



Oral Statement by the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI)

53rd Session of the Human Rights Council

Panel discussion on human rights violations against the Rohingya and other minorities in Myanmar (HRC Res. 50/3)

21 June 2023

The Need to Address Hate Speech and Misinformation

The IBA's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI) welcomes this panel discussion on the measures necessary to find durable solutions to the Rohingya crisis and to end all forms of human rights violations and abuses against Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar.

The IBAHRI is concerned about the anti-Rohingya narratives that are omnipresent in Myanmar. In 2017, the Rohingya have been subjected to a litany of horrific atrocities that amount to the legal definitions of crimes against humanity and genocide. Currently, two major international courts are examining the crimes, the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ), however, their involvement does not mean that the targeting of the Rohingya in Myanmar has ceased. On the contrary, the ongoing impunity for the genocide and the ever-present dehumanising speech against the Rohingya put the community at risk of further mass atrocities.

Furthermore, recent months have seen how hate speech and misinformation are being used to fuel interethnic tensions in Myanmar. For example, after on 11 March 2023, 21 civilians were murdered at Nam Nein monastery in Pinlaung township, and despite evidence clearly showing that the Myanmar military was the perpetrator, the junta-aligned Pa-O National Organisation (PNO) accused the Karenni National Defense Force (KNDF) of the killing. The spreading of misinformation and hate speech in the immediate aftermath of a mass killing of civilians was aimed at sparking ethno-religious tensions between the Buddhist Pa-O community and the Christian Karenni community.

Considering the patterns of hate speech and misinformation in Myanmar, which ultimately target ethno-religious communities and aim to exacerbate tensions, it is crucial to focus on steps that could challenge these issues and strengthen cohesion between communities in Myanmar.

The IBAHRI, therefore, calls on:

- States to support truth and justice efforts, including by engaging the ICC and ICJ.
- States to support communities in Myanmar and help to build their capabilities to identify and challenge hate speech and misinformation.

Thank you.

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Delivering the statement

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