



Rohingya Human Rights Initiative

ROHRIingya

Letter, No A001_/2024

Date: 28 January 2024

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R4R Immediate Press Release

Indiscriminate bombardment in Rohingya civilian areas in Buthidaung Township, Myanmar

The Rohingya Human Rights Initiative (ROHRIingya) strongly condemns the recent indiscriminate attacks on Rohingya civilians in the Buthidaung Township of Arakan (also called Rakhine State). Since January 25th, 2024, at least 20 innocent Rohingya civilians have been killed, and 104 others have sustained severe injuries, in the indiscriminate bombardment carried during an armed conflict between the Myanmar military and the Rakhine Militants called Arakan Army (AA). Regrettably, the attacks continue to persist as we issue this statement.

The onslaught has resulted in the destruction of 50 Rohingya houses in Hpon Nyo Lake village and 4 in Khin Daung, with an additional hundred house partially damaged. These incidents are exacerbating an already dire humanitarian situation in the region. The shutdown of mobile networks, communication disruptions, and transportation challenges due to the ongoing fighting has led to a surge in the prices of essential goods, including food and medicines. This has further endangered the lives of civilians.

In a previous incident on December 27, 2023, four Rohingya civilians, including two children lost their lives, five others sustained severe injuries and two houses belonging to Rohingyas were destroyed. This occurred as the Myanmar military junta indiscriminately fired artillery at Zedi Taung village in Buthidaung, while targeting the Rakhine militants .

It is of grave concern that Rohingya villages are being targeted as part of the conflict between the Myanmar military and Rakhine Militants (AA). Reports suggest that AA fighters have based themselves in Rohingya villages, thus placing civilians at risk during the fighting. While the AA should not be using civilians as shields, the Myanmar military should also not be indiscriminately bombing areas where civilians can come to harm. Both the AA and Myanmar military should comply international laws of war and protect civilians.

The Rohingyas are a protected ethnic minority group. The **International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2020** mandated Myanmar to protect and safeguard the Rohingyas from

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genocidal attacks and preserve the evidence. The ICJ has ruled that Myanmar must take all the measures to protect Rohingya from further harm. Hence, all the parties involved in the armed conflict in Myanmar must refrain from causing further destruction to the community.

The Rohingya Human Rights Initiative urgently calls for an immediate cessation of all attacks on Rohingya civilians in Bhuthidaung township and beyond in Arakan. We call upon the AA to refrain from occupying civilian areas in Rohingya settlements, including schools, for military purposes. The Myanmar's military must cease indiscriminate bombing of civilian areas and take all necessary actions to ensure the protection of civilians and their properties.

Moreover, we urge Myanmar authorities to allow unhindered access for humanitarian aid to affected civilians and to lift the internet shutdown, enabling communication and assistance to reach those in need.

We also call upon the international community, including the Independent International Fact Finding Mission on Myanmar (IIFMM) and UN bodies to investigate the recent war crimes against Rohingya civilians perpetrated by both the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army. It is imperative that the Myanmar military upholds international laws and guarantees the safety and well-being of all its citizens, including the Rohingya minority.

Rohingya Human Rights Initiative (ROHRIngya)
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