



Republic of the Union of Myanmar
National Unity Government
Ministry of Human Rights



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
52nd session

**ITEM 2 – Interactive dialogue with the High Commissioner for Human Rights
on the human rights situation in Myanmar**

MYANMAR

7 March 2023

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar welcomes the interactive dialogue with the High Commissioner for Human Rights on Myanmar, as well as OHCHR's corresponding report on the 'Situation of human rights in Myanmar since 1 February 2022'.¹

High Commissioner Türk was blunt in telling the Human Rights Council that "[t]he disregard and contempt for human life and human rights that are continuously demonstrated by the military constitute an outrage to the conscience of humanity."²

OHCHR has also delivered a strong report on the 'catastrophic' human rights situation in Myanmar and the illegal military junta's grave human rights violations and probable crimes against humanity and war crimes. Further, its report catalogues some of the constructive actions taken by the National Unity Government consistent with Myanmar's international obligations.

OHCHR's collective updates are strikingly familiar in their content and findings. Each periodic report since the junta's failed power grab in 2021 has recorded fresh peaks in murders, executions, disappearances, torture, sexual violence, and the junta's blocking of humanitarian aid and use of forced displacement and starvation as tactics of war.

Emboldened by 'continuous and absolute impunity',³ the junta has intensified its use of heavy weapons against civilians over the past year. According to High Commissioner Türk, airstrikes against civilian locations increased by 141% and artillery shelling of communities, including hospitals, schools and places of worship, increased by over 100%.⁴

OHCHR has also documented clear junta acts of terror and collective punishment, including villagers being burned alive, the hostage-taking of children, and a 1,200% increase in houses burnt or destroyed in junta operations.⁵ Significantly, OHCHR attributes these widespread and systematic atrocities to the junta's leadership:

OHCHR documented consistent tactics and patterns of abuse across the country confirming that the military operates as a solid and coherent structure, implying

¹ A/HRC/52/21.

² See 'Statement by Volker Türk, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 6 March 2023'.

³ A/HRC/52/21 at para. 5.

⁴ See 'Statement by Volker Türk'.

⁵ See A/HRC/52/21 at para. 21 and High Commissioner Türk's statement.

knowledge of its leadership of commission of atrocities and/or, at minimum, failures to foreseeably prevent them.⁶

Accountability is essential. On behalf of Myanmar, the National Unity Government welcomes OHCHR's call for the Security Council to refer the situation in the country to the International Criminal Court (ICC), as well as its acknowledgment that no public response has yet been issued by the ICC to the National Unity Government's July 2021 statement accepting the Court's jurisdiction for crimes committed in Myanmar since 1 July 2002.⁷

Furthermore, there has been no discernible improvement in the lives of the Rohingya despite the generosity of Myanmar's neighbours. The Rohingya are no closer to returning home, with OHCHR reporting that conditions in Rakhine State remain unconducive for safe returns and that persistent security concerns have worsened.⁸ Yet this situation does not remove the National Unity Government's responsibility to the Rohingya, including much needed progress on citizenship rights. OHCHR's report acknowledges that the National Unity Government 'has committed to abolishing the National Verification system and adopting a new and inclusive citizenship law in accordance with its 2021 "Policy Position on the Rohingya in Rakhine State"'.⁹ We stand by these commitments.

The National Unity Government also accepts OHCHR's calls on all parties to adhere to their international obligations, to ensure full, unrestricted, predictable humanitarian access to all persons in need, and to cooperate with international human rights and accountability mechanisms. Further, we support High Commissioner Türk's entreaty that all parties strengthen their efforts to ensure civilian protection.

Finally, the National Unity Government fully endorses the High Commissioner's call on the Council to respect the democratic will of the Myanmar people. To High Commissioner Türk:

[t]he elections of November 2020 made clear that what the people of the country wanted was to continue the hard-won path of democratic reform. It is critical that the country's future is decided by a process led by the people of Myanmar.¹⁰

On behalf of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the National Unity Government will continue to serve in accordance with the democratic will of the people as expressed in 2020 and consistent with Myanmar's international obligations. We will also strengthen our partnerships with UN Member States to translate recent international momentum on Myanmar, including at the Security Council, into tangible impact on the ground.

⁶ A/HRC/52/21 At para. 11.

⁷ A/HRC/52/21 at paras. 76 and 65.

⁸ A/HRC/52/21 at para. 39.

⁹ A/HRC/52/21 at para. 43.

¹⁰ See 'Statement by Volker Türk'.