

Human Rights Council – 41st session

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Myanmar (oral update)
2-3 July 2019

Australian Statement

Australia thanks the Special Rapporteur for her update. We note her findings with deep concern, and continue to urge Myanmar to resume cooperation with the Special Rapporteur and allow her to visit Myanmar to fulfil her mandate.

Australia remains concerned by ongoing fighting in Rakhine State and calls on all sides to cease hostilities and protect civilians. The current violence is a major challenge for the national peace process, and further deterioration in the security environment makes finding a durable solution to the Rohingya crisis even more difficult.

In Rakhine, Kachin and Shan states, we urge Myanmar to work with humanitarian agencies to enable humanitarian access for those in need.

Freedom of expression is essential to democracy. Australia welcomes the recent pardon of journalists Wa Lone [*Wah Loan*] and Kyaw Soe Oo [*Jaw So Oo*]. However, many other journalists, artists, and activists face charges for undertaking activities central to their work. We urge the government to ensure that Myanmar's legislative framework allows for unimpeded participation in the public sphere, including for the media.

Australia recognises the challenges Myanmar continues to face as it navigates complex political and economic transitions. As a regional partner, we will support Myanmar's efforts toward national peace and reconciliation. Accountability is an important element of peace and reconciliation.

Australia would be interested to hear from the Special Rapporteur how regional partners can best help progress the peace process and support Myanmar's democratic transition.

253 Words