

PATRICK RUTANA

**Human Rights Council, 19<sup>th</sup> Session**

**Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Mr. Ojea Quintana**

**Statement of the Czech Republic**

Mr. Quintana,

The Czech Republic supports the statement made on behalf of the European Union.

Let me thank you for your latest report on the situation of human rights in Burma/Myanmar. The Czech Republic welcomes the recent reform steps in the country, while sharing your caution that there is a risk of backtracking on the progress achieved so far. Serious challenges remain that must be addressed by the Government to improve the human rights situation and deepen the transition to democracy, particularly: the unconditional release of all political prisoners, free and fair by-elections, cessation of violence in all ethnic areas and the establishment of truth, justice and accountability measures for gross and systematic human rights violations, past and present.

We agree with you, Mr. Quintana, that clear time-bound target dates for the review and amendment of key legislation in order to guarantee respect for human rights are absolutely necessary. The establishment of a law reform commission to facilitate the review should be considered by the Government. However, in order to reach irreversible and substantial improvement of the human rights situation, legislation changes are only the first step. Implementation of the newly promulgated and reformed laws, and respective training and capacity building of all relevant actors, including the judiciary, must be encouraged. The latter is one of the areas where international community can lend its support to the Government. *Have you an idea of a possible time-line for the legislative changes?*

We fully share your view on the importance of creating environment favourable to development of civil society. We believe that its unhindered, active and efficient participation in political life is a precondition to successful transition to democracy.

Mr. Quintana, you state in your report that a comprehensive and thorough investigation is needed to clarify records and determine accurate numbers of political prisoners, who, in spite of several presidential amnesties, remain behind the bars. *We would like to ask what is your estimate of the number of remaining political prisoners? Who should be responsible for carrying out such an investigation? What, in your opinion, are the relevant sources of information?*

To conclude, Mr. Quintana, the Czech Republic would like to reiterate its support to your professional and devoted work.

Thank you.