

ORAL STATEMENT TO UNHRC: HUMAN RIGHTS IN MYANMAR

AGENDA ITEM 4

JUNE 2017

Interactive Dialogue with UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Myanmar

Organisation: Christian Solidarity Worldwide

Speaker: Sini Maria Heikkilä

Thank you Mr President.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide thanks the Special Rapporteur for her tireless work to advocate for human rights in Myanmar and welcomes the landmark resolution passed at the 34th session of the Human Rights Council in March, which establishes an independent international fact-finding mission to investigate human rights violations in Rakhine State.

The resolution sends an important message to the people in Myanmar that the international community is committed to addressing the harrowing situation in the country, in particular in Rakhine State. We are disappointed that the government of Myanmar has disassociated itself from this resolution and we urge the government to collaborate fully with the fact-finding mission and to provide full and unrestricted access to all areas, in particular Rakhine State. In addition to thorough, independent and impartial investigation into systematic and institutionalised persecution in Rakhine state, the deterioration of human rights in Kachin and northern Shan states require urgent action. The Myanmar army has intensified its assault on the predominantly Kachin ethnic group which has recently resulted in the displacement of thousands of people. More than one hundred thousand ethnic Kachin continue to live in IDP camps and face starvation because the Myanmar military has denied vital and life-saving humanitarian aid access.

Mr President. International responses to the situation in Myanmar have rightly celebrated advances towards democracy made by the civilian government; yet we remain deeply concerned about the continuous suppression of voices of dissent. One year after the NLD-led government took power and despite a series of prisoner releases, there are still scores of people behind bars as a result of politically motivated arrest and imprisonment. We urge the government to immediately release all political prisoners and to establish an independent prisoner review mechanism to bring about an end to arbitrary arrests and detention.

Thank you Mr President.