



## UNITED LEAGUE OF ARAKAN

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August 7, 2024

### **Press Release on the Ground Situation in Buthidaung and Maungdaw Regions**

The three Muslim armed groups, RSO, ARSA, and ARA, along with Muslim militants, trained and armed by the military junta, some small extremist terrorist groups, and criminal Muslim gangs involved in kidnapping, murder, robbery, and looting, are operating in the Buthidaung and Maungdaw areas, and near the Bangladesh-Myanmar border in the Arakan region. Initially, these groups were active near the military camps of the junta, but they have recently started to cohabit with the junta's soldiers.

After the junta activated the military conscription law and the Arakan Army took full control of Buthidaung town, the armed Muslim groups trained by the junta have been committing acts of murder, looting, armed robbery, kidnapping, extortion, arson, and destruction of private and public properties as well as bridges in areas within Maungdaw town, some places controlled by the junta in Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships, and areas not yet under the control of the Arakan People's Authority. They have also been planting mines, spreading racial and religious hatred, distributing leaflets, and murdering Muslim police officers, administrators, and civil servants serving in the ULA/AA. These groups have been engaging in these activities both independently and in cooperation with the junta. Additionally, these groups have been threatening and attacking security forces patrolling the Bangladesh-Myanmar border and destroying border fences.

The junta has been recruiting Muslims from Maungdaw, Buthidaung, Sittwe, and Kyaukpyu areas and providing terrorist training. Similarly, RSO, ARSA, and ARA have been recruiting Muslims from Bangladeshi refugee camps and providing terrorist military training. The junta uses these trained Muslims not only in battles but also to carry out terrorist activities. During the battles in Buthidaung and Maungdaw, junta soldiers and border guard policemen fleeing their camps have been transported to the Bangladeshi side in boats owned by these Muslims, carrying military weapons, supplies, and personnel to support their operations.

Although the Arakan Army has taken full control of all junta camps in Buthidaung town, there remain only two military positions— Na-Kha-Kha (5) and other fortified defensive posts under the junta's control in Maungdaw town. The junta forces are also preventing people trapped in the urban centre from leaving as they

intend to use them as human shields, and are taking positions in people's homes in preparation for defense. In this precarious situation where the junta is about to lose Maungdaw town completely, it has been cooperating with these extremist Muslim groups to commit the aforementioned terrorist acts with the intention of inciting racial and religious conflicts.

The junta-trained armed extremist Muslims and the junta-supported Islamist extremists have been continuously committing various terrorist acts as if they have a license to do so. These terrorist incidents mainly occur in Maungdaw town and areas not yet under the control of the ULA/AA.

In particular, not just the ethno-religious minority groups such as the Khami, Mro, and Hindu, who are not Muslims but also the Muslims who want to live in peaceful coexistence in Arakan face increasing threats to their lives and greater dangers of violent murder by these extremist Muslims. Additionally, they are being forced to leave these areas through various means, and mass killings by terrorist groups are increasing. At the same time, extremist Muslims are also campaigning for non-Muslims and people of different religions to stop trading with, interacting with, and ostracizing them, and posting hateful notices in public places.

The threat posed by Muslim terrorist groups such as the RSO, ARSA, ARA, and junta-trained armed Muslims continues to endanger the lives, homes, and possessions of the minority communities and the entire local population in the Buthidaung and Maungdaw regions. The number of victims of terrorist attacks is also rising. This situation is viewed as the military council's intentional attempt to trap the ULA/AA and the entire Arakan population in ethnic, religious, and political conflicts.

The United League of Arakan/Arakan Army (ULA/AA) will collaborate with the local population to implement effective security responses to fully protect the mental and physical security of every resident of the Arakan region. In addition, it has been announced that there will be continued offensives to completely seize all remaining military council camps in the Maungdaw region. Furthermore, all terrorist groups and extremists will be eradicated to prevent the rise of religious and ethnic extremism.

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.*