



40th 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)
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Mr. President, FORUM-ASIA welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar and echoes her calls for 'concrete action to advance human rights, accountability and the democratic transition in Myanmar.'

We share the Special Rapporteur's concerns on the shrinking democratic space and the pervasiveness of hate speech, as senior Government officials and the military continue to deploy hate speech against ethnic and religious minorities, particularly against the Rohingya. Incendiary materials promoting hate and racial superiority of Bamar-Buddhist majority have spread across the country, furthering the military's state-building project based on discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities, emboldened by its civilian wing, ultranationalist Buddhist organisations such as the Ma Ba Tha (Association for Protection of Race and Religion).

We are also gravely concerned at the escalation of the armed conflicts in Shan and Rakhine States and their impacts on Ta'ang, Shan, Rakhine and Chin ethnic civilians including forced displacement, death and arbitrary arrests while the situation of Rohingyas remains dire with no sign of safe, voluntary and dignified return.

We appreciate the Special Rapporteur's assessment of human rights implications of military control over economic activities. Military-run conglomerates, such as the Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited (UMEHL) and Myanmar Economic Corporation (MEC), provide off-budget financing to the military, while military controlled state-owned enterprises funnel vast revenues to "Other Accounts" outside the national budget with no transparency and accountability. Meanwhile, ethnic communities whose resource-rich land these enterprises exploit and profit from suffer the consequences of unchecked extraction of natural resources and mega-development projects, including environmental destruction and forced mass displacement.

Coordinated international action on these enterprises is crucial as the military have greatly benefited from growing foreign investments in Myanmar's rich natural resources through these enterprises while it continues to commit grave violations against the ethnic and religious minorities.

Mr. President, we welcome the Council's decision in September 2018 to establish the Independent Investigative Mechanism as an important step towards justice and accountability. However, with Myanmar government's lack of political will and the military's continuous grave international crimes, including genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, it is imperative that the Council and the international community act urgently to follow up on this decision with steps to immediately operationalise the IIM and refer Myanmar to the International Criminal Court (ICC). Thank you.