

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 57th SESSION

Interactive Dialogue on the Report of the High Commissioner on the Overall Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar

24 September 2024

Ms. Nada Al-Nashif, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, delivered a detailed and grave assessment of the worsening crisis in Myanmar, focusing on the catastrophic humanitarian situation and rampant human rights violations. The military's increasing reliance on air strikes and artillery in its battle against armed groups has led to countless civilian casualties, including children, and has caused widespread displacement. Some ethnic armed groups have also harmed civilians, further worsening the conflict. The Rohingya community, caught between the military and ethnic forces, remains particularly vulnerable, with the situation in Rakhine State deteriorating rapidly.

Since the military coup in February 2021, at least 5,600 civilians have been killed, including women and children. The crisis is exacerbated by natural disasters, such as Typhoon Yagi, which displaced over 800,000 people. Humanitarian aid remains severely restricted, with the United Nations reporting that over 18.6 million people are in need, and 15 million face food insecurity. The military's inaction in mitigating these disasters and helping civilians further compounds the suffering. The economic situation is dire, with the country's GDP falling and over half of the population now living in poverty. Despite this, Myanmar's humanitarian response is severely underfunded, and essential services have collapsed. The health system is overwhelmed by disease outbreaks, while food and medical shortages continue to worsen. Instead of addressing the humanitarian needs, the military has intensified its repression, forcibly conscripting civilians and arming local militias, leading to increased violence. The justice system has been weaponized to silence dissent, with over 26,000 people detained, including women and children. Torture, sexual violence, and appalling prison conditions are rampant, contributing to widespread human rights abuses.

Ms. Al-Nashif called for stronger political will and international leadership, particularly from ASEAN, to stop the flow of arms to Myanmar's military, support humanitarian aid, and engage with local civil society. It is crucial to protect Rohingya civilians and hold military leaders accountable through international mechanisms like the International Criminal Court (ICC). The involvement of civil society and local organizations is essential for Myanmar's future and the eventual restoration of democracy.

Interactive dialogue

35 country delegations took the floor during the interactive dialogue. **The majority of delegations** expressed concern about Myanmar's worsening human rights and humanitarian crisis. The recurring themes included military-led violence, human rights abuses, forced displacement, and the persecution of the Rohingya. Many countries expressed support for ASEAN's five-point consensus as a framework for resolving the crisis, while others stressed the need for international cooperation to protect civilians and ensure accountability.

The **EU, USA, and Japan**, among other delegations, strongly condemned the ongoing military violence in Myanmar, including arbitrary detentions, forced conscription, and attacks on civilians. They emphasized the need for international accountability and highlighted the devastating effects on civilians, particularly through airstrikes, forced displacement, and lack of access to humanitarian aid.

A consistent group of countries, including **Kuwait, Iran, Maldives, and Bangladesh**, focused on the plight of the Rohingya Muslims, condemning the violence and human rights abuses they face. They stressed the importance of protecting Rohingyas, facilitating their safe return, and holding Myanmar accountable for the crimes against this group. Bangladesh, in particular, emphasized the need for sustainable repatriation of the 1.2 million Rohingyas it hosts.

Thailand, Spain, Malaysia, and Turkey, *inter alia*, underlined the need for immediate and unhindered humanitarian access to Myanmar's vulnerable populations. They expressed concerns about food insecurity, mental health impacts on the population, and the urgent need for aid, especially in regions affected by natural disasters like Typhoon Yagi.

Some delegations, including **Australia, Indonesia, and Viet Nam**, commended ASEAN's efforts to resolve the crisis through the five-point consensus, and urged for cooperation between ASEAN and the international community in addressing cross-border issues like smuggling and in promoting a return to democratic governance.

Russian Federation, Belarus, Venezuela and China took a stance in favour of Myanmar's sovereignty, opposing what they perceive as external interference and politicized mandates. They expressed support for Myanmar's internal efforts to restore peace and stability and advocated for peaceful dialogue and regional cooperation.

NGOs underlined that the military coup in Myanmar has led to a severe human rights crisis, with the *junta* demonstrating no intention or capacity to restore peace or democracy. The humanitarian situation is rapidly deteriorating, exacerbated by Typhoon Yagi, which has displaced millions and increased the urgency for aid. Civilians are facing widespread violence, including airstrikes, torture, arbitrary detentions, and attacks on journalists. **ARTICLE 19** highlighted Myanmar's alarming status as the second-worst jailer of journalists, with the military actively targeting the media to control information and perpetuate violence. The organization called for the immediate and unconditional release of imprisoned journalists and advocates for open and secure internet access. The Rohingya community faces existential threats from both the junta and the Arakan Army, which has committed widespread violence, including killings and property destruction. **Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch** stressed that silence on these abuses only fuels impunity, urging the UN Security Council to ensure compliance with protective measures for the Rohingya and to halt arms supplies to Myanmar. Both **Human Rights Watch** and **Edmund Rice International Limited** highlighted the increasing civilian casualties and documented war crimes, calling for the referral of Myanmar's situation to the ICC to hold perpetrators accountable. They emphasized the need for urgent actions from UN Member States to strengthen international efforts in addressing these crises, including recognizing the National Unity Government as the legitimate representative of the people and ensuring access to humanitarian aid.

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (35 country delegations):

Norway (on behalf of a group of countries), Australia (on behalf of a group of countries), European Union, Pakistan (on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation), Liechtenstein, Czechia, Kuwait, Iran, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Japan, France, United States of America, Maldives, Malawi, Indonesia, Spain, Philippines, Russian Federation, Belarus, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Georgia, Cyprus, Malaysia, Mauritania, Venezuela, Thailand, China, Türkiye, Luxembourg, India, Viet Nam, Bangladesh, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Romania.

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

Centre pour les Droits Civils et Politiques - Centre CCPR, Legal Action Worldwide, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, Article 19 – International Centre Against Censorship, Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, International Bar Association, Amnesty International, Edmund Rice International Limited, Human Rights Watch, Meezaan Center for Human Rights.

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