



## Women's Peace Network

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*Submission to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar*

### The situation of women in Myanmar since the Burmese military's attempted coup

December 22, 2023

#### **Introduction and background**

1. On February 1, 2021, the Burmese military toppled an elected government, sparking a people-led uprising for human rights and democracy across the country. Nearly three years since then, in an attempt to physically and virtually destroy the pro-democracy movement, the military is continuing to commit atrocities against civilians and civilian infrastructure of an intensifying frequency and degree. A growing number of these atrocities are being described as amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity by the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights (“UNHCR”), the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (“IIMM”), and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar.<sup>1</sup>
2. The Burmese military's unabashed brutality spans decades beyond its attempted coup. Over thirty years following the country's independence, the military – united by a predominantly ethnic Bamar and Buddhist coalition – targeted ethnic and religious minority groups in an attempt to subjugate them in all their dimensions. The military's systematic attacks against these groups entailed widespread atrocities that have been reported by the IIMM as amounting to crimes against humanity, war crimes, and, against the Rohingya ethnic minority, genocide.<sup>2</sup> These atrocities were observed throughout Myanmar's successive military dictatorships, and even during the so-called democratic transition right before the military's attempted coup.
3. It is in this context of a decades-long cycle of vicious and virtual impunity where the country's women exist, risking their survival by the day. These women include ethnic and religious minority women, against whom the Burmese military has, for decades, perpetrated sexual violence as a “hallmark” of its operations, and as a part of its “clearance operations” in 2017.<sup>3</sup> Since the attempted coup, the military has continued to target women with rape, gang rape, sexual mutilation, torture, and other related acts in prisons, detention and interrogation centers. Women of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, queer, and intersex communities (“LGBTQI+”) also remain under particular threat from the military – whose authoritarianism

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations, Human Rights Council, *Situation of human rights in Myanmar: report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, A/HRC/54/59 (19 September 2023), available from [undocs.org/e/A/HRC/54/59](https://undocs.org/e/A/HRC/54/59); Ibid., Report of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, A/HRC/54/19 (30 June 2023), available from [undocs.org/e/A/HRC/54/19](https://undocs.org/e/A/HRC/54/19); Ibid., General Assembly, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar*, A/78/527 (12 October 2023), available from [undocs.org/e/A/78/527](https://undocs.org/e/A/78/527).

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, Human Rights Council, *Report of the independent international fact-finding mission on Myanmar*, A/HRC/39/64 (12 September 2018), available from [undocs.org/en/A/HRC/39/64](https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/39/64).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, *Sexual and gender-based violence in Myanmar and the gendered impact of its ethnic conflicts*, A/HRC/42/CRP.4 (22 August 2019), available from [undocs.org/en/A/HRC/42/CRP.4](https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/42/CRP.4).



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and hypermasculinity unite its officials – and its commission of sexual and gender-based violence.<sup>4</sup> Though incomparable in scale and strategy, sexual violence by certain armed groups in the pro-democracy movement has also been reported.<sup>5</sup> Women caught in the crossfire of the country's growing areas of armed conflict become doubly vulnerable to its devastating, ripple effects. Fleeing their homes, whether in Myanmar or beyond its borders, does not guarantee their access to safety and protection, as well as basic services and livelihoods.

4. The predominantly Muslim, Rohingya ethnic minority uniquely bears the brunt of the military's attempted coup and its gendered effects. Their historically marginalized and minoritized status relative to the wider Burmese populace makes them particularly vulnerable to such effects, as well as their detriments; despite their indigeneity to Myanmar and Rakhine State, or Arakan, Rohingya have for generations systematically been stripped of their human rights to their full capacity. The Burmese military still recognizes the 600,000 Rohingya remaining in the country under apartheid-like conditions as foreign interlopers, putting them at risk of further attacks of genocide.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, these Rohingya are now facing additional layers of vulnerability – risks to their life, safety, security, and access to humanitarian aid – amid the recent escalation of armed conflict between the military and the Arakan Army ("AA"). The over one million Rohingya refugees too face deteriorating conditions, with their women and children at growing risk of human trafficking and other life-threatening abuses.<sup>7</sup> Now, more than ever, the safe, voluntary, dignified, and sustainable return of all Rohingya to their places of origin in Myanmar is unlikely to take place.
5. In this submission to the U.N. Special Procedures, and in line with its calls, Women's Peace Network ("WPN") analyzes the ways in which the Burmese military's attempted coup in 2021 have affected the country's women in particular.<sup>8</sup> WPN's report interprets Rohingya women as a part of Myanmar women, and takes the ongoing human rights and humanitarian catastrophe as a degradation of the country's already precarious conditions prior to February 2021. In so doing, WPN provides recommendations to comprehensively address the over

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, A/HRC/52/21 (3 March 2023), available from [undocs.org/en/A/HRC/52/21](https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/52/21).

<sup>5</sup> A/78/527.

<sup>6</sup> "We are targeted for being Rohingya in Myanmar and everywhere": The situation of Rohingya since February 1, 2021," *Women's Peace Network*, March 2023, [https://mcusercontent.com/6819ae24e30bd9a9db0322d69/files/26c68fcf-6c35-707b-d7eb-caa3e98a0840/Report\\_\\_We\\_are\\_targeted\\_for\\_being\\_Rohingya\\_in\\_Myanmar\\_and\\_everywhere\\_.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/6819ae24e30bd9a9db0322d69/files/26c68fcf-6c35-707b-d7eb-caa3e98a0840/Report__We_are_targeted_for_being_Rohingya_in_Myanmar_and_everywhere_.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> A/78/527.

<sup>8</sup> The facts described herein are based upon reports from news media, non-governmental organizations, and U.N. stakeholders, including the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, and are informed by WPN's close observations of the situation of the ethnic Rohingya over the past several years as a civil society and human rights organization, as well as, since the Burmese military's attempted coup, a member of the National Unity Consultative Council. They also specifically follow up on information compiled by WPN for its previous reports.



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three decades of crises that have engulfed the country and prevented its people from achieving lasting peace, genuine democracy, and justice for generations.

### Participation in political and public life

6. In Myanmar, in exile, and virtually, the country's women continue to stand at the forefront of the Burmese pro-democracy movement. They are leading various aspects of the movement, as clearly demonstrated by their organizing of guerilla-style protests, social media campaigns, humanitarian assistance with civil society and community-based organizations, as well as engagements with the Civil Disobedience Movement and strike committees; reports also find that over 60 per cent of the protestors soon after the attempted coup were women.<sup>9</sup> These women also include those who have had no choice but to defend themselves from the Burmese military's atrocities as a part of existing ethnic revolutionary organizations, armed groups, as well as single-gender groups such as the Myaung Women Warriors in Sagaing Region.<sup>10</sup>
7. The dire situation of Myanmar – lack of full access to life-saving assistance, safety and protection – and its people's diminishing expectations of the international and regional community's effective intervention, is a key contributing factor to these women's dedicated activism to sustain the movement. Simultaneously, the pre-2021 environment helped build the foundation of such a phenomenon; women, especially ethnic minority women, had been key contributors to women's rights and feminist civil society organizations, ethnic minority-led community-based organizations, as well as – though to a significantly lesser degree – the state and regional parliaments. In this context, it is important to recognize that Myanmar, in Asia, was among the first to achieve women's suffrage in 1935; and, as a state, endorsed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995, and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1979.<sup>11</sup>
8. As a selected member of the National Unity Consultative Council (“NUCC”), WPN has been an active participant in the movement's core peace process and federal democracy discussions. WPN has contributed its expertise on gender equality and human rights to NUCC's key policies, including on gender and transitional justice, respectively, as well as the

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<sup>9</sup> Umayma Khan, “The women of Myanmar: ‘Our place is in the revolution’,” *Al Jazeera*, April 25, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2021/4/25/women-of-myanmar-stand-resilient-against-the-military-coup>.

<sup>10</sup> Nu Nu Lusan and Emily Fishbein, “‘We are warriors’: Women join fight against military in Myanmar,” *Al Jazeera*, November 16, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/16/we-are-warriors-women-join-fight-against-military-in-myanmar>; Emily Fishbein, “Meet the women fighting Myanmar's junta,” *The New Humanitarian*, January 12, 2023, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/first-person/2023/01/12/Women-fighting-junta-Myanmar-CN.F>

<sup>11</sup> “Handbook on Key Laws Impacting Women in Myanmar,” *The Asia Foundation*, June 2018, <https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Key-Laws-Impacting-Women-in-Myanmar.pdf>.



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Federal Democracy Charter (“FDC”). These policies have, in turn, helped direct the work of the National Unity Government (“NUG”), whose officials are approximately 20 per cent women, and over half ethnic and religious minorities. The FDC in particular stipulates that the “federal democratic union” in Myanmar would include “a quota system of at least 30 percent of women in decision-making mechanisms.”<sup>12</sup>

9. WPN finds that its perspective is uniquely valued by its fellow NUCC members despite the multifaceted forms of prejudice – racism, sexism, ageism – it may consistently face. Though varying in its degree, this double-edged sentiment has also been shared by other women-led groups or WHRDs. For example, concerns on the still-limited women representation, exclusion of women from decision-making processes, use of tokenism against women, and allegations of sexual and gender-based violence have been leveled at certain actors of the pro-democracy movement.<sup>13</sup>

### Human rights defenders

10. WPN finds that, in conditions of mass atrocities as with the case of Myanmar, it is apt for the term, “human rights defenders” (“HRDs”), to be applied to all actors in the Burmese pro-democracy movement and be used interchangeably with the terms, “people” and “civilians” – and “women human rights defenders” (“WHRDs”) to “women.”<sup>14</sup> Such categorization should also be applied to LGBTQ+. Failing to do so will likely produce approaches to protection that do not capture the ground reality of Myanmar, and undermine the grassroots efforts of its people to persist with their pro-democracy movement.
11. In particular, WHRDs involved in issues related to Myanmar lack a safe physical and virtual environment to continue their much-needed work: those remaining in Myanmar are in danger of intensifying atrocities by the Burmese military, the majority of them in exile are being denied access to asylum, and all of them risk the military’s targeted abuses including arbitrary

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<sup>12</sup> “Federal Democracy Charter,” National Unity Consultative Council, <https://nucc-federal.org/federal-democracy-charter/>.

<sup>13</sup> “Breaking Gender and Age Barriers amid Myanmar’s Spring Revolution,” *International Crisis Group*, February 16, 2023, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/myanmar/b174-breaking-gender-and-age-barriers-amid-myanmars-spring-revolution>; Aung Naing, “NUG to file case against NLD member accused of raping child,” *Myanmar Now*, May 12, 2023, <https://myanmar-now.org/en/news/nug-to-file-case-against-nld-member-accused-of-raping-child/>; “Woman Raped Repeatedly While in NUG Jail in Myanmar,” *The Irrawaddy*, August 8, 2023, <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/woman-raped-repeatedly-while-in-nug-jail-in-myanmar.html>.

<sup>14</sup> The U.N. Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders’ latest report to the General Assembly focuses on the situation of WHRDs, including those in Myanmar, and features WPN’s related submission and work. See United Nations, General Assembly, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders*, A/78/131 (7 July 2023), available from [undocs.org/e/A/78/131](https://undocs.org/e/A/78/131).



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arrest and detention, raiding of offices and homes, registering on blacklists, and doxxing.<sup>15</sup> The military is also using collective punishment against WHRDs as was demonstrated by its arbitrary arrest of a woman's eight family members – including a one-year-old infant – for her alleged donation to the People's Defence Force.<sup>16</sup>

12. The Burmese military is continuing to abduct WHRDs for their alleged involvement in the pro-democracy movement. Since its attempted coup, the military has arbitrarily arrested and detained over 5,130 women; the majority of them have been sentenced, without any due process, to prison sentences for alleged violations of the Penal Code and the Counter-Terrorism Law.<sup>17</sup> At least 16 WHRDs have been sentenced to death.<sup>18</sup>
13. WHRDs under the military's arbitrary detention risk its targeted use of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as torture; this was reported by the military's commission of rape against young women in the Mandalay interrogation centre, as well as battering of over 70 women political prisoners in the region's Obo Prison.<sup>19</sup> The military's use of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment is also being noted by its denial of access to medical treatment, as well as frequent use of solitary confinement against WHRDs in the prisons as Bago Region's Tharawaddy Prison.<sup>20</sup> None of these prisons or detention centers provide basic access to food, water, infrastructure, medical treatment, sanitation, or menstrual hygiene, putting those arbitrarily detained in acute danger of preventable illnesses such as skin and

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<sup>15</sup> "Submission to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders The situation of women human rights defenders in Myanmar," *Women's Peace Network*, May 22, 2023, [https://mcusercontent.com/6819ae24e30bd9a9db0322d69/files/9289b01d-977c-b202-5579-04b7f6a452fd/5\\_22\\_WPN\\_Submission\\_to\\_UN\\_SR\\_on\\_HRDs.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/6819ae24e30bd9a9db0322d69/files/9289b01d-977c-b202-5579-04b7f6a452fd/5_22_WPN_Submission_to_UN_SR_on_HRDs.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> Nway Nway Eain, "Myanmar junta detains entire family of woman wanted on suspicion of supporting PDF," *Myanmar Now*, June 22, 2022, <https://myanmar-now.org/en/news/myanmar-junta-detains-entire-family-of-woman-wanted-on-suspicion-of-supporting-pdf/>.

<sup>17</sup> "Daily Briefing in Relation to the Military Coup," Daily Briefing since Coup, Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, accessed December 2023, <https://aappb.org/?p=27011>.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Mary Hnin and Maung Shwe Wah, "Junta forces raped three detainees in Mandalay interrogation centre, student activists say," *Myanmar Now*, February 22, 2022, <https://myanmar-now.org/en/news/junta-forces-raped-three-detainees-in-mandalay-interrogation-centre-student-activists-say/>; Myat Thwel, "Female political prisoners brutally beaten in Mandalay's Obo Prison," *Myanmar Now*, February 14, 2023, <https://myanmar-now.org/en/news/female-political-prisoners-brutally-beaten-in-mandalays-obo-prison/>.

<sup>20</sup> "Political Prisoners Tortured for Honoring Myanmar's Martyrs' Day," *The Irrawaddy*, August 4, 2023, <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/political-prisoners-tortured-for-honoring-myanmars-martyrs-day.html>.



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bowel diseases.<sup>21</sup> The military's murder in custody also remains a constant threat to the women prisoners, as was demonstrated by the September 2023 death of an arbitrarily detained businesswoman in Kachin State; the military allegedly directed her body to be immediately cremated, putting her family members at fear of facing reprisals for calling for investigations or her justice.<sup>22</sup>

14. WHRDs who are members of ethnic and religious minorities and other marginalized groups, and those who engage in any kind of activism for justice and accountability, face double the risk of such abuses by the military and its supporters. These WHRDs are in danger of targeted attacks rooted in other minoritized aspects of their identities, as has been demonstrated by the military's denial of right to freedom of religion against a Muslim woman journalist during Ramadan, as well as its use of Islamophobia in its gendered, online attacks against WHRDs.<sup>23</sup>
15. Although non-governmental organizations, embassies, and other international stakeholders have made available protection mechanisms (e.g., legal aid, third country resettlement, safe houses) to people affected by the attempted coup, their accessibility remains extremely challenging for Myanmar WHRDs. Combined with the atrocity conditions in Myanmar, such an environment has thus forced WHRDs to take "calculated risks" in the various spheres where they operate. In Thailand, WHRDs are being forced to conceal their public profile with measures that include limiting their public and private engagements with other Burmese people and locals. Online, and as was demonstrated by a recent study, concerns about their footprint and host countries' surveillance have forced many WHRDs to use Virtual Private Networks and restrict the spread of personally identifiable information on social media and communication platforms.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Manny Maung, "Rights of Women Violated in Myanmar Prisons," *Human Rights Watch*, June 8, 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/06/08/rights-women-violated-myanmar-prisons>; "Insight: Smuggled sketches offer glimpses into harsh Myanmar prison," *Reuters*, April 7, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/smuggled-sketches-offer-glimpses-into-harsh-myanmar-prison-2022-04-07/>.

<sup>22</sup> "Woman dies during Myanmar junta interrogation," *Radio Free Asia*, September 13, 2023, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/interrogation-death-09132023064140.html>.

<sup>23</sup> United Nations, Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar*, A/HRC/52/66 (9 March 2023), available from [undocs.org/en/A/HRC/52/66](https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/52/66); "One year after the coup attempt: Violence against women and girls by the Myanmar military junta"; "Myanmar: Social media companies must stand up to junta's online terror campaign say UN experts," *United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner*, March 13, 2023, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/03/myanmar-social-media-companies-must-stand-juntas-online-terror-campaign-say>; "Jailed Myanmar Now reporter put in solitary confinement after starting fast for Ramadan," *Myanmar Now*, May 6, 2021, <https://myanmar-now.org/en/news/jailed-myanmar-now-reporter-put-in-solitary-confinement-after-starting-fast-for-ramadan/>.

<sup>24</sup> "Surviving Myanmar's digital coup," *Free Expression Myanmar*, April 2023, <https://freeexpressionmyanmar.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/surviving-myanmars-digitalcoup.pdf>.



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16. In Myanmar and beyond, Rohingya WHRDs face risks associated with their gender and ethnic and religious affiliations. Those who are a part of the 600,000 Rohingya remaining in Myanmar continue to be denied access to healthcare, education, and other basic needs and livelihoods, and instead face travel restrictions, and other increasingly targeted laws and policies; this persecution is heightened for the 140,000 Rohingya who remain confined in Burmese military-run internally displaced camps in Rakhine State. In effect, such apartheid-like conditions put Rohingya women at particular risk of repercussions from the military. At the same time, among the nearly one million Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, Rohingya WHRDs – for subverting traditional gender norms – increasingly risk threats and intimidation, kidnapping and abduction, and sexual and gender-based violence by the community's predominantly male gangs and militant groups.<sup>25</sup> Full and reliable access to domestic justice mechanisms remains limited to these women, endangering them with further, targeted abuses. Combined with the deteriorating livelihood conditions in the camps, WPN finds that many more women are being left with no choice but to resort to human trafficking, as well as other abuses, in order to flee over land and sea.
17. As a civil society organization, WPN has faced various challenges to its work in Myanmar due to its engagements with the Rohingya ethnic minority. WPN's Founder and Executive Director, Wai Wai Nu, a Muslim Rohingya woman and a former political prisoner, has faced persecution, intimidation, and surveillance even during her years forced into exile.<sup>26</sup> Since its attempted coup, the Burmese military has issued an arrest warrant against Wai Wai Nu, interrogated her family members in Rakhine State, and raided WPN's offices and threatened its staff in Myanmar. Her uncle, U Shekul Islam, is also believed to have been shot to death in Rakhine State by the Burmese military.<sup>27</sup>

### Access to humanitarian aid

18. The Burmese military's commission of further atrocity crimes, as well as restrictions on humanitarian access in Myanmar's growing areas of armed conflict, is preventing the full and unfettered provision of humanitarian aid to civilians, including women and children.<sup>28</sup> As was demonstrated by its response to Cyclone Mocha's arrival to Myanmar, the military's failure to evacuate Rohingya civilians in Rakhine State and allow the direct provision of emergency

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<sup>25</sup> “We are targeted for being Rohingya in Myanmar and everywhere”; *The Rohingya Camps: Let Down by the UN*. 2023: BBC, 2023, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001t72d>.

<sup>26</sup> Wai Wai Nu and Rin Fujimatsu, “‘RAPE HER’: Gendered Hate Speech against Rohingya Women,” Arrow for Change no. 1 (26): 9-11, (2020),

[https://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/AFC\\_Right-to-Freedom-of-Speech-Expression.pdf](https://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/AFC_Right-to-Freedom-of-Speech-Expression.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> Wai Wai Nu (@wainu), “My mom and my whole family is devastated to learn my mother's youngest brother has been shot dead an hour ago in Gudarpin village, Buthidaung . . .,” Twitter, October 8, 2022, <https://twitter.com/wainu/status/1578596239884443648?s=20>; Myanmar Now (@Myanmar\_Now\_Eng), “Both the military and the Arakan Army have been accused of carrying out the killing amid tensions in northern Rakhine State's Buthidaung Township,” Twitter, October 14, 2022, [https://twitter.com/Myanmar\\_Now\\_Eng/status/1580814717165088768?s=20](https://twitter.com/Myanmar_Now_Eng/status/1580814717165088768?s=20).

<sup>28</sup> A/78/527.



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assistance to them resulted in a disproportionate degree of damage, displacement and deaths.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, since the resumption of armed conflict between the military and the AA, the military has imposed additional restrictions on the provision of humanitarian aid to Rakhine State.<sup>30</sup> The conflict has further compromised such a situation by deteriorating the already dire security conditions, causing road and waterway blockades, and destroying civilian infrastructure, in areas with humanitarian needs.<sup>31</sup>

19. The military's weaponization of aid is a key contributing factor to the entrenchment of apartheid-like conditions in Rakhine State; these conditions include the denial of access to education, healthcare, employment, and other basic services and livelihoods. While such circumstances affect all Rohingya remaining in the area, they specifically affect women by denying them their unique needs (e.g., maternal care) and access to opportunities that would help, though marginally, relieve their multidimensional persecution. Combined with the military's targeted policies and laws, the lack of humanitarian aid to Rakhine State is forcing many more women to face human trafficking, deadly sea crossings, and other abuses in an attempt to find refuge elsewhere.
20. The continued reliance of international aid providers on the military, as it commits further atrocities across the country, is failing to ensure the full and sustainable provision of life-saving assistance to its target population, including women; this is in part due to the fact that the military cannot be relied on to permit such assistance to civilians whom it is targeting, and in areas not under its effective control. Such a dire situation is continuing to force women-led groups, particularly community-based organizations, to become first responders to atrocities in their proximate areas. Along the Thailand-Myanmar border, ethnic minority women-led groups like the Karen Women's Organisation are providing emergency assistance, including food and medical treatment, to IDPs fleeing the Burmese military's airstrikes on their villages.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.; "How the UN is Failing Myanmar," *Special Advisory Council for Myanmar*, October 3, 2023, <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/SAC-M-Full-Paper-UN-Myanmar-EN-GLISH.pdf>; A/78/527; "Press release: Bangladesh refugee camps and Rakhine State devastated by Cyclone Mocha according to affected communities, including Rohingya," *Women's Peace Network*, May 16, 2023,

[https://mcusercontent.com/6819ae24e30bd9a9db0322d69/files/2f176359-f827-a30e-e3c8-f22e7584b415/5\\_16\\_Press\\_release\\_on\\_Cyclone\\_Mocha\\_briefing.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/6819ae24e30bd9a9db0322d69/files/2f176359-f827-a30e-e3c8-f22e7584b415/5_16_Press_release_on_Cyclone_Mocha_briefing.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> "Escalating Hostilities - Rakhine and Southern Chin Flash Update #5," *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*, November 17, 2023,

<https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/myanmar/myanmar-escalating-hostilities-rakhine-and-southern-chin-flash-update-5-17-november-2023>

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> "Karen Women's Organisation Condemns Burmese Military's Continued Airstrikes and Indiscriminate Shelling of Civilians" *Karen Women's Organisation*, September 12, 2023,

<https://karenwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/KWO-statement-regarding-Airstrike-in-Kawtho-olei-comments-Final-Sept-12th-2023-1.pdf>





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### Impact of displacement

21. Myanmar's deteriorating humanitarian catastrophe will continue to bring spillover effects of further loss of life and mass displacement to the region. Nearly two million civilians have been forced to flee the country and over 2.6 million are currently internally displaced according to the UNHCR, though these figures are estimated to be higher according to Burmese civil society.<sup>33</sup> As many more of them flee, women, as well as other gender and sexual minorities, risk the military's targeted use of sexual violence and other abuses; cases of the military's rape against women, including pregnant women, amid its ground attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure have been reported in Chin, Shan, and Kachin states, among other states and regions.<sup>34</sup>
22. The hundreds of thousands of civilians who attempt to flee the military's air and ground attacks are forced to find refuge in rural and isolated areas, with already limited access to food, water, fuel, shelter, sanitation, healthcare and other basic needs and livelihoods, as well as privacy.<sup>35</sup> In areas including Chin, Karen, and Karenni states, IDPs also are denied adequate access to maternal care, nutrition and baby milk formula, as well as educational support – all of which disproportionately affect women in particular.<sup>36</sup>
23. Displaced civilians, both IDPs and refugees, remain denied full and reliable access to safety and protection. While civilians who remain in Myanmar face the Burmese military's further atrocities, including airstrikes, those who seek refuge abroad face growing challenges to accessing asylum, including reliable options for third-country resettlement.<sup>37</sup> In certain

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<sup>33</sup> "Myanmar Situation," *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, December 22, 2023, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/myanmar>.

<sup>34</sup> "Junta troops accused of raping two women in Myanmar's Chin state," *Radio Free Asia*, November 16, 2021, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/rape-11162021200357.html>; "Myanmar Junta Soldiers Storm Moebye, Slaughter 5 Civilians," *The Irrawaddy*, June 10, 2023, <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-soldiers-storm-moebye-slaughter-5-civilians.html>; "Myanmar Detains Three Soldiers for Alleged Rape and Murder of Kachin Woman," *Radio Free Asia*, July 20, 2021, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/kachin-07202021201524.html>.

<sup>35</sup> Daniel P. Sullivan, "Paths of Assistance: Opportunities for Aid and Protection along the Thailand-Myanmar Border," *Refugees International*, July 12, 2022, <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports-briefs/paths-of-assistance-opportunities-for-aid-and-protection-along-the-thailand-myanmar-border/>.

<sup>36</sup> "Pregnant Women and children suffer from poor nutrition and lack of medicine in IDP camps," *Karen News*, July 27, 2023, <https://karennews.org/2023/07/pregnant-women-and-children-suffer-from-poor-nutrition-and-lack-of-medicine-in-idp-camps/>; Maung Moe, "I have no idea how I'll survive': Myanmar villagers who fled airstrikes face food shortage," *The Guardian*, November 24, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2023/nov/24/i-have-no-idea-how-ill-survive-myanmar-villagers-who-fled-airstrikes-face-food-shortage>; "Refugee camps short of food, medicine in Myanmar's Kayah state," *Radio Free Asia*, August 5, 2023, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/camps-08052022144100.html>.

<sup>37</sup> "Myanmar refugees granted resettlement in third countries are stuck in Thailand," *Frontier Myanmar*, July 12, 2023,



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countries, such as Thailand and India, WPN has been informed that Myanmar refugees are being denied documentation that would help them access resources beneficial to their lives in an undetermined period of exile; this includes overly bureaucratic processes as registering under the UNHCR's Refugee Status Determination and applying for long-term visas that would permit employment or study, or as precarious as renewing one's passport at the Burmese military-run Myanmar embassies. Denied an established path to legally acquiring protection in exile, Myanmar refugees then effectively become undocumented without any immediate legal recourse in the case of detention or deportation.<sup>38</sup> Such a status endangers women in particular with denial of urgent life-saving assistance, long-term opportunities for their livelihoods and their empowerment (e.g., employment and education), and increased risk of abuse.<sup>39</sup>

24. Amidst the nationwide humanitarian catastrophe, Rohingya confined in in IDP camps now face a heightened risk of further attacks of genocide from the Burmese military, which is issuing and reissuing discriminatory policies as supposed grounds to deny them access to basic services and freedom of movement, as well as further arbitrary arrest and detain its members. These policies include travel restrictions, requirements for the National Verification Cards, Form 4, and Swe Tin Sit.<sup>40</sup> According to WPN, since the attempted coup, the military has arrested over 3,400 Rohingya, including over 930 women and 150 children, and sentenced them in military courts to at least two years' imprisonment.
25. Rohingya IDPs are also at growing danger of targeted abuses by the AA, with women being subjected to its arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, and sexual and gender-based violence. In recent years, WPN has been informed of the AA raiding areas predominantly resided by Rohingya and committing abuses against them (e.g., forced disappearance, arbitrary detention, and torture and cruel treatment against their inhabitants).<sup>41</sup> These reports also

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<https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/myanmar-refugees-granted-resettlement-in-third-countries-are-stuck-in-thailand/>.

<sup>38</sup> "Thailand: Recent Refugees Pushed Back to Myanmar," *Human Rights Watch*, November 29, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/29/thailand-recent-refugees-pushed-back-myanmar>.

<sup>39</sup> "Despite Risk of Death, Thailand Sends Myanmar Refugees Back," *VOA News*, April 7, 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/despite-risk-of-death-thailand-sends-myanmar-refugees-back-/6518846.html>; *I stayed silent*. 2022: Frontier Myanmar, 2022, <https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/video-i-stayed-silent/>.

<sup>40</sup> "The arbitrary arrest and detention of Rohingya since the attempted coup," *Women's Peace Network*, March 2, 2022,

[https://mcusercontent.com/6819ae24e30bd9a9db0322d69/files/2a79f5e9-4d82-bf0a-7c7e-702bc869a5c2/Briefer\\_on\\_Arbitrary\\_Arrest\\_Detention.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/6819ae24e30bd9a9db0322d69/files/2a79f5e9-4d82-bf0a-7c7e-702bc869a5c2/Briefer_on_Arbitrary_Arrest_Detention.pdf); "Panel Discussion on Human Rights Violations in Myanmar - 5th Meeting, 50th Regular Session of Human Rights Council," UN Web TV, June 15, 2022, <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k10/k10gx401yf>

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*; "Arakan Army Searches Western Myanmar for Muslim 'Criminal Gangs,'" *The Irrawaddy*, September 29, 2023, <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/arakan-army-searches-western-myanmar-for-muslim-criminal-gangs.html>.



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follow reports of sexual violence by the AA, as have been demonstrated in cases including that of October 2022, when AA soldiers gang raped at least two Rohingya women in Rakhine State's Buthidaung Township.<sup>42</sup>

26. Such life-threatening circumstances further prolong the safe, sustainable, dignified, and voluntary return that the over one million Rohingya refugees in countries beyond Myanmar desire. Across South and Southeast Asia, the lack of proper access to education, healthcare, employment, and other basic services are denying Rohingya refugee women and girls with opportunities for their empowerment.<sup>43</sup> In Bangladesh, where over half are women and children, Rohingya refugees are now being denied access to food and other livelihoods due to the massive funding shortage to the Joint Response Plan 2023.<sup>44</sup> The Bangladesh authorities have escalated their restrictions of Rohingya's rights, especially their freedom of movement, denying women access to privacy and putting them at increased risk of sexual violence.<sup>45</sup> Hate speech and targeted violence also remain a growing risk for Rohingya refugees attempting to seek safety and protection in countries including India and Indonesia.<sup>46</sup>
27. Amid the crises, the Burmese military's so-called "pilot repatriation project" risks Rohingya women and girls with targeted abuses. The approximately 1000 Rohingya refugees whom the project aims to forcibly repatriate from Bangladesh will risk further atrocities by the military in Rakhine State. This is part because the project, according to its published flyer, is a recipe

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<sup>42</sup> "AA Rebels Gang Rape Rohingya Woman in Buthidaung," *The Rohingya Post* online, October 11, 2022, <https://www.rohingyapost.com/aa-rebels-gang-rape-rohingya-woman-in-buthidaung/>; Md Jamal (@mdjamal315), "AA (Arakan Army) gang raped two Rohingyas women in northern Buthidaung in Myanmar...", *Twitter*, October 6, 2022, <https://twitter.com/mdjamal315/status/1578095135727837185?s=20&t=g5NLXcMukb7Wz9NRNJv79w>.

<sup>43</sup> "We are targeted for being Rohingya in Myanmar and everywhere".

<sup>44</sup> "Bangladesh: UN experts decry devastating second round of rations cuts for Rohingya refugees," *Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, June 1, 2023, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/06/bangladesh-un-experts-decry-devastating-second-round-rations-cuts-rohingya>; "We are targeted for being Rohingya in Myanmar and everywhere".

<sup>45</sup> Anne Sophie Bonefeld, "When going to the bathroom takes courage," *UNICEF*, March 21, 2018, <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/stories/when-going-bathroom-takes-courage>; Hannah Ellis-Petersen and Shaikh Azizur Rahman, "Rohingya refugees allege sexual assault on Bangladeshi island," *The Guardian*, September 22, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/22/rohingya-refugees-allege-sexual-assault-on-bangladeshi-island>; Verena Hölzl, "As violence soars in refugee camps, Rohingya women speak up," *The New Humanitarian*, August 2, 2021, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2021/8/2/as-violence-soars-in-refugee-camps-rohingya-women-speak-up>.

<sup>46</sup> "We are targeted for being Rohingya in Myanmar and everywhere"; Resty Woro Yuniar, "In Indonesia, fake UN accounts spewing anti-refugee hate feed rejection of Rohingya," *South China Morning Post*, December 22, 2023, <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/people/article/3246022/indonesia-fake-un-accounts-spewing-anti-refugee-hate-feed-rejection-rohingya>.



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for modern-day slavery and concentration camps: it will forcibly confine the repatriated refugees into settlements under highly militarized conditions.<sup>47</sup> These conditions include a “community-based programme” for women, which provides training courses in “pastry making and sewing” and whose output will be entirely monitored by the military.<sup>48</sup>

### **Gendered protection risks such as forced marriage, sex work, and trafficking**

28. For the Rohingya ethnic minority, their deteriorating conditions in their homes in Rakhine State and refugee camps beyond Myanmar have left them with no choice but to resort to human trafficking, sexual slavery, and other life-threatening conditions to flee for safety, protection, and livelihoods over land and sea. According to the UNHCR, at least 7,679 civilians have taken deadly sea crossings, with 573 missing, and 727 with an “unknown” status.<sup>49</sup>
29. The majority of Rohingya women and girls are also victims of human trafficking from Myanmar, Bangladesh, or Thailand. Likely kidnapped, sold into child and forced marriage or forced into domestic servitude, these refugees have often been subjected to brutal, violent detention conditions on land and sea.<sup>50</sup> WPN has also been informed of the involvement of human trafficking networks involving, to a varying degree, local authorities in Myanmar, Bangladesh, and other neighboring countries, the AA, as well as some members of the Rohingya ethnic minority.
30. Rape, gang rape, sexual slavery, sexual exploitation, and other forms of sexual violence have also been committed against Rohingya women and those taken hostage on boats, as well as in areas including along the Myanmar-Bangladesh border and human-trafficking camps on the Malaysia-Thailand border.<sup>51</sup> In countries where the justice processes remain inaccessible to Rohingya, women and girls risk detention over seeing significant legal action taken against their traffickers or transnational criminal syndicates.<sup>52</sup> In countries where detention centers are

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<sup>47</sup> See Appendix.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> “Myanmar Situation,” *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, December 22, 2023, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/myanmar>.

<sup>50</sup> Naimul Karim, “Traffickers demand ransoms for Rohingyas held at sea in SE Asia,” *Reuters*, June 15, 2020,

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bangladesh-malaysia-rohingya-traffick-idUSKBN23M1AC>;

“Protection risks for Rohingya women and children: from departure country to arrival in Malaysia,” *Mixed Migration Centre*, March 2022,

[https://mixedmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/218\\_Protection\\_risks\\_for\\_Rohingya\\_women\\_and\\_children\\_from\\_departure\\_country\\_to\\_arrival\\_in\\_Malaysia.pdf](https://mixedmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/218_Protection_risks_for_Rohingya_women_and_children_from_departure_country_to_arrival_in_Malaysia.pdf); Kristen Gelineau, “I feel trapped: Scores of underage Rohingya girls forced into abusive marriages in Malaysia,” *AP News*, December 13, 2023,

<https://apnews.com/article/rohingya-refugees-bangladesh-myanmar-malaysia-migration-f481e725f97d1b004a474e5facb10144>.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.



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primarily run by male officials, Rohingya women and girls risk sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence.<sup>53</sup>

### Conclusion and recommendations

31. The exacerbating human rights and humanitarian catastrophe in Myanmar is risking the unique circumstances and needs of women and other gender and sexual minorities despite their efforts and sacrifices for the pro-democracy movement. The Burmese military's atrocities of an intensifying frequency and degree is risking this group in particular with targeted sexual violence, lack of aid access, and other detriments to an intensifying armed conflict. Ethnic and religious minorities which already have limited access to basic services and livelihoods, as well as safety and protection, bear the brunt of this catastrophe; and among them, women and other marginalized sub-groups acutely face its risks. The situation in Myanmar is further delaying the safe, voluntary, sustainable, and dignified return home for the Rohingya ethnic minority: victims and survivors of genocide. As a part of the ongoing crisis in Myanmar, the situation of Rohingya women in particular should thus require the world's highest level of attention and action.
32. Based on its above analysis and findings, WPN recommends the international community to take the following actions for the people of Myanmar, particularly women and other gender and sexual minorities.
  - a. To address the root causes of the human rights and humanitarian catastrophe:
    - Engage with the movement, including the NUG, the NUCC, and civil society, over the Burmese military, and encourage U.N. entities and other development agencies in Myanmar to partner with them.
    - Maintain pressure on the U.N. Security Council to advance accountability efforts on Myanmar and address the junta's failure to comply with resolution 2669 (2022), including by issuing a strong, binding resolution to follow up on it and by referring the situation of Myanmar to the International Criminal Court, while also encouraging the U.N. Secretary-General to take the lead on Myanmar.
    - Expand sanctions against the Burmese military-affiliated enterprises, financial institutions, extractive operations and the aviation fuel sector, while enforcing the sanctions that are already in place.
    - Impose a full and comprehensive arms embargo against the Burmese military.
    - Call on the U.N. Secretariat to develop a unifying strategy in line with the recommendations of the Rosenthal report.
  - b. To address issues related to human trafficking and forced displacement:
    - Ensure to those displaced full and reliable access to asylum and protection, including options for resettlement to third countries, immediate and safe

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<sup>53</sup> A/HRC/52/66.



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- disembarkment from their deadly sea crossings, and deployment of search-and-rescue missions.
- Prevent their detention and deportation, as well as other acts in violation of the non-refoulement principle.
  - Provide full and sustainable access to food, healthcare, mental health education, employment and other basic needs and livelihoods to the refugees, including by resolving the massive funding shortfall for the Myanmar and Rohingya responses.
  - Provide reliable access to domestic justice mechanisms and mental health and psychosocial support to the refugees, especially women and other marginalized groups at risk of abuses by human traffickers and related groups.
  - Halt the spread of hate speech and targeted violence against Rohingya refugees.
- c. To address the challenges that are being faced by WHRDs and women in displacement:
- Support U.N. entities in finding the most effective means of delivering humanitarian relief through all available channels, including by facilitating any negotiations to permit cross-border aid when applicable.
  - Ensure the provision of direct and sustainable material, technical, and financial assistance to increase women's participation in politics and sustained women's leadership.
  - Provide direct financial and material assistance to WHRDs and women-led organizations, especially by implementing flexible funding mechanisms with maximum adaptability and optimal support.
  - Support the delivery of mental health and psychosocial support to victim and survivor communities of past and ongoing atrocities in Myanmar, including sexual and gender-based violence.

## Facts on the Arrangements of the Myanmar Government for Reception and Resettlement of Displaced Persons on their Return under the Pilot Project

### 1. Provision of Humanitarian Assistance

- ❖ Upon arrival at the Taung Pyo Letwe and Nga Khu Ya Reception Centers, every returnee will be provided with humanitarian assistance, including clothing, blankets and soaps. The administration teams of each reception center will be funded to prepare and provide daily meals to the returnees during their stay at the Reception Centers, meanwhile, cooking utensils will be provided to each family who needs to quarantine.

- ❖ During their stay at the Hla Phoe Khaung Transit Center each family will receive a kitchen set and a family kit.



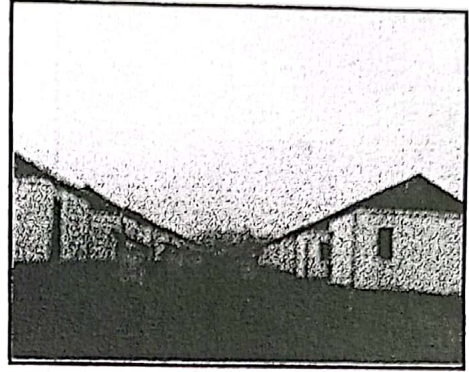
- ❖ Every returnee will receive basic food provision which includes rice, cooking oil, salt, beans, and cash for meal preparation, as well as a high-performance stove and cooking briquettes.

- ❖ The Social Welfare Department of Myanmar will provide 15,000 Kyats per month to every pregnant woman and child under the age of two for three months, 10,000 Kyats per month to every elder over the age of 85 for three months, and 30,000 Kyats to every disabled person for one time.



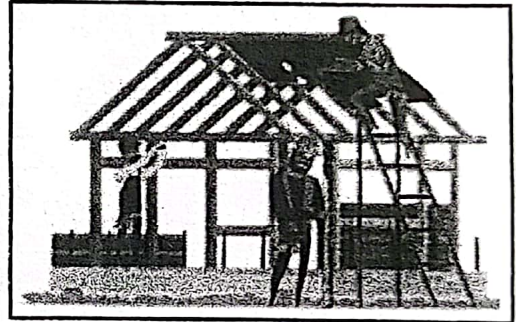
## 2. Construction of Housing for Resettlement

❖ Returnees will be temporarily accommodated in Hla Phoe Khaung Transit Center not more than 60 days.



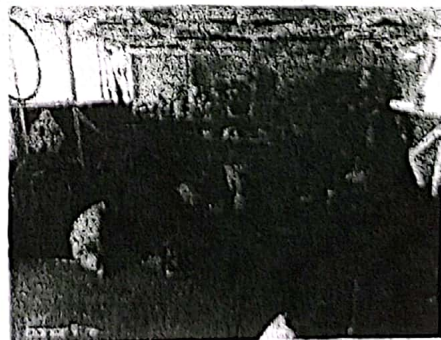
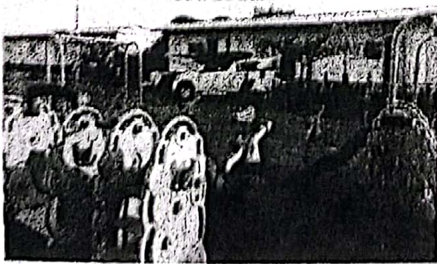
❖ Whenever the returnees complete the necessary preparations for the resettlement, they will be relocated to the resettlement places.

❖ For the returnees under the pilot project, they will be relocated with their consent as well as by their choice either to Kyeing Chaung (south) and Thet Kay Pyin villages where the housing units are in place or to the 15 designated villages where they will be provided with



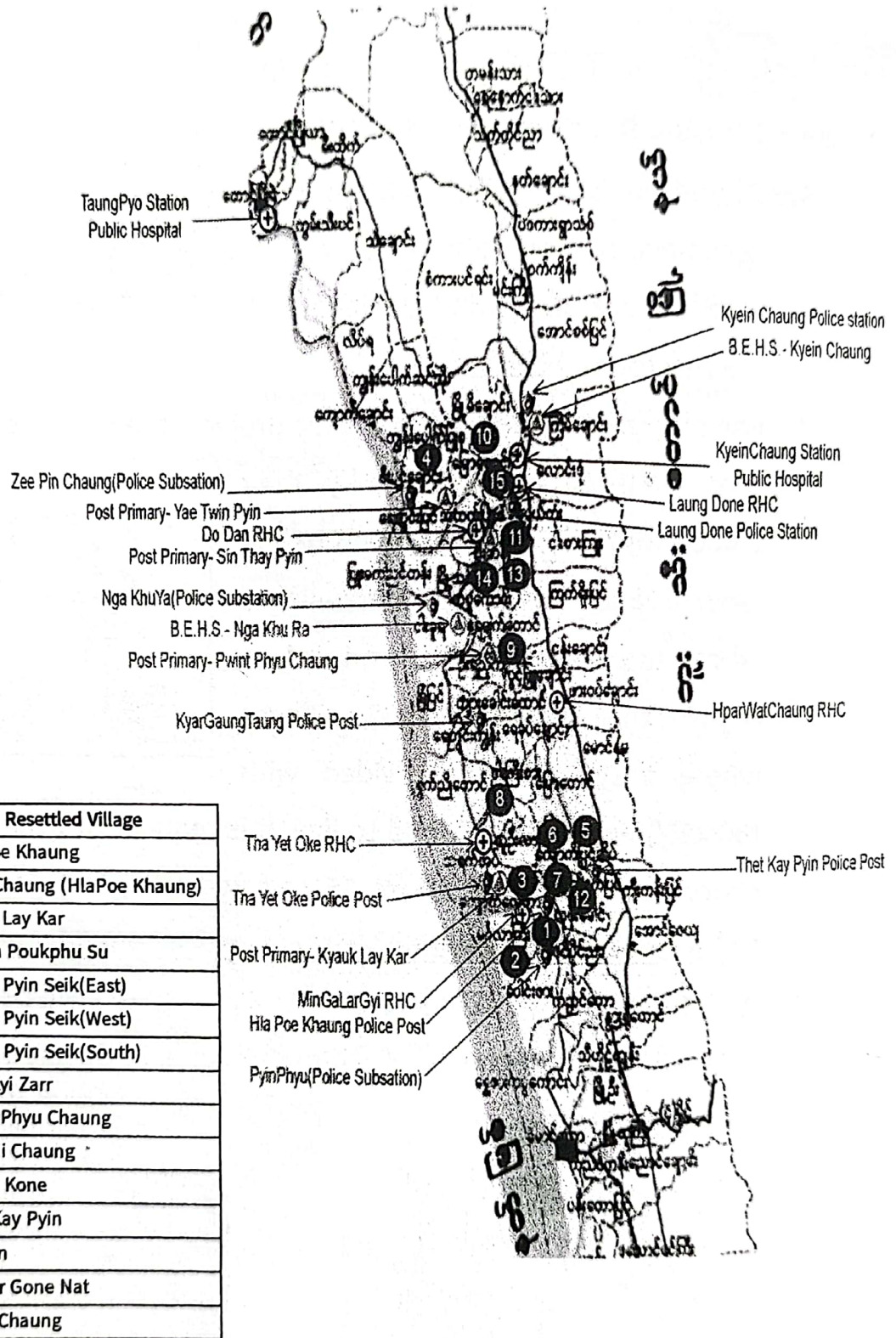
(60'x25') wide plots of land to live. It is required for the returnees who choose to resettle at those 15 selected villages to take part in the Cash-for-Work Programme for the constructions of their own houses.

❖ With funding from ASEAN, a Child-friendly space will be set up in each of the Transit Centers in Hla Phoe Khaung, Thet Kay Pyin, and Kyein Chaung (South).



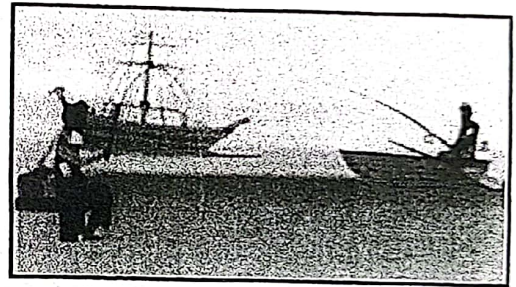
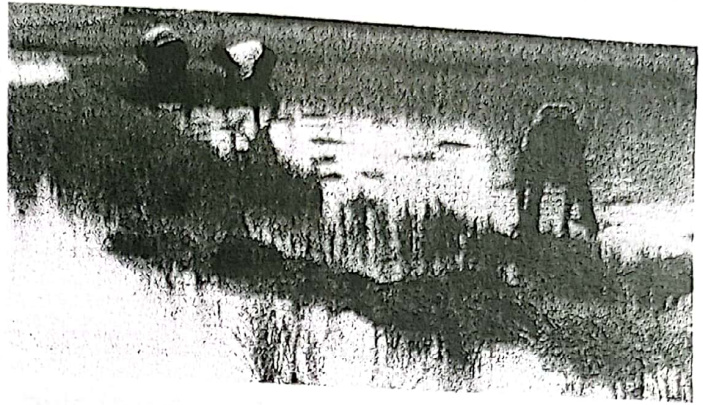


# Map of Prioritized Villages for resettlement in Maungdaw Township



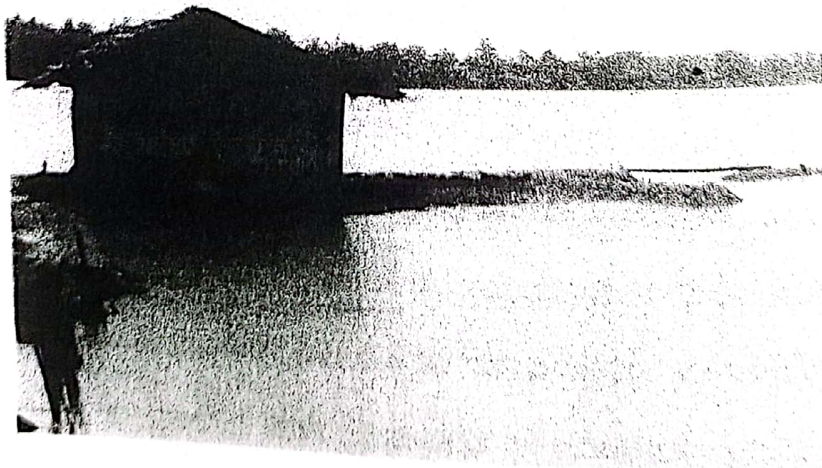
### 3. Livelihood

- ❖ Returnees will be granted permission to farm on suitable land plots in designated villages.
- ❖ Returnees will also receive paddy seeds, annual and perennial crops (seeds and saplings), fertilizers, farming tools, and cultivation trainings.
- ❖ In accordance with the existing Myanmar laws, relevant registration (ID) cards including National Verification Cards (NVC) will be issued to the returnees. The returnees, aged 18 or older, with NVC card or any identification card recognized by the Myanmar Government can apply for a Fishermen Identification Card which permits them to work both inshore and offshore fishing boats.
- ❖ Farming trainings will also be held at the designated villages.
- ❖ Livestock breeders will be trained and educated on livestock production and livestock disease prevention and management through trainings and seminars in order to contribute to their breeding profession, whereas fish breeders and those who are



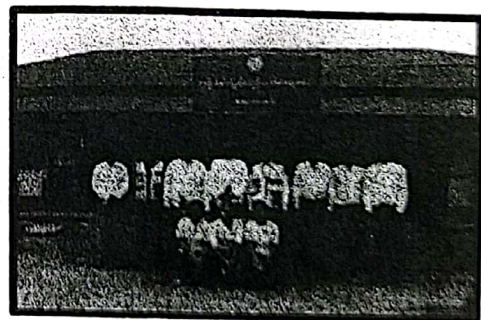
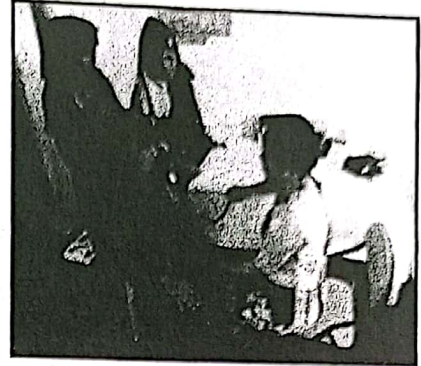
interested in fish farming will receive trainings in basic fish farming and fish breeding by injection method as needed.

- ❖ A variety of vocational trainings such as agricultural and animal husbandry training, bamboo handicraft training, tailoring, carpentry and masonry training, weaving training, and other trainings pertinent to local areas will be conducted selectively for the returnees under the pilot project in the designated villages.
- ❖ The returnees will also receive genetic resources (breeds), animal food production technologies, veterinary services along with the necessary trainings so that they can start up their own livestock, poultry, prawn and fish breeding businesses.
- ❖ Training courses in pastry making and sewing (basic and advanced courses) will be provided to the returnee women under the Community-based programme.



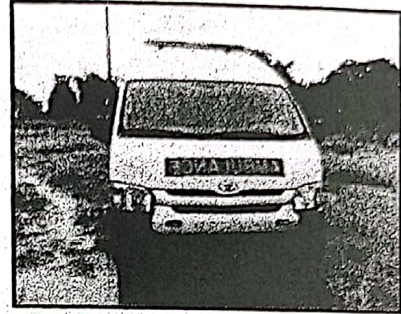
#### 4. Healthcare

- ❖ Upon arrival at the Taung Pyo Letwe and Nga Khu Ya Reception Centers, returnees will be required to undergo COVID-19 Antigen (RTD) Test.
- ❖ Returnees whose test result is negative for COVID-19 Antigen (RTD) Test will quarantine at each Reception Center for a required period and they will need to undergo RT-PCR test during their quarantine.
- ❖ Each reception center will set up a positive center for the returnees who get positive results for the COVID-19 Antigen (RTD) and RT-PCR tests. Those positive patients with COVID-19 symptoms will be transferred to Maungdaw General Hospital by ambulances for isolation and treatment.
- ❖ A Port of Entry Health Post has already been set up to conduct COVID-19 tests and monitor the COVID-19 situation in the quarantine and positive centers. Ambulances will be on standby. Medicines and medical equipment such as beds, ventilators and oxygen concentrators are already prepared at Maungdaw General Hospital and Medical specialists are also already assigned there.



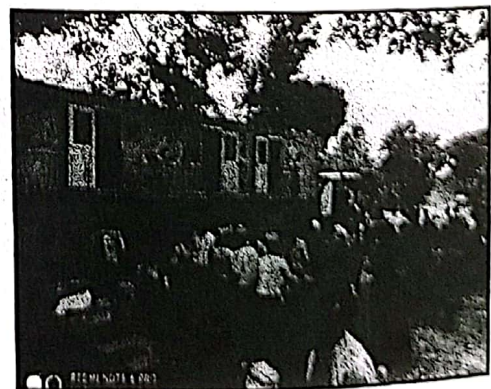
- ❖ After completing the quarantine period, the required stay in the Positive Center, and the isolation period in Maungdaw General Hospital, returnees will be transferred to the Hla Phoe Khaung Transit Center where they will receive healthcare from Public Health Medical

Teams assigned at the clinics located there. Ambulances and delivery beds will be available at all times in the clinics.



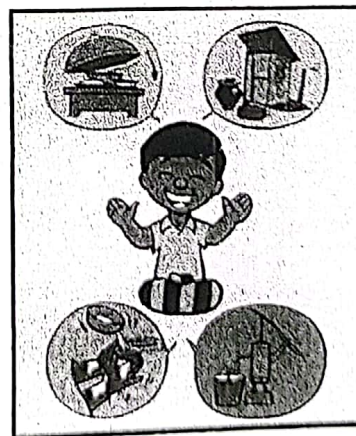
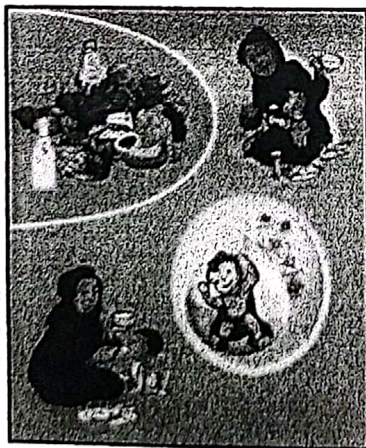
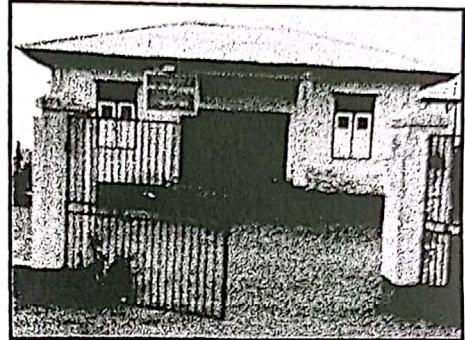
- ❖ Members of the Public Health Teams in three Transit Centers will treat mild illnesses and will transfer the patients who require hospitalization transfer to the Maungdaw General Hospital. Moreover, the Public Health Teams will provide prenatal and child health care, nutrition care, vaccination for children, health awareness trainings, communicable disease surveillance and prevention activities, continued treatments and medication for those suffering from chronic diseases (heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, etc.) as well as for those living with AIDS and *Tuberculosis* (TB).

- ❖ Returnees will be provided necessary medical care by rural health clinics located near their allocated villages. Mobile clinics will provide healthcare in areas far from health clinics. The maximum distance between the village and the hospital



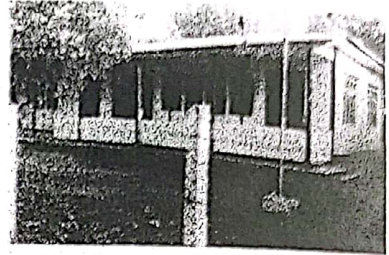
is approximately 8 miles, and the minimum distance is approximately 8 furlongs.

- ❖ If necessary, health clinics in villages will be upgraded and new clinics will be opened based on factors such as population, distance from health clinics, and required types of health clinic after returnees have settled in those villages.
- ❖ At all hospitals and clinics in Myanmar, including Rakhine State, the Government of Myanmar has been offering healthcare services to anyone without discrimination. In order to let people know that anyone can receive medical care regardless of race, religion, or nationality, sign boards have been placed outside the hospitals and clinics in northern Rakhine State.
- ❖ Mobile health units, medical staff, and local medical personnel are being trained to provide Comprehensive Healthcare in northern Rakhine State.

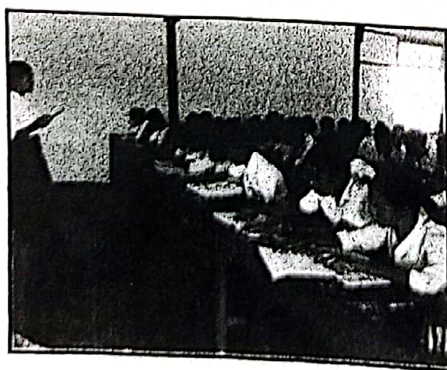


## 5. Education

- ❖ Children of the returnees can attend schools near their resettled villages to pursue their basic education. The maximum distance between a village and a school is approximately 3 miles, and the minimum distance is approximately 3 furlongs.



- ❖ Moreover, arrangements have been made to provide students in primary, middle, and high schools with Textbooks and exercise books. And primary school students will be provided with four pencils and a school uniform, and secondary school and high school students will be provided with two pencils and four pens. Nutrition campaigns are also being organized for students in primary schools. A placement will be conducted for students for allocation in appropriate level of classes and expenses for this process will be borne by the Government.

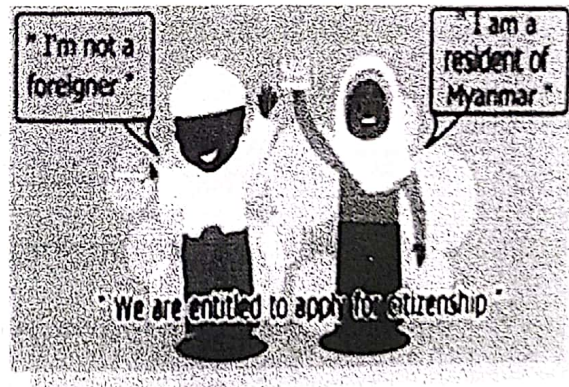


## 6. Security

- ❖ Following the return of the verified displaced persons to the Rakhine State, the corresponding security personnel from Township Police stations and the Border Guard Police posts will take necessary security measures at various levels to ensure the rule of law and security in the areas where the returnees reside or pass through.
- ❖ The necessary security measures will have been put in place, especially at the reception centers, transit camp, and designated villages where returnees will be resettled.
- ❖ ASEAN, UNDP, and UNHCR representatives will be on-site to provide assistance to ensure the smooth implementation of the Pilot Project for the reception and resettlement of returnees upon their arrival.

## 7. Process of National Verification Card (NVC) and its benefits

- ❖ NVC is required for the citizenship verification process, freedom of movement, access to livelihood activities, education and health care services.
- ❖ According to the Arrangement of Return of Displaced Persons from Rakhine State signed between Myanmar and Bangladesh in November 2017, Myanmar will issue all returnees the required ID cards at reception centers after verification and registration. The NVC is a temporary identification card (with no





mention of ethnicity or religion) to be used during the citizenship verification process.

- ❖ NVC is not required for those returnees who are in possession of any citizenship scrutiny card or national registration card issued by the Government of Myanmar. If the returnee's identification card is lost or destroyed, he or she can request for a duplicate, and no NVC is required.
- ❖ NVC holders are considered as residents of Myanmar.
- ❖ NVC holders need to keep their cards while their citizenship application is decided upon.
- ❖ The application of NVC holders who can submit the necessary documents for citizenship will be decided approximately as to whether they qualify for citizens/ naturalized citizens/ associated citizens, according to the Myanmar Citizenship Law and will be entitled to the rights corresponding to their respective citizenship categories.
- ❖ Children of NVC holders are entitled to apply for citizenship according to the Myanmar Citizenship Law.
- ❖ NVC holders in Rakhine State can cross into Bangladesh via official border checkpoints with Border Pass.

## 8. Entitlement to apply for citizenship according to the existing laws

- ❖ According to the 1982 Citizenship Law of Myanmar, there are three types of citizenship: citizen, associate citizen, and naturalized citizen.
- ❖ Those who are eligible under the 1982 Citizenship Law can apply for Citizenship (or) Associate Citizenship (or) Naturalized Citizenship together with the necessary documentation.
- ❖ The application and documentation will be examined in accordance with the 1982 Citizenship Law, and Citizenship (or) Associate Citizenship (or) Naturalized Citizenship will be decided by the Central Body.
- ❖ To abet smooth and speedy citizenship application procedure, mobile teams organized by the Township General Administration Office are working for issuance of birth certificates to all children born in Rakhine State regardless of religion.
- ❖ Furthermore, in accordance with existing laws, the authorities of Myanmar have been issuing birth certificates to the communities in Rakhine State, assisting holders of the three-fold National Registration Card to apply for Citizenship (or) Associate Citizenship and issuing Citizenship Scrutiny Card and Naturalized Citizenship Card based on the documents presented for the NVC card application.

## 9. Land/Properties Possession and Compensation

- ❖ Following the resettlement of returnees in designated locations, documentations that permitted them to use their previous farmland and prawn pound will be reviewed in accordance with the existing

farmland law and rules so that the same areas of farmland and prawn pound close to the resettlement locations will be permitted for them to use.

- ❖ Farmlands will be explored within the areas of resettlement sites where the prospective returnees are going to be placed.

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