

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 55th SESSION

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

01 March 2024

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 the human rights situation in Myanmar has morphed into a never-ending nightmare, away from the spotlight of global politics.

He reported that credible sources have verified that over 4,603 civilians, including 659 women and 490 children, have been killed at the hands of the military since February 2021. The actual toll is almost certainly much higher. Brutal acts are carried out by trained soldiers against their own people – around 400 civilians, including 113 women, have been burnt alive or after execution. Heavy weapons are today causing a majority of civilian deaths as the military has increasingly directed its war planes at towns and cities. In January 2024 alone, 145 out of 232 verified civilian deaths - over 60 per cent - were attributable to these airstrikes and artillery attacks. Over half of those victims were women or children.

In **Shan, Rakhine, and Kachin States** in particular, the military appears again to be provoking inter-ethnic tensions by employing ultra-nationalist militias and forcibly recruiting members of ethnic communities to attack others. Throughout Myanmar, other **sweeping violations of fundamental rights and the rule of law continue unabated**. People fear they can be arrested for anything at any time. More than 20,000 opponents of the military, including 3,909 women, are still languishing in detention.

Finally, he repeated a call for the **immediate cessation of operations** in or around civilian areas, for the full protection of all civilians, for the military to release all political prisoners, and for full compliance with international human rights law. He called on the international community to refocus its energy on **preventing atrocities against all people in the country**, including the Rohingya, notably by taking meaningful and effective, targeted action to end the military's access to arms, jet fuel and foreign currency that it needs to sustain its campaign of repression against civilians. Moreover, he called for a **new approach by ASEAN and States with influence to engage all actors**, including the National Unity Government, ethnic organizations and the broader civil society, to create a pathway to the restoration of democracy and civilian rule. This is the moment to enable the democratic movement to build an inclusive political consensus to end this human rights crisis.

Myanmar did not deliver any statements.

Interactive dialogue

33 country delegations took the floor during the interactive dialogue. **The majority of the countries** remained concerned on the human rights situation in Myanmar and its regional impact. They called on the immediate cessation of violence in Myanmar and the restoration of peace and stability under a Myanmar-owned and led comprehensive political solution. The international community should support ASEAN's efforts, promote dialogue and reconciliation on the basis of respect for Myanmar's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. **The EU, France, the Netherlands and Malta** condemned the repressive actions of the Myanmar military, marked by the use of indiscriminate violence against civilians. It emphasized the importance of rescue at sea and of the principle of non-refoulement, especially in the clear absence of the necessary conditions for a voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their places of origin. **The Islamic Republic of Iran** recommended the authorises in Myanmar to address root causes of

discrimination and human rights violations against ethnic and religious minorities in Myanmar and ensure accountability for serious crimes committed, undertake meaningful efforts to ensure that legal accountability at the national level is ongoing, this can prevent impunity and future repetition of crimes, and to ensure full, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to Rakhine State. **Kuwait**, raising concerned over the deteriorating human rights situation, the serious violations and abuses against Rohingya Muslims and minorities, stressed the importance of respecting and protecting basic human rights for all groups of society, without discrimination. **Maldives** expressed concern over escalating violence against Myanmar's minorities and urged the military to end systematic violence and comply with international humanitarian, criminal, and human rights laws.

The Russian Federation advocated for a non-politicized approach when discussing the situation in this country. It condemned the practice of a number of states in using multilateral platforms, including the Human Rights Council, to put pressure on Naypyitaw and provoke an increase in confrontation in Myanmar. It welcomed ASEAN's desire to assist in finding ways to normalize the situation in and around Myanmar, including solving humanitarian problems by providing assistance to people in need. **Belarus** affirmed that conducting interactive dialogues without the participation of representatives of the affected country is contrary to the principles of universality of non-selectivity and impartiality. This interactive dialogue makes it impossible to know Myanmar's efforts and progress on the ground, added **Venezuela**. It demanded an end to the unilateral coercive measures imposed that cause unspeakable suffering to its population, violating their most basic rights.

The Centre for Civil and Political Rights deeply deplored that a number of countries, including those sitting as members of this very Council, remain silent and inactive, and more regrettably, there are even countries and private actors providing the junta with weapons, resources and revenues. **NGOs** remained concerned about the the situation of civilians in Myanmar. Frequent arbitrary arrests, torture, sexual violence and extrajudicial killings of civilians by the Myanmar Armed Forces. The military has completely compromised the independence of the judiciary. **NGOs** called upon member states to uphold the principle of non-refoulement and work together to provide a compassionate yet durable solution to this refugee crisis. **The International Bar Association** urged the international community to call for a moratorium on the death penalty and to use all possible avenues to hold the junta accountable for all international crimes that are being committed.

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (33 country delegations):

Belarus, Costa Rica, European Union (on behalf of EU), France, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Netherlands, Norway (on behalf of NB8: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden), Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Pakistan (on behalf of the OIC), The Gambia (on behalf of the African Group), Saudi Arabia, United States of America, Türkiye, Georgia, The Philippines, China, Bangladesh, LAO PDR, Thailand, Albania, India.

NHRIs and NGOs that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (6):

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, Centre pour les Droits Civils et Politiques - Centre CCPR, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Edmund Rice International Limited, International Bar Association, Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada.

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