



EUROPEAN UNION
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and other international organisations in Geneva

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19th session

Item 4 – Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Burma/Myanmar

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EU Intervention

Mr. Quintana,

The European Union warmly thanks you for your excellent report on the situation of human rights in Myanmar. The EU shares your assessment that positive developments have taken place in Burma/Myanmar over the last year and the EU welcomes this development. The EU also welcomes the constructive engagement of the Government with the Special Rapporteur.

Meanwhile some significant challenges in the field of human rights still remain to be addressed.

Regarding specific areas covered by the Special Rapporteur's report:

- The EU welcomes the significant release of prisoners of conscience while reiterating that the releases must be unconditional. Remaining cases of prisoners of conscience should be identified swiftly through a consultative process with all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, with a view to ensuring their immediate and unconditional release.
- While the EU is encouraged by the progress achieved so far in securing ceasefire agreements, we share your concern over reports of serious human rights violations and ongoing hostilities in some ethnic areas, especially in Kachin State. The EU calls on all parties to the conflicts to ensure full humanitarian access to all parts of the country and for the protection of the civilian population. The EU welcomes ongoing peace talks and encourages further efforts to find a political solution to the conflict. The EU would be grateful to receive the Special Rapporteur's views on how the international community could constructively contribute to ending the remaining ethnic conflicts in the country.
- The EU calls on the Government to take substantial steps to address justice and accountability issues, as an essential element for national reconciliation and democratisation process in the country.

- The EU welcomes steps taken to pursue legal reforms, including the adoption of the new Labour Organisations Law. The EU encourages the Government to implement new legislation and review laws considered not to be in full compliance with international human rights standards. The EU shares your concerns that the country faces challenges due to the lack of an independent, impartial and effective judiciary essential for the transition to democracy and safeguarding human rights. The EU is about to launch a programme on strengthening of public administration in the country and would welcome the judiciary to join this.
- On the issue of forced labour, the EU calls for the complete prohibition of such practices in law, with further effective engagement by the Government following up on this in practice.

The EU attaches particular importance to the free and fair conduct of April 1st by-elections, which includes the conduct of the entire process leading up to and following election day, and encourages the Government to further pursue reforms towards democracy, national reconciliation and respect of human rights.

Finally, the EU reiterates its readiness to support and assist the Government in its efforts to undertake reforms, ensuring a democratic process and respect for the rule of law.

Thank you for your attention.