

Renewed atrocities against **Rohingya** in Rakhine State, Myanmar

July 2024
Report





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Women's Peace Network is a Burmese civil society and human rights organization that works for the rights of marginalized communities, including women, youth, and ethnic and religious minorities. We are composed of lawyers, community leaders, and peace activists from Myanmar and around the world who share a common goal: peacefully promote and protect human rights. We strive to ensure that Myanmar is a place where all people can enjoy peace, justice, and prosperity and live together harmoniously.

For more information, please visit our website: www.womenspeacenet.org

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Out of our deep respect for them and heightened concern for Myanmar and Arakan's peaceful and democratic future, the organization solemnly issues this report. We call for an immediate end to the ongoing crisis across the country with bold actions for justice, accountability, and sustainable peace.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Burmese military and the Arakan Army are targeting an estimated 600,000 members of the Rohingya ethnic and religious minority group remaining in Myanmar with atrocities, in addition to risking the group with lethal conditions as a direct result of their armed conflict. Developments in the year 2024 point to the urgency of the matter, which has rapidly deteriorated since the resumption of such an armed conflict in November 2023. To accelerate its decades-long genocide, the Burmese military – perpetrator of crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide – has been launching more armed ground, air, and naval attacks on Rohingya civilians. It has also been pursuing a strategy of divide and conquer among the diverse populace of Rakhine State, especially by forcibly recruiting Rohingya civilians, collaborating with “Rohingya militant groups,” and forcing Rohingya civilians into divisive protests. Meanwhile, in its efforts for full control over Rakhine State, or “Arakan,” members of the Arakan Army have recently been acting in ways that demonstrate an ambition to take full control of, or get rid of, Rohingya in its desired area. Their acts range from torching Rohingya villages to massacring Rohingya civilians, including internally displaced persons, all the while promoting hate speech and genocidal rhetoric against Rohingya. Evidence points to a pattern of atrocities unique to each perpetrator, yet collectively risk yielding the same, devastating consequences on Arakan, Myanmar, South and Southeast Asia, and the world. At this critical juncture, it is imperative that – in consultation with Rohingya – the international community, including United Nations Member States, the leadership of the Burmese pro-democracy movement, and the Arakan Army all take measures to prevent the crisis from further exacerbating.

Key recommendations include:

1. **THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY** to immediately act to protect Rohingya, prevent further atrocities against them, and provide humanitarian aid to Rohingya forcibly displaced by the ongoing crisis in Rakhine State;
2. **THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL** to immediately hold a meeting dedicated to addressing the situation in Rakhine State, and discussing the possibility of non-compliance of the provisional measures that were issued by the International Court of Justice in *The Gambia v. Myanmar*;
3. **THE LEADERSHIP OF THE BURMESE PRO-DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT**, including the National Unity Government, the National Unity Consultative Council, and ethnic revolutionary organizations, to take measures immediately to mitigate the risk of further atrocities by the AA, and combat actively the Burmese military’s attempts to manipulate the people’s pursuit for a truly inclusive federal democracy; and
4. **THE ARAKAN ARMY** to cease immediately its attacks on Rohingya civilians, and instead genuinely work towards building a robust foundation for the peaceful coexistence of all people of Arakan, including Rakhine and Rohingya ethnic groups.

I. INTRODUCTION

The situation in Rakhine State has now all but reached a point of no return nearly eight months after the resumption of an armed conflict between the Burmese military and the Arakan Army (AA) in November 2023.¹ At the time of this report's writing, the AA, which aspires to gain full control of Rakhine State – or “Arakan” – has captured ten of the 17 townships of the state.² From early May 2024, the AA declared that it had taken control of significant command posts of the Burmese military and other areas in northern Rakhine State: areas where the majority of an approximate 600,000 Rohingya remaining in Myanmar reside.³

Evidence is now surfacing of Rohingya civilians being targeted by the AA with atrocities, being further subjected to genocidal actions by the Burmese military, and being caught in the crossfire of an escalating armed conflict between the two armed actors. With hundreds of thousands internally displaced, reports have revealed a rapidly deepening humanitarian crisis – compounded by a lack of medical facilities and humanitarian assistance – to which Rohingya civilians have acutely faced. As the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights reported in June 2024 on the situation of Myanmar to the 56th session of the UN Human Rights Council, “Rohingya [interviewed] often stated that there was no difference between the two parties and the only constant was that they are continuously exposed to life-threatening risks and systematic human rights violations.”⁴

Therefore, out of its principles for human rights and justice, as well as its genuine concern for a peaceful Arakan and Myanmar, Women's Peace Network (WPN) issues the present report: **“Renewed atrocities against Rohingya in Rakhine State, Myanmar.”**

The report will focus on the situation of Rakhine State after November 2023, with particular attention to key types of atrocities that both parties have since predominantly inflicted on Rohingya civilians, and in Rohingya villages and hamlets. Specifically, it will first highlight the urgency of the situation at the time of this report's writing. Then, it will present case studies and related reporting of such atrocities, in order to demonstrate the systematic, widespread, and targeted patterns with which they have increasingly been unleashed. Further, to highlight the gravity of the situation in Rakhine State, the report will provide the crisis' many likely, catastrophic implications on domestic, regional, and international peace and security.

¹ “Myanmar: Türk sounds alarm amid rising tensions in Rakhine,” *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, April 19, 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/04/myanmar-turk-sounds-alarm-amid-rising-tensions-rakhine>; “Myanmar: Intensification of clashes: Flash Update #4,” *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*, November 15, 2023, <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/myanmar/myanmar-intensification-clashes-flash-update-4-14-november-2023-enmy>.

² “20,000 civilians trapped by fighting in Western Myanmar,” *Radio Free Asia*, May 23, 2024, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/civilians-trapped-maungdaw-rakhine-05232024163703.html>; “AA Now Controls 10 Townships in Rakhine,” *Burma News International*, May 20, 2024, <https://www.bnionline.net/en/news/aa-now-controls-10-townships-rakhine>; “Arakan Army vows to fight for total control of Myanmar's Rakhine State,” *Radio Free Asia*, March 4, 2024, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/aa-03042024163837.html>.

³ “Dashboard,” Myanmar Conflict Map, last accessed July 9, 2024, <https://myanmar.iiss.org/dashboard>.

⁴ United Nations, Human Rights Council, *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, A/HRC/56/23* (22 May 2024), available from undocs.org/en/A/HRC/56/23.

WPN takes this report to follow up on the many calls for action to address the situation of Rakhine State, over the past months. Indeed, multiple alarms on the situation have already been raised as efforts to curb the region's dangerous trajectory. Following the Burmese military and the AA's armed clashes in Hpon Nyo Leik village in late January 2024, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights sounded the alarm on January 30, on its finding that "the Arakan Army allegedly positioned its troops in and around this Rohingya village anticipating the military's attacks."⁵ Soon after the Burmese military's fatal airstrikes on Rohingya civilians in Minbya township on March 18, a statement from the UN Secretary-General was issued with deep concern for the military's attacks and a call to "all parties to prevent further incitement of communal tensions."⁶ On April 4, at the UN Security Council's second open meeting on Myanmar, calls for the protection of the Rohingya population were raised when addressing the situation in Rakhine State.⁷ And, following the AA's brutal attack on downtown Buthidaung on May 17, on May 23, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar issued a statement on the situation of Rohingya, warning that "the choice of [Member States] to either step up or step away from this horror could literally be a matter of life or death for countless Rohingya."⁸

Unfortunately, such calls have yet to be heeded. That is also despite the domestic efforts to learn from the tragedies of its past: a people-led movement that took root in the wake of the Burmese military's attempted coup on February 1, 2021. On May 19, addressing the AA's May 17 attack, WPN issued a statement calling for urgent action to prevent further atrocities in Rakhine State – for the international community "not to fail Rohingya again." On May 21, Rohingya civil society issued a statement claiming, "we want to live side by side in peaceful co-existence with the Rakhine and other diverse ethnic and religious communities, on equal terms, rooted in dignity and respect for our Rohingya identity."⁹ On May 25, WPN joined 194 civil society organizations (CSOs) and other members of the Burmese pro-democracy movement to "call on organizations and individuals in Rakhine and across the country to immediately stop exploiting the lives, property and image of the oppressed Rohingya for political and military use."¹⁰ Reaffirming these united, grassroots calls, in its final chapter, the report provides comprehensive recommendations to the international community, the leadership of the Burmese pro-democracy movement, and the AA. There is no time to lose.

⁵ "Myanmar: Human rights situation worsens as military lashes out indiscriminately amid losses - Türk," *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, January 30, 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/01/myanmar-human-rights-situation-worsens-military-lashes-out-indiscriminately>.

⁶ "Secretary-General Deeply Concerned by Deteriorating Situation, Escalating Conflict in Myanmar, Condemns All Violence, Reiterates Call for Civilian Protection," *United Nations*, March 18, 2024, <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sgsm22167.doc.htm>.

⁷ "Myanmar: And end to the military's campaign of violence and political repression is a vital step, says ASG Khiari," *United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs*, April 4, 2024, <https://dppa.un.org/en/mtg-sc-9595-asg-khiari-myanmar-4-apr-2024>.

⁸ "Myanmar: Urgent international action crucial to save lives of thousands of Rohingya in Rakhine State says UN expert," *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, May 23, 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/05/myanmar-urgent-international-action-crucial-save-lives-thousands-rohingya>

⁹ "Rohingya Facing Existential Threat in Arakan," *Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK*, May 21, 2024, <https://www.brouk.org.uk/rohingya-facing-existential-threat-in-arakan/>.

¹⁰ "Joint statement by 195 revolutionary forces and civil society organisations on the situation in northern Rakhine," *Justice For Myanmar*, May 22, 2024, <https://www.justiceformyanmar.org/press-releases/joint-statement-by-195-revolutionary-forces-and-civil-society-organisations-on-the-situation-in-northern-rakhine>.

II. METHODOLOGY

Extensive research of case studies, thorough verification of their sources, and a careful approach to WPN's analysis were essential to the production of this report.

Based on its observation of developments in Rakhine State, for this report, WPN gathered a significant number of case studies from late December 2023 to June 2024. Staff gathered secondary sources deemed credible and reliable based on its expertise and knowledge. UN reports were heavily relied on for its language and approach.

WPN also accessed its wide network, which is composed of those personally affected by the ongoing atrocities in Rakhine State, for further information. WPN staff conducted 20 interviews with witnesses, victims, and the victims' family members. Consent was acquired in gathering and presenting such information in this report. Significant attention was dedicated to ensuring the confidentiality of its sources, in order to prevent serious, direct and indirect acts of reprisals. For this reason, WPN chose to avoid presenting any personally identifiable information in this report; it refers to its primary sources as "WPN sources." The report urges immediate safety and protection for Rohingya human rights defenders and civil society working on issues related to Rakhine State.

WPN also cross-referenced information from both types of sources to ensure that the report would present the situation in Rakhine State as closely as possible. In this context, the organization takes this report as a medium to illustrate the patterns of atrocities in Rakhine State more than a full account of all and each of the atrocities that have been, and are still being, committed by the Burmese military and the AA in that area. This decision was taken upon acknowledging the presence of widespread communication, internet, transportation, and movement cuts imposed on the state – increasingly by the Burmese military and the AA on Rohingya civilians – and considering these restrictions' potential ramifications on the quality of acquired data. As with the case of Myanmar as a whole, WPN underscores that the actual situation is far worse than what can be possibly depicted in writing, with the actual number of cases and casualties likely much higher than what may be provided. WPN calls for independent investigations on the situation in Rakhine to be conducted immediately.

Further, WPN emphasizes that the amount of information in each chapter does not, in any way, indicate the degree to which each perpetrator of atrocities should respectively be held liable. The report simply reflects the information that WPN could gather, verify, and analyze given its resources and circumstances.

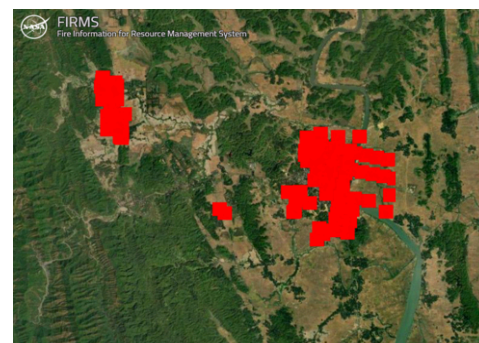
Lastly, in this report, WPN defines villages with a majority Rohingya population as "Rohingya villages," and hamlets with a majority Rohingya population as "Rohingya hamlets." This terminology is consistent with the UN and other independent reports on the situation in Rakhine State, to which this report refers. The segregated infrastructure of these areas are a result of the decades-long genocide and apartheid-like conditions to which Rohingya have been subjected. For a better understanding of the anatomy of Rohingya lives in Rakhine State, WPN recommends accessing its past reports and the sources it cites, among the many other resources available online.

III. A CRITICAL CRISIS IN RAKHINE STATE

At the time of this report's writing, a lethal crisis is enveloping northern Rakhine State's Maungdaw township – further endangering its Rohingya majority of an estimated 40,000 people.

On June 16, 2024, the AA issued an “advanced notice” to “residents” in Maungdaw township. The notice directed them to “evacuate” the area starting at 9 PM Myanmar Time (MMT) that day.¹¹ This act is familiar: the AA had issued a “notice” to civilians in Buthidaung township before they announced that they would take over it in May 2024.¹² And even before that – in April and months before – cases of AA members targeting Rohingya civilians in Rakhine State had already been widespread. As this report will reveal, there has been a jarring juxtaposition between the AA's statements to the public and its members' actions in Rakhine State.

Combined, such observations strengthen the possibility that the AA will approach Maungdaw township just as heinously – just as systematically – as it did in Buthidaung township a month prior. On May 17, AA members set downtown Buthidaung and its surrounding Rohingya villages on fire.¹³ Buthidaung township was known to have the largest Rohingya population, an approximate 260,000 people, in Rakhine State.¹⁴ Detailed and consistent reports have since emerged of the members torching Rohingya villages and hamlets, burning homes, and massacring an estimated 1,500 Rohingya civilians, including women, children, and elderly persons.¹⁵ Such attacks have forcibly displaced more than 200,000 civilians, mostly Rohingya, without any avenue for protection or escape.¹⁶ From May 18 to 21, further mass fires were reported in the area; witnesses claim that AA soldiers launched such fires even after taking full control of Buthidaung township.



Satellite imagery, with the red squares marking fires, of downtown Buthidaung on May 17, 2024 from NASA's Fire Information for Resource Management System (“FIRMS”).

¹¹ Khine Thu Kha (@KhineThuKha), “Advance Notice and Emergency Announcement Regarding Maungdaw Township . . .,” X, June 17, 2024, <https://x.com/KhineThuKha/status/1802526361611100310>.

¹² Nathan Ruser, “They left a trail of ash: decoding the Arakan Army's arson attacks in the Rohingya heartland,” *The Strategist - The Australian Strategy Policy Institute*, June 13, 2024, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/they-left-a-trail-of-ash-decoding-the-arakan-armys-arson-attacks-in-the-rohingya-heartland/>; “Rohingya Facing Existential Threat in Arakan”; Khine Thu Kha (@KhineThuKha), “Curfew statement . . .,” X, April 26, 2024, <https://x.com/KhineThuKha/status/1784230231341211698>.

¹³ “Urgent call for action for Rohingya in Rakhine State, Myanmar,” *Women's Peace Network*, May 19, 2024, https://mcusercontent.com/6819ae24e30bd9a9db0322d69/files/fac84ff2-a7b2-e781-fd50-d8e2484cc136/5_19_Urgent_call_for_action_for_Rohingya_in_Rakhine_State_Myanmar.pdf.

¹⁴ “Rohingya Facing Existential Threat in Arakan.”

¹⁵ “SAC-M expresses serious concern over risk of grave violations in Maungdaw and calls on all armed actors to ensure protection of civilians,” *Special Advisory Council for Myanmar*, June 18, 2024, <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/2024/06/sac-m-serious-concern-risk-grave-violations-rohingya-maungdaw-armed-actors-ensure-protection-civilians/>; “Urgent call for action for Rohingya in Rakhine State, Myanmar”; Wai Wai Nu (@wainu), “1/ Deeply troubled to learn that at midnight May 17, #ArakanArmy set fire to downtown #Buthidaung and surrounding villages . . .,” X, May 18, 2024, <https://x.com/wainu/status/1791714692148211762>.

¹⁶ “Myanmar: Urgent international action crucial to save lives of thousands of Rohingya in Rakhine State says UN expert”; “Comment by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk on violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State,” *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, May 19, 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/05/comment-un-high-commissioner-human-rights-volker-turk-violence>.



Satellite imagery of downtown Buthidaung on May 18 to May 21, 2024 from NASA's FIRMS.¹⁷ The red marks indicate the progression of fires each day.

On June 19, at the 56th session of the UN Human Rights Council, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights warned, when referring to Maungdaw township, “following a similar pattern in Buthidaung, where Rohingya were ordered to flee, and then the town burned, I fear we are – yet again – about to bear witness to displacement, destruction and abuses.”¹⁸

Reports have, in fact, already begun to reveal such an outcome.¹⁹ For more than a month, the Burmese military and the AA have been deliberately positioning themselves in several Rohingya villages in the township – killing and injuring many Rohingya.²⁰ WPN has also been told of AA members restricting Rohingya’s movement, including by installing checkpoints between, and gates around, Rohingya villages. The AA’s tools have since enabled its members to intimidate Rohingya civilians, and often extort from them a prohibitive amount of money or “taxes.”

WPN has also been informed of allegations of sexual and gender-based violence against Rohingya women, including internally displaced persons (“IDPs”); the cases are being substantiated at the time of this report’s writing. While not presenting them, this report recalls the decades-long use of rape as a weapon of war by the Burmese military, and the past commission of sexual and gender-based violence by AA members against Rohingya; for the latter, WPN notes that the AA reportedly did take some steps to ensure justice for the victims and survivors.²¹ It also takes into

¹⁷ NRT VIIRS 375 m Active Fire product VNP14IMGT distributed from NASA FIRMS. Available on-line <https://earthdata.nasa.gov/firms>. doi:10.5067/FIRMS/VIIRS/VNP14IMGT_NRT.002. Note: We acknowledge the use of data and/or imagery from NASA’s Fire Information for Resource Management System (FIRMS) (<https://earthdata.nasa.gov/firms>), part of NASA’s Earth Observing System Data and Information System (EOSDIS).

¹⁸ “Myanmar: a breakneck speed ‘disintegration of human rights,’ says High Commissioner,” *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, June 18, 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/06/myanmar-breakneck-speed-disintegration-human-rights-says-high>.

¹⁹ Libby Hogan and wires, “Fresh attacks against Rohingya in Myanmar, UN decries beheadings, violence,” *ABC News*, June 17, 2024, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-06-17/fresh-attacks-violence-against-rohingya-in-rakhine-myanmar/103988740>.

²⁰ Arakan Express News, “မောင်တော၊ ပန်းတောပြင်နဲ့ ဇင်တူလာကျေးရွာမှာ အေအေနဲ့ စစ်ကောင်စီတို့ကြား တိုက်ပွဲကြောင့် ရိုဟင်ဂျာ ၄ ဦးသေဆုံးပြီး ၁၈ ဦးဒဏ်ရာရ,” *Facebook*, June 20, 2024, https://www.facebook.com/thearakanexpress/posts/pfbid0eXpookFGkUipnv1ABqv82h9pv9DLQUutrxKWSjciDLui48nYtpcADm5oLqwNC245I?_rdc=1&_rdr.

²¹ “Efforts to investigate and punish sexual and gender-based crimes committed against Rohingya: Evidence analysis,” *Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar*, March 27, 2024, https://iimm.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/SGBC-Report_EN.pdf; “‘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; United Nations, Human Rights Council, *Sexual and*

consideration that on July 2024, the Special Rapporteur for the situation of human rights in Myanmar reported that “the re-escalation of conflict between the Arakan Army and the [State Administration Council] has put Rohingya women at heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence,” leaving “Rohingya women and [lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender] people [now] fearful of sexual violence by the Arakan Army as well as from Rohingya militant groups.”²²

All such atrocities have increasingly become in stark contrast to the UN Secretary-General’s calls on June 6, for “all parties to the conflict to exercise maximum restraint, prioritize protection of civilians in accordance with international humanitarian law and prevent further incitement of communal tension and violence.”²³ That both the Burmese military and the AA have failed to succumb to the various forms of pressure reveals their utter disregard for international human rights and humanitarian law, their degree of impunity and – as this report will reveal – their interest in benefiting from the infliction on Rohingya conditions calculated to bring about its physical destruction, in whole or in part, in Myanmar.

gender-based violence 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.

²² United Nations, Human Rights Council, *Courage amid crisis: gendered impacts of the coup and the pursuit of gender equality in Myanmar*, A/HRC/56/CRP.8 (2 July 2024), available from undocs.org/en/A/HRC/56/CRP.8.

²³ “Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General - on increasing conflict in Myanmar,” *United Nations*, June 6, 2024, <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2024-01-31/statement-attributable-the-spokesperson-for-the-secretary-general-%E2%80%93-myanmar>.

IV. THE BURMESE MILITARY: Acceleration of its genocide against Rohingya

The Burmese military is continuing to perpetrate atrocities against Rohingya civilians remaining in Rakhine State. In their scale and scope, these atrocities are becoming more consistent with – or far beyond – the abuses committed by the military for over seven decades, including its “clearance operations” in 2016 and 2017 onward. In 2016 and 2017, allegedly in response to an isolated armed attack, the Burmese military collectively punished the Rohingya population as a whole in Rakhine State with acts of mass killing, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, sexual and gender-based violence, and other grave abuses.²⁴ Over 750,000 Rohingya were forced to flee from the country.²⁵ The abuses against Rohingya have since been described as likely amounting to genocide by the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar (IIFMM) and the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, among many others in the international community.²⁶

Following such findings, in November 2019, The Gambia instituted proceedings against Myanmar – both state parties to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (“the Genocide Convention”) – before the International Court of Justice (ICJ). In its application, The Gambia contended that the acts taken against Rohingya from around October 2016 and August 2017 had constituted violations of the Genocide Convention.²⁷ The *Gambia v. Myanmar*, which is being reviewed at the time of this report’s writing, has since observed public sittings, memorials, counter memorials, and other developments.²⁸ On January 2020, in response to The Gambia’s request, the ICJ indicated provisional measures to Myanmar that include directions to “take all measures within its power to prevent the commission of all acts within the scope of Article II” of the Genocide Convention.²⁹ Having noted the “exceptional circumstances of the case and its gravity,” the ICJ is expected to rule on the case in the near future.³⁰

The over three-year period following the Burmese military’s attempted coup has observed a rapid and unprecedented spike in the commission of abuses against Rohingya in Myanmar. This is in large part due to the military being the key perpetrator of such abuses, on top of the widespread

²⁴ “Efforts to investigate and punish sexual and gender-based crimes committed against Rohingya: Evidence analysis”; “Bachelet shocked by killing of Rohingya human rights defender,” *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, October 1, 2021, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/2021/10/bachelet-shocked-killing-rohingya-human-rights-defender>; A/HRC/42/CRP.4; 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.

²⁵ “Bachelet shocked by killing of Rohingya human rights defender,” *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, October 1, 2021, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/2021/10/bachelet-shocked-killing-rohingya-human-rights-defender>.

²⁶ *Ibid.*; United Nations, Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar*, Thomas H. Andrews, A/HRC/55/65 (14 March 2024), available from undocs.org/en/A/HRC/55/65; United Nations, Human Rights Council, *Report of the independent international fact-finding mission on Myanmar*, A/HRC/42/50 (8 August 2019), available from undocs.org/en/A/HRC/42/50.

²⁷ “Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (The Gambia v. Myanmar),” International Court of Justice, last accessed July 9, 2024, <https://www.icj-cij.org/case/178>.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (The Gambia v. Myanmar), Provisional Measures, Order of 23 January 2020, I.C.J. Reports 2020, p. 3.

³⁰ Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (The Gambia v. Myanmar), Fixing of time-limits: Memorial and Counter-Memorial, Order of 23 January 2020, I.C.J. Reports 2020, p. 5.

atrocities across the country that have since been reported as crimes against humanity and war crimes by the UN Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM), the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar.³¹

Such crimes have taken place in spite of recent, international efforts for justice and accountability in the country. Over the years, groups including civil society and lawyers filed cases for the exercise of universal jurisdiction in prosecuting certain Burmese military officials and leadership for their crimes – some indicating significant steps to come.³² In March 2022, the United States government formally determined that the Burmese military had committed crimes against humanity and genocide against Rohingya.³³ Subsequently, in November 2023, the Maldives, as well as Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom jointly, filed declarations of intervention in *The Gambia v. Myanmar* under Article 63 of the Statute of the ICJ.³⁴ In July 2024, the ICJ decided that the declarations are admissible, effectively allowing the seven countries to join the case.³⁵

Yet, atrocities have continued to take place in the country – and now increasingly in Rakhine State. In late May 2024, for at least two-and-a-half days, more than 100 Burmese military soldiers raided Byain Phyu village, Sittwe township.³⁶ The soldiers systematically tortured and killed at least 50 civilians, raped and gang raped women, looted the villagers' properties, and abducted dozens of civilians, including women and children.³⁷ Reports have also surfaced of the military subjecting civilians whom it abducted to extreme forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment when interrogating them in Sittwe Prison; many were then allegedly tortured and killed, some of whose bodies became “covered in bruises and long cuts.”³⁸ The massacre was noted by the UN Secretary-General in a statement on June 6, which stated that “the latest incident targeting ethnic Rakhine in Western Myanmar, and the ongoing persecution of the Rohingya, underlines the need for protection of all communities,” and “those responsible must be held to account.”³⁹

³¹ A/HRC/56/CRP.8; A/HRC/55/65; United Nations, Human Rights Council, *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, A/HRC/53/52* (15 November 2023), available from undocs.org/en/A/HRC/53/52; United Nations, Human Rights Council, *Report of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, A/HRC/54/19* (30 June 2023), available from undocs.org/en/A/HRC/54/19.

³² “Argentine Prosecutor Seeks Arrest Warrants for Rohingya Genocide,” *Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK*, June 28, 2024, <https://www.brouk.org.uk/argentine-prosecutor-seeks-arrest-warrants-for-rohingya-genocide/>; A/HRC/56/23.

³³ “Genocide, Crimes Against Humanity and Ethnic Cleansing of Rohingya in Burma,” United States Department of State, last accessed July 9, 2024, <https://www.state.gov/burma-genocide/>; Wai Wai Nu and Naomi Kikoler, “One Year after US Genocide Determination, Rohingya Community Remains at Risk,” *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, March 29, 2023, <https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/blog/one-year-after-us-genocide-determination-rohingya-community-remains-at-risk>.

³⁴ “Declaration of intervention of Maldives,” International Court of Justice, last accessed July 9, 2024, <https://www.icj-cij.org/case/178>; “Joint declaration of intervention of Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom,” *ibid.*

³⁵ Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (*The Gambia v. Myanmar*), The Court decides that the declarations of intervention filed by seven States are admissible, Order of 3 July 2024, Press Release No. 2024/55, p. 1.

³⁶ Jonathan Head and Burmese Service, “Myanmar soldiers cut off tattoos and gave detainees urine to drink, witnesses tell BBC,” *BBC News*, June 6, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ckmm6jep6l7o>.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ “Junta interrogation results in more deaths in Myanmar’s west: source,” *Radio Free Asia*, June 12, 2024, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/myanmar-junta-interrogation-06122024062517.html>.

³⁹ “Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General - on increasing conflict in Myanmar”.

Meanwhile, in another effort to subjugate the country's people, the Burmese military has acutely intensified its targeting of Rohingya. In its dwindling areas under its control, the military has issued past and new measures that serve to specifically weaken Rohingya and erase the Rohingya identity in Myanmar.

- **SWE TIN SIT:** A measure that has facilitated the Burmese military's monitoring and surveillance of Rohingya has been the "Swe Tin Sit" process.⁴⁰ The process allows the military to check the status of the group in specified areas, including IDP camps, by mandating Rohingya to be photographed with their respective families.⁴¹ In January 2022, the military reinstated the Swe Tin Sit process in Buthidaung and Sittwe townships, and other parts of northern Rakhine State predominantly resided by Rohingya. The process allows the Burmese military to arbitrarily arrest and detain, and commit other abuses against, Rohingya who are removed from their family's household registration list for not being physically "present" for the photo.⁴²
- **NATIONAL VERIFICATION CARD:** Another measure is the National Verification Card (NVC), which is a discriminatory tool that has imposed upon Rohingya no other option but to falsely identify themselves as "Bengali immigrants" in line with the discriminatory 1982 Citizenship Law.⁴³ Rohingya who deny the acquisition of NVCs are effectively barred from exercising basic rights – even freedom of movement – and accessing basic services that have for decades been afforded to many other groups in the country. Since its attempted coup, the Burmese military has increasingly required Rohingya to present NVCs when seeking healthcare in already under-resourced and understaffed hospitals and clinics; their staff have long segregated Rohingya patients from others, often restricting them in enclosed spaces or "detention wards" with people detained by the Burmese military.⁴⁴ The military is also using NVCs as a prerequisite for Rohingya to access education in Myanmar, including higher education systems.⁴⁵

Citizenship, or any kind of official documentation that recognizes their belonging to Myanmar, thus remains exclusively denied to Rohingya: a uniquely dehumanizing tactic following the discriminatory laws that were present under previous military dictatorships and the civilian government.⁴⁶ It also disproportionately aggravates the already vulnerable conditions of Rohingya women and girls: In July 2024, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar reported that "Rohingya women and girls are less likely than Rohingya men to hold identity documents, further limiting their mobility and access to employment, healthcare, and education under the [State Administration Council's] web of restrictions and travel checkpoints."⁴⁷

⁴⁰ "We are targeted for being Rohingya in Myanmar and everywhere': the situation of Rohingya since February 1, 2021".

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ "We are targeted for being Rohingya in Myanmar and everywhere': the situation of Rohingya since February 1, 2021; A/HRC/39/64.

⁴⁴ "We are targeted for being Rohingya in Myanmar and everywhere': the situation of Rohingya since February 1, 2021".

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ A/HRC/56/CRP.8.

- **TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS:** The Burmese military is also attempting to control Rohingya's movement in Myanmar. These mechanisms include "travel restrictions," which are policies that condition movement to and from townships and villages on the presentation of NVCs, household registration lists, and other personally identifiable information to their respective military-affiliated police and administrative officials. The vague language and oversight of these restrictions allows the Burmese military to apply them to Rohingya leaving or returning to the country.

Collectively, such discriminatory instruments have since enabled the Burmese military to rely on them as grounds to imprison Rohingya. Since its attempted coup, the military has arbitrarily arrested and detained at least 3957 Rohingya, including at least 1167 Rohingya women and 166 children, according to WPN.⁴⁸ Despite such unparalleled levels of persecution, legal protection and support have become largely inaccessible to Rohingya. All remain denied healthcare, education, employment, food, water, and other basic necessities, at least in part due to the military's NVC requirement. Access to basic health services have also become virtually nonexistent for Rohingya in Rakhine State. In March 2024, the Burmese military arbitrarily shut down "Maungdaw General Hospital," the township's only public hospital.⁴⁹

At the same time, 130,000 Rohingya remain segregated from the wider Rakhine population in internally displaced persons' camps ("IDP camps") controlled by the Burmese military and its associated groups.⁵⁰ Many Rohingya in these camps had been forced into them following the 2012 wave of state-sponsored violence against the group in Rakhine State.⁵¹ The IDP camps have since served to entrench the line of division along "racial" and ethnic identities in the state; travel checkpoints are still being used by the Burmese military and its related camp affiliates as instruments to control Rohingya's movement, and doubly force them into confinement with bribery, intimidation, extortion, and other abuses.⁵²

An increasingly disproportionate loss of life is thus forced upon the IDPs as a result of the debilitating circumstances with which they remain targeted. These circumstances include the Burmese military's blanket restrictions on the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Rakhine State after the May 2023 arrival of Cyclone Mocha to the region.⁵³ Reports revealed that the cyclone led to the destruction of over 1,000 health facilities and the deaths of over 400 Rohingya, of whom the majority were IDPs; many of these civilians had not received full emergency assistance or been exposed to relevant warnings prior to the cyclone's arrival.⁵⁴ The military's aid cuts have since had

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ A/HRC/56/23; A/HRC/55/65.

⁵⁰ "The Rohingya boat crisis: Recent developments and key contributing factors in South and Southeast Asia," *Women's Peace Network*, March 2024,

https://mcusercontent.com/6819ae24e30bd9a9db0322d69/files/8cc673ec-3a91-b2d8-7063-acafb88046f4/BRIEFING_PAPER_The_Rohingya_boat_crisis_Recent_developments_and_key_contributing_factors_in_South_and_Southeast_Asia.pdf.

⁵¹ "An Open Prison without End": Myanmar's Mass Detention of Rohingya in Rakhine State," *Human Rights Watch*, October 8, 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/10/08/open-prison-without-end/myanmars-mass-detention-rohingya-rakhine-state>.

⁵² "We are targeted for being Rohingya in Myanmar and everywhere": the situation of Rohingya since February 1, 2021".

⁵³ United Nations, General Assembly, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar*, Thomas H. Andrews, A/78/527 (12 October 2023), available from undocs.org/A/78/527.

⁵⁴ A/HRC/56/23; "Preventable Deaths in Cyclone Mocha and the Rohingya genocide," *Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK*, May 25, 2023,

<https://www.brouk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Preventable-Deaths-in-Cyclone-Mocha-and-the-Rohingya-Genocide>.

an “outsize impact on women” in Rakhine State, denying pregnant women access to maternal care, medication, and nutrition according to the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar.⁵⁵ In June 2024, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reported that “camps in central Rakhine damaged during Cyclone Mocha in May 2023 were yet to be rebuilt.”⁵⁶



Left: Seventy-seven Rohingya, including 49 women and 11 children, being rounded up by the Burmese military to be arbitrarily arrested and detained on December 22, 2021 for their “illegal traveling.”⁵⁷

Right: The devastation in a Rohingya village after Cyclone Mocha hit Rakhine State in May 2023.⁵⁸

Taken together, the above analysis presents the Burmese military’s decades-long genocide. It also details the various ways in which the military has advanced it after its attempted coup. The military’s targeting of Rohingya with its longstanding, discriminatory, persecutory ways are thus evident.

As the following sections will demonstrate, over the past months, the Burmese military has taken the resumption of its armed conflict with the AA as an opportunity to further advance its genocide against Rohingya civilians, and in Rohingya villages and hamlets.

A. Forced recruitment

The Burmese military has been forcibly recruiting Rohingya despite not considering them as “citizens” under its “mandatory military service” and other related measures. Since unjustly requiring conscription since February 2024, the military has forcibly recruited more than 1,000 Rohingya, mostly youth, through armed abductions and night raids from areas in Rakhine State – including IDP camps.⁵⁹ The military has also attempted to conscript Rohingya in the state with extortion, intimidation, verbal promises of money and rice rations, and false promises of citizenship

[pdf](https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/they-ignore-us-on-purpose-cyclone-deepens-rohingya-suffering/); “‘They ignore us on purpose’: Cyclone deepens Rohingya suffering,” *Frontier Myanmar*, June 15, 2023, <https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/they-ignore-us-on-purpose-cyclone-deepens-rohingya-suffering/>.

⁵⁵ A/HRC/56/CRP.8.

⁵⁶ A/HRC/56/23.

⁵⁷ *Rohingya Muslims Arrested by Myanmar military regime/Photo via DMG*, photograph, The Chindwin, December 23, 2021, <https://www.thechindwin.com/dozens-of-the-rohingya-muslims-were-arrested-for-illegal-traveling/>.

⁵⁸ Photograph, Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK, last accessed May 22, 2024, <https://www.brouk.org.uk/at-least-400-rohingya-feared-dead-in-idp-camps-humanitarian-aid-urgently-needed/>.

⁵⁹ “The Intensifying Rohingya Genocide”; “Myanmar: Military Forcibly Recruiting Rohingya,” *Human Rights Watch*, April 9, 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/04/10/myanmar-military-forcibly-recruiting-rohingya>.

(or pink citizenship cards denoting “full” citizenship) and other acts.⁶⁰ That these acts specifically make use of the unique vulnerabilities that have long been faced by Rohingya further suggest their targeted nature. Reports have also surfaced of the military threatening and “using as leverage” families of Rohingya who refuse the military’s forced recruitment or escape from it.⁶¹ The forced recruitment’s residual effects of Rohingya left behind, especially women, have also aggravated their already dire economic, social, and security conditions in Rakhine State.⁶²



Left: Members of the Burmese military purportedly “training” Rohingya, whom they forcibly conscripted, on March 10, 2024.⁶³

Right: Photos of corpses suspected to be of Rohingya men who had been forcibly conscripted by the Burmese military, issued by the AA on March 20, 2024.⁶⁴

The Burmese military has since sent Rohingya forced conscripts to the front line of its battles in Rakhine State. That none have been provided adequate military training suggests the military’s intent of not relying on the Rohingya forced conscripts for their combat – but rather as cannon fodder and human shields. Such a dehumanizing approach to Rohingya is also revealed by the catastrophic loss of life of its forced conscripts.⁶⁵ According to WPN sources, a minimum of 207 Rohingya forced conscripts have already been killed “in battle.” The following illustrate the military’s forced recruitment of Rohingya, from its recruitment to deployment: acts that have evidently caused serious harm to the group.

⁶⁰ “The Intensifying Rohingya Genocide”; A/HRC56/23; “Myanmar: Military Forcibly Recruiting Rohingya”.

⁶¹ A/HRC/56/23.

⁶² Emily Fishbein and Myo Thazin Swe, “‘No safe place’: Women flee conscription risk, hardship in Myanmar,” *Context*, July 4, 2024,

<https://www.context.news/money-power-people/long-read/women-flee-conscription-threat-economic-hardship-in-myanmar>.

⁶³ *Muslims in Rakhine state wearing uniforms and undergoing military training on March 10, 2024.*, photograph, Radio Free Asia, March 22, 2024, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/rohingya-conscripts-03222024062520.html>.

⁶⁴ *Warning: Graphic Content.* . . . , photograph, X, March 20, 2024,

<https://x.com/IrrawaddyNews/status/1770320926380363941>.

⁶⁵ “Myanmar: Military Forcibly Recruiting Rohingya”.

- On **February 16, 2024**, in That Kyae Pyin and Thae Chaung villages, Sittwe township, the Burmese military informed residents to provide 50 Rohingya youth from each village.⁶⁶ The military also demanded ten Rohingya youth from some small villages.⁶⁷
- On **February 19 and 20**, in Nga Kyin Tauk, Tat Min Chaung, Pu Zun Chaung and Kyauk Hpyu Taung villages, Buthidaung township, the Burmese military abducted around 100 Rohingya targeting specifically those of the “eligible” age for forced conscription.⁶⁸
- On **February 27**, in a Sittwe IDP camp, Sittwe township, the Burmese military forcibly recruited at least 300 Rohingya (aged 20 to 35) with acts of bribery that include offerings of bags of rice and financial incentives.⁶⁹
- In **early March**, the Burmese military forcibly conscripted at least 41 Rohingya civilians from Nga Kyi Tauk village, forced them into “training” for 14 days, and then sent them to its front line in Rakhine State according to WPN sources.
- On **March 13**, the Burmese military allegedly instructed a group of Rohingya IDPs in Rakhine State to take 97 dead bodies of Rohingya youth.⁷⁰ The youth had allegedly been killed, as human shields, in a battle near Angumaw village, Rathedaung township.⁷¹
- On **March 19**, in Rathedaung township, many dead bodies of Rohingya, alongside the Burmese military, were reportedly discovered by the AA.⁷² A local source said that at least ten dead Rohingya civilians were found “only at a spot.”⁷³ The concentration of such bodies suggest the military’s strategic deployment of Rohingya to its battles. More Rohingya bodies have since been discovered in a similar manner on battlefields.⁷⁴
- On **May 5**, in “Basic Education High School (1),” a school in downtown Buthidaung, Buthidaung township, the Burmese military forcefully entered the school where hundreds of Rohingya had been seeking refuge, and arbitrarily arrested them according to WPN sources. The sources indicate that those detained risk the military’s forced recruitment, among other abuses.
- On **May 10**, in Ward 5 of downtown Buthidaung, the Burmese military arbitrarily arrested around 100 Rohingya civilian youth according to WPN sources. The sources share that those detained risk the military’s forced recruitment and use of human shields in its conflict with the AA.

⁶⁶ “စစ်တွေက မွတ်ဆလင်များကို စစ်မှုထမ်းရန် စစ်ကောင်စီက အတင်းအဓမ္မခေါ်ယူနေ,” *Western News*, February 16, 2024, https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid02NGwgeobaenSjbxLQC9RSapxj8oq75kGuUaC1PyUvQ89ZBx8EVDgSmiVfugEynuZ1I&id=100063883071441&mibextid=Nif5oz&paipv=0&eav=AfZ_FrCwDGm3yhayB7M6iGrZFTCM_isByqGWqk-DuU7Ijx753VKGLF1aVEjZThoNgl& rdr.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ “Myanmar’s military recruiting at displaced camps,” *Radio Free Asia*, February 22, 2024, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/recruiting-02222024174652.html>.

⁶⁹ According to WPN sources.

⁷⁰ RFA Burmese, “ရိုဟင်ဂျာ ၉၇ ဦး ရုပ်အလောင်းတွေ လာသယ်ဖို့ ဒုက္ခသည်စခန်းတွေကို စစ်ကောင်စီ အကြောင်းကြား,” *Facebook*, March 13, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/rfaburmese/posts/pfbid02dcUa8UDk8J9V8jJibhT4wqppYKv9JFgbkqJJurnDd7xbY3cGCZAortuvzsp2QLJGI? rdc=1& rdr>.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Radio NUG, “ရသေ့တောင်မြို့ကို AA သိမ်းပိုက်၊ သေဆုံးစစ်သားများတွင် လတ်တလောစစ်သင်တန်းပေးထားသူများပါဝင်နေ,” *Facebook*, March 18, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/radionug/posts/pfbid0ZkhyyNE6gf7N25QUMFvsJiqGKLW2keszWiehqNzQrpFvYsikaPXz4PaGcbqEheTbi? rdc=1& rdr>.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Jonathan Head and BBC Burmese, “Myanmar’s army massacred Rohingyas. Now it wants their help.,” *BBC News*, April 8, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-68730994>.

- On **May 19** and **May 25**, in several Sittwe IDP camps, including Thet Kyae Pyin IDP camp, the Burmese military coerced the camp’s Rohingya men into attending meetings and participating in a “lottery system” to be selected for its forced recruitment according to WPN sources. The sources share that the military forcibly recruited 15 Rohingya men from each camp.
- On **May 27**, the Burmese military began ordering Rohingya residents in Sittwe township to provide around 30 people aged 18 to 30 from more than ten IDP camps, including Thet Kyae Pyin, Ohn Taw Gyi, Bar Sar Ra, Dar Paing, and Thae Chaung.⁷⁵ Witnesses alleged that the Burmese military had threatened the residents who had not cooperated with its orders with cuts to food supplies from aid providers.

Simultaneously, the Burmese military is also forcing young Rohingya civilians – whom it abducted and confined – into forced labor. In late June, in downtown Maungdaw, Maungdaw township, the Burmese military reportedly forced Rohingya civilians into carrying weapons from the military’s ships to the city center.⁷⁶ This tactic is congruent with the Burmese military’s decades-long exploitation of Rohingya and other ethnic minorities for their labor.⁷⁷

B. Collaboration with “Rohingya militant groups”

In another effort to aggravate ethnic tensions in Rakhine State to its own benefit, the Burmese military is allegedly enlisting militant groups claiming to represent the Rohingya ethnic minority – the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), the Arakan Rohingya Army (ARA), and the Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO) – to fight against the AA. It is important to underscore that these groups do not represent the Rohingya community; for decades, Rohingya members, including human rights defenders, have consistently rejected such militant groups and unequivocally condemned their actions.⁷⁸ The commission of abuses against Rohingya civilians, purportedly in retaliation for the abuses by militant groups professing their representation, is thus tantamount to collective punishment.

Since April 2024, reports have emerged of the Burmese military and many of these militant groups attacking villages predominantly inhabited by populations that include the Rakhine ethnic group. From **April 11**, these groups allegedly burned down Buddhist and Hindu-majority neighborhoods in downtown Buthidaung, destroying approximately 2,400 structures across 150 acres.⁷⁹ These arson attacks reportedly include the burning down of the office and pharmacy of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), an international non-governmental organization (INGO), in Buthidaung township

⁷⁵ Ye Kaung Myint Maung, “Myanmar junta threatens to block food aid for Rohingyas who refuse military training,” *Radio Free Asia*, May 29, 2024, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/junta-block-food-aid-rohingya-recruitment-05292024163347.html>.

⁷⁶ Ibid., “မောင်တောမြို့ထဲပိတ်မိနေတဲ့ရိုဟင်ဂျာတွေကို စစ်ကောင်စီက အတင်းလုပ်အားပေးခိုင်းခြင်းများပြုလုပ်နေ,” *Facebook*, July 2, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/thearakanexpress/posts/pfbid026xbajE75NJX6db84eMRU4XJwCRci8Wdv2PSRxbmoCQCxwskd3mq5xsCMgy3KzXbul? rdc=1& rdr>.

⁷⁷ A/HRC/39/64.

⁷⁸ “The Intensifying Rohingya Genocide,” *Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK*, June 2024, https://www.brouk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/BROUK_ICJ_The-Intensifying-Rohingya-Genocide_FULL-Report.pdf; “Rohingya Facing Existential Threat in Arakan.”

⁷⁹ Nathan Ruser, “They left a trail of ash: decoding the Arakan Army’s arson attacks in the Rohingya heartland.”

on **April 15**.⁸⁰ According to MSF, “no staff were injured, but all medical stock and office equipment were destroyed.”⁸¹



Left: Satellite imagery, from NASA’s FIRMS, of fires/hotspots (in red) in Buthidaung township, Rakhine State, on April 15, 2024. The pushpin indicates the location of MSF’s office.⁸²

Right: Photo of the burnt remains inside the MSF’s office.⁸³

C. Forced protests

Reports continue to surface of the Burmese military forcing Rohingya civilians to demonstrate against the AA by committing intimidation and bribery against them. Anti-AA protests have emerged in Sittwe, Buthidaung, Rathedaung, and Maungdaw townships and across Rakhine State from March 2024, with hundreds of Rohingya congregating on their respective village’s streets and carrying posters and banners with slogans.⁸⁴ For some Rohingya, the military allegedly threatened them to join the protest or pay a fine of 50,000 Myanmar Kyat (MMK) and have their village “cut off.”⁸⁵ According to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights’ latest annual report in June, “interviewees stated that soldiers threatened a repetition of the 2017 violence for non-compliance” with its threats against Rohingya to participate in such protests.⁸⁶

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ “MSF office and pharmacy in Rakhine state destroyed in fire amid ongoing violence,” *Médecins Sans Frontières*, April 16, 2024, <https://www.msf.org/msf-office-destroyed-fire-amid-ongoing-violence-rakhine-myanmar>.

⁸² NRT VIIRS 375 m Active Fire product VNP14IMGD distributed from NASA FIRMS. Available on-line <https://earthdata.nasa.gov/firms>. doi:10.5067/FIRMS/VIIRS/VNP14IMGD_NRT.002. Note: We acknowledge the use of data and/or imagery from NASA’s Fire Information for Resource Management System (FIRMS) (<https://earthdata.nasa.gov/firms>), part of NASA’s Earth Observing System Data and Information System (EOSDIS).

⁸³ The burnt remains inside the MSF office in Buthidaung following increased conflict in the area. Rakhine state, Myanmar, 15 April 2024, photograph, *Médecins Sans Frontières*, April 16, 2024, <https://www.msf.org/msf-office-destroyed-fire-amid-ongoing-violence-rakhine-myanmar>.

⁸⁴ A/HRC/56/23; “Junta forces Rohingyas to protest ethnic rebels in Myanmar’s Rakhine state,” *Radio Free Asia*, April 22, 2024, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/protest-04222024154413.html>; Hein Htoo Zan, “Myanmar Junta ‘Orchestrating Rohingya Protests’ Against Arakan Army in Rakhine,” *The Irrawaddy*, March 22, 2024, <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-orchestrating-rohingya-protests-against-arakan-army-in-rakhine.html>.

⁸⁵ “Junta forces Rohingyas to protest ethnic rebels in Myanmar’s Rakhine state”.

⁸⁶ A/HRC/56/23.

Evidently, falsifying Rohingya opposition to the AA would advantage the Burmese military by bolstering its supposedly authoritative image to the public. Such a tactic is also consistent with the military’s longstanding, divide-and-conquer approach to control and dominate ethnic and religious minorities in the country. Both findings worryingly point to the degree to which the military’s approach to Rohingya has remained calculated, preplanned, and dehumanizing.



Groups of Rohingya forced into protests in Bu May and Bar Sar Ra villages of Sittwe township on March 23, 2024 on the left, and in Buthidaung township on April 23, 2024 on the right.⁸⁷

D. Ground, air, and naval attacks against civilians

The Burmese military’s commission of ground, air, and naval attacks have further brought a catastrophic loss of life of Rohingya civilians, including Rohingya women and children. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights estimated in June 2024 that since November 2023, the military reportedly killed at least 86 Rohingya with its armed attacks; these include the military’s airstrikes on Mrauk-U and Buthidaung townships on **December 28**, which killed 10 Rohingya and injured 17 Rohingya.⁸⁸ Further reports indicate that, from January 2024 to April 2024, the Burmese military launched the highest number of airstrikes in Rakhine State among all other states and regions in Myanmar.⁸⁹ Among the military’s intensifying, armed attacks against civilians include the following.

- On **March 10, 2024**, in Sittwe township, an attack from the Burmese military’s navy, whose base in the city is located near a Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) field office, killed eight Rohingya civilians and injured 11 others according to WPN sources.

⁸⁷ A photo that began circulating on pro-regime social media accounts on March 19 shows Rohingya protesters in Buthidaung Township holding signs denouncing the AA, photograph, Myanmar Now, April 23, 2024,

<https://myanmar-now.org/en/news/myanmar-regime-continues-to-stoke-ethnic-tensions-as-fighting-rages-on-in-northern-rakhine/>; Rohingya from Bu May and Bar Sar Ra villages of Sittwe township, Rakhine state, protest March 23, 2024., photograph, Radio Free Asia, April 22, 2024, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/protest-04222024154413.html>.

⁸⁸ A/HRC/56/23; “Junta raid kills 10 Rohingyas, injures 17 in Myanmar’s Rakhine State,” *Radio Free Asia*, December 29, 2023, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/junta-rohingya-rakhine-12292023060131.html>.

⁸⁹ Brian Wei, “Myanmar Junta Airstrikes Kill 359 Civilians in Four Months: Report,” *The Irrawaddy*, May 23, 2024, <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-junta-airstrikes-kill-359-civilians-in-four-months-report.html>; Nyan Lynn Thit Analytica, “Aerial Attacks Carried out by the Military Council (4),” *Facebook*, May 21, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=843354457826577&set=a.623518353143523>.

- On **March 18**, in Thar Dar village, Minbya township, the Burmese military's air bombardment killed at least 25 civilians and injured more than 30 others.⁹⁰ The murdered Rohingya include six children, as well as IDPs who had been forced to flee the township's San Gyi Pyin village in November 2023.⁹¹ In November 2023, the Burmese military had repeatedly shelled San Gyi Pyin village, killing four Rohingya civilians and injuring nine others, including children.⁹²
- On **May 7**, in Paungzar and Tayat villages, Maungdaw township, the Burmese military killed eight Rohingya, including a pregnant woman, with its use of heavy weapons.⁹³
- On **May 12**, in Nyaung Chaung village, Maungdaw township, the Burmese military launched multiple airstrikes against houses resided by Rohingya.⁹⁴ The houses subsequently caught on fire.⁹⁵ The village's Rohingya residents said that "the airstrikes were done without any clashes in the area" according to WPN sources.



A house destroyed by the Burmese military's airstrikes on Thar Dar village, Minbya township, Rakhine State, on March 18, 2024.⁹⁶

⁹⁰ Grant Peck, "UN's Guterres decries violence in Myanmar as military airstrikes kill at least 25 Rohingya in west," *AP News*, March 20, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/rakhine-arakan-rohingya-airstrikes-fa2753011e1191c3906fe9e1623cd326>; "Piles of corpses' left after Myanmar junta attacks village," *Radio Free Asia*, March 18, 2024, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/rakhine-village-attack-03182024051323.html>; "Secretary-General Deeply Concerned by Deteriorating Situation, Escalating Conflict in Myanmar, Condemns All Violence, Reiterates Call for Civilian Protection".

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² A/HRC/56/23.

⁹³ Maungdaw Daily News, "မောင်တောမြို့နယ် ကညင်တောကျေးရွာတွင် ကိုယ်ဝန်ဆောင်အမျိုးသမီးအပါအဝင် ရိုဟင်ဂျာ ၈ ဦးသေဆုံးပြီး အများအပြား ဒဏ်ရာရရှိ၊ အိမ်ခြေ ၃၀ ကျော် ပြာကျ၊" *Facebook*, May 7, 2024, https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid0qrUtEneU247qad6aGHHYwXESUTunVWp4vKi6RPmWsojsLmTbFFPqcvH3qU9rLV2l&id=100064191067923.

⁹⁴ Maungdaw Daily News, "ဂျက်လေယာဉ်က လက်နက်ကြီး ပစ်ခတ်မှုကြောင့် မောင်တော ညောင်ချောင်းရွာက ရိုဟင်ဂျာအိမ်များ မီးလောင်," *Facebook*, May 12, 2024, https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=818756430274052&id=100064191067923&mibextid=oFDknk&rid=zvLvlVaPzXZCyKQx.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ *Houses hit by bombing raid in Thardar Village, Minbya Township / APM*, photograph, The Irrawaddy, March 19, 2024, <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/asia/over-20-rohingya-villagers-killed-as-myamar-junta-warplane-attacks-village-in-rakhine.html>.

- On **May 21**, in Shwe Baho and Baw Di Kone villages, Maungdaw township, which are along the Myanmar-Bangladesh border, the Burmese military's fighter jets dropped three bombs. The military's bombs killed a woman and injured at least 11 other civilians.⁹⁷
- On **June 9**, Har Bi village, Maungdaw township, the Burmese military launched heavy weapons, killing five civilians and injuring eight others according to WPN sources.
- On **June 10**, on the shores of Maungdaw township, the Burmese military targeted a boat carrying Rohingya civilians, including children, with heavy weaponry, killing over 40 of them.⁹⁸ The civilians had attempted to leave the township to receive medical treatment in Bangladesh.⁹⁹
- On **June 17**, the Burmese military launched airstrikes on Har Bi village, burning down several houses of Rohingya civilians according to WPN sources.
- On **June 30**, at around 2:30 PM MMT, the Burmese military launched airstrikes on Shwe Zar village, Maungdaw township, destroying six houses of Rohingya civilians according to WPN sources.

Such attacks have taken place amid the Burmese military's armed fighting with the AA in Rakhine State. In this context, it is important to note that in line with international law, civilian life must be protected; as the IIMM stated in its May 23 statement on the "escalation of conflict" in the state, "under the laws of war, people who are not taking active part in hostilities may not be targeted, and all parties should take measures to minimize harm to civilians and civilian objects, such as homes, schools and hospitals."¹⁰⁰ Despite such a standard, it is alarming that many attacks in Rakhine State, including the military's December 28 shelling, allegedly occurred in Rohingya villages without the AA's presence.¹⁰¹ Widespread attacks against Rohingya civilians have also taken place in Rohingya-majority areas without the Burmese military's presence.

As this report will emphasize further, the aims and actions of the parties to this conflict reveal that they have seemingly taken advantage of their circumstances as an opportunity to commit, and to justify, their targeted attacks against Rohingya.

⁹⁷ "Airstrike kills woman on Myanmar-Bangladesh border," *Radio Free Asia*, May 21, 2024, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/rakhine-airstrike-death-05212024065940.html>.

⁹⁸ Maungdaw Daily News, "မြန်မာရေတပ်က ရိုဟင်ဂျာတွေ တင်ဆောင်ပြီးသွားတဲ့ စက်လှေကို တိုက်ခိုက်လို့ ၄၀ ကျော် သေဆုံး," *Facebook*, June 10, 2024, https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=836414835174878&id=100064191067923&mibextid=oFDknk&rdid=nUEoUVID89pqvAzg.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ "Statement on the escalation of conflict in Rakhine State," *Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar*, May 23, 2024, <https://iimm.un.org/statement-on-the-escalation-of-conflict-in-rakhine-state-myanmar/>.

¹⁰¹ A/HRC/56/23.

V. THE ARAKAN ARMY: Increasing control of Rakhine State and atrocities against Rohingya

From early 2024, the AA has been rapidly escalating its attacks against Rohingya in its attempts to take full control of Rakhine State.¹⁰² Formally established in 2009, the AA is the official armed wing of the United League of Arakan (ULA). The ULA is a political organization that is composed of ethnic Rakhine and Buddhist members and purportedly represents the interests of the “people of Arakan” for their “self-determination, national equality, justice, and freedom.”¹⁰³ As noted earlier, the AA’s campaign since November 2023 indicates that it is, indeed, on the road to achieving its mission. Less than a majority of Arakan’s townships are now under the military’s control at the time of this report’s writing.

The AA has been embroiled in successive conflicts with the Burmese military since its formation, all of which intensified in the years after the 2016 and 2017 genocidal attacks against Rohingya. The AA’s use of guerilla warfare, ambush, artillery, and improvised explosive devices, as well as abductions of civilians and use of them as hostages, have since propelled its years-long resistance.¹⁰⁴ During such a period, the AA was described as the “most ruthless, militarily effective, and defiant armed group.”¹⁰⁵ The AA has also been distinguished for its effective use of communications platforms – especially on social media platforms – to disseminate their messages to the wider ethnic Rakhine, Burmese, and international, Western audience. Retaliation against the AA soon followed: Burmese military forces were deployed to Rakhine State, an internet blockade was unjustly and undemocratically imposed on the region, and the AA was declared as a “terrorist organization.”¹⁰⁶ The Burmese military eventually faced losses amid its battles, with the AA consolidating its control of predominantly rural areas in northern Rakhine State.¹⁰⁷ In those areas, reports have emerged of the AA’s administrative branch providing a judicial system, a police force, healthcare, and other services deemed typically run by state actors.¹⁰⁸ In November 2020, the AA and the military reached an informal ceasefire.¹⁰⁹ Today, the AA is reportedly composed of over 38,000 individuals, with Twan Mrat Naing as its commander-in-chief and the ULA’s chairman.¹¹⁰

The Burmese military’s attempted coup brought about marked shifts in its relationship with the AA. In March 2021, the military removed the designation of the AA as a “terrorist organization,” which

¹⁰² “Arakan Army vows to fight for total control of Myanmar’s Rakhine State”.

¹⁰³ “About Us,” Arakan Army, last accessed May 20, 2024, <https://www.arakanarmy.net/about-us>.

¹⁰⁴ David Scott Mathieson, “The Arakan Army in Myanmar: Deadly Conflict Rises in Rakhine State,” *United States Institute of Peace*, November 2020, https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/sr_486-the_arakan_army_in_myanmar_deadly_conflict_rises_in_rakhine_state.pdf.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Shoona Loong, “Rakhine: a precarious ceasefire hangs in the balance,” *The International Institute for Strategic Studies*, July 26, 2022, <https://myanmar.iiss.org/analysis/rakhine>.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ “Avoiding a Return to War in Myanmar’s Rakhine State,” *International Crisis Group*, June 1, 2022, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/myanmar/avoiding-return-war-myanmars-rakhine-state>.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ BBC Burmese, “ဗိုလ်ချုပ်ထွန်းမြတ်နိုင်နဲ့ ဘီဘီစီ သီးသန့်မေးမြန်းခန်း ပထမပိုင်း- BBC News မြန်မာ,” *YouTube*, February 2, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9dlX8mcQzVQ>.

was then suspected as an effort to limit the scope of its growing, nationwide conflict.¹¹¹ The AA leadership then largely refrained from explicitly commenting on the Burmese military's attempted coup and subsequent actions. Rather, that month, it resorted to issuing a statement condemning the military's killing of protestors and calling for the restoration of civilian rule as a member of the "Three Brotherhood Alliance": a military alliance the AA had formed in 2019 with the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army.¹¹² In October 2023, the Three Brotherhood Alliance launched what it calls "Operation 1027" in capturing key areas in Shan State from the Burmese military.¹¹³ Operation 1027 was lauded as a victory by the pro-democracy movement, with expressed support from the National Unity Government.¹¹⁴ In January 2024, a ceasefire, mediated by China, was established between the alliance and the Burmese military.¹¹⁵

Amid Operation 1027, in November 2023, the two-year ceasefire between the AA and the Burmese military was broken. The AA has since captured a greater territory of Rakhine State, especially its northern areas where the majority of Rohingya civilians, including IDPs, reside. In those areas, reports have now surfaced of the AA specifically attacking Rohingya villages and hamlets, and perpetrating atrocities against Rohingya civilians.¹¹⁶ The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' latest, June 2024 annual report, upon describing the military's forced recruitment of Rohingya, states, "through a wide range of abuses, the Arakan Army also targets Rohingya, including killings, abductions, severe beatings, forced recruitment, forced labour, extortion, and denial of access to life-saving resources."¹¹⁷ This report draws attention to the following abuses.

A. Usage of villages and civilian objects as "battlefields"

The AA is raiding villages predominantly inhabited by Rohingya, forcibly displacing its Rohingya residents, and physically positioning themselves in their homes in its armed fighting against the Burmese military. Such a strategy has since disproportionately devastated the lives of Rohingya civilians by forcing them into the crossfire of an armed conflict and, as the following examples will elaborate, making them an "easier" target of the AA's operations.

On **January 24, 2024**, AA members reportedly entered Hpon Nyo Leik village, Buthidaung township, began digging trenches, and then eventually positioned themselves in the village.¹¹⁸ Two

¹¹¹ "Myanmar military removes rebel Arakan Army from 'terrorist' list," *Al Jazeera*, March 11, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/11/myanmar-junta-removes-rakhine-rebels-from-terrorist-list>.

¹¹² "Brotherhood Alliance tells military to stop killings, threatens to abandon ceasefire," *Myanmar Now*, March 30, 2021, <https://myanmar-now.org/en/news/brotherhood-alliance-tells-military-to-stop-killings-threatens-to-abandon-ceasefire/>.

¹¹³ "Arakan Army vows to fight for total control of Myanmar's Rakhine State," *Radio Free Asia*, March 4, 2024, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/aa-03042024163837.html>.

¹¹⁴ "Statement on Operation 1027 and Related Operations," *National Unity Government*, October 30, 2023, <https://gov.nugmyanmar.org/statement-on-operation-1027-and-related-operations/>.

¹¹⁵ Saw Lwin, "'No Agreement' Between Myanmar Junta and Brotherhood Alliance in Latest Peace Talks," *The Irrawaddy*, May 17, 2024, <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/no-agreement-between-myanmar-junta-and-brotherhood-alliance-in-latest-peace-talks.html>; "Myanmar rebel alliance agrees to ceasefire with ruling military," *Reuters*, January 12, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/myanmar-rebel-alliance-agree-ceasefire-with-ruling-military-rebel-group-tnla-2024-01-12/>.

¹¹⁶ "Rohingya Facing Existential Threat in Arakan".

¹¹⁷ A/HRC/56/23.

¹¹⁸ "The Intensifying Rohingya Genocide"; "ICC Member States: Ensure Accountability for Attacks on Civilians in Myanmar," *Fortify Rights*, February 13, 2024, <https://www.fortifyrights.org/mya-inv-2024-02-13/>.

days later, on **January 26**, “AA came into the village and fired their guns into the sky without any reason” while the Burmese military “fired continuously.”¹¹⁹ Collectively, the armed attacks resulted in the killing of at least 12 Rohingya civilians, and the injuries of at least 30 others, including at least eight children.¹²⁰ On January 30, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a press release noting that the AA’s had allegedly positioned its forces in the village “anticipating the military’s attacks.”¹²¹

On **April 19**, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights raised an additional alarm to its finding that “the AA has positioned itself in and around the Rohingya villages effectively inviting military attacks of Rohingya civilians.”¹²² The AA has continued to employ such a tactic despite sustained outcry from even local sources: according to the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights’ June 2024 annual report, “interviewees confirmed the Arakan Army [had] disregarded people’s repeated requests not to use the village for military purposes.”¹²³

More reports have since surfaced of AA members entering a Rohingya village or a similar Rohingya-majority area, positioning themselves in it, and then making use of it for further attacks against Rohingya civilians or putting such civilians at acute risk of the Burmese military’s lethal attacks. According to WPN sources, such a pattern is demonstrated by the following case study in Pan Taw Pyin village, Maungdaw township.

- From **June 17 to 19, 2024**, AA members entered and positioned themselves in Pan Taw Pyin village. The Burmese military then fired heavy weapons at the village, injuring dozens of Rohingya civilians and killing a civilian.
- On **June 20**, AA members launched a drone attack from Pan Taw Pyin village. The attack killed two Rohingya civilians in nearby Maung Ni village, Maungdaw township. On the same day, AA members and the Burmese military launched heavy weapons from the village, injuring five Rohingya civilians in Ka Nyin Tan quarter and killing two in Ward 2, both of which are in downtown Maungdaw, Maungdaw township.
- On **June 21**, AA members fired at least three rounds of heavy weapons from Pan Taw Pyin village. The weapons landed near Maung Ni village and Ward 2, and killed a Rohingya civilian.
- On **June 22**, the Burmese military’s airstrikes destroyed a large house in Pan Taw Pyin village.
- On **June 23**, at night MMT, from Pan Taw Pyin village, AA members fired at least five artillery shells at Ka Nyin Tan quarter. The shells injured two Rohingya civilians.
- On **June 24**, at around 8:15 PM MMT, from Pan Taw Pyin village, AA members fired artillery shells at Maung Ni village. The shells injured four Rohingya civilians.
- On **June 26**, from Pan Taw Pyin village, AA members fired ten artillery shells at specifically Rohingya-majority areas in downtown Maungdaw.

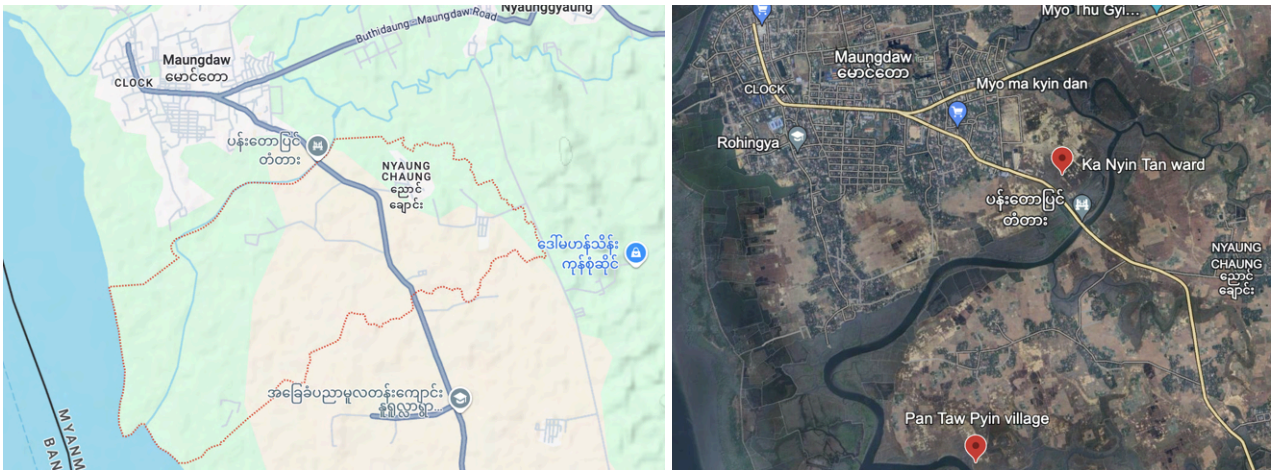
¹¹⁹ “ICC Member States: Ensure Accountability for Attacks on Civilians in Myanmar.”

¹²⁰ A/HRC/56/23; “ICC Member States: Ensure Accountability for Attacks on Civilians in Myanmar”.

¹²¹ “Myanmar: Human rights situation worsens as military lashes out indiscriminately amid losses - Türk”.

¹²² “Myanmar: Türk sounds alarm amid rising tensions in Rakhine”.

¹²³ A/HRC/56/23.



Map depicting Pan Taw Pyin village (encircled by the red dotted line on left) and downtown Maungdaw (or “Maungdaw”), including Ka Nyin Tan ward (on right).¹²⁴

B. Forced transfer and taking of property

Reports have also surfaced of the AA systematically expelling Rohingya civilians from their homes and villages in northern Rakhine State, forcibly transferring them to areas of confinement under its control, denying them freedom of movement, and subjecting them to further grave abuses.

The AA’s pattern of forced displacement, forced transfer, confinement, and abusive treatment of Rohingya civilians were observed in its attack on downtown Buthidaung in mid-May 2024. On **May 17**, according to WPN sources, AA members forcibly transferred approximately hundreds of thousands of Rohingya civilians to at least three villages in Buthidaung township (mostly to Sein Nyin Pyar village). The forcibly displaced Rohingya civilians were then told that “they can’t leave” from the village.¹²⁵ According to WPN sources, AA members also placed movement restrictions specifically on Rohingya forcibly transferred to other villages.

The AA’s confinement of Rohingya enables the commission of further atrocities against them. A few days later, on **May 21**, in Sein Nyin Pyar village, AA members told a group of Rohingya in a mosque that a “clearance operation” would be conducted against “military collaborators and terrorists” without explicitly detailing the characteristics of such individuals. On **May 29**, AA members arbitrarily arrested “dozens of Rohingya” without fully informing their families of their whereabouts.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Google Earth. Accessed July 3, 2024. <https://earth.google.com/web/@20.81993976,92.36922633,6.92928407a,9189.01329267d,35y,-0h,0t,0r/data=MikkJwolCjExY1ZkajhlcmxIY0Z0c05UbmV1UzVCTUN4cHlpUjl4WiggAToDCgEw>; “Google Maps. “Pan Taw Pyin.” Accessed July 3, 2024. [https://www.google.com/maps/place/Pan+Taw+Pyin,+Myanmar+\(Burma\)/@20.7926678,92.3326286,13z/data=!3m1!4b!4m6!3m5!1s0x30ae1bfd7507191f:0xa69807e4478cbbdd!8m2!3d20.7972005!4d92.3764258!16s%2Fq%2F11qqm571h?entry=ttu](https://www.google.com/maps/place/Pan+Taw+Pyin,+Myanmar+(Burma)/@20.7926678,92.3326286,13z/data=!3m1!4b!4m6!3m5!1s0x30ae1bfd7507191f:0xa69807e4478cbbdd!8m2!3d20.7972005!4d92.3764258!16s%2Fq%2F11qqm571h?entry=ttu).

¹²⁵ Wai Wai Nu (@wainu), “URGENT: On May 21, in Sein Hnyin Pyar village, where hundreds & thousands of #Rohingya had been forcibly transferred and confined by the #Arakan Army, #AA members told people in a mosque that they will conduct “clearance operations” against “military collaborators & terrorists. . . ,” X, May 21, 2024, <https://x.com/wainu/status/1792967575153905900>.

¹²⁶ Ibid., “URGENT: On May 29, the #Arakan Army arrested dozens of #Rohingya from Sein Hnyin Pyar village, #Buthidaung Township. . . ,” X, May 29, 2024, <https://x.com/wainu/status/1795903176387821968>.

Simultaneously, reports have also surfaced of the AA systematically taking over the homes of displaced Rohingya. According to WPN sources, in downtown Buthidaung, AA flags were reported on homes of Rohingya – “big houses of Rohingya” – amid the AA’s attacks.

The sources have also shared that the AA members are specifically looting the homes of Rohingya and selling their valuable properties, such as watches. In Buthidaung township, AA members “snatched” gold jewelry from Rohingya women forced to flee the area, looted Rohingya’s houses before setting them on fire, and stole cattle and other livestock after setting Rohingya’s houses on fire.

According to WPN sources, AA members are now similarly targeting Rohingya homes and properties in Maungdaw township. On **June 18**, AA members forcibly displaced Rohingya civilians in Habi and Bakka Gunna Rohingya hamlets, Thi Ho Kyun village, Maungdaw township, after having entered it the day prior. The Rohingya civilians were reportedly commemorating Eid al-Adha, a major Muslim holiday, when the AA expelled them from the area and looted their houses.

C. Burning and torching of villages

The AA is also systematically burning down dozens of Rohingya villages and hamlets.¹²⁷ Such attacks have been independently described, with expert analysis, as “an arson campaign against Rohingya villages, retaliating against the whole Rohingya community for arson attacks in Buthidaung town.”¹²⁸ According to independent satellite imagery and analysis, for ten days starting **April 24, 2024**, the AA burned down 27 villages and hamlets on the eastern bank of the Mayu River.¹²⁹ Among many, an investigation has found that “as Arakan Army forces advanced across rural Buthidaung township in late April and May, they left a trail of rubble and ash as they burnt down Rohingya villages, seemingly indiscriminately.”¹³⁰

The AA subsequently turned to Buthidaung township – launching similarly deadly attacks on its Rohingya civilians.

On **May 17**, starting at approximately 10 PM MMT, the AA torched homes and other civilian objects in downtown Buthidaung and its surrounding villages, including Tat Min Chaung and Kyauk Phyu Taung, killing and seriously maiming hundreds, and forcibly displacing at least 200,000 Rohingya.¹³¹ As noted in this report’s introduction, the actions were in contrast to the AA’s “notice” of “evacuation” to the area’s residents earlier that day; allegedly, according to WPN sources, the AA was set to enter downtown Buthidaung on the following day, at 10 AM.

Reports indicate that immediately prior to the attack, the Burmese military, its forced Rohingya conscripts, and ARSA were not physically present in the area.¹³² In the subsequent days, until

¹²⁷ “Urgent call for action for Rohingya in Rakhine State”.

¹²⁸ Nathan Ruser, “They left a trail of ash: decoding Arakan Army’s arson attacks in the Rohingya heartland”.

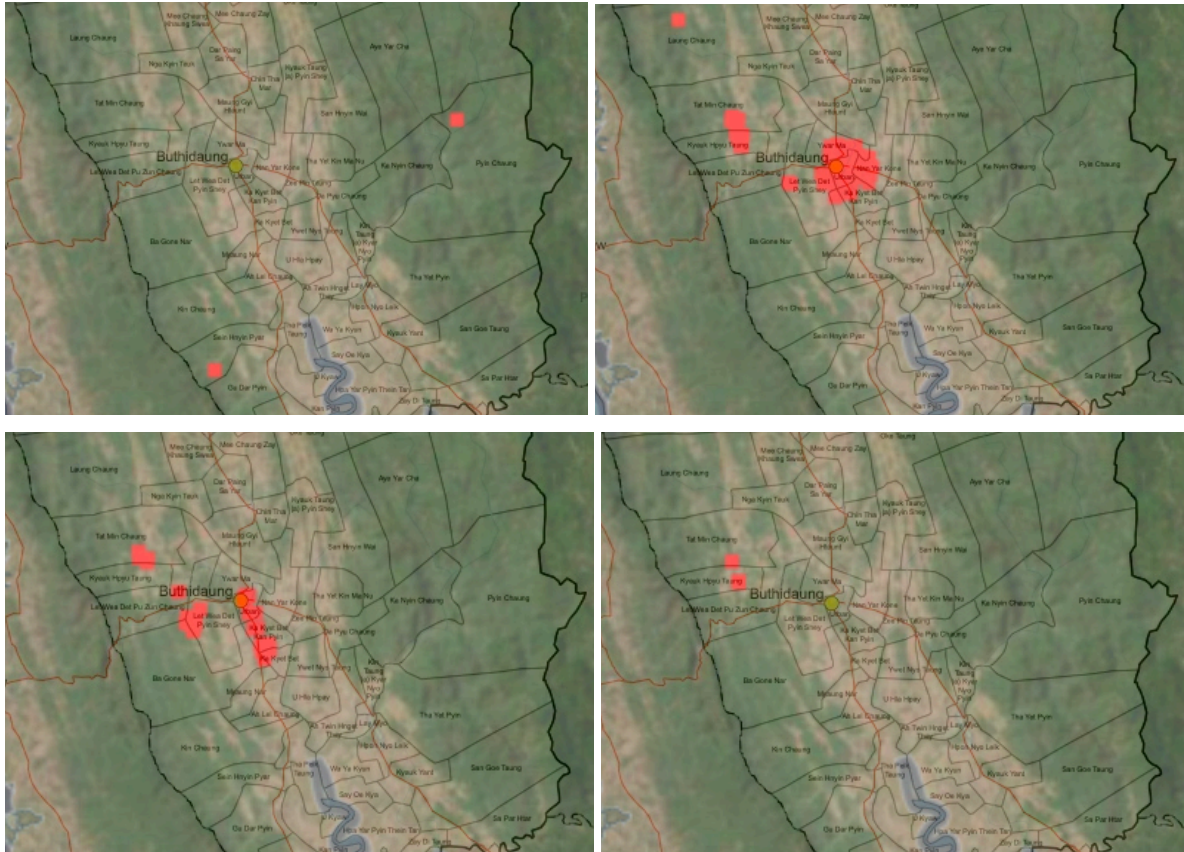
¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.; Caleb Quinley, “‘Nowhere to go’: Rohingya face arson attacks in Myanmar’s Rakhine State,” *Al Jazeera*, May 21, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/5/21/nowhere-to-go-rohingya-face-arson-attacks-in-myanmars-rakhine-state>.

¹³¹ Ibid.; Helen Regan and Avery Schmitz, “Myanmar: Fires rage as Rohingya caught up on the front lines of Myanmar’s civil war,” *CNN*, May 23, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/23/asia/myanmar-rohingya-arson-buthidaung-intl-hnk/index.html>.

¹³² Ibid.

around **May 21**, members of the AA followed up on its attack by launching further massive fires against areas in downtown Buthidaung resided by Rohingya civilians.¹³³ According to independent reporting, “the burning also continued in many villages following the complete capture of Buthidaung township by the Arakan Army, with around a dozen villages, mostly to the west and southwest of Buthidaung town being burnt down following the expulsion of all junta positions in the area.”¹³⁴



Satellite imagery of downtown Buthidaung, overlaid with its village tracts, from May 16, 2024 (top left), May 17 (top right), May 18 (bottom left), and May 19 (bottom right).¹³⁵ The red marks indicate fires/hotspots according to NASA’s FIRMS.

D. Shelling and drone attacks against civilian objects

The AA is launching shelling and drone attacks against civilian objects, such as schools, hospitals, and homes, specifically in Rohingya villages, Rohingya hamlets, and other areas predominantly inhabited by Rohingya civilians in Rakhine State.

¹³³ “Perpetrators of Attacks on Rohingya in Buthidaung Must Be Held Accountable,” *Burma Human Rights Network*, May 22, 2024, <https://bhrn.org.uk/en/press-release/1255-perpetrators-of-attacks-on-rohingya-in-buthidaung-must-be-held-accountable.html>.

¹³⁴ Nathan Ruser, “They left a trail of ash: decoding Arakan Army’s arson attacks in the Rohingya heartland”.

¹³⁵ “Village Tracts of Buthidaung Township: Rakhine State,” *Myanmar Information Management Unit*, November 22, 2011, https://themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/VT%20Map_Buthidaung%20Tsp_Rakhine_MIMU250v01_22Nov11_A3.pdf; NRT VIIRS 375 m Active Fire product VNP14IMG1 distributed from NASA FIRMS. Available on-line <https://earthdata.nasa.gov/firms>. doi:10.5067/FIRMS/VIIRS/VNP14IMG1_NRT.002. Note: We acknowledge the use of data and/or imagery from NASA’s Fire Information for Resource Management System (FIRMS) (<https://earthdata.nasa.gov/firms>), part of NASA’s Earth Observing System Data and Information System (EOSDIS).

WPN has gathered reports of the AA's shelling and drone attacks for months, some even before the AA's mass, armed incursions into Buthidaung township in May 2024 and Maungdaw townships the following month. In Buthidaung township, these reports include the **April 17** shelling of Ward 2 in downtown Buthidaung, which hit a Rohingya civilian's home and killed his entire family, including his wife and children; and the AA's **April 21** shelling of a school, "Basic Education High School (3)," which injured several Rohingya civilians, including a woman, who had been sheltering there from the Burmese military and the AA's armed fighting. In Maungdaw township, these reports include the AA's **April 27** shelling of Noyapara hamlet in Nol Boinna Rohingya village amid intensifying clashes with the military; the shelling injured a Rohingya civilian when he was feeding his cattle on a field, and killed three of his cattle.

As the months proceeded, the AA intensified its attacks specifically against civilian objects that are and are known to be associated with Rohingya, such as those in Rohingya villages. The following cases demonstrate such a pattern.

- On **May 2, 2024**, AA members launched shelling on Rwa Ma Rohingya village, Buthidaung township, destroying a Rohingya woman's home and severely injuring her according to WPN sources.
- On **May 2**, AA members launched shelling on Ward 1 of downtown Buthidaung, Buthidaung township, according to WPN sources. The shelling killed five Rohingya civilians, including three women and two children, and severely injured a Rohingya woman.
- On **May 11**, at around 8:30 PM MMT, AA members launched several shells on "Buthidaung General Hospital," downtown Buthidaung's only hospital, according to WPN sources. Forcibly displaced Rohingya had been seeking shelter there. The attacks significantly destroyed the hospital's infrastructure, killed at least three civilians, and severely injured at least ten civilians.
- Starting **May 17**, the AA's shelling of civilian objects in Buthidaung township have left hundreds of civilians killed and injured, and nearly 200,000 Rohingya forcibly displaced in Rakhine State according to WPN sources. The exact number of civilians affected is being verified at the time of this report's writing.
- On **June 19**, the AA's shelling of downtown Maungdaw killed three Rohingya civilians according to WPN sources. The affected area is largely residential, where offices of non-governmental organizations and INGO were once placed.
- On **June 27**, at around 11 AM MMT, AA members launched heavy weapons on Shwe Zar village, Maungdaw township.¹³⁶ The attack killed a Rohingya woman, and seriously injured three other civilians.¹³⁷

Similarly, the AA have employed drone attacks against civilian objects in Rakhine State. The AA's attacks have since resulted in severe injuries and killing of Rohingya civilians, including IDPs, women, and children. The following cases draw attention to this emerging pattern of warfare.

¹³⁶ Maungdaw Daily News, "မောင်တော ရွှေဇားတွင် လက်နက်ကြီး ကျရောက်ပေါက်ကွဲမှုကြောင့် ရိုဟင်ဂျာ ၁ ဦး ပွဲချင်းပြီး သေဆုံး၊ ၃ ဦး ပြင်းထန်စွာ ဒဏ်ရာရ," Facebook, June 27, 2024, https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid0sgLRCQ82YDtMGRNiwgHf9jdkB8suNUGxwckwMZG1tYKJuwz uEPPUptiDupYMKCrFl&id=100064191067923&_rdc=1&_rdr.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

- On **May 17, 2024**, in downtown Buthidaung, AA members launched a drone attack on a school, “Basic Education High School (1),” where hundreds of Rohingya civilians, who had been forcibly displaced from about 20 villages amid the Burmese military and the AA’s clashes, were seeking refuge.¹³⁸ The drone attack reportedly killed at least 18 of the IDPs and injured 200 of them.
- On **June 24**, at around 8:15 PM MMT, AA members launched a drone attack on the Maung Ni village, Maungdaw township, subjecting four Rohingya civilians to near-fatal injuries.¹³⁹ On the same day, at around 9:30 PM MMT, AA members reportedly launched another drone attack on Ward 2 of downtown Maungdaw, Maungdaw township.¹⁴⁰
- On **June 27**, at around 11 AM MMT, AA members launched drone attacks on Gunah hamlet of Maungdaw township’s Shwe Zar village according to WPN sources. The attacks killed two Rohingya women and injured two Rohingya civilians.
- On **June 28** at around 12 PM MMT, AA members launched a drone attack on Shwe Zar village, Maungdaw township.¹⁴¹ The attack killed two Rohingya children, and left near-fatal injuries on two other Rohingya children.¹⁴²

Dangerously, that the AA’s drones – weaponry known to ensure heightened control and precision to its operators – are reportedly landing on civilian objects and resulting in injuries and casualties of Rohingya civilians, should warrant greater scrutiny of its purpose of warfare. Such an analysis, with a thorough application of international law, may reveal a greater understanding of the AA’s possible intent: targeting Rohingya civilians.

E. Killing of civilians

The AA is conducting killings, as well as massacres, of Rohingya civilians in Rakhine State. Those murdered include women and children. Reports of such killings – often involving abductions, torture, and burning of villages – reveal the systematic and violent nature of the AA’s treatment of Rohingya lives. According to WPN sources, the report shares the following cases among many known and likely unknown due to, as noted earlier, the severe cuts in movement and communication channels in Rakhine State.

- On **April 4, 2024**, in Aung Lan Pyin village, Buthidaung township, AA members shot dead three Rohingya civilians. The members had allegedly suspected them of being informants of the Burmese military.
- On **April 17**, at around 7 PM MMT, in Ward 2 of downtown Buthidaung, Buthidaung township, AA members shot at a Rohingya civilian “multiple times,” killing him immediately.

¹³⁸ “About 30 Rohingya killed in clashes between Myanmar junta, insurgents,” *Radio Free Asia*, May 18, 2024, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/rohingya-killed-in-junta-aa-clashes-05182024055017.html>.

¹³⁹ , “မောင်တော မောင်နီရွာတွင် AA က ဒရုန်းနဲ့ ဗုံးချခဲ့တာကြောင့် ရိုဟင်ဂျာလူငယ် (၄)ဦး ပြင်းထန်စွာ ဒဏ်ရာရ,” *Facebook*, June 25, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1971239383330368>.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Maungdaw Daily News, “မောင်တော ရွှေလေး ဂုံးနားရွာတွင် AA က ဒရုန်းဖြင့် ဗုံးကြဲတိုက်ခိုက်မှုကြောင့် ရိုဟင်ဂျာကလေး ၂ ဦး ပွဲချင်းပြီး သေဆုံး၊ ၂ ဦး ပြင်းထန်စွာ ဒဏ်ရာရ,” *Facebook*, June 28, 2024, https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid0C8hwGujiiH9rfGJgXaaCzAJEMCkcVxmsjzGfmhXEyVXqRFbLgZChBQ5iuJr6twpl&id=100064191067923&_rdc=1&_rdr.

¹⁴² Ibid.

- On **April 24**, in Ward 7 of downtown Buthidaung, AA members allegedly “disguised as Border Guard Police [of the Burmese military]” shot indiscriminately at Rohingya civilians in a shop, a public area. The AA’s attack killed four Rohingya civilians and left several injured.
- On **May 2**, in Thang Shout Kan village (also known as Hoyasuri village), Buthidaung township, AA members forcefully entered the village and killed at least 228 civilians, mostly women and children, of at least 40 families. The members had conducted its massacre of civilians by gathering a large group of them, forcing them in a stress position, then shooting at them execution-style; as well as, while setting houses on fire, arbitrarily killing Rohingya civilians, including those attempting to flee. The AA members then burned the corpses with petrol.
- On **May 13 and 14**, in Nga Kyin Tauk village, Buthidaung township, AA members killed dozens of Rohingya civilians attempting to flee their attacks according to WPN sources. The AA also targeted the houses of the village’s Rohingya residents; independent imagery points to the burning specifically affecting Rohingya hamlets and a mosque whereas the hamlets where the Buddhist Dagnet ethnic minority predominantly reside remained untouched.¹⁴³ A month before the AA’s attack, the residents had returned to the village (from Tat Min Chaung village, Buthidaung township) after having been forcibly displaced from it after the AA’s takeover of the village in late March. According to WPN sources, in late March, the AA had forcefully entered the village using drone attacks and heavy artillery; the attacks killed around seven civilians and injured six civilians.
- On **May 17**, at around 7 PM MMT, in Tat Min Chaung village, AA members forcefully entered the village, indiscriminately fired at its residents, and killed hundreds of Rohingya civilians, including elderly persons, women, and children as young as five. A similar case of mass killings was reported in the village’s neighboring Kyauk Phyu Taung village.
- On **May 17**, in Ward 5 of downtown Buthidaung, AA members killed a Rohingya civilian for attempting to make a phone call. Prior to the killing, the AA had reportedly threatened Rohingya in the area with death for being physically found with a phone or attempting to contact “the outside.”
- On **May 19**, in Tat Min Chaung village, AA members forcefully entered the area, looted its homes, tortured the village’s Rohingya civilians, and then slaughtered those attempting to flee by crossing a valley to Maungdaw township’s Kyi Kan Pyin village. Multiple bodies were reportedly later found in the valley. The whereabouts of the nearly 1,000 Rohingya women and children, whom the AA had allegedly blocked from leaving Tat Min Chaung village, remain unknown.
- On **June 20**, in Horitula hamlet, a Rohingya hamlet in Myo Oo quarter of downtown Maungdaw, Maungdaw township, AA members shot dead a Rohingya civilian.
- On **June 22**, in Zula village, Maungdaw township, AA members shot dead a Rohingya civilian.
- On **June 27**, at around 11:30 AM MMT, in Paung Zar village, Maungdaw township, AA members abducted a Rohingya civilian from the village and shot him multiple times in the head, killing him immediately. The members had allegedly accused the man for collaborating with the Burmese military.

¹⁴³ Nathan Ruser (@Nrg8000), “This video inadvertently provides further evidence that the Arakan Army is the actor responsible for systematic arson attacks against Rohingya villages. . . .”, X, May 29, 2024, <https://x.com/Nrg8000/status/1795837095912841442>.

On **April 2**, AA members entered Nga Kyin Tauk village, Buthidaung township, according to WPN sources. The Burmese military then targeted the AA members in the village with heavy artillery. The armed fighting forcibly displaced the village's residents, and resulted in the killing of four Rohingya civilians, including two children.

Dangerously, the AA's spate of killings and massacres of Rohingya civilians recall the 2016 and 2017 "clearance operations." In the days and weeks that followed August 25, 2017, the Burmese military systematically led a mass-killing spree of Rohingya civilians in Rohingya villages across northern Rakhine State. According to the IFFMM, "the operations were designed to instill immediate terror, with people woken by intense rapid weapon fire, explosions . . . structures were set ablaze, and Tatmadaw soldiers fired their guns indiscriminately into houses and fields, and at villagers."¹⁴⁴ Thousands were killed, though the UN mechanism finds that the "information collected by the mission suggests that the estimate of up to 10,000 deaths is a conservative one."¹⁴⁵ Unfortunately, many of the victims and survivors of the Burmese military's attacks are now facing debilitating levels of revictimization and retraumatization by the AA's treatment of them and their fellow Rohingya civilians, and commission of more atrocities, in Rakhine State.

F. Abductions

The AA is abducting many Rohingya civilians from Rakhine State, confining them in AA-controlled "prisons," and then, for many, subsequently subjecting them to acts of torture and murder. They include the following.

- On **April 4, 2024**, AA members abducted a Rohingya civilian from a tea shop in Sein Hnin Pyar village, Buthidaung township, according to WPN sources. The members reportedly conducted the civilian's abduction in a forceful manner, including by using weaponry such as knives and pistols against him. The civilian was severely tortured and subsequently killed.
- On **April 17**, in Tha Yet Oke village, Maungdaw township, AA members abducted, tortured, and murdered five Rohingya civilians according to WPN sources. Two of the men were found slaughtered, and the remaining three shot dead.
- On **April 17**, AA members abducted five Rohingya (including a "village secretary") from Abu Ky village, Maungdaw township.¹⁴⁶ Their bodies were found stranded on April 22.¹⁴⁷
- On **April 26**, AA members intercepted a group of 26 Rohingya civilians, who had recently been released from arbitrary arrest and detention by the Burmese military, and were attempting to travel from Buthidaung township to Maungdaw township according to WPN sources. At least three Rohingya civilians from Kyauk Phyu Taung township had been guiding the group across a valley. Upon capturing them, the AA members blindfolded the group, tied them up, forced them into interrogation, and then attacked them with sticks, knives, and guns. The sources share that the Rohingya civilian guides were likely later killed.

¹⁴⁴ A/HRC/39/64.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ RFA Burmese, "မောင်တောက် ရိုဟင်ဂျာ ငါးဦးကို AA ဖမ်းဆီးသတ်ဖြတ်ခဲ့ကြောင်း ဒေသခံတွေပြော၊ AA ငြင်းဆို," Facebook, April 23, 2024, https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=846299404198130&id=100064542350311&mibextid=oFDknk&rdid=VZV2Qz8b1r7wml7b.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

- On **May 8**, in Ywama Rohingya village, Buthidaung township, AA members abducted two Rohingya civilians who were on the way to a mosque in Ward 1 of downtown Buthidaung, Buthidaung township. Their whereabouts remain unknown.
- On **May 10**, in Minglalaryi Rohingya village, Maungdaw township, AA members abducted three Rohingya civilians according to WPN sources. Their whereabouts remain unknown.
- On **May 22**, in Kuntabil Rohingya village, Maungdaw township, AA members abducted 22 Rohingya civilian youths, and then beat and tortured them for at least 14 hours according to WPN sources.
- On **May 22**, in Thu Oo Hla Rohingya village and Bodi Pyin village, Maungdaw township, AA members abducted four Rohingya civilians, who were local fishermen, according to WPN sources. Their whereabouts remain unknown.
- On **May 29**, in Sein Hnin Pyar and Yaung Chaung villages, Buthidaung township, where forcibly displaced Rohingya were sheltering, AA members abducted dozens of Rohingya youths with baseless allegations of their association with the Burmese military, and then beat and tortured them according to WPN sources.

The AA is specifically targeting Rohingya men without informing their families; those left behind are “unaware if their relatives are still alive” according to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights’ June 2024 annual report.¹⁴⁸ This has also been the case of WPN’s staff and network. According to the UN report, “small prisons in bamboo shelters” have been noted across northern Rakhine, where Rohingya are allegedly being confined by the AA.¹⁴⁹ An interviewee for the report “described being blindfolded and made to walk four hours into the forest to such a prison,” and “was held for 14 days, beaten, hung upside-down, and held at gunpoint.”¹⁵⁰ As the following section will elaborate, evidence also points to the AA abducting Rohingya civilians, particularly men, for purposes that include forced recruitment.

G. Forced recruitment

In addition to the Burmese military, the AA is forcibly recruiting Rohingya civilians to deploy them to its armed conflict in Rakhine State. Young Rohingya men in northern Rakhine State are being disproportionately targeted for this specific purpose. Reports reveal that the AA has established a formal process to forcibly recruit Rohingya civilians, beginning by entering a village, employing abusive tactics against its residents to coerce them into providing a list of youths in the village, and, at times, fining the families of those forcibly recruited. The following cases demonstrated the targeted and systematic nature of the AA’s conduct.

- On **April 18, 2024**, in Maung Nu and Mee Chaung villages, Buthidaung township, AA members forcibly recruited 20 Rohingya civilians aged 18 to 35 according to WPN sources. Prior to forcibly recruiting the civilians, the AA members had allegedly met with the village’s residents, and forced them to provide a list of potential youths under their designated age bracket.
- From **April 23**, in several Rohingya villages in Buthidaung township, AA members forcibly recruited 110 Rohingya civilian youths upon coercing the villages’ residents to do so

¹⁴⁸ A/HRC/23.

¹⁴⁹ A/HRC/56/23.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

according to WPN sources. On April 28, AA members transferred the civilians to Botgyi Chaung village to force them into training for at least 10 days. On May 11, all 110 civilians were reportedly “released” with awareness that they would be forcibly deployed any day; the whereabouts of them since then remain fully unknown.

- On **April 24**, AA members intimidated Rohingya civilians in several villages in Buthidaung township to provide “one person per household from Rohingya villages to serve for the organization.”¹⁵¹ The villages include Kyee Hnoke Thee, Maung Nu, Mee Chaung Kaung Swee, Maung Gyi Taung, Sangribil, Maung Napara, and Khyan Down. From the township as a whole, the AA allegedly recruited around 200 Rohingya youths and forced them to undergo “training” for 15 days.
- On **April 28**, in Hpon Nyo Leik village, Buthidaung township, AA members forcibly recruited 20 Rohingya civilian youths according to WPN sources. The AA members allegedly required the families of the youths to pay a fine of 50,000 MMK.
- On **May 1**, in Ngant Chaung Rohingya village, Maungdaw township, AA members forcibly recruited 30 Rohingya civilian youths upon coercing the village’s residents into meeting them and providing them with a list of youths in the area according to WPN sources.

In areas beyond Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships, cases of AA members forcibly recruiting Rohingya civilians have also been reported by WPN sources. The reports include the AA’s forced recruitment of 50 Rohingya men, specifically aged 18 to 45, from Rathedaung township’s Tha Mee La Rohingya village in mid-April. The sources confirm that the AA then forced the civilians to undergo its “training” for about 15 days. Among those forcibly recruited reportedly include several of the community’s well-known Islamic scholars. The case of forced recruitment in Tha Mee La Rohingya village follows the AA’s statement on March 17, which declared that it had taken control of the township from the Burmese military, and found “bodies of Bengalis” whom the military had reportedly conscripted in its conquered areas.¹⁵²

Subsequently, WPN has been informed that in late April, the AA also forcibly recruited 22 Rohingya civilian youth from Sittwe township’s Aung Mingalar quarter, and fined “15,000 MMK per conscripted youth” from the Rohingya’s households. Described as a “ghetto” and an “open-air prison” by many, Aung Mingalar quarter is an area known to have strictly confined around 4,000 Rohingya forcibly displaced during the the wave of state-sponsored mass violence in 2012; the quarter has since been heavily barricaded with barbed wire and monitored “first by police checkpoints [of the Burmese military] and then by the Rakhine Buddhist community that surrounds them on all sides and constantly looks on” according to credible reports.¹⁵³ The quarter’s

¹⁵¹ “AA Forcibly Recruiting Rohingya Youths on a Village-by-Village Basis in Buthidaung Township,” *Rohingya Vision*, April 24, 2024, <https://rohingyavision.com/aa-forcibly-recruiting-rohingya-youths-on-a-village-by-village-basis-in-buthidaung-township/>.

¹⁵² Khine Thu Kha (@KhineThuKha), “ရက္ခိင်ပြည်တိုက်ပွဲသတင်းများ . . .,” X, March 18, 2024, <https://x.com/KhineThuKha/status/1769571851427258507>.

¹⁵³ “Ten years in dire conditions perpetuates severe mental health problems for Rohingya,” *Médecins Sans Frontières*, July 14, 2022, <https://www.msf.org/after-10-years-camps-myanmar-rohingya-mental-health-continues-suffer>; Joe Freeman, “Inside a Muslim Ghetto,” *Tablet*, March 7, 2017, <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/inside-a-muslim-ghetto>; “Dispatches: In Burma, Hell is a Very Small Place,” *Human Rights Watch*, September 30, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/09/30/dispatches-burma-hell-very-small-place>; Anthony Kuhn, “Barricaded In, Myanmar’s Rohingya Struggle To Survive In Ghettos and Camps,” *NPR*, July 29, 2015, <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2015/07/29/425904620/barricaded-in-myanmars-rohingya-struggle-to-survive-in-ghetos-and-camps>. For the quote describing the quarter’s infrastructure, see Jonah Fisher, “Open-air prison: Rohingya cut off in Myanmar town,” *BBC News*, March 6, 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-26452892>.

segregated and highly militarized conditions have brought about inhuman conditions, that have since been further exacerbated by the armed conflict between the AA and the Burmese military: in June 2024, an MSF staff reported that in April and May, there were 98 cases of Acute Water Diarrhea (AWD) in children under the age of five, as well as pregnant women.¹⁵⁴ The AA's targeting of these areas – particularly where Rohingya have been rendered unimaginably vulnerable – thus further demonstrate the degree to which its forced recruitment has been brutally strategic.

Further, reports have surfaced of the AA pursuing a process similar to the Burmese military's Swe Tin Sit against Rohingya civilians in villages and other areas under its control. As noted in the previous chapter, Swe Tin Sit is an intrusive family checking process that has long been conducted by the military to harass Rohingya and monitor Rohingya and their population. From **May 14**, in Ngakhuya village, Maungdaw Township, AA members gathered the village's residents and inspected them, including by taking photos of them individually and collecting "population lists" to assess the village's demography.¹⁵⁵ WPN has been informed that the AA members prohibited Rohingya Muslim women from wearing their religious coverings during their inspection, further pointing to the highly intrusive and violative nature of their conduct. The AA's close surveillance of Rohingya's population risks expanding its grasp of the group's demography in areas under its control. In so doing, WPN sources fear that this process will likely aid the AA's further forced recruitment of Rohingya as its armed conflict with the Burmese military intensifies.

Dangerously, the AA leadership has yet to condemn the abusive practice of its members. Evidence shows that, on the contrary, they have entertained it. On **May 6**, photos of Rohingya men were shared on the personal X profile of Twan Mrat Naing, the AA's commander-in-chief. The photos' corresponding text, describing Rohingya as "Bengalis," seemed to laud Rohingya forced conscripts who had "surrendered" from the Burmese military. The whereabouts of these men remain unknown.

¹⁵⁴ Dr Nimrat Kaur, "Denial of humanitarian assistance is a death sentence in Myanmar," *The New Humanitarian*, June 11, 2024, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/opinion/2024/06/11/denial-humanitarian-assistance-death-sentence-myanmar>.

¹⁵⁵ "မောင်တော ငါးခုရတိုင် အေအေတပ်ဖွဲ့က ရိုဟင်ဂျာများကို အိမ်ထောင်စုအလိုက် လူဦးရေ စစ်ဆေး ဓါတ်ပုံရိုက်ယူသွား," *Rohingya Vision*, May 16, 2024, <https://rohingyavision.com/burmese/1842/>.



Rohingya men “surrendering” themselves to the AA from the Burmese military. The photos were issued on Twan Mrat Naing’s personal X profile on May 6, 2024.¹⁵⁶

H. Hate speech and genocidal rhetoric

Against the backdrop of its atrocities lies another worrying development from the AA: the use of hate speech and genocidal rhetoric targeting Rohingya.¹⁵⁷ The AA’s leadership, namely Twan Mrat Naing and its spokesperson, Khine Thu Kha, have actively contributed to the dissemination of narratives denying the Rohingya identity, as well as their belonging to Rakhine State and Myanmar. At a UN Geneva press briefing on May 24, 2024, the head of the Office of the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights’ (OHCHR) Myanmar Team stated, “there had been several instances in recent weeks with lot of misinformation and propaganda on social media sowed with the purpose of spreading discord between the Rohingya and other Rakhine communities,” with “the head of the Arakan Army himself had spread on X some ethnically motivated conspiracy theories about the Rohingya.”¹⁵⁸ The AA leadership’s use of such discriminatory language is in stark contrast to what has been shared to international, English-speaking media, as was demonstrated by Twan Mrat Naing’s January 2022 interview on “recognizing the human rights and citizen rights of the Rohingyas.”¹⁵⁹

On **April 23**, Khine Thu Kha issued a five-page analysis brazenly accusing the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights’s “press conference” on April 19 of being “fraught with factual errors, biased accusations, and attempts to hide the truth.”¹⁶⁰ Such a document was ostensibly

¹⁵⁶ ရဲရဲတောက် ခွဲ ဘင်္ဂလီတွေ သတ္တိခဲတွေ. . . , photograph, X, May 6, 2024, <https://x.com/TwanMrat/status/1787331762483298361>.

¹⁵⁷ “Statement on The Situation in Rakhine State,” *United Nations Myanmar*, May 2, 2024, <https://myanmar.un.org/en/267589-statement-situation-rakhine-state>.

¹⁵⁸ “UN GENEVA PRESS BRIEFING,” *United Nations Office at Geneva*, May 24, 2024, <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/press-briefing/2024/05/un-geneva-press-briefing-5>.

¹⁵⁹ Altav Parvez, Shafiqul Alam, and Ashfaque Ronnie, “We recognize the human rights and citizen rights of the Rohingyas,” *Prothom Alo*, January 2, 2022, <https://en.prothomalo.com/opinion/interview/we-recognise-the-human-rights-and-citizen-rights-of-the-rohingyas>.

¹⁶⁰ Khine Thu Kha (@KhineThuKha), “Remarks in response to the statement of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights . . . ,” X, April 23, 2024, <https://x.com/KhineThuKha/status/1782776701602365531>.

intended to be a direct response to a press release – “Myanmar: Türk sounds alarm amid rising tensions in Rakhine – issued by the OHCHR on April 19. In it, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said, among other points, that “disinformation and propaganda are also rife, pointing to claims that ‘Islamic terrorists’ have taken Hindus and Buddhists hostage”; he then expresses, “this was the same kind of hateful narrative that fuelled communal violence in 2012 and the horrendous attacks against the Rohingya in 2017.”¹⁶¹ The discriminatory rhetoric to which the statement referred is, notably, reflected by an article issued by The New Indian Express on April 15: “Islamic terror groups holding over 1600 Hindus, 120 Buddhists hostage in Myanmar.”¹⁶² Two days later, on **April 17**, the article was shared on Twan Mrat Naing’s personal X profile.¹⁶³



Left: The New Indian Express article from April 15, 2024, with its link, shared on Twan Mrat Naing’s personal X profile on April 17, 2024.¹⁶⁴

Right: The first two pages of the AA’s “Remarks in response to the statement of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights” shared on Khine Thu Kha’s personal X profile on April 23, 2024.¹⁶⁵

The leadership’s comments, namely on X profiles, the AA’s official Telegram channel, and interviews with Burmese and international new media platforms, effectively put to question the AA’s position on Rohingya as a part of the “Arakan” that it envisions. They reinforce the worrying indication that Rohingya’s uniquely exacerbating vulnerabilities in Rakhine State are purposefully being weaponized against them for others’ aims.

Alarming, the AA leadership’s hate speech has emboldened AA’s followers to engage in similar kinds of acts online; WPN has observed a proliferation of anti-Rohingya hate speech in response to

¹⁶¹ “Myanmar: Türk sounds alarm amid rising tensions in Rakhine.”
¹⁶² Yeshi Sell, “Islamic terror groups holding over 1600 Hindus, 120 Buddhists hostage in Myanmar,” *The New Indian Express*, April 14, 2024.
¹⁶³ Twan Mrat Naing (@TwanMrat), X, April 17, 2024, <https://x.com/TwanMrat/status/1780529254368973013>.
¹⁶⁴ Ibid.
¹⁶⁵ *Remarks in response to the statement of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*. . . , photograph, X, April 23, 2024, <https://x.com/KhineThuKha/status/1782776701602365531>.

the AA's posts on Rohingya. The leadership's actions can be broadly categorized into the following, among others.

Blaming Rohingya as "traitors"

The AA leadership is publicly accusing Rohingya for supposed acts of treason. This was observed in the **March 22, 2024** interview on the British Broadcasting Corporation's Burmese channel with Khine Thu Kha, during which he accused Rohingya for "siding with the military" and "betraying the country or Burmese people" in response to their forced conscription and protests.¹⁶⁶ Consistent with this approach, on **May 7**, Twan Mrat Naing issued a post on his personal X profile ambiguously warning the ramifications of "betrayal": "*History teaches us the price of treachery; let it serve as a cautionary tale for those who flirt with betrayal.*"¹⁶⁷ Here, it points to the interpretation that Twan Mrat Naing is referring to the Rohingya civilians who were forcibly conscripted by the Burmese military and its related militias.



*Posts on Twan Mrat Naing's personal X profile with texts suggesting, or even promoting, acts of retaliation against "those who betrayed their nation" on April 19 and May 8, 2024, respectively.*¹⁶⁸

The approach of blaming Rohingya for treason and betrayal in such a context is faulty, and dangerous. It is important to note that the AA has yet to provide any kind of evidence to substantiate their claim despite outwardly expressing that "upholding truth and verified information should be the keys to countering false narratives and disinformation."¹⁶⁹ On the contrary, this report's previous sections, among many reports by local, and UN and other international actors, demonstrated the growing number of ways Rohingya have been targeted, their unique vulnerabilities made use of, and their bodies weaponized by the Burmese military for its divide-and-conquer strategy in Rakhine State and across Myanmar. And, as this report and many

¹⁶⁶ BBC Burmese, "အေအေကိုအလိုမရှိကြောင်း ဆန္ဒပြပွဲနဲ့ပတ်သက်လို့ ရုက္ခိဉ်တပ်တော် AA ဘယ်လိုတုံ့ပြန် - BBC News မြန်မာ," Facebook, March 22, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?mibextid=w8EBqM&rdid=z9edZZSJlxtwrULf&v=426212343148800>.

¹⁶⁷ Twan Mrat Naing (@TwnMrat), "Reflecting on Bangladesh's liberation war, I marvel at the resolve of its courts and security forces in confronting those who betrayed their nation . . ." X, May 8, 2024, <https://x.com/TwanMrat/status/1788047737608679607>.

¹⁶⁸ "Reflecting on Bangladesh's liberation war, I marvel at the resolve of its courts and security forces in confronting those who betrayed their nation. . . , photograph, X, May 8, 2024, <https://x.com/TwanMrat/status/1788047737608679607>; We are neither naive nor idiots to fall into SAC's cliched scheme. . . , photograph, X, April 19, 2024, <https://x.com/TwanMrat/status/1781375372195660121>.

¹⁶⁹ Ali M. Latifi, "The Arakan Army responds to Rohingya abuse accusations in Myanmar," *The New Humanitarian*, May 29, 2024, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/interview/2024/05/29/arakan-army-responds-rohingya-abuse-accusations-myanmar>.

other sources have emphasized, there exists a clear, strict distinction between Rohingya civilians and the militant groups with which the Burmese military has allegedly collaborated.

Moreover, the AA leadership’s verbal act of collective punishment also risks unjustifiedly allowing the false depiction of Rohingya as a group that chooses to side with the key perpetrator of the ongoing crises in Myanmar, and the decades-long genocide against them. In doing so, in the context of ongoing efforts for Myanmar’s truly inclusive federal democracy, it provides more reason to entertain the military’s attempts at inflaming communal tensions in Rakhine State across the country, and fostering a discriminatory and genocidal narrative for Rohingya’s exclusion.

Denying Rohingya identity

The AA leadership is using terms such as “Muslims” and “Bengali Muslim,” instead of “Rohingya,” to identify the group. These terms have for decades been used by actors, including the Burmese military, to falsely identify Rohingya as foreign interlopers – casting them as an “existential threat” to Myanmar and its Buddhist majority. Effectively, by purportedly justifying their exclusion, these genocidal terms thus contribute to the narrative that denies Rohingya’s identity in Myanmar and belonging to Rakhine State. The following exhibit the AA leadership’s usage of such a language.

- On **March 26, 2024**, Twan Mrat Naing issued a post on his personal X profile: “As immediate neighbors, it is a fact that the Arakanese (Rakhine) ppl reside in Bangladesh as Bangladeshi citizens and there are ethnic Bengali citizens in Myanmar vice versa. However, some irrational individuals refuse to acknowledge the presence of Bengali ppl living in Arakan.”¹⁷⁰
- On **April 30**, Khine Thu Kha issued a joint-ULA and AA press statement “strongly condemning the fabricated news and allegations concerning AA and its relationship with the Bengali Muslim community in Rakhine State.”¹⁷¹
- On **May 6**, Twan Mrat Naing used “Bengali” to describe Rohingya being forcibly conscripted by the AA in a post on his personal X profile.¹⁷²
- On **May 28**, in an interview with The Irrawaddy – “Arakan Army Liberating All People in Rakhine: Spokesman” – Khine Thu Kha used the term “Muslim” to refer to Rohingya in response to questions explicitly using the term “Rohingya.”¹⁷³ For example, in response to the question, “How will the AA handle the Rohingya issue?,” Khine Thu Kha responded: “We didn’t target Muslim communities during the fighting in Buthidaung, despite the allegations. It is a baseless accusation made by so-called activists just for money.”¹⁷⁴ This contrast in language suggests that Khine Thu Kha, as a part of the AA leadership, is intentionally not using the term Rohingya.
- On **May 29**, in an interview with The New Humanitarian – “Arakan Army responds to Rohingya abuse accusations in Myanmar” – the AA issued responses that named Rohingya

¹⁷⁰ Twan Mrat Naing (@TwanMrat), “As immediate neighbors, it is a fact that the Arakanese (Rakhine) ppl reside in Bangladesh as Bangladeshi citizens and there are ethnic Bengali citizens in Myanmar vice versa . . . ,” X, March 26, 2024, <https://x.com/TwanMrat/status/1772616255935029728>.

¹⁷¹ Khine Thu Kha (@KhineThuKha), “သတင်းတူ သတင်းမှားများ လုပ်ကြံစွပ်စွဲချက်များနှင့် ပတ်သက်၍ တုန့်ပြန်ချက်,” X, April 30, 2024, <https://x.com/KhineThuKha/status/1785338209196798230>.

¹⁷² Twan Mrat Naing (@TwanMrat), “ရဲရဲထောက် ခွံ့ ဘင်္ဂလီတွေ သတ္တိခဲတွေ . . . ,” X, May 6, 2024, <https://x.com/TwanMrat/status/1787331762483298361>.

¹⁷³ Saw May Ri, “Arakan Army Liberating All People in Rakhine: Spokesman,” *The Irrawaddy*, May 28, 2024, <https://www.irrawaddy.com/in-person/interview/arakan-army-liberating-all-people-in-rakhine-spokesman.html>.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

“Muslim residents of Arakan” and “Muslims.” In the article, the AA’s responses only use the “Rohingya” term when referring to “militants.” Such a terminology is in stark contrast to what the AA reportedly expressed in its response about its vision: *“The commitment of the ULA authority to protect equal citizenship and human rights for all individual residents in Arakan will never be wavered.”*¹⁷⁵

In the years prior, perpetrators of the many genocidal attacks against Rohingya consistently used the above, exclusionary terms in an effort to justify their acts. The Burmese military’s commander-in-chief, Min Aung Hlaing, precisely employed such a tactic in the period leading up to and during the 2016 and 2017 “clearance operations” against Rohingya as was reported by the IIFMM.¹⁷⁶ For example, on September 17, 2017, Min Aung Hlaing posted on Facebook: *“The Bengali population exploded and the aliens tried to seize the land of local ethnics . . . Race cannot be swallowed by the ground but only by another race. All must be loyal to the State in serving their duties, so that such cases will never happen again.”*¹⁷⁷ Further, on September 2, 2018, at the height of the “clearance operations,” he issued: *“The Bengali problem was a long-standing one which has become an unfinished job despite the efforts of the previous governments to solve it. The government in office is taking great care in solving the problem.”*¹⁷⁸

Following such a pattern, the AA leadership’s usage of genocidal terms – more and more similar to that demonstrated above – is extremely concerning. In the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights’ June 2024 annual report, upon noting its Rohingya interviewees’ frequent statements of there being “no difference” between the Burmese military and the AA and the continued exposure to “life-threatening risks and systematic human rights violations,” it states: “A simple and clear indicator of this was the consistent refusal by both parties to use the term ‘Rohingya’ to identify members of this community.”¹⁷⁹ It also risks pointing to an alternative reality coming into full existence in Rakhine State as AA takes control of it: one where the “people of Arakan” are rendered a homogenized society of ethnic Rakhine Buddhists that denies Rohingya’s identity, and excludes them as second-class citizens.

¹⁷⁵ Ali M. Latifi, “The Arakan Army responds to Rohingya abuse accusations in Myanmar.”

¹⁷⁶ A/HRC/39/64.

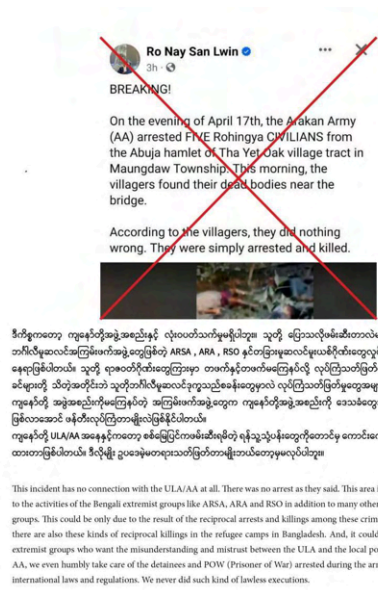
¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ A/HRC/56/23.



Left: Post on Twan Mrat Naing's personal X profile, from March 26, 2024, with text promoting the justification of the use of the term "Bengali" to identify Rohingya.¹⁸⁰



Right: A document issued on Khine Thu Kha's personal X profile on April 24, 2024 that attempts to refute an allegation of killing by the AA – instead blaming it on "Bengali extremist groups" – from a Rohingya human rights defender.¹⁸¹

Moreover, it is important to recall that the AA leadership's hate speech and genocidal rhetoric were followed by the armed group's May 17 attack on downtown Buthidaung, when, as noted earlier, its members killed and injured Rohingya civilians, and systematically torched their homes. At the time of this report's writing, the AA leadership has responded in the below ways to the growing reports of the AA's involvement in the May 17 attack and other atrocities against Rohingya.

Disinformation and propaganda

The AA leadership has taken to social media and its official communication platforms to outrightly deny its attacks against Rohingya civilians, as well as reports of them from multiple, credible sources. Seemingly an attempt to quell international criticism of its actions, the AA has instead resorted to creating and distributing "propaganda": material ostensibly portraying the AA as actors doing "no harm" to Rohingya remaining in Rakhine State – rather "saving" them. Such have been demonstrated by the following.

- On **May 18, 2024**, on his personal X profile, Twat Mrat Naing posted: *"Kindly urge to not buy any distorted & misleading craps during this challenging time. Our dedicated Arrakkha soldiers are committed to protecting and serving everyone, regardless of their religious or ethnic background."*¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Nothing is wrong with calling Bengalis 'Bengalis'. . . , photograph, X, March 26, 2024, <https://x.com/TwanMrat/status/1772562446882074725>.

¹⁸¹ Photograph, X, April 24, 2024, <https://x.com/KhineThuKha/status/1783066101552910466>.

¹⁸² Twan Mrat Naing (@TwanMrat), "Kindly urge to not buy any distorted & misleading craps during this challenging time. . .," X, May 18, 2024, <https://x.com/TwanMrat/status/1791777614446882846>.

- On **May 19**, on his personal X profile, Khine Thu Kha released a video in the Burmese language claiming the AA's provision of medical treatment to 166 "Muslims" who had allegedly fled the Burmese military's armed attacks.¹⁸³
- On **May 20**, the AA released a statement in both Burmese and English languages claiming that on May 17, "SAC and its allies have destructed the town, and they are now spreading false narratives and accusations relentlessly as if it was done by the Arakan Army."¹⁸⁴ The statement also used the terms "Bengali Muslims," "Bengalis," and "Muslims to indicate Rohingya."¹⁸⁵ In conjunction with the statement, on May 21, Twat Mrat Naing "retweeted" a video issued by the AA of Rohingya civilians purportedly blaming the Burmese military for the AA's May 17 attack on Buthidaung.¹⁸⁶
- On **May 24**, on his personal X profile, Khine Thu Kha, issued an official AA video depicting the AA's provision of "medical treatment" to Rohingya.¹⁸⁷ Specifically the video portrays the leg of "a young Muslim woman" being operated on by "AA medical staff."¹⁸⁸ It also includes an interview between a Rohingya man and an AA soldier, during which he thanks the AA for its provision of food and medical treatment; a closer analysis of this interview reveals the voice of another individual having a command of the man's responses.

¹⁸³ Khine Thu Kha (@KhineThuKha), "အကြမ်းဖက်စစ်ကောင်စီမှ ဗုံးကြဲတိုက်ခိုက်ဖျက်ဆီးနေသောကြောင့် ထွက်ပြေးလာသော မုဆလင် စုစုပေါင်း (၁၆၆) ယောက်အား အာရက္ခတပ်တော်မှ မောင်တောမြို့နယ်၊ အောင်ဇေယျကျေးရွာ၏ အရှေ့တောင်ဘက် (၃.၂၁) ကီလိုမီတာခန့်အကွာ၌တွေ့၍ ကျန်းမာရေးမကောင်းသော သူများအား ဆေးကုသမှုပေးနေသော ရုပ်သံမှတ်တမ်း," X, May 19, 2024, <https://x.com/KhineThuKha/status/1792258710825550230>.

¹⁸⁴ AA Info Desk, "Statement," VK, May 20, 2024, <https://vk.com/arakanarmyinfodesk>; Khine Thu Kha (@KhineThuKha), "#ULA," X, <https://x.com/KhineThuKha/status/1792577550968881197>; *Ibid.*, <https://x.com/KhineThuKha/status/1792577384664957256>.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ Twanmrarnaing (@twanmrarnaing), "https://t.me/aainfodesk/913," X, May 20, 2024, <https://x.com/twanmrarnaing/status/1792762264015237124>.

¹⁸⁷ Khine Thu Kha (@KhineThuKha), "အာရက္ခတပ်တော်မှ ဆေးဝါးကုသမှုပေးခဲ့သည့် လူနာများမှ ကျေးဇူးတင်စကားအချို့ပြောကြားခဲ့သည့် ရုပ်သံမိုင် . . .," X, May 29, 2024, <https://x.com/KhineThuKha/status/1795827958579597369>.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*



Statement

The fascist terrorist group known as the military council, or SAC, has been facing defeats across Myanmar, including in Arakan. They have lost control of many major military bases, including headquarters and border guard outposts, and stand to lose many more. Being desperate due to failures on all fronts—military, administrative, and diplomatic—SAC has resorted to tactics that violate international humanitarian and human rights laws, as well as laws on crimes against humanity. They have continually targeted civilian areas, markets, hospitals, schools, and religious structures with ground and naval artillery shelling and aerial bombardments. Additionally, they have been burning homes and destroying bridges.

Civilians are once again warned to dig bomb shelters to protect themselves from aerial, artillery, and naval bombardments, and to swiftly evacuate to safer areas to avoid getting caught in the crossfire. Due to ongoing intense fighting in the Buthidaung, Maungdaw, and Thandwe regions, international organizations based there are advised to relocate to safer areas. If they become trapped in the warzone, they should contact ULA/AA for assistance anytime.

In addition to the aforementioned crimes, SAC has been inciting racial and religious violence by recruiting, training, and equipping militant Bengali Muslims from Buthidaung, Maungdaw, and Kyaukphyu townships, in collaboration with RSO, ARSA, and ARA. The Arakan Army strictly adheres to its principle of fighting under the military code of conduct and never targets non-military objects. Accordingly, it has been helping people evacuate to safer areas in a timely manner. Conversely, the defeated military council, with malicious intentions, has been intent on inciting racial and religious conflicts.

Moreover, in April this year, SAC, together with the Bengali militants they trained and equipped, burned down almost all the houses of Rakhine, Hindu and other non-Muslim people in Buthidaung, preventing them from returning home and recovered. It should be noted that on May 17, SAC launched a prolonged aerial attack on Buthidaung township until midnight as their last desperate attacks. In reality, SAC and its allies have destructed the town, and they are now spreading false narratives and accusations relentlessly as if it was done by the Arakan Army.

The Arakan Army had issued warnings before the offensives began, advising people in major cities like Sittwe and Kyaukphyu to evacuate to areas under its control, and practically helped with their evacuation. Similarly, in Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships, advance warnings were given, and the Arakan Army has been assisting people in moving to safer areas. Meanwhile, extremist organizations such as RSO, ARSA, and ARA, along with their cohorts, have been echoing SAC's lines for their own agendas.

Spreading such disinformation is clearly aimed at destroying the unity, social harmony, and cooperation among the ULA/AA, Arakanese, Muslim communities and other minority ethnic groups in the region. These claims are in favor of SAC's propaganda and false, and we hereby denounce and condemn them. We also strongly and categorically reject the news broadcast by RFA Burmese on May 17, 2024 that portrayed that the Arakan Army had dropped bombs by drone on some civilians in Buthidaung which had killed some civilians and injured hundreds as groundless and having nothing to do with our organization.

For transparency and truth seeking, both domestic and international media are welcomed to come and gather unbiased and objective information in accordance with media ethics. We are striving for truth and justice and we denounce all forms of terror and atrocities. And we are also ready to cooperate with the international ant-terrorism groups to participate in combating against all forms of terrorism. Regarding Buthidaung and Maungdaw situations, our organization can be contacted anytime to have clearance and ground truth about the many false accusation and fake news propagated by the groups who have negative stance on ULA/AA. We would like to firmly reiterate that we are ready to work with any unbiased organization for the above-mentioned subjects.

United League of Arakan

DISCLAIMER: The English version of this statement serves as a translation of the original Burmese text for informational purposes only. In case of any discrepancies, the Burmese original shall prevail.

A statement issued by the AA on May 20, 2024 refuting reports of the AA's abuses, including its May 17 attack on downtown Buthidaung.¹⁸⁹ The statement in the English and Burmese languages was shared on Khine Thu Kha's personal X profile, as well as the AA's official Telegram channel and VK profile, on that day.¹⁹⁰

Attacks against human rights defenders and civil society

The AA, including its leadership, has also taken to social media platforms to threaten and intimidate human rights defenders and civil society members attempting to resolve the situation in Rakhine State. They include the 195 members of CSOs and other members of the Burmese pro-democracy movement, including WPN, that issued a joint statement concerning Rakhine State on May 22, 2024.¹⁹¹ On **May 25**, the AA responded with a statement accusing the groups for spreading disinformation, misleading information, and "fake news."¹⁹²

Among Burmese civil society, Rohingya human rights defenders and their affiliated civil society organizations have been subjected to disproportionate levels of verbal attacks by the AA. Notably, on **May 19**, on his personal X profile, Twan Mrat Naing posted a photo with a text directed at "R-Bengali diaspora activists&coterie . . . to abandon your misbegotten scheme of creating a separate Islamic safe zone through foreign interventions."¹⁹³ The post is assumed to be a threat against Rohingya, particularly its human rights defenders, in response to their work to raise awareness of the AA's May 17 attacks on downtown Buthidaung.

¹⁸⁹ #ULA. . . , photograph, X, May 20, 2024.

¹⁹⁰ See AA Info Desk (@aainfodesk), <https://t.me/aainfodesk>, Telegram; AA Info Desk (@arakanarmyinfodesk), VK, <https://vk.com/arakanarmyinfodesk>.

¹⁹¹ Khine Thu Kha (@KhineThuKha), "တော်လှန်ရေးအင်အားစုများအပါအဝင်အရပ်ဘက်အဖွဲ့အစည်းများ၊ ပြည်တွင်းလိုခြံရေးအခြေအနေကြောင့် အမည်မဖော်လိုသောအဖွဲ့အစည်း. . ." X, May 25, 2024, <https://x.com/KhineThuKha/status/1794206730475520138>; "Joint statement by 195 revolutionary forces and civil society organisations on the situation in northern Rakhine."

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Twan Mrat Naing (@TwanMrat), X, May 19, 2024, <https://x.com/TwanMrat/status/1792001699894419764>.



Left: Post shared on Twan Mrat Naing’s personal X profile, on May 19, 2024, with a photo inscribed with text that suggests threats targeting Rohingya or as he derogatorily terms “R-Bengali diaspora activists&coterie.”¹⁹⁴

Right: A post, liked on Twan Mrat Naing’s personal X profile, from May 18, 2024 with text targeted at “several Muslim diaspora activists,” including WPN’s Founder and Executive Director.¹⁹⁵

On his personal X profile, Khine Thu Kha has also issued statements targeting Rohingya human rights defenders and civil society, seemingly referring to some of them as “affiliated groups” of “Bengali Muslim terrorist organizations such as ARSA, ARA, RSO.”¹⁹⁶

It is important to note that Rohingya addressing the situation of Rakhine State through their work have family and other personal connections in Rakhine State, including in Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships.¹⁹⁷ Consequently, the AA leadership’s verbal attacks against these individuals risks further endangering their network with acts of retaliation by other members of the AA or its supporters. Such acts of collective punishment begin to bear resemblance to those systematically pursued for decades by the Burmese military against many human rights defenders and civil society members, both in Burma and, now, in exile.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴ Photograph, X, May 19, 2024, <https://x.com/TwanMrat/status/1792001699894419764>; Photograph, X, last accessed May 21, 2024, <https://x.com/TwanMrat/likes>.

¹⁹⁵ Twan Mrat Naing (@TwanMratNaing), X, last accessed May 28, 2024, <https://twitter.com/TwanMrat>.

¹⁹⁶ Khine Thu Kha (@KhineThuKha), “သတင်းတို သတင်းမှားများ လုပ်ကြံစွပ်စွဲချက်များနှင့် ပတ်သက်၍ တုန့်ပြန်ချက်,” X, April 30, 2024, <https://x.com/KhineThuKha/status/1785338209196798230>; Ibid., April 24, 2024, <https://x.com/KhineThuKha/status/1783066101552910466>.

¹⁹⁷ Caleb Quinley, “Nowhere to go’: Rohingya face arson attacks in Myanmar’s Rakhine State.”

¹⁹⁸ A/HRC/56/CRP.8

VI. CATASTROPHIC SHORT AND LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS

If left unaddressed, the situation in Rakhine State will further exacerbate domestic, regional, and international prospects for immediate peace and security. WPN raises the alarm about the following six key concerns, among many, from its analysis at the time of this report's writing.

A. Eliminate Rohingya group from Myanmar

The approximately 600,000 Rohingya remaining in Rakhine State risk complete elimination from their ancestral home, Arakan. Rohingya are now, indeed, caught between two parties with unique interests, on top of being targeted with atrocities by them without any recourse. As noted by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' latest annual report from June 2024, "Rohingya also feared abuses and crimes from the Arakan Army and Rohingya armed elements" in addition to the Burmese military, and that "these actions taken by all parties that endanger Rohingya appear inconsistent with the provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice and indicate confidence of the military and other perpetrators in their impunity."¹⁹⁹ The AA's May 17 attack on downtown Buthidaung, namely of targeting Rohingya villages and massacring Rohingya civilians, should provide further evidence for this dangerous implication.

B. Worsen the humanitarian catastrophe

Full and unfettered access to humanitarian aid remains lacking for Rohingya in Rakhine State, thereby denying them much-needed access to life-saving, emergency resources.²⁰⁰

Famine is now imminent in Rakhine State. Since October 2023, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN and the World Food Programme (WFP) have, in fact, already designated Myanmar as one of the world's 19 "hunger hotspots": a country where "acute food insecurity is likely to deteriorate further in the coming months."²⁰¹ At the time of this report's writing, starvation is now widespread among Rohingya IDPs and all others displaced in the region as restrictions on movement and burning of civilian objects including villages are further brought about by the intensifying armed conflict. Continued rises in prices of food and essential supplies have also been reported.²⁰² Water scarcity is increasingly putting displaced and conflict-affect communities at risk of preventable conditions including AWD.²⁰³

On June 22, 2024, WFP's warehouse in Maungdaw township was burned down and its food and supplies – of 1,175 metric tons, or "enough emergency food to sustain 64,000 people for one month" according to the UN organization – were looted.²⁰⁴ WFP subsequently issued a statement

¹⁹⁹ A/HRC/56/23.

²⁰⁰ "Myanmar Humanitarian Update No. 38 | 24 May 2024," *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*, May 24, 2024, <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/myanmar-humanitarian-update-no-38-24-may-2024>.

²⁰¹ "UN chief condemns escalating violence and civilian attacks in Myanmar," *UN News*, June 6, 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/06/1150751>; "Acute food insecurity to rise in 18 'hunger hotspots', warn aid agencies," *UN News*, June 5, 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/06/1150646>.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ "Myanmar Humanitarian Update No. 38 | 24 May 2024".

²⁰⁴ "WFP condemns looting and burning of its warehouse in Myanmar.," *United Nations Myanmar*, June 25, 2024, <https://myanmar.un.org/en/272410-wfp-condemns-looting-and-burning-its-warehouse-myanmar>.

condemning the attack and “calling on all parties to the conflict to uphold their obligations under International Humanitarian Law.”²⁰⁵ As of late June, in Maungdaw township, about 10,000 civilians – mostly Rohingya recently forcibly displaced – are reportedly “in urgent need of food and medical aid.”²⁰⁶

Such a catastrophic situation is unlikely to be resolved at the status quo. Immediate access to medical care and other forms of international aid remains unforeseeable following the evacuation of UN and international aid providers from Rakhine State.²⁰⁷ According to a MSF staff member – who described, in June 2024, the situation in Rakhine State as “worse than any other period of violence in the state since 2017” – hospitals in Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships “are not functioning.”²⁰⁸ In late June, MSF suspended its “medical humanitarian activities” in northern Rakhine State due to “the extreme escalation of conflict, indiscriminate violence, and severe restrictions on humanitarian access.”²⁰⁹

In July 2024, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported of two humanitarian facilities in a Rohingya IDP camp in Sittwe township being “occupied by a party to the conflict since the third week of June,” and the “temporary detention” of an interagency mission of two UN vehicles traveling from Mandalay to Myitkyina, Kachin State, in mid-June.²¹⁰ As the OCHA noted, “these incidents are a violation of International Humanitarian Law and the humanitarian community reminds all parties to the conflict of their obligations to protect and respect civilians, aid workers and humanitarian facilities and assets.”²¹¹

C. Prolong Myanmar crisis

The situation in Rakhine State will continue to yield devastating effects on the entire Myanmar crisis. Despite its territorial gains, the AA has yet to arrive at a position to fully and immediately take control of Rakhine State from the Burmese military; this implies that the status quo points to the strong possibility that the regional conflict will prolong for an indefinite time. At the same time, the military will remain embroiled in other conflicts across the country, particularly along the Thailand-Myanmar border, in its ongoing, armed efforts to defeat pro-democracy forces and other major ethnic armed groups. In this context, it is important to also consider the strategic position of Rakhine State in the wider domestic and regional sphere and, in light of Operation 1027, the AA in the pro-democracy movement and its vision for a truly inclusive federal democracy.²¹²

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ “Neither hospitals nor doctors’ for 10,000 displaced in Myanmar,” *Radio Free Asia*, June 26, 2024, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/myanmar-displaced-06262024071115.html>.

²⁰⁷ “Fierce fighting in Rakhine state prompts aid workers to evacuate,” *Radio Free Asia*, January 31, 2024, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/rakhine-aid-workers-01312024160935.html>.

²⁰⁸ Dr Nimrat Kaur, “Denial of humanitarian assistance is a death sentence in Myanmar”.

²⁰⁹ “MSF suspends medical activities in northern Rakhine state, Myanmar,” *Médecins Sans Frontières*, June 27, 2024, <https://www.msf.org/msf-suspends-medical-activities-northern-rakhine-state-myanmar>.

²¹⁰ “Myanmar Humanitarian Update No. 39 | 1 July 2024,” *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*, July 1, 2024, <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/myanmar-humanitarian-update-no-39-1-july-2024>.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Zachary Abuza, “Arakan Army treatment of Rohingya minority poses challenge to Myanmar opposition,” *Radio Free Asia*, June 8, 2024, <https://www.rfa.org/english/commentaries/myanmar-rohingya-arakan-army-06082024105708.html>; Jason Tower, “Myanmar’s Collapsing Military Creates a Crisis on China’s Border,” *United States Institute of Peace*, April 11, 2024, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2024/04/myanmars-collapsing-military-creates-crisis-chinas-border>; Yun Sun, “China, the

D. Exacerbate protection conditions in Bangladesh refugee camps

Reports have emerged of militant groups and gangs, namely ARSA, ARA, and RSO, attempting to forcibly conscript Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh's Kutupalong refugee camp, and deploy them to battles in Rakhine State.²¹³ These reports include abductions and forced transfer of refugees across the Bangladesh-Myanmar border to the control of the Burmese military or the AA.²¹⁴

Reliable and immediate protection and accountability mechanisms for the refugees remain lacking in Bangladesh despite the recent rise in such intracommunal actors' attacks, all of which risk further detriments on Rohingya to come. These attacks, including kidnapping and sexual violence against women refugees, have forced a disproportionate number of them to flee the camps under more vulnerable circumstances.²¹⁵ Forced and child labor, forced and child marriage, domestic servitude, human trafficking, and sexual slavery continue to be committed against these Rohingya without any means of legal recourse, or access to protection.²¹⁶

E. More deadly land and sea crossings

With the current closure of the Bangladesh-Myanmar border, many more Rohingya, especially women and children, will have no choice but to be trafficked into dangerous land and maritime routes for their escape. The UNHCR reported that in 2023, a total of 6,500 Rohingya attempted to pursue these routes, with nearly 4,500 on sea and 2,000 over land; the majority of them were women and children.²¹⁷ The number is estimated to be higher according to WPN and local civil society, which have also taken 2023 to be the "deadliest year" for Rohingya's deadly sea crossings in the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal.²¹⁸

As it exacerbates, the situation in Rakhine State will make 2024 an even deadlier year for Rohingya forced to escape Myanmar. The land and maritime routes long taken by Rohingya have depended on abusive tactics of human trafficking, bribery, and extortion, often mediated by the Burmese military and transnational and regional crime syndicates.²¹⁹ Their journey also endangers those fleeing with atrocities. In areas that include Thailand and Malaysia, mass graves of trafficked Rohingya refugees were found with marks of torture and starvation; in these "human trafficking camps," or interim stops in their traffickers' routes, cases of forced labor and rape being committed against the refugees have also been reported.²²⁰ "The lack of accountability and limited investigations into credible evidence of trafficking in persons, in addition to the limited assistance

Arakan Army, and a Myanmar solution," *Frontier Myanmar*, March 9, 2020,

<https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/china-the-arakan-army-and-a-myanmar-solution/>.

²¹³ "The Intensifying Rohingya Genocide"; "Myanmar: Urgent international action crucial to save lives of thousands of Rohingya in Rakhine State"; Shafiur Rahman, "Rohingya families torn apart by conscription," *Dhaka Tribune*, May 17, 2024,

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/rohingya-crisis/346776/rohingya-families-torn-apart-by-conscription>.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ A/HRC/56/CRP.8; "The Rohingya boat crisis: Recent developments and key contributing factors in South and Southeast Asia".

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ "Rohingya refugees fleeing over land and sea - Quarterly update: Desperate journeys: Rohingya refugees in search of protection," *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, February 5, 2024,

<https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/106455>.

²¹⁸ "The Rohingya boat crisis: Recent developments and key contributing factors in South and Southeast Asia".

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

and protection to victims and persons at risk of trafficking among Rohingya refugees crossing the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal is a very serious concern, requiring urgent attention from United Nations entities, regional bodies and States,” underscored the UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, in an April 2024 report issued to the 56th session of the UN Human Rights Council.²²¹

Rohingya forced into overcrowded, unseaworthy vessels too face abuses including torture, with women and girls risking rape, gang rape, sexual slavery, and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence committed by their traffickers.²²² Their boats’ safe disembarkation is also not guaranteed by the region’s countries, putting them at risk of being stranded at sea to die from starvation or drowning.²²³ Some regional actors have also resorted to forcibly transferring Rohingya to the Burmese military, further putting them at risk of the military’s retaliative, punitive tactics of arbitrary arrest and detention, and other abuses.²²⁴

Even after being permitted to arrive at their host countries, Rohingya refugees are not guaranteed full access to asylum, safety and protection, and basic needs and livelihoods. Many of them risk being detained in immigration detention centers and other related facilities without any immediate access to UNHCR or legal services, thereby risking them with indefinite detention or deportation to Myanmar via the Burmese military.²²⁵ In Malaysia, Thailand, and India, cases of Rohingya refugees being detained in squalid imprisonment conditions have been recorded.²²⁶ As was reported by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar in July 2024, “Rohingya women and girls who successfully reach other destinations face a myriad of challenges and uncertainties” – detention, family separation, domestic and interpersonal violence, no access to healthcare or mental health and psychosocial support, no access to asylum or refugee registration – that all but subject them to conditions similar to those they had fled from.²²⁷

Simultaneously, among Rohingya’s host countries, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and anti-Rohingya sentiment have rapidly proliferated over the past decade. Without proper intervention, these sentiments risk yielding physically life-threatening conditions on the refugees. Such was demonstrated in Aceh, Indonesia in December 2023, when a group of students led anti-Rohingya protests and then forcefully expelled at least 137 Rohingya refugees, including women and children, from their designated shelter.²²⁸ In India, the approximately 40,000 Rohingya refugees are forced to bear the consequences of widespread Islamophobic and anti-immigrant rhetoric under a Hindu nationalist government.²²⁹ In July 2, 2024, under its early warning and urgent action procedure, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination issued a statement – “Situation of Rohingya who fled Myanmar to India” – to India, a state party to the International

²²¹ United Nations, Human Rights Council, *Trafficking in persons, mixed migration and protection at sea: Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Siobhán Mullally, A/HRC/56/60* (25 April 2024), available from undocs.org/A/HRC/56/60.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ A/HRC/56/60; A/HRC/56/CRP.8.

²²⁸ “The Rohingya boat crisis: Recent developments and key contributing factors in South and Southeast Asia”.

²²⁹ “We are targeted for being Rohingya in Myanmar and everywhere’: the situation of Rohingya since February 1, 2021”.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.²³⁰ In it, the committee raised alarm on the spread of anti-Rohingya hate speech and stereotypes online, and by actors including “politicians and public figures.”²³¹ In addition to urging an end to the arbitrary detention of Rohingya and their forcible deportation to Myanmar, the UN committee urged India to “combat the spread of racist hate speech in the media, on the Internet and in social media and to firmly condemn any form of hate speech and distance itself from racist hate speech expressed by politicians and public figures, including members of parliament and religious leaders, and ensure that such acts are investigated and adequately punished.”²³²

F. Delay repatriation

Ultimately, the armed conflict in Rakhine State and its associated atrocities against Rohingya are conditions not conducive for the safe, voluntary, sustainable, and dignified repatriation of Rohingya to Myanmar. This reality is in stark contrast to the language that has been employed by key international agreements and measures underscoring the need for such conditions; at the time of this report’s writing, they most recently include the 55th session of the UN Human Rights Council’s resolution on the situation in Myanmar, the 78th session of the UN General Assembly’s resolution on the situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar, and resolution 2669 of the UN Security Council.²³³ It is also important to consider that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations’ (ASEAN) April 2021 agreements concerning Myanmar (namely, the “Five-Point Consensus”) continue to increasingly diverge from the realities of the crisis in Rakhine State and across Myanmar.²³⁴

In this context, the Burmese military’s sham efforts to “repatriate” Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh in line with the 2017 bilateral agreement between Myanmar and Bangladesh are unlikely to take root. The status of the military’s 2023 “pilot repatriation project” has been largely unpublicized. Regardless of its outcome, any similar, future attempts to forcibly transfer Rohingya refugees to Myanmar, and confine them in highly militarized concentration camps in Rakhine State, will never be or become conditions conducive to their safe, voluntary, sustainable, and dignified repatriation. It is imperative for the international and regional community to recognize that, and ensure that that remains the case.

²³⁰ “India must end racial discrimination against Rohingya, cease forced deportation and arbitrary detention, urges UN Committee,” *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, July 2, 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/07/india-must-end-racial-discrimination-against-rohingya-cease-forced>; “Statement (1) Situation of Rohingya who fled Myanmar to India,” *United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*, June 29, 2024, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCERD%2FSWA%2FIND%2F10005&Lang=en.

²³¹ *Ibid.*

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ United Nations, Human Rights Council, *Situation of human rights in Myanmar*, A/HRC/55/L.17 (26 March 2024), available from undocs.org/en/A/HRC/55/L.17; *ibid.*, General Assembly, *Situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar*, available from undocs.org/en/A/RES/78/219; *ibid.*, Security Council, *Resolution 2669 (2022)*, S/RES/2669 (21 December 2022), available from undocs.org/en/S/RES/2669.

²³⁴ “Five-Point Consensus,” *Association of Southeast Asian Nations*, April 24, 2021, <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/Chairmans-Statement-on-ALM-Five-Point-Consensus-24-April-2021-FINAL-a-1.pdf>.

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The atrocities in Rakhine State, the pattern by which they are committed against Rohingya civilians, and implications of the crisis as a whole should merit widespread attention and immediate international, regional, and domestic actions. After introducing the situation, explaining its methodology, and highlighting the urgency of the ongoing crisis, the report traced such an argument in the following order.

First, it addressed the Burmese military's atrocities against Rohingya in its efforts to accelerate its decades-long genocide against the minority group. The report drew attention to the military's genocidal attacks and policies, as well as its recent atrocities that have been exhibited by its mass, forced recruitment of Rohingya civilians, collaboration with "Rohingya militant groups," orchestration of anti-AA protests, and ground, air, and naval attacks against Rohingya civilians. All served to demonstrate the intent of the Burmese military in continuing to target Rohingya for their identity. Conclusively, the chapter's cases also exhibited the strategy that the military has long employed to weaken communities in Myanmar – namely to divide and conquer them – as it faced growing defeat following its February 1, 2021 attempted coup.

Second, the report addressed the AA's atrocities against Rohingya amid its attempts to take full control of Rakhine State, or Arakan. It focused on the AA's treatment of Rohingya civilians since the resumption of its armed conflict with the Burmese military in November 2023, particularly its commission of atrocities targeted at them. It specifically drew attention to the AA's conduct of using Rohingya villages and civilian objects as "battlefields," forced transfer of populations and taking of their property, burning and torching of villages, shelling and drone attacks against civilian objects, abductions, forced recruitment, and hate speech and genocidal rhetoric against Rohingya. Taken as a whole, the chapter demonstrated the targeted nature of the AA's atrocities against Rohingya civilians.

Based on its previous two chapters, the report then delved into analyzing the potential consequences of the situation in Rakhine State at the time of its writing. It presented WPN's six key concerns, among many: the situation resulting in the elimination of Rohingya from Myanmar, the worsening of the region's humanitarian catastrophe, the prolonging of the situation in Myanmar since the Burmese military's attempted coup, the exacerbation of protection concerns in Bangladesh's Rohingya refugee camps, more deadly land and sea crossings taken by Rohingya, and further delays in Rohingya's safe, voluntary, dignified, and sustainable return to Myanmar. By drawing attention to these devastating implications, this report highlighted the gravity of the situation in Rakhine State – pivoting its way to underscoring the urgency of its recommendations to its conclusion.

In all, WPN takes this report to reinforce its calls for expedited actions to save civilian lives. At this critical juncture, the following actions must be taken to save an Arakan and Myanmar where peaceful and sustainable coexistence, and a truly inclusive federal democracy, can finally reign supreme.

To the international community

- **Take** all necessary measures to protect Rohingya and prevent further atrocities against them, as well as apply pressure on UN Member States and donor governments to **provide** humanitarian aid – including medical and nutritional support – to Rohingya forcibly displaced, including women and children, by the ongoing crisis in Rakhine State;
- UN Member States to **hold** a special session in the UN General Assembly on the recent, deteriorating situation in Rakhine State and across the country to ensure immediate and concrete actions beyond the Five-Point Consensus of the ASEAN;
- **Lead or support** human rights documentation and investigations on the situation in Rakhine State, including by providing comprehensive forms of assistance, including safety and protection, technical, material, and financial support, mental health and psychosocial support, to citizen journalists and Rohingya CSOs addressing the situation;
- **Center** justice and accountability on all efforts to address the human rights and humanitarian catastrophe in Myanmar, with a targeted focus on the catastrophe's disproportionately debilitating and lethal effects on Rohingya, including women and children;
- State parties to the Rome Statute to **request** the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to, under the statute's Article 14, initiate an investigation of crimes committed in Myanmar and, if denied, appeal to the ICC;
- **Develop** coordinated measures among governments in South and Southeast Asia to address effectively the crisis of Rohingya forced into deadly sea and land crossings, including by ensuring the immediate and safe disembarkment of boats, deployment of search-and-rescue missions, prevention of detention and forcible deportation, and full and reliable access to asylum, protection, and basic needs and livelihoods;
- **Expand** sanctions against Burmese military-affiliated enterprises, financial institutions, extractive operations, and aviation fuel sector – including trading companies, owners of storage facilities and transport vessels, and Myanmar-based buyers – while enforcing the sanctions that are already in place in a coordinated manner and to the fullest extent possible; and
- **Impose** an arms embargo on Myanmar, which should include a comprehensive ban on all indirect and direct, supply, sales, and transfer of weapons, dual-use technologies, manufacturing equipment, and materials to the Burmese military.

To the UN Secretariat

- The UN Secretary-General to, on the situation of Rakhine State, **invoke** Article 99 of the UN Charter;

- **Call for** the enabling of cross-border aid for the delivery of emergency humanitarian aid directly to civilian communities affected by the ongoing crisis in Rakhine State, especially Rohingya IDPs;
- **Develop** a unifying strategy, including by encouraging the UN Secretary-General to take the lead on Myanmar, in line with the recommendations of “A Brief and Independent Inquiry into the Involvement of the United Nations in Myanmar from 2010 to 2018” (or the “Rosenthal Report”); and
- The Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General on Myanmar to strategically **raise awareness** of the reality on the ground in the country, particularly in Rakhine State, to key international stakeholders, and urge them to pursue measures that are in line with the calls by communities affected by the ongoing crisis, especially victims and survivors, including sexual and gender minorities, and local civil society and community-based organizations.

To the United Nations Security Council

- **Hold** an open meeting on recent developments in Myanmar with a particular focus on atrocities against Rohingya in Rakhine State following the Burmese military’s forced conscription and escalation of armed conflict, as well as on the possibility of non-compliance of the provisional measures that were issued by the International Court of Justice in *The Gambia v. Myanmar*;
- **Uphold** its mandate, as well as the Responsibility to Protect and Women, Peace, and Security agendas, and use its powers under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to effectively address the situation in Myanmar beyond enforcing the Burmese military’s compliance with resolution 2669 (2022); and
- **Issue** a binding and actionable resolution with actions that include
 - a full arms and aviation fuel embargo,
 - targeted economic sanctions against the Burmese military and its related businesses,
 - a referral of the situation of Myanmar to the ICC or an adoption of a special or ad-hoc tribunal on it, and
 - regular reporting by the UN Secretary-General to the UN Security Council.

To the Burmese pro-democracy leadership, including the National Unity Government, the National Unity Consultative Council, and ethnic revolutionary organizations

- **Take all measures** to prevent the escalation of atrocities, particularly against Rohingya civilians, in Rakhine State and mitigate the risk of further atrocities by the AA;

- **Actively combat** the Burmese military's efforts to manipulate longstanding divisions and narratives in its attempts to subjugate the pro-democracy movement and its pursuit of a truly inclusive federal democracy;
- **Include and involve** the Rohingya community, especially its community leaders and representatives from civil society, including youth and sexual and gender minorities, in all its initiatives through various forms of meaningful engagement, such as consultations;
- **Ensure** that the diverse perspectives of the Rohingya community, including women, are reflected to the fullest extent possible in mechanisms and procedures related to Myanmar's federal democracy, such as by appointing Rohingya to meaningful and influential positions of leadership;
- **Provide** avenues for justice, reparations, and rehabilitation to Rohingya, including by guaranteeing the restitution of their lands and properties that have been destroyed or stolen throughout the decades-long genocide against them; and
- **Recognize** Rohingya as an official ethnic minority in Myanmar with full citizenship and equal rights, as well as the genocide against them, including the 2016 and 2017 attacks.

To the Arakan Army and its leadership

- **Immediately cease** attacks against civilians, particularly against Rohingya civilians, in line with international human rights law and international humanitarian law;
- **Refrain** from issuing or spreading further hate speech and genocidal rhetoric against Rohingya;
- **Cooperate** with independent bodies and international processes aimed at documenting, investigating, and verifying the situation in Arakan;
- **Ensure** the full and unfettered delivery of humanitarian aid from international and local aid providers to Rohingya communities, including Rohingya IDPs;
- **Meaningfully and genuinely engage** with the Rohingya community with the specific aim to prevent the further commission of atrocities against them; and
- **Ensure** equality, justice and accountability as a step toward building a robust foundation for the peaceful coexistence of all communities, including Rohingya, who call Arakan home.



Photo of downtown Buthidaung, Buthidaung township, Rakhine State, Myanmar, on fire on May 17, 2024 shared by WPN sources.



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