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An Oral Statement to the 7th Session of the UN Human Rights Council by the Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC).

Item 4 - Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Myanmar

Mr. Special Rapporteur,

We, like you, remain deeply concerned by the situation of human rights in Myanmar in the aftermath of the government crackdown on the nationwide uprising last September.

Large numbers of ordinary persons, as well as forcibly disrobed monks and nuns, remain in illegal detention and are facing concocted charges, or have been disappeared. Very few if any have been treated in accordance with any law, domestic or international.

Unidentified men pulled 23-year-old university student Khin Sanda Win from a Yangon street last September and took her to the town hall where she was photographed alongside other persons standing behind tables with weapons. She was held without charge until late October and released only after signing a pledge of good behaviour, but in November was charged with endangering life and detained again. She has been kept in solitary confinement at the central prison since.

There are many reports that detainees are suffering from ill-health but are not getting access to treatment. The 70-year-old U Than Lwin was earlier denied access to a doctor for treatment for his eyes, damaged when a government-backed thug attacked him last year. He was finally allowed treatment in February but has now completely lost sight in his left eye. He has not yet been formally charged or brought to court for an offence.

The Council must balance a sense of urgency to address such individual cases through Special Procedures and other routine work with an effective strategy for lasting change in Myanmar.

While acknowledging the hard work performed by you and your staff as well as that of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General, the ALRC remains convinced that these measures have proven insufficient.

It is for this reason that the ALRC reiterates its call for a special study and strategy group to be urgently established to devise a coherent and comprehensive plan of action on Myanmar for United Nations agencies and some other key international bodies.

We kindly ask you to respond to this proposal, and present any alternatives that you may have in order to take the work of the Council on Myanmar beyond business as usual, since the current limited measures offer no prospects for success.

Thank you, Mr. Special Rapporteur.