

Oral Statement submitted to the 48th Regular Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

Introduction

The purpose of this statement is to recommend measures for safe online communications in Myanmar.

Statement

Public access to online communications have been disrupted by internet shutdowns and online curfews, and have become increasingly unsafe.

Amendments to domestic laws provide for online surveillance, interception of private communications, and criminalisation of critical content online.

There are also demands that telecommunication firms install intercept spyware that would enable authorities to eavesdrop on private communications.

This has made it unsafe for online political expression. To date, 6,572 individuals have been charged, arrested and sentenced.

As a result, internet users have become reluctant, or abstain from online communications for fear of repercussions.

Recommendations

Asia Centre makes the following recommendations:

- Revise vaguely-worded laws to ensure safe online access to information.
- Amend laws that affect data privacy, rights to information, and freedom of expression.
- Disallow unrestricted surveillance of online communications.
- Do not install spyware or hand over personal data that may put individuals at risk.
- Create a safe environment for all online users in Myanmar.

This statement on Myanmar is based on Asia Centre's report *Myanmar: Dismantling Dissent – Crackdowns on Internet Freedoms*, launched on 2 July 2021.