



Urgent: Help needed for over 30,000 Rohingya trapped on hillsides in Tha Win Chaung and Inn Din

2nd September 2017, London, United Kingdom - A group of displaced Rohingya believed to be larger than 30,000 people are reportedly stranded on a hill area around Tha Win Chaung and Inn Din townships in the most southern point of Maungdaw Township, bordering Rathedaung Township. The numbers of those isolated in the hills has accumulated since August 25th and continues to increase as military operations in the area continue. Those trapped on the hill are caught between the ocean miles south of the mouth of the Naf river and security forces fighting and stationed nearby. For this reason they are unable to escape and are isolated without access to food, water and medicine. Some have already been reported as becoming ill, with a 56 year old woman reportedly dying of what is believed to be a heart attack, and a 55 year old woman believed to have died from a poisonous insect bite.

Beginning August 25th, security forces carried out operations in Chain Khali and Koe Tan Kauk villages in Rathedaung Township resulting in the expulsion of 14,000 villagers who evacuated to nearby hills in Maungdaw township's Tin Win Chaung and Inn Dinn townships over the following days. The assaults by security forces are said to have included arson attacks as many as 800 homes with many believed to have been killed in the attacks. Others from Tha Win Chaung and Inn Din fled at this time as well.

On August 27th a 56 year old woman name Mubena from Kwa Soe was reported to have died of heart failure, believed to have been aggravated from the stress of the assault and fleeing. She was buried the following morning.

On August 28th fighting continued in Kwa Sone Village and nearby areas. Following this more residents from Tha Win Chaung and Inn Din fled into the hills for safety. At the current time vast numbers have accumulated in the hills seeking safety from attacks by security forces but are without access to food and medicine. There are serious concerns that without intervention to help such a large number of people find refuge and access to aid a large number of preventable deaths may occur.

Between the combined villages the total number displaced and stranded is believed to exceed 30,000. The total numbers who've fled are an estimate by locals based on household numbers of affected areas.

Executive Director of Burma Human Rights Network, Kyaw Win said, "The human lives that are most vulnerable must be rescued immediately without delay. As we see the situation unfold it appears almost certain the death toll will far exceed that seen in the violence of 2012 and 2016. The international community must act to prevent any more needless loss of life, as those in hiding 30, 000 people near Tha Win Chaung are at risk of becoming."

The Burma Human Rights Networks is asking that all aid agencies and governments apply appropriate pressure on the Burmese Government to allow them to access these individuals isolated and to help relocate them to safe areas. We insist that the Burmese Government cooperate with NGOs and relevant bodies of the UN to assist these people to prevent any unnecessary sickness, death or further suffering.

Notes for Editors

Background on the current situation:

On August 25th, 2017 the Rohingya insurgent group ARSA attacked as many as 30 posts held by security forces in the Northern part of Myanmar's Rakhine State. The Military has deployed reinforcements to the area is responding with a worrying crackdown that has already seen massive area where civilians are living razed to the ground in arson attacks. In October of 2016 ARSA (Then called al Yaqeen) attacked 3 police posts in the same area, which saw a devastating response from the military over the following months that included several allegations of Crimes Against Humanity.

Background on the Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN)

Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN) works for human rights, minority rights and religious freedom in Burma. BHRN has played a crucial role advocating for human rights and religious freedom with politicians and world leaders.

Media Enquiries

Members of The Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN) are available for comment and interview.

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