

Human Rights Council – 43rd session

Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on Myanmar

10 March 2020

Australian Statement

Australia thanks the Special Rapporteur.

Australia remains gravely concerned by the situation in Rakhine, Shan and Kachin States, and southeast Myanmar. Ongoing clashes among ethnic armed groups and the Myanmar military are displacing, injuring and killing civilians, and further complicating the peace process.

Australia again calls on all sides to exercise restraint, comply with international law and work towards peace.

We welcome Myanmar's engagement in the International Court of Justice process, consistent with its international legal obligations, and urge it to comply with the Court's orders. We encourage Myanmar to engage with international accountability mechanisms, including the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar.

It is critical that Myanmar make all efforts to improve conditions in Rakhine for all people living there, and enable the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable returns of displaced Rohingya. We recognise initial steps taken to date. The Advisory Commission on Rakhine State recommendations provide an important framework for future progress, including freedom of movement. We call for restrictions on humanitarian access to be lifted and note the internet shutdown is hampering civilian communications and delivery of assistance and protection.

We remain deeply concerned by ongoing undue restraints on freedom of expression, including restrictions on protests, and prosecution of journalists, lawyers, performers and activists. We urge Myanmar to address these constraints.

Australia is a longstanding supporter of Myanmar's democratic transition, for which general elections this year are an important milestone. We encourage Myanmar to ensure open and transparent elections, where all communities can participate.

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