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ARTICLE 19 (Author)

UN: Ongoing digital dictatorship in Myanmar

ARTICLE 19 and Access Now delivered this statement during the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Myanmar at the 52nd Session of the UN Human Rights Council.

ARTICLE 19 and Access Now thank the Special Rapporteur for his report and share his dismay that the military has entrenched a 'digital dictatorship' in Myanmar.

Since the coup, the military has issued [internet shutdowns in all 330 townships, with more than 50 townships cut off for more than a year to date](#). Shutdowns have been wielded by the military to conceal and facilitate gross human rights violations and alleged crimes against humanity. They are often imposed before, during and after military attacks on villages – including killings, arson and destruction of property – implying [international criminal liability for those responsible for the shutdowns](#). It is essential that the Council continues to unequivocally condemn these actions and steps up its calls for accountability.

While shutdowns wage on, [the military is also rapidly expanding a network of CCTV cameras](#), equipped with facial recognition technology, and has activated intercept surveillance capacities across telecommunications networks to allow mass surveillance of public and publicly-accessible spaces, with a severe lack of transparency over the procurement of such technologies. The military is also tightening controls to ensure tracking of all individuals through mandatory SIM card and IMEI registration requirements. The Council must urge all States and private companies to ban the sale, servicing, transfer and export of surveillance technologies, including 'dual-use' technologies, and continue to investigate violations emerging from the abuse of such technologies.

Meanwhile, an onslaught of illegitimate repressive laws – including recent bylaws under the Counterterrorism Law – have facilitated the interception of personal communications and dramatically increased the risks of those voicing opposition to the military online and offline with severe penalties, including the death penalty.

We urge the Special Rapporteur to continue his efforts of monitoring the military's efforts to throttle digital civic space in Myanmar.

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Article on Internet shutdowns issued by the military facilitating human rights violations

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