



*Ambassador
of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
to the United States*

Joshua Kurlantzick
Senior Fellow for Southeast Asia
Council on Foreign Relations

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Dear Joshua Kurlantzick,

I hope you and all in the Council on Foreign Relations are well. I am writing this letter in connection with your article “Myanmar’s National Elections: What to Expect” that was posted in NPR and CFR online news on 26th October 2020.

I am very disappointed to see the Council on Foreign Relations, an eminent institution disseminating completely distorted information on Myanmar. On 8 November, multiparty general elections were held with the overwhelming support of the entire population. Voters and all parties involved in the election strictly adhered the health guidelines related to COVID-19 pandemic, and the elections were held orderly and peacefully across the country. We are now receiving congratulatory messages from many countries welcoming the success of the elections. Local and foreign observers to the elections have also made positive remarks on Myanmar election. If you have closely followed the electoral process objectively, you would have found out the degree of importance the government has attached to the successful holding of the elections amidst the challenging time of COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, I would like to clarify on what you have mentioned about the PACE election observers. The Union Election Commission (UEC) has allowed the (PACE), a local poll monitor to observe the conduct of the 2020 General Elections on 15th August 2020 following the completion of the latter’s submission for registration as a non-profit organization in Myanmar. In addition to PACE, the UEC has also granted permissions to monitor the electoral processes to the foreign embassies based in Yangon and international observers such as The Nippon Foundation (Japan), ANFREL-Asian Network for Free Election, EU and Carter Center.

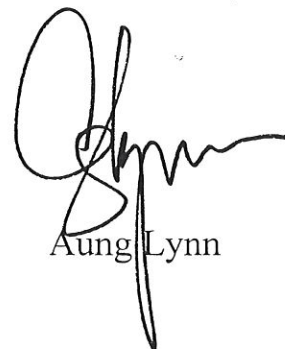
At the time countries in the world are working vigorously to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, it is totally unfair and incredibly unjust of you to blame us in our efforts in alleviating the situation. We are making rigorous efforts within our limited resources to prevent and contain the spread of the disease, and to mitigate the impact on the socio-economic life of the people with the support within the country and from friends abroad such as the United States. Due to Myanmar's strategy of "No one left behind" and the whole-of-nation approach, we are fortunate that we have not suffered severely like the most developed countries. Nevertheless, our efforts are relentless and we will continue to carry out until the end of the pandemic.

In the Rakhine State, the government spares no efforts to bring peace, stability and development for all communities in the Rakhine State even during the very difficult circumstances like the COVID-19. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, in her capacity as the Union Minister for Foreign Affairs has led the Myanmar team to the Hague, Netherlands, to defend the national interest of Myanmar at the ICJ. Her representation is not to defend the human right violators, but to justify that there was no genocide in Myanmar. In her statement at the Court, the State Counsellor enunciated that actions will be taken against all offenders in line with due process and there will be no tolerance of human rights violations in the Rakhine State, or elsewhere in Myanmar.

Myanmar is a young democracy and we highly appreciate the encouragement and the support of the people of the United States in our struggle for freedom and democracy. The success of the general elections has marked another milestone in the history of Myanmar in promoting human rights and justice; and in moving forward to build the democratic federal union to which the people of Myanmar have aspired for generations.

The Council of Foreign Relations has supported the democratization process in Myanmar in the past. In light of the success of the general election, I wish to see the continued support of the CFR to further progress democracy in Myanmar.

Yours sincerely,



Aung Lynn