

53rd session of the Human Rights Council

Panel discussion on the measures necessary to find durable solutions to the Rohingya crisis and to end all forms of human rights violations and abuses against Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar (21 June 2023)

Benelux Statement

Mr President,

I have the honour of presenting the following statement on behalf of the Benelux: Belgium, the Netherlands, and my own country, Luxembourg. We align with the statement read by the EU.

We have listened to the panellists with great concern and thank them for their testimony. The military junta, which once again rules Myanmar with an iron fist since its illegal coup against the democratically elected government in February 2021, has extended its persecution and violent repression against the Rohingya and other minorities to practically the entire civilian population.

The Junta's numerous crimes are documented meticulously and the IIMM has determined that they amount to crimes against humanity. Nevertheless, we are hearing delegations here insisting that this is an internal affair of Myanmar and continuing their cooperation with the Tatmadaw. However, we strongly believe victims must have access to remedy and justice and perpetrators must be held accountable. Fulfilling the ICJ's provisional measures should be the strictest minimum requirement for diplomatic engagement with the Junta.

The humanitarian situation of the Rohingya is devastating and the second cut of food rations by the World Food Programme makes their lives even more unliveable. We call on all member states to respond to UN OCHA's appeals for the Rohingya crisis¹ and the ongoing humanitarian disaster in Myanmar², and call on all parties involved to allow full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access. Furthermore, we call upon the junta to cooperate with the IIMM, the ICC and the UN.

While grateful to Bangladesh for all it does to support the Rohingya and other refugees under enormously difficult circumstances, we remind all participants that any returns to Myanmar should be on a purely voluntary basis.

Mr President,

We would like to ask the panellists what they expect from further ASEAN engagement. Finally, what more could those countries that still maintain ties with the Junta do to alleviate the plight of the Rohingya and other minorities in Myanmar?

Thank you for your attention.

¹ <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/1143/summary>

² <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/1132/summary>