

Human Rights Council – 40th Session

Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on Myanmar

11 March 2019

Australian Statement

Australia thanks the Special Rapporteur for her update. We note her findings with deep concern and support the extension of her mandate for a further year. We call on the Government of Myanmar to re-engage with the Special Rapporteur and allow her to visit Myanmar in order to fulfil her mandate.

Australia is disturbed by the renewal of violence in Rakhine state and urges all parties to cease hostilities, respect international law, including human rights, and uphold commitments to dialogue for peace. Further conflict makes finding a durable solution to the Rohingya crisis even more difficult.

We welcome the unilateral ceasefire declared by the Myanmar armed forces in Kachin and Shan states and hope it can be extended. We reiterate our call on Myanmar to lift restrictions on humanitarian access to Kachin, Shan and Rakhine states, and urge it to urgently establish conditions for the safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable return of displaced Rohingya and other communities.

Australia supports the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar and calls on Myanmar's Government and Independent Commission of Enquiry to cooperate fully with the mechanism. Perpetrators of human rights violations must be held to account.

Australia acknowledges that Myanmar faces challenges as it seeks to embed democratic reforms and achieve national peace and reconciliation. Recognising that a free media is an essential component of democracy, we remain deeply troubled by the ongoing imprisonment of journalists Wa Lone [*Wah Loan*] and Kyaw Soe Oo [*Jaw So Oo*], and urge the Government to find a solution leading to their release.

Australia would be interested to hear from the Special Rapporteur how regional partners can best help support the establishment and operation of the Independent Investigative Mechanism.

275 Words