

1

**Statement by UN Watch  
UPR of Myanmar  
UNHRC 31<sup>st</sup> Session, 17 March 2016**

*Delivered by David Choueke*

Thank you, Mr. President.

UN Watch remains deeply concerned about the ongoing human rights situation in Myanmar. We call attention to three areas of particular concern in the report that is before us today.

First, we are alarmed by the government's treatment of the Rohingya community in Rakhine State, and appeal to the Myanmar authorities to end their discriminatory policies. We join the United States in calling on the Myanmar government to repeal the discriminatory 1982 Citizenship Law and grant the Rohingya community citizenship in a country they have inhabited for generations.

Secondly, we note with regret that Myanmar rejected the recommendation of Ireland to grant the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Myanmar unrestricted access to the Rakhine region. We call on the government to allow the Special Rapporteur unhindered access without delay.

Finally, we are gravely concerned with the unequal and discriminatory treatment of minorities in general, exemplified by the recent passing of a deeply troubling legislative package – the so-called “Race and Religion Laws.” The Religious Conversion Law forces citizens of Myanmar who wish to convert to another religion to obtain approval from a registration board. Meanwhile, the Interfaith Marriage Law contains several troubling elements, including one provision allowing local authorities to publicly post marriage applications to determine whether there are any objections. Couples may marry only if there are no objections and they face imprisonment if they violate the law.

In this regard, we note with dismay that Myanmar has rejected recommendations to end violence and bigotry against minorities, as well as multiple recommendations from countries including Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, and Denmark, to repeal these unjust laws.

Mr. President, the encouraging steps Myanmar has taken toward becoming a pluralistic democracy must not distract us from the many human rights challenges that remain.

Thank you, Mr. President.