



The Law Society
of England and Wales



Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

United Nations Human Rights Council, 48th Session

Agenda Item

*Interactive dialogue on the High Commissioner for Human Rights' written update on Myanmar
24 September 2021*

Oral Statement

Madam President,

The International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, the Law Society of England and Wales, Lawyers for Lawyers, and Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada condemn the ongoing gross human rights violations in Myanmar, intensified following the coup d'état.

Over 1000 civilians have been killed with impunity by the military and over 8000 people are victims of mass arbitrary detention, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture and ill-treatment. Political opponents, lawyers, journalists, and activists – all civilians - are being brought before military courts, in breach of international standards. As of July 2021, said courts have reportedly sentenced 65 people to death since the coup.¹ The activities of lawyers and lawyers' associations have been suppressed, against the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers and threatening access to justice.

On 7 September 2021, the National Unity Government declared a 'defensive war' against the military, increasing risk of further escalation of abuses.

We urge the international community and this Council to ensure that these large-scale and systematic abuses are duly investigated, including an assessment of whether they amount to crimes against humanity, including through a possible Security Council referral to the international criminal court. We also urge UN member states to consider all possible actions to help ensure justice and reparation for victims in Myanmar.

This statement was delivered by:

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¹ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/07/21/myanmar-junta-tribunals-impose-65-death-sentences>