

Rohingya

GENOCIDE DAY



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AUGUST 2025

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ARNA - 2025 - 01

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**ARNA
GENOCIDE RESPONSE AND ADVOCACY REPORT
2023–2025**



From the Editor

This year's Special Issue of Rohingya Genocide Remembrance reaffirms ARNA's commitment to defending the rights, dignity, and future of the Rohingya people. The alliance was founded to achieve the right of self-determination and the right of return within a federal democratic union of Myanmar—through unity, justice, and peaceful coexistence.

We open with “Peaceful Coexistence in Arakan,” which reminds us that Rohingya and Rakhine once built a shared, multicultural society together. That history points to the only viable path forward: equal rights, mutual respect, and an end to cycles of hatred.

“Echoes of Rohingya Genocide in Rakhine” and “Situation in Arakan Poses Threat to Regional Stability” document today's harsh realities: renewed massacres, forced displacement, and regional security risks as the Rohingya face violence from multiple sides.

In conclusion, we present the ARNA Activities (2023–2025), highlighting the ongoing advocacy, humanitarian outreach, and international engagement efforts that have continued despite ongoing challenges faced.

This issue is both testimony and a call to action. We urge the international community to protect civilians, ensure humanitarian access, hold perpetrators accountable, and uphold the principles of justice and coexistence. “Never again” must be more than a promise—it must be delivered in practice.

Ronnie @rohingya

Message from the Chair

To my Rohingya brothers and sisters, to the people of Myanmar—including the opposition and the National Unity Government—and to the international community,

The Rohingya people stand at a crossroads of history. We have survived genocide, mass displacement, and renewed waves of atrocity. Yet despite unbearable suffering, our spirit is unbroken, and our determination to live as equal citizens in our homeland remains steadfast.

To my fellow Rohingya: remain united, disciplined, and hopeful. Education, lawful conduct, and solidarity are our strength. No matter how long the journey, justice will come if we walk together with patience and resolve.

To the opposition leaders and the National Unity Government: the credibility of Myanmar's democratic movement depends on whether it embraces all its peoples, including the Rohingya. There can be no true federal democracy while any community remains excluded or stateless. Our struggles are interconnected—your freedom will not be complete without ours, and ours cannot be secured in isolation.

To our ethnic compatriots, especially the Rakhine, the Arakan Army's brutal campaign has inflicted grave wounds on our community and destroyed trust. Yet history shows that ordinary Rohingya and Rakhine once lived and prospered together. Peace in Arakan requires rejecting violence and rebuilding coexistence, not perpetuating hatred.

And to the international community: the promise of "never again" must be honored in practice. Condemnation without action leaves the persecuted to their fate. We call on you to ensure protection for civilians, humanitarian access for those trapped in violence, accountability for perpetrators, and meaningful support for refugees. Silence and delay will only embolden those who commit crimes with impunity.

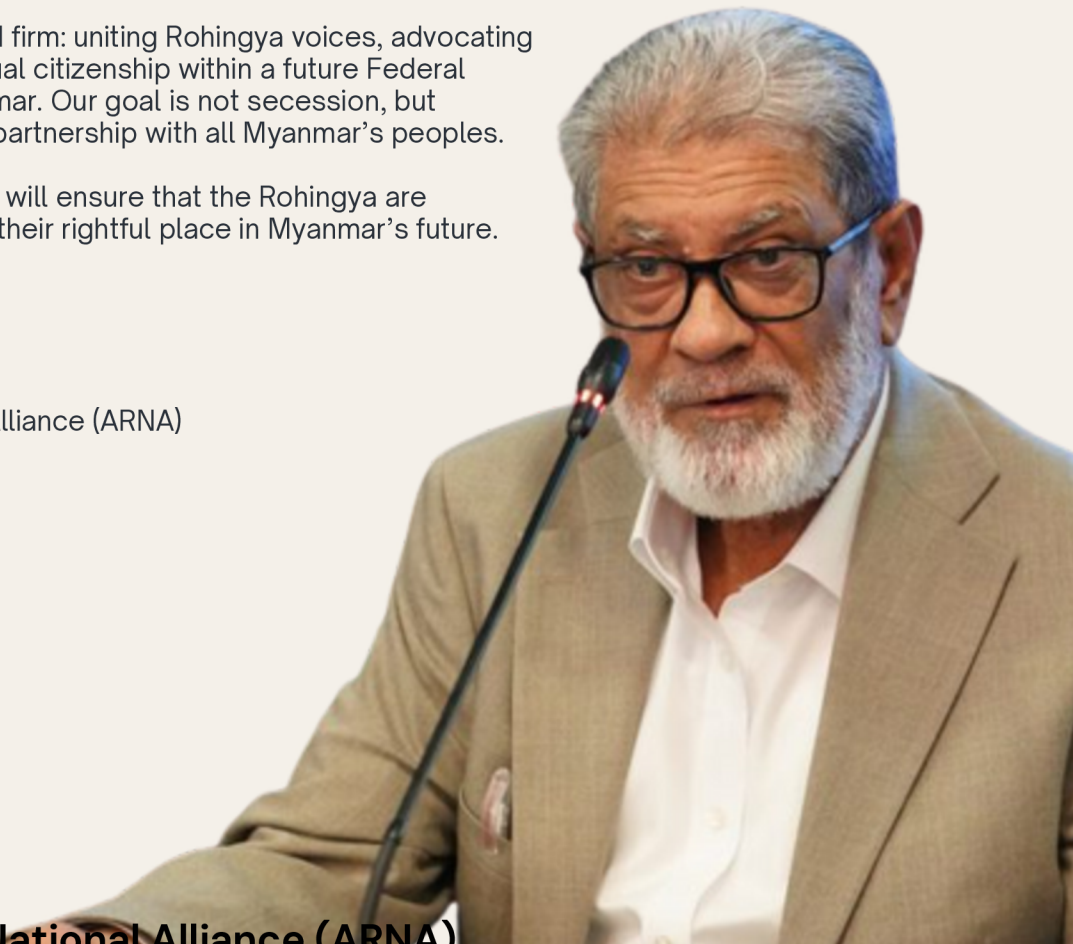
ARNA will continue to stand firm: uniting Rohingya voices, advocating for justice, and seeking equal citizenship within a future Federal Democratic Union of Myanmar. Our goal is not secession, but peaceful coexistence and partnership with all Myanmar's peoples.

With courage and unity, we will ensure that the Rohingya are not erased but restored to their rightful place in Myanmar's future.

With determination,

Nurul Islam
Chairman
Arakan Rohingya National Alliance (ARNA)

25 August 2025



PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE IN ARAKAN

BY NURUL ISLAM

CHAIRMAN, ARAKAN ROHINGYA NATIONAL ALLIANCE

Peaceful coexistence is a principle that obligates different states, peoples or ethnic groups to maintain peace and security and to develop mutually beneficial cooperation between them. It is very important in international relations as well as relations within a multiracial, multi-religious and multilingual country and Myanmar is no exception, being one of the most ethnically diverse nations in the world, with ethnic minorities making at least one-third of the Myanmar's 55 million population and inhabiting nearly half of the land area.

The Union of Burma/Myanmar was born on January 4, 1948 out of the combined efforts of all nationalities and ethnic groups of the country. They therefore collectively own it. The people of Burma have accepted 'unity in diversity' as the cardinal principle for peace, progress and stability of the Union. It means that the diverse people of the country have agreed to peacefully coexist which requires them to practice tolerance, mutual respect and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours and compatriots.

In the early history, Arakan was an independent kingdom ruled by Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims. It is multicultural society with a population of diverse ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious entities. The Rohingya have always been to all intents and purposes an integral part of Arakan. They are predominantly Muslim community and are the second largest ethnic group in Arakan while Buddhist Rakhine are in majority. In addition, Kaman, Chin, Khami, That, Daignet (Chakma), Maramagyi, Hindu and others also inhabit Arakan. According to the court poet Shah Alwal, "the Muslim population of Arakan consisted roughly of four categories, namely the Bengalee, other Indian, Afro-Asian and native... The Arakanese Muslims introduce themselves to others as Rohingyas." [1]

Being a thriving trading centre people from many parts of the world visited Arakan. Among them were nobles, traders, missionaries or preachers, warriors, administrators or statemen, poets and also captives (from Bengal) by Portuguese and Rakhine pirates. They also included people of ruling class invited by the Arakan kings who were mostly Muslims. There were people of high social rank among the captives and the celebrated Arakan court poet Shah Alwal, who was also commander of the cavalry, was one of those captives.

Historically Arakan had more interactions with Bengal than Burma maintaining close relations in the fields of culture, religion, education, trade and politics. The centuries-old relation between Arakan and Chittagong is influenced by geographical, ethnological, cultural and historical considerations. For a long time, the two territories had embraced each other under the same rule and influence. History testifies that the heyday of Arakan began with the influence and spread of Muslim civilisation in Arakan. The Burmese were envious of Arakan, particularly the period of their greatest strength and prosperity under the Muslim rule and influence.

The Rohingya Muslims and Rakhine Buddhists had a long period of peaceful coexistence. Together they developed Arakan and defended its territorial integrity from external aggressions or invasions. Arakanese kings nurtured sincere admiration towards the Muslim communities. They entrusted the chief administrative posts of government departments, including that of the defence, to the Muslims. Burhanuddin, Ashraf Khan, Sri Bara Thakur were distinguished Lashkar Wazirs (Defence or War Ministers); Megan Thakur, Syid Musa, Navaraj Majlis were efficient Prime Ministers, and Syid Muhammad Khan, Srimanta Sulaiman were capable ministers in Arakan. There were lots of other efficient Muslim ministers, high civil and military officers. They contributed to the growth of Islamic culture in Arakan.

From 1430 to 1645, for a period of more than two hundred years, the Buddhist Arakanese kings took Muslim titles and used Muslim names in their coins. They followed Muslim traditions and culture at home. Col. Bashin, the then Chairman of the Burma Historical Commission states, "Arakan was virtually ruled by Muslims from 1430 to 1531." [2]

In accordance with the Muslim tradition like Gaur and Delhi, the whole kingdom of Arakan was provided with the sets of officials by the imperial order. The head of officials was known as Qazi. Some of them were prominent in the history of Arakan. They are Daulat Qazi, Sala Qazi, Gawa Qazi, Shuza Qazi, Abdul Karim, Muhammad Hussain, Osman, Abdul Jabbar, Abdul Gafur, Mohammad Yousuf, Rawsan Ali and Nur Muhammad etc.[3] There was of course exchange of courtesies and cooperation in the fields of administration, economic and literary activities and common interest.

Muslim religious persons were admired and well respected. Speaking about a village named Bandar in Mrauk-U, Roshang [Arakan] Poet Abdul Karim Khondkar (17th-18th century) says, "There lived in the village qadis, muftis, ulama, religious faqirs and darwishes. Those high-ranking Muslims living there used to converse with the king on equal and friendly terms".[4] Buddhists and Muslims had accepted that 'diversity is strength, not weakness' and they harmoniously existed together in Arakan. How charming their social interaction may be assessed from the following information:

"Magan Takur was a learned Muslim minister in Arakan. Buddhist King Narapadigyi trusted and loved him so much that, at the hour of his death he left his only daughter under Magan's custody. When this prince became the principal queen of the Tado Mintar, she entrusted the Roshang [Arakan] king's Chief Minister to Magan Thakur realising the guardianship she enjoyed in childhood." [5] It was a true "peaceful coexistence".

Unfortunately, these admirable relations between Rohingya and Rakhine began to deteriorate at the instigation of the third parties, during the long colonial rule. In addition, the Muslim Massacre of 1942 – in which about 100,000 Rohingyas were massacred, 50,000 of them were driven across the border to East Bengal and parts of Muslim settlements devastated – had caused rapid erosion in their relations. It was a 'divide and rule' stratagem machinated by Bo Ne Win (later Gen. Ne Win), who was then commander of the Burma Independence Army (BIA) in Bassein, in order to destroy the Rohingya Muslims from the soil of Arakan before Burma's independence. Rohingya leaders attempted in vain for reconciliation during and after independence. Rather, it turned out to be a state policy after independence in 1948, particularly from the seizure of power by Gen. Ne Win in 1962, continuing till today. It is a great misfortune ending the long "peaceful coexistence" between the Rohingya and the Rakhine, setting one people against the other while dividing them on ethnic and religious lines. For the military, xenophobic Rakhine or Burmese leaders, it is a device to rid Arakan of the Muslim population ultimately. Today under intolerant state policy almost all Rakhines are hostile to the Rohingya in line with the military or successive military dominated regimes. Despite boomerang for them Rakhine feel charm over the genocidal extermination of Rohingya without feeling remorse.

Recently Arakan Army becomes one of the powerful ethnic armed groups in Myanmar controlling almost all areas of Arakan. But contrary to our expectations, Arakan Army (AA) with its political wing United League of Arakan (ULA) is more violent to the Rohingya, committing widespread atrocity crimes against them, including murder, looting, rape, destruction of homes and properties, expulsion and removal from their hearth and home while resettling the Buddhist Rakhines on the traditional Rohingya lands. Today Arakan Army is no different from the Myanmar military. Both groups are forcibly recruiting Rohingya youths to be used in battle fields as cannon fodders and human shields and many of them perished.

Since 2024 more than 1000 Rohingya were killed by Arakan Army in northern Arakan, in addition to recent discovery of mass graves of about 600 Rohingyas killed from Htan Shauk Khan village in Buthidaung township. Moreover, at least 150,000 Rohingya men, women and children have freshly fled to Bangladesh, from Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships, to escape the tyranny of AA. All these crimes against Rohingya have been well documented by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Fortify Rights and many other human rights activists urging the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate.

Being blinded by the charm of deceptive power, one cannot expect "peaceful coexistence" under AA unless good sense prevails in their mind. If the Rohingya and Rakhine remain at daggers drawn, none of them will either thrive or can at all exist in the truest sense of Arakanese. The people of Arakan are required to correctly assess their past glorious history, bury their differences, and charter their own national destiny in accordance with their free will, ensuring the future of the whole people of Arakan and their generations to come.

In order to promote peaceful coexistence, let all people of Arakan come forward with a commitment to unity and diversity, a respect for difference, and a willingness to share power. Let's replace hatred with love and affection, the policy of confrontation and destruction with cooperation, peace, and development, and work together in unison to achieve the best solution for our generations.

[1] Dr S.B. Qanungo, "A History of Chittagong" Vol. 1, Signet Library, Chittagong, Bangladesh, 1998, p.29.

[2] Ba Shin, "Coming of Islam 1700 AD", A research paper presented at Azad Bhavan, New Delhi in 1961, p.4.

[3] Dr. Mohammed Ali Chowdhury, "Bengal-Arakan Relations: A study in Historical Perspective", Bangkok 23-25 November 2000, p.6.

In Mahabubul Alama; Chittagramee Itihas (Purana Amal), Chittagong, 1965, pp.55-56

[4] Dr Mohammad Mohar Ali, "History of the Muslims of Bengal, Vol.1 B, Islamic Foundation, Bangladesh, Madina Printers, Dhaka (1985) p.795.

[5] Arakanese Research Society of Bangladesh, "Arakanese Research Journal", Vol. III, Cox's Bazar, July 2005, p.16.



Situation in Arakan Poses Threat to Regional Stability

BY DR. HLA MYINT

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER, ARAKAN ROHINGYA NATIONAL ALLIANCE

The Arakan Army, an ethnic armed group in Myanmar's Rakhine State, has imposed severe restrictions and committed grave abuses against the ethnic Rohingya population. The Arakan Army's territorial gains in the state have been accompanied by movement restrictions, pillage, arbitrary detention, mistreatment, and unlawful forced labor and recruitment, among other abuses against the Rohingya. Myanmar's military has long subjected the Rohingya to atrocity crimes, including the ongoing crime against humanity of apartheid.

Since the launch of Operation 1027 in November 2023, the Arakan Army (AA) has now taken control of 14 out of 17 townships in Myanmar's Rakhine State. This has effectively established its dominance in the Rakhine by repelling Myanmar's military forces. As of December 2024, the AA had also taken complete control over 271 kilometers of the Myanmar side of the border with Bangladesh, effectively establishing itself as the new governance body in Arakan, though it's a rebel ethnic armed group. This spontaneous rise of AA has sparked public debates, especially among South Asian and Southeast Asian security planners, practitioners, and scholars, primarily concerning the future of Rohingya refugee repatriation, informal engagement with the AA, and prospects for a humanitarian aid corridor into Rakhine. Before taking crucial policy decisions on any of the above issues, it is essential to address and analyze the security threats that Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs), such as AA, can pose to Bangladesh's national security and the regional stability of South and Southeast Asia.

The Arakan Army is carrying out policies of oppression against the Rohingya similar to those long imposed by the Myanmar military in Rakhine State. The Arakan Army pledged inclusive, equitable governance in areas it captured from Myanmar's abusive military junta, following fighting that resumed in November 2023. But Rohingya describe life under the Arakan Army and its political wing, the United League of Arakan, as harsh and restrictive, with discriminatory regulations and practices. Rohingya in Rakhine State have been caught between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army, with both forces committing grave abuses, including extrajudicial killings, widespread arson, and unlawful recruitment. Since late 2023, over 400,000 people have been internally displaced in Rakhine and Chin States, while as many as 200,000 Rohingyas have fled to Bangladesh.

Rohingya villagers are required to obtain permits to travel between villages in Buthidaung, which are valid for only one day and cost 3,000 to 5,000 kyat (US\$1.40-US\$2.40). These permits require signatures from both the local Rohingya administrator and the Arakan Army or its political wing. There are credible reports that indicate that the Arakan Army set up a curfew. If they found anyone outside their homes, they would arrest them, and their whereabouts would become unknown.

Arakan Army restrictions on livelihoods and agriculture, compounded by extortion and exorbitant prices, have exacerbated the severe food shortages and the junta's blockade on aid, in place since late 2023. Some Rohingya said they survived by begging from families who received money from relatives abroad. Others worked as day laborers for little to no pay. There is overwhelming evidence that the Arakan Army had confiscated farmland, houses, cattle, fishing hauls, firewood, and even cemeteries of Rohingya people in Northern Arakan and many townships in Arakan state.

AA controls all the Myanmar side of the frontier with Bangladesh, along with the major townships in Northern Rakhine, where the Rohingyas are predominantly based. Thus, it is highly likely that these Rohingyas are escaping their homeland in fear of AA's wrath. This can also be linked to the fact that the military regime in Burma has been battling for its survival. Since the fall of its Western Command in December 2024, no significant garrison has existed alongside Northern Rakhine. Therefore, it is very clear that AA has become the new force to displace these Rohingyas from Arakan.

The ideology of AA is rooted in the ‘Arakan Dream,’ which aims to establish an independent and homogeneous Rakhine State without the Rohingya people through its ultranationalist ideology, ‘Way of Rakhita.’ This calls for restoring the glorious status of Arakan State by liberating it, which was lost due to the Bamar invasion and later through British colonial occupation in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The AA’s leader, Twan Mrat Naing, had always maintained a racist position on defining the status of the Rohingyas under AA’s rule such as he has frequently labelled the Rohingyas as Bengalis and AA reserves the right to wipeout the entire Rohingya population from Arakan. These AA-Rohingya tensions are going to make the conditions for Rohingya refugee repatriation more complex, which will severely impact Bangladesh’s ability to sustain more than a million refugees amidst the ongoing funding crisis. Such a scenario will foster local tensions, which could have the potential to destabilize the southeastern region of Bangladesh.

Another major threat that the Arakan Army poses to Bangladesh’s stability is its impact on the security situation along the Bangladesh-Myanmar land and maritime border. The AA has been repeatedly targeting the fishermen of Bangladesh, abducting them, and even shooting and injuring them. However, they have returned the fishermen in most instances. Despite that, it has created a sense of fear in the areas surrounding the Naf River, which divides Bangladesh and Myanmar, and also in the strategically crucial island of Saint Martin’s.

The constant harassment and intimidation of fishermen have severely hampered the local livelihoods and earnings of the communities. Moreover, the abrupt small arms fire is a provocation to the territorial integrity of Bangladesh. It is also reported that AA wants a commission on the sea-based trade in and out of Rakhine. These are affecting the exchange of goods between Bangladesh and Myanmar. Businessmen and traders are also increasingly concerned about the safety of transport vessels due to the AA’s increasing interference in trade and commerce. Moreover, the Bangladesh-Myanmar border lacks well-secured fencing and surveillance. This has been evident from the recently reported intrusion of Arakan Army members within Bangladesh during an ethnic festival, which has sparked outrage in the public sphere. It is also important to note that AA has been reportedly involved in international drug trade, which also poses a significant challenge to Dhaka’s anti-narcotics drives through the border region.

Bangladesh should also not rule out the potential threats emerging from the greater territorial ambitions of AA. The primary goal of AA is to restore the lost glory of the 18th-century Arakanese Kingdom by regaining its sovereignty and territorial status. The notion of regaining territorial status is somewhat problematic because the current Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and the Greater Chittagong region of Bangladesh were historically part of the Arakanese Kingdom. Therefore, it shouldn’t be ruled out that AA may have ulterior motives towards these historical lands in CHT and the Greater Chittagong region, which are now under Bangladesh’s sovereign jurisdiction.

Two key developments suggest the Arakan Army might consider a greater territorial interest in the future. First, after the AA took hold of the Paletwa Township of Chin State, which had been the center of the former Arakanese Kingdom, it refused to hand it over to other Chin rebels and established its complete control of the township. Second and foremost, the AA has launched operations into several key adjacent regions, including Bago, Magway, and Ayeyarwady. This is contrary to their vision of only acquiring control of Rakhine. These extended operations and conquests can either be part of creating a buffer against the Myanmar military forces to ensure the substantial holding of territories won over in Rakhine, or they might be an opportunistic move to take advantage of deteriorating Myanmar military forces and increase territorial gains. Either way, this reflects AA’s desire to establish a presence in territories outside of Rakhine, which Bangladesh should be cautious about.

The Arakan Army is a battle-hardened force that has been fighting constantly since late 2023. They have rebel allies (both ethnic and pro-democratic groups) throughout Myanmar, including the Chin, Kachin, and Shan States. It has also established logistical and intelligence apparatus through Arakan Army Auxiliaries (AAA) to enhance operational capabilities. The Arakan Army has also established strong structures of parallel governance, which are equivalent to those of a sovereign state. Its forces have also recovered significant remnants of small to heavy weapons captured from the defeated military forces. The group has also aimed to capture several ammunition factories based in regions outside Rakhine State, indicating it will achieve self-reliance in producing small and medium arms, thereby creating the initial basis for an indigenous defense industrial base (DIB). These pragmatic and growing capabilities of AA can also pose a significant threat to Bangladesh's sovereignty and territorial integrity in the near future.

In light of above stated we can reach to a firm conclusion that AA poses a significant regional threat to Bangladesh as well as AA committing genocide, war crimes and crime against humanity against the Rohingya people in Arakan. Therefore, it is incumbent upon Bangladeshi government and international actors to stop AA in fulfilling its evil objective.

The AA has also desired to establish a presence in territories outside of Rakhine, which Bangladesh should be gravely concerned about. Therefore, creating and sending a stabilisation force to Arakan with the combination of the Bangladeshi army and the armies of other coalition of willing alliance could possibly change Rakhine's attitude towards Rohingyas, as well as the desire of AA to establish a presence in territories in Bangladesh. Moreover, the case of the Rohingya is a strong case for a humanitarian Intervention under the emerging norm of R2P, which was adopted by the UNGA in 2005. The AA does not have a licence to commit genocide against the Rohingya, nor does it have the right to disintegrate the territorial integrity of Bangladesh. Therefore, an intervention under the initiative of the Bangladesh government, along with international actors, would resolve the Rohingya crisis that is unfolding in Burma, and it would also safeguard the territorial integrity of Bangladesh, as it would be like hitting two targets with one stone.



Echoes of Rohingya Genocide in Rakhine

BY DR. HABIB ULLAH

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER, ARAKAN ROHINGYA NATIONAL ALLIANCE

Not even a decade after the world watched in horror as Myanmar's military waged a genocidal campaign against the Rohingya, a new wave of terror is engulfing this persecuted minority in Rakhine State. This time, shockingly, the perpetrators are not the country's military junta, but an ethnic rebel force that once claimed to fight for freedom: the Arakan Army. In recent months, the Arakan Army (AA) has unleashed brutal attacks on Rohingya communities that chillingly mirror the tactics of the 2017 genocide and in some respects even exceed its cruelty. Villages have been torched, civilians massacred, and drones have been used to bomb fleeing families. The humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Rakhine today demands an urgent and unflinchingly critical response from the international community. If the world fails to act now, it will be complicit in allowing history to repeat itself in one of the darkest ways imaginable.

A Disturbing Repeat of 2017's Horrors: In August 2017, Myanmar's military (the Tatmadaw) carried out what the United Nations called a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing" against the Rohingya. Troops and militias razed hundreds of villages, massacring thousands of men, women, and children, and driving more than a million Rohingya refugees into Bangladesh. The global outrage that followed led to genocide and promises of "never again." Yet eight years later, the situation in Rakhine State looks terrifyingly familiar. Once again, Rohingya towns are emptying out, civilians are being slaughtered or forced to flee en masse, and the very existence of the Rohingya people in their homeland is under grave threat. The cruel irony is that this time the atrocities are being perpetrated by an ethnic Rakhine armed group – the Arakan Army rather than the Myanmar military. The oppressed have become the oppressors, following in the genocidal footsteps of the former regime.

For the roughly 600,000 Rohingya who remained in Myanmar after 2017 (confined under an apartheid-like system of segregation and deprivation), the promise of respite was always fragile. The February 2021 coup by Myanmar's generals plunged the country back into civil war, including in Rakhine. Initially, a tenuous ceasefire between the Arakan Army and the junta held, offering a rare lull in violence in 2022. But by late 2023, that ceasefire collapsed. The Arakan Army, emboldened and better armed, launched offensives to seize control of Rakhine State from the junta. Caught in the middle once again were the Rohingya civilians, already stateless, rightless, and traumatized by decades of persecution. What began as fighting between the AA and the junta has morphed into something even more sinister: a direct campaign by the AA against Rohingya people, eerily re-enacting the pogroms of the past.

Recent Atrocities: The warning signs of this unfolding horror became undeniable in the spring and summer of 2024. In mid-May, as Arakan Army forces advanced on the northern Rakhine township of Buthidaung home to one of the largest remaining Rohingya communities – reports emerged of large-scale arson and slaughter. On the night of May 17, witnesses described how AA fighters shelled and then systematically set fire to Rohingya neighborhoods in Buthidaung town. Entire blocks were reduced to ash in hours. Families awoke to flames and fled into the darkness amid screams and gunfire. When the fires finally died down, much of the riverside town lay in ruins. Initial accounts suggested that dozens of Rohingya civilians were killed in that assault, including children and the elderly who couldn't escape the inferno. Thousands more were left homeless overnight. It was a chilling reprise of the "scorched earth" tactics the Tatmadaw had used in 2017 but now carried out by a group that, until recently, cast itself as a liberator of Rakhine's people.

Just weeks later, an even more ghastly massacre struck the Rohingya of Maungdaw, a neighboring township along the Bangladesh border. By July and early August, tens of thousands of Rohingya villagers from outlying areas had crowded near Maungdaw town, desperate to escape intensifying fighting. The junta's forces, along with an allied Rohingya militia, were making a last stand there against the Arakan Army's advance. As battles raged, terrified Rohingya families – mostly women, children, and the elderly – gathered on the banks of the Naf River, hoping to cross by boat into Bangladesh or find safety elsewhere. What happened next on August 5, 2024 will be remembered as one of the most horrific single days of violence against the Rohingya since 2017. According to survivors and aid groups, explosive-laden drones appeared in the sky without warning and began dropping bombs onto the crowds of unarmed civilians massed along the riverbank. In an instant, terror and chaos engulfed those thousands of refugees-in-waiting. Mothers cradling infants were blown apart. Children and grandparents alike were cut down by shrapnel. Panic set in as people ran in every direction – some straight into the river's currents – to escape the aerial assault.

By the end of that day, the carnage was staggering. Charred and broken bodies littered the paddy fields and muddy river shoreline. Survivors spoke of the Naf River turning red with blood, and of banks strewn with dozens upon dozens of corpses. At least 150 Rohingya civilians – possibly close to 200 – were killed in the drone bombardment. Many more were wounded, left to nurse shrapnel injuries or search for missing loved ones in the mayhem. Eyewitnesses identified the attackers as Arakan Army fighters, who had reportedly herded Rohingya villagers toward the river in the first place. As if the drone strikes were not heinous enough, accounts emerged that the following day (August 6) AA soldiers shot dead more Rohingya survivors as they tried to slip across the border. Such calculated brutality – bombing and shooting defenseless people already in flight – shows a level of depravity that rivals the worst acts of the Myanmar military. In some ways, it is even more shocking: the 2017 campaign saw widespread killings and village burnings, but the use of drones to terrorize and massacre civilians attempting to flee is a grisly new chapter in this conflict.

The Arakan Army, for its part, has denied targeting Rohingya civilians, absurdly blaming the Maungdaw carnage on Myanmar's junta. But independent investigations by journalists, human rights organizations, and the United Nations point squarely to the AA's culpability. Satellite imagery of Buthidaung confirms that the town's destruction on May 17 was not caused by an airstrike (as AA claimed), but by deliberate arson consistent with ground attacks. Video evidence from the August 5 massacre shows the distinctive pattern of drone-dropped explosives and the absence of Myanmar military aircraft at the scene. No amount of denial or disinformation can erase the testimonies of Rohingya eyewitnesses who saw AA fighters commit these crimes. The pattern is unmistakable: the Arakan Army is following the same playbook of collective punishment and ethnic cleansing that the Myanmar military perfected – driving out a minority population through terror and violence.

The Arakan Army Following the Military's Footsteps: It is a bitter twist of fate that the Arakan Army itself born from the ethnic grievances of the Rakhine people against the central Myanmar state has now taken up the same abhorrent methods of oppression that were once used against its own community. The Rakhine Buddhist population (for whom the AA claims to fight) also suffered abuses and marginalization under Myanmar's military rule. Yet, rather than break the cycle of hatred, the Arakan Army's leadership appears to have embraced a toxic brand of ethno-nationalism, one that views the Rohingya Muslim minority as interlopers or even traitors. In their drive to assert control over Rakhine State, AA commanders have accused Rohingya villagers of collaborating with the junta or harboring militants from the Rohingya side. Indeed, Myanmar's military has cynically tried to exploit divisions by recruiting Rohingya militias (such as the Rohingya Solidarity Organization) to fight against the AA. But nothing can justify the response the Arakan Army has chosen punishing an entire population for the actions of a few. The genocidal logic that "the only loyal Rakhine is a Buddhist Rakhine" differs little from the Myanmar military's old racist dogma that denied the Rohingya their very identity.

In practice, the Arakan Army's tactics in recent fighting have mirrored the junta's scorched-earth campaigns. Consider the grim parallels:

- **Indiscriminate killings of civilians:** Just as the Tatmadaw massacred Rohingya villagers in 2017, the AA's offensives have wantonly killed unarmed Rohingya. The Maungdaw drone strike slaughtering families on the run is a carbon copy of the military's mass killings, only updated with modern weaponry.
- **Widespread arson and destruction:** The burning of Rohingya homes and villages – a trademark of the 2017 genocide has been continued by the AA. Buthidaung's razed neighborhoods in May 2024 prove that the rebels are willing to burn Rohingya communities to the ground to achieve their aims.
- **Forcible displacement and terror:** Like the clearance operations that drove tens of thousands into Bangladesh before, the AA's violent campaign is sending a new wave of Rohingya refugees over the border. For those who can't flee, life in Rakhine has become a constant nightmare of fear, echoing the trauma of 2017.

By adopting these methods, the Arakan Army has utterly tarnished its cause and credibility. One cannot claim to be fighting for the liberation of an oppressed people while simultaneously committing atrocities against another oppressed minority. The AA's actions now meet the definition of war crimes and crimes against humanity the very crimes the Myanmar junta stands accused of. If the Arakan Army hoped to legitimize itself as a governing force in Rakhine, it has done the opposite: it is proving to be as brutal an oppressor as the regime it opposes, if not worse in its deliberate targeting of the most vulnerable. This tragic turn of events also underscores a broader lesson: oppression is not cured by reversing the target onto a different minority. True freedom for Rakhine cannot be built on the graves of Rohingya civilians.

Rohingya Families Trapped with Nowhere to Turn: For the Rohingya still in Rakhine State, the situation could not be more desperate. These people have been described as "the most persecuted minority in the world," and today that title rings truer than ever. They are literally trapped between two warring forces that both view them with hostility or cynicism. On one side is Myanmar's junta, which still denies Rohingya citizenship and basic rights, periodically rounding up men and boys to forcibly conscript as cannon fodder. On the other side is the Arakan Army, which now treats any Rohingya civilian as a potential enemy collaborator, subjecting them to collective retribution. Stuck in the middle of this vise, Rohingya villagers have no safe haven. If they stay in their villages, they risk being shelled, shot, or burnt out by whichever army comes through next. If they flee, they risk being bombed from above by drones or gunned down at the border. It is a diabolical trap with deadly consequences.

Many Rohingya have nonetheless chosen to risk everything to escape this renewed violence. Throughout July and August, thousands of terrified people from northern Rakhine have tried to reach the relative safety of Bangladesh a country that already hosts about one million Rohingya refugees from earlier exoduses. They travel by foot through jungles to the Naf River, then cram into rickety, overloaded boats to cross the swift river currents into Bangladesh. The journey itself has proven fatal for some. In recent weeks, bodies of Rohingya including children have washed up on the riverbanks, drowned when their flimsy boats capsized or sank. Those who do make it across are often intercepted by Bangladeshi border guards. Bangladesh, burdened by refugees and domestic challenges, has increasingly pushed back boatloads of Rohingya, fearing a fresh influx. This leaves desperate families stranded at the frontier, hiding in borderland forests or adrift on the water, uncertain where to go. It is a heart-wrenching spectacle: people who survived a drone massacre by sheer luck, now finding no country willing to offer refuge.

Within the squalid refugee camps of Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh, anxiety is soaring as news spreads of the carnage back home. Many refugees had clung to hope that stability in Rakhine might one day allow a safe return. Instead, they are hearing of their villages being wiped off the map and their remaining relatives being slaughtered. The trauma of 2017 is being relived all over again, compounded by the hopelessness of exile. Bangladesh's camps themselves are struggling with aid shortfalls, fires, crime, and monsoon floods; they are hardly a long-term solution. Yet right now, staying in Myanmar is akin to awaiting one's own execution. The Rohingya thus find themselves in an untenable limbo unwanted in Myanmar, increasingly unwelcome in Bangladesh, and largely abandoned by a world that has grown weary of their plight. It is a humanitarian crisis of the highest order, and every passing day of inaction costs more lives.

The World Must Not Stay Silent (Again): The international community's response to the Rohingya genocide of 2017 was woefully inadequate. Muted condemnations, half-hearted sanctions, and endless UN debates did little to hold the Myanmar military accountable or to guarantee the Rohingya a path to justice and safety. That failure is now coming home to roost. The impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators of the 2017 atrocities has emboldened new actors like the Arakan Army to believe they too can get away with mass murder. This cycle of ethnic violence will continue unless there are real consequences and a concerted effort to protect vulnerable populations. The fresh atrocities in Rakhine should serve as an electric shock to the world's conscience a reminder that genocide denied or downplayed will almost certainly be genocide repeated.

At this critical moment, urgent and concrete actions are needed to prevent a total catastrophe for the Rohingya and to send a message that such crimes will not be tolerated. The world – governments, international organizations, and civil society – must unite to:

1. Unequivocally condemn the Arakan Army's attacks on Rohingya civilians. Any actors who have engaged with or supported the AA, including those who saw it as a partner in resisting the junta, must make clear that war crimes and ethnic cleansing are unacceptable. The AA's leaders should be put on notice that they face international scrutiny and potential prosecution for these actions.
2. Press for immediate humanitarian access and protection. Both the Arakan Army and Myanmar military should be pressured (by regional powers and the UN) to allow aid agencies to reach affected Rohingya communities with food, medicine, and shelter. Ceasefires or humanitarian pauses may be necessary to evacuate civilians from combat zones. Bangladesh, for its part, should be supported to keep its borders open to Rohingya fleeing imminent harm, and provided with increased international aid to care for refugees.
3. Pursue accountability through international justice mechanisms. The wheels of justice turn slowly, but they must turn. Ongoing efforts at the International Criminal Court and International Court of Justice regarding the 2017 genocide should be expanded to include the new evidence of atrocities in 2024–2025. Any Arakan Army commanders implicated in ordering or carrying out massacres and torture should be investigated for war crimes. Likewise, the Myanmar junta's continued crimes against the Rohingya (such as forced conscription and indiscriminate attacks) should remain under the spotlight. There can be no lasting peace in Myanmar without justice for these grave crimes.

Time is of the essence. Each day of diplomatic inertia is another day in which more Rohingya civilians could be killed, abused, or driven from their homes. Global leaders, especially those in ASEAN and the UN Security Council, need to treat this crisis with the urgency it demands. Strong statements of condemnation are a start but not enough; they should be followed by tangible measures like targeted sanctions on Arakan Army officials, support for war crimes investigations, and humanitarian corridors for those at risk.

We have been here before. The smoke of burning villages, the streams of desperate refugees, the unheeded cries for help – the Rohingya have endured all of this, and the world promised “never again.” To let the same pattern of genocide unfold once more – under a different banner but with the same innocent victims – is an unforgivable moral failing. The Rohingya of Rakhine are bleeding and dying in real time, while many nations remain silent or distracted. History will judge this silence harshly if it continues.

In an era scarred by many tragedies, the Rohingya people’s continued persecution stands out as a stain on humanity’s conscience. Yet it is not too late to change the narrative. International pressure has made a difference before – even Myanmar’s generals felt the sting of global outrage post-2017, and some humanitarian aid reached survivors because of it. Now, a clear message must be sent to the Arakan Army and any who might emulate its brutality: the world is watching, and there will be a price for genocide, no matter who commits it.

Ultimately, the Rohingya want nothing more than what any people deserve: to live in their homeland in peace, with rights and dignity, as equal citizens. That dream has been deferred for far too long by hatred and violence. It will slip away entirely if the current campaign of terror is allowed to run its course. Stopping this new chapter of genocide is not only about saving lives in the here and now it is about upholding the fundamental principle that no group of human beings can be exterminated or expelled with impunity. The world failed the Rohingya once; it must not fail them again. In Rakhine, the flames of genocide have been rekindled. It is our collective responsibility to snuff them out decisively and forever before they consume another people’s existence.

ARNA

Genocide Response and Advocacy Report 2023–2025

Overview and Context

The Arakan Rohingya National Alliance (ARNA) was established in November 2022 as a unified platform for Rohingya organizations and leaders to speak with one voice. Born out of the trauma of the 2017 genocide and the urgent need for coordinated leadership, ARNA's mission is to defend the rights, dignity, and security of the Rohingya people and to secure their rightful place as equal citizens within a future Federal Democratic Union of Myanmar.

From 2023 to 2025, the Rohingya faced a renewed campaign of atrocity crimes in Rakhine State—this time at the hands not only of the Myanmar military, but also the Arakan Army (AA). Mass killings, arson, drone attacks, forced recruitment, and large-scale displacement have again put the very survival of Rohingya communities in question.

In response, ARNA has acted as both a witness and an advocate, documenting abuses, engaging with policymakers, and pressing for immediate protection, accountability, and durable solutions.

This section outlines ARNA's organizational role and the key activities it has undertaken between 2023 and 2025.

It is intended to inform governments, multilateral organizations, and stakeholders of ARNA's activities and to highlight the urgent need for more decisive international action.



Main Objective of ARNA

The primary objective of ARNA is to unify the Rohingya people under one alliance, amplifying their voices, and to achieve their right of self-determination within the Federal Union of Myanmar. This includes advocating for their right to return to their homes, securing justice for atrocities committed against them, and ensuring their political and human rights are recognized and upheld.

Rohingya National Charter

The Rohingya National Charter, ratified on 29 January 2021 during a global consultation of Rohingya representatives, affirms that the Rohingya are an indigenous ethnic nationality of Myanmar's Arakan (Rakhine) region and an essential part of the country's plural society. It defines the "Rohingya Movement" as a struggle for self-determination, protection of Rohingya identity, and opposition to any erasure of that identity. The charter asserts loyalty to Myanmar's sovereignty while demanding full equality within a federal democratic union. It underscores the Rohingya's right to return and reintegrate into their historical homeland "in full security," ensures their enduring identity despite dispersal, and pledges peaceful coexistence, cultural preservation, and universal suffrage. It also emphasizes collaboration with the Rakhine community, democratic forces across Myanmar, and support for Rohingya women's empowerment and the rights of Muslim minorities.

Key Activities and Campaigns 2023–2025

1. Advocacy on Repatriation

ARNA consistently expressed deep gratitude to Bangladesh for sheltering over one million Rohingya refugees under immense social, economic, and security pressures. We especially thank the current Interim Government of Bangladesh for its leadership and initiatives aimed at achieving safe, voluntary, dignified, durable, and sustainable return.

In early 2023, ARNA engaged thoughtfully on the proposed “pilot project” for repatriation, recognizing the need for dialogue but also underlining key principles for success. We emphasized that genuine repatriation must go beyond short-term gestures and be grounded in restoring citizenship, recognizing ethnic rights, and ensuring safety for returnees. Our joint statements with civil society partners encouraged the UN and regional actors to carefully align any process with these essentials, so that returns can be sustainable and dignified.

Outcome: ARNA’s advocacy contributed to reinforcing Bangladesh’s position that repatriation must be credible, durable, and rooted in rights. This constructive engagement helped keep the focus on building a pathway for returns that can truly last.

2. Humanitarian Response and Community Solidarity

Following Cyclone Mocha, which devastated Rakhine and parts of Bangladesh, ARNA swiftly called on the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs UNOCHA and relief agencies to expand aid to Rohingya communities. On 19 June 2023, ARNA leaders held a Condolence, Solidarity and Prayer meeting in Cox’s Bazar attended by over 1,500 refugees. ARNA leadership emphasized lawful behavior, unity, and resilience, noting that community discipline is crucial for maintaining Bangladesh’s ongoing support.

Outcome: Demonstrated ARNA’s dual role as an advocacy body and a responsible community anchor, reinforcing trust between refugees, host authorities, and international partners.

Key Activities and Campaigns 2023–2025

3. Confronting Renewed Atrocity Crimes

As violence in northern Rakhine escalated, ARNA documented and condemned atrocities by both the Myanmar military and the AA. Reports of mass killings, arson, forced recruitment, and even drone bombings of Rohingya civilians were met with urgent ARNA appeals to the UN, ASEAN, and regional powers.

In a January 2024 statement, ARNA warned that “both the regime and AA have become a serious threat to Rohingya lives and property,” and later cautioned that the AA was mirroring the junta’s genocidal tactics. ARNA emphasized that targeting minorities undermines Myanmar’s democratic movement and sets a dangerous precedent for ethnic coexistence.

Outcome: ARNA’s clear stance positioned it as one of the few Rohingya voices confronting atrocities from all sides, strengthening its credibility with stakeholders and rights defenders.

4. International Advocacy to Prevent Genocide

ARNA intensified international engagement, urging urgent preventive action. On 18 May 2024, ARNA issued a widely cited press release calling on the UN, ASEAN, and regional governments to intervene before a new genocide unfolded. ARNA leaders met the UN Special Rapporteur on Myanmar, Tom Andrews, and briefed UN agencies and humanitarian partners.

At every level, ARNA stressed that the Rohingya struggle is for equal citizenship within a Federal Democratic Union of Myanmar, not secession. By rooting advocacy in ethnic rights, justice, and coexistence, ARNA built bridges with pro-democracy forces while urging them to uphold inclusivity.

Outcome: Helped sustain international scrutiny on Rakhine and ensured Rohingya concerns remained linked to Myanmar’s broader democratic struggle.

Key Activities and Campaigns 2023–2025

5. Engagement with Bangladesh and Regional Policy Discourse

On 23 November 2024, ARNA's Chairman, Nurul Islam, participated in a National Dialogue on Rohingya Policy in Dhaka with Bangladeshi officials, diplomats, and experts. ARNA emphasized that Bangladesh has borne disproportionate burdens and called for greater international responsibility-sharing. At the same time, ARNA reiterated that durable solutions lie only in Myanmar, through restoration of ethnic rights, citizenship, and guarantees of safety.

ARNA also maintained contact with India, Malaysia, and Indonesia, advocating for humane treatment of Rohingya refugees, respect for non-refoulement, and regional cooperation on sea rescues.

Outcome: Signaled ARNA's evolution into a recognized stakeholder in regional policy debates, aligning with Bangladesh's call for safe, sustainable repatriation.

6. Community Outreach and Unity Initiatives

ARNA commemorated key dates—such as the August 25, 2024, anniversary of the 2017 exodus—with events honoring victims and demanding justice. Its outreach team engaged with camp leaders, youth, and civil society, urging unity, the rule of law, and investment in education.

By promoting non-violence and discipline, ARNA reassured host authorities and international donors that Rohingya refugees remain a responsible community, focused on a future return home with restored rights.

Outcome: Strengthened cohesion among Rohingya refugees while reinforcing ARNA's role as a responsible bridge between communities, host governments, and international partners.



KL CONFERENCE: THE ROHINGYA CRISIS - REGIONAL ACTIONS AND GLOBAL ADVOCACY
Ibnu Taymiyyah Conference Room, IUM
23rd February 2025 (Sunday)
09.00am - 02.30pm

Distinguished speakers

- Dato' Ahmad Azam Ali** *Prime Minister of Malaysia*
- Tan Sri Dr. Syed Hamid Albar** *Former Minister of Education, Malaysia*
- Muhammad Ibrahim** *Former Minister of Education, Malaysia*

Welcomes Address:
Prof. Dr. Dr. Muhammad Fauzan Noridin *Deputy Rector, Senior Lecturer (Student Development & Engagement)*

"REGIONAL AND GLOBAL ADVOCACY FOR THE ROHINGYA CRISIS"

Panellists

- Prof. Sk Tafique M. Haque** *Rohingya Perspective*
- Datin Nur Auliana binti Abdul Aziz** *(MPC) - Malaysia Education for Rohingya*
- Dr. Ahmad El-Muhammady** *(IUM, IUM) - ASEAN Perspective*
- Nasrullah Hassan** *(IUM) - Rohingya Crisis*
- Dr. Juffri bin Jaha** *Department of Civil - Humanitarian Perspective*
- Prof. Dr. Salewati Mat Basir** *(IUM) - Legal Perspective*

Moderator:
Dr. Md. Mahbubul Haque *Human Rights for Rohingya, International Humanitarian Law and Security*





Rohingya

GENOCIDE DAY



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