



31st Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council
Item 4: Interactive Dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar,
Ms. Yanghee Lee

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

Monday, 14 March 2016

Mr. President. FORUM-ASIA, in solidarity with Equality Myanmar and Burma Partnership welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur.¹ We recognise the significance of the November 2015 elections and note that Burma/Myanmar is at a critical juncture in its history. We express our strong support for the Rapporteur's time bound recommendations for the new government including tasks outlined as priorities during the first 100 days as well as those identified to be completed before March 2017.

We echo calls by the Special Rapporteur for immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners, including peaceful protestors, such as the Letpadaung students and Letpadaung land rights activists charged or convicted under the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law and the Penal Code. We are deeply concerned by the ongoing legal harassment and prosecution of U Gambira, Nilar Thein and Mee Mee and those charged or convicted under defamation, trespassing and national security laws.

We draw the attention to the urgent need for constitutional reform and the restoration of full civilian control over the military. Extensive legislative reform and review is essential for democratic space and a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders, civil society organisations and journalists. In this regard Article 18 of the Peaceful Assembly Law and the Article 505 (b) of the Penal Code must be reviewed and amended in conformity with international standards. In relation to the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission the government must act on the recommendations of the International Coordinating Committee of NHRIs-Sub Committee on Accreditation (ICC-SCA) recommendations and review relevant legislation to make the Commission fully compliant with the Paris Principles.

We express serious concern over continuing conflict in ethnic areas and resulting human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law including sexual and gender-based violence, extrajudicial killings and torture. In this regard we support the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on establishing accountability for these violations. We further support her recommendations on ensuring full participation of local and affected communities, civil society and women in the peace process.

We reiterate the Special Rapporteur's calls to end highly discriminatory policies and practices against Muslim communities including the Rohingya. To this end we call on the government to review the Citizenship Law and the four 'race and religion' laws. We also support the Special Rapporteur's calls for the government to address incitement and discrimination against minorities.

Lastly, we draw attention to an open letter by 121 civil society organisations from Burma/Myanmar on 24 February 2016 to this Council.² We strongly support the letter's call for the Council to maintain Burma/Myanmar under item 4 and its appeal to the Council for clear benchmarks and a roadmap for Burma/Myanmar. We endorse the Special Rapporteur's assessment that the new government will have to face formidable human rights challenges and seek her views on how Burma/Myanmar should tackle these challenges.

Thank You

¹ A/HRC/31/13

² Burma Partnership, 24 March 2016, [Open Letter to Permanent Representatives of Member and Observer States of the UN Human Rights Council](#)