



Combatants in Northern Rakhine State Must End Fighting in Civilian Areas

18th February 2020 -- London, UK -- The Burma Human Rights Network is calling on the Burmese Army and the Arakan Army to cease combat in and near civilian areas following a particularly deadly series of skirmishes in northern Rakhine State. Local estimates say at least seven civilians have died in the past two weeks with at least 49 civilians being injured. These deaths and injuries follow artillery shelling in civilian areas and reported use of helicopters by the Burmese army to bombard in and near civilian areas. Most recently, an artillery shell hit a school in Khamwe Chaung Village Buthidaung Township, injuring 19 ethnic Khami students. One of the students' injuries is reported to be critical.

"Civilians have no say in war and yet are always its greatest victims. All combatants in Rakhine State must cease activity in civilian areas in order to ensure the safety of the innocent. The international community must make addressing this conflict a greater priority, especially as the Burmese military continues to harm the civilian population despite the International Court of Justice's order for them to cease such activities," Said BHRN's Executive Director, Kyaw Win.

Due to the conflict and restriction imposed by the Burmese Government, Rohingya living in northern Rakhine State remain desperately deprived of food and medical aid. Travel restrictions on Rohingya make their situations even direr, as they cannot travel for work, food, or medicine without special permission.

The Conflict in Rakhine State between the Burmese Military and the Arakan Army has intensified in recent months, with civilians from the Rohingya, Rakhine and other ethnic communities all suffering as a result. Both belligerents have accused the other of shelling civilian areas and Burmese forces are known to station soldiers in or very close to civilian villages. There have been no known attempts to reduce civilian casualties and little international effort to remedy the situation.

BHRN calls on the Burmese Security Forces and the Arakan Army to withdraw from civilian areas, cease any bombardments of those areas, and to begin steps towards establishing a ceasefire. The international community must enforce the ICJ's order against the Burmese military and exert maximum pressure on the Burmese Government and military and government to end hostilities and open dialogue for a ceasefire. Burma must allow all aid agencies full access to all civilian areas and for Rohingya to travel freely in order to adequately seek food and aid.

Organisation's Background

BHRN is based in London, operates across Burma and 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

Please contact:

Kyaw Win, Executive Director

Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN)

E: kyawwin@bhrn.org.uk T: +44(0) 740 345 2378