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## **Situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar: update**

**Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights\***

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\* The information contained in the present document should be read in conjunction with the official report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/60/20), submitted to the Human Rights Council at its sixtieth session, pursuant to Council resolutions 53/26 and 56/1.

## **I. Introduction**

1. Following decades of systematic discrimination and persecution, with citizenship denied and most members of the community rendered stateless, the suffering of the Rohingya further intensified with the resumption of hostilities in Rakhine State in November 2023. Nearly all civilians, including ethnic Rakhine communities, have also suffered as a result of the intensification of conflict, particularly due to the military's repeated use of aerial bombardment against residential areas and their denial of humanitarian access. The Arakan Army has also limited humanitarian activities and employed tactics that have impacted civilians in several instances – with some attacks targeting Rohingya communities. As a result, since November 2023, over a quarter of the Rohingya still residing in Myanmar after the 2017 crisis have departed Myanmar seeking safety.

2. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has systematically monitored the situation of human rights in Rakhine State, particularly focused on the situation of minority communities including the Rohingya over many years – and particularly since the crises of 2012 and 2016/2017 crises and after the 2021 coup. Since the coup, OHCHR has published 15 reports and delivered 19 oral updates on the evolving situation to the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council. OHCHR's most recent report was presented on 8 September 2025 by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the 60th session of the Human Rights Council, covering the period between April 2024 and May 2025.<sup>1</sup> This paper supplements that report, with a focus on current conflict dynamics, their impact on civilians, and the situation of Rohingya in Rakhine State ahead of the forthcoming High-level Conference on the Rohingya in New York on 30 September 2025.

3. In the past year, OHCHR has held 20 consultations involving Rakhine communities, including the Rohingya, discussing pathways to attain their aspirations for effective human rights protection, accountability, good governance and a democratic, civilian-led government. OHCHR also supported consultations held by the UN Bangladesh with Rohingya refugees in the camps in Cox's Bazar. The findings from those consultations are incorporated in this paper, in addition to findings from 28 witness and victim interviews conducted between June and August 2025. All findings presented here are based on OHCHR monitoring activities, interviews, consultations conducted both remotely and from three visits to Cox's Bazar in 2024 and 2025, as well as analysis of credible open sources, including reports by United Nations entities.

## **II. Current conflict dynamics and impact on civilians in Rakhine**

4. Armed conflict between the military and the Arakan Army continued to intensify in multiple townships of Rakhine, with paramount concerns for protection of civilians from all communities, including the Rohingya. According to open sources, at least 2,351 conflict-related incidents have been reported, including 554 airstrikes conducted by the military and 330 artillery barrages – both by the military and the Arakan Army – between November 2023 and August 2025. Credible sources verified 610 civilian deaths, which certainly represents an underestimation of the reality on the ground. While the Arakan Army has made significant territorial gains with control over 14 of 17 Rakhine townships – except for Sittwe, Kyaukphyu, and Manaung – airstrikes, drone attacks, and land and naval artillery barrages by the military persist, posing constant threats to civilian lives across the state. For example, on 25 August 2025, airstrikes carried out by the military in Mrauk-U township reportedly killed at least 12 civilians and injured 20 others. On 12 September 2025, airstrikes hit two boarding schools in Kyauktaw Township reportedly killing 20 students and injured 22 others. Most of those killed and injured were below the age of 18. Hostilities continue to intensify in Kyaukphyu and in border areas with neighbouring Magway, Ayeyarwady, and Bago regions. Fighting between the Arakan Army and Rohingya armed groups near Bangladesh

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<sup>1</sup> 'Situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar', Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, A/HRC/60/20, 29 August 2025.

also continued, exposing the Rohingya to serious protection risks in northern Rakhine and further fuelling intercommunal tension. On 31 July 2025, the military imposed martial law on all 14 Rakhine townships controlled by the Arakan Army, heightening safety concerns amid fear of intensified military air and ground attacks.

5. Escalating hostilities, military-imposed and prolonged blockades continued to impose movement restrictions and severely limit access to humanitarian aid and essential goods, affecting people from all communities. Drastic funding cuts from donors have further deepened the humanitarian crisis in Rakhine. While the famine warnings for earlier this year have not yet materialized, in July 2025, the World Food Programme stated that 57% of households in central Rakhine are unable to meet their basic food needs, with a dramatic rise in hunger and malnutrition across the state.<sup>2</sup>

### III. Situation of the Rohingya in Rakhine

6. As highlighted in the High Commissioner's latest report,<sup>3</sup> the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army committed violations and abuses with impunity against the Rohingya in the context of hostilities in Rakhine throughout 2024 with both sides killing, arresting, and forcibly recruiting Rohingya, and causing widespread destruction and displacement. In the case of the Arakan Army, the destruction of property included burning of Rohingya homes. As the Arakan Army took control of northern Rakhine, they became the main perpetrator of human rights abuses against the Rohingya, with some incidents involving large scale killings in Hoya Siri on 2 May 2024 and on the Naf riverbank on 5 August 2024 attributed by the Rohingya community to the Arakan Army. Like the military, the group also carried out discriminatory policies and practices against the Rohingya, including, for example, by denying the Rohingya's identity by referring to them as "Bengalis".

7. Since December last year, the Arakan Army has been the *de facto* authority in all townships under its control, including Buthidaung and Maungdaw in northern Rakhine where the majority of the country's remaining Rohingya population reside. Some areas of central Rakhine, including the state capital Sittwe and nearby Kyaukphyu township, where 140,000 live in IDP camps remain under military control. Ongoing violations and abuses by both parties in areas under their control and protection risks are described in the sections below.

#### A. Violence, insecurity and killings

8. While in 2025 there have not been reports of large-scale violence and killings of Rohingya civilians at the scale documented in 2024, security conditions remained fragile. It is notable that violations that occurred in Rakhine throughout 2024 were reminiscent of violations the Rohingya endured in 2017. Similarly, the civilian population in 2025, including the Rohingya, have been regularly exposed to concrete and life-threatening protection risks due to fighting and persistent airstrikes and artillery bombardments carried out by the military from both land and sea, particularly in central Rakhine. In northern Rakhine, escalated military flyovers and intensified military operations by the Arakan Army against Rohingya armed groups including through village and house raids continue to heighten the safety and security concerns for Rohingya.

9. Due to insecurity, communication challenges, and fear of retaliation by the Arakan Army, in northern Rakhine, security incidents have been under-reported, potentially significantly. However, those arriving in Bangladesh continued to share accounts of extrajudicial killings of Rohingya civilians by the Arakan Army in 2025, where no military or Rohingya armed groups were present. OHCHR has documented two incidents involving the killings of two Rohingya men in Buthidaung in 2025. In separate cases, two men were

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<sup>2</sup> 'WFP urges life-saving support for Myanmar's Rakhine State as hunger surges', World Food Programme, 12 August 2025.

<sup>3</sup> <https://bangkok.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/2025-09/A%20HRC%2060%2020%20AdvanceEditedVersion.pdf>

shot dead in broad daylight by Arakan Army fighters in February. There are grave protection concerns for Rohingya living near Htan Shauk Khan (also known as Hoya Churi) in Buthidaung where the Arakan Army is alleged to have killed hundreds of Rohingya civilians, including women and children, on 2 May 2024.<sup>4</sup> In denying the allegations, it has been reported that the Arakan Army has sought to silence the community or to persuade them to attribute the responsibility for this atrocity to the military. Due to multiple protection concerns, Rohingya particularly from Buthidaung continued to leave for Bangladesh and other destinations, including by taking dangerous maritime journeys. UN figures indicated that in the first five months of 2025, at least 457 of the 3,329 (roughly 1 in 7) (roughly 1 in 7) Rohingya who have fled Myanmar for Southeast Asia died at sea, making this year's initial five months nearly seven times deadlier than the same period in 2024 that recorded 69 deaths at sea.

## **B. Arbitrary detention, torture, and disappearances**

10. Arbitrary deprivations of liberty by both the military and the Arkan Army have been widespread. According to available data, at least over 5,000 civilians from all communities in Rakhine, including the Rohingya, have been detained since November 2023.<sup>5</sup> In June and July alone, the military was reported to have arrested over 200 civilians across central Rakhine for alleged fishing, irregular movement, violating curfews, and seeking to leave the state. Rohingya youths from Sittwe camps and villages continued to be detained, subjected to extortion, forced labour, forced recruitment, and ill-treatment. Rohingya refusing recruitment have also been arrested. Village leaders continue to be ill-treated and detained when they fail to “provide” youths for recruitment purposes.

11. In northern Rakhine, arbitrary detention of Rohingya by the Arakan Army was widespread throughout 2024. Former detainees have described torture, ill-treatment, and inhuman and degrading conditions in Arakan Army-run detention facilities, while families of many of those detained have no knowledge about their whereabouts until their release. Numerous cases of arrests by the Arakan Army in 2024 and 2025 raised concerns of enforced disappearances. OHCHR has also received credible reports of Rohingya deaths in Arakan Army detention facilities, where torture and other forms of ill-treatment are reported to be routinely practised. Documented incidents show that children as young as 14 have been among those arrested and disappeared. Arrests continue to be carried out in 2025 on allegations of supporting the military or the Rohingya armed groups, for possessing telephones, traveling without authorization from the Arakan Army, attempting to return to places of origin to pick up food or other materials from their homes, resisting forced recruitment, or simply because those targeted are perceived as educated. Arrests have been often carried out at night, and in many instances, those arrested are blindfolded and bound before being taken to unknown locations.

12. Arakan Army units have also arrested and detained families after they returned from Bangladesh to Maungdaw. Some families were sent back to Bangladesh after the Arakan Army extorted money from them in exchange for their release from detention. Other arrested families, unable to pay, remained in detention. In July, the Arakan Army reportedly issued a warning that any Rohingya returning from Bangladesh must seek approval before returning to their places of origin or face imprisonment. Such pronouncements have deterred spontaneous returns and have prompted many returnees to flee back to Bangladesh, fearing arrest and detention. Rohingya elders have also been threatened with arrest by the Arakan Army in the central townships of Kyauktaw, Minbya, Myebon, Pauktaw, and surrounding areas if they are found to be supporting Rohingya armed groups. Fear of arrest and detention continue to be one of the key drivers for Rohingya families fleeing Rakhine.

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<sup>4</sup> ‘Arakan Army Denies Rohingya Massacre’, *The Irrawaddy*, 12 August 2025. The incident is outlined in the High Commissioner’s September report. See para. 39.

<sup>5</sup> UNHCR Protection updates June and July.

### C. Forced recruitment and labour

13. Widespread forced recruitment by both the military and the Arakan Army remained a serious protection concern among the Rohingya community, driving them to flee Rakhine. Throughout the ground offensives in 2024, the military relied heavily on Rohingya forced recruits. Scores, possibly hundreds, of those men and boys recruited by the military remain unaccounted for, with many feared killed on the battlefield. Since the military announced the initiation of a conscription process in February 2024, over 5,000 Rohingya are reported to have been conscripted in the period up to June 2025,<sup>6</sup> with this practice continuing into July 2025 in Sittwe IDP camps and villages and Kyaukphyu, prompting many to flee Rakhine. Information received indicated that only those who could pay military and camp leaders could avoid recruitment. Rohingya men who resisted recruitment risk being arrested, beaten, threatened, extorted, and detained. Conscripted Rohingya continued to be deployed at military bases and checkpoints with the military extorting money from Rohingya families in Sittwe camps to support families of the recruits, exacerbating their already dire financial conditions. Credible reports indicated that many forcibly recruited Rohingya men from Sittwe camps in June and July were sent to fight the Arakan Army in the ongoing battles in Kyaukphyu, and families have lost contact with them, with their whereabouts unknown. Hundreds of Rohingya youths have fled camps and villages to avoid conscription.

14. Forced recruitment by the Arakan Army of Rohingya continued in areas under its control. Following the Arakan Army's announcement of its National Defence Emergency Provision in March this year, conscription and forced recruitment targeting civilians from all communities including the Rohingya increased, with many youths fleeing Rakhine for Yangon and neighbouring areas.<sup>7</sup> New arrivals in Bangladesh from northern Rakhine reported forced recruitment by the Arakan Army taking place across Buthidaung and Maungdaw with families being forced to send boys as young as 15 and 16 years old to fight for them if they wish to remain in the country. Those who resisted recruitment risked being arrested or subject to violence and in some instances killed and their houses burned.<sup>8</sup> Many families have left and continue to leave for Bangladesh, Yangon, and other destinations to avoid their sons and daughters being forcibly taken into the Arakan Army. Conditions across Rakhine indicate that Rohingya youth risked being recruited or arrested by either party if they returned.

15. Widespread use forced labour of Rohingya by the Arakan Army is a major concern in northern Rakhine. Force labour is used for multiple purposes which include, among others, cleaning, sentry duties, clearing jungles and constructing roads. The forced labour of Rohingya is being used to destroy Rohingya homes and to build homes and other buildings for the Arakan Army and the Rakhine community. In Rohingya Daung village, east of Buthidaung town, forced labour imposed on Rohingya has been reportedly used to erect a fence to prevent Rohingya from leaving one area and entering another. Some Rohingya arriving in Bangladesh endured forced labour up to 15 times. Those who could pay were permitted to send someone in their place. Rohingya detainees and prisoners including those arrested after returning from Bangladesh were also routinely subjected to forced labour, in some instances while chained together by the legs and the necks.

### D. Forced displacement and returns

16. More than half of the Rohingya population estimated to be living in Rakhine in November 2023 are currently living as displaced people on either side of the border. Figures for recent displacement in northern Rakhine are likely the clearest evidence as to the non-existence of conditions on the ground for safe, sustainable, dignified and voluntary returns to

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<sup>6</sup> 'Starving to death: the latest phase of the Rohingya genocide', Burmese Rohingya Organization UK, June 2025.

<sup>7</sup> 'Arakan Army Publishes Military Service Provision Across Controlled Territories, Framing It as National Duty', *Border News Agency*, 22 May 2025.

<sup>8</sup> 'Myanmar: Arakan Army Oppresses Rohingya Muslims', *Human Rights Watch*, 28 July 2025.

Rakhine State. According to UNHCR, 150,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh in the 18 months up to July 2025. A further 88,100 Rohingya in northern Rakhine have been displaced by hostilities since November 2023 with a further 140,000 Rohingya living in displacement in central Rakhine. Large-scale destruction of homes, towns, and villages, and mass displacement took place in 2024, in many cases after the advancing Arakan Army drove out the Rohingya population. Rohingya who returned to their villages months after being displaced in 2024 found their homes and mosques destroyed and building materials taken away. While many have fled to Bangladesh, most of the displaced Rohingya in Maungdaw appeared to have been able to return to their places of origin. Returns have also occurred to both Maungdaw and Buthidaung towns, but those displaced from rural areas of Buthidaung township overwhelmingly reported not being permitted to return to their places of origin. Those who have returned continue to face challenges in rebuilding their homes, with some returning Rohingya forced to live in makeshift bamboo and tarpaulin shelters, forbidden from building anything sturdier, in some cases on their own plots of land. Repeated displacement of Rohingya by the Arakan Army during military operations against Rohingya armed groups persisted, remaining another major driver of cross-border movement to Bangladesh via dangerous routes through mountains and the Naf River, driven by socio-economic hardship and persecution by the Arakan Army.

## **E. Occupation of property**

17. Widespread destruction of Rohingya property has repeatedly resulted from hostilities launched by the Myanmar military in 2017, 2019-2020 and from late 2023 to the present, and the widespread burning and use of Rohingya homes by the Arakan Army, the question of where returning Rohingya would be able to live necessarily arises. Concerningly, the Arakan Army is regulating the use and sale of land and houses owned by Rohingya who have fled northern Rakhine. Rohingya in central townships, including Kyauktaw, have reportedly been told they cannot sell and buy land and homes without the approval of Arakan Army village administrators. In Buthidaung, only Rohingya who remained were allowed to lease or sell their property, with the Arakan Army having taken control of property belonging to those who have left the township. In Maungdaw, the Arakan Army has confiscated several homes belonging to Rohingya who have fled, with several confiscated in July alone. In some areas in Buthidaung, Rohingya stated that members of the ethnic Rakhine community were now living in formerly Rohingya areas. As outlined above, forced labour of Rohingya has been used to destroy Rohingya homes and villages and to build homes for ethnic Rakhine people, some of whom have been brought into these areas. These developments have raised serious concerns among the Rohingya community, who viewed them as proof of an Arakan Army strategy to alter permanently the demographics of northern Rakhine. Some arriving in Bangladesh stated that the Arakan Army had outlined plans to house the Rohingya community in long-term IDP camps, similar to the camps in central Rakhine which have existed since 2012.

## **F. Restriction of movement and communications**

18. Long-standing movement restrictions imposed by the military continued to severely limit humanitarian organizations' movement in central Rakhine, preventing people from all communities including the Rohingya from accessing urgently needed life-saving aid and essential services. Communication blackouts also continued to significantly hamper the flow of critical information on the needs of the affected population. Rohingya continued to face increased risks of arrest and forced recruitment during movement, especially while seeking livelihood opportunities outside camps. Credible sources reported that in June 2025 alone, over 50 Rohingya from camps were arrested by the military for movement restriction and curfew violations, with several sentenced to fines and a month-long imprisonment.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> UNHCR July Protection update.

19. Current living conditions for the Rohingya in northern Rakhine are largely unreported due to a longstanding communications blackout, fear of arrest, and surveillance of communications by the Arakan Army. In these areas, the Arakan Army has continued the military's long-established regime of severe and discriminatory restrictions, solely targeting the Rohingya community. Draconian restrictions, including curfews, continued to have a wide-ranging effect on all aspects of daily life, severely limiting access to livelihood activities, preventing farming, fishing and the gathering of food from forests. Members of the community were also prevented from attending mosques for nighttime prayers. Rohingya are required to seek authorization and pay money to undertake journeys beyond their village including for medical purposes. In July, the Arakan Army closed the border to Rohingya traveling to Bangladesh for medical treatment, a longstanding practice for a community denied regular access to treatment for many years. New arrivals in Bangladesh included people with chronic but treatable conditions, such as hypertension and diabetes, who had no access to the medicine they need. Despite the risk of arrest and refolement, Rohingya continue to flee to Bangladesh today, stating that there was no future for them in northern Rakhine. Those who leave stated consistently that they had to pay the Arakan Army for permission to do so.

## **G. Access to basic needs and essential services**

20. Food scarcity across Rakhine has reached emergency levels, with deaths, disease, and malnutrition reported throughout the state. In northern Rakhine, the situation is acute with most Rohingya surviving on a single meal a day. Internally displaced persons in those areas have been living in makeshift shelters or the homes of other Rohingya families, unable to access food, water and sanitation. In the Arakan Army run Hla Poe Kaung IDP camp in Maungdaw, ten children are reported to have died in 2025 from diarrhoea.<sup>10</sup> Acute food shortages, caused by months of conflict, have been exacerbated by Arakan Army taxes and restrictions on access to land and livelihoods. In central Rakhine, where as many as 70% of Rohingya IDPs in certain camps may be at risk of starvation,<sup>11</sup> there are credible reports of survival strategies including women resorting to sex work to earn money to buy food. Reports of suicides and attempted suicides due to hunger were also received. In these desperate humanitarian conditions, disease is rampant, with cases of acute watery diarrhoea, scabies, hepatitis, malaria, and dengue fever reported. Amidst a global funding crisis that has seen financial support for assistance plummet, the humanitarian crisis in Rakhine is likely only to get worse.

## **IV. Conclusion**

21. In consultation with OHCHR, members of different communities in Rakhine, including Rohingya, have outlined their aspirations for a future Myanmar. Representatives of various communities expressed their desire for a federal democratic Myanmar grounded in human rights, equality, rule of law, and justice. Given the ethnic diversity of Rakhine, they call for an inclusive, participatory, and accountable democratic governance system that ensures individual and collective rights, protection, and equal opportunity for all, including women and youths and their genuine representation at all levels without any form of discrimination based on ethnic, religious, and other grounds. They wish to see a governance system where ethnic and religious minority groups, including minorities within the minorities in Rakhine, can enjoy equal rights, dignity, freedom, and coexist in peace and harmony. They also stress the need to address the impunity that enables perpetrators to commit serious violations and abuses, and call for accountability and justice for the past and ongoing violations by all parties to the conflict through transitional justice processes and mechanisms.

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<sup>10</sup> 'Starving to death: the latest phase of the Rohingya genocide', Burmese Rohingya Organization UK, June 2025, p. 20.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

22. The Rohingya stress that the same root causes of the violence suffered in 2017, remain unresolved. In the words of one member of the community, *“foremost among these is the restoration of our full-fledged citizenship in Myanmar with Rohingya recognized as one of the indigenous communities of the country with rights fully ensured, respected, and protected”*. The community demands to be equal citizens and to have their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights respected, so they can thrive in Myanmar together with and alongside other communities.

23. In order for these aspirations to be fulfilled, the community has demanded repeatedly their voices be included, and their views valued, including in the conferences in New York in September and in Doha in December. As one Rohingya interlocutor stated, what the community longs for is *“to be acknowledged not as part of Myanmar’s problems, but as part of the solution”*. Without addressing the root causes of the Rohingya crisis, which include ensuring their rights to security, citizenship, and equality, the cycle of violence against the Rohingya, their statelessness, and systemic exclusion will continue.

24. Today’s reality is a result of escalating hostilities, ongoing systematic violence, discrimination, persecution, insecurity, and desperation, with hundreds of Rohingya reported killed since the conflict resumed. Rohingya from across Rakhine continue to flee Myanmar. There is an urgent need to protect community members who remain in Rakhine where violations and abuses continue against them, committed by both the military and the Arakan Army with total impunity, and to hold perpetrators accountable including by supporting the ongoing international justice processes, notably before the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. Additionally, amid drastic cuts in humanitarian funding, the international community must act to ensure support for the Rohingya by increasing funding to secure access to needs and essential services, while redoubling their efforts to ensure unhindered humanitarian access for delivery of urgently needed life-saving aid and assistance.

25. The Rohingya community have repeatedly outlined their desire to return home to Myanmar, with their safety guaranteed and their rights respected and fulfilled. As outlined in this paper, the conditions for safe, dignified, sustainable, and voluntary returns of Rohingya refugees do not currently exist in Rakhine State. The conference in New York is an opportunity to make meaningful progress to achieve conditions that will allow Rohingya to return and for their rights to be respected and upheld by both the military and the Arakan Army. This must be complemented by additional and comprehensive solutions including local integration, provision of legal status and temporary protection, and more generous resettlement options for Rohingya in other countries. The latest reports of the High Commissioner<sup>12</sup> offer recommendations in this regard.

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<sup>12</sup> Situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar’, Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, A/HRC/60/20, 29 August 2025; Situation of human rights in Myanmar - Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, A/HRC/59/57, 26 May 2025.