

# **Background Paper on Rakhine State**

**by**

**Myanmar-Institute of Strategic and International Studies (M-ISIS)**

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**NB:** For clarity and internal cohesion, the name '**Arakan**' is used to refer to the historical region under the suzerainty of various centres of power located in the Kaladan – Lémro valley. The term '**Arakan Division**' is used to refer to the administrative region that existed between 1826 and 1974, and '**Rakhine State**' to the same region after 1974. The word '**Rakhine**' is used to refer to the Rakhine people, who are also known as '**Arakanese**'.

# RAKHINE STATE

## 1. Background



Figure 1. District Map of Rakhine State. From 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census: Rakhine State Report (Census Report Volume 3-K) published by Department of Population, Ministry of Immigration and Population, Government of Myanmar.



Figure 2: Map of Northwestern Rakhine State (including Maungdaw District). Adapted from 'Township Map of Rakhine State', Myanmar Information Management Unit.

Rakhine State is a coastal region in western Myanmar, located on the eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal. It has an area of 36,778.1 square kilometers (between the sizes of Belgium and Switzerland) and comprises five districts made up of 20 townships and sub-townships in total. Sittwe is the administrative and economic capital of Rakhine State, and a transport hub for the northern part of the state.

According to the 2014 census, the state has a population of over 3.188 million, of which 2 million (63.3%) are Buddhists and over 1.12 million (34.5%) are Muslims. The state had a population of 1.712 million in 1973 and 2.045 million in 1983. It is home to the Rakhine people - one of Myanmar's eight main indigenous ethnic groups – who constitute 58% of the state's population. In addition to Chin communities (another major ethnic group), smaller ethnic groups such as Mro, Thet, Khamee, Kaman, Daingnet and Mramagyи also live in the state. Furthermore, Rakhine State has a large Muslim minority population and a small Hindu community.

The state has the highest number and percentage of Muslims among Myanmar's states and regions, accounting for half of Myanmar's entire Muslim population. Of the 1.12 million Muslims in Rakhine State, two-thirds (around 740,600) live in northwestern Maungdaw district which borders Bangladesh.

	Rakhine State		Maungdaw District	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
<b>Rakhine</b>	1,757,215	57.9%	39,424	4.82%
<b>Muslim</b>	1,047,544	34.52%	740,661	90.6%
<b>Chin</b>	81,030	2.67%	72	0.009%
<b>Mro</b>	40,388	1.33%	8,338	1.02%
<b>Khamee</b>	35,171	1.16%	9,018	1.1%
<b>Bamar</b>	20,227	0.67%	2,307	0.28%
<b>Daing-net</b>	17,093	0.56%	9,969	1.22%
<b>Kaman</b>	14,359	0.47%	15	0.0018%
<b>Mramagy</b>	8,776	0.29%	316	0.04%
<b>Hindu</b>	8,520	0.28%	5,119	0.63%
<b>Thet</b>	2,711	0.09%	1,892	0.23%
<b>Others</b>	1,074	0.04%	50	0.0061%
<b>Kayin</b>	429	0.01%	29	0.0035%
<b>Kathae</b>	276	0.01%	276	0.01%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>3,034,813</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>817,486</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1: Ethnic composition of Rakhine State and Maungdaw District. Source: Rakhine State Government 2017.

## 1.1. Economic Landscape

Main economic activities include agriculture (particularly rice but also coconuts and palm oil), coastal fishing (including production of dried seafood) and small non-agricultural businesses. The population is largely dependent on fishing and agricultural casual labour as their main income sources – casual labour accounting for 26% of the income source.<sup>1</sup> The agricultural sector is the main source of employment for casual labourers during harvest season and in the early monsoon season for preparing land for cultivation. Fishing also contributes around 26% of incomes and small non-agricultural businesses account for around 15% of incomes.<sup>2</sup> Tourism is an important income generator in certain places such as Ngapali and Mrauk U.

According to a 2009-2010 Integrated Household Living Conditions Assessment, Rakhine State has a poverty rate of 43.5% compared to 25.6% nationally.<sup>3</sup> A 2014 study by the World Bank Group reported a much higher poverty rate of 78% (compared to 37.5% nationally).<sup>4</sup> The state has the lowest labour force participation rate and unemployment rate in the country (at 58.8% and 10.4% respectively of people aged 15 years and above).<sup>5</sup>

## 1.2. Maungdaw District

Maungdaw District is the westernmost district in Rakhine State and borders the People's Republic of Bangladesh. With an area over 3,500 square kilometers (slightly larger than Rhode Island), the district comprises Maungdaw (including Taungpyo Letwae sub-township) and Buthidaung townships. According to the Rakhine State Government, the district had a population of 817,500 in July 2017 of which over 740,600 (90.6%) were Muslims while around 40,000 (4.8%) were Rakhine, over 5,100 (0.63%) were Hindus, and the remainder (approximately 32,000) comprised small ethnic groups such as the Daingnet, Khamee, Mro, Thet and Mramagy.<sup>6</sup> It is one of the most densely populated districts (233.5 persons per square kilometre or 605 per square mile) in Myanmar outside of Yangon and Mandalay cities (Myanmar in comparison has a population density of 79.5 persons per square kilometre or 205.8 per square mile.). It is also the only district in Myanmar with a Muslim majority population.

Buthidaung township consists of the upper part of the Mayu river valley and surrounding hills, and Maungdaw township consists of the lower Nat (Naf) river valley with a coastal strip running south from the river estuary. Agriculture, fishing and cross-border trade are the main economic activities of most of the inhabitants.

Maungdaw township has an area of 1517.5 square kilometres (585.92 square miles) and Buthidaung township has an area of 2020.2 square kilometres (780 square miles).

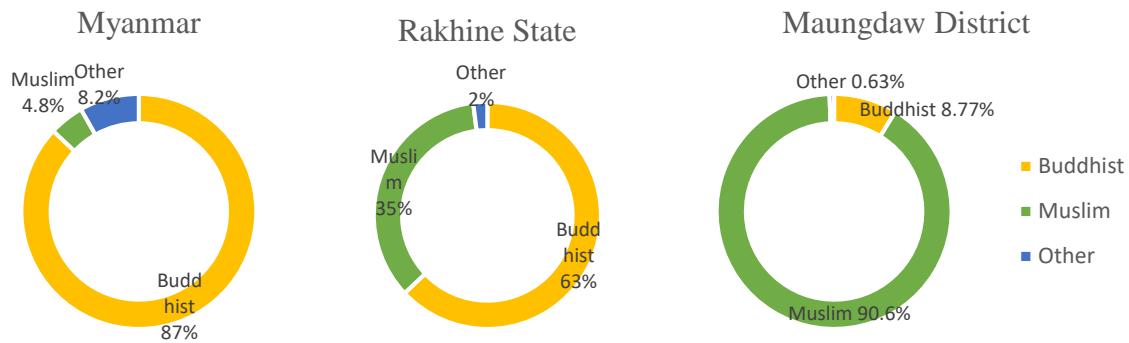


Figure 3: Religious composition of Myanmar, Rakhine State and Maungdaw district. Source: Myanmar Census 2014 and Rakhine State Government 2017

	1921	1983	2017
Population of Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships	196,700	438,000	817,500

Table 2: Population of Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships 1921-2017. Source: Census of British Burma 1921, Census 1983 and Rakhine State Government.

### 1.3. Etymology of Arakan / Rakhine

The present-day state and historical region is called ‘Rakhine’ in both the local Rakhine language and Burmese. One theory is that the word ‘Rakhine’ is a corruption of the Pali word ‘Raksha’/ ‘Yakkho’, a term often applied to ogres. This label was also used by Indo-Aryans of antiquity to describe non-Buddhist peoples across the Indian Subcontinent and Southeast Asia. The Rakhine people retained the label which became ‘Rakhine’.<sup>7</sup> Another theory is that the Rakhine believe their ancestors had to chase out rakshas before establishing their first polity and assumed the Pali name ‘Rakkhita’ meaning “one who protects his own race”.<sup>8</sup>

In the first century AD, Alexandrian geographer Ptolemy referred to the general region as ‘Argyre’, the land of silver, while seventh century Chinese Buddhist pilgrims called it ‘A-li-ki-lo’ or ‘Harikela’. 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century Burmese language inscriptions from Bagan and Innwa refer to it as ‘Rakhaing’, while Tibetan historians used ‘Rakhan’ and Sri Lankan chronicles termed it ‘Rakhanga’. ‘Arakan’ is a corruption of the Portuguese ‘Arracão’ which was then called ‘Aracan’ by later Dutch and English merchants.<sup>9</sup>

## 2. BRIEF HISTORY OF RAKHINE

The history of Rakhine can generally be divided into three main parts:

1. The four independent kingdoms that existed from the 4<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries AD;
2. Konbaung and British rule (1784-1948); and
3. The post-Independence period since 1948.

## **2.1. Independent Kingdoms (4<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries AD)**

According to legends and oral tradition, *Marayu* – the hero-ancestor of the Rakhines – married the daughter of a local Mro chief and cleared the region of ogres (*rakshas*) in 2666 BC.<sup>10</sup> Western historians state that the Rakhine are Tibeto-Burmans who migrated into the area around the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD. The 3 meter-tall Shitthaung pillar, commissioned by Wethali king Anandracandra in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, provides insight into the political history of early Arakan, especially a list of kings who rule during the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. The Candra dynasty ruled during both the Dhanyawaddy and Wethali periods and claimed to have descended from the Hindu god Shiva, although they professed Buddhism.<sup>11</sup>

Owing to its coastal nature, Arakan was more cosmopolitan in nature and political worldview and also exposed to external influences – be it cultural, political, economic and religious - compared to the inland polities based along the Ayeyarwaddy valley. Proximity to, and at times, ownership of, the major trading port of Chittagong further amplified these influences.

### **2.1.1. Dhanyawaddy (Mid-4<sup>th</sup> – early 6<sup>th</sup> centuries AD)**

The first historical polity in Arakan was centered on the enclosed city of Dhanyawaddy (from Pali *Dhannavati*, meaning ‘grain-blessed’) located about 290 kilometers north of Sittwe on a tributary of the Kaladan river. The kingdom was able to benefit from access to the expansion of maritime trade routes from Asia to the Mediterranean.<sup>12</sup> The Shitthaung pillar (circa AD 729) gives the names and reign periods of 18 kings, the earlier ones possibly ruling from Dhanyawaddy from the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>13</sup> The Mahamuni Buddha shrine on a hill northeast of the palace site in Dhanyawaddy, contains sculptures influenced by Mahayana Buddhism.<sup>14</sup> Rakhine oral tradition claims that the Mahamuni Buddha image was cast in the sixth century BC when the Buddha visited Dhanyawaddy.

### **2.1.2. Wethali (circa 6<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries AD)**

Wethali (named after the Indian city of Vaishali) is the second historical Rakhine kingdom and was based in the eponymous enclosed city of Wethali, located about nine kilometers south of Dhanyawaddy. Similar to its predecessor, Wethali had trade links with India, central Myanmar and pre-Angkorian cultures further east.<sup>15</sup> King Anandracandra is described in the Shitthaung pillar, which he commissioned around AD 729, as a Buddhist who established monasteries and welcomed Buddhist monks from other lands including the Buddhist clergy of Sri Lanka to whom he donated an elephant and robes.<sup>16</sup> Excavations in the 1980s uncovered a Buddhist ordination hall, a monastery and a building with a stone image of a bull on a pedestal, possibly used for religious purposes.<sup>17</sup>

From the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Tibeto-Burman speaking peoples from Nanzhao (in present-day Yunnan) made major migrations into the Ayeyarwaddy valley and Rakhine region. By the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the Bamar had consolidated power in the Ayeyarwaddy valley around Bagan, while the Rakhine became the dominant ethno-linguistic group in Arakan.

### **2.1.3. Lémro (1018-1406)**

Lémro refers to the period during which Arakan’s centre of power shifted through four towns (Sambawak, Parein, Hkrit and Launggret) within the eponymous Lémro river valley. The Lémro period saw greater political influence and involvement from Bagan, and the art of the period shows strong Theravada influence from both Bagan and Sri Lanka.<sup>18</sup> The first capital, Sambawak, was believed to have been founded by a descendant of a Wethali king in 1018. Parein served as the capital from 1118-1167, Hkrit from 1167-1180, and then returning to

Sambawak from 1180-1237.<sup>19</sup> Launggret was founded in 1237 and the kingdom was able to reassert independence owing to Bagan's decline. Between 1374 and 1430, the inland Bamar and coastal Mon kingdoms exerted influence onto Arakan. Launggret was sacked between 1404 and 1406, leading to the last king Narameikhla Min Saw Mon to flee to "Suratan" (i.e. the dominion of the Sultan)<sup>20</sup>, meaning Bengal.<sup>21</sup>

#### 2.1.4. Mrauk U (1430-1784)

Mrauk U was the last but also the most powerful and prosperous of Rakhine kingdoms. Fleeing invading Bamar forces, Min Saw Mon sought refuge in Gaur, the capital of the Sultanate of Bengal. After some years in exile, the Sultan of Bengal – Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah – provided military assistance to aid Min Saw Mon to reconquer Arakan in exchange for vassalage. Min Saw Mon was reinstated in 1430, and he moved the capital from Launggyet to Mrauk U (also known as Mrohaung) in 1433.<sup>22</sup> Between 1430 and 1530, Mrauk U oscillated between vassalage and outright rivalry towards the Bengal Sultanate.

Bengal's dominance faded in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, which ultimately resulted in Mughal conquest in the 1570s. This enabled Mrauk U to assert itself and it became prosperous and influential during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, reflected in the large number of Buddhist temples and ruins dotting the former royal capital. It controlled Chittagong from 1459 till 1666.<sup>23</sup> The Mrauk U period marks the beginning of Muslim influence in Arakan.<sup>24</sup> For example, Min Saw Mon, despite being a Buddhist, assumed the title of *Suleiman Shah* to acknowledge Mrauk U's vassalage to the Sultanate of Bengal.<sup>25</sup> His successors continued this 'tradition' until Mrauk U was able to fully assert its sovereignty in 1531.<sup>26</sup> Min Saw Mon also introduced a coinage system heavily influenced by that in Bengal. Trilingual coins bore Buddhist epithets in Arakanese on one side, and the Shahada (the Islamic declaration of faith) in Bengali and Persian on the other side.<sup>27</sup> The first historical mosque in Arakan - the Santikan mosque - was built in the eastern outskirts of Mrauk U in the 1430s by Muslim soldiers from Bengal who came over with Min Saw Mon.<sup>28</sup>

Portuguese friar Sebastien Manrique traveled to Bengal and Arakan from 1629 to 1637 and offered important insight into early 17<sup>th</sup> century Rakhine. During that time, Portuguese mercenaries and slave traders based in Dianga (opposite Chittagong) operated around the Ganges delta and alternated between competition and service to Mrauk U. The Portuguese raided villages on the Sundarbans delta, and sold the kidnapped Bengalis at ports in India, or to the Arakanese who used the slaves for agriculture.<sup>29</sup> Later, the Dutch East India Company replaced the Portuguese, and established a trading post in Arakan and had even facilitated the sending of Arakanese monks to Sri Lanka to revive the Buddhist ordination rites which had declined under Portuguese rule.<sup>30</sup>

In 1660, the Mughal prince Shah Shuja and his supporters fled to Arakan after losing the civil war for Mughal succession to his brother Aurangzib. Despite Aurangzib offering large sums for Shuja's extradition, Arakanese King Sandathudamma consented to Shuja's request for asylum. Tensions however soon escalated between Sandathudamma and Shuja and when the king asked for Shuja's eldest daughter, Shuja plotted to seize the throne.<sup>31</sup> The attempt – involving Shuja's retinue supported by local Muslims - was foiled and Shuja was ultimately executed, his treasures seized and daughters taken into the king's harem.<sup>32</sup> Shuja's followers – mainly Afghan archers - were pressed into Arakanese service, but would become king makers within the Mrauk U court.<sup>33</sup> They were ultimately exiled to Ramree (Yanbyé) in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and their descendants became the Kaman people ("bow" in Persian).<sup>34</sup>

Shuja's execution along with Arakanese-sanctioned piracy along the Bay of Bengal precipitated in the Mughals invading Chittagong in 1666. The Mughals pushed the Arakanese right up to Ramu near Cox's Bazar.<sup>35</sup> The fall of Chittagong and then civil war and natural disasters (specifically earthquakes in 1761-2) eventually led to Mrauk U's downfall.<sup>36</sup> Arakanese lords discontent with the last king, Thamada, sought assistance from King Bodawpaya of the Konbaung dynasty to install a contender. Konbaung forces invaded and instead annexed Arakan in late 1784.<sup>37</sup>

## 2.2. Konbaung and British Rule (1784-1948)

The Rakhine coast was one of the last major areas in lower Burma to be incorporated into the Konbaung kingdom based in Central Myanmar. Along with Tanintharyi (Tenasserim), Rakhine was the first Myanmar territory to be annexed by the British. Both periods saw significant impact on the demographics of the region - major outflows of Arakanese fleeing Konbaung rule followed by major inflows of immigrants and migrant labourers from Bengal during British colonial rule.

### 2.2.1. Konbaung rule (1784-1826)

After the Konbaung conquest, a governor with a garrison of several thousand men was installed at Mrohaung. The Mahamuni Buddha image along with the deposed royal family and 20,000 inhabitants were brought back to the Konbaung capital.<sup>38</sup> Over 200,000 Arakanese fled to Chittagong and the Sundarbans.<sup>39</sup> These Arakanese communities who fled to Bengal would subsequently be known or referred as *Mugs* or *Maghs* by the British and Bengalis, and *Anaukthar* by the Arakanese who remained in Arakan.

Levies were raised in Arakan in 1790 and 1795 to support construction projects, notably for the Meiktila irrigation system and the Mingun pagoda.<sup>40</sup> In 1811, a local revolt killed nearly the entire Bamar population garrisoned at Mrauk U.<sup>41</sup> The Konbaung kingdom sent forces to pacify the rebellion and cross-border raids caused friction with the East India Company that had conquered Bengal. Furthermore, tensions arose over competing territorial claims over a border island, known as 'Shin Ma Phyu kyun' in Burmese and St Martin's Island or of 'Shaporee'/'Shahaporee' to the British.<sup>42</sup> The first Anglo-Burmese war erupted in March 1824 and Arakan was occupied by the British in 1825.<sup>43</sup>

### 2.2.2. British Rule (1826-1941)

The Yandabo Treaty, signed in February 1826 to end the First Anglo-Burmese War, ceded Arakan to the East India Company, along with other territories such as Tanintharyi and Manipur.<sup>44</sup> Arakan was annexed into British India as part of the Bengal Presidency, and then as part British Burma which was formed in 1862.<sup>45</sup> When all of Myanmar was finally colonized in 1885, the entire country including Arakan became a province of India. Local rebellions broke out in 1827, 1836, 1870 and 1888 but had little impact on colonial rule.<sup>46</sup>

The capital was shifted from inland Mrohaung to the newly built coastal town of Akyab (Sittwe) in 1826, and the region was incorporated into Arakan Division with four districts – Akyab,<sup>1</sup> Kyaukphyu, Sandoway and the Arakan Hill District (now part of Chin state). A commissioner was seated at Akyab with four Senior Assistants in charge of the districts.<sup>47</sup> With the development of the colonial economy – particularly agriculture - Akyab became an

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<sup>1</sup> The colonial-era Akyab district is now divided into three districts – Maungdaw, Sittwe and Mrauk-U districts. Sandoway district is now called Thandwe District.

important port town in British Burma. In 1872, the town had a population of 19,230 of which 60% (11,519) were Buddhists, 26% Muslim (5,018) and 10% (1,911) Hindus.<sup>48</sup>

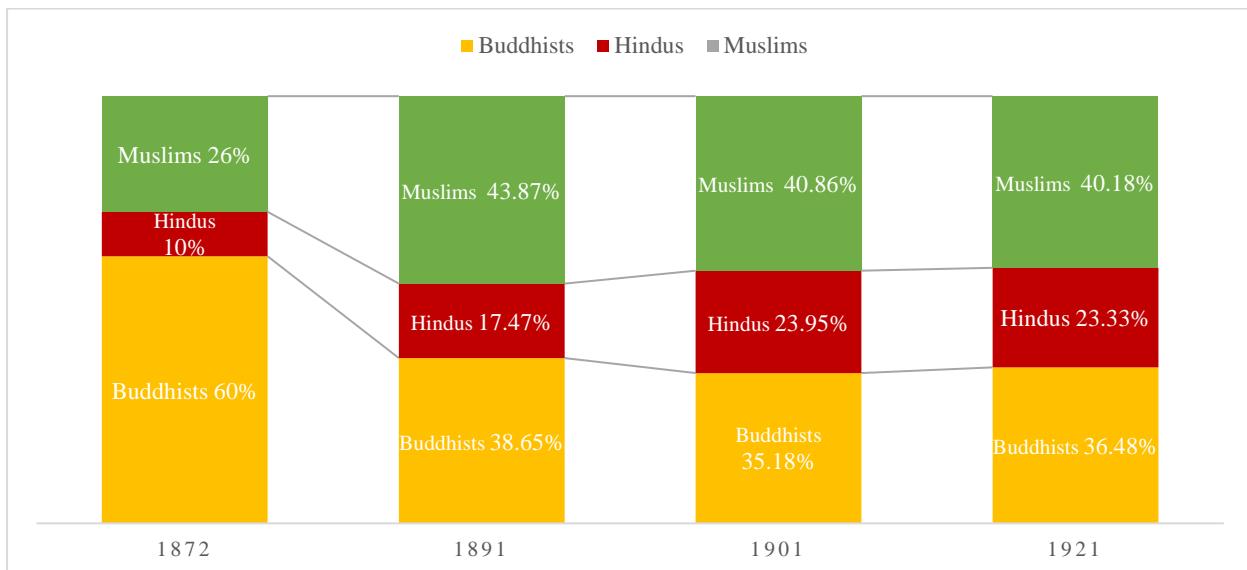


Figure 4. Religious Composition of Akyab Town from 1872 to 1921 (Sources: Aye Chan 2005; 1901 Census of British Burma; 1921 Burma Gazetteer)

	1872	1891	1901	1921
<b>Buddhist</b>	11,519	14,291	12,249	12,939
<b>Muslim</b>	5,018	16,223	14,225	14,250
<b>Hindu</b>	1,911	6,460	8,340	8,277
<b>Total</b>	19,230	36,974	34,814	35,466

Table 3: Population breakdown of Akyab Town (Sittwe) from 1872 to 1921 (Sources: Aye Chan 2005, 1901 Census of British Burma and 1921 Burma Gazeteer Akyab District).

A large-scale immigration of various people from British India – especially Bengal and southern India - came to Rakhine and other parts of Myanmar for economic reasons such as seasonal labour and merchants.<sup>49</sup> As a province of British India, the movement of these people was as residents moving from one district to another within one ‘land’.<sup>50</sup> The seasonal migration from Chittagong to Akyab districts was the only overland migration between British Burma and British India. There is an annual periodic migration of coolies from Chittagong to assist in the agricultural operations. The migration was through three main routes: entirely by sea by the steamers of the British India Company; partly by land to Maungdaw and thence by steamers of the Arakan Flotilla Company; and entirely by land.<sup>51</sup>

Districts	1827	1832	1842	1852	1862	1872*	1881	1891*	1901	1911	1921	1931
Akyab						276,700	276,877	415,044	481,666	529,943	576,430	637,580
Kyaukpyu						146,586	158,667	164,354	168,827	184,916	199,873	220,292
Sandoway						56,760	54,773	79,464	90,927	102,803	112,029	129,245
<b>Total</b>	<b>121,288</b>	<b>195,107</b>	<b>246,766</b>	<b>352,348</b>	<b>381,985</b>	<b>480,042</b>	<b>490,317</b>	<b>658,862</b>	<b>741,268</b>	<b>817,662</b>	<b>888,332</b>	<b>978,117</b>

\* Extrapolations from density per square mile provided in 1901 census

Table 4. Population of Arakan during the colonial era. (Note: The Arakan Hill Tracks District is not included in the calculation, as it is now part of Chin State.)

Townships	Total			Buddhist		Muslim		Hindu	
	All	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Akyab	48,188	33,894	14,294	9,682	9,340	15,319	4,212	8,087	440
Buthidaung	78,497	40,835	37,662	15,120	14,474	22,299	20,595	972	273
Kyauktaw	58,274	31,642	26,632	15,025	14,100	12,147	8,768	626	828
Maungdaw	118,205	59,461	58,744	11,171	11,592	45,540	45,174	1077	471
Minbya	51,388	27,729	23,659	18,413	17,214	408	2,245	657	7
Mrohaung	61,089	33,446	27,643	23,796	22,014	6,210	3,265	908	9
Pauktaw	45,615	23,902	21,713	20,355	19,644	2,891	1,676	196	17
Ponnagyun	53,581	27,327	26,254	22,842	22,951	11,50	541	462	1
Rathedaung	61,593	31,328	30,265	23,317	24,089	7,092	5,749	416	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>576,430</b>	<b>309,564</b>	<b>266,866</b>	<b>159,721</b>	<b>155,418</b>	<b>111,906</b>	<b>92,225</b>	<b>13,401</b>	<b>2,058</b>
<b>Population in 1921:</b>		<b>576,430</b>		<b>315,139</b>		<b>204,131</b>		<b>15,459</b>	
		<b>100%</b>		<b>54.67%</b>		<b>35.41%</b>		<b>2.68%</b>	

Table 5. Religious breakdown of the townships in Akyab District, 1921.<sup>52</sup>

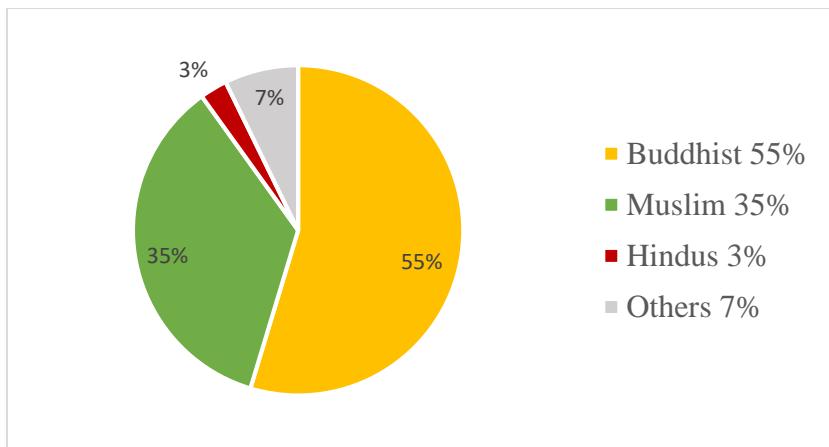


Figure 5: Religious composition of Akyab District 1921

In 1872, Akyab District had 171,600 Arakanese and 58,200 Muslims while in 1911, there were 209,000 Arakanese and 178,650 Muslims.<sup>53</sup> According to the 1911 Burma Gazette for Akyab District, most of the Muslims in Akyab district were male seasonal workers from Chittagong. There were also some who were descendants of the Bengali slaves that were captured and brought by the Arakanese during the Mrauk U period. Most of these descendants lived in Kyauktaw and Mrohaung (Mrauk U) townships, while Maungdaw and Buthidaung hosted the large, recent immigrants from Chittagong.<sup>54</sup>

The sex ratios noted in British censuses point to the immigrant nature of a large segment of the Muslim and Hindu inhabitants in northwestern Arakan, particularly Akyab Township. For example, in 1922, there were 15,319 Muslim men compared to 4,212 Muslim women (a ratio of 3.64 to 1) and 8,087 Hindu men to 440 Hindu women (a ratio of 18.38 to 1).<sup>55</sup> Of these, around 8,500 Muslims and 3,400 Hindus were noted to be either temporary migrants or travellers. By 1931, Arakan Division had around 216,000 people classified by the colonial government as “Indians” (in contrast to “Burmese” and “Other Indigenous Races”) of which 197,500 (91.5%) were Muslims, representing half the total “Indian Muslim” population of British Burma.<sup>56</sup> These immigrant communities gradually expanded southward, pushing the Buddhist communities such that by 1941, only a handful of Buddhist villages remained in northwestern Arakan.<sup>57</sup> The Indian population in British Burma – including Arakan Division – grew in both absolute and relative terms into the 1930s, but the effects of the Great Depression on the colonial economy, along with anti-Indian riots and legislation later saw a decline in the Indian populace.<sup>58</sup>

Arakanese monk U Ottama (1879-1939) was one of the major figures in the nascent nationalist anti-colonial movement. He attracted a large following among Buddhist monks and his activities from 1920 till dying of a hunger strike in 1939 led to the emergence of political and anti-colonial activism by the Buddhist sangha.<sup>59</sup> In 1937, Burma became a separate colony from British India and Arakan Division became part of “Ministerial Burma”. Large-scale, predominantly Muslim immigration from India contributed to the emergence of a nationalist movement.<sup>60</sup> In 1938, Maungdaw district saw riots that were part of a wider wave of anti-Muslim riots across British Burma.

### **2.2.3. Second World War (1941-1945)**

During the Second World War, British Burma – including Arakan – was invaded and occupied by the Japanese from 1942 to 1945, and was an active frontline for much of the war. The Japanese enjoyed support among Buddhist communities such as the Bamar and Rakhines (who joined the Burma Independence Army, BIA) while non-Buddhists were more sympathetic towards the retreating British.<sup>61</sup> Colonial officials, Europeans and over half a million Indians fled overland to India, and a colonial government-in-exile was established in Simla, India.

The British retreated from Arakan in late March 1942 and armed Chittagonian Muslims to form a guerrilla force called the ‘V Force’ to harass the Japanese forces.<sup>62</sup> Some British officials also promised a “Muslim National Area” in northern Arakan to encourage Muslim loyalty during the war.<sup>63</sup> However, the V Force, bandits and Buddhist guerrillas loosely affiliated with the BIA committed wanton communal violence and massacres that led to Buddhists fleeing south and Muslims to the north.<sup>64</sup> Rakhine sources state that as much as 20,000 Buddhists were killed in the bloodletting, while Muslim sources claim a similar number of Muslims killed.

The violence and anarchy partly subsided when the Japanese invaded Arakan in end 1942. However, Buddhists and Muslims continued to flee to areas dominated by their respective co-religionists. In August 1943, the Japanese established the “State of Burma” as a client state and reorganized the BIA into the Burma National Army. Scorched earth policies employed by the retreating British forces and aerial bombings – first from the Japanese and then the Allies – destroyed most of the colonial era resources and facilities that had been vital in Burma’s economic development. As the tide of the war turned against the Japanese, the Buddhist guerrillas and later the BNA turned against the Japanese under the banner of the “Anti-Fascist People’s Freedom League” with British assistance. The British recaptured Maungdaw in January 1944, Buthidaung and Akyab in December 1944 and most of Arakan by January 1945.<sup>65</sup>

### **2.2.4. Lead-up to Independence (1945-1947)**

The British initially established a military administration and the colonial government-in-exile returned from Simla in October 1945. The British appointed Muslims to administrative positions, which enabled them to retaliate against Buddhists who had collaborated with the Japanese during the war.<sup>66</sup> More Muslim immigrants from Chittagong also came in the wake of the returning British and returning refugees, and the tensions from communal violence and massacres from 1942 continued to simmer.<sup>67</sup>

Even before Myanmar achieved independence, armed groups that operated in Arakan during the Japanese occupation soon engaged in rebellions using the large leftover stock of arms and ammunitions. A Buddhist secessionist movement emerged under the leadership of monk U Seinda that was supported by communists, while some Rakhine leaders demanded for the formation of a specific Arakan State (like the Kachins and Shans) within the union.<sup>68</sup>

Muslims in northwestern Arakan supported for either the annexation of Arakan into the future state of Pakistan or for the establishment of an independent Muslim state. A Muslim group named the Muslim Liberation Organization – later calling themselves the ‘*Mujahids*’ or ‘*Mujahideens*’ meaning “Soldiers of the Holy War” – began a separatist rebellion in March 1946.<sup>69</sup> An irredentist movement called the North Arakan Muslim League was formed in July 1946.<sup>70</sup> A Muslim delegation also went to Karachi in May 1946 to lobby the future Pakistani leader Muhammed Ali Jinnah to annex northern Arakan into Pakistan<sup>71</sup> and another group went

again in July 1947.<sup>72</sup> Muslim gangs in Akyab district also went about trying to evict Buddhist refugees and returnees.<sup>73</sup>

In January 1947, General Aung San met with Jinnah in Karachi to begin settling border issues between the two soon-to-be independent neighbors Myanmar and East Pakistan.<sup>74</sup> The Pinlon (Panglong) Conference was held in February 1947 for British Burma to achieve independence as a single country. Arakan Division did not have its own specific representatives as it was part of “Ministerial Burma”. Elections for the constituent assembly to draft the new constitution were held in April 1947, which the AFPFL won by a landslide. General Aung San – architect of Myanmar’s independence – was assassinated on 19 July 1947 by political rivals. The country – including Arakan Division – achieved independence six months later on 4 January 1948 under the premiership of U Nu.

## 2.3. Post-Independence (1948 - present)

### 2.3.1. 1948 – 1962

Even before independence, armed conflict had erupted in Rakhine among competing armed groups. U Seinda’s rebellion was mainly active in Myebon and Minbya townships in north-central Rakhine since mid-1947.<sup>75</sup> The Muslim Liberation Organization – later known as the Mujahids or Mujahadeen - had begun fighting since mid-1946.<sup>76</sup> The return of Buddhist refugees and the replacement of British-appointed Muslim officials with Buddhists by the new Burmese government stoked communal tensions further.

The Mujahids were estimated to have from 2,000 to 5,000 fighters headed by former military personnel and with a training camp in the Mayu hills between Buthidaung and Maungdaw. The Mujahids enjoyed a degree of support among Muslims in Arakan – who numbered around 100-120,000 and beyond the border in East Pakistan.<sup>77</sup> While the central government in Pakistan did not support the Mujahid rebellion, there were reports of local officials who actively helped the guerrillas.<sup>78</sup>

Communists – particularly the Red Flag faction – was also active in Rakhine and had supported some of the insurgencies.<sup>79</sup> From 1948 to mid-1949, most of Rakhine was in the hands of a patchwork of competing insurgent groups, but government forces (the 5<sup>th</sup> Burma Rifles) were able to gain advantage by mid-1949. In 1950, Burma and Pakistan reached an agreement to cease Pakistani support for the Mujahid rebels.<sup>80</sup> By the mid-1950s, both U Seinda’s rebellion and the Mujahids had lost steam.<sup>81</sup><sup>2</sup> The last Mujahid rebels surrendered in July 1961.<sup>82</sup>

Both Buddhist and Muslim politicians played roles in the politics of post-independence Myanmar. One notable Muslim politician was Sultan Mahmud, MP for Buthidaung constituency who also served as union-level Minister of Health from 1960 to 1962 and also pushed for the creation of a special area for Muslims living in Arakan. Some local Muslim politicians began using the word “Rohingya” to refer to Muslim communities in northwestern Arakan, and pushed for a confessional power structure where public offices were to be equally divided and held in check between the majority Buddhists and minority Muslims. Some Muslim leaders also pushed for the creation of a Muslim-majority region in northwestern Arakan.

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<sup>2</sup> See Annex I for newspaper report of the fall of Mujahideen rebels in 1954.

The ruling AFPFL split into two factions in 1958, leading to a political crisis. General Ne Win was invited by U Nu to lead a caretaker government from October 1958 to April 1960, and elections were held in February 1960 which U Nu party won. In August 1961, the government declared Buddhism as the state religion – a fulfilment of one of U Nu's election promises.<sup>83</sup> Although the government subsequently adopted a freedom of religion bill, the move to make Buddhism the state religion alienated non-Buddhists.

### *Mayu Frontier District*

During campaigning in the run-up to the 1960 election, U Nu promised to create an Arakan state. The Muslims, led by Sultan Mahmud, also demanded a separate region for themselves. He agreed to create a 'frontier region' along the Mayu River in order to win the vote of Muslims in northwestern Arakan. While the creation of Arakan State was delayed due to legislation, the 'Mayu Frontier District' – comprising Maungdaw district and the northwestern part of Rathedaung Township – was established on 30 May 1961. It was within Arakan Division but was directly administered by the central government based in Yangon. The district headquarters was located in Maungdaw. The Mayu Frontier District had a population of over 400,000, of which 75% were Muslims.

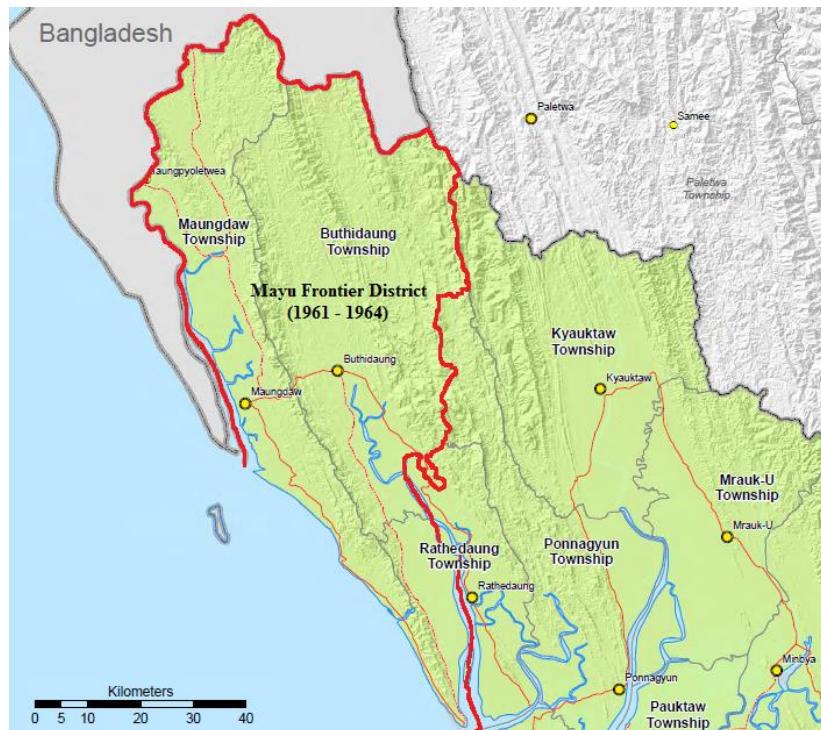


Figure 6. Map of the Mayu Frontier District (1961-1964). The Mayu Frontier District was part of Arakan Division but administered directly by the Central Government from Yangon (Rangoon). Adapted from "Township Map of Rakhine State", Myanmar Information Management Unit

### **2.3.2. 1962-1988**

Citing concerns for the unity of the country – including the disgruntlement due to U Nu declaring Buddhism as the state religion, the Tatmadaw under General Ne Win assumed power on 2 March 1962 and established the Union Revolutionary Council government.<sup>84</sup> Shortly after, the Revolutionary Council declared the "*Burmese Way to Socialism*" as the national ideology and the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) was formed. In 1964, the government implemented a wide-spread nationalization campaign of businesses and expelled around 300,000 people holding Indian and Pakistani citizenship.

The Mayu Frontier District was dismantled on 1 February 1964, and the area was again administered through Sittwe (Akyab). During the Bangladeshi War of Independence in 1971, Myanmar remained neutral but allowed for the evacuation of some Pakistani citizens and aircrafts through Sittwe. There were also Bengali war refugees who fled into Myanmar –the Bangladeshi ambassador in Yangon K. M. Kaiser told the British ambassador T. J. O'Brien that there were “upward of ½ million Bangalee trespassers in Arakan” that Myanmar had some right to eject but the Bangladeshi embassy had been imploring the Myanmar government not to press the matter.<sup>85</sup>

In 1974, a new socialist constitution was promulgated that made Myanmar a one-party socialist state (“the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma”), and granted statehood to Arakan Division as “Rakhine State”. Over the past decades, border regions such as Shan, Kachin and Chin States had seen influxes of illegal immigrants, but the scale in Arakan was of a much larger magnitude.<sup>86</sup>

In May 1977, Operation Nagamin was launched in Kachin and Chin States and in Yangon. It comprised immigration and Tatmadaw officials to verify citizenship, register citizens and to screen out non-citizens and non-residents as preparation for the 1978 census.<sup>87</sup> The operation was initiated in Rakhine State in February 1978 and involved military operations targeting suspected illegal immigrants. This resulted in over 200,000 Muslims crossing into Bangladesh.<sup>88</sup> The governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh negotiated for the resettlement of the Muslims who had left for Bangladesh. Eventually, most of those who had gone to Bangladesh returned but some remained in the camps along the border.<sup>89</sup> In 1982, the Citizenship Act was enacted that updated Myanmar’s citizenship laws.

Rakhine State had a population of 1.7 million in 1973 and 2.04 million in 1983.<sup>90</sup> The 1983 census reported that 1.38 million or 67.8% of Rakhine State’s population were Rakhine and 24.3% were “Bangladeshis”. Buddhists constituted 69.7% of the population while Muslims were 28.5%. Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships had a combined population of around 438,000.

### **2.3.3 Rebellions**

Beginning in the 1960s, Muslim rebels began fighting for greater political rights and secession under the banner of various “Rohingya” movements. Often one movement would split and one of the factions would morph into a newly named armed movement. These groups would establish small camps along remote areas of the Myanmar-Bangladesh border and launch cross-border raids against government outposts and both Buddhist and Muslim villages.

In 1963, the “Rohingya Independence Force” (RIF) began fighting the central government.<sup>91</sup> The RIF was reorganized as the “Rohingya Patriotic Front” (RPF) in 1974 but the movement soon split into various factions. In 1982, more radical elements of the RPF broke away and founded the “Rohingya Solidarity Organization” (RSO), with bases in remote parts of Bangladesh along the Myanmar border. The RSO enjoyed close ties with militant Islamist organizations, with Afghan trainers – veterans in the war against the Soviet invasion – seen in some RSO camps. Around 100 RSO militants were also reported to have undergone training with Hizb-e-Islami Mujahideen in the Afghan province of Khost.<sup>92</sup> The RSO split in 1986 and one of the moderate factions, along with RPF remnants, became the “Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front”.<sup>93</sup>

With help from the Karen National Union (KNU), some Rakhines founded the Arakan Liberation Party in 1967, and its armed wing the Arakan Liberation Army (ALA) was established in 1968. The ALA was soon defeated by the Tatmadaw, but was re-established in 1973 and again in 1980, with help from the KNU.<sup>94</sup>

#### **2.3.4. 1988-2010**

Following widespread pro-democracy demonstrations across the country, the Tatmadaw assumed power in September 1988 and established the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). Elections for a constitutional committee to draft a new constitution to replace the 1974 socialist constitution. Elections for a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution were held in May 1990.

The RSO continued its expansion and operations in the 1990s, including providing training to militants and conducting cross-border raids. In 1992, Operation Pyi Tharyar was launched as a response to RSO activities. The operations also caused around 250,000 Muslims to flee into Bangladesh. An agreement was again reached between Myanmar and Bangladesh, and over 230,000 were repatriated between 1995 and 1997 under the supervision of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

In 1998, the ARIF and RSO merged to become the “Arakan Rohingya National Organization” (ARNO) that continued to exist mainly in Bangladesh with negligible militancy activities through its armed wing, the “Rohingya National Army”. The front fell apart a few months after it was formed (Lintner 2001)<sup>95</sup>.

#### **2.3.5. 2010 – present**

Myanmar’s first elections since 1990 were held in November 2010. In Rakhine State, the Rakhine Nationalities Development Party (RNDP) became the only ethnic minority party to win majorities in the states and regions contested. It won 7 out of 12 elected seats in the Amyotha Hluttaw (House of Nationalities), 9 out of 17 seats in the Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives), and 18 out of 35 seats in the Rakhine State Assembly. The National Democratic Party for Development (NDPD), a party with mainly Muslim membership, won two seats in the State Assembly, while Buthdaung and Maungdaw constituencies elected Muslim candidates from the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) to the Pyithu Hluttaw. Another general election was held in November 2015, where the Arakan National Party (ANP) won 12 Pyithu Hluttaw seats, 10 Amyotha Hluttaw seats, and 22 State Hluttaw seats – a total of 45 seats.

According to the 2014 census, Rakhine currently has a population of around 3.2 million, of which over 2 million (63.3%) are Buddhists and around 1.12 million (35.1%) are Muslims.

### **3. MUSLIMS IN NORTHWESTERN RAKHINE STATE: A BRIEF HISTORY**

As a coastal region with trade and political links along with geographical proximity to Bengal and ports along the eastern coast of the Indian subcontinent, Rakhine has had more cultural and religious influences from South Asia. These include earlier exposure to Hinduism, Buddhism and also Islam. While the history and culture of modern Rakhine since the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD is deeply rooted in Buddhism, Islam exerted a certain level of influence starting from 1430 when the Mrauk U kingdom was established.<sup>96</sup>

While Islam had some influence on the communities living in Rakhine, much of the pre-colonial history of the Muslim communities who inhabit northwestern Rakhine State have been heavily based on speculation, contentions and liberal interpretations of facts or revisionism made by activists and political leaders. Archaeological remains, primary documents and historical evidence tend to not support many of the politicized conjectures proffered by “Rohingya” activist-academics.

In an entry in the 1917 Burma Gazette, the British deputy commissioner for Akyab (now Sittwe) wrote that during the reign of Mahataing Sandaya (ruled circa AD788-810), “several ships were wrecked on Ramree Island and the crews, said to have been Mahomedans, were sent to Arakan proper and settled in villages.”<sup>97</sup> The report has no further mention of those people. It is believed that the shipwreck survivors were settled in a few villages around the then-capital of Wethali.

Some “Rohingya” activists contend that these shipwreck survivors were Arab men who, through their marriage of local women, were progenitors of the “Rohingyas”. It is also claimed that many local inhabitants converted to Islam and by the 10<sup>th</sup> century, a Muslim kingdom was already established in northwestern Rakhine area. One version claims that the “Rohingyas’ ” forebears inhabited Arakan, had already embraced Islam long before the arrival of Arakanese Buddhists, and that the name “Arakan” or “Rakhine” comes from Persian or Arabic words (Raham). For example, it is claimed that the Rohingyas’ forebears, having supported Prophet Muhammad’s grandson and leader of Shia Islam Hussain bin Ali, fled the Battle of Karbala (in modern day Iraq) in 680AD, fled the Middle East and landed in Maungdaw.<sup>98</sup> These claims are used to support arguments that the “Rohingyas” are indigenous inhabitants of Arakan, and in some versions, even pre-dating the Arakanese people.

These claims cannot be corroborated with archaeological and historical evidence, nor do they conform to the wider trend of history in the region. Classic Arabic texts from 950-1350 provide no evidence of Arab contact with the northeastern coast of the Bay of Bengal.<sup>99</sup> An Arab geographer, Mas’udi (d. 956) did record the earliest known notice of Muslims in Bengal. However, Bengal - including Chittagong - was ruled by the Buddhist Pala and Chandra dynasties from the 8th to 12<sup>th</sup> century. Turkic General Bakhtiyar Khilji conquered Bengal in 1204 and Shah Jalal, a Sufi saint associated with the spread of Islam in Northeastern Bengal, arrived in only the early 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>100</sup> And while the followers of Hussain bin Ali were of the Shia branch of Islam, the Muslims of Rakhine State follow Sunni Islam.

That said, Arakan was part of the commercial trade network spanning the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean. Unlike the medieval kingdoms that arose in the Ayeyarwaddy valley, Arakan was more open to trade and external influence. Such exposure to maritime communication meant that Buddhism reached Arakan earlier than the interior of Myanmar while Hindu influence led to kings adding the word ‘Chandra’ between 788 and 957 AD.<sup>101</sup> Many traders from India and maritime Southeast Asia – including many Muslims – also called in Arakanese ports.<sup>102</sup> Interaction with the Portuguese also brought about Catholicism.

### **3.1. Origin of the Muslim Communities**

Five junctures and periods that saw the arrival of Muslims into Arakan have been historically recorded. While “Rohingya” leaders and activists claim that their forebears purportedly arrived in the 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> century as shipwreck survivors and gave rise to a Muslim civilization, there is no archaeological record or evidence available to date that supports this claim of a Muslim civilization. That said, given the role of Arabs and Muslims in maritime trade around the Indian Ocean, it is feasible that there were some contacts between Arakan and the Muslim world, and that some Muslim merchants would have called port in Arakan including some shipwrecked Muslims. However, Muslim influence and presence was minimal.

The first significant arrival of Muslims was in 1430, when Muslim soldiers from Bengal fought for Arakanese king Min Saw Mon. The first historical mosque in Arakan - the Santikan mosque - was built in the eastern outskirts of Mrauk U in the 1430s by Muslim soldiers from Bengal who came over with Min Saw Mon.<sup>103</sup>

The next wave was in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century during Min Ba Gri (c. 1530-1556)’s expedition to Bengal that brought back Muslim prisoners of war. There were also Muslim slaves that were sold to Arakan by Portuguese slavers based in Dianga (modern day Chittagong). Most of them were settled around Mrauk U.

In 1660, Mughal prince Shah Shuja and his supporters fled to Arakan after losing the civil war for Mughal succession to Aurangzeb. They were given asylum by King Sandathudamma but tensions soon escalated. The tensions erupted into violence after Shuja plotted to seize the throne after the Arakanese king asked for Shah Shuja’s eldest daughter. Shah Shuja was subsequently executed and his followers – mainly Afghan archers – were pressganged into Arakanese service. They would gain influence to become kingmakers but were ultimately exiled to Yanbyé (Ramree) in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Their descendants became the Kaman people.

The fourth and most significant phase of Muslim arrival was during British colonial rule. Arakan along with Tenasserim (now Tanintharyi Region) became the first parts of Myanmar to be colonized by the British in 1826. The colonial administration proceeded to develop the economy of Arakan, with a focus on agriculture. Due to manpower shortages along with British view of the local populations as indolent, a large number of seasonal laborers were brought in from British India. Arakan saw a large number of seasonal laborers from neighboring Chittagong in Bengal, and over the years some of these migrants settled down in Arakan.

The last influx was in the period immediately following the end of the Second World War. New Muslim immigrants from Chittagong also came in the wake of the returning British and returning refugees.<sup>104</sup> And in 1971, there were around half a million war refugees who fled into Myanmar (compared to the nearly ten million who fled to India) to escape the violence of the Bangladeshi war of independence.<sup>105</sup>

Since the 1990s, the term “Rohingya” has been increasingly used to refer to Muslims living in Rakhine State, especially in the northwestern part of the state. However, despite this increased usage, the people that the term is used to refer to has not been constant by those who use it: at one end, it is used to refer to a specific group of Muslims who mainly live in northwestern Rakhine State, and on the other, some have haphazardly used it to refer to either all Muslims living in Rakhine State, or even all Muslims living in Myanmar.

While a version of the word “Rohingya” was first recorded by Dr. Francis Buchanan-Hamilton in 1799 while on his mission to the Konbaung dynasty’s capital of Innwa (Ava), it was an isolated reference and the term did not appear in other sources – Arakanese, Burmese or British – until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Buchanan wrote:

*“I shall now add three dialects, spoken in the Burma Empire, but evidently derived from the language of the Hindu nation. The first is that spoken by the Mohammedans, who have long settled in Arakan, and who call themselves Rooinga, or natives of Arakan.*

*The second dialect is that spoken by the Hindus of Arakan. I procured it from a Brahmen and his attendants who had been brought to Amarapura by the king’s eldest son, on his return from the conquest of Arakan. They call themselves Rossawn, and for what reason I do not know, wanted to persuade me that theirs was the common language of Arakan. Both these tribes, by the real natives of Arakan, are called Kulaw Yakain, or stranger Arakan.”*<sup>106</sup>

Subsequent British administrative and census records that studied the ethno-linguistic landscape of British Burma including Arakan and Akyab district did not mention the term “Rohingya”. There is reference to small Muslim communities that have lived in the area since the Mrauk U period, and also to large scale migration and immigration of Chittagonians and other people from Bengal, mainly Muslim.

The term “Rohingya” first arose as a label of identity in the 1950s, as political leaders of Muslim communities living in northwestern Rakhine state adapted to the post-colonial landscape. While the districts of Chittagong and Akyab belonged to a single entity (British India, until Myanmar became a separate colony in 1937) or were administered by the British (1937-1947), an international border now separated the area, between Myanmar (then Burma) and then the Dominion of Pakistan (later East Pakistan 1955-1971, Bangladesh after 1971). This post-colonial border, while based on the natural geographic barrier created by the Naf river, arbitrarily cut across cross-border communities. Just as some Muslim communities became part of Burma, Buddhist communities – including Rakhines – became part of the Dominion of Pakistan.

In May 1946, in the lead-up to the independence of British Burma and the creation of East Pakistan, some Muslim leaders went to Karachi to lobby future Pakistani leader Muhammed Ali Jinnah to incorporate northern Arakan into the new Pakistan.

While the Mujahid rebellion began in 1946 to fight for a separate Muslim state that would either be independent or merge with then-East Pakistan, there were Muslim political leaders who remained loyal to the newly independent Union of Burma. These leaders worked within the existing political structure and some served as elected officials, the most notable being Butidaung constituency MP Sultan Mahmud who served as the Minister of Health from 1960 to 1962. Some of these political leaders began to use the term “Rohingya” to refer to their communities. However, most of the Muslim leaders – including parliamentarians - used the term “Arakanese Muslims” to refer to themselves.<sup>107</sup>

As Rakhine politicians gained momentum for the creation of an Arakan State, Sultan Mahmud and his colleagues pushed for a confessional power structure for Arakan Division, where public offices were to be equally divided and held in check between the majority Buddhists and minority Muslims. They also demanded for a “Arakanese Muslim state” west of the Kaladan

river, citing that the Mughals under General Shaista Khan had occupied Arakan right up to the river in 1666<sup>3</sup>.<sup>108</sup> During the campaigning in the run-up to the 1960 general elections, Prime Minister U Nu agreed to Muslim demands to create a “frontier region” in order to win the support of the Muslim political leaders.

It was also during the U Nu government era that the term “Rohingya” began to be more widely used as a collective identity by the Muslim community in Rakhine. However, as previously stated, the term “Rohingya”, first mentioned in Buchanan’s accounts as “Rossawn”, was not subsequently mentioned in any British colonial era administrative and census reports. It is safe to assume that the British colonial administration, with its practice of extensive studying and recording of ethnic groups in its colonies, should not have had any reason to purposefully exclude the “Rohingya” as an ethnic group. With the term only becoming widely used post-independence, i.e. in the 1950s, after a series of failed rebellions and separatist movements led mainly by the Mujahideen, it is safe to conclude that the term “Rohingya” is in fact a politically constructed identity.

### **3.2. Contested and Politicised History**

For both the Arakanese and “Rohingya” political elites, history – or rather their versions of history – is a cause near and dear to them to the point of obsession. The Arakanese, disgruntled with what they perceive as neglect under successive Bamar-dominated post-independence governments, pine for rose-tinted recollections of Mrauk U and its kings who asserted Arakanese sovereignty such as Mong Ba Gri and Mong Razargri. For the “Rohingyas”, they present what they claim as irrefutable historical evidence of their presence in the region.

As nationalism emerged across British Burma, Arakanese and Muslim political leaders began to weave narratives to highlight their historical claims to political space in the emerging landscape. This politicization predictably led to liberal interpretations of history, the sweeping aside of inconvenient facts or narratives, and the projection of modern notions of ethnicity, nation-states and religion onto historical events and periods.

While the cosmopolitan nature of the Buddhist kingdom of Mrauk U cannot be denied, the extent of Muslim influence and historical presence as claimed by “Rohingya” activists is not indisputable, particularly when such claims constitute a part of an effort in historical revisionism intended to further the argument in favour of the “Rohingyas’ ” ethnic identity.

## **4. SECURITY CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES**

### **4.1. Links to Extremist Organizations**

While most of the Muslim population living in Northwestern Rakhine state have eschewed extremist or terrorist activities, some have sought to cultivate ties with terrorist and extremist organizations operating in Southeast and South Asia. The “Rohingya Solidarity Organization” (RSO) and the latest militant group – Harakah al-Yaqin / “Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army” (ARSA) have exhibited links to Islamist terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda, Harakat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI), Hizb-e-Islami Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jemah Islamiyah (JI).

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<sup>3</sup> However, this is not supported by historical evidence.

Abdul Qudus al-Burmi founded the “Arakan branch” of Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI-A) in 1988 that operates in collaboration with HuJI-B (Bangladesh). HuJI-B is reported to have operated a number of training camps in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and Cox’s Bazaar near the Myanmar-Bangladesh border, and recruited and trained “Rohingya” refugees.<sup>109</sup> Malaysian military officer Abdul Manaf Kasmuri (aka Kolonel Jihad) who worked for al-Qaeda after being radicalized during his peace keeping deployment to Bosnia and Herzegovina provided military training to cadres from the Arakan Rohingya National Organization for their plans to undertake “jihad” in Myanmar.

In January 2000, a “Rohingya” militant named Salimullah attended a meeting near Kuala Lumpur that was hosted by Riduan Isamuddi, a leader in both al-Qaeda and Jemah Islamiyah better known as Hambali. The meeting was attended by representatives of various jihadist organizations operating in Southeast Asia, and led to the formation of the *Rabitatul Mujahidin*, or Mujahideen League.<sup>110</sup> The meeting overlapped with the infamous Kuala Lumpur “al-Qaeda Summit” that was attended by senior al-Qaeda members and also two of the September 11 attack hijackers.

#### **4.1.1 Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO)**

Before the ARSA attacks of 2016 and 2017, the “Rohingya” militants and extremists had ties with international terrorism networks, reports dating as far back as the late 1990s and early 2000s. Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden told a Karachi-based newspaper, Ummat, on 28 September 2001, that there were “strong jihadi forces” present in Burma – very likely referring to the “Rohingya” militants on the Myanmar-Bangladesh border.<sup>111</sup>

The RSO has had ties to foreign extremist organizations (including Jamaat e islami in Bangladesh and its youth branch Islami Chatro Shibir) and received training from Afghan Mujahedeen, according to Jane’s Intelligence Review in July 1993. The RSO also has links to the Aqa Mul Mujahidin (AMM) terror group that had been reportedly active in Maungdaw.<sup>112</sup>

The RSO also has a Pakistan branch and “Rohingya” communities reported that Nur Hussain Arakani, head of the RSO’s Pakistan branch had been collecting funds and relief material from Hafiz Mohammed Sayeed of JuD/ LeT and Maulana Abdu Rauf of JuD-linked Falah-e-Insaaniyat foundation (FIF)<sup>4</sup> in 2015.<sup>113</sup> In fact, according to senior Bangladeshi intelligence officials, it was JuD/LeT that inaugurated the Difa-e-Musalmān-e-Arakan conference in Pakistan, to bring attention to the “Rohingya” in Rakhine.<sup>114</sup>

The RSO has strong ties to HuJI, Bangladesh’s main terrorist group, that was founded in 1992 – reportedly with funds from Osama Bin Laden. The U.S. State Department has designated HuJI as a terrorist organization, with ties to Islamic militants in Pakistan. It belongs to the “Jihad Movement in Bangladesh” which was one of the terrorist groups that signed the declaration of ‘holy war’ against the U.S. in February 1998, Bin Laden included. HuJI’s stronghold is in the southeast, including the Myanmar-Bangladesh border area, a volatile region rife with illicit activities such as smuggling, arms trafficking, and drug trafficking. HuJI was infamously involved in the July 2000 assassination attempt on Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

In early May 2002, nine terrorist groups including HuJI met near Ukhia (south of Cox’s Bazaar) and formed the Bangladesh Islamic Manch (Association). This new umbrella group included a

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<sup>4</sup> This is the humanitarian front of the LeT.

group claiming to represent the “Rohingya”. For coordination among the nine member-groups, a “Jihad Council” was formed.<sup>115</sup>

RSO also sent a delegation to the Forum Umat Islam in Jakarta in June 2013, a gathering of Islamic militant and extremist groups. According to Ar Rahmah Media Network’s website the two delegates – Ustadz Abu Arif and Abu Shafiyah (commander of the “Rohingya” Laskar Mujahideen) – called for personnel, weapons, funds, and medical assistance to fight for the “Rohingya”. The website reports that they unequivocally called for an armed struggle and that “there should be no diplomacy whatsoever”.<sup>116</sup>

Currently, there is a HuJI-A or HuJI-Arakan branch, led by its founder Abdul Qadoos Burmi who is a Pakistani national and a Burmese Muslim who fled to Pakistan in the early 1980s. He founded HuJI-A in 1988 with the goal of “liberating” Rakhine State. He has close ties to the well-known global terror group Lashkar-e-Tayyaba/Jamaat ud Dawa (LeT/JuD).<sup>117</sup> He fought with the Talibans in Afghanistan against the Soviets in the 1980s before joining HuJI in Karachi. HuJI-A is based in Korangi Town in Karachi, and had worked closely with Ilyas Kashmiri, head of al-Qaeda’s 313 Brigade.<sup>118</sup>

#### **4.1.2. Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA)**

Contrary to its declarations, ARSA is not a freedom fighter group.<sup>119</sup> Its leader Ataullah abu Ammar Junjuni, also known as Hafiz Tohar, was recruited by HuJI-A Chief Abdus Qadoos Burmi in Maungdaw and sent for training in Pakistan.<sup>120</sup> In fact, ARSA was initially known as Harakah al-Yaqin, “the faith movement”, without the words “Arakan” or “Rohingya” in its name. Like the RSO, its members also received training from veterans of the Afghan wars, mostly conducted in the Myanmar-Bangladesh border area. Around 150 of its members are also non-“Rohingya” militants.<sup>121</sup> In August 2012, JuD operatives Shahid Mahmood and Nadeem Awan visited “Rohingya” extremists in camps along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border. Pakistan-linked “Rohingya” terror groups are also present in Mae Sot, on the Thai side of the Thai-Myanmar border. Two terrorists, Maulana Ustad Wazeer@Noor Kabir and Fareed Faizullah, Pakistani nationals of “Rohingya” origin, have been recruiting “Rohingya” migrants who fled from Bangladesh to Thailand or Malaysia and have been unable to procure necessary documentation in those countries for refuge.<sup>122</sup>

ARSA is extremely active in disseminating its propaganda on the internet, particularly through social media platforms such as YouTube and Twitter. It is reported to have over 20 YouTube channels and an active Twitter account. This is similar to recruitment and public relations tactics practiced by terror groups such as ISIL.

There have been four attacks by “Rohingya” militants in recent years. An attack was carried out in November 2012, where three Tatmadaw soldiers were abducted on the Bangladesh-Myanmar border, prompting the government to seal the border at the Maungdaw crossing.<sup>123</sup> This was believed by Myanmar authorities to have been carried out by the RSO.

Several RSO attacks took place in May 2014, in Maungdaw Township, one on May 17, where four Border Guard Police officers were killed and one was wounded after a clash. Seven officers from border posts Number 52 and 53 were on patrol when they were ambushed. A separate attack also took place at border post Number 39, where two were killed. Four civilians were also killed in another attack by an unknown armed group, likely the RSO. The victims were Thimbawkwae village administrator Zaw Kawria and three of his family members in

Maungdaw. In the same report by The Irrawaddy, locals expressed fears about their security due to the “inadequacy of the border fence’s deterrent capability.”<sup>124</sup>

The third attack occurred on 9 October 2016, launched by at least 250 militants. According to official reports, nine police officers were killed and five were injured during coordinated attacks at night at Kyikanpyin, Kotankauk, and Ngakhuya in Maungdaw and Rathedaung Townships. The attackers were armed with knives and hand-made weapons. They were able to steal more than 50 guns and 10,000 bullets from the border posts. The bodies of eight attackers were found and two attackers were captured alive. Interrogations by police revealed that they were from Aqa Mul Mujahidin (AMM) linked to RSO and that they had planned to attack six separate locations.<sup>125</sup> A report by Mizzima news on 19 October 2016 proved that AMM’s leader then was Ata ullah abu Ammar Junjuni@Hafiz Tohar, current chief of ARSA.

The most recent attack, and the most brutal to date, was carried out by ARSA. The attack came a mere six hours after the Kofi Annan Advisory Commission on Rakhine released its final report. On 25 August 2017, ARSA launched a coordinated attack against 30 police posts and an army base in Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Rathedaung Townships. The attackers were equipped with hand-held explosive devices, machetes, and small arms, and killed ten police officers, a soldier, and an immigration official. Official reports state that 77 insurgents were killed and one captured.<sup>126</sup>

On 27 May 2018, Amnesty International released a detailed report on what its Crisis Response Director Tirana Hassan called “the largely under-reported human rights abuses by ARSA”. The report was released after an investigation by Amnesty International, which included forensic evidence and testimonies from survivors of the massacres. The report concluded that at least around 99 Hindus, including women and children less than three months old, were killed “execution-style”. The victims also had their identification documents burned, hands tied behind their backs, and were blindfolded. A total of 53 Hindus were killed at Ah Nauk Kha Mauk Seik Village, while 16 villagers – 8 women and their 8 children – were spared after they agreed to convert to Islam and marry people selected by ARSA militants. The 16 survivors were repatriated in early October to Rakhine State. The bodies of 46 Hindus presumed to have been killed at Ye Bauk Kyar Village remain missing. Of the 53 killed at Ah Nauk Kha Mauk Seik Village, 45 bodies were found in four mass graves in late September 2017.

Amnesty International also reported that the survivors who were made to flee across the border to Bangladesh with their ARSA captors were forced by the militants to falsely testify on video that the victims were killed by Rakhine villagers and the Myanmar military. The report also stated that ARSA mobilized “likely around several thousand” “Rohingya” villagers and armed them with “bladed weapons or sticks” to participate in the killings of the Hindus. However, the “overwhelming majority” of “Rohingya” villagers did not participate in the attacks.

Amnesty International added that victims fear speaking out about abuses and crimes committed by ARSA as they face threats and intimidation from the militants. There have been murders in refugee camps in Bangladesh, thought to be committed by ARSA against refugees suspected of cooperating with the Myanmar government.<sup>127</sup>

## 4.2 Security Challenges

In recent years, security in Rakhine State has weakened. This can be attributed to two things: 1) the weakening of the government's intelligence network after the removal of former intelligence chief General Khin Nyunt and the subsequent purge of his military intelligence personnel; and 2) the disbandment of Border and Immigration Control Command (widely known by its Burmese acronym "Na Sa Ka").<sup>128</sup>

Before the attacks in recent years – in 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2017 – the RSO was able to carry out only one major attack in 1994, where 300 "Rohingya" militants five army posts including Ale Than Gyaw and Myin Lut in April 1994. Both the Myanmar army and Bangladeshi authorities attacked RSO camps and arrested its members and the RSO suffered heavy losses.

### 4.2.1. Keeping Check on Illegal Immigration

Under BSPP rule, at least five crackdowns on illegal immigration were carried out, the most high-profile one being the Nagamin Operation in 1978. Contrary to widespread belief, this was not confined to Rakhine and was in fact a nationwide operation. In Buthidaung Township, 83 village tracts, 17,193 households, and 108,431 people were inspected and scrutinized. Officials found 643 illegal immigrants. Approximately 35,596 people fled across the border into Bangladesh. In Maungdaw Township, 99 village tracts, 19,418 households, and 125,983 people were inspected and scrutinized. Officials found 458 illegal immigrants. Approximately 98,227 people fled across the border into Bangladesh. Additionally, 156,683 people from other townships also fled to Bangladesh.<sup>129</sup>

### 4.2.2. "Na Sa Ka" – Border and Immigration Control Command

It was after the April 1992 MoU for refugee repatriation between the Bangladesh and Myanmar governments that the "Na Sa K" was formed, in June 1992 - the Border and Immigration Control Command (known by its Burmese acronym Na Sa Ka). The Na Sa Ka was led by military intelligence personnel and included military intelligence, law enforcement, and immigration and customs. It started with nine operational areas (later eleven in 2012) and twenty-five stations. Its goals were to check illegal immigration and border trade and maintain border security while operating an intelligence network. To that end, it implemented a mapping, registration, and inspection process where every village in Northern Rakhine was visited on a yearly basis to:

- a. Register households and draw village maps.
- b. Form village administrations.
- c. Photograph family members of each household.
- d. Register the village population.
- e. Create a registration and reporting system for visitors, births, deaths and marriages.
- f. Issue travel documents.
- g. Conduct regular inspections.
- h. Hold regular meetings with village heads.

The Na Sa Ka also began issuing temporary identification cards, called "white cards", as part of their citizenship verification process.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> These would later be handed to self-identifying "Rohingya" in Rakhine during the November 2010 elections held by the SPDC.

Under the SLORC/SPDC, Maungdaw – along with all major townships bordering Myanmar’s neighbouring countries except for Laos – was designated a Special Administrative District. Na Sa Ka had authority over immigration and customs these districts. In the 1990s, the SLORC/SPDC government also established 24 villages in Northern Rakhine, populated by ex-convicts from prisons all over the country to increase the number of Buddhists in the area. The villages became known widely by the Myanmar acronym for the Ministry for Development of National Races and Border Affairs (now Ministry of Border Affairs under direct control of the military) – “Na Ta La”. As of 2007, Na Ta La villages had over 1,700 households and over 8,700 inhabitants.<sup>130</sup>

While Na Sa Ka could be argued to be an effective system for preventing illegal immigration in theory, in practice there was nationwide corruption in the lower levels of the Ministry of Border Affairs. Anecdotal evidence and verbal reports indicate that immigration and customs officers abused their powers and accepted bribes to let illegal immigrants in and in many cases, even issued national identification cards. Such corruption and abuse of power likely resulted in significant increase of illegal immigrants being allowed to settle in Rakhine State through illegal means.<sup>131</sup>

#### **4.2.3. Military Intelligence**

The military intelligence grew powerful under the BSPP and SLORC/SPDC governments. The RSO and other separatist movements in Rakhine, along with their supporters, were closely monitored. The military intelligence was purged twice, with its chiefs removed – once under the BSPP in May 1983 and then under the SPDC in October 2004. The first purge did not affect the country’s intelligence network and security as much as the second purge, as the military intelligence held a lot more power and responsibilities under the SLORC/SPDC government than it did under the BSPP. Intelligence Units 10 and 18 operated in Rakhine State, where Unit 18 operated in Buthidaung-Maungdaw and Yathetaung areas which were predominantly Muslim. Unit 18 worked with local mullahs who had considerable influence over the villagers. This was done in exchange for special favours such as permission to travel freely throughout Rakhine and going to Yangon for medical treatment. Several local villagers were also offered special privileges, such as border-trade with Bangladesh, to be informers as part of the intelligence network.<sup>132</sup>

The second military intelligence purge in 2004 saw the removal of all high-ranking officers except four, with all commanding officers of intelligence units and the Na Sa Ka given long prison sentences. Members with over two years of service were either dismissed or imprisoned. The military intelligence’s powers and resources were greatly diminished, and the entire institution was reorganized into the Military Affairs Security (now Military Security Affairs). The Na Sa Ka was also reorganized but continued its mapping, registration, and inspection process.<sup>133</sup>

The newly reorganized military intelligence never reached the level of effectiveness that its predecessor had, as its authority and resources were decreased. The Na Sa Ka itself was also disbanded in July 2013 under President U Thein Sein’s administration due to allegations of discrimination against the Muslim population and demands from international organizations, human rights groups, and the NLD, to ease international pressure before his visit to Europe. The Border Police force was formed for border security and the mapping, registration, and inspection process was passed on to the Immigration Department. The respective handovers of authority and responsibility were uncoordinated and resulted in inefficiencies. Consequently, intelligence networks were never able to penetrate the communities and monitor criminal

activities as the old military intelligence networks used to and yearly inspections to prevent illegal immigration could not be conducted efficiently.<sup>134</sup>

#### 4.2.4. Attack Against Myanmar Diplomatic Missions

The plight of the “Rohingya” has been exploited as justification for attacks on Myanmar diplomatic missions. Past attacks against Myanmar diplomats and diplomatic missions are cause for concern.

In April 2004, three “Rohingya” militants set fire to the Myanmar Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, attacking the Minister Counsellor and a security guard, both of whom sustained serious injuries. The militants entered the Embassy under false pretexts of seeking consular services. The Minister Counsellor attempted to negotiate with the attackers, who entered the compound by climbing over the fence, but was attacked the moment he left the main Embassy building. The militants carried an axe, a knife, and a briefcase containing more than 30 packets of petrol which they used to set the Embassy on fire.<sup>135</sup>

In September 2017, a Molotov cocktail was thrown at the Myanmar Embassy in Jakarta.<sup>136</sup> At the end of the same month, an Egyptian militant group called “Hasm” claimed responsibility for a minor bomb blast at the Myanmar Embassy in Cairo.<sup>137</sup>

## 5. SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### 5.1. Socio-economic Profile of Rakhine

**Total Population:** 3,188,807 – includes estimation of those not enumerated<sup>6</sup> <sup>138</sup>

**Male:** 1,526,402 (47.87%)

**Female:** 1,662,405 (52.13%)

**Age Groups:** 0-14 at 31.1%; 15-64 at 62.2%; 65+ at 6.7%

**Urban:** 17% of population

**Literacy rate:** Age 15+ at 84.7%; 92.2% for males; 78.7% for females

**Labour force participation:** Age 15-64 at 58.8%

**Unemployment rate:** Age 15-64 at 10.4%<sup>7</sup>

**Per capita income:** MMK 42,000 per month/USD 500 per annum<sup>8</sup> <sup>139</sup>

**Poverty rate:** 78% of state’s population (compared to 38% nationally)<sup>9</sup> <sup>140</sup>

**Access to safe drinking water:** 50-58% of population<sup>141</sup>

**Access to sanitation:** 48-54% of population (around 41% have no access to sanitation)<sup>142</sup>

**Food security:** 10% of population identified as “food poor”<sup>10</sup>

**Malnutrition levels:** 53% of population

(highest levels in Myanmar with 16.3% prevalence of severe malnutrition)<sup>143</sup>

**Transport Infrastructure:** 350 miles of road in-state for 14,000 square miles (200 miles interconnecting towns/cities & 150 miles within towns/cities)<sup>144</sup>

**Electrification rate:** 26% of population (2010 data)<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Other data excludes those not enumerated.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> This is data from mid-2013.

<sup>9</sup> Data from the World Bank included in UNDP’s “The State of Local Governance: Trends in Rakhine” (February 2015).

<sup>10</sup> “Food poverty” here is defined as insufficient household income to meet minimum caloric requirements. Center for Diversity and National Harmony. Rakhine State Needs Assessment, September 2015.

## **5.2. Addressing Challenges in Rakhine**

In September 2016, at the request of State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the Kofi Annan Foundation and the Office of the State Counsellor formed the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State chaired by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The Commission was mandated to examine the complex challenges facing Rakhine State and to propose responses to those challenges. In March 2017, the Commission issued a set of interim recommendations.

On 24 August 2017, the Commission released its final report on Rakhine State.<sup>11</sup> As was recommended by the report, the Myanmar government formed the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State, which has begun taking steps for implementation. The Committee has recently published the first report on the progress of implementation of the recommendations.

One of the most significant developments in recent months, was the formation of the 10-member Advisory Board to the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State on 14 December headed by Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai, former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand. The primary purpose of the Board is to provide external perspective and advice to the Committee for the implementation of recommendations more effectively and efficiently. The Board has visited Rakhine State, and has already provided a five-point advice to the Implementation Committee as preliminary reflections. The points made by the Board include sustainability of implementation projects, wider participation of the UN agencies in the repatriation and resettlement process, and granting of full humanitarian access, among others.

## **5.3. Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement, and Development in Rakhine (UEHRD)**

**The Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement, and Development in Rakhine (UEHRD)** is a public-private Union enterprise launched on 12 October 2017, with three main goals: providing humanitarian assistance, carrying out resettlement and rehabilitation and working for development in Rakhine State. The UEHRD's work has been to spearhead various projects to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi acts as Chairperson and Dr. Win Myat Aye the Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement acts as Vice Chairman. This Union Enterprise brings together the experience and expertise of the public and private sectors and will be funded by public funds and generous donations from UN agencies, friendly countries, international and regional financial institutions as well as by donors inside the country and those who are living abroad all over the world.<sup>12</sup>

### **5.3.1 Task Forces**

The UEHRD, with the assistance of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI), has set up eleven private sector led Task Forces:

1. Construction and Infrastructure Task Force (CITF)
2. Agriculture and Livestock Task Force (ALTF)
3. Development of Industrial Zone Task Force (DIZTF)
4. Communications, Information, and Media Task Force (CIMTF)

<sup>11</sup> Available at: [http://www.rakhinecommission.org/app/uploads/2017/08/FinalReport\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.rakhinecommission.org/app/uploads/2017/08/FinalReport_Eng.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> For further reading, accessible at - <http://rakhine.unionenterprise.org/>

5. Job creation, opening and running of Vocational Training Task Force (JVTF)
6. Healthcare Task Force (HTF)
7. Microfinance Support Task Force (MSTF)
8. Crowd Funding Task Force (CFTF)
9. Tourism Promotion Task Force (CPTF)
10. International Relations Task Force (IRTF)
11. Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) Secretariat as Coordinating Body for Task Force meetings

The eleven Task Forces function to coordinate and collect private sector resources for both emergency and humanitarian work and longer term socio-economic development in Rakhine State.

For progress on UEHRD work, please refer to “The Report to the People on the Progress of Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State”, published on 13 February 2018, in the Annex section. The report includes details on the repatriation and resettlement process, humanitarian assistance for IDPs, and socio-economic development projects in Rakhine State.

The Red Cross Movement also continues to play an important role in providing services to address the urgent need of humanitarian assistance in affected areas. The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) is also actively participating in the Government-led mechanism to deliver humanitarian assistance.

In early to mid-February, members of the diplomatic corps in Myanmar, representatives of UN agencies including UNHCR, WFP, FAO, and the World Bank were provided with access to the Maungdaw area for observation of the preparations for repatriation and related projects. The Foreign Minister of Japan and the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom have also visited the area, accompanied by their media personnel.<sup>146</sup>

## **6. REPATRIATION**

The last refugee repatriation process was carried out in 1992. Bangladesh and Myanmar signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in April 1992 and formed a Working Group for the repatriation process, in collaboration with the UNHCR. A joint statement was issued, on 28 April 1992, at end of the visit of the 14-member Myanmar delegation to Bangladesh, led by Foreign Minister U Ohn Gyaw and included Information Minister Brigadier General Myo Thant. The delegation met with Bangladeshi President Abdur Rahman Biswas, Prime Minister Beum Khaleda Zia, Information Minister Nazmul Huda, Minister of State for Relief and Rehabilitation Lutfur Rahman Khan, Chief of Mission of UNHCR in Dhaka Darioush Bayandor.

The agreement included the voluntary return of refugees who had National Registration Cards, other relevant documents issued by Myanmar authorities, or could provide evidence of their prior residence in Myanmar. There were to be no restrictions on the number of refugees repatriated, as long as they could establish “bonafide evidence” of their residence in Myanmar. Additionally, both governments also agreed to cooperate to prevent illegal border crossings from both sides of the border. Over 230,000 refugees were repatriated.

Both governments further agreed to cooperate to ensure security along the border areas, in compliance with the Agreement on Border Arrangements and Cooperation (Border Ground

Rules) signed in 1980. Lastly, the two governments agreed to oppose all forms of terrorism, insurgency, and illicit activities such as smuggling, arms trafficking, and drug trafficking directed against each other. It was decided that the respective law enforcement agencies would collaborate on such matters.<sup>147</sup>

## 6.1. Current Repatriation Process

On 23 November 2017, the governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh signed an MoU on the "Arrangement on Return of Displaced Persons from Rakhine State". The Arrangement includes the formation of a Joint Working Group for the repatriation process. Its terms of reference were signed on 19 December 2017.<sup>148</sup>

On 15 January 2018, the first Joint Working Group Meeting was held. The Physical Arrangement for Repatriation was signed by the both governments on 16 January 2018.<sup>149</sup> According to the Physical Arrangement, the repatriation process was to commence on 23 January 2018.<sup>13</sup>

The returnees are to be received at two reception centers, i.e. Taung Pyo Letwe and Nga Khu Ya. After one or two nights, the returnees are to be temporarily accommodated at Hla Phoe Kaung transit camp before permanent settlement. Myanmar will initially receive 300 returnees (150 returnees per center) per day to ensure smooth and safe return. The number shall be increased based on the progress of the return and shall be reviewed in three months. The number of transit camps and reception centers may be increased based on requirement, as the repatriation process progresses. In the process of repatriation, Myanmar will draw on the services of the UNHCR as needed. On 5-6 February, the UNHCR conducted its second workshop on voluntary repatriation. Officers and staff members from nine relevant government ministries including the Ministries of Home Affairs, Immigration, and Foreign Affairs, have been assigned at the reception and transit centers to facilitate the repatriation process.<sup>14</sup>

Myanmar has provided to Bangladesh a list of 508 Hindus and 750 Muslims who have been verified as Myanmar residents, to be included in the first batch of repatriation. In addition, on 30 January, the Myanmar Ministry of Foreign Affairs has provided Bangladesh with information related to resettlement plans, provision of livelihoods assistance, access to basic services, and safety arrangements for verified returnees.

On 16 February 2018, Bangladesh Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan formally handed over to his Myanmar counterpart Lieutenant General Kyaw Swe, a list containing 8,032 people from 1,673 families. Discussions are also underway for a solution to some 6,000 refugees currently on the "Zero Line" of the Bangladesh-Myanmar boundary, where habitation is prohibited according to the boundary agreement.<sup>150</sup>

To expedite the repatriation process, a team of ten Myanmar officials visited refugee camps in Cox's Bazar on April 11-13, 2018. The officials were Minister for Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye, Chief Coordinator for UEHRD Dr. Aung Tun Thet, and representatives from the Myanmar Women's Federation, and various religious communities. Officials later made public that refugees in the camps had no knowledge of the repatriation forms the Bangladesh government had agreed, with the Myanmar government, to distribute to

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<sup>13</sup> This was pushed back due to a delay in administrative and logistical preparations.

<sup>14</sup> Statement by H.E. U Hau Do Suan, Ambassador/ Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations at the Security Council Briefing Session on Myanmar (New York, 13 February 2018)

those who wished to be resettled in Rakhine. Bangladesh Minister for Foreign Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali and Minister for Home Affairs Asaduzzaman Khan later admitted that the completed forms for the list of 8,032 refugees handed over to the Myanmar government were not the forms that the two governments had agreed to use when the bilateral repatriation agreement was signed on 23 November 2017.<sup>151</sup>

The Myanmar team's requests to meet with "Rohingya" imams, refugees whom the Myanmar government had already agreed to resettle, and Hindu refugees who also fled across the border after the ARSA attacks of August 2017 were all denied by the Bangladeshi authorities. The Myanmar team was told that the camp for Hindu refugees was too far away. It was discovered later that said camp was located on the way to the Cox Bazar camps. The refugees in the camps also were "ill informed" about the National Verification Card (NVC).<sup>152</sup> According to a statement made before parliament, on 14 May 2018, by Minister for Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye, NVC holders will be allowed to travel freely within the country with temporary travel permission forms issued by the relevant local authorities.<sup>153</sup>

# THE SUNDAY NATION

## PEASANTS HARD HIT BY LONG DELAY IN PAYMENTS

Brokers Profit From Farmers' Need For Ready Cash

(By The Editorial Staff of "The Nation")

Inefficiency in the handling of the rice industry in Thongwa, Kyanthawin and Kyauktaung townships is reflected in the slow payment of peasants described yesterday, but not in the payment for their produce.

This other aspect of the situation emerges from the investigation made by *The Nation*. The editorial staff into the situation across the country from Rangoon, with regard to the peasants in these three areas, the SAMB has not been purchasing paddy directly from the peasants themselves. As its agents the State Commodity Board and Marketing Unit, The Union started purchasing in January and continued its buying until April. Paddy was bought at six purchasing-points, two in each of the three townships of Kyanthawin, Thongwa and Syriem. Some of it was purchased from brokers and traders, but the largest amount came in from the peasants themselves. At the beginning of the purchasing season, payments were being made to the peasants within the period became a month and later three or four months.

Still Waiting

In Thongwa township, last payments were made to cultivators who weighed in their produce in February. 20. Cultivators who had sold their grain and paid it in full are still waiting to be paid.

As the peasant is in need of ready cash, these delays have wrought great hardship on him. In Syriem, peasants have been forced to sell their grain to brokers and traders, who naturally take a large margin. They have taken "queue". This stage is the first opportunity for the exercise of corrupt practices on the part of the purchasing agents. It is reported that peasants who are willing to pay the small commodity board price are asked to invariably receive their numbers in record time.

The paddy is then piled in the Union granaries, with the assurance that it will be safeguarded. However, several days usually elapse before the grain is graded if the paddy is done, and in this period it is unusual for some of the brokers to pay only the amount found on the scales at the time of weighing in.

This however, is not the end

(Continued page 8, col. 3)

## LIMBIN WINS TITLE TO BURMESE EMBASSY BUILDINGS IN TOKYO

TOKYO, June 12—A Tokyo District court has ruled in favour of the Burmese Prince Limbin against the Burmese Consulate General, as proxy of the Burmese Government in the dispute over the ownership of the Burmese Embassy property in Tokyo, it was learned here today.

The Japanese Foreign Office fears that the decision may result in a deterioration of relations between Burma and Japan, local newsmen reported.

Limbin acquired ownership of the said estate through his marriage with the daughter of U Thant, former Burmese Ambassador to Japan who was said to have purchased the property in dispute in 1944.

Limbin refused to obey orders received from home but he was not granted an extension of his visa which expired here in principle on April 12 last.

Japan expects Burma to refer the matter to the International Court of Justice.—AFP.



Limbin Htak Tin Lat.



VIETS AT GENEVA: Viet-Minh Foreign Minister Pham Van Dong is greeted on his arrival at the airfield in Geneva by Mr. Gromyko, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, in dark coat, and Chou En-lai (extreme right). Also at the airfield was General Nam II of Korea.

FASTIDIOUS PEOPLE prefer  
**Pelikan**  
FOUNTAIN PENS  
Available  
At all leading stationers

PRICE: 25 PYAS  
THROUGHOUT THE UNION

Jeeps Collide  
In Bahar

(From Our Staff Reporter)

Two men and three children were injured in a collision between two jeeps yesterday afternoon at the Bahan railway station. The accident occurred when a jeep (RC 113), trying to overtake two buses, ran into another jeep coming from the opposite direction.

U Ba Pu, of No. 130, Yedashe Road, and three children who were in the second jeep, received minor injuries.

The driver of the first jeep, Mg. Nyo, was arrested by the Traffic Police for reckless driving.

Rebels Take Land Dues

(From Our Own Correspondent)

PAKU, June 12—Mekkahla, 30 miles east of Pega, was attacked by Communists last night according to reports reaching here.

The rebels, who had evidently been tipped off that there was a large sum of money in Headman Pei's office, made straight for the building, and seized the family members who were staying there. They forced the headman to "sell" his tokens to brokers and traders, who naturally take a large margin. They also took the money, and revenue collected from the cultivators.

Headman As Hostage

(From Our Staff Reporter)

PAKU, June 12—Communist insurgents attacked Seikkan village, 7 miles west of Mekkahla, on June 9, and got away with 11 rifles issued to the village defence unit.

The rebels, who had evidently been tipped off that there was a large sum of money in Headman Pei's office, made straight for the building, and seized the family members who were staying there. They forced the headman to "sell" his tokens to brokers and traders, who naturally take a large margin. They also took the money, and revenue collected from the cultivators.

Indo-China Issue Causes Fall Of French Govt.

Laniel Resigns After Defeat In Confidence Vote

PARIS, June 12—The cabinet of Premier Joseph Laniel handed its collective resignation to the President of the Republic today.

The resignation was announced by the Secretary of State at the Premier's office, Pierre July, after calling on National Assembly Speaker M. Soumeyrol. M. July said that it was not yet known whether President Rene Coty would accept the resignations.

Earlier: M. Joseph Laniel's eleven month old Government was defeated in the French National Assembly.

But there were not sufficient votes to cause automatic resignation.

A total of 306 deputies voted against the Government's Indo-China policy while 293 supported it.

The opposition fell eight votes short of the 314 needed to obtain a majority which would mean the automatic fall of the Government. As under the French constitution, Laniel can remain in office. It was not immediately known what course of action he would take.

Laniel had staked the existence of his Government on the support of three opposition motions

(Continued page 8, col. 2)

## Mujahids Confirm Demand For Autonomous State

### INSURGENT PAMPHLET CLAIMS "CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS"

(From Our Staff Reporter)

An unequivocal demand for an autonomous Muslim state in northern Arakan is contained in pamphlets now being distributed openly by the Mujahid insurgents.

These pamphlets, which confirm *The Nation* story on the demand (May 30) are signed by Muhammad Abbas, who styles himself the President of the Jihad Council, Mujahid-i-Arakan.

The insurgent leader claims that the "helpless Muslim minority" in northern Arakan have a right to a separate state in which they can "enjoy the same privileges and fulfil the same obligations as the other citizens of the Union". He alleged that the Government of the Union is well aware of their "noble and great object", but has deliberately tried to "misrepresent" the Mujahids as a band of robbers, fighting without any object save looting and robbery.

The argument used by the Mujahid leader is that the Muslims in northern Arakan are long resident in the country as a culture, language and religion different from the rest of the people of Arakan, wherefore the only solution is an autonomous state in which its entity can be preserved. Such a state would allow the Muslims in Arakan to contribute to the general well-being of their "beloved country and its people".

These pamphlets, which bear the seal of the Mujahid insurgent organization, are being widely distributed in Arakan and in Rangoon.

Pay Best Price  
AND  
Get Best Quality

**WAHL SHELL**  
(Savile Row, London)  
English 100 cent Wool  
Suit Length  
Price K. 195/-  
per piece of 3 yds.

Hundreds of Designs to make your Choice Selection.

Exclusive Quality for Burma Monsoon.

**TIGER BRAND LADIES' UMBRELLAS**  
Best British Make  
K. 18/- each.

**TURKISH BATH FACE,  
AND TOILET TOWELS**  
of outstanding Design from Holland

at K. 25/-, 8/-, 5/- and 6/- respectively.

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The report did not say if the Japanese seamen were injured in the attack.—UP (BPS).

prayer that "good sense will prevail with the rulers of Burma" so that the "constitutional right" of the Muslim minority may be recognized.

These pamphlets, which bear the seal of the Mujahid insurgent organization, are being widely distributed in Arakan and in Rangoon.

Finally, the President of the Jihad Council concludes with a

Rene Coty would resign.

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## Japs Protest Against Rgn. Dock Workers

OSAKA, June 11—A Japanese shipping company is expected to ask the Foreign Office to protest against an act of violence allegedly committed to its seamen by harbour workers in Rangoon last April, it was reported today.

Kyodo News Agency said the alleged incident occurred on April 27 in Rangoon harbour when Burmese workers attacked two crewmen of the 4,693-ton *Nankai Maru* owned by the Namura Shipping Company.

The fight started when the Japanese accused the stevedores of tampering with the cargo, Kyodo said.

The report did not say if the Japanese seamen were injured in the attack.—UP (BPS).

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**THE NATION**

VOL VI RANGOON No. 327 TUESDAY REGD No. 177 JUNE 15, 1954

**CASSIM ARRESTED BY E. BENGAL AUTHORITIES**

Mujahid Leader To Face Trial On Several Charges

(From Our Staff Reporter)

Cassim, the notorious Mujahid leader, has been arrested by the East Bengal authorities, and is at present lodged in the Chittagong jail, it can now be confidently stated.

Following on a reliable report from a correspondent in Arakan that Cassim had been arrested while attempting to cross into Pakistan, ten days ago, *The Nation* last night interviewed a spokesman of the Pakistan Embassy in Rangoon, who confirmed the news of the arrest.

The spokesman said that Cassim had been arrested on a charge of illegal entry, and that no official approach had been made by the Burmese Government for the handing over to them of the rebel leader.

It is understood that Burma has at the moment no extradition treaty with Pakistan, and that no official approach has been made by the Burmese Government for the handing over to them of the rebel leader.

However, the Pakistan Government is likely to take a favourable view of any suggestion for discussions on the matter.

Cassim, who is said to be an illiterate fisherman, has been a recognised leader of the Mujahids since the middle of 1948. He is a history-sheet criminal, having served a prison sentence for a sea-dacoity before he became a Mujahid. Released from jail at the end of 1947, he organised a dacoit gang in Arakan. Pursued by the police he took refuge with the Burma Communist Party operating underground in Arakan, and came under the influence of U Seinda and Bo Maung Tu, the rebel leaders of the area.

Politically trained by these leaders, Cassim turned his attention to the organisation of a Mujahid party throughout Arakan. At first he had only about 30 men, but later his force increased when the followers of another Mujahid leader who had surrendered to the Government joined his ranks.

He received further support from a group of Muslim insurers.

(Continued page 8, col. 2)

**Lack Of Timber Throws Workers Out Of Jobs**

(From Our Staff Reporter)

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**Corpse Floats Down River In Iron Drum**

(From Our Staff Reporter)

The body of a man was yesterday found in a G1 drum which came floating down the Rangoon River. The discovery was made by workers of No. 2 Sawmill, Akyab, where the barrel was washed ashore.

Up to a late hour last night, the police had not been able to establish the dead man's identity. The body, which was in a highly decomposed state, was sent to the RGH for examination. It is believed that he wished to return the confession made by him before the Maubin District Magistrate. He had been wounded in the back.

The cause of death is unknown. U Ohn Maung, Vice-President of the Union, accompanied by BWPP's Yebaw Than Ngwe, stated that due to lack of "timber quota", work at Mills No. 4, 6, 9 and 10 has slowed down and 400 workers have been thrown out of employment. He stated that the four mills have been forced to share about 600 tons per day, whereas each mill needed that amount for efficient working.

It is understood that the main cause of the suspension of work is the insurrection. But the early days of the insurrection, when the sawmill owners had been unable to procure logs from rebel-held territories, the situation had not been as acute as at present. The Government's embargo on procurement of timber from rebel-held areas amounted to encouragement of the insurgents, he asserted.

U Ohn Maung urged a more liberal issue of logs to the mills, and the introduction of a system to circumvent the present tender-system which tended to raise prices.

Meanwhile, they agreed that there should be a session of the deadlocked nine-nation Indo-China peace talks here this afternoon.

Conference sources said that it would be a restricted session.

The British and Soviet Foreign Ministers and their delegations should be present at the plenary session of the 19-nation Korean Conference tomorrow, conference sources said.

Mr. Eden and Mr. Molotov, who shared the Indo-China talks chairmanship, met at the British Minister's Lakeside Villa in an attempt to break the deadlock and laid bare in full detail a plenary session.

There were public sessions held at Soviet Embassy followed 12 secret meetings of the Indo-China Conference now in its second year.

Mr. Eden was understood to have asked Mr. Molotov again today about a possible compromise in the dispute over Laos and Cambodia, the two smaller Indo-China states.

Meanwhile, the sixteen-nation non-Communist "Korean group" (Continued page 8, col. 1)

**BBTCL Workers Protest Against Eviction Order**

(From Our Staff Reporter)

About 50 ex-employees of the BBTCL Sawmill in Dannedlaw have been served with orders to quit the quarters they have been occupying since the Mill was closed down.

A spokesman of the group yesterday stated that they had applied for re-employment when the State Timber Board began firing them but for some reasons had not yet been informed whether they were being accepted or not.

The spokesman added that they were appealing to the authorities to give them back their jobs and to allow them to stay until Oct. 1.

He pointed out that they had been allocated the quarters as legitimate workers, before the nationalisation took place, and they should not now be treated as trespassers as implied in the eviction notices served on them on June 12.

An emergency meeting was held by the workers concerned at the Soviet Embassy in New Delhi, where he enjoyed the same rank as Ambassador.

Mr. Stichibon has held that appointment until his designation as Ambassador Extraordinary to Egypt the next five years he served in the Soviet Foreign

**NEWSPAPER FORMS EVIDENCE IN U KYAW MYINT TRIAL**

CASE ADJOURNED FOR HEARING OF ARGUMENTS

(From Our Staff Reporter)

The hearing of evidence in the trial of ex-Minister U Kyaw Myint and ex-Secretary to Government U Kyaw Thien concluded in the Court of the Special Tribunal yesterday with the examination of three defence witnesses: U Ba Saing, Secretary of the Economic and Social Advisory Council; U Tun Sein, Secretary, Economic Affairs; and U Ba Pe, Editor, *Hanthawaddy Daily*. U U Pe, Secretary to the Cabinet, was absent and waived by the defence.

U Ba Saing said he had prepared defence by referring to the bound volume of the *Hanthawaddy* newspaper for 1949. He said the 2-4-9 case was the first to be heard by the Prime Minister on the previous evening dealing with the political situation in the country. The Prime Minister had made no statement about the case.

The 3-4-9 case contained the information that the Prime Minister had accepted the resignations of the Economic and Social Advisory Council Ministers from the Cabinet. Accused U Kyaw Myint was mentioned as one of those whose resignation had been accepted. The

Office at Moscow, and was then appointed as Counsellor to the Soviet Embassy in New Delhi, where he enjoyed the same rank as Ambassador.

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**TRADE MARK T TENNENT'S**

PRICE: 25 PYAS (THROUGHOUT THE UNION)

Rice Shipments

During the month of April 1954 the State Agriculture Marketing Board has shipped a total of 1,67,134 tons of rice, and rice products, details below:

Rangoon	85,954 tons.
Bassein	31,838 tons.
Moulmein	19,085 tons.
Akyab	30,295 tons.
Total	1,67,134 tons.

total value of rice and rice products including loadings from January 1, 1954 up to the end of April 1954 amounted to 9,71,997 tons of rice and rice products including 46,400 tons of bran.

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The spokesman said that Cassim had been arrested on a charge of illegal entry, and that it was probable that other charges would be preferred against him when he is brought to trial.

It is understood that Burma has at the moment no extradition treaty with Pakistan, and that no official approach has been made by the Burmese Government for the handing over to them of the rebel leader.

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(Continued page 8, col. 2)

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**Fall Of French Govt. May Mean Suspension Of Talks**

**Eden & Molotov Try To Break Nine-Nation Deadlock**

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## 'OPERATION MONSOON' SMASHES MUJAHID HQ ON MAYU RANGE

### REBEL COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF KILLED IN FIERCE BATTLE

(From Our Staff Reporter)

In a major offensive designated "Operation Monsoon" now being launched in the Arakan, Burma Army troops have succeeded in smashing the Mujahid headquarters on the western slopes of the Mayu range, killing the Muslim rebel commander, Colonel Shibal Rashid, and the Buthidaung Regional Commander, Colonel Abad.

Colonel Shibal Rashid, who was formerly one of the Mujahid's Regional Commanders, was promoted to succeed the notorious Bo Cassim, when the latter was arrested in Chittagong. "Operation Monsoon" began on November 1, when Army units started a two-pronged drive along the eastern and western slopes of the Mayu range, one column taking off from Buthidaung and the other from Maungdaw.

First objective of the Maungdaw column was Point 1440 which

was attacked at 7 a.m. on November 1. The Mujahids put up fierce resistance here. Despite heavy shelling from the Government side, the troops could make little headway against the rebels who were well dug-in in bunkers. The strong-point finally fell at 2-53 p.m. after an eight-hour battle.

When the troops entered the mountain hide-out they found six well-constructed barracks, heavy fortifications, plentiful food supplies and five new cases of rifle and tommy-gun ammunition containing some 7,000 rounds.

Meanwhile the Buthidaung column were attacking Point 309 in the Rathedaung area. The place was garrisoned by a small force of about 50 rebels, who soon fled after a brief resistance.

The following day, November 2, saw dawn attacks on Mujahid camps along the eastern slope of the Mayu Range. Points 714, 308 and 385 fell to the advancing Army units in quick succession. 15 enemy dead were found after these skirmishes.

The Government units then continued their advance along the mountain range, encountering no more resistance for the next five days. Entering the village of Htaindaw on November 5, they surprised Mujahid Lieut-Col. Dusala and two of his aides, and made them prisoners.

The final blow of the offensive was struck on November 7 when the eastern and western columns converged on the Mujahid headquarters near the northern end of the Mayu Range.

In this stronghold about 150 of the rebels were holding out, behind a battery of heavy machine-guns which from the height of the encampment commanded all approaches. "Operation Monsoon" troops had to call in the aid of mortars to silence the guns before they could take the position.

Launching their assault at 7-30 a.m. they hoisted the Union

### Bogus BSI Men Caught

(From Our Staff Reporter)

Two men, posing as BSI officers, were detained by the Ward Headman of St. John's Khetthit, and handed over to the Police on Sunday night.

The men had accosted Maung Kyi, a peon of the Port Commissioner's Department, and demanded that he establish his identity. When they told him that he was wanted at the BSI headquarters for interrogation in connection with a certain case, he became suspicious.

Delaying them in his house, on the pretext that he would have to inform his relatives who were living nearby, he went out and returned with the Ward Headman, who promptly detained the two men.

Handed over to the Police, the impersonators were identified as Aung Sein and Kala, of no fixed abode.



(Continued page 4, col. 2)

## 'Operation Monsoon':

(Continued from page 1)

flag over the place four hours later.

Within the enemy headquarters they found 8 of the enemy who had fallen at their positions. Amongst them were the Commander of all the Mujahid forces in the Arakan, Colonel Shibal Rashid and his Regional Commander for Buthidaung, Colonel Abad. The rebels had fled in such disorder that they had left their headquarters intact, together with an ammunition dump containing over 20,000 rounds of .303.

The Mujahids are reported to have retreated towards Satobauk in the north.

"Operation Monsoon", which is still continuing, has dealt a smashing blow against the Mujahid rebels who have been terrorising the inhabitants of the Maungdaw - Buthidaung area, victimising innocent people and masquerading in the name of religious liberators.

## Rebels Storm Tauntha:

(Continued from page 1)

three Army columns struck simultaneously at the headquarters. Relying mainly on machine-guns and light automatic weapons, the Mujahids put up a strong resistance for nearly 4 hours, but as the number of their dead and wounded mounted, they became demoralised and fled in disorder.

"Colonel" Ahmed Hussein, Commanding the Mujahid defenders is believed to have had a narrow escape, as he fled with his men, leaving 40 dead scattered in the headquarters area.

When Army units went in they found about 50 barracks and ammunition dumps in the camp.

The Maung-hna-ma-daung headquarters was established by Cassim himself with forced labour from nearby villages. Many of Cassim's victims, who had their ears and noses cut off, have been held at this camp.

## **ANNEX II**

### **The Report to the People on the Progress of Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State**

13 February 2018

#### **Introduction**

1. The current issues in Rakhine State are not only the concern of Rakhine State alone but also the concern of the country as a whole. The stability, peace and development of Rakhine State are absolutely critical for the whole country to become stable, peaceful and developed.
2. While there is so much work to be done for rule of law and development across the country including Rakhine State, the Government is putting a great deal of determined efforts into promoting rule of law and enhancing development. In doing so, the national level development projects and plans as well as those for Rakhine State have been implemented. The implementation of those plans and projects is found to be highly relevant to and in line with the recommendations put forward by the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State. The Advisory Commission on Rakhine State submitted its interim report in March, 2017. The implementation of the recommendations of the interim report started from 1 April, 2018 and in order to increase the momentum, the Government established the Committee for Implementation of Recommendations on Rakhine State with 19 members on 9 October, 2017. The Committee has to release its Report to the People on the progress of its implementation every four months. This report covers the period from 1 April, 2017 when the implementation of the recommendations started before the formation of the Committee up to 31 December, 2017.

#### **The Economic and Social Development of Rakhine State**

3. Since both domestic and foreign investments play an important role in the state's economy, the Rakhine State Investment Commission was established on 7 July 2017 and the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration opened its state office on 30 October 2017. Till now, they have verified and granted concessions to a total of 48 investment projects, including 6 livestock and fishery projects, 2 construction projects, 11 hotel and tourism projects in accordance with the Myanmar Citizen Investment Law, as well as 1 mining project, 27 energy projects and 1 service business in accordance with the Foreign Investment Law, with an aim to create job opportunities for local people.

4. Whenever expropriation of private land is unavoidable to execute investment projects, the owners are entitled to compensations for their land and losses. To date, compensations have been provided to 1,001 local people who lost their land and crops due to land expropriation for investment and development projects. The fund to compensate another 7 local people has also been requested in 2018-2019 FY Budget.

5. As a form of Corporate Social Responsibility, the contributions made by the investors to the socioeconomic development of Kyaukpyu are as follows: 50 villages are supported MMK 30 million each to use as revolving funds for village development activities; and heavy equipment operator training was conducted in cooperation with Caterpillar Company. In education and infrastructure sectors, Shwe Gas Project and Southeast Asia Oil and Gas Pipeline Project have contributed MMK 7.62907 billion and USD 876257.65 respectively.

6. Previous experience has shown that large-scale projects, including SEZs, can have negative consequences on the environment, other economic sectors and local people; therefore, the Environmental Conservation Department and the Management Committee of Kyaukpyu Special Economic Zone have been discussing and coordinating to conduct the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in a comprehensive approach.

7. Also, the coordination and cooperation with ILO are taking place to conduct labour market assessment – LMA. While preparing for LMA, trainings have been delivered to local people to enhance their vocational skills. There have been 22 types of vocational training including those for women provided to a total of 2,160 trainees. With the support of GIZ, dress-making training course was provided in Yangon for the local women from Kyaukpyu, and other vocational training on ironwork, welding, and electrician training and the training on modern agricultural techniques were also conducted. During the reporting period, 250 jobs can be created in Smart garment factory, Khine Pyi Soe garment factory and Shwe Kyar hand weaving workshop. Likewise, Shwe Project and Southeast Asia Oil and Gas Pipeline Project also offer jobs to 520 local people.

8. As transportation is an important component of socioeconomic development, high priority is given to improving transportation in Rakhine State. Starting from April up to December 2017, roads and bridges damaged after the attacks in Maungtaw were repaired and earthen roads, gravel roads, concrete roads and concrete bridges were built. Heliports were also constructed. Currently, twenty bridges and two new mountain roads on May Yu Mountain are under construction.

9. In the land transport sector, 6 more bus lines have been expanded in addition to the 42 existing bus lines. For water transport, transportation along the Rakhine coastline and rivers is improved with Kispanadi (1) and (2) vessels running along the Sittway-Kyaukphu route and Aung Takhon vessels running along the Sittway-Buthidaung route. As a part of the Kalatan Multi Modal Transit Transport Project supported by the Indian Government, six cargo vessels of 300-ton capacity started running on 26 June, 2017. In the air transport, approval has been obtained to build the new Mrauk U airport through public private partnership (PPP). At Munaung Airport, construction of 200 feet over-run to the south to the existing runway (4,500'x100') and RESA earth levelling work has been started. Also in Sittway Airport, construction of the expanded terminal building (180'x60') has been completed;

10. In the Communications sector, mobile phone penetration is now over 85% and there have been more than 1 million internet users.

11. The efforts made in the electricity sector, starting from 1 April 2017 up to 31 December 2017, have resulted in the increases of electricity supply in terms of the number of hours a day, which is illustrated in the following diagram.

12. For drinking water supply, building and repairing 26 earthen ponds were completed in the villages in Rakine State. Thinechaung Earthen Dam (with capacity 249 million gallons) and Dotantaung (1) Check Dam (with capacity 20.39 million gallons) were constructed. Construction of concrete reservoirs, repair of earthen ponds, installation of pipes connecting reservoirs to water collecting tanks were also carried out. Additionally, 234 rural drinking water supply projects were implemented in 233 villages, sourcing water from hand-dug wells, ponds, springs and other sources. A variety of comprehensive rural development activities were also undertaken in 7 villages through Village Development Project, in 235 villages through CDD Project and in 97 villages through Emerald Green Project.

13. In support of agricultural production, mechanization was promoted by giving out loans of MMK 447.953 million to farmers to buy 233 machines and equipment for farming and fishery, and by selling 2 tractors and 575 hand-operated tractors in instalments. Moreover, 23,332 baskets of seeds of pure paddy variety, 30 baskets of seeds of winter peanuts, 4 baskets of seeds of green gram, 796 packets of vegetable seeds were distributed to 4,553 households. The training on agricultural techniques was provided to 90 farmers with the support of KOPIA project. The farming equipment operator training was conducted for four times and benefitted 110 trainees. Besides, 1,261 farmer trainings were delivered in all townships of Rakhine State.

14. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are important drivers of the development of the regional economy. Loans are given out to SMEs with the repayment terms from 3 to 5 years at an interest rate of 9%. Cooperating with JICA, Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank provides two step loans, with 3 to 5 year repayment terms, at an interest rate of 8% to farmers all over the country including Rakhine State. As agricultural loans have been provided to farmers in Rakhine State, loans of MMK 86181.15 million were given out for monsoon crops to the farmers in 17 townships and loans of MMK 2408.55 million were given out for winter crops to the farmers in 7 townships in 2017-2018 Financial Year.

15. In the tourism sector, the new Myanmar Hotel and Tourism Law have been drafted and submitted to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw through the President's Office. Once that law is approved and enacted, there will be more opportunities for small scale family hotel businesses.

16. Encouraging investments and development of businesses, the company registration process has been streamlined by reducing the procedures up to 4 steps from previous 13 steps, and also reducing the registration fee from MMK 1 million to MMK 500,000. Additionally, a telephone hot line (1887) has been set up to provide information needed for incorporating a company or making an investment.

17. As efforts to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change, the following activities have also been implemented: 11,764 acres of community forests have been established; 1,644 acres of Gwa Chaung mangrove forest is planned to designate as protected area; and 390,000 trees

were grown through community tree planting movements in 2017-2018. Regarding production and distribution of climate resilient seeds, 441 acres of monsoon paddy seed nursery was established, 415,687 acres was planned and grown for crop diversification during 2017-2018 Financial Year. Improving irrigation systems is another important effort for agricultural development. As such, 100% of 75 projects were completed, including construction, upgrade and repairs of irrigation systems, embankments, spillways, concrete water gate, check dams, and reservoir dams. In Rakhine State, 26 environmental education programs were organized during the period from June to November 2017 and 5,174 people attended those programs.

## **Citizenship**

18. Since the time the current Government took office, the Muslim people who applied for going through the national verification process were verified in accordance with the Law and the numbers of people who benefitted from those processes are listed below.

19. If the people who want go through the verification process do not hold any forms of identification documents, they need to hold a NV Card first in accordance with the Law. As a form of advocacy for acquiring and holding NV cards, the members of the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State have been briefing the rights and responsibilities, associated with holding NV cards, to Muslim village administrators, 100-household heads, local people and fishermen working on fishing boats on every visit of theirs to Rakhine State. During the NV processes, the necessary forms and documents for application of citizenship are also provided.

20. The Government seeks to actively engage the Islamic religious groups in the country to mobilize more participation and cooperation of Muslim people in the verification processes. This active engagement did result in discussions and negotiations between the Islamic religious groups and the members of the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State as well as the statements issued by those Islamic religious groups, urging all the Muslim people in Rakhine State to cooperate with the authorities in the national verification process.

## **Freedom of Movement**

21. With regards to the freedom of movement for people holding NVC Card or any forms of identification document, a road map has been developed with time-frames and milestones for removing restrictions. According to the road map, the initial steps have taken in the Maungtaw District, including intensifying security and raising awareness widely among the communities of both sides that actions will be taken against any acts by any side which harm, disturb or block the people from the other side moving around, in accordance with the existing laws, rules and regulations.

## **Internationally Displaced Persons (IDPS)**

22. Work has been started for the closure of the Thetkelpyin IDP Camp and Aung Mingalar Ward in Sittway Township, and the Taungpaw IDP Camp in Myepon Township in line with the international standards.

23. The repair and construction work carried out to improve the shelters in the IDP camps is as follows:

- (a) 50 shelters in the Say-tha-margyi IDP camp, Sittway were refurbished;
- (b) 12 individual houses were constructed in place of the shelters in the camp in Ramree;
- (c) At the IDP camps in Sittway Township, 176 new shelters, 281 new units of shelters, 482 tube-well pumps and 508 toilets were constructed.

## **Humanitarian Assistance**

24. Humanitarian assistance has been provided by the Union Government, the public, UEHRD Youth Volunteer Program, Red Cross Movement, ASEAN countries, partner countries and various national and international organizations as follows:

- (a) Food and non food items in a total value of MMK 479.60 million by the Union Government;
- (b) Food and non food items in a total value of Swiss Franc 17 million by Red Cross Movement;
- (c) Food and non food items in a total value of USD 730,000 by ASEAN countries;
- (d) Assistance in a total value of MMK 443.75 million by UEHRD Youth Volunteers;
- (e) Assistance in a total value of MMK 79.05 million by MA UK Myanmar.

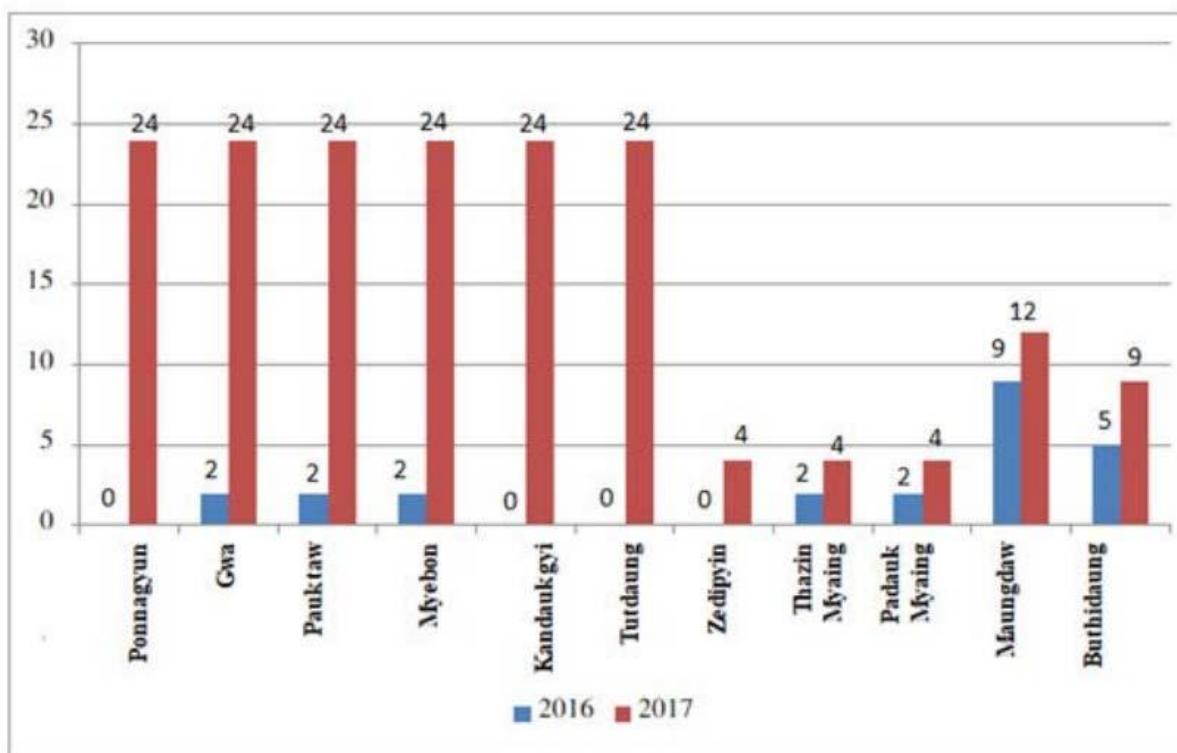


Figure: Increase in electricity supply (in hours). (Note: 2017 figures much higher.)

Sr.	Description	From 01/04/2010 to 31/12/2016	From 01/04/2017 to 31/12/2017
1.	Citizens	40	118
2.	Naturalized citizens	24	105
3.	Children under 18 of naturalized citizens entered into the list of eligible applicants for naturalized citizenship	22	129
4.	Children above 18 of naturalized citizens entered into the list of eligible applicants for naturalized citizenship	-	15
5.	Children of citizens and naturalized citizens to whom 10 year old citizenship scrutiny cards are issued	-	148
6.	Children of citizens and naturalized citizens to whom 18 year old citizenship scrutiny cards are issued	-	480
7.	People to whom NV cards are issued	2,457	5,162
8.	Biometric data collection	-	8,501
9.	Kaman people to whom the national ID cards are issued	-	3,336

**Source: GNLM (Global New Light of Myanmar).** Accessed at UEHRD website:  
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<sup>146</sup> Statement by H.E. U Hau Do Suan, Ambassador/ Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations at the Security Council Briefing Session on Myanmar (New York, 13 February 2018)

<sup>147</sup> Joint Statement by the Foreign Ministers of Bangladesh and Myanmar Issued at the Conclusion of the Official Visit of the Myanmar Foreign Minister to Bangladesh from 23-28 April 1992.

<sup>148</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> Mizzima News. (2018, February 17). “Bangladesh hands list to Myanmar for Rohingya repatriation” Accessible at - <http://www.mizzima.com/news-regional/bangladesh-hands-list-myanmar-rohingya-repatriation>

<sup>151</sup> The Irrawaddy. (2018, April 20). “Myanmar Says Refugees in Bangladesh Have Not Received Repatriation Forms”. Accessed online at - <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-says-refugees-bangladesh-not-received-repatriation-forms.html>

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> RFA (Radio Free Asia) Burmese. (2018, May 14). “Dr. Win Myat Aye on NVC Process at Parliament”.

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