

Human Rights Council – 44th session

Interactive dialogue with Special Rapporteur on the oral update on the situation of human rights in Myanmar

14 July 2020

Australian Statement

We welcome the Special Rapporteur, thank him for his update, and urge Myanmar to extend its full cooperation.

Australia remains gravely concerned by escalating fighting in Rakhine and Chin States, which continues to displace tens of thousands of vulnerable civilians. The conflict is disproportionately affecting the human rights of ethnic minorities, women, children and people with disabilities, who face violence, intimidation and harassment.

We urge the protection of civilians, compliance with international law, and dialogue between all armed actors to ensure that the intractable humanitarian situation is not exacerbated. We call on Myanmar to intensify work with humanitarian agencies to ensure assistance reaches affected civilians.

Australia urges the Tatmadaw to release details of recent court martial sentences and sustain efforts to prosecute those responsible for serious international crimes. We continue to call for Myanmar's full engagement with international accountability mechanisms.

Australia encourages Myanmar to make progress on the Prevention of Violence against Women Law. We call for the prevention and cessation of all sexual and gender based violence, particularly in this twentieth anniversary year of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

We remain concerned by restrictions on freedom of expression and media freedoms and urge Myanmar to pursue meaningful reform. Citizens, including in Rakhine and Chin States, must be able to access information during this pandemic and engage meaningfully in open, transparent and inclusive elections.

Australia encourages Myanmar to fully implement the Rakhine Advisory Commission recommendations, including progressing citizenship, freedom of movement, and access to services for the Rohingya in order to create the conditions for voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable returns. We also welcome ASEAN's role in addressing the crisis including the work by the ASEAN Secretariat Ad Hoc Support team and the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre).

295 Words