

Joint Statement by 195 revolutionary forces and civil society organizations on the situation in Northern Rakhine

May 22, 2024

Calling on organizations and individuals in Rakhine and across the country to immediately stop exploiting the lives, property and image of the oppressed Rohingya for political and military use

The terrorist military junta has consistently oppressed and committed torture, killings, genocide, and crimes against humanity against the Rohingya. Currently, with forced conscription orders, the military junta is forcibly using Rohingya as human shields and soldiers to perpetrate violence on its behalf.¹

In a significant incident, almost 100 Rohingya, who were forcibly abducted and taken into the fighting by the military during the battle with the Arakan Army (AA), were massacred in Angumaw, Rathedaung Township, Rakhine region, in March of this year.²

In addition, the military junta is currently forcing Rohingya from the IDP camps in Buthidaung and Sittwe to protest the AA and is inciting a public misperception of Rohingya to cause further ethnic conflict.

In April of this year, the terrorist military junta used Rohingya who had been forcibly recruited under its conscription orders to burn down more than 200 homes of ethnic Rakhine people in Buthidaung Town, Rakhine region, to intentionally create an ethnic conflict between the Rakhine and Rohingya communities.

In addition to the fact that the military junta is working to create such ethnic conflict, the revolutionary forces and the public need to be especially prudent, aware, and understanding that the Rohingya people—who do not have a choice and face unparalleled hardships, having been locked down for many years—are being forced into patterns that the terrorist military junta wants to portray.

¹ <https://bur.mizzima.com/2024/02/23/16037>

² <https://www.rfa.org/burmese/news/rohingya-dead-idp-03132024124435.html>

In this situation, it has been observed that organizations, media, and individuals are repeatedly using hate speech such as "Bengali terrorists" and "Muslim terrorists" to describe the Rohingya, as well as portraying all Rohingya as collaborating with the military junta. Such situations of indiscriminate accusations against an entire ethnic group and the religion they believe in are fomenting ethnic and religious conflict and increasing hatred among the public.

As in other ethnic groups, it is important to note that, among Rohingya, there also are some who are collaborating with the terrorist Myanmar military junta for their own self-interest, but at the same time, there are many Rohingyas who oppose the military dictatorship.

All of us need to understand and clearly distinguish that Rohingya armed groups, such as the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), Arakan Rohingya Army (ARA) and Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO)—which are collaborating with the terrorist military junta—do not represent all Rohingyas.

We absolutely condemn and oppose any ethnic armed groups, including Rohingya armed groups, that are collaborating with the terrorist military junta and abusing the public.

We are well aware that there are armed groups like ARSA in other ethnic communities who collaborate with the terrorist military junta and falsely claim to represent these communities. Since December 7, 2021, Rohingya communities and organizations have issued a public statement declaring that ARSA does not represent the Rohingya in any way.³

We urge the Arakan Army (AA) to take responsibility to be accountable to local communities for ensuring social harmony. It is also necessary to comply with the Geneva Conventions and International Humanitarian Law (IHL) not to wage battles in civilian areas and not to forcibly relocate villagers from the Rohingya villages.

³ <https://www.rohingyatoday.com/en/joint-statement-rohingya-denounces-arsa>

Since the protection of civilians is a military code of conduct (a norm of customary IHL) that must be particularly adhered to during wartime, we specifically call on the Arakan Army (AA) to protect all civilians, whether they are ethnically Rakhine, ethnically Rohingya, or from other ethnic and religious groups living in region and allow access to independent international news media and humanitarian aid.

On the other hand, although the AA has announced that they will not engage in extrajudicial killings or arrest ethnic Rohingya people, there are cases on the ground that have been allegedly committed by soldiers under the command of the AA. According to published reports,⁴ there have been massacres of entire Rohingya villages;⁵ Rohingya who were arrested, taken, and killed in hidden places; and illegal abductions of Rohingya in Thankyaukkhe Village and Ywetnyotaung Village in Buthidaung, and Thayetoak Village in northern Maungdaw, in April and May.

According to eyewitnesses and media reports, the Arakan Army (AA) burned down and destroyed houses where Rohingya civilians lived in Buthidaung Town, on the night of May 17 at approximately 10 p.m., after the Arakan Army (AA) gained control of most of the town. This incident is a war crime and a crime against humanity.⁶

The undersigned revolutionary forces and civil society organizations specifically and seriously request the Arakan Army (AA) to carry out independent investigations of these matters and take action against perpetrators if there were violations.

The safety of all people in Rakhine is of grave concern during the intense fighting between the terrorist military junta and the Arakan Army (AA).

The oppressed and exploited Rohingya need protection, and it is crucial that another genocide is prevented. Along with political forces and civil society organizations of Myanmar, individuals in Myanmar are also responsible for civilian protection. It is vitally important to uphold the principles of human dignity and protection

⁴ <https://www.rfa.org/burmese/news/sac-aa-rohingya-04272024134102.html>

⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/uPvJHkVwnsDPiYJB/?mibextid=qi2Omg>

⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/burmese/articles/cyx65d257rvo>

for all. The Arakan Army (AA), responsible for the Rakhine region, has a special duty to protect all the people living in the Rakhine.

We strongly urge the Arakan Army (AA) leaders and the Rohingya leaders to engage in dialogue and hold consultations as soon as possible. We are raising these concerns constructively, and we will support and strengthen activities for the peaceful coexistence and long-term stability of various ethnicities and religions in the future Arakan. We pledge to continue supporting the revolution that aims for the liberation of all people living in every part of Arakan.

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Remark: 195 organizations endorsed in this joint statement; 59 organization's names are undisclosed because of security situation in Myanmar.

1. Action Committee for Democracy Development (ACDD)
2. Ah Nah podcast - Conversations with Myanmar
3. All Young Burmese League, Australia
4. Alliance for Democracy in Myanmar (ADM)
5. Alliance of Students' Unions – Yangon (ASU-Yangon)
6. Anti Dictatorship in Burma - DC Metropolitan Area.
7. Anti-Junta Mass Movement (AJMM)
8. Arakan Youth Peace Network
9. Athan – Freedom of Expression Activist Organization
10. ATN Ayarwaddy Youth Network
11. Aung San Su Kyi Park, Norway
12. Ayeyarwaddy West Development Organisation (AWDO), Magway
13. Ayeyarwaddy West Development Organisation (AWDO), Ngaphe
14. Bago Regional Support Team

15. Blood Money Campaign (BMC)
16. Burma Civil War Museum
17. Burma Human Rights Network (BHRN)
18. Burma Support
19. Burmese Women's Union (BWU)
20. CAN-Myanmar
21. Chin Community in Norway
22. CRPH & NUG supporters Ireland
23. CRPH Funding Ireland
24. CRPH Support Group, Norway
25. CRPH, NUG Support Team Germany-Deutschland
26. Defend Myanmar Democracy (DMD)
27. Democracy Peace and Women Organization
28. Democratic Movement Strike Committee (Dawei)
29. Democratic Party for a New Society, Norway
30. Democratic Youth Council (DYC)
31. Doh Atu - Ensemble pour le Myanmar
32. Doh Ayay
33. Educational Initiatives
34. Equality Myanmar
35. Former ABSDF
36. Free Rohingya Coalition (FRC)
37. General Strike Committee (GSC)
38. General Strike Committee of Nationalities (GSCN)
39. Generation Wave
40. Global Myanmar Spring Revolution (GMSR - Japan)
41. Global Myanmar Spring Revolution (GMSR)
42. Historical Carriers Group
43. Human Rights Foundation of Monland
44. Inlighten Peninsula Tenasserim - IPT
45. International Society of Myanmar Scholars and Professionals
46. Justice for Myanmar
47. Kachin Association Norway
48. Karen Women's Organization
49. Karenni Association - Norway
50. K'cho Ethnic Association

51. Keng Tung Youth
52. Knowledge Hub Myanmar
53. Kyae Lak Myay
54. Kyauktada Strike Committee
55. LASHIO UIC
56. Legal Aid For Human Rights
57. MAGGA Initiative
58. MATA စစ်ကိုင်းတိုင်း
59. Matu Burma Foundation
60. MilkTeaAlliance Calendar Team
61. Min Hla farmers Group
62. Minbu farmers Group
63. Minority Affairs Institute (MAI Myanmar)
64. Mon Association - Norway
65. Mother's Embrace Foundation
66. Muslim of Myanmar Multi-Ethnic Consultative Committee (MMMCC)
67. Myanmar Baptist Churches in Norway
68. Myanmar Catholic Community In Norway
69. Myanmar Community Austria
70. Myanmar Community in Norway
71. Myanmar Cultural Research Society (MCRS)
72. Myanmar Freedom of Religion or Belief Network
73. Myanmar Hindu Community - Norway
74. Myanmar Muslim Organization - Norway
75. Myanmar Muslim Revolution Force
76. Myanmar Tourism Committee
77. Mya Yar Knowledge Tree
78. Network for Human Rights Documentation - Burma (ND-Burma)
79. New Power Generation
80. New Rehmonnya Federated Force -NRFF
81. New Step
82. NLD Organization Committee (International) Norway
83. Norway Falam Community
84. Norway Matu Community
85. Norway Rawang Community

86. Nyan Lynn Thit Analytica
87. Olive Organization
88. People Defense and Supporting Force
89. Politics for Women Myanmar
90. Progressive Voice
91. Pwintphyu Development Organisation
92. RAISA Rohingya Southeast Asia Network
93. Rathedaung Society for Peace and Development (RSPD)
94. Rohingya Action Ireland
95. Rohingya Community in Norway
96. Rohingya Student Network (RSN)
97. Rohingya Union for Women Education and Development (RUWED)
98. Save and Care Organization for Ethnic Women at Border Areas (SCOEWBA)
99. Save Myanmar San Francisco
100. Save Myanmar USA
101. Shan MATA
102. Sisters 2 Sisters
103. Sitt Nyein Pann Foundation
104. South Dagon`s Saturated Blood of Revolution Strike Force
105. Southern Dragon Myanmar
106. Southern Monitor
107. Southern Voice
108. Southern Youth Development Organization
109. Spring Revolution Myanmar Muslim Community (SRMMC)
110. Support Group for Democracy in Myanmar (Netherlands)
111. Ta'ang Legal Aid Foundation-TLAF
112. Ta'ang Women's Organization
113. Tamwe Nway Oo Channel
114. HTY Scout Channel
115. NOK Information & Scout Echo
116. Thaketa & Dawbon Scout Channel
117. Information & Scout News (Hlaing)
118. South Dagon Scouting Infos (SDG)
119. Kyimyindaing Scout Channel
120. Insein Scout Channel
121. North Dagon & East Dagon News

122. Youth Scout For Democracy (YSD)
123. Tanintharyi Nationalities Congress - TNC
124. Tenasserim Student's Union Network- TSUN
125. Thint Myat Lo Thu Myar Organization
126. Union of Karenni State Youth (UKSY)
127. White Coat Society Yangon
128. Women Advocacy Coalition Myanmar (WAC-M)
129. Yangon Medical Network
130. Yangon Public Relations (YPR)
131. Youth for democratization of Myanmar (UDM)
132. Z Fighter News
133. Zomi Christian Fellowship of Norway
134. Zomi Community Norway
135. အညာလွင်ပြင်ရပ်ဝန်း
136. Women's Peace Network (WPN)