

Joint Statement on Myanmar

1. Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Tunisia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America welcome the briefings on the situation in Myanmar provided by UN Special Envoy for Myanmar Christine Schraner Burgener, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, and Assistant Secretary-General and Regional Director of the UN Development Programme Kanni Wignaraja today.
2. As committed supporters of Myanmar's democratic transition, we recognise the efforts made by Myanmar's government in the country's democratisation. The elections on 8 November are an important milestone in Myanmar's transition, which the international community has supported with funding and technical expertise. We underline the importance of ensuring individuals of all communities, including Rohingya, are able to participate safely, fully, and equally in credible and inclusive elections.
3. In this regard, we are concerned by the continued clashes between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army in Rakhine and Chin States and by the heavy toll this continues to take on local communities. Recalling the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire as supported by Security Council Resolution 2532, we call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and a halt to all activities that risk fuelling or escalating the situation. We also call for safe, full, and unhindered humanitarian access to all vulnerable populations and the full restoration of internet access in the affected areas.
4. These steps are even more urgent in light of the increased number of Covid-19 cases in Rakhine State. We reiterate our support to Myanmar in combating the global pandemic and support the positive steps taken so far, including Myanmar's public awareness campaign, the Covid-19 Economic Relief Plan, and the joint commission to coordinate the efforts of the government and ethnic armed organisations.
5. On the situation in Rakhine more broadly, it is now more than three years since over 700,000 Rohingya refugees were forcibly displaced from their homes to Bangladesh because of violence perpetrated by the Myanmar military. In line with Security Council Presidential Statement 2017/22, we call on Myanmar to accelerate its efforts to address the long-term causes of the crisis in Rakhine and create conditions conducive to the safe, voluntary, sustainable, and dignified return of refugees.
6. In particular, we encourage Myanmar to set out a transparent and credible plan to implement the recommendations of the Rakhine Advisory Commission and the Independent Commission of Enquiry. Furthermore, we recall that Myanmar is under the obligation to comply with the provisional measures order of the

International Court of Justice. We also encourage Myanmar to take immediate confidence-building steps that include lifting restrictions on access to health, education and basic services, lifting restrictions on freedom of movement, and implementing the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp closure strategy in Rakhine in line with international standards. Moreover, we encourage Myanmar to intensify its bilateral dialogue with Bangladesh to agree a durable solution that enables the safe, voluntary, sustainable, and dignified return of refugees. We stand ready to support Myanmar in these efforts and commend the work of the United Nations system, ASEAN and its Ad Hoc Support Team and other regional partners in doing so too.

7. We underscore that accountability is an essential part of addressing the long-term challenges in Myanmar and in creating conditions for the return of refugees and IDPs. We stress the importance of fighting impunity and holding accountable all those responsible for violations of international law and abuses, and call on Myanmar to cooperate with all international justice mechanisms, including the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar.
8. Finally, we reiterate our appreciation and support to the government and people of Bangladesh for continuing to provide protection and assistance to the refugees forcibly displaced from Myanmar. We call on the international community to increase its support, including through the UN Joint Humanitarian Response Plan. We also urge all states in the region to cooperate and provide protection and assistance to refugees in line with international obligations, including as applicable international refugee law and the principle of non-refoulement.