

## HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 54th SESSION

### Interactive Dialogue on the Report of the Office of the High Commissioner on the situation of human rights in Myanmar

26 September 2023

**Volker Türk, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights**, addressed the Council during the interactive dialogue on the report on the situation of human rights in Myanmar. He affirmed that each day, the people of Myanmar are enduring horrifying attacks, flagrant human rights violations, and the crumbling of their livelihoods and hopes. The report describes a range of incidents – many of particular brutality, emblematic of a systematic negation of human rights, human life, and human dignity. Senseless military attacks are exacerbating the human rights crisis with interconnected humanitarian, political, and economic impacts, imposing an unbearable toll on the people in Myanmar.

Further, he stated that **three specific military tactics** have been systematically directed against the civilian population: airstrikes, mass killings, and burning of villages. Violence by anti-military armed groups, including targeted killings and bombings of public places, also persists. While the scale of these violations is not comparable to those perpetrated by the military, it remains crucial that groups opposing the military respect, in full, international humanitarian and human rights law, as well as principles of civilian protection.

Denial of humanitarian access throughout the whole country is having dramatic consequences on the **right to food**. This denial of access has been acutely felt in **Rakhine State** where the human rights situation of the Rohingya community continues to be of the utmost concern, particularly for women, children, and young people.

In conclusion, he welcomed the recent decision of ASEAN to try a new approach, introducing a Troika mechanism to support the Chair and special envoy; reiterated a call to all States and other actors with influence to support efforts to de-escalate this crisis and ensure that all vulnerable people in Myanmar can exercise their fundamental rights and receive all necessary assistance; and urged all actors to ensure that allegations of human rights abuses against the civilian population are promptly and transparently investigated and that perpetrators are held to account. The UN Security Council should refer this situation to the International Criminal Court.

**Myanmar did not deliver any statements.**

### Interactive dialogue

27 country delegations took the floor during the interactive dialogue. **The majority of the countries** remained deeply concerned about the worsening human rights situation in Myanmar, where the military continues to commit atrocities and numerous other serious abuses of human rights across the country, with absolute impunity. **Libya** stressed the Government to ensure the return of displaced Rohingya from Bangladesh and other host countries, and the need for accountability for serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. **Countries** were also concerned over the grave human rights violations and abuses against Rohingya Muslims and other minorities. **Among others, the US and Spain** called on the military to immediately release all political prisoners and others unjustly detained and cease the targeted use of the death penalty against pro-democracy leaders. The **Lao PDR** reiterated that human rights issues shall be addressed through genuine dialogue and cooperation, with respect for the sovereignty and independence of states. Some countries, such as **India and Malaysia**, remained steadfast in our support of the ASEAN-led efforts in Myanmar and strongly believe in the centrality and unity of ASEAN.

**Venezuela**, however, affirmed that the duplication of reports and dialogues mandated by some countries, without taking into account the information of the country concerned, is unnecessary and counterproductive. It also undermines the principles of respect for sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States enshrined in the UN Charter. Not listening to the country concerned makes genuine dialogue and cooperation, fundamental pillars of this Council, impossible. While appreciating the HC's updates, demanded an end to the bloody MCU imposed on Myanmar that causes unspeakable suffering to its population, violating their most basic rights. **The Russian Federation** opposed politically motivated initiatives regarding this country in the Council, which are based on selectivity and double standards.

In the context of political prisoners, **NGOs** reported killings and tortures by the junta during detention and prison transfers. They were concerned about attempts to the right to freedom of expression and other human rights. **CIVICUS** reported that activists face killings, torture, arbitrary detentions and enforced disappearances while communities suffer air strikes, forced displacement and denial of humanitarian access. Affirming that the atrocities committed against the Rohingya, because of their ethnicity and because of their religion, clearly meet the legal definition of genocide and crimes against humanity, NGOs called States to support truth and justice efforts, including by engaging the ICC and ICJ.

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (27 country delegations):

*European Union, Australia (on behalf of a group of countries), Pakistan (on behalf of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Italy, Czechia, Libya, Kuwait, Luxembourg, United States of America, Türkiye, Germany, France, Saudi Arabia, Georgia, Malaysia, Thailand, China, Indonesia, Russian Federation, Bangladesh, Maldives, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Spain, Gambia, India.*

NHRIs and NGOs that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (10):

Article 19 - International Centre Against Censorship, The, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, Centre pour les Droits Civils et Politiques - Centre CCPR, CIVICUS - World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Edmund Rice International Limited, Federatie van Nederlandse verenigingen tot integratie van Homoseksualiteit - COC Nederland, Human Rights Now, International Bar Association, Jubilee Campaign, Meezaan center for human rights.

To watch the full meeting refer to the [UN WEB TV](#).