



45th 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 Ahmed Adam
On behalf of the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

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Madam President, FORUM-ASIA welcomes the Special Rapporteur's update.

Myanmar has increased its military offensives in Rakhine and Chin States, taking advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing internet blockade, further risking the safety of civilians amid serious allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity by the military.

On 3 September, Myanmar military set fire to nearly 190 houses in two villages in Kyauktaw Township of Rakhine State and killed two civilians. On 8 September, four civilians including two children were killed in artillery shelling on a village in Mayebon Township. Between 1 January 2019 and 10 September 2020, a total of 295 civilians have been killed and 674 were injured in Rakhine and Chin States. Escalating conflicts across the country have killed a total of 432 civilians and injured 775 during the same period.

The Myanmar government is using the COVID-19 pandemic as an excuse to crackdown on calls to end the war and restore internet access in Rakhine and Chin states. On 9 September, three students from Arakan Student Union were charged under the Natural Disaster Management Law and the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law for peaceful protests calling for an end to the war and internet blackout. Similarly, 13 students in Mandalay have been charged under the Peaceful Assembly and Peaceful Procession Law for holding an anti-war rally. These charges raise serious questions about the Myanmar government's commitment to pursue genuine peace.

Atrocities of the Myanmar military will continue unless the international community takes urgent steps to hold perpetrators of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity against Rohingya and other ethnic minorities to account. We reiterate our calls to the UN Security Council to refer Myanmar to the International Criminal Court (ICC) or establish an ad hoc tribunal.

Finally, we call on Myanmar to adhere to the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire amid the COVID-19 pandemic, end the suppression of human rights defenders, democracy activists and peaceful demonstrators, and release and drop criminal charges against political prisoners and activists, and to fully restore internet services. Thank you.