

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL - 47th SESSION

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE ON THE ORAL UPDATE OF THE HIGH-COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ON THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN MYANMAR, 6-7 JULY 2021

[Ms Michelle Bachelet – United Nations High-Commissioner for Human Rights](#)

In recent months, the situation in Myanmar has evolved from a **political crisis** to a **multi-dimensional human rights catastrophe**. Suffering and violence throughout the country are devastating prospects for sustainable development, and raise the possibility of **state failure or a broader civil war**. Nearly **900 people have been killed**. Some **200,000 people have been forced to flee** their homes.

This crisis has compounded the already disastrous **impact of COVID-19** on the **economy**. The World Food Programme estimates that **over 6 million people are severely in need of food aid**. UNDP forecasts that nearly **half the population could be forced into poverty** by early 2022.

Since 1 February, at least **240 attacks on health-care facilities, medical personnel**, ambulances and patients have seriously disabled **COVID-19** testing, treatment and vaccination. Meanwhile, mass displacement and continued protests heighten the **risk of contagion**.

The coup has exacerbated a number of **long-running conflicts in Myanmar's**. Fighting has resumed in **Kachin, Kayin and northern Shan States**, as well as in **Chin and Kayah States**. Military forces have repeatedly conducted **indiscriminate airstrikes** and artillery shelling, **killing civilians, displacing** tens of thousands of people and **destroying civilian structures** such as **schools** and places of worship.

Laws have been instrumentalized to stifle **freedom of expression**, curb **independent and social media**, and **arbitrarily detain at least 5,200 people**. Over **90 journalists have been arrested** and 8 major **media outlets have been closed**. We have also received reports of **enforced disappearances, torture** and **deaths in custody**, and arrests of relatives or children in lieu of the person being sought.

People across the country continue **peaceful protests** despite the **use of lethal force** against them. A **civil disobedience movement** has brought many military-controlled government structures to a standstill. Myanmar's people have shown **incredible resilience** in organising systems of **solidarity** and support that cross Myanmar's ethnic, religious and social divides and hold **promise for reconciliation**.

But despair is rising. Some people, in many parts of Myanmar, have taken up arms and **formed self-protection groups**. These newly formed armed opposition groups have launched attacks in several locations, to which the security forces have responded with **disproportionate force**. I am concerned that this **escalation in violence** could have horrific consequences for civilians.

To end this crisis and to foster a **new future for Myanmar**, free from military impunity and control, it is essential that the **National Unity Government** and **democratic civil society** stakeholders be brought into any political process. Myanmar **youth** and **women** should be given a leading role as well.

It is incumbent on the **international community** to stand united in **pressuring the military** to halt its attacks on the people of Myanmar and return the country to democracy. **ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus** is an important starting point, this process should be advanced, before the human rights situation in the country deteriorates further. This should be reinforced by **Security Council action**.

Ultimate **accountability** cannot be avoided. Continued **impunity** will only undermine any future democracy, reconciliation, sustainable development or progress towards stability and peace. Any **future democratic government** in Myanmar must have the authority to exercise effective **civilian control over the military**.



INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE (Access the full recording of the meeting here: [PART 1](#); [PART 2](#))

27 States delegations took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue.

All States were concerned by the **human rights violations perpetrated by the military junta** in Myanmar, including **arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, and torture** in custody. States were also concerned by the situation of human rights in Myanmar, which includes **threats against freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly, harassment of journalists, lawyers and human rights defenders, media closures and internet shutdowns** across the country, **women and girls' rights, sexual and gender-based violence** and use of **rape as a weapon of war**. Speakers specifically emphasized the concerning trend of **enforced disappearances** and called on Myanmar to **release all the detainees arbitrary arrested**.

States deplored the facts that these **widespread violations** were committed in **total impunity** by members of the **military junta** in Myanmar, who regularly use **military weapons against civilians**, and called for **accountability** to be ensured. Many States condemned in the strongest term the military coup in Myanmar.

States deplored the **dire humanitarian situation** and underlined the urgent **need to allow unimpeded access to humanitarian aid** in Myanmar.

States commended the **5 points consensus reached by the ASEAN leaders** on: immediate cessation of violence; constructive dialogue; special envoy of ASEAN for mediation; humanitarian assistance through AHA Centre; visit of the special envoy to Myanmar to meet with all parties concerned.

Many States reminded that the **situation of the Rohingya in Myanmar** was concerning and recalled the importance of their **safe and voluntary return** in Myanmar. Several States commended **Bangladesh for its role** in this crisis and for hosting the Rohingya refugees on its territory.

Several States commended the work of the **Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar** and the work undertaken by the **OHCHR**.

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue (27 delegations)

European Union, Sweden (on behalf of Nordic-Baltic countries), Pakistan (on behalf of the OIC), Germany, Sierra Leone, Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, France, Spain, Japan, Maldives, Lao, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Romania, Ireland, United Kingdom, Mauritania, Marshall Islands, Bulgaria, Netherlands, Philippines, India, Iran, Ukraine.

10 NGOs took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue:

Asian Forum, Edmund Rice International, Center CCPR, Article 19, International Bar Association, International Commission of Jurists, CIVICUS, Amnesty International, Lawyers' Rights Watch, Support Center for Food Development.

- **Widespread human rights violations in Myanmar**, including arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, sexual violence, rape as a weapon of war, torture and ill-treatment. NGOs called on the need to release the arbitrary detainees.
- The **arrests of journalists, lawyers and participants of civil disobedience** movements and the concerning **use of internet shutdowns** imposed by the military across the country.
- Application of **targeted sanctions** aiming **top military leaders** of the junta.
- The lack of **independence of the judiciary** and the **military courts** subordinated to the junta.
- The **situation of Rohingya**, who continue to be **denied basic rights**.
- The need for **global arms embargo** on Myanmar.