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ORAL STATEMENT

Item 4: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Myanmar (oral update)

UN Human Rights Council
Forty-fifth session
14 September – 6 October 2020

Madam President,

We share Mr Andrews' concerns over ongoing human rights violations in Myanmar, some of which constitute crimes under international law, as the Myanmar military continues to operate with impunity.

In Rakhine and Chin States, where fighting between the Myanmar military and Arakan Army has been escalating since early 2019, we have been alarmed by ongoing reports of civilians — including children — injured and killed through indiscriminate shelling and airstrikes by the Myanmar military. Tens of thousands have been displaced.

The Myanmar military has repeatedly failed to distinguish between ethnic minority civilians and members of ethnic armed groups, and subjected people to arbitrary detention, arrest, threats, torture and other human rights violations. We note with alarm a recent report of a gang rape of a Rakhine woman by government soldiers, which was initially denied but confirmed this month by the Myanmar military.

We also note with concern ongoing violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in northern Shan, Kachin and Karen States.

Meanwhile, the government is failing to effectively protect the Rohingya, despite its obligations under international law and the provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice.

Amid a surge in COVID-19 infections, the government continues to curtail humanitarian access to at-risk populations. Mobile internet access remains restricted, limiting the flow of crucial information to those in conflict zones. The level of access to education and healthcare — particularly for the Rohingya — remains dire.

Ongoing restrictions on freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly across the country underscore concerns about shrinking civic space.

Mr Andrews,

What more could the UN do to prevent ongoing human rights violations, and address the pervasive impunity enjoyed by the military?