



43rd Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council
Item 4: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar

**Oral Statement Delivered by Khin Ohmar on behalf of
Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)**

Tuesday, 10 March 2020

Madam President, FORUM-ASIA welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur.

We are gravely concerned at the resurgence of civil war in Myanmar, particularly in Rakhine and Chin States leading to forced displacement of 140,000, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention, torture and extrajudicial killings by Myanmar military. This intensifying conflict makes voluntary, sustainable and dignified return of Rohingya refugees to the places of their origin untenable and threatens the safety of remaining Rohingya and other ethnic minorities in contravention of the provisional order of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to protect the Rohingya.

We echo the Special Rapporteur's concerns at the increasing restrictions on democratic and civic space and targeting of human rights defenders (HRDs) in Myanmar. Unjust criminal charges against youth activists for protesting against internet shutdown in Rakhine and Chin States, members of Peacock Generation Thangyat troupe for satirising Myanmar military, and Karen land and environmental rights defenders, Naw Ohn Hla and Saw Tha Phoe, demonstrate this escalating trend. We call for their immediate and unconditional release and withdrawal of charges against them, and repeal or reform of all restrictive legislations including the Official Secrets Act, Telecommunication Act, defamation provisions of the Penal Code, the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law and other legislation used to persecute HRDs, journalists and government critics.

Increasing repression of civil and political rights, along with hate speech and incitement to violence against ethnic and religious minorities with overt support from the government and the military, undermine the possibility of credible, inclusive and transparent elections. Furthermore, Myanmar must reform the Union Election Commission Law in line with international standards and guarantee equal opportunity for all, including Rohingya and other ethnic refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) to fairly contest and participate in the elections.

Finally, we call on international community to ensure international criminal accountability for the grave international crimes including genocide against Rohingya and war crimes and crimes against humanity against Kachin and Shan ethnic nationalities by referring Myanmar to the International Criminal Court (ICC) or establishing an ad-hoc tribunal. Thank you.