**50th session of the Human Rights Council (13 June – 8 July 2022)**

**Panel discussion on the root causes of human rights violations and abuses against   
Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar**

*Concept note (as of 2 June 2022)*

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| **Date and venue:** | **15 June 2022, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.  Room XX, Palais des Nations, Geneva, and online platform (Zoom)**  *(will be broadcast live and archived on* [*https://media.un.org/en/webtv*](https://media.un.org/en/webtv)*)* |
| **Objectives:** | The panel provides a unique opportunity for members and observers of the Human Rights Council to be briefed about the root causes of violations and abuses against Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar and to take stock of the latest research and developments on the ground. The panel will further explore existing and new recommendations to address these root causes for protecting the human rights of the Rohingya and other minorities and as an essential part of the solution for peace in Myanmar, including the permanent solution for the Rohingyas displaced from Rakhine State. |
| **Chair:** | H.E. Mr. Andranik Hovhannisyan, Vice-President of the Human Rights Council |
| **Opening statement:** | **Ms. Michelle Bachelet**, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| **Panellists:** | * **Ms. Thyn Zar Oo**, Co-Founder and Program Director of the Public Legal Aid Network (The PLAN) (*video message*) * **Ms. Laetitia van den Assum**,Commissioner on the Annan Advisory Commission of Rakhine State (*video message*) * **Ms. Wai Wai Nu**, Founder and Executive Director of the Women’s Peace Network (*video message*)   **Mr. Imtiaz Ahmed**, Professor of International Relations and Director of the Centre for Genocide Studies at the University of Dhaka (*video message*) |
| **Mandate:** | In its [resolution 47/1](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/47/1) of 12 July 2021, the Human Rights Council decided to hold a panel discussion on the root causes of human rights violations and abuses against Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar at its fiftieth session, and requested the High Commissioner to submit a report on the panel discussion to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-second session. |
| **Format:** | The panel discussion will be limited to two hours. The opening statement and initial presentations by the panellists will be followed by a two-part interactive discussion and conclusions from the panellists. A maximum of one hour will be set aside for the podium, which will cover the opening statement, panellists’ presentations and their responses to questions and concluding remarks. The remaining hour will be reserved for two segments of interventions from the floor, with each segment consisting of interventions from 12 States and observers, 1 national human rights institution and 2 non-governmental organizations.  The list of speakers for the discussion will be established through the online inscription system and, as per practice, statements by high-level dignitaries and groups of States will be moved to the beginning of the list. Each speaker will have two minutes to raise issues and to ask panellists questions. Delegates who have not been able to take the floor due to time constraints will be able to upload their statements on the online system to be posted on the HRC Extranet. |
| **Background:** | The root causes of the human rights violations against Rohingyas and other minorities in Myanmar are varied, complex, multidimensional and long-standing. They have been studied and documented for years by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations agencies and special procedures of the Human Rights Council. In a 2020 report presented at the 43rd session of the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/43/18), the High Commissioner identified, among the root causes of human rights violations and abuses against Rohingya Muslims and other minorities: historical legacies, a legal regime that institutionalized discrimination against minorities with the most notable Citizenship Law of 1982, armed conflicts, displacement and poverty, structural democratic deficits and the weakness in the rule of law and institutions, including the judiciary, actions by Buddhist ultranationalists, as well as the entrenched impunity of the military.  While successive military Governments of Myanmar suppressed and restricted democratic rights and freedoms for all people in the country, ethnic and religious minorities, particularly the Rohingya, bore the brunt of some of the worst human rights violations. These violations, engrained in the history and fabric of society at large have affected the entire spectrum of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, and perpetuated a cycle of marginalization, systemic discrimination and poverty. The institutionalized and long-standing persecution of the Rohingya in Rakhine State has led to serious violations and abuses of the human rights of the Rohingya, including their mass forced displacement. In addition, long-standing armed conflicts have led to serious violations and abuses of the human rights of ethnic minorities in other states, including enforced disappearance, extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, trafficking, forced labour, sexual and gender-based violence, and extensive forced displacement.  Of particular concern has been the situation of women and girls from minority groups with domestic legislation, policy and practice marked by deeply entrenched gender inequality and patriarchal attitudes, some aspects of traditional culture and religious practices perpetuating discriminatory norms as well as sexual and gender-based violence.  Systematic and systemic discrimination and policies of exclusion and marginalization the Rohingya and other minorities in Myanmar have been at the roots of extensive violations and abuses of human rights against them and the past and present conflicts in the country. Over decades they have generated waves of displacement of the Rohingya and other ethnic and religious minority communities, both within Myanmar and to neighbouring countries.  In its resolution 47/1 of 12 July 2021, the Human Rights Council reiterated its deep concern at the escalating violence as well as violations and abuses of human rights against the Rohingya Muslims and the continuing forced displacement of civilians, including of Rohingya Muslims and other ethnic minorities. The Council also expressed its concern that recent developments resulting from the declaration of the state of emergency by the Myanmar military poses serious challenges to the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of forcibly displaced Rohingya Muslims and all internally displaced persons, including those displaced since 1 February 2021 and in this regard stressed the need to address the root causes of the crisis in Rakhine State and reaffirming the necessity of an immediate cessation of the use of military force that would lead to further displacement of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities, both internally and across borders.  In order to achieve viable and durable peace, to ensure a democratic transition and the building a society on the basis of the principles of equality and non-discrimination and to prevent further instability, insecurity and violations of and abuses of the human rights of the Rohingya and other minorities in Myanmar, it is essential to address the root causes of discrimination and human rights violations against ethnic and religious minorities in Myanmar, to ensure accountability for serious crimes committed and to support long term grassroots initiatives aimed at strengthening inter-community and inter-religious dialogues, addressing hate speech, and providing human rights education to youths.  The panel discussion is an important venue for States members and observers of the Human Rights Council to propose effective actions and coordination mechanisms to follow up on the recommendations made by United Nations bodies and to effectively address the root causes of human rights violations of ethnic and religious minorities in Myanmar. |
| **Background documents:** | * Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of of human rights in Myanmar since 1 February 2021 ([A/HRC/49/72](https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session49/list-reports), March 2022) * [Human Rights Council resolution 47/1](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/47/1) of 12 July 2021 on the situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar * Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar ([A/HRC/43/18](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/43/18), November 2020) * Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights of Rohingya in Rakhine State, Myanmar ([A/HRC/40/37](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/40/37), March 2019) * [Human Rights Council resolution 39/2](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/39/2) of 27 September 2018 on the situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar * Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar ([A/HRC/32/18](https://undocs.org/A/HRC/32/18), June 2016) |