

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 56th SESSION

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

18 June 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, a country that is suffocated by an illegitimate military regime. The disintegration of human rights continues at breakneck speed. The High Commissioner reported stories of horrific war tactics such as beheadings, midnight drone attacks, the burning of homes as people sleep, and people being shot at as they flee for their lives.

He reported a people's revolution against decades of oppression and violence. In some areas outside the military's control, new local governance structures have emerged, supported by ethnic armed groups and activists alike. They are providing food, shelter, education, and healthcare for hundreds of thousands who are otherwise receiving little to no humanitarian support. And they are delivering critically needed protection services in the complete absence of a functioning public system.

He called on all anti-military armed groups to ensure the protection of civilians, defectors, and surrenderers at all times. Armed conflicts continue to rage brutally across the country, taking an increasingly grim toll on the lives of civilians.

The military also reportedly ordered the evacuation of ethnic Rakhine villages where they have been conducting mass arrests in recent days. Men were separated from women. Dozens of men were allegedly tortured, shot and killed. Multiple reports alleged that at least five women were also raped and killed in the incident. Hundreds of men taken away are missing.

The HC affirmed that the accountability including proceedings currently pending before the International Criminal Court is absolutely critical. The failures to ensure accountability in Myanmar's past transition are now allowing history to repeat itself and are haunting the present and the future.

In conclusion, the situation in Rakhine State is tragically just one example of how this coup which has resulted in three years of conflict has brought pain and suffering to an entire country. The attacks by the military have been and continue to be indiscriminate. Since February 2021, at least 5,280 civilians including 1,022 women and 667 children have been killed at the hands of the military. At least 26,865 individuals have been arrested and 20,592 remain in detention. There are now 3 million internally displaced by these conflicts, the vast majority still without proper shelter, without access to food or water, without essential medicines and healthcare and so many more of the cruel consequences of the military's continued denial of humanitarian access remain invisible and underreported.

The gender impact of the coup has been tremendous. It continues to worsen. The HC reported that at least 185 girls and 841 women have been killed by the military since the coup. 5536 have been arrested. Sexual violence is reported as rampant although fears and shame prevent a proper quantification of these crimes. When it comes to the internally displaced, half of them, 1.5 million are women and of the displaced population are women and girls. Recent reports of the initiation of forced conscription by the military involve also women under the military law which exacerbates all of these existing concerns. Women's leadership has played a very important role in that regard.

Myanmar did not deliver any statements.

Interactive dialogue

37 country delegations took the floor during the interactive dialogue. **The majority of the countries** shared their grave concerns expressed by the High Commissioner of forcible recruitment of children by the regime, among others. They called on all armed actors to ensure the protection of civilians. **They also reiterated their support to the ASEAN's role in facilitating Myanmar to have a comprehensive and durable solution through the implementation of the ASEAN five-point consensus. Pakistan and the OIC countries** were deeply concerned at the resumption of hostilities in Rakhine State and at the recent reports of violence, forced displacement and property destruction against the Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine. **Ireland** was appalled by the perpetration and continued torture on sexual and gender-based violence and the targeting of civilians by the military including in shelters and camps where they have sought protection that have intensified since October.

The EU stated that ensuring justice and accountability for all human rights violations and abuses committed by any actor is crucial. **Denmark** added that Myanmar must comply with the ICJ's provisional measures order. **Switzerland** urged the military authorities and all parties to the conflict to fully and rapidly implement Resolution 2669 at the Security Council. **Countries, as Egypt, Spain, Maldives and Sierra Leone** appreciated the role of Bangladesh and other neighboring countries and their continued efforts to address the repercussions of the crisis and we call on the international community to render support to host countries and to find practical and durable solutions.

The Russian Federation reported that a serious factor in the further degradation of the situation in Myanmar is the political, diplomatic, and financial support for anti-governmental forces by the collective West. **Belarus** was concerned with the ongoing politicization of the HRC's mandate in Myanmar and the fact that the country concerned does not consent to this process. Also, **Venezuela** urged continued support for good faith efforts to seek a lasting peace and ensure sustainable development opportunities for their people. Such an approach must be non-politicized and strictly aligned with respect for human rights for sovereignty and noninterference in the internal affairs of states. The application of unilateral coercive measures and the imposition of mandates will in no way contribute to resolving the difficulties and crises of the people of Myanmar.

UNICEF reported that 3.1 million people have been displaced, and nearly 40% of children are facing multiple rights violations and deprivations. Grave child rights violations verified by the UN continue to rise. The increasing use of land mines and explosive remnants of war are putting civilians at grave risks including children who account for over 20% of civilian casualties.

NGOs remained deeply alarmed by the ongoing human rights crisis affecting the Rohingya both in Rakhine State, Myanmar, and refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. They urged member states to immediately refer the situation to the Security Council to identify concrete preventative measures. Building durable solutions for the Rohingya and upholding the rights of all people in Myanmar depends on the establishment of civilian democratic rule and holding the military accountable for its crimes, added **Human Rights Watch**. The **LAW** affirmed that while no ethnic peoples are left unaffected by the ongoing fighting, the Myanmar military's systematic campaign to fuel ethnic tensions leaves the Rohingya more vulnerable to inter-communal violence. **CIVICUS** remained concerned about the state of civic space, in addition to the situation of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar. The **Association caritative étudiante pour la jeunesse** deplored that a number of countries, including those sitting here 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.

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (37 country delegations):

Australia (on behalf of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand), EU, Luxembourg (on behalf of Benelux Countries), Pakistan (on behalf of OIC), Danmark (on behalf of Nordic-Baltic Countries), Kuwait, Ireland, Egypt, Japan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Sierra Leone, Türkiye, Indonesia, Spain, France, Maldives, Switzerland, China, USA, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Russian Federation, Malta, Belarus, Cyprus, Malaysia, Georgia, UK, Austria, Ghana, Venezuela, Gambia, India, Malawi, Thailand, Viet Nam, LAO PDR.

NHRIs and NGOs that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (8):

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, CIVICUS, Centre for Political and Civil Rights, Association Ma'ona for Human Rights and Immigration, Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, Human Rights Watch, Association caritative étudiante pour la jeunesse, Legal Action Worldwide.

International Organizations: UNICEF.

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