

# What are countries saying about Myanmar at the UN HRC?

## Analysis and findings

### 55th Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council

*by the Centre for Civil and Political Rights*

*May 2024*

#### [Background](#)

*The Centre for Civil and Political Rights (CCPR Centre) has been monitoring discussions of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) on Myanmar and analysing statements made by countries. In order to provide stakeholders with practical and useful information for their advocacy, CCPR Centre has started an extensive collection and analysis of such statements and visualisation of the findings since the 29th Special Session of the HRC immediately after the military coup in February 2021. It highlights, among others: which countries are more vocal in addressing the crisis in Myanmar in support of its people, which are not and which countries appear to be blocking effective actions from the international community; what issues are raised and actions called for; and where advocacy should be strengthened.*

*This summary paper presents the results and findings of the analysis of statements made by countries at the 55th regular session of the HRC. More details about the entire project, including the visualisation products as well as the findings of the monitoring of previous HRC sessions since the illegal military coup can be found [here](#).*

## HRC 55 - facts

- *The 55th Regular Session of the HRC took place from 26th February to 5th April 2024.*
- ***Two Interactive Dialogues (ID)** were held on Myanmar: the **ID with the High Commissioner (ID HC)** on 1st March and the **ID with the Special Rapporteur on Myanmar (ID SR)** on 19 March 2024.*
- *During these two IDs in total, **59** statements were made by countries and **7** by groups of countries:*
  - *During the ID HC, **29** countries<sup>1</sup> and **3** groups of countries<sup>2</sup> made statements.*
  - *During the ID SR, **30** countries<sup>3</sup> and **4** groups of countries<sup>4</sup> made statements.*

## Methodology update

- *Statements were analysed using their texts uploaded on the HRC extranet. Texts uploaded in languages other than English<sup>5</sup> were analysed by using an online translation tool. Furthermore, statements of following countries were analysed by transcribing their statements from the English channel of the UN Webcast as their texts were not available on the HRC extranet at the time of analysis.*
  - *ID HC: China*
  - *ID SR: Canada, China, Gambia, Germany, Türkiye, UK and USA*

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<sup>1</sup> Albania, Bangladesh, Belarus, China, Costa Rica, France, Gambia, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kuwait, Lao PDR, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Netherlands, Philippines, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Thailand, Türkiye, United Kingdom, United States, Venezuela, Viet Nam

<sup>2</sup> European Union (EU), Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC, presented by Pakistan), and Nordic-Baltic Countries (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden, presented by Norway)

<sup>3</sup> Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Gambia, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Lao PDR, Libya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mauritania, Russian Federation, South Africa, Switzerland, Türkiye, United Kingdom, United States, Venezuela

<sup>4</sup> European Union (EU), Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC, presented by Pakistan), Nordic-Baltic Countries (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden, presented by Sweden), and CANZ (Australia, Canada and New Zealand, presented by Australia)

<sup>5</sup> ID HC: Belarus, Costa Rica, France, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela; ID SR: Belarus, Belgium, France, Kuwait, Libya, Luxembourg, Mauritania, Russian Federation, Switzerland, Venezuela

## 1. Key Highlights

- **Cyprus** participated in the HRC discussion on Myanmar for the **1st time**, by presenting a statement during the ID SR.
- **Majority** of countries **thanked**, **appreciated** or **commended** the work and/or reports of the HC and SR, while:
  - **China** *listened attentively* the HC's oral update, **Saudi Arabia** *read with interest* and **Viet Nam** *took note* of the HC's report;
  - **Bangladesh** and **Mauritania** took note, and **Kuwait** just reviewed the SR's report;
  - **Belarus, France, Indonesia, Philippines, Russia, Thailand** and **Venezuela** made no reference to the HC's report, and **China, France, Indonesia, Malaysia** and **Russia** made no reference to the SR's report; and
  - **Venezuela** appeared to **discredit** the **SR's report** by saying that it *maintained biases and imbalances, with unverified information from uncorroborated sources*.
- Furthermore, **Belarus, China, Russia** and **Venezuela** appeared to **undermine** or **oppose** international efforts to address the situation in Myanmar, e.g.:
  - Belarus was saying, during both IDs, that the mandates on Myanmar were **politicised** and opposed "*unilateral country mandates*";
  - China, during both IDs, stressed that the issue was an **internal affair** of Myanmar and, during ID SR, that what was happening in Myanmar was a **twist in a political transition** and **outside pressure and sanctions** were **counter-productive**;
  - Russia, during both IDs, condemned "*the practice of a number of states in using multilateral platforms including the HRC to put pressure on Naypyitaw*" and "*provoke an increase in confrontation in Myanmar*";
  - Venezuela, during ID HC, demanded "*an end to the **unilateral coercive measures** imposed on Myanmar that cause unspeakable suffering to its population, violating their most basic rights*" and, during ID SR, condemned the SR's calls for the imposition of more unilateral coercive measures and insisted that the HRC should not support "*these **hostile mandates against the countries of the South***";
- Only a few countries addressed the issue of **accountability** during the ID HC, while more were doing so during ID SR: :
  - **Costa Rica, Netherlands, Sierra Leone** and **UK** addressed the accountability, while **Malawi** urged the "military authorities", **Maldives** called on "the authorities" and **Malta** on "Myanmar" to ensure accountability during ID HC;
  - **Austria, Bangladesh, Cyprus, Germany, Libya, Liechtenstein, South Africa, Switzerland** and **UK** addressed the issue of accountability in general during the ID SR;
  - **Bangladesh** during ID HC and **Türkiye** during both IDs addressed the issue of accountability for **Rohingyas**;
  - France and Gambia were indirectly addressing the issue during ID SR.
- While Myanmar **military's access to arms, fuels** and other **resources** including **foreign currency** was one of the key issues raised by HC and SR, only some countries addressed it at HRC 55:

- **US** was the only one that addressed the issue during ID HC by referring to **global arms embargo** and **targeted sanctions** and **Canada, Luxembourg, UK** and **US** addressed the issue during the ID SR.
- Enactment of the **conscription law** by the junta was another issue raised by the HC and SR, but **no country** addressed it during the ID HC, whereas **Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Germany, Italy, South Africa, Switzerland** and **UK** did so during the ID SR.
- **Luxembourg** was the only country at HRC 55 referring to the **NUG** by raising the lack of its recognition by the international community.
- Some countries were using **vague or problematic terms** when seemingly addressing Myanmar military, such as “Myanmar,” “Myanmar government,” “Myanmar authorities,” “authorities,” “military authorities,” or “authorities in Naypyitaw,” thereby failing to spell out the accountability of the Myanmar military / junta, blurring the target of their calls for actions, or appearing to give some recognition or legitimacy to the junta.
- Several countries addressed the issue of the human rights of **Rohingyas** and their repatriation, while **Malaysia** was the only one referring to their **resettlement to third countries** in both IDs.
- **India** was the only country that addressed the issue of increasing **transnational crimes** such as drugs and human trafficking at HRC 55 (during ID HC).
- Australia, Canada and New Zealand presented a statement on Myanmar as a bloc “**CANZ**” for the **second time** during ID SR.
- **Argentina** has presented a statement in the General Comment segment, when the resolution on Myanmar was adopted at the end of the HRC 55, expressing deep concern, addressing various issues including escalation of violence, IDPs, forced recruitment, freedom of expression, calling for release of arbitrarily detained, welcoming the resolution, and urging the international community not to remain indifferent.<sup>6</sup>

*Did you know? After the HRC 54, 42 African States (out of 54), 28 Asia-Pacific States (out of 54<sup>7</sup>), 7 Eastern European States (out of 23), 27 Latin American and Caribbean States (out of 33), 4 Western European and Other States (out of 28<sup>8</sup>) still remain silent on Myanmar.<sup>9</sup>*

## 2. Condemnations and Concerns

- The average degree of condemnations and concerns expressed at the HRC 55 (0.24) increased from the HRC 54, which recorded the lowest was the lowest (-0.23) and slightly above HRC 53 (0.17), although it is significantly lower than the highest average recorded at the SS 29 (1.34).

<sup>6</sup> The statement of Argentina is not included in the Centre’s database as it was not presented during the two IDs.

<sup>7</sup> Excluding Myanmar

<sup>8</sup> Türkiye is included in the group of Asia-Pacific States

<sup>9</sup> See UN regional groups of member states [here](#). Some of the countries were part of joint statements presented by regional bodies or groups of countries, but never presented individual statements. For details, please see [here](#).

- At HRC 55, only 5 countries expressed **specific condemnations** over the acts of the junta: **Albania** (ID HC); **Cyprus** (ID SR), **Japan** (ID HC and SR), **Liechtenstein** (ID SR), and **Sierra Leone** (ID HC).

*“Japan strongly condemns the Myanmar military’s repeated extension of the state of emergency and failure to seek a peaceful resolution while many innocent civilians are killed and wounded daily.”*

*- Japan, ID HC*

- **Canada** (ID SR) and the **Netherlands** (ID HC) were the only countries expressing **specific concern** over the violation of international human rights and humanitarian law and violence against civilians committed by the junta respectively.

*“Canada is deeply concerned by the increasingly egregious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed by the Myanmar regime.”*

*- Canada, ID SR*

- A number of countries expressed general concern over the situation in Myanmar at the HRC 55,<sup>10</sup> while any expression of condemnations or concerns was absent in statements of some.<sup>11</sup>

### 3. Issues Raised

#### **Overview of the issues raised and their frequency (from most to less frequent):**

Humanitarian situation (28); Violence and extrajudicial killing (26); Rights of Rohingyas (25); ASEAN (15); Military coup (14); Impunity and accountability (12); Women, children and other vulnerable groups (10); Arbitrary arrests and detentions (6); Freedom of expression and assembly (6); Repatriation (5); State of Emergency (2); Elections (0 from 0);

- **‘Humanitarian situation’** was the **most frequently** addressed issue at HRC 55, with a significant **increase** from HRC 54 (12).
- **‘Violence and extrajudicial killing’** (26) and **‘Rights of Rohingyas’** (25) were two other issues **frequently** addressed at HRC 55, both were also frequently addressed at HRC 54 (26 and 24 respectively).
- **‘ASEAN’** (15), **‘Military coup’** (14), and **‘Freedom of expression and assembly’** (6) were much **more frequently** addressed at HRC 55 than HRC 54 (7, 7 and 0 respectively).
- Reference to the issue of **‘impunity and accountability’** **significantly decreased** at HRC 55 (12) from HRC 54 (22).

<sup>10</sup> ID HC: France, Gambia, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Kuwait, Lao PDR, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Thailand, Türkiye, UK, Viet Nam; ID SR: Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Czech, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Malaysia, Mauritania, South Africa, Switzerland, Türkiye, UK, US

<sup>11</sup> ID HC: Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, US; ID SR: Austria, Belgium, Gambia, Indonesia, Kuwait, Lao PDR, Libya, Luxembourg

- Reference to the issues of ‘**arbitrary arrests and detentions**’ (6) and ‘**State of emergency**’ (2, both by Japan during ID HC and ID SR) **slightly increased** at HRC 55 from HRC 54 (3 and 0 respectively).
- The situation of ‘**women, children and other vulnerable groups**’ (10) and the issue of ‘**repatriation**’ of Rohingyas (5) were **less frequently** addressed at HRC 55 as compared to HRC 54 (13 and 7 respectively).

*Did you know? Same as the HRC 54, the issue of ‘elections’ was not addressed at all by any country at the HRC 55.*

## 4. Call for Actions

### **Overview of number of calls for action by region and countries**<sup>12</sup>

#### **African States** (14 calls by 6 countries):

Sierra Leone (4), Libya (3), Gambia (2), Mauritania (2), Malawi (2), South Africa (1)

#### **Asia-Pacific States** (37 calls by 13 countries):

Bangladesh (6), India (4), Maldives (4), Türkiye (4), Viet Nam (4), Indonesia (3), Malaysia (3), Japan (2), Philippines (2), Saudi Arabia (2), Cyprus (1), Kuwait (1), Lao PDR (1), China (0), Thailand (0)

#### **Latin American and Caribbean States** (1 call by 1 country):

Costa Rica (1), Venezuela (0)

#### **Eastern European States** (9 calls by 3 countries):

Bulgaria (6), Czech Republic (2), Albania (1), Belarus (0), Georgia (0), Russian Federation (0)

#### **Western European and other States** (50 calls by 13 countries):

France (7), Canada (6), Malta (6), US (6), Italy (5), Germany (4), Luxembourg (4), Netherlands (3), Austria (2), Ireland (2), Liechtenstein (2), Switzerland (2), UK (1), Belgium (0)

- In **total, 111 calls** for actions were made by countries at the HRC 55<sup>13</sup>, presenting a clear **increase** from HRC 54, which recorded 93 calls.
- The highest number of calls for action came from **France** (7), followed by **Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Canada, Malta** and the **US**, which made 6 calls each.
- In terms of regions, most calls were made by countries from **WEOG** (50), followed by **Asia-Pacific** (37) and **Africa** (14).
- **Asia-Pacific** (13 out of 15 countries that presented statements) and **WEOG** (13 out of 14) had the highest number of countries that made calls for actions.
- The average number of calls per countries that presented statements (including the ones that did not make any call in their statements) was highest with **WEOG** (3.57 calls per country),

<sup>12</sup> See UN regional groups of member states [here](#).

<sup>13</sup> A phrase in statements that clearly calls for a concrete action is recorded as one “call”. As such, one statement may include several calls for action, and vice versa, some statements might not include any.

followed by **Asia-Pacific** (2.47) and **Africa** (2.33), and Eastern Europe (1.5), whereby **Latin America and Caribbean** recorded the lowest (0.5).

*Did you know? Although they participated in the discussion on Myanmar, Belarus, Belgium, China, Georgia, Russian Federation, Thailand, and Venezuela did not make any concrete call for actions during the HRC 55.*

## 5. Which Actions?

### **Overview of actions called for and their frequency (from most to less frequent):**

General call for peace, democracy, rule of law, and human rights (23); Unhindered humanitarian assistance (16); Protect rights of the Rohingyas (14); Stop violence (13); Realise accountability (10); Stop persecution (7); Provide humanitarian assistance (7); Reinstate civilian government (5); Implement ASEAN initiatives (5); IDPs and Refugees (5); Arms embargo (3); Other economic measures (2); End state of emergency (1); Sanctions (0); Stop death penalty/ execution (0); Recognise NUG (0); Access to information (0)

- While the total number of calls increased to 111 at HRC 55 from 93 at HRC 54, it was mainly due to the **increase** in the number of **general calls** for peace, democracy and human rights (from 14 at HRC 54 to 23 at HRC 55).
- Other calls for actions that increased at HRC 55 as compared to the ones at HRC 54 were: ‘ensure **unhindered humanitarian aid**’ (from 9 to 16), ‘**provide humanitarian aid**’ (from 2 to 7), protect ‘**IDPs and refugees**’ (from 1 to 5), and impose ‘**arms embargo**’ (from 0 to 3), while there was a slight increase in the calls to impose ‘other economic measures’ (from 0 to 2), ‘protect the rights of Rohingyas’ (from 13 to 14), ‘implement ASEAN initiatives’ (from 4 to 5), and ‘end state of emergency’ (from 0 to 1).
- **Arms embargo** was called by **Canada, Luxembourg** and the **US** during the ID SR, while **Canada** and **US** were also the ones calling for imposing **other economic measures** during the same ID.
- **Bulgaria** was the only one calling for the end of the **state of emergency** (ID SR).
- The call for ‘**accountability**’ was **5th most frequent**, but the number **significantly decreased** from the HRC 54 (from 15 to 10).
- Calls to ‘stop **violence**’ (from 15 to 13), ‘stop **persecution**’ (from 10 to 7), and ‘stop **death penalty / execution**’ (from 2 to 0) also recorded a **decrease** as compared to the number at the HRC 54.

*Did you know? No calls for actions were made on: ‘imposition of sanctions’, ‘other economic measures’, ‘stop death penalty / execution’. ‘access to information’ and ‘recognition of NUG’ at HRC 55.*

## 6. Terms used to address “Myanmar”

- Some countries were using **vague or problematic terms** when seemingly addressing Myanmar military, thereby failing to spell out the accountability of the junta, blurring the target of their calls for actions, or appearing to give some recognition or legitimacy to the junta.
- **“Myanmar”**: **Albania** (ID HC), **Lao PDR** (ID HC), **Maldives** (ID HC, also used “authorities” and “military”), **Malta** (ID HC, also used “authorities”) used the term **“Myanmar”**, from the context most likely referring to the Myanmar military / junta / SAC. Concerning the issue of the representation of the country concerned, using this term blurred the target of their statement / call and, in some cases, even gave the impression that they regard the junta as an actor representing Myanmar. However, the number of countries using this term has **decreased** from the HRC 54<sup>14</sup>.

*“Lao PDR supports the bilateral initiative by Thailand and Myanmar to deliver humanitarian assistance with the involvement of AHA Center.”*

*- Lao PDR, ID HC*

*“Malta calls on Myanmar to cooperate fully with the IIM, allow unhindered access to investigate allegations and hold perpetrators accountable.” (ID HC)*

*- Malta, ID HC*

- **“Myanmar authorities”, “authorities”**: **Gambia** (ID HC), **Maldives** (ID HC, also used “Myanmar” and “military”), **Malta** (ID HC, also used “Myanmar”), **Indonesia** (ID SR), **Mauritania** (ID SR), **Russian Federation** (ID SR, also used “Nay Pyi Taw”, “authorities in Nay Pyi Taw” and “government”), used these terms. From the context, most cases seem to be referring to the Myanmar military / junta / SAC, and by doing so, blurring the accountability of the Myanmar military for their actions and/or giving the impression that they regard the junta as the authorities in Myanmar. In some cases, the target of their statement / call was not absolutely clear. **Maldives** and **Mauritania** were the two countries that used the same term at the HRC 54.<sup>15</sup>

*“we call upon the authorities of Myanmar to fully comply with the orders of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and cooperate with ongoing international and regional judicial accountability mechanisms.”*

*- Maldives, ID HC*

*“We will also continue to urge the Myanmar Authority to make concrete progress in implementing the 5PC.” (ID HC)*

*- Indonesia, ID SR*

<sup>14</sup> At HRC 54, it was used by Bangladesh and Venezuela in two IDs, and China (ID IIMM), Kuwait (ID HC), Lao PDR (ID HC) and Russian Federation (ID HC)

<sup>15</sup> At HRC 54, it was used by Bangladesh (ID HC), Iran (ID IIMM), Maldives (ID HC), Mauritania (ID IIMM) and Russian Federation (ID IIMM), while Luxembourg used the term “de facto authorities in Myanmar” (autorités de fait du Myanmar) during ID IIMM.



- **“Authorities in Nay Pyi Taw”, “Nay Pyi Taw”**: Russian Federation used this term in both IDs clearly referring to the junta and appearing to “defend” it.<sup>16</sup>

*“We condemn the practice of a number of states in using multilateral platforms, including the Human Rights Council, to put pressure on Naypyitaw and provoke an increase in confrontation in Myanmar.”*

*- Russian Federation, IDs HC and SR*

- **“Myanmar government”, “government”**: Belarus (ID HC and ID SR) and Russian Federation (ID HC) use these terms clearly referring to the junta and appearing to regard the junta as the “government” of Myanmar and appearing to “defend” its actions. Belarus used the same term at HRC 54, while the number of countries using this term has decreased at HRC 55 as compared to the HRC 54.<sup>17</sup>

*“We call on all interested parties to contribute in every possible way to the government’s efforts to normalize the situation, to prevent interference in internal affairs, and to abandon the practice of putting pressure on sovereign countries using unilateral country mandates.”*

*- Belarus, ID HC*

*“We consider it important to continue the government’s course towards national reconciliation and socio-economic development.”*

*- Russian Federation, ID HC*

- **“Military authorities”**: Malawi (ID HC), Malaysia (ID HC), Netherlands (ID HC) and Switzerland (ID SR) used this term at HRC 55, whereby giving the impression that they are regarding the military as the authorities of Myanmar. Malaysia and Switzerland used the same term at the HRC 54.<sup>18</sup>

*“We continue to call upon the military authorities to halt the violence as a first step in a process towards the peaceful resolution of the conflicts in Myanmar.”*

*- Netherlands, ID HC*

*“Switzerland urges the Myanmar military authorities to fully and quickly implement Security Council Resolution 2669.”*

*- Switzerland, ID SR*

## 7. Regional bodies and groups of States

The EU has been **vocal and consistent** in addressing various issues by presenting statements at every session of the HRC since the 29th Special Session. At the HRC 55, statements of the EU expressed specific condemnations and concerns, addressing: violence and extrajudicial killings; rights of Rohingyas;

<sup>16</sup> Romania was the only one country using the term “authorities in Nay Pyi Taw” at HRC 54 (ID IIMM).

<sup>17</sup> At HRC 54, it was used by Egypt (ID IIMM), Belarus (ID IIMM), Libya (ID HC) and Malta (ID IIMM).

<sup>18</sup> At HRC 54, it was used by Malaysia (ID SR), Switzerland (ID IIMM), Czech (ID HC) and Spain (ID HC).

humanitarian situation; and repatriation; and called for actions on: arms embargo; and ensuring access to humanitarian assistance; and on peace, democracy and human rights in general. The EU addressed one of its calls to “*military authorities*” while emphasising the military’s “*overwhelming responsibility for violence across the country*” (ID HC).

**OIC** has been **vocal** at each session of the HRC, except for the 29th Special Session, however, their statements have been **largely focused on matters related to Rohingyas**. At HRC 55, OIC presented statements at both IDs (presented by Pakistan), thanking HC’s oral update, while only taking note of the SR’s report. The degree of **condemnation** by OIC concerning Myanmar military’s acts has been rather **weak** and OIC’s statements seem to **avoid mentioning anything about Myanmar military** (constantly using the term “Myanmar”), while expressing concerns and calling for actions over the situation of Rohingyas.

**Nordic-Baltic Countries** have been **consistent** in addressing the crisis in Myanmar, presenting statements at each HRC session since the HRC 46. At the HRC 55, they presented a statement during both ID HC (presented by Norway) and ID SR (presented by Sweden). In both cases, Nordic-Baltic countries expressed specific and strong condemnation of the acts of Myanmar military, while expressing concerns over various issues. One of their calls was addressed to the “*regime*” “*to end all forms of violence against civilians, including sexual and gender-based violence, aerial attacks, mass killings and persecution of civilians*” (ID SR).

**CANZ** (Australia, Canada and New Zealand) as a group participated in the discussion on Myanmar for the **second time** through a statement presented by Australia during the ID SR. Their statement addressed escalating violence against civilians including jailing, torture and killings, growing humanitarian crisis, and the enforcement of the conscription law, while calling on the UN and international community “*to support efforts to press the regime to cease the violence, release those unjustly detained, engage in meaningful dialogue, allow full access for humanitarian assistance, and fully implement ASEAN’s Five-Point Consensus.*” However, the degree of condemnation of the acts of the military was weak in CANZ’s statement at HRC 55.