



Rohingya Voices

ATMOSPHERIC REPORT

CONFIDENTIAL - NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

MARCH 2025

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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.

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KEY FINDINGS

/ PERCEPTIONS OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Rohingya community members in villages in Rakhine State reported a lack of assistance including in the form of shelters, healthcare, and medicine to control the outbreak of skin diseases among children.

- Compared to February, the reported concerns of Rohingya villagers in Rakhine State did not change significantly, but concerns about clean water, toilet facilities, shelters, and insecticide-treated mosquito nets appeared to become more pressing.

- Respondents in Buthidaung Township reported urgently needing shelter support for people forcibly displaced by the Arakan Army (AA), while respondents in Minbya and Mrauk-U townships said that they needed urgent shelter support as their shelters have been damaged since Cyclone Mocha in May 2023, and they cannot afford to repair their roofs, forcing them to live under tarpaulin sheets.

Rohingya community members in camps in Rakhine State expressed concerns about food shortages and news that agencies planned to halt food assistance in camp areas.

- Respondents in Pauktaw Township said that, due to the lack of healthcare assistance and medicines, chronic disease patients and children rely on traditional medicines and herbs.

- In March, respondents in camps reported more urgently needing food, nutritious food for children and the elderly, and medications.

Rohingya community members in Bangladesh expressed concerns about a lack of sufficient food, shelter, drinking water, and toilet facilities in Cox's Bazar.

- Respondents in Bangladesh expressed concern over some NGOs planning to halt food assistance and healthcare support in April due to funding shortfalls related to the USAID Stop Work Order, and added that these conditions might force many Rohingya to participate in illegal activities, such as trafficking in persons or drug smuggling.

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

KEY FINDINGS

/ PERCEPTIONS OF ARMED AND GOVERNANCE ACTORS

Rohingya community members in villages in Rakhine State voiced concerns over State Administration Council (SAC) air and artillery attacks on Rohingya villages. Compared to February, respondents expressed greater concern about United League of Arakan (ULA)/AA movement restrictions, forced labour, mandatory “tax” and detentions, especially in Pauktaw, Kyauktaw, Minbya, Mrauk-U, Maungdaw, and Buthidaung townships.

- All respondents living in ULA/AA-controlled areas expressed negative views of the ULA/AA administration. Respondents reported that in many Rohingya villages, the AA systematically discriminates against Rohingya villagers and often detains Rohingya people arbitrarily or as a pretext for extortion.

Rohingya community members in camps in Rakhine State reported that the SAC and ULA/AA regularly communicated with Camp Management Committee (CMC) members and camp leaders.

- Respondents in Sittwe Township reported that SAC forces were actively involved in human trafficking, forced recruitment, and extortion, and that they often harassed and verbally abused Rohingya women wearing Islamic clothing, including by forcing women to remove their niqab or hijab at checkpoints.

- Respondents in Pauktaw and Myebon townships expressed concerns about movement restrictions, harassment and threats, and mandatory “tax” by the ULA/AA.

Rohingya community members in Bangladesh reported fighting and killings between the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) and Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO).

- Respondents welcomed the arrest of ARSA leaders and its members in Dhaka by Bangladesh’s Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and urged Bangladesh authorities to take serious actions regarding the crimes committed by ARSA leaders.

KEY FINDINGS

/ PERCEPTIONS OF INTERCOMMUNAL TENSIONS

Rohingya community members in villages in Rakhine State expressed concerns about potential tensions between Rohingya and Rakhine villagers.

- Respondents in Minbya and Mrauk-U townships reported tensions between Rakhine and Rohingya villagers, especially at markets.

- Respondents in Pauktaw, Minbya, and Mrauk-U townships reported experiencing physical and verbal abuse and being falsely accused of theft and sexual harassment, among other accusations.

Rohingya community members in camps in Rakhine State reported that Rohingya camp residents had regular interaction with their ethnic Rakhine neighbours.

- Respondents in Sittwe Township said that Rakhine villagers came to Rohingya camps to buy vegetables and meat, and that Rohingya camp members went to Rakhine villagers to sell food items. However, they reported that some Rakhine villagers targeted and robbed Rohingya people in urban and some Rakhine village areas.

Rohingya community members in Bangladesh reported that tensions between refugees and host communities were rising due to kidnappings for ransom by Bangladeshi criminal gangs and local communities.

- Respondents on Bhasan Char Island noted that although there was tension between Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshi NGO staff, the relationship between Bangladeshi businessmen and refugees remained good.

- Respondents in Cox's Bazar reported that Bangladeshi farmers and employers often exploited Rohingya day labourers, and that Bangladeshi law enforcement failed to take action on crimes committed by the host community, instead often blaming Rohingya refugees for travelling to host areas illegally.

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 March, but violence by the SAC, AA, and others continued to impact communities, particularly in northern Rakhine State.

- On 17 March, local media reported that between February and early May 2024, while SAC troops were still present in Buthidaung Township, ARSA engaged in extortion, forced recruitment, and incitement violence against civilians in collaboration with the SAC.

Hate speech



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

Hate speech appeared to change significantly in March, particularly within the camps in Bangladesh.

- In the third week of March, following the arrest of ARSA leaders by the RAB, ARSA supporters launched hate speech attacks against Rohingya leaders and civilians who welcomed the arrests. These attacks included calling Rohingya leaders traitors, comparing them to dogs or pigs, and using other offensive language. Additionally, ARSA supporters spread misinformation, falsely claiming that the entire Rohingya community condemned the arrests, using fake photos and videos to support their narrative.
- In Pauktaw, Minbya, and Mrauk-U townships, respondents reported that AA members and Rakhine communities discriminated against Rohingya people, calling them “Kalar” and comparing them to animals.

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 15 March, international NGOs operating in Bangladesh called for immediate and coordinated action to sustain life-saving assistance, innovative response strategies, and a dedicated mission that ensures stability and dignity for Rohingya refugees and host communities in Cox's Bazar. The statement mentioned that essential services—including food and nutrition, WASH, protection, shelter, and livelihoods—had been critically affected by severe funding cuts.
- On 10 March, rights groups urged Bangladesh's interim government to allow Rohingya new arrivals fleeing from Myanmar to Bangladesh to be registered in partnership with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and to ensure humanitarian assistance for these new arrivals.

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

Tension



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

Tensions between ethnic Rohingya and Rakhine communities appeared unchanged in March in many areas of Rakhine State.

- Respondents in Minbya, Pauktaw, and Mrauk-U townships reported that some Rakhine people accused Rohingya children of theft and physically abused them, causing Rohingya villagers to feel unsafe when travelling to marketplaces.

Cohesion



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

Social cohesion between ethnic Rohingya and Rakhine communities appeared unchanged in March in many areas of Rakhine State.

- Respondents in Sittwe Township stated that there was good communication between Rohingya and Rakhine neighbors. They reported that they could visit Rakhine villages, and that Rakhine people also visited Rohingya villages and camps.

Perceptions

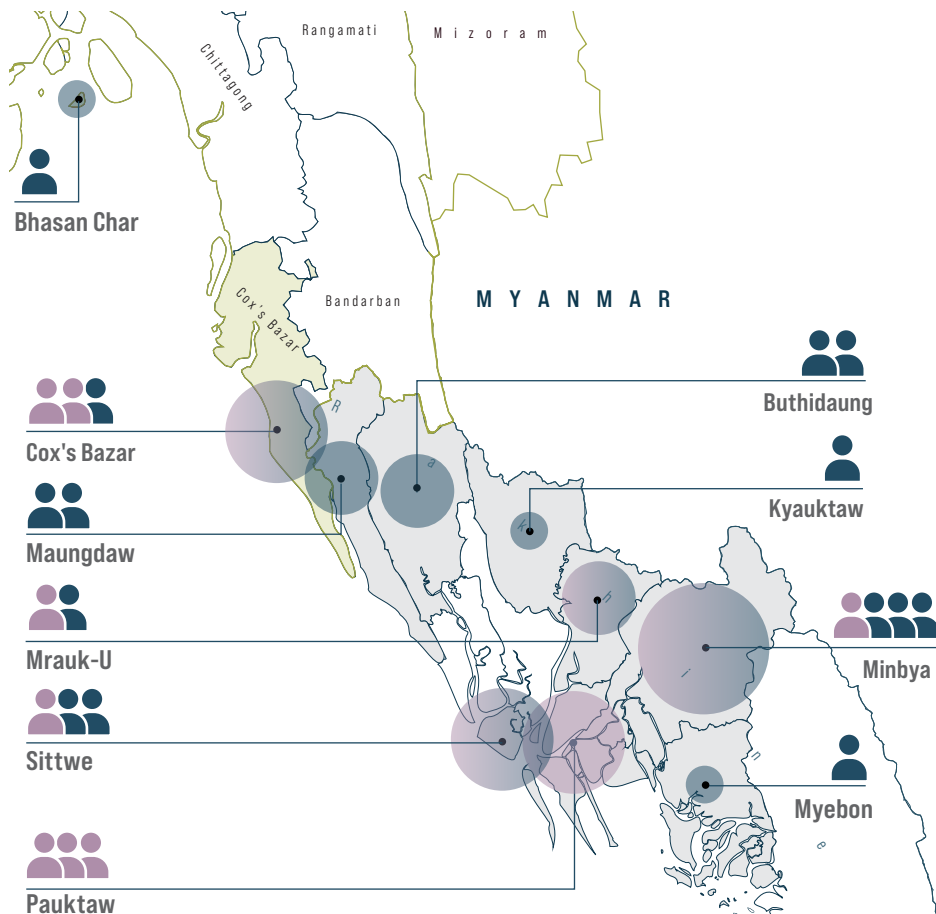


'Perceptions' includes the expressed sentiments of Rohingya people (e.g. respondents).

Respondents in Rakhine State did not report perceptions of intercommunal relations that differed significantly from February. Respondents living in ULA/AA-controlled areas expressed concerns that the ULA/AA's actions and discrimination toward Rohingya people might negatively impact the relationship between some communities, including other minority ethnic groups, and Rohingya communities.

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.

8
March

Local media [reported](#) that the AA pressured and forcibly displaced Rohingya villagers from the north of Buthidaung Township in order to seize their land, including agricultural land. The same source added that the AA handed land owned by Rohingya villagers over to Daingnet people in Mee Kyaung Khaung Swea village in Buthidaung Township.

17
March

Local media [reported](#) that SAC forces planted landmines near the Kyauk Ta Lone relocation site in Kyaukpyu Township, causing frequent explosions and resulting in injuries to both people and animals. Due to the threat of landmines, camp residents face severe difficulties accessing food and work, and increased concerns regarding travelling outside the camp.

18
March

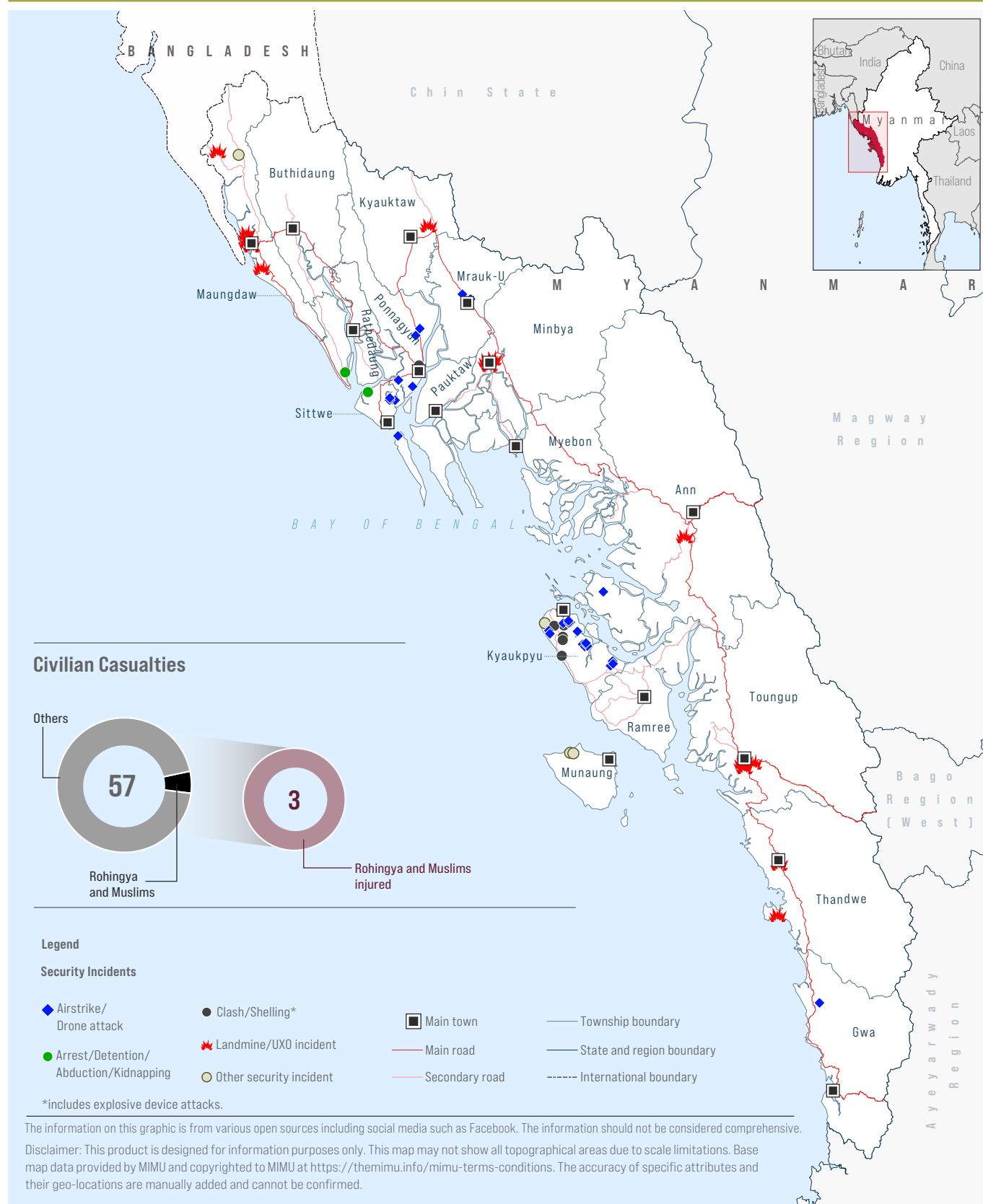
Bangladesh's RAB [arrested](#) Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) leader Ataullah Abu Ammar Jununi alongside nine other members in Dhaka; authorities filed a case against these people for illegal entry in the country and, under the Anti-Terrorism Act, for involvement in terrorism activities. On 19 March, Fortify Rights [called](#) on the government of Bangladesh to investigate Rohingya armed actors operating in refugee camps for committing war crimes against civilians.

23
March

A boat carrying an estimated 40–50 Rohingya people [capsized](#) in the Bay of Bengal while trying to illegally enter Bangladesh from Myanmar. Twenty-five men, women, and children were rescued off the Teknaf coast in Cox's Bazar. Several others, including a Border Guard Bangladesh member, are reported missing.

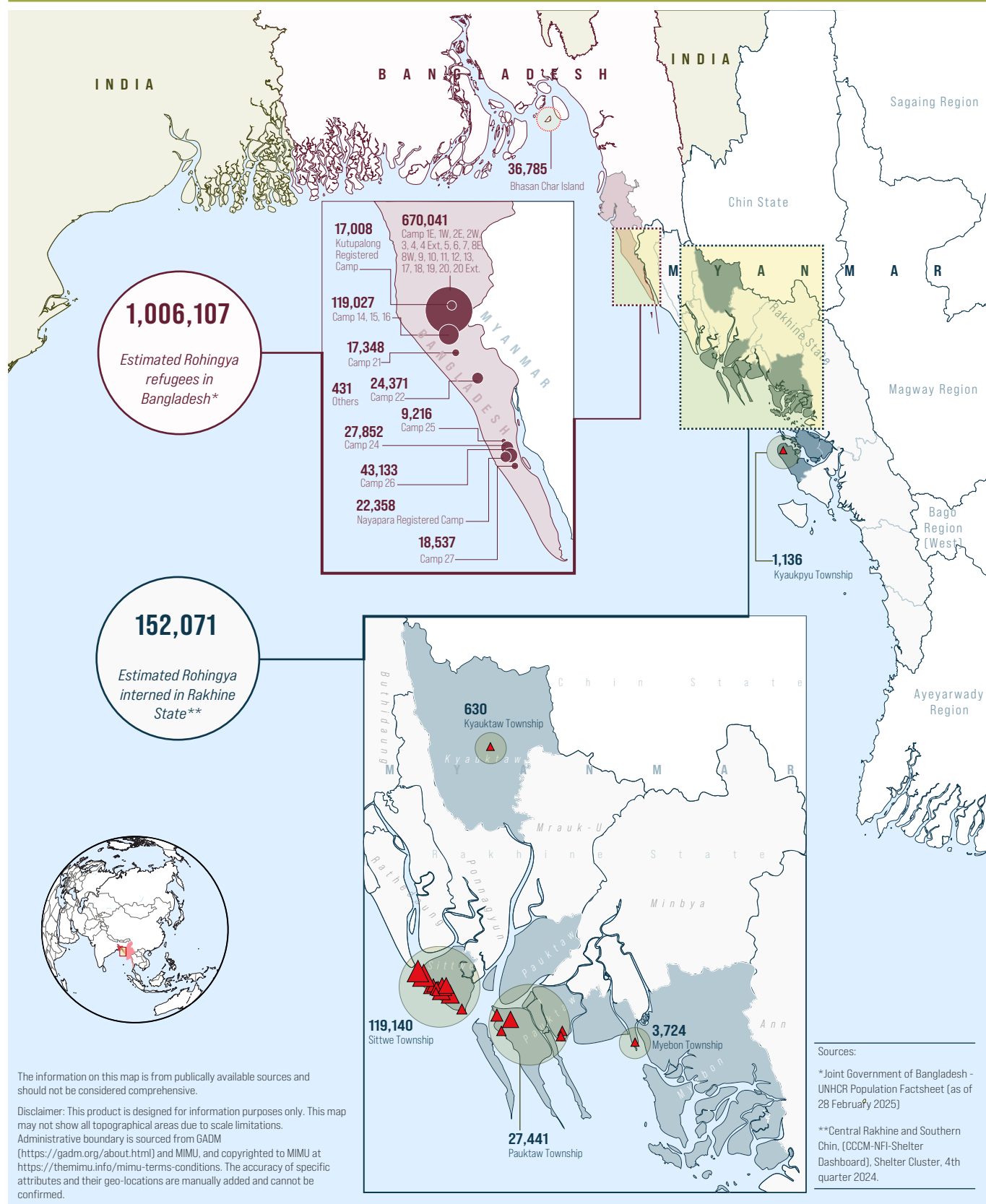
KEY SECURITY INCIDENTS

MARCH 2025



ROHINGYA CAMPS IN RAKHINE STATE AND BANGLADESH

MARCH 2025



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 CAMPS,
SITTWE TOWNSHIP

/ PRIMARY CONCERNS

SITTWE TOWNSHIP

Respondents in Sittwe Township reported that while a few displaced Rohingya people received rice and cash assistance, many had not received any aid since January. One respondent noted that INGOs and NGOs had stopped providing tuberculosis (TB) treatment, assistance for pregnant women, nutrition support for malnourished children, and food assistance in IDP camps. Economic hardship has also reportedly led to the exploitation of Rohingya women, including through sex work.

“The most urgent needs are food and healthcare. Movement restrictions imposed by the SAC have left people without job opportunities or access to healthcare. [A UN agency] has informed us that it will stop food assistance in Sittwe camps in April, raising serious concerns among IDPs. Healthcare services and nutrition support for children and pregnant women have already been cut off.”

- 37, MALE, SITTWE

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN CAMPS

/ PRIMARY CONCERNS

MYEBON TOWNSHIP

As with respondents in Sittwe Township, a respondent in Taung Paw Ward (an 'officially closed' camp) in Myebon Township reported the urgent need for humanitarian assistance, particularly food and shelter support. ULA/AA movement restrictions reportedly prevent camp residents from working outside the township, leaving them with no source of income.

"We haven't received any humanitarian aid. We have to go to other places to ask for help. There is only one Rohingya IDP camp in Myebon Township, and we are not allowed to travel without permission from ULA/AA. Many of us are unemployed. The AA does not provide any assistance. Since the neighboring Rakhine villages are facing similar struggles, they can't help us either."

- 60, MALE, MYEBON

PAUKTAW TOWNSHIP

Respondents in Pauktaw Township reported concerns over the lack of regular income and livelihood support. They reported that movement restrictions imposed by the ULA/AA had made it increasingly difficult for IDPs to access job opportunities.

Many people, unable to earn a regular income, have reportedly been forced to rely on high-interest loans, which they struggle to repay. Due to the lack of livelihood opportunities and the inability to afford regular meals for children, parents said to send their children to work in Rohingya-owned farms or shops where the employers pay the children in food (not salary). Additionally, a respondent expressed concern over potential fighting between AA and SAC forces in Sittwe Township and the risk of SAC airstrikes. She noted that AA is planning to use Pauktaw Township as a base for launching attacks on Sittwe Township.

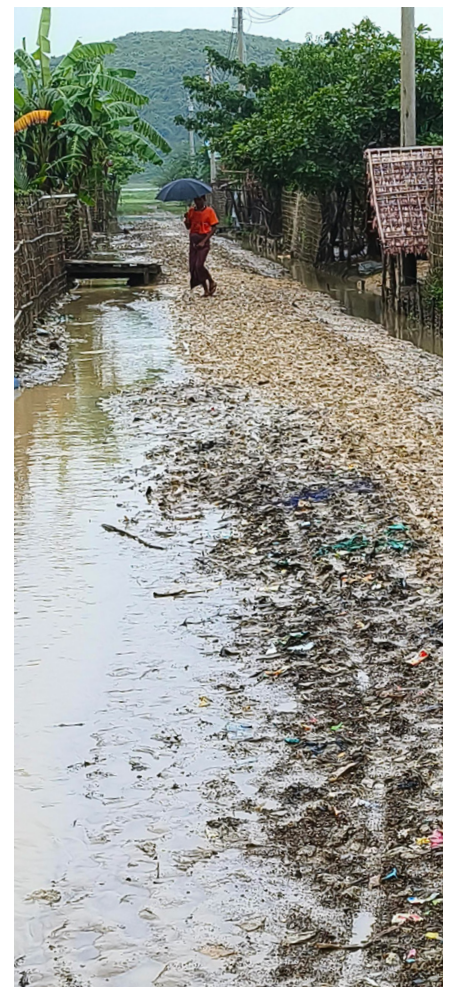
"Before, we could catch fish and sell them at the Sittwe market to earn money. But now, we can't do that anymore [due to movement restrictions]. My household has 15 family members, but only one person has a daily labor job. We are drowning in debt and unable to repay our loans under these conditions. Parents are forcing their children to work for survival, and some families have even sold their homes to afford basic necessities."

- 36, FEMALE, PAUKTAW

"Rohingya are restricted from working in many jobs by the ULA/AA. We are not allowed to go fishing. Even when selling livestock like cattle, Rakhine people are given priority over Rohingya. Recently, the AA issued

a warning that armed clashes between the SAC and AA would soon take place in Sittwe Township. They are planning to launch attacks on Sittwe from Pauktaw Township. We are deeply worried that the SAC will retaliate with airstrikes. If fighting breaks out in Sittwe Township, our areas will suffer severe consequences."

- 45, FEMALE, PAUKTAW



ROHINGYA CAMPS, MYEBON TOWNSHIP

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN CAMPS

/ REFLECTIONS ON ...

... HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Respondents reported that while a small number of IDPs received rice and cash assistance, the majority had not received any aid since January. One respondent noted that INGOs and NGOs had stopped providing essential services, including TB treatment, assistance for pregnant women, nutrition programs for malnourished children, and food aid in camps. Due to extreme economic hardship and lack of access to any income, Rohingya women are increasingly vulnerable to exploitation, and some women now reportedly do sex work within the camps.

“The most urgent needs are food and healthcare. Movement restrictions imposed by the SAC have left people without job opportunities or access to medical care, while there is no assistance from agencies. [A UN agency] has informed us that it will stop food assistance in the Sittwe camps in April, raising serious concerns among IDPs.”

- 37, MALE, SITTWE

A respondent in Taung Paw Ward (an 'officially closed' camp) in Myebon Township reported an urgent need for humanitarian assistance, and particularly food and shelter support. Due to movement restrictions imposed by the ULA/AA,

camp residents are reportedly prohibited from working outside the township, leaving them with no means of earning a livelihood.

“We have received no humanitarian assistance. We are forced to go elsewhere to seek help. Shelter support is an urgent need for us. We are not allowed to go outside of the township freely. Many of us are unemployed. The AA doesn't provide assistance, and neighboring Rakhine villages are facing similar struggles, so they cannot offer jobs or support to us.”

- 60, MALE, MYEBON

As with Rohingya in camps elsewhere, respondents in Pauktaw Township reported an urgent need for healthcare and food assistance. Due to lack of proper medical services and restrictions on movement, they said, camp members rely on traditional healers and herbal medicines for treatment, including guava leaves.

“We urgently needed food and healthcare services. Right now, we rely on traditional healers and use herbal medicine to treat chronic diseases. Many people have fled to Malaysia due to the hardships we face in our camp. Some have been involved in illegal businesses just to survive.”

- 36, FEMALE, PAUKTAW

... ARMED AND GOVERNANCE ACTORS

Respondents in Sittwe Township expressed concerns about extortion, forced recruitment, and forced labour by SAC forces at checkpoints. One respondent reported that SAC forces instructed Rohingya people in camps to direct complaints to Arakan Liberation Party (ALP) members rather than SAC police, but when a robbery committed by Rakhine individuals was reported, neither the ALP nor SAC took any action. He said that SAC forces regularly extorted Rohingya people under false accusations and were actively involved in human trafficking. On 10 March, SAC forces reportedly detained five Rohingya people without evidence, tortured them for five days, and extorted their families upon release.

“SAC forces arrested at least five Rohingya men from different camps and villages without any valid reason. They tortured them for five days, and only after their families paid 20 million Myanmar Kyat [~7,369 GBP] per person were they released and sent to the hospital for treatment. SAC forces, especially at checkpoints in Ye Chan Pyin and Pin Lin Pyin villages in Sittwe Township, are deeply involved in human trafficking, charging human smugglers one million Myanmar Kyat [~368 GBP] per boat to transport Rohingya to Malaysia and Thailand.”

- 37, MALE, SITTWE

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN CAMPS

/ REFLECTIONS ON ...

Respondents in Pauktaw Township and in Taung Paw ‘ward’ (‘officially closed’ camp) in Myebon Township reported severe restrictions on travel due to their inability to afford permission letters from ULA/AA. They also said that Rohingya students studying in Sittwe Township had to pay a tax to return home to Pauktaw Township. Respondents also reported both human trafficking and harassment by AA soldiers, who they said frequently visited camps to threatened and verbally abused Rohingya people living there.

“My son traveled from Sin Tet Maw camp to Malaysia, and I had to pay 1.2 million Myanmar Kyat [~442 GBP] to the AA as a ‘travel tax.’

The AA imposes many restrictions on Rohingya IDPs. In some areas, like Pauktaw Town, we are not allowed to travel at all. There are numerous checkpoints, and we must show travel permits stamped by the AA, whereas Rakhine people are free to travel without such permits.”

- 45, FEMALE, PAUKTAW

... INTERCOMMUNAL RELATIONS

Respondents in Taung Paw ‘ward’ (‘officially closed’ camp) in Myebon Township reported regular communications — and no tensions — with their Rakhine neighbors. However, in Pauktaw Township, some Rakhine villagers were reported to have falsely accused Rohingya people, physically abused them, referred to them with anti-Muslim slurs like “Kalar,” and compared them to animals. They said that due to the activities of Rohingya armed actors, ULA/AA and Rakhine communities distrust Rohingya people, leading to increased restrictions and oppression.

“There is no tension between Rohingya and Rakhine friends. But in some villages, Rakhine people made false accusations to justify attacks against Rohingya. Violence between the two communities seems likely in the future. Due to the actions of Rohingya armed groups, Rakhine people and AA distrust us, imposing more restrictions. They assume that all Rohingya support Rohingya armed groups. We fear more oppression from the ULA/AA and Rakhine people in the future.”

- 36, FEMALE, PAUKTAW

Respondents in Sittwe Township likewise noted generally positive relationships between Rohingya and Rakhine communities, saying that some Rakhine people visited Rohingya villages and camps to buy meat and vegetables, while poorer Rakhine people visited to beg for food. However, one respondent expressed doubt that the ULA/AA would grant Rohingya citizenship rights and freedom of movement in Sittwe Township.

“Rohingya do not trust that the ULA/AA will grant us citizenship and freedom of movement if they take control of Sittwe Township. However, daily interactions with Rakhine people are good — Rohingya can travel to urban areas, and Rakhine people come to camps and villages to buy food. Some Rakhine poor from Padalet and Kyauktan villages even come to our camps to beg for food, and Rohingya give [food] to them. However, since Rohingya elders were forced to follow SAC orders and recruited conscripts, we have been worried that this could further anger Rakhine people and the AA.”

- 37, MALE, SITTWE

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN VILLAGES

Rohingya people living in villages in 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 more 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

Respondents in Pauktaw and Kyauktaw townships expressed significant concerns over the ULA/AA's mandatory "tax" imposed on Rohingya villagers for business and movement. They reported that individuals who wished to return to ULA/AA-controlled areas needed permission from the AA and were required to pay a "tax" to return home. A respondent from Pauktaw Township added that, although the ULA/AA had warned villagers to dig bomb shelters before it launched an offensive attack on Sittwe Township, some areas were too rocky to construct shelters to protect against SAC airstrikes.

"We are farmers. One of my sons was arrested by SAC forces while trying to travel to Malaysia. In February, the SAC released him along with 600 other Rohingya detainees. I had to pay one million Myanmar Kyat [~368 GBP] to the AA to allow my son to return to Kyauktaw Township. I am worried that even after paying, I might not be able to bring him home, and I fear for his safety."

- 55, MALE, KYAUKTAW

Respondents in Minbya and Mrauk-U townships voiced concerns over the lack of shelter support, healthcare, and internet and phone connectivity, stating that this severely impacted their businesses and access to remittances from family abroad.

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN VILLAGES

/ PRIMARY CONCERNS

Respondents said that to use the internet or phone services, they had to travel to Pauktaw Township.

Respondents in Mrauk-U Township reported that, due to shortages of medicine, Rohingya people relied on herbs and traditional remedies. They also noted that food scarcity and high food prices forced families to send their children to work in agriculture as daily laborers.

“During Cyclone Mocha, our house was damaged, and we have been living under tarpaulin sheets ever since. We still cannot afford to repair the roof. My husband is chronically ill, but he has no access to healthcare services or medicine. We rely on traditional healing practices and have asked our children to work in agriculture to help support the family.”

- 35, FEMALE, MRAUK-U

Rohingya villagers in Sittwe Township expressed concerns over food shortages, lack of regular income, and medicines to treat skin diseases and diarrhea among children. They said that due to the worsening food shortages, petty crime cases had increased, and more people were attempting to reach Malaysia and Thailand with human traffickers. They also expressed fear of potential fighting between the AA and SAC forces in Sittwe Township.

“We are deeply worried about the possibility of heavy fighting between the AA and SAC. Every night, we hear the sounds of heavy weapons. Due to food shortages, petty crime has increased in many Rohingya villages, and more people are preparing to leave for Malaysia by boat through human traffickers in search of jobs.”

- 46, FEMALE, SITTWE

Many children under five in Maungdaw Township are reportedly suffering from malnutrition due to severe food shortages. The situation is particularly dire in informal Rohingya IDP camps and villages, where one-third of Rohingya children are malnourished. Respondents in Buthidaung Township also stressed the urgent need for healthcare services for malnourished children and the elderly, as well as shelter support for displaced persons.

“As many Rohingya have been forcibly displaced by the ULA/AA, they are in urgent need of shelter support. Among the displaced, children under five and elderly individuals are suffering from malnutrition and desperately require healthcare.”

- 29, MALE, BUTHIDAUNG

/ REFLECTIONS ON ...

... HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Rohingya villagers in Sittwe Township stated that food and healthcare services were their most pressing needs. One respondent reported that, due to the lack of regular income and assistance from aid agencies, many families had been forced to send their children to work, and elderly people, women, and children are suffering from malnutrition. Other respondents reported that the struggle to access sufficient food and stable income had also led to a rise in domestic violence cases among Rohingya families.

“Due to the lack of support and income, domestic violence between husbands and wives happens frequently, and children are left starving. Elderly people can’t access nutritious food, and patients with chronic illnesses go untreated because there is no healthcare assistance. As many people are struggling to secure food, we are unable to help each other. Last month, one of my sisters, who was 30 years old, died from malnutrition.”

- 46, FEMALE, SITTWE

Respondents in Pauktaw, Minbya, Mrauk-U, and Kyauktaw townships reported an urgent need for agricultural and educational support, food, healthcare, drinking water, and shelter. Respondents in Mrauk-U

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN VILLAGES

/ REFLECTIONS ON ...

Township particularly emphasized the need for hygiene kits for women and insecticide-treated mosquito nets.

“The mosquito nets are especially important for us because the upcoming season is mosquito season, which could bring various diseases.”

- 35, FEMALE, MRAUK-U

Respondents in Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships highlighted their urgent need for food, health-care, shelter, clean water, latrines, and medicines to treat skin diseases among children. One respondent in Buthidaung Township reported that a few Rohingya villagers in Sein Nyein Pyar village received rice and beans for Ramadan from Rohingya relatives and donors abroad. Respondents in Maungdaw Township said that due to the skyrocketing prices of rice and other essential food items, Rohingya families were unable to provide nutritious meals for their children.

“As we are in the summer season, we are facing a shortage of drinking water and have to fetch it from far away. We also urgently need health-care services, doctors, and medicines. During Ramadan, we wanted to have fish and meat, but the AA has restricted us from fishing in the river.”

- 31, MALE, MAUNGDAW

... ARMED AND GOVERNANCE ACTORS

Respondents in Minbya and Mrauk-U townships reported that the ULA/AA frequently targeted Rohingya people, detaining them arbitrarily and extorting money from them upon release. In Minbya Township, respondents reported that although a Rohingya individual admitted to the murder of an AA-appointed village leader in Let Ma village, the AA refused to release at least 60 other Rohingya people who were detained in February on suspicion of involvement in that killing. In Mrauk-U Township, respondents said that the ULA/AA's justice system favored Rakhine people over Rohingya villagers and failed to take action against human traffickers, even when Rohingya villagers reported such incidents.

“At [AA] checkpoints, they check travel permits from Rohingya but not from Rakhine people. Rakhine people have freedom of movement, while Rohingya face severe restrictions. If there is a financial dispute between Rakhine and Rohingya people, the AA always favors the Rakhine. A Rakhine man from Myaung Bwe village owed three million Myanmar Kyat [~1,100 GBP] to a Rohingya villager from my village. When he failed to repay the money, the Rohingya villager reported the issue to the AA, but they took no action. However, if a Rakhine person

files complaints, the AA takes action immediately. Some ULA/AA members and their informers are actively involved in human trafficking, giving false hope to many young people and luring them into being trafficked abroad. We reported these cases to the AA, but they ignored us.”

- 45, MALE, MRAUK-U

Respondents in Minbya, Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, and Pauktaw townships reported that the ULA/AA imposed increasing restrictions on Rohingya villagers, including mandatory taxation and severe movement restrictions. The ULA/AA also reportedly banned Rohingya people from participating in tenders for butcher licenses, in contrast to the prior SAC administration. Respondents in Pauktaw Township reported that individuals who traveled without obtaining a permit from the AA faced detention and fines. In Minbya Township, Rohingya people were reportedly required to carry travel permits issued by the ULA/AA even to move within their own township.

“I have a negative view of the ULA/AA because they discriminate against us and impose harsh policies on Rohingya, while Rakhine people can travel freely. All Rohingya face travel restrictions, and even within the same township, we must carry a permission letter with the ULA/AA's stamp. Under the SAC administration,

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN VILLAGES

/ REFLECTIONS ON ...

we didn't need such permission to travel within the township."

- 28, MALE, MINBYA

Respondents in Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships expressed fears over SAC airstrikes and the ULA/AA's oppression of Rohingya villagers. They reported that the AA imposed a curfew order in March, prohibiting Rohingya people from going outside after 9pm, and announced that individuals who violated the curfew would face serious consequences.

"Although the AA imposed a curfew in March, we were allowed to pray in the mosque until 9pm. Some people had a positive view of the AA for allowing Rohingya to pray at night until 9pm, but many expressed negative opinions due to the restrictions on movement and the curfew."

- 31, MALE, MAUNGDAW

Respondents in Buthidaung Township stated that the ULA/AA strictly restricted access to mountain areas, farmland, and rivers, significantly impacting their livelihoods. One respondent reported that, according to Rohingya villagers who had been released recently from ULA/AA custody, Rohingya who were detained on accusations of affiliation with Rohingya armed actors or for serving as SAC

conscripts were severely tortured, with some becoming paralyzed as a result. Another respondent reported that on 8 March, the AA forcibly displaced Rohingya villagers from Pyin Shey, Kyat Mauk Taung, and Da Pyu Chaung villages, confiscated their lands, and relocated them to fields between Pule Taung and Pyin Shey villages.

"We view the ULA/AA administration negatively due to its oppression of the Rohingya, and we are concerned that under their rule, more Rohingya would lose lands owned by our ancestors."

- 25, MALE, BUTHIDAUNG

Respondents in Sittwe Township expressed concerns over extortion at SAC checkpoints, forced labor, and the detention of Rohingya fishermen. They reported that SAC forces detained Rohingya fishermen and boat owners for fishing or going to sea without permission, severely tortured them, and confiscated their boats.

"On March 28, the SAC officially announced that boats could resume fishing in the sea. However, when Rohingya fishermen went out to fish, they were arrested, and their boats were confiscated by SAC forces. The fishermen were brutally beaten and tortured."

- 34, MALE, SITTWE

... INTERCOMMUNAL RELATIONS

Most respondents in Pauktaw and Sittwe townships reported regularly communicating with their Rakhine neighbors. However, one Rohingya villager in Sittwe Township stated that they had no regular interactions with Rakhine people. He expressed concerns over safety, alleging that Rakhine villagers often robbed Rohingya people who passed through Rakhine villages. He also voiced a lack of trust in both the ULA/AA and the Rakhine community.

"There is no regular communication between Rohingya and Rakhine people. Both communities live separately in their respective villages. If a Rohingya passes through a Rakhine village, they are robbed by Rakhine people, and it is not safe to travel through those areas."

- 34, MALE, SITTWE

Rohingya villagers in Mrauk-U and Minbya townships voiced concerns about potential intercommunal violence. Respondents in Minbya Township reported that on 12 March, a Rakhine villager from Shwe Ta Mar Rakhine village attacked two Rohingya children from Let Ma village with a machete, critically injuring one and also seriously injuring the other. They also reported

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN VILLAGES

/ REFLECTIONS ON ...

that three Rohingya children — two from Mrauk-U and one from Minbya Township — were beaten by Rakhine villagers in Pan Myaung Market in Minbya Township and Myaung Bwe Market in Mrauk-U Township.

“On 6 March, a Rakhine woman brutally beat a Rohingya child, accusing him of stealing from her shop. He was seriously injured. We are deeply concerned about rising tensions between Rakhine and Rohingya villagers, as we are often subjected to physical and verbal abuse.”

- 38, FEMALE, MINBYA

Respondents in Minbya, Buthidaung, and Maungdaw townships stated that they had limited communication with Rakhine people and that trust between the two communities remained low. They expressed growing fears over potential intercommunal tensions, citing rumours that Rohingya armed actors were planning to fight against the AA after Ramadan.

“There are rumors that Rohingya armed groups are planning to attack and fight against the AA after Ramadan. If this happens, it would severely impact the already fragile relationship between Rakhine and Rohingya villagers.”

- 29, MALE, BUTHIDAUNG

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 growing concerns over the reduction of food assistance scheduled for April. They highlighted the lack of job opportunities in the camps, noting that many Rohingya volunteers had lost their jobs due to NGOs halting project activities. Respondents stressed that, with limited humanitarian assistance, many people might be forced into illegal activities, including drug trafficking, human trafficking, and kidnapping.

"Bangladeshi authorities do not allow refugees to open shops or work outside the camp. Movement from one camp to another is also restricted. Due to these limitations, many people may resort to illegal activities to meet their needs. The cash-for-work opportunities in the camp have also been reduced, leaving refugees with no way to earn even a small income."

- 40, MALE, COX'S BAZAR

COX'S BAZAR



ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN COX'S BAZAR AND BHASAN CHAR

/ PRIMARY CONCERNS

BHASAN CHAR

As with the Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, those on Bhasan Char Island expressed deep concerns about the planned reduction in food assistance by humanitarian agencies. One respondent noted that, even with the current 12.50 USD per person per month, many Rohingya people struggled to meet their basic needs; he said that the upcoming reduction in food assistance and other support would only add further hardships for refugees on Bhasan Char.

"We have been informed by an organization that, starting in April, food support will be reduced to 6 USD per person. People are extremely worried about this reduction because refugees are entirely dependent on this assistance. A cut of more than 50 per cent will severely impact many Rohingya households."

- 38, MALE, BHASAN CHAR

/ REFLECTIONS ON ...

... HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Respondents in Cox's Bazar also reported an urgent need for humanitarian assistance, particularly access to clean water and adequate toilet facilities for newly arrived Rohingya refugees. They expressed growing alarm over reports that humanitarian agencies were reducing food assistance due to funding shortages. Respondents further noted that the cash-for-work program had scaled back project activities, while WASH support and many learning centers had also been discontinued. As a result, they said, newly arrived Rohingya refugees were experiencing severe water shortages and outbreaks of skin diseases.

"As [an organization] is planning to reduce food support from 12.50 USD to 6 USD per person, people will face severe challenges to survive. Moreover, refugees are not allowed to work, leaving them unable to support themselves."

- 30, FEMALE, COX'S BAZAR

Similarly, a respondent on Bhasan Char expressed concern over the upcoming food assistance reduction in April. He noted that 90 per cent of refugees on the island had no regular income and relied entirely on humanitarian aid. He also highlighted that volunteer jobs had been reduced

and that, unlike in previous years, no additional support had been provided for Ramadan. Residents feared that food shortages would disproportionately affect children, potentially leading to widespread malnutrition.

"In the past, some organizations provided meals and food support during Ramadan, but this year, that assistance has also been cut. If food aid is further reduced, many children will suffer from malnutrition because we rely entirely on humanitarian assistance, and there are no alternative sources of income to meet household needs."

- 38, MALE, BHASAN CHAR

... ARMED AND GOVERNANCE ACTORS

On 9 March, Bangladesh police arrested three Rohingya actors including a key leader of the Arakan Rohingya Army (ARA) who was actively recruiting Rohingya youth to fight against the AA. Local media reported that on 17 March, ARSA killed an RSO member as he returned home from a grocery store in Camp-14, Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar. Respondents in Cox's Bazar expressed concerns over the attacks and fighting between Rohingya armed actors, particularly

ROHINGYA COMMUNITIES IN COX'S BAZAR AND BHASAN CHAR

/ REFLECTIONS ON ...

between ARSA and RSO. They reported that on 4 March, a camp leader was killed by an unidentified Rohingya group after returning from a mosque. One respondent reported that on the same day, SAC ally Dil Mohammed, a leader of the Arakan National Defence Force (ANDF), gathered religious and community leaders in the camp and formed the Rohingya Community for Peace and Repatriation (RCPR). According to the respondent, the group was established to ensure that Rohingya people are repatriated with rights and dignity.

"Unknown armed groups are active in the camp these days. Because of them, we can't move freely. We fled Rakhine State to escape persecution by the AA, but now we are facing similar threats from various Rohingya armed groups. A Rohingya camp leader from Camp 20, Block 32, was killed after returning from the mosque. He was attacked with a machete and died from severe injuries. I heard he was a good person. Some say the perpetrators could be members of either RSO or ARSA."

- 35, FEMALE, COX'S BAZAR

Respondents in Bangladesh welcomed the arrest of ARSA leaders, including the group's leader, Ataullah Abu Ammar Jununi, by the RAB. Respondents said that some ARSA supporters and members

urged Bangladesh authorities to release arrestees and also organized and gathered to pray for the early release of its leaders in Bangladesh. However, respondents in Bangladesh urged Bangladesh authorities to take serious action against ARSA leaders responsible for crimes on both sides of the border.

"We welcomed the authorities' action in arresting the ARSA leaders. ARSA leaders have committed many crimes against the Rohingya and killed so many innocent people in both Rakhine State and also in Cox's Bazar. Bangladesh should take strong action against these criminals."

- 38, MALE, BHASAN CHAR

... INTERCOMMUNAL RELATIONS

Respondents on Bhasan Char reported that they maintained regular communication with local businessmen and that there was no tension between the host community and refugees in March. However, respondents in Cox's Bazar expressed concerns about attacks, abductions, and kidnappings carried out by host community members or Bangladeshi criminal gangs. Respondents said that, due to the reduction in humanitarian assistance, many Rohingya people planned

to go outside of the camps illegally to seek work in fishing, agriculture, and construction. However, they said, they feared that cases of extortion, attacks, and kidnappings by local community members and criminal gangs could increase in the coming months. Respondents also claimed that Bangladeshi security forces do not take action against these criminal groups or local communities; instead, they said, when Rohingya people report those incidents, the police blame the victims for leaving the camps illegally. Additionally, some newly arrived refugees reportedly experienced discrimination from the host community, as their lifestyle and clothing differ from both the existing Rohingya refugees and the local population.

"Since food rations are insufficient, people try to leave the camp to find work. But they face serious risks, including kidnapping, beatings, and extortion by the host community. We are worried that these crimes will only increase. Even when we report incidents to the authorities, they always blame the Rohingya instead of taking action. They ignore crimes committed by the host community. The locals also discriminate against us — because our lifestyle and dress differ from existing refugees or hosts, they call us 'Rakhine people'."

- 40, FEMALE, COX'S BAZAR.

ROHINGYA VOICES

ATMOSPHERIC REPORT

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Contact: analyst.myanmar2020@gmail.com