

## **JOINT PRESS RELEASE**

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*For immediate release.*

### **Grave Concerns Over the Escalating Humanitarian Catastrophe in Maungdaw and Buthidaung: An Urgent Call for Intervention**

After more than two months of escalating conflict between the State Administration Council (SAC) and the Arakan Army (AA), the situation in Maungdaw has reached a catastrophic level. We, the undersigned organizations, express our deepest concern over the alarming increase in violence and the deliberate targeting of Rohingya civilians by both parties. The Rohingya people, already marginalized and persecuted, are now facing yet another humanitarian disaster.

#### **Condemnation of 5th August Massacre by Arakan Army (AA):**

The Arakan Army's indiscriminate use of heavy weaponry including drone bombs, machine guns, and shock missiles has resulted in horrific civilian casualties. Eyewitness accounts reported hundreds of civilians fleeing in terror, and the lifeless bodies of over 200 Rohingya civilians. These brutal attacks, occurring at the bank of Naf River straight West to Ali and Feazi villages of Maungdaw on the evening of August 5, are a gross violation of international humanitarian law. Survivors have reported seeing destructive drones and shock missiles originating from AA-held areas.

We unequivocally condemn these deliberate attacks on innocent civilians. We urge the Arakan Army(AA) to immediately cease its targeting of civilians and to strictly adhere to international laws governing armed conflict. The distinction between combatants and non-combatants is a fundamental principle of international humanitarian law, and failure to observe this principle constitutes a war crime.

#### **Condemnation of Phone Confiscation by the Arakan Army(AA):**

In addition to the violence, we are alarmed by reports that the Arakan Army(AA) has been confiscating mobile phones from Rohingya civilians in AA-controlled areas. This practice not only infringes upon the basic rights of individuals but also isolates them from their loved ones and the outside world at a time when communication is critical for their safety and well-being. We strongly urge the Arakan Army(AA) to immediately cease this practice of phone confiscation, return the confiscated phones to their owners, and respect the fundamental rights of the Rohingya people to communication and information.

#### **Urgent Calls to the International Community, ASEAN, and the UN:**

We call upon the National Unity Government (NUG), ASEAN, the international community, and all human rights organizations to exert maximum pressure on the Arakan Army(AA) and the SAC to immediately cease all hostilities against civilians. The protection of civilians must be the highest priority. We demand immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access to all

affected areas, including Maungdaw and Buthidaung. The international community must ensure that life-saving aid, including food, medicine, and shelter, reaches those in desperate need.

#### **Bangladesh Government and International Community: Responsibility Toward Refugees:**

Reports indicate that hundreds of thousands of Rohingya attempting to cross the Naf River were kidnapped by local gangs. These vulnerable individuals must be rescued and provided with immediate protection. We urgently appeal to the Government of Bangladesh to provide temporary shelter, food, medicine, and other essential services to these refugees. The international community, including the UN and relevant NGOs, must support Bangladesh in this effort and ensure the rights and dignity of these refugees are upheld.

#### **Humanitarian Crisis in Buthidaung and Surrounding area: Forced Conscription and Extortion:**

The situation in Buthidaung is equally dire. The Arakan Army(AA) has reportedly ordered villages such as Sein Hynin Pyar and Hpon Nyo Leik to provide them with at least 100 Rohingya youth for forced conscription, under the threat of burning down the villages. In Ward 5, young children as young as 10 are being abducted daily, forcing them into hiding. Families are being extorted for exorbitant sums of money to avoid conscription, while others are forced to pay inflated prices for basic food supplies. The people in these areas are suffering from a severe lack of food and medicine and are in desperate need of emergency humanitarian assistance.

#### **In Conclusion**

The escalating conflict in Maungdaw and Buthidaung is creating an unbearable humanitarian catastrophe for the Rohingya people, who have already suffered unimaginable hardships. The international community, including state actors, UN organizations, and NGOs, must respond urgently to this crisis. The lives of thousands of innocent civilians hang in the balance. We demand immediate action to protect these lives, uphold human dignity, and restore peace in Rakhine State.

#### **Signatories:**

1. Myanmar Ethnic Rohingya Human Rights Organization in Malaysia (MERHROM)
2. Arakan Institute for Peace and Human Rights (AiPAH)
3. Rohingya Women Welfare Society (RWWS)
4. Burmese Rohingya Community of Georgia USA (BRCG)
5. Rohingya Women Development Network (RWDN)
6. Rohingya National League (RNL)
7. Burmese Rohingya Welfare Organization New Zealand (BRWO)
8. Global Rohingya Students' Union (GRSU)
9. Rohingya Centre UK (RCUK)

10. Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace and Human Rights (ARSPH).
12. Burmese Rohingya Community Netherlands (BRCNL).
13. Myanmar Muslim Association Netherlands (MMANL).
14. Arakan Rohingya Human Rights and Democracy Movement International Network.
15. The European Rohingya Council (ERC)
16. Rohingya Action Ireland (RAI)
17. Rohingya Youth Association (RYA)
18. Rohingya Student Network (RSN)
19. Rohingya community in Japan (RCJ)
20. Rohingya Graduation For Hope Institution(RGHI)
21. Rohingya National College (RNC)
22. Rohingya Community Service of Gorgia (RCSG)
23. Rohingya American Council (RAC)

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