

Human Rights Council – 42<sup>nd</sup> session

Interactive Dialogue with Special Rapporteur on Myanmar (oral update)

16 September 2019

Australian Statement

Australia thanks the Special Rapporteur for her update.

Australia remains gravely concerned by the situation in Rakhine State. We reiterate our calls for timely, unimpeded, sustained and safe humanitarian access in Rakhine State and other conflict-affected areas. We urge Myanmar to create conditions for the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of displaced people to Rakhine State, including through implementing the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State.

Ongoing clashes among ethnic armed groups and the Myanmar military are a continuing concern. Fighting in northern Shan has displaced and killed civilians, and further complicates the national peace process. We welcome recent ceasefire announcements from the Tatmadaw and the Northern Alliance, and call on all parties to cease hostilities and protect civilians.

We acknowledge steps taken by the Myanmar Government towards the ratification of international human rights instruments, and welcome Myanmar's planned ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.

Australia will continue to support Myanmar's efforts toward full democracy, a cornerstone of which is freedom of expression. In this regard, we welcome the withdrawal of the lawsuit against Reverend Samson. We urge Myanmar to amend restrictive laws and end restrictions on rights to ensure a safe and enabling environment for civil society, journalists and lawyers.

**220 Words**