



Rohingya Voices

ATMOSPHERIC REPORT

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NOVEMBER 2024

CONTENTS

KEY FINDINGS 3
Perceptions of humanitarian assistance 3
Perceptions of armed and governance actors 4
Perceptions of intercommunal tensions 5

RISK INDICATORS OF INTERCOMMUNAL VIOLENCE IN RAKHINE STATE 6

RISK INDICATORS OF INTERCOMMUNAL VIOLENCE IN RAKHINE STATE (CONT.) 7

RESPONDENTS 8

METHODOLOGY 8

KEY CONTEXT DEVELOPMENTS 9

KEY SECURITY INCIDENTS 10

ROHINGYA CAMPS IN RAKHINE STATE AND BANGLADESH 11

ROHINGYA VOICES: RAKHINE STATE

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN CAMPS 12
PRIMARY CONCERNS
Sittwe Township 12
Myebon Township 13
Kyauk Ta Lone, Kyaukpyu Township 13
Pauktaw Township 13

REFLECTIONS ON ...
... humanitarian assistance 14
... armed and governance actors 14
... intercommunal relations 15

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN VILLAGES 16
PRIMARY CONCERNS

REFLECTIONS ON ...
... humanitarian assistance 17
... armed and governance actors 18
... intercommunal relations 20

ROHINGYA VOICES: BANGLADESH

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN COX'S BAZAR AND BHASAN CHAR 21
PRIMARY CONCERNS
Cox's Bazar 21
Bhasan Char 22

REFLECTIONS ON ...
... humanitarian assistance 23
... armed and governance actors 23
... intercommunal relations 24

The information and analysis presented in this report represent the perceptions of the individuals interviewed, and these findings have not been independently verified by this analytical unit. While extensive efforts have been undertaken to ensure accuracy and reliability, it is important to acknowledge that, due to the complex and dynamic nature of the situation in Rakhine State, there are limitations related to the data and findings. The perspectives presented in this report are not representative of the perspectives of these communities as a whole. Therefore, no guarantees can be made regarding the completeness of the information presented. This report is crafted with the intention to provide valuable insights and foster a comprehensive understanding of the prevailing environment in Rakhine State. By shedding light on various perspectives and experiences, it aims to contribute to a nuanced understanding of the issues at hand. However, it is imperative for users of this report to approach its contents with caution. Users are strongly advised to independently verify critical information where necessary.

Photos included in this report used with permission. Sources withheld by request due to security concerns.

KEY FINDINGS

/ PERCEPTIONS OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Rohingya community members in villages in Rakhine State reported a lack of assistance and urgently needing hygiene, shelter, food, and healthcare assistance.

- Compared to October, the reported concerns and issues of Rohingya villagers in Rakhine State did not change significantly, but concerns about food, non-food items such as warm clothes and blankets, shelters, and medicine appeared to become more pressing.

- Respondents in Maungdaw, Buthidaung, Minbya, Kyauktaw, and Mrauk-U townships reported urgently needing nutrition support for children and pregnant women and maternity care support. They said that although Rakhine CSOs and NGOs provided assistance to Rakhine villagers, they did not provide it in Rohingya villages. Respondents added that the United League of Arakan/Arakan Army (ULA/AA) also excluded Rohingya villagers when providing assistance.

Rohingya community members in camps in Rakhine State expressed concerns about a lack of education and food support, and they reported needing clean water and healthcare services.

- Respondents at the Kyauk Ta Lone relocation site in Kyaukpyu Township reported urgently needing food assistance — especially rice — and said that SAC checkpoints restricted the transport of rice into the camp.

- Compared to October, respondents in camps expressed greater concerns about food (especially rice) shortages, lack of hygiene assistance, and lack of cooking fuel — especially fire wood for cooking.

Rohingya community members in Bangladesh expressed concerns about insufficient food assistance and a lack of support, especially for newly-arrived Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar.

- Compared to October, the reported concerns and humanitarian issues of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh did not change significantly.

- Respondents in Bangladesh expressed concerns about a lack of livelihood opportunities, protection, and support to children and single mothers.

KEY FINDINGS

/ PERCEPTIONS OF ARMED AND GOVERNANCE ACTORS

Rohingya community members in villages in Rakhine State reported concerns that the State Administration Council (SAC) increased its movement and security checks in Sittwe Township. As well, compared to October, respondents expressed greater concern about ULA/AA movement restrictions, detention of young Rohingya people, extortion (by ULA-appointed administrators), land grabbing, and the involvement of Rohingya armed actors and the ULA/AA in human trafficking.

- Respondents in Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships reported that the AA issued a curfew and did not allow Rohingya people to travel from one place to another, even in emergency situations. In Buthidaung Township, at least 30 Rohingya young people were reportedly detained by the ULA/AA for alleged affiliation with the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA).

- According to respondents in Kyauktaw and Minbya townships, the AA held meetings with Rohingya community leaders and villagers and pressured them to organise forced recruitment. The AA reportedly instructed village administrators (VAs) to collect around 20–40 Rohingya people in each Rohingya village, and then transported Rohingya recruits to different parts of the state (presumably to fight against

the SAC) but did not inform families of where they were sent. Respondents in Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, and Minbya townships said that they need ULA/AA permission to work as daily labourers in Rakhine villages.

Rohingya community members in camps in Rakhine State reported concerns over both the SAC and ULA/AA pressuring Camp Management Committee (CMC) members to organise forced recruitment.

- Respondents in Sittwe Township expressed greatest concern over SAC troop movements and searches. Respondents said that the SAC restricted fishing in the sea and prevented people from going to some areas, citing landmine risks.

- Respondents in Pauktaw Township expressed concerns that the AA might attack the SAC in Sittwe Township. ULA/AA members and its appointed VAs also reportedly told Rohingya people to move to safer locations as the AA might launch drone attacks on Sittwe from Pauktaw Township.

- Compared to October, respondents expressed greater concern over potential fighting between the SAC and AA, and greater abuses by SAC troops at checkpoints, in Sittwe Township.

Rohingya community members in Bangladesh said that ARSA, the Arakan Rohingya Army (ARA), the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO), and four other Rohingya armed actors agreed to a ceasefire in Cox's Bazar.

- Respondents said that fighting between ARSA and the RSO declined in November, but they expressed concerns over forced recruitment by Rohingya armed actors — especially the RSO.

- Rohingya refugees in both Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char reported extortion and both physical and verbal abuse, by the Armed Police Battalion (APBn) in Cox's Bazar and by the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) — especially to newly-arrived Rohingya refugees.

KEY FINDINGS

/ PERCEPTIONS OF INTERCOMMUNAL TENSIONS

Rohingya community members in villages in Rakhine State expressed greater concerns than in October about tensions between Rohingya and Rakhine villagers.

- Respondents in Kyauktaw and Minbya townships reported that Rakhine villagers beat at least seven people, including a child, who they accused of affiliation with ARSA or of stealing from Rakhine people.

- Respondents in Sittwe Township said that they could go to the market freely, and that Rakhine people came to their villages to sell goods. However, respondents in Sittwe, Kyauktaw, and Minbya townships said that they were cautious about the aggressiveness and anger of Rakhine villagers due to the activities of Rohingya armed actors and avoided confrontation with them.

Rohingya community members in camps in Rakhine State reported that Rohingya camp residents had good relationships with their Rakhine neighbours.

- Compared to other areas, respondents in Sittwe Township camps and at the Kyauk Ta Lone relocation site in Kyaukpyu Township appeared to have better relationships with their Rakhine neighbours; they said that Rohingya camp residents often went to Rakhine villages — and vice versa — to sell goods. However, they expressed concerns about tensions with Rakhine villagers from urban areas, and respondents in Sittwe Township reported tensions between Rohingya and Hindu community members. According to respondents in these areas, Rakhine people said that they would kill Rohingya people first if fighting started there between the SAC and AA.

Rohingya community members in Bangladesh expressed concerns over the harassment, robbery, and physical abuse of newly-arrived refugees in Teknaf.

- Respondents said that host communities in Bangladesh detained Rohingya people who had fled from Rakhine State and handed them over to the BGB. Respondents said that BGB forces physically and verbally abused Rohingya refugees in detention.

- Compared to October, respondents in camps expressed greater concerns about potential tensions between Rohingya refugees and host communities due to the new influx of Rohingya people in Bangladesh.

RISK INDICATORS OF INTERCOMMUNAL VIOLENCE IN RAKHINE STATE

Violence



Violence includes any violent incident occurring between Rakhine and Rohingya communities, including those involving armed actors, civilians, or any combination thereof.

Violence did not appear to change significantly in October, but violence by the SAC, AA, and others continued to impact communities, particularly in northern Rakhine State.

- Local media **reported** that one out of five Bangladeshi fishermen kidnapped by an unknown group in the Naf River at the Bangladesh-Myanmar border was found dead on 8 November, while the other four remained missing. Bangladesh media **claimed** that those people were kidnapped by the AA, but the ULA/AA spokesperson **denied** this and said that the ULA/AA did not arrest or detain Bangladeshi fishermen. On 20 November, the ULA/AA **warned** that it would take legal action against any Bangladeshi citizen caught fishing illegally in Rakhine State waters.
- Local media **reported** that due to SAC airstrikes in Zu La Rohingya village, half a mile from the BGF 5 base in Maungdaw Township, several houses were destroyed.
- Local media **reported** that the RSO ambushed a boat carrying Rakhine fishermen and three Rohingya workers from Maungdaw Township and fired guns to halt the motorboat and seized items on the boat in Naf river.

Hate speech



Hate speech includes abusive or threatening speech or writing that expresses prejudice on the basis of Rohingya identity.

Hate speech did not change significantly in November

- Respondents in Sittwe and Kyauk Ta Lone camp in Kyaukpyu townships expressed concerns over verbal abuse and incitement to kill Rohingya by the Rakhine people.

Tension



Tension includes actions that do not rise to the level of violence, as well as fears of violence or such actions.

Tensions between Rohingya and Rakhine communities did not appear to change in November in many areas of Rakhine State, but they appeared more prevalent in areas where the AA and SAC were actively fighting.

- Respondents in Minbya and Kyauktaw townships reported that Rakhine people beat seven Rohingya people who they accused of being afflicted with ARSA or stealing from Rakhine people.

RISK INDICATORS OF INTERCOMMUNAL VIOLENCE IN RAKHINE STATE (CONT.)

Statements



Statements include any official or public statements made by armed or governance actors, activists, or community representatives.

Various actors issued statements in response to dynamics involving Rohingya people.

- On 18 November, The Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK (BROUK) **issued** a statement expressing concerns about the loss of the life of 174 Rohingya after their boat capsized in Hai Gyi Island in Ayeyarwady Region. BROUK called on regional and international actors to ensure the protection of the Rohingya people.
- On 19 November, a rights group **urged** Bangladesh authorities to immediately stop the forced return of Rohingya fleeing deadly violence in Rakhine State. The same source mentioned that BGB forces had forcibly returned to Myanmar more than 400 Rohingya refugees since August 2024 and during the detentions of Rohingya newly arrivals, BGB forces physically and verbally abused Rohingya people.

Cohesion



Cohesion includes actions, stated sentiments, and other conditions that foster positive intercommunal relations.

Social cohesion between Rohingya and Rakhine communities did not appear to change in November in many areas of Rakhine State.

- Respondents in Sittwe and Kyauk Ta Lone camp relocation site in Kyaukpyu Township said that there was regular communication between Rohingya and Rakhine neighbours and Rohingya people could go to neighbouring Rakhine villages to sell vegetables and food items.

Perceptions

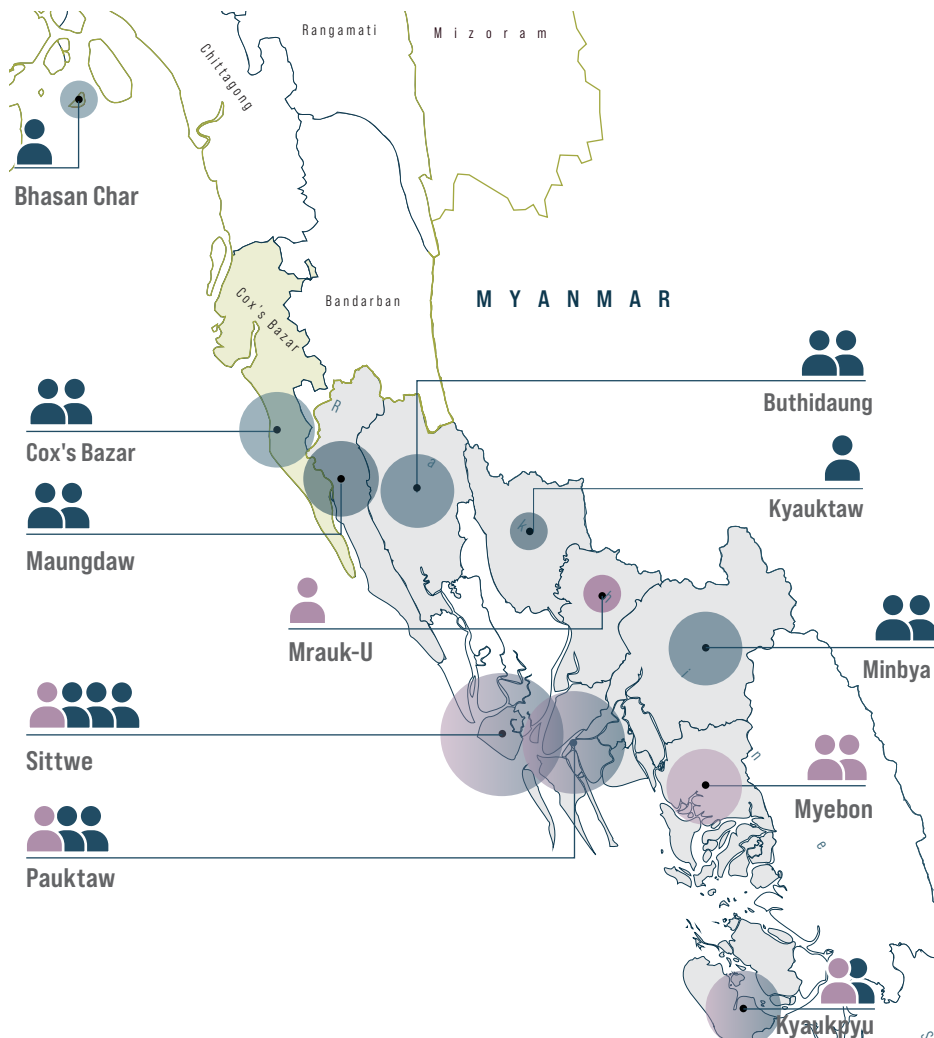


'Perceptions' includes the expressed sentiments of Rohingya people (e.g. respondents).

Respondents in Rakhine State did not express perceptions of intercommunal relations that differed significantly from October. However, respondents said that the activities of Rohingya armed actors — in cooperation with the SAC — were fueling intercommunal tensions, hatred, and misunderstandings, especially in Minbya and Kyauktaw townships.

RESPONDENTS

RESPONDENTS WERE BASED IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS OF RAKHINE STATE AND BANGLADESH:



Gender of the respondents



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METHODOLOGY

This document is structured around highlighting the perceptions and concerns of different Rohingya communities in Rakhine State, broadly categorised as communities in camps and communities in villages, as well as Rohingya communities in Bangladesh, in Cox's Bazar or Bhasan Char. The perceptions of these communities are structured around three key topics on which 22 Rohingya respondents were asked to share their perspectives:

- Armed and governance actors;
- Humanitarian assistance; and
- Intercommunal relations.

As this update is based on a small sample size of 22 respondents, the observations found here should not be assumed as representative. Rather, this snapshot illustrates the perceptions of community members, and the value of this qualitative approach is in the context-specific knowledge it provides.

KEY CONTEXT DEVELOPMENTS

These context updates are not meant to be a comprehensive overview of the developments in Rakhine State over the past month. Instead, these are intended to provide a brief background on the key developments impacting the context in Rakhine State and Bangladesh and the Rohingya communities living there.

9
November

Local media [reported](#) that many bodies of SAC-trained young Rohingya conscripts were found in Taungup and Ann townships amid ongoing fighting between the AA and SAC there. The same sources said that those Rohingya conscripts were recruited from the Kyauk Ta Lone relocation site in Kyaukpyu Township, and from Sittwe Township. The SAC reportedly transported more than 600 Rohingya conscripts to frontlines in Ann and Taungup townships to fight against AA. According to the [local media](#), among them 22 Rohingya are under aged children.

11
November

81 Rohingya (31 children and 50 adults) were [detained](#) by the local authorities in Bandarban near Myanmar and Bangladesh border area for illegally entering Bangladesh and they were handed over to the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) to be [deported](#) back to Rakhine State. In addition, on 16 November, around 70 Rohingya were [detained](#) by the Thai authorities on an island in southern Thailand while attempting to travel to Malaysia.

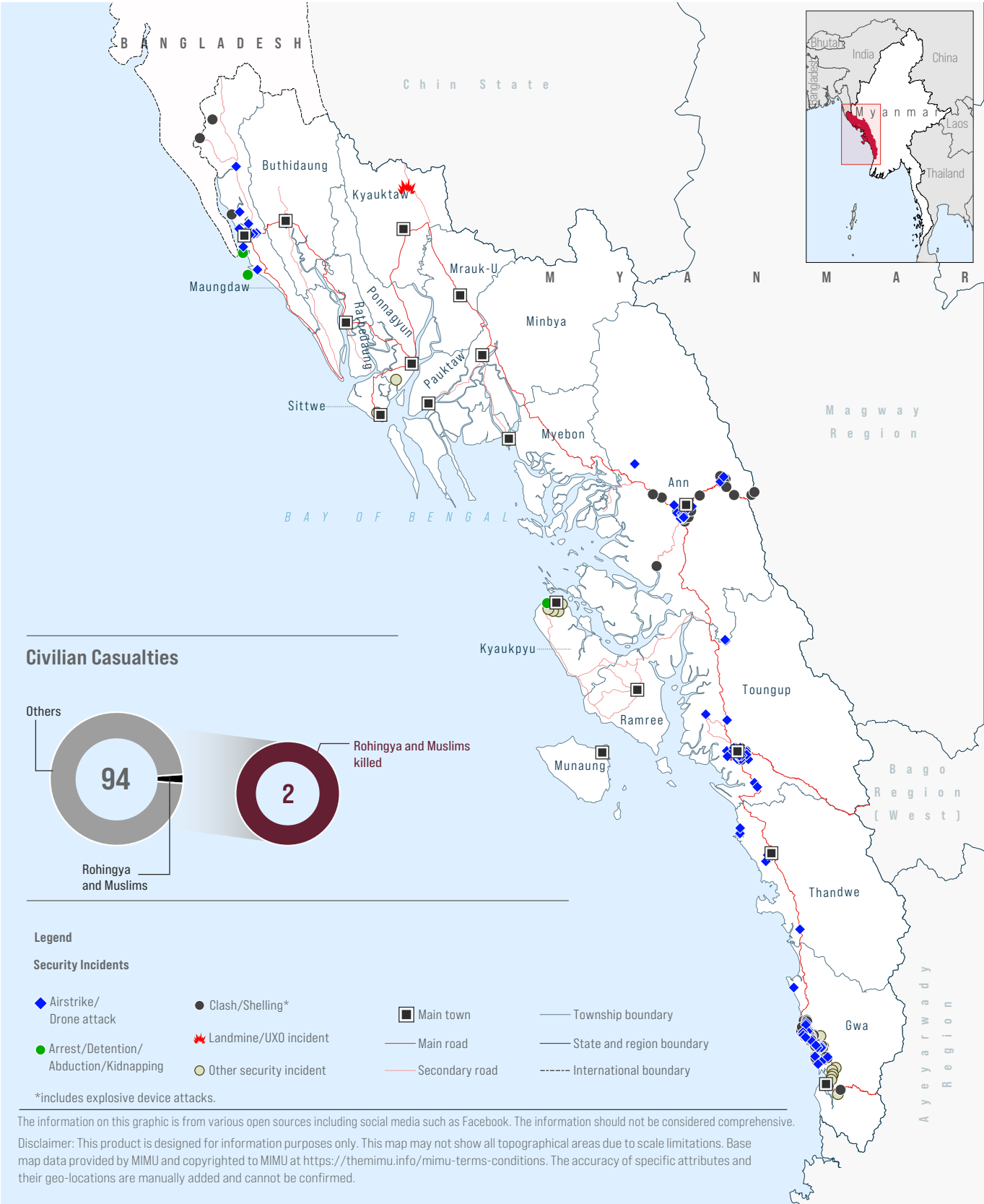
17
November

Local media [reported](#) that the SAC navy confiscated fuel and extorted from Rohingya fishermen from Taung Paw 'ward' ('officially closed' camp) in Myebon Township for fishing near Kyaukpyu Township. The same source reported that the SAC navy strictly prohibited fishing in areas such as Sittwe, Pauktaw and Kyaukpyu townships and often arrested, shot and extorted to fishermen.

20
November

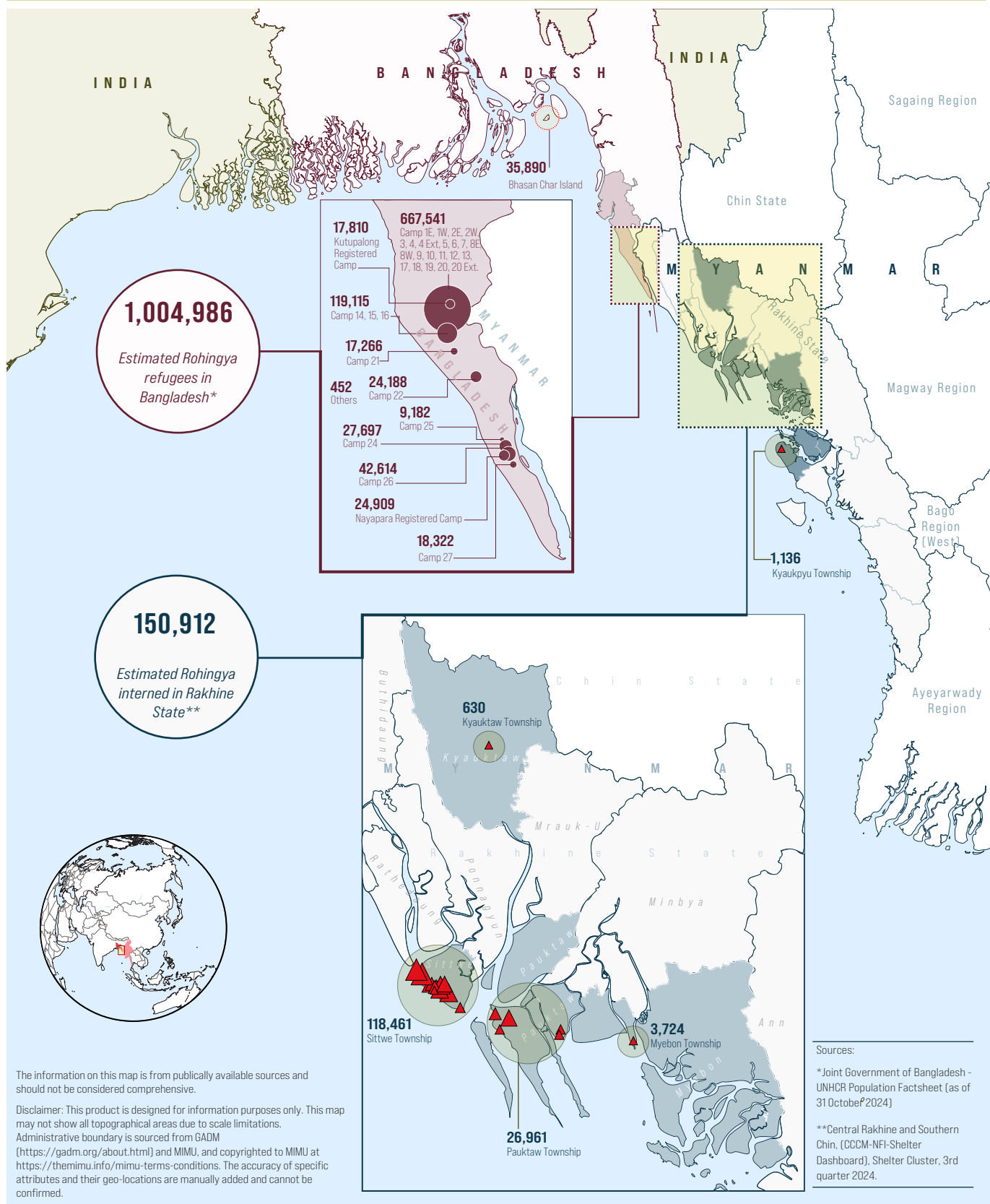
Local media [reported](#) that ARSA and RSO coordinated with the BGB forces and Bangladeshi boatmen to smuggle Rohingya to Bangladesh. The same source reported that ARSA and RSO were asking money for each Rohingya, and there were many people who have been sent back to Rakhine State after being arrested by the Bangladesh border police.

KEY SECURITY INCIDENTS
NOVEMBER 2024



ROHINGYA CAMPS IN RAKHINE STATE AND BANGLADESH

NOVEMBER 2024



ROHINGYA VOICES

Rakhine State

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN CAMPS

Rohingya people in four townships of central Rakhine State — Sittwe, Pauktaw, Myebon, and Kyaukpyu — have been living in camps since 2012, when they were displaced by violence often termed ‘inter-communal’ but which also involved state security forces. While these are sometimes called IDP camps, they differ from other IDP camps in Myanmar, mainly in that the movement of their residents is heavily restricted. In addition to living in impoverished areas and being limited in movement by SAC checkpoints outside their camps, fear of violence by neighbouring Rakhine communities has historically been a factor preventing many of these people from seeking work, healthcare, or goods outside camps, making them heavily reliant on humanitarian assistance. In some cases — such as in Pauktaw and Myebon townships — the AA offensive since November 2023 has removed the presence of SAC troops, but introduced a new actor (the ULA/AA) which requires ‘taxes’ and may expose camp members to other types of abusive practices. There are also contextual differences between these camps, including their composition: Kyauk Ta Lone (in Kyaukpyu Township) is a mix of ethnic Rohingya and Kaman, with Kaman in the majority, whereas the other camps are entirely or mainly Rohingya.

ROHINGYA CAMP, SITTWE TOWNSHIP



/ PRIMARY CONCERNS

SITTWE TOWNSHIP

Respondents in Sittwe Township expressed concerns over a lack of humanitarian assistance, saying that many Rohingya people in these camps are facing severe hardship due to lack of rice and other key food items. Respondents also expressed concerns about shortages of food items and medicines in Sittwe Township, saying that many shopkeepers — fearing potential intense fighting between SAC and AA — had fled to safer locations. They said that the SAC strictly prohibited fishing in the sea, forcing many households to lose their daily income. Respondents said that many IDP children were suffering from malnutrition and women had engaged in prostitution to fulfil the needs of their families.

“We haven’t received food assistance, and there are shortages of food items and medicines in Sittwe Township. The shopkeepers also fled to safer locations due to potential fighting and there were only a few shops left. To cope with the situation of hardship in the family, women have become more involved in prostitution.”

- 37, FEMALE, SITTWE

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN CAMPS

/ PRIMARY CONCERNS

MYEBON TOWNSHIP

As with respondents in Sittwe, respondents in Taung Paw ‘ward’ (officially closed’ camp) in Myebon Township expressed concern over a lack of food and livelihoods saying that SAC forces had restricted fishing in the sea. One respondent said due to lack of sufficient food, Rohingya people, especially children and elderly people, were suffering from malnutrition.

“There is no assistance in our camp and we urgently need rice and medicines. Due to SAC restrictions, Rohingya are unable to fish in the sea and lost livelihoods, and the prices of food items are increasing. Due to the lack of the assistance in the camp, people are suffering malnutrition and starvation. Elderly people and children are more vulnerable.”

- 39, FEMALE, MYEBON

KYAUK TA LONE, KYAUKPYU TOWNSHIP

As with residents in Sittwe and Myebon townships, respondents at the Kyauk Ta Lone relocation site in Kyaukpyu Township expressed concerns about malnutrition, and about food and medicines shortages. Respondents said that due to flooding in the camp in previous months and a lack of the clean water, many children were suffering from skin diseases but families could not afford to buy medicines to address this. As with residents in Sittwe Township, respondents said that due to the potential for intense fighting, shops previously selling medicine and other commodities in Kyaukpyu Town had closed, resulting in shortages of food items and medicines.

“Due to the potential for fighting in Kyaukpyu Township, many shops including pharmacies closed; shop owners fled to safer locations and there are shortages of food items and medicines in Kyaukpyu Township. Chronic patients such as those suffering from diabetes, hypertension, and liver disease are unable to buy medicines.”

- 48, MALE, KYAUK TA LONE

PAUKTAW TOWNSHIP

As with communities in Sittwe and Myebon townships, respondents in Pauktaw Township camps shared concerns about the lack of healthcare and food. They said that Rohingya camp residents were starving and their health was worsening due to poor nutrition. Due to food shortages, livelihood difficulties, and movement restrictions by the ULA/AA and SAC, many Rohingya IDPs reportedly planned to travel to Malaysia with human traffickers.

“Many IDPs are facing difficulties in camps and are preparing to go abroad by boat via human trafficking. My whole family is also planning to go to Malaysia with human traffickers. There is no freedom of movement, the SAC prohibited fishing, and we haven’t received food assistance for months now. Now many Rohingya have sold their shelters and properties to leave the camps.”

- 29, MALE, PAUKTAW

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN CAMPS

/ REFLECTIONS ON ...

... HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Respondents in Sittwe Township expressed concerns over a lack of nutrition support for children and food assistance, especially rice, in November. One said that, due to the lack of hygiene kits, women faced difficulty accessing sanitary pads and could not afford to buy these themselves due to high prices. The same respondent also noted the lack of non-food items, especially warm clothes, as the cool season approached.

“We haven’t received food assistance, and there is a lack of medicine and healthcare support in the camps. As winter is coming, we need warm clothes and blankets, but there is no support for non-food items like warm clothes this year.”

- 37, FEMALE, SITTWE

Respondents in Taung Paw ‘ward’ (officially ‘closed’ camp) in Myebon Township, and in Pauktaw Township, expressed concerns over the lack of humanitarian assistance in their areas. Respondents in Taung Paw ‘ward’ reported that the lack of maternity care and reproductive health care had resulted in many unwanted pregnancies, as women could not access and/or afford contraceptive pills or injections at pharmacies.

“There is no healthcare and we are facing shortages of medicines. Due to the lack of maternity care, pregnant women are facing more difficulties delivering children; many women have had unwanted pregnancies due to lack of reproductive healthcare support in our area.”

- 39, FEMALE, MYEBON

Respondents at the Kyauk Ta Lone relocation site in Kyaukpyu Township reported that an organisation distributed nutrition packs for children under the age of nine, but they also expressed concerns over a lack of rice and hygiene and sanitary support. They explained that an organisation reduced its hygiene kit support due to the increasing prices of hygiene items such as toothpaste, soap, and sanitary pads in the market.

“We need hygiene kits support, especially for women. We haven’t received hygiene kits for months. An organisation said that it would provide hygiene kits, but it reduced the support. We also need rice assistance as we haven’t received food assistance for months and the SAC security checkpoint also restricts the transportation of rice inside the camp.”

- 33, FEMALE, KYAUK TA LONE CAMP

... ARMED AND GOVERNANCE ACTORS

Respondents in Sittwe Township reported that the SAC continued its forced recruitment in Rohingya camps, and that some Rohingya people paid to be replaced with others on the SAC’s recruitment list. Respondents said that the SAC prohibited fishing by Rohingya people in Sittwe Township and increased its movement near Rohingya camps. Respondents conveyed rumours that the AA might attack SAC forces to capture Sittwe town in coming months.

“SAC forces increased security in Rohingya IDP camps and checked people coming and going. We are concerned about potential fighting in Sittwe town, and there are rumours spreading that the AA might attack the SAC in Sittwe Township.”

- 40, MALE, SITTWE

Respondents in Pauktaw Township likewise expressed concerns over potential fighting between AA and SAC forces and rumours that the AA would attack the SAC in Sittwe Township. Rakhine and Rohingya villagers in 17 villages, and Rohingya residents of Ah Nauk Ye camp, reportedly planned to flee to safer locations because of these concerns.

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN CAMPS

/ REFLECTIONS ON ...

“On 10 November, we heard from Rakhine people and ULA members that the AA was planning to attack SAC stations in Sittwe Township by shooting weapons from Pauktaw Township in coming months. Due to that information, Rakhine villages and Ah Nauk Ye [Rohingya] village and camp plan to go to safer locations. People are concerned about this information, as Rohingya would be more vulnerable.”

- 29, MALE, PAUKTAW

A respondent in Taung Paw ‘ward’ in Myebon Township said that the AA held meetings with Rohingya people, who had to pay “tax” to the ULA/AA, increasing their financial burden. However, she said that the Rohingya community there viewed the ULA/AA administration positively because it solved crime cases in the community.

“The ULA/AA solves crimes in the community, but they restrict movement of Rohingya. We need permission from the ULA/AA to travel outside of the township. We have to pay ‘tax’ monthly, and it makes our lives harder as we don’t have regular income.”

- 39, FEMALE, MYEBON

... INTERCOMMUNAL RELATIONS

Respondents in Taung Paw ‘ward’ (‘officially closed’ camp) in Myebon Township reported that there was regular communication and good relations, but also misunderstanding and mistrust, between Rohingya and Rakhine people. Respondents in Sittwe Township reported experiencing discrimination and verbal abuse by Rakhine people. Respondents also reported tensions between Rohingya and Hindu community members due to activities of SAC-trained Rohingya conscripts. Respondents in multiple townships said that they were careful and avoided confrontation with Rakhine people at the market because Rakhine people had shown aggression and verbally abused Rohingya people.

“There were tensions between the Hindu community and Rohingya people, and between Rakhine people and Rohingya IDPs, because of SAC-trained Rohingya conscripts. Rakhine villagers thought that we were planning to kill them like they did to us in the 2012 violence in Rakhine State.”

- 37, FEMALE, SITTWE

Respondents in Pauktaw Township reported that they had good relations with Rakhine neighbours and said that they could go to Rakhine villages

to sell food items such as fish and vegetables. Respondents at the Kyauk Ta Lone relocation site in Kyaukpyu Township also said that due to camp residents helping to buy food items for Rakhine villagers, the relationship between camp residents and Rakhine neighbours was good.

“As the SAC restricted the movement of Rakhine people to Kyaukpyu town, some camp residents help their neighbours to buy food items from Kyaukpyu town. They allowed Rohingya and Kaman vendors to come to their villages to sell food items.”

- 33, FEMALE, KYAUK TA LONE

However, one respondent at the Kyauk Ta Lone relocation site said that they had faced verbal abuse, and that some Rakhine people threatened that, if there was fighting in Kyaukpyu Township, they would kill Muslims at the Kyauk Ta Lone site.

“Although the relationship between camp residents and our Rakhine neighbours is good, some Rakhine people threatened us that they would kill us first if there was fighting in Kyaukpyu Township. They thought that if fighting started in Kyaukpyu Township, Rohingya and Kaman conscripts would attack them.”

- 48, MALE, KYAUK TA LONE

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN VILLAGES

Rohingya people living in villages of Maungdaw, Buthidaung, Rathedaung, Mrauk-U, Minbya, Kyauktaw, Pauktaw, and Sittwe townships have historically had greater ability to move around — and therefore greater access to income and services — than Rohingya camp residents, but their movement is still heavily constrained. In 2021, the SAC restarted the practice of requiring Rohingya villagers to provide documentation if they need to travel to other villages (a recommendation letter from a VA) or cross township lines (a recommendation letter and a so-called Form 4). While the ULA/AA has not imposed analogous movement restrictions since it took over these areas (all except Sittwe), since early 2024 it has reportedly limited Rohingya people's movement in order to reduce tensions between Rohingya and Rakhine communities. Because Rohingya villagers (as opposed to camp members) interact with the ULA/AA, they are often exposed to 'taxation', recruitment, and other abusive practices by the group. Those travelling for healthcare, work, or other purposes in Sittwe Township also have greater interaction with SAC troops, making them more vulnerable to extortion and other abuses by these actors as well.

MAUNGDAW TOWNSHIP



/ PRIMARY CONCERNS

As with camp residents elsewhere, Rohingya villagers in Sittwe Township expressed concerns over SAC movement restrictions and increased security checkpoints that made it difficult to access income. One respondent said that due to movement restrictions, Rohingya villagers were unable to access their workplaces, especially for fishing, resulting in difficulties fulfilling household needs.

"As we cannot move freely, it makes it difficult to access our workplaces and livelihoods. We are facing food shortages. In my family, as I have no job right now, I cannot support my children and cannot cover daily expenses."

- 30, MALE, SITTWE

Respondents in Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships expressed concerns over shortages of food items and said people urgently needed shelters and toilet facilities. Respondents in Maungdaw Township said that there was no market available to them, that the prices of food items were skyrocketing, and that there were shortages of basic food items. Respondents also expressed concerns about a lack of healthcare and medicines, especially for patients with chronic diseases. They also said that the ULA/AA falsely accused young Rohingya people of affiliation with armed actors and detained them. To cope, many Rohingya people reportedly attempted

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN VILLAGES

/ PRIMARY CONCERNS

to flee to safer locations by paying money to the ULA/AA and human traffickers affiliated with the ULA/AA.

“My mother has hypertension and she doesn’t have any access to medicines or to doctors. There is no formal market in the area, and prices of food and other commodities have increased. There are often shortages of food items in the area. The AA has been falsely accusing young Rohingya people and arresting them. Therefore, Rohingya people, including young people, are very desperate to flee for their safety. The AA is taking advantage of the situation and arranging trafficking of Rohingya to Bangladesh by charging 200,000 Myanmar Kyat [~75.73 GBP] per person.”

- 28, MALE, MAUNGDAW

“In Buthidaung Township, for example in Mee Chaung Zay village, people are facing shortages of food items and many are dying from starvation. Rohingya are also being arrested every day and facing starvation in Buthidaung, so Rohingya are finding every means to flee to Bangladesh and Malaysia.”

- 35, MALE, BUTHIDAUNG

Respondents in Kyauktaw, Minbya, and Mrauk-U townships expressed concerns over difficulties accessing food, education, and healthcare services. They also reported that Rohingya

villagers faced shortages of medicines and foods, and also faced debt because they could not repay their loans.

“Our community urgently needs support for food, healthcare, and education. As many of us are unemployed, and due to the increasing prices of food and other commodities, we are facing extreme challenges. There are no healthcare services that we can access. There are no clinics or medical professionals in our area. There are shortages of medicines in the villages. We have loans and we can’t afford to pay them back.”

- 25, MALE, MINBYA

Respondents in Pauktaw Township expressed concerns about the lack of medical assistance and medicines in their areas and said that children and elderly people were most vulnerable due to the lack of healthcare services.

“There are no medicines anymore in the hospital and clinics in the area. As we have no job and no income, we can’t afford to get treatment by going to another township. There are no medical clinics here. We needed to go to Myebon or Kyauktaw or Minbya townships to find good medical treatment by getting permission from the ULA/AA, but we are not allowed to go to Sittwe by the SAC or the ULA/AA. Children and elderly people with chronic diseases can’t access any medical treatment.”

- 30 MALE, PAUKTAW

/ REFLECTIONS ON ...

... HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Like respondents in camps, Rohingya villagers in Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships reported urgently needing warm clothes, shelters, and healthcare, especially for pregnant women and chronic disease patients. They also reported that, due to a lack of maternity care in their areas, both women and children died during childbirth and many women faced complications before and after pregnancy. Respondents in these areas said that children were suffering from skin diseases due to a lack of the clean water and hygiene facilities.

“Currently, IDPs need food support urgently as the first priority. Second, IDPs need access to healthcare services, especially for pregnant women. Due to lack of medicines and doctors in the region, people are unable to receive any healthcare services. As the winter is approaching, children and elderly people need warm clothes and blankets.”

- 23, MALE, BUTHIDAUNG

As with Rohingya villagers elsewhere, respondents in Pauktaw and Sittwe townships said that people urgently needed humanitarian assistance, especially rice, healthcare, and shelter support. One respondent in Sittwe Township said that there had been no assistance in his village for months, and that many households found

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN VILLAGES

/ REFLECTIONS ON ...

difficulty cooking because they could not access firewood.

“We are facing a shortage of firewood, and we have to pay high prices for firewood sticks that we can’t afford. Many poor families are starving due to lack of food assistance and increasing prices of food items in the market. We urgently need rice support in Rohingya villages. Many children are also suffering malnutrition.”

- 30, MALE, SITTWE

Respondents in Minbya, Mrauk-U, and Kyauktaw townships reported urgently needing medicines, clean water, hygiene kits, and food assistance. They said that although Rakhine CSOs and NGOs were active in those areas and providing assistance in Rakhine villages, they did not provide support in Rohingya villages. Respondents in Kyauktaw and Mrauk-U townships said that Rohingya villagers needed greater awareness of illicit drugs and human trafficking; they said that many young Rohingya people were using drugs and becoming victims of human trafficking due to the lack of job and education opportunities.

“We need support for medicines, clean water, hygiene kits, and food assistance. We need awareness of drugs and human trafficking. The drug use problem is a major concern among

the Rohingya community, especially among Rohingya students. Due to the lack of job and education opportunities, many young people are involved in using drugs such as Yaba tablets and small-scale selling in our area.”

- 40, FEMALE, MRAUK-U

... ARMED AND GOVERNANCE ACTORS

Villagers in Minbya Township reported that the ULA/AA regularly met with Rohingya community leaders and VAs it had appointed. They said that it imposed an 8pm curfew and restricted Rohingya people’s access to phone lines, and also prevented them from fishing. Respondents in Minbya, Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, and Pauktaw townships said that they needed ULA/AA permission to travel or work, or else risked being detained. They also reported that ULA/AA-appointed VAs extorted Rohingya people and collected a monthly ULA/AA ‘tax’, and that the ULA/AA told VAs to organise a list of Rohingya to join its military training. Respondents in Pauktaw Township reported that the ULA/AA demanded 2 million Myanmar Kyat (~759 GBP) to build a police station.

“They collect tax from businessmen including small shops here. Our village

paid 2 million Myanmar Kyat to the AA in November for building its police station nearby. The ULA/AA also asked for money from villagers in Pauktaw Township to build roads. We felt it was unfair collecting money from us while we were facing severe hardships.”

- 30, MALE, PAUKTAW

“The ULA/AA pressured Rohingya community leaders and VAs to organise lists of Rohingya to join its forces and military training. VAs are collecting data on young people, so many of them are [...] planning to go with human traffickers to Malaysia. There are rumours that the ULA/AA will provide a few days of military training to Rohingya in our villages and then send them to the frontlines in Sittwe Township to fight against the SAC.”

- 40, FEMALE, MRAUK-U

On 17 November, the ULA/AA’s Land Management Committee in the ULA/AA-designated ‘Alpha 3 Military Region’ reportedly attempted to evict Rohingya residents in Kyauktaw Township’s Paik Thei (Rohingya) village and seize 25 of their houses, but did not do the same for Rakhine villagers’ houses. The same source reported that the regional commander called a meeting of residents and stated that all land in “good locations” must be handed over to the ULA/AA. Respondents in Minbya Township

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN VILLAGES

/ REFLECTIONS ON ...

reported that the ULA/AA seized Rohingya farmers' land and gave it to Rakhine villagers to grow paddy.

Respondents expressed concerns over the ULA/AA's administration and its justice system, which they said took no action on Rohingya people's complaints and was biased in cases involving Rohingya and Rakhine people. Likewise, a respondent in Kyauktaw Township reported that the ULA/AA detained two young Rohingya people for taking photos of a market, sentenced them to nine years in prison, and seized their phones and motorbikes.

"The ULA/AA arrested and badly beat 21 Rohingya farmers and young people for fishing without permission in the river. [...] Five Rohingya daily labourers were beaten by a group of Rakhine people who accused them of being ARSA members while they were going to a Rakhine village for work. Regarding this case, the ULA/AA investigated Rakhine people but did not take any action against those who beat the Rohingya workers."

- 52, MALE, MINBYA

Respondents in Maungdaw Township reported that the ULA/AA forced Rohingya people to clean its camps and military bases captured from SAC and often threatened to punish them if they failed to work. Respondents said that the ULA/AA detained people

for alleged affiliation with ARSA, and restricted Rohingya people's movement, increasing challenges to accessing livelihoods and markets. According to respondents, the ULA/AA was actively involved in human trafficking and sent Rohingya to Bangladesh and Malaysia.

"The ULA/AA forced more than 100 Rohingya to work on the island where they were camping and also to clean SAC's [BGP] (10) that they captured. They had to go to the island with their meals at 7am and return at 5pm every day. AA forces also threatened to punish them if they failed to work properly."

- 40, MALE, MAUNGDAW

As with respondents in Minbya Township, respondents in Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships said that the ULA/AA issued an 8pm curfew, which they said did not apply to Rakhine people. In Buthidaung Township, the ULA/AA reportedly detained at least 30 Rohingya people, for reasons including alleged support to or affiliation with Rohingya armed actors. The ULA/AA also reportedly warned Rohingya community leaders to immediately inform it of any affiliation or movement of Rohingya armed actors in the areas.

"I heard that more than 200 Rohingya are planning to travel to Malaysia through the human trafficking

network as they are afraid of ULA/AA arrest. The AA arrested many Rohingya who they accused of affiliation with Rohingya armed groups."

- 23, MALE, BUTHIDAUNG

According to respondents in Sittwe Township, the SAC required men there to do night sentry duty in their village, and told them to detain any Rakhine or suspicious people who came into the village at night and hand them over to the SAC forces. The SAC reportedly continued pressuring VAs to recruit people; one respondent in Sittwe Township reported that each Rohingya village needed to provide five people per month for SAC conscription, and that VAs collected money from Rohingya families to pay Rohingya people willing to join.

"Each village needs to provide five people to the SAC to join its forces per month. Village leaders tried to persuade men from poor families to join the SAC by paying them 600,000 Myanmar Kyat [~227 GBP]. Village leaders collected around 5,000-10,000 Myanmar Kyat [~1.89-3.78 GBP] from all households to pay Rohingya who were willing to join the SAC. The SAC forces threatened that if village leaders failed to provide people monthly, they would raid villages or houses and arrest people randomly."

- 30, MALE, SITTWE

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN VILLAGES

/ REFLECTIONS ON ...

... INTERCOMMUNAL RELATIONS

Rohingya villagers in Sittwe Township said that there was regular communications between Rohingya villagers and Rakhine businessmen and shopkeepers in the market, but that Rohingya people were generally cautious about intercommunal tensions. Respondents said that Rohingya villagers often faced extortion and robbery by Arakan Liberation Party (ALP) members and young Rakhine people who targeted Rohingya people in urban areas.

“Rohingya people can go to the urban market and sell their farmed products like vegetables, and Rakhine people come to our village and sell goods which they got from humanitarian agencies. ALP members and some young Rakhine people rob and extort Rohingya in urban areas. Rakhine people are very sensitive about Rohingya and even one NGO worker called me and asked me whether I was involved in the protest against ULA/AA which was held in our village a few months ago.”

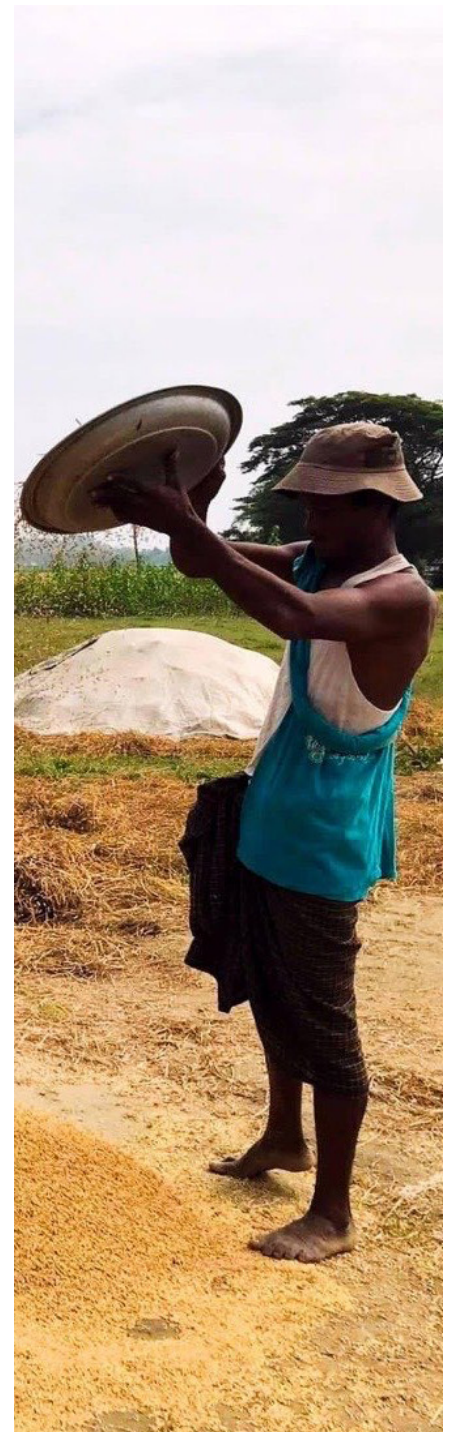
- 30, MALE, SITTWE

One respondent in Kyauktaw Township reported having regular communication with Rakhine people and said that there was no

tensions between them in November. However, respondents in Minbya and Mrauk-U townships expressed greatest concern over potential violence between Rakhine and Rohingya people. Respondents in Minbya Township said that Rakhine people badly beat five Rohingya people in Nagara Pyin village and two (a 7-year-old and an adult) in Tha Yet Oke and Let Pan Kone villages. Rohingya in these areas expressed that Rakhine people were very aggressive and physically and verbally abused and extorted Rohingya people for different reasons.

“There is tension between Rakhine and Rohingya. On 2 November, a 7-year-old boy from Tha Yet Oke village was severely beaten by Rakhine villagers who accused him of stealing a shoe from Pann Myaung Market. He was severely injured. On 4 November, in Let Pan Kone village, a Rakhine person hit a Rohingya by motorbike. He got injured, but instead of helping the Rohingya, a group of Rakhine people beat him and extorted 500,000 Myanmar Kyat [~ 189.42 GBP] from him. It is very likely that there will be violence in the future between the two communities as most Rakhine people hate Rohingya and they are very hostile and abusive towards us.”

- 25, MALE, MINBYA



BUTHIDAUNG TOWNSHIP

ROHINGYA VOICES

Bangladesh

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN COX'S BAZAR AND BHASAN CHAR

The Myanmar military's 2017 'clearance operations' displaced some 700,000 Rohingya people from (mainly northern) Rakhine State into Bangladesh, where these people joined hundreds of thousands of Rohingya people displaced by earlier waves of violence. Upwards of one million Rohingya people now live in refugee camps in Cox's Bazar and neighbouring areas. However, these camps have offered no respite from violence; particularly since 2019, competition between — and little policing of — ARSA, RSO, and other criminal actors in the camps have left Rohingya refugees dead, injured, and fearful, and may be the cause of deadly fires that have destroyed thousands of homes. In addition, stringent restrictions by Bangladesh authorities mean that camp residents are not allowed to leave the camps to access markets, or seek work, healthcare, or education in neighbouring communities, and violence by Bangladeshi communities has often prevented even informal movement. Bangladesh's Armed Police Battalion (APBn) has frequently used violence, extortion, forced labour, and arbitrary detention to enforce restrictions. Rohingya refugees are heavily reliant on humanitarian assistance, particularly since Bangladeshi authorities demolished businesses in the camps in 2022.

In 2020, Bangladeshi authorities began relocating Rohingya refugees to Bhasan Char, a silt island in the Bay of Bengal that is exposed to dangerous weather events and which offers almost nothing in the way of work or subsistence opportunities. Bhasan Char residents are largely prevented from leaving due to formal restrictions and the difficulties associated with travelling back to the mainland, meaning that the only income opportunities are a small number of NGO positions, and the only healthcare option (except in dire emergencies) is a single 20-bed hospital. Reporting suggests that humanitarian assistance is greater on Bhasan Char than in Cox's Bazar camps, but is still inadequate.

/ PRIMARY CONCERNS

COX'S BAZAR

Respondents in Cox's Bazar expressed concerns over human trafficking of Rohingya to Bangladesh by armed actors such as ARSA, the RSO, and the ULA/AA. They said that human traffickers in camps targeted new Rohingya arrivals to send them to Yangon, Myanmar, and Malaysia. One respondent said that due to the lack of the job opportunities, suicides had also increased (including one case in November).

"New arrivals are mainly targeted by the human traffickers to go to Malaysia. Many people were killed on their way to Malaysia, for example recently in Hai Gyi Island near Ayeyarwaddy Region. Rohingya know about the risk but they have no other alternative for a better life in the camp. Due to many challenges, there are Rohingya who even committed suicide. In the first week of November, around 50 Rohingya refugees from my camp went back to Rakhine State to go to Malaysia with human traffickers."

- 37, MALE, COX'S BAZAR

Respondents said that the RSO and Bangladesh authorities extorted Rohingya people fleeing violence in

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN COX'S BAZAR AND BHASAN CHAR

/ PRIMARY CONCERNS

Rakhine State. They said that the RSO was recruiting young Rohingya people in Cox's Bazar to fight against the ULA/AA in Rakhine State.

Respondents in Cox's Bazar expressed concerns over the safety of children, saying that Rohingya armed actors kidnapped children in camps in order to receive ransom payments. One respondent said that parents did not receive any support from Bangladesh authorities and avoided complaining to local authorities due to concerns about the safety of their children.

"There are many kidnapping cases going on in the camps, especially kidnapping of children for ransom. On 26 October, a 17-year-old boy was kidnapped from camp (25). He was severely beaten for six days, and the

videos were sent to his parents to get a huge ransom. The kidnappers initially demanded 1 million Taka [~6,657 GBP] but later released him for 200,000 Taka [~1,331 GBP]. Parents are very concerned about the safety of their children in the camps. Bangladesh authorities have taken no action on those kidnapping cases yet."

- 28, MALE, COX'S BAZAR

Respondents continued to express concerns over the lack of humanitarian assistance — especially food assistance for new Rohingya arrivals — and said that new arrivals urgently needed shelters and healthcare, including psychosocial support.

BHASAN CHAR

On 10 November, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) [reported](#) on the urgent needs of Rohingya refugees on Bhasan Char, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive support across multiple sectors, including health-care, child protection, and caregiver assistance. One respondent in Bhasan Char expressed concerns over a child drowning in a pond on Bhasan Char island and said that each cluster has ponds which lack proper fences and pose risks of drowning for children.

"There are 121 ponds on Bhasan Char. 119 ponds are located in the camp clusters and three ponds are located in the Bangladesh navy compound.

COX'S BAZAR



ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN COX'S BAZAR AND BHASAN CHAR

/ REFLECTIONS ON ...

The 119 ponds do not have any proper fences, so it is not safe for children. We raised this issue to camp leaders and Bangladesh authorities, but there was no proper action on this issue. The protection sector should put strong fences around those ponds to prevent drowning, but NGOs also said that they didn't have funding to build permanent fences."

- 42, MALE, BHASAN CHAR

... HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Respondents in Cox's Bazar reported urgent shelter support needs for new Rohingya arrivals and said that these people were temporarily staying with friends and relatives. Respondents said that due to the lack of a health record book, new arrivals found it difficult to access regular healthcare services. Another respondent said that in November, new arrivals did not receive any assistance from agencies and were not able to register with UNHCR. Respondents also stressed the need for protection for Rohingya new arrivals and urged agencies to provide protection from deportation by Bangladesh authorities.

"The new arrivals were provided with limited humanitarian assistance last month. But in November, there was no assistance provided to them. UNHCR

also did not register them. There were many new arrivals in camp (7), and in November alone, hundreds of new arrivals fled to Bangladesh with human traffickers by paying bribes to Bangladesh authorities. Unfortunately, they did not receive any assistance. Sometimes, new arrivals are also arrested and pushed back to Myanmar. They all need support for shelter, food, healthcare services, and warm clothes."

- 37, MALE, COX'S BAZAR

One respondent on Bhasan Char reported the need for protection and extra assistance, including job opportunities, for single mothers. The same person said that, due to the lack of family planning, young girls were at high risk of early pregnancies and often faced complications during and after pregnancy. He also said that due to the lack of family planning education, domestic and sexual violence were high, as was the rate of divorce among young couples.

"There are many single mothers in the camp due to high divorce cases and there should be more awareness on family planning for us on Bhasan Char. Most of those single mothers don't have any income or job opportunities to earn a small income. There should be more cash for work activities designed for single mothers."

- 42, MALE, BHASAN CHAR

... ARMED AND GOVERNANCE ACTORS

On 11 November, ARSA, the RSO, the Arakan Rohingya Army (ARA), and four other Rohingya armed actors met and **agreed** to cease attacks between them in Cox's Bazar refugee camps. However, the agreement did not **involve** cooperation between these actors in Rakhine State to fight against the ULA/AA. Respondents in Bangladesh said that this meeting was initiated by the Bangladesh Security Intelligence. One respondent reported that an SAC commander in Rakhine State and Bangladesh Security Intelligence pressured ARSA and the RSO to fight against the ULA/AA in Maungdaw Township.

"I heard that the SAC regional commander is putting more pressure on ARSA to fight against the AA. Similarly, the Bangladesh security intelligence is putting pressure on ARSA and RSO to go back to Rakhine State and fight against the AA. Bangladesh security intelligence forced them to unite and work together to fight against the AA. Currently all Rohingya armed groups reached an understanding not to fight with each other in Bangladesh. In November the armed clashes between Rohingya armed groups in the camp also declined."

- 37, MALE, COX'S BAZAR

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN COX'S BAZAR AND BHASAN CHAR

/ REFLECTIONS ON ...

Respondents in Bangladesh expressed concerns over human trafficking involving ULA/AA members and Rohingya armed actors. Respondents also reported that Bangladesh local authorities extorted new Rohingya arrivals who fled to Cox's Bazar to seek protection.

"The AA has been conducting human trafficking, and they charge Rohingya in Buthidaung Township who want to flee to Cox's Bazar. AA members first transport them to Mingalargyi village in Maungdaw Township by car. From Maungdaw Township, they are sent to Bangladesh by boats through human traffickers."

- 38, MALE, COX'S BAZAR

"Due to persecution and oppression in Rakhine State, many Rohingya are fleeing to Bangladesh and Yangon. AA members and appointed VAs are involved in human trafficking and charge Rohingya who want to flee to Bangladesh. I heard from my relatives in Maungdaw Township that many Rohingya are planning to flee to Bangladesh due to the arrest and abuse of the ULA/AA."

- 42, MALE, BHASAN CHAR

... INTERCOMMUNAL RELATIONS

Although there was no reported tension between Rohingya refugees and host communities on Bhasan Char, respondents in Cox's Bazar expressed concerns over tensions between refugees and host communities around Cox's Bazar and Teknaf. Respondents reported that they experienced verbal and physical abuse by host community members, and said that due to the increasing flow of new refugees from Rakhine State, Bangladeshi locals were becoming more aggressive and expressing concerns over the new refugee flow into Bangladesh. Respondents in Cox's Bazar said that host community members detained several new Rohingya arrivals who were hiding in the forest near Teknaf and handed them over to the BGB. They said that the BGB verbally and physically abused and threatened Rohingya refugees who recently arrived in Bangladesh. One respondent said that Bangladesh security forces arrested new Rohingya refugees who passed a checkpoint without a UNHCR card and permission, after verbally abusing them and forcing them to stay under the sun for several hours as punishment. Respondents continued to note tensions between Rohingya refugees and host communities, saying that some Bangladeshi gangs and host community members robbed and extorted new Rohingya arrivals.

"There is tension between host communities and Rohingya, especially in the Teknaf area. Many Rohingya were arrested and handed over to BGB by locals and some of them were also robbed by host communities. The host community expressed concern about the new flow of Rohingya into Bangladesh."

- 37, MALE, COX'S BAZAR



COX'S BAZAR

ROHINGYA VOICES

ATMOSPHERIC REPORT

Contributing information sources to this document include public and non-public humanitarian information. The content compiled is by no means exhaustive and does not necessarily reflect the position of its authors or funders. The provided information, assessment, and analysis are designated for humanitarian purposes only and as such should not be cited.

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