

Human Rights Council - 28th session
(2 March – 27 March 2015)

**Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in
Myanmar**
16 March 2015

Statement by Ireland

Ireland aligns with the statement of the European Union and adds the following remarks

We thank the Special Rapporteur for her report and presentation today.

Ireland is conscious of the significant changes which have occurred in Myanmar in recent years. However we, like others, are concerned at the slowed pace or even backsliding which is evident in recent times. Further, we are concerned by reports of reprisals against persons seeking to cooperate with UN mechanisms and we urge the authorities in Myanmar to give full cooperation to UN systems, including the Special Procedures of this Council.

Ireland firmly believes that it is imperative that human rights and the rule of law should be guaranteed for all people in Myanmar. We believe that the underlying root causes of tensions in Rakhine State between the ethnically distinct Muslim Rohingya population and the Buddhist Rakhine population must be addressed.

The right of Rohingyas to self-identification must be respected, including in the citizenship verification process. We fully support the view of the Special Rapporteur that the severe curtailment of the rights of IDPs, in detention and with limited access to essential services, is a serious violation of human rights law and must be immediately addressed. The Presidential Statement adopted at the 23rd Human Rights Council session urged the Government of Myanmar to grant full citizenship rights to the Rohingya in Rakhine, and to review the 1982 Citizenship Law. Has the Government of Myanmar given any commitment to reviewing this Law?

Ireland has called for more investment in early recovery and support for livelihood opportunities for both communities in Rakhine State. A longer term Government of Myanmar Strategy for rehabilitation and reconciliation is required. [We note that over 80 members of the Rohingya community were settled in Ireland in 2009.]

Another issue of concern for Ireland is the Religious Conversion Bill, which establishes a State-regulated system for religious conversion. We agree with the Special Rapporteur that offences and penalties in this Bill for “insulting religion” are vague and could be used to discriminate against minority religions.

We would like to ask the Special Rapporteur the following question:

We note that the second cycle UPR review of Myanmar is scheduled for November 2015. Does the Special Rapporteur have a view on how this period, in the run-up to that review, might be used by States and UN mechanisms to encourage progress in the human rights situation in Myanmar?

Thank you