

Joint Press Statement on the Humanitarian Situation in Myanmar on Behalf of the U.S., joined by 30 countries.

(The following is a joint statement, delivered by Ambassador Robert Wood, Alternative Representative for Special Political Affairs, on behalf of the Permanent Missions to the United Nations of Albania, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, and the European Union and its Member States, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden.)

We are deeply concerned by the escalation of violence and conflict and credible reports of violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law across Myanmar that are deepening the humanitarian crisis. Recent reports indicate the Myanmar regime has taken deliberate steps in Rakhine State to use internally displaced persons (IDP), many of whom are Rohingya, as human shields amid the conflict. We are particularly concerned by reports indicating the regime has placed landmines around IDP camps and appears to have taken steps to use these camps as military bases. There are also credible reports of forced recruitment of persons, including children, belonging to ethnic minorities by the Myanmar Armed Forces in particular and other parties, which risk further fueling inter-communal tensions and aggravating the humanitarian situation.

These concerning developments follow a range of reports of other violations and abuses, particularly by the Myanmar Armed Forces, including indiscriminate aerial bombardments of civilians and civilian objects, burning of civilian homes, attacks on humanitarian workers and facilities, and restrictions on humanitarian access. These practices are unacceptable.

Since the regime's violent military coup in February 2021 and attack on the Myanmar population, the number of people in humanitarian need has risen from 1 million to 18.6 million. More than 2.9 million have been newly displaced, including 66,000 people who have sought protection in neighboring countries, adding to the more than 1 million Rohingya refugees who fled before the coup. We highlight the importance of all countries respecting the principle of nonrefoulement. We reiterate our commitment to support safe, voluntary, dignified, and sustainable repatriation when conditions allow. We also reiterate the call for full, rapid, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access to all people in need, including women, children, and members of ethnic and other minority populations.

We urge the Myanmar Armed Forces in particular and all parties concerned in Myanmar to de-escalate violence, respect international humanitarian law and human rights law, and to protect civilians. We recall our demands for the full implementation of UNSC resolution 2669 (2022). We reiterate our full support for ASEAN's central role and for the appointment of Special Envoy of the Secretary-General Julie Bishop. We reiterate calls to engage in constructive and inclusive dialogue to find a peaceful solution to the situation in Myanmar.

Thank you.