



Letter No A0003_/2024

Date: August 08, 2024

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R4R Immediate Press Release

Rohingya Human Rights Initiative (ROHRIngya) Condemns Atrocities Against Rohingya Civilians in Rakhine State's Maungdaw Township

The Rohingya Human Rights Initiative (ROHRIngya) is deeply alarmed and condemns the ongoing violence and atrocities being committed against Rohingya civilians in western Myanmar, specifically in the town of Maungdaw in Rakhine State. As per our initial findings, more than 200 civilians, mostly children and women fleeing for safety, were killed in the first week of August 2024.

The Rakhine militant group, also known as Arakan Army or AA, has targeted the Rohingya population with severe violence and atrocities in the town of Maungdaw under the pretext of extending its control over the area. On August 5, 2024, the militant group targeted a group of Rohingya civilians attempting to cross the Naf River (Myanmar - Bangladesh border). According to eyewitnesses, the brutal aerial attacks killed more than 200 Rohingya civilians and left hundreds injured. The drone attacks have also drowned as many as 2 boats of a total of 7 boats near Foyazi Fara area. On 6 August alone, local media in Bangladesh reported that they had documented at least 13 dead bodies of Rohingya refugees mostly children and women due to drowning of their boats while crossing the Naf River. The next day 10 dead bodies were recovered, including 5 children, and 2 women in Shah Porir Deeb. Between 5 to 7 August, as many as 1,800 Rohingya refugees were detained by the Bangladesh border guards of whom as many as 400 were reportedly pushed back to Myanmar. While writing this press, the humanitarian team MSF was allowed to provide medical assistance to those crossed into Bangladesh.

Our team working in affected areas of Myanmar has recorded testimonies of victims who have sustained serious injuries in the ongoing attack. The testimonies of the surviving victims bring out their horrific witness of the barbaric attacks.

Testimonies

1. A 15-year-old survivor of the recent bombings in the Maung Ni Pera village of Maungdaw, she and her family became targets during the ongoing conflict between the Myanmar Military and the AA. She stated "During the attack, my mother, sister, and I sustained severe injuries.

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We received emergency medical relief from Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). People from my village fled in fear for their lives, and eventually, my family and I were admitted to a hospital in Bangladesh, suffering from severe injuries that resulted in amputations. We received no assistance from Myanmar authorities during this distressing time”.

2. Another eyewitness of the horrific incident states his plight "I am a 19-year-old survivor currently caring for my severely injured brother at an MSF hospital. On August 5, 2024, I was in Burma when the bombing occurred. My brother sustained severe injuries including an erupted stomach and hand injury and was admitted to the operating theatre. My sister-in-law also suffered injuries.

In Maungdaw village, the conflict between the Arakan Army and the Myanmar Military led to a severe shortage of food and an internet shutdown, endangering local lives. We made a desperate attempt to flee to Bangladesh, where we received minimal medical help from the local authorities. AA's drone attacks killed many people, including those in my own home. The drone attacks destroyed civilian property and lives, killing around 300 people on August 5 as we tried to flee across the border to Bangladesh. There were three more drone attacks after August 5. I witnessed the dreadful aftermath, with dead bodies all around and no one available to rescue them. I managed to rescue my brother and reached MSF Hospital in Bangladesh.”

3. A 22-year-old survivor of the attacks "I have been witnessing violence since 2012, but the current atrocities by the Arakan Army are unprecedented. People are being killed daily. Over the past two months, around 100 houses in our area have been attacked by drones. In my neighbouring areas, 4-5 people are killed every day. I have been displaced and separated from my family, with two of my brothers injured and hospitalised. Four days ago, I fled to Bangladesh, but my husband is still in Burma. I don't know whether he is alive or killed.
4. I witnessed the deaths of nearly 300-400 people, and my relatives are still in the village, unable to find safely or leave the country. In Mong-Yu village, the Arakan Army detained nearly 200 people, barged into houses, robbed, and brutally slit the throats of some. We had no internet, and the heavy rainfall is making things even worse. The entire situation is unknown to the outer world."

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The Rohingyas are a protected ethnic minority group. The **International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2020** mandated Myanmar to protect and safeguard the Rohingya from genocidal attacks and preserve the evidence. The ICJ has ruled that Myanmar must take all the measures to protect Rohingya from further harm. Hence, all the parties involved in the armed conflict in Myanmar or Arakan must refrain from causing further destruction to the community. In this distressing situation, women and children are suffering in innumerable ways, directly violating all the safeguards available in International Human Rights Law.

Sabber Kyaw Min the founder and director of the Rohingya Human Rights Initiative (ROHRIngya) said, *"It's heartbreaking to see yet again vulnerable Rohingya people being forcefully displaced from Maungdaw and struggling to cross into Bangladesh. The Military Junta and the Rakhine militants' Arakan Army took advantage of the unfolding situation in Bangladesh to drive out the remaining Rohingya population in Maungdaw, Rakhine State, Myanmar. Hundreds have been reportedly killed."*

The Rohingya Human Rights Initiative (ROHRIngya) calls on the international community to urgently address this humanitarian crisis. Immediate steps must be taken to protect the Rohingya civilians and provide safe passage and humanitarian aid.

Rakhine militants AA and the Myanmar Military junta must cease all the targeted violence against Rohingyas and fight in the civilian areas. At all costs, the lives and properties of civilians must be protected. We call upon Bangladeshi authorities to open its border for the refugees fleeing the violence in Myanmar, rescue those drowning at Naf-River, and provide protection and medical attention to those injured.

Rohingya Human Rights Initiative (ROHRIngya)

August 08, 2024

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