



**Arakan Rohingya Union Narrative Report to OIC on Situation
in Arakan/Rakhine State, Myanmar**
(March 28, 2017)

Submitted by
Dr. Wakar Uddin
Director General, Arakan Rohingya Union

The outlook for bringing the stability in Arakan/Rakhine state remains grim as there has not been significant change on the ground since the Government of Myanmar declared the end of military campaign in Rohingya areas. The brutal assaults on Rohingya villages, indiscriminate killing of Rohingya men, women, and children, and the widespread torching of homes in a number of Rohingya villages by the Myanmar armed forces have set off a humanitarian crisis with mass population displacement internally and externally. The growing humanitarian crisis in the area has further deteriorated in recent days due to the blockade of a number of devastated areas where there is acute shortage of food, water, medicine, and other life-sustaining supplies.

Crimes against humanity in Arakan

During the several months of assault on Rohingya villages, over 1000 innocent Rohingya civilians have been reportedly killed by the Myanmar armed forces. The overwhelming number of killing of Rohingya civilians were done in summary execution, and a number of victims succumbed to their injuries from atrocities committed by the Myanmar Government forces. Over 3,000 Rohingya homes from 14 villages have been torched by the Myanmar armed forces. Of the 14 villages, two villages were completely burnt down where not a single Rohingya home was spared. During this campaign, Myanmar Government forces committed crimes against Rohingya civilian population. The crimes included mass killing, gang rapes, burning children alive, dismemberment, and various forms of brutality.

According to medical aid workers who treated the gang rape victims and survivors of brutal torture who later took refuge in Bangladesh, Crimes Against Humanity have been committed by the Myanmar Government forces. United Nations Special Rapporteur on Myanmar, Yanghee Lee, had interviewed victims in villages in Arakan and refugee camps in Bangladesh. The Special Rapporteur stated in her detailed oral report at the 34th Session of Human Rights Council:

“I spoke to a mother of a child and she said she heard him screaming for her and managed to save his life but burn scars have been seared onto him - scars which I saw with my own eyes. I wanted to share what I saw with you today. I heard allegation after allegation of horrific events like these – slitting of throats, indiscriminate shootings, setting alight houses with people tied up inside and throwing very young children into the fire, as well as gang rapes and other sexual violence. Even men, young and old, broke down and cried in front of me telling me about what they went through and their losses.”

UN-HRC calls for international fact-finding mission

The 34th Session HRC has adopted a resolution calling for sending an international fact-finding mission to Arakan to investigate crimes against humanity committed by the Myanmar armed forces

(combination of army, BGP personnel, and township police) accompanied by local government officials. Myanmar Ambassador Htin Lynn, speaking before the decision was taken by consensus, rejected the move as "not acceptable". Myanmar's national commission had just interviewed alleged victims who fled to Bangladesh and would issue its findings by August, he said.

Myanmar army chief makes incendiary statement on Rohingya

The Myanmar Army Chief, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, in his address on the 72nd anniversary of Armed Forces Day, again stated that the "Bengalis" do not belong to Myanmar, but they are interlopers from Bangladesh – a reference to Rohingya ethnic minority in Arakan. The General said any international political intervention on the pretext of assisting refugees from this community would threaten the sovereignty of Myanmar.

"We are responsible to prevent, based on the Tatmadaw (Military) Spirit, those actions done on the pretext of [addressing the] political situation as well as religious or racial issues in our country, because they can harm the sovereignty of our country," said the army chief. The army chief had made similar derogatory statements in the past, even during the meeting with former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan who is on a mission to find avenues for ethnic reconciliation and peaceful co-existence in Arakan.

The current and former senior officials of Myanmar military have consistently made dehumanizing and derogatory statements against ethnic Rohingya population for several decades. In disdain for Rohingya, a Myanmar senior military officer and diplomat in Hong Kong told East China Morning Post that Rohingya are "as ugly as ogres" and they are not fair and smooth skinned as the Bama (*also known as Burmans, the majority ethnic group that controls the military and dominates the government*). Former President of Myanmar in the USDP Government Gen. Thein Sein said to United Nations officials that Rohingya people are a national security threat, and they should to be expelled to a third country. The hostility against Rohingya people by the Government of Myanmar is deeply rooted, and the persecution of Rohingya by the Government of Myanmar is the single reason for all the violence, including hate speech, mass killing, gang-rape and other sexual violence, and grave humanitarian issues in Arakan.

Acute food shortage causing severe hardship in Rohingya population

While several Rohingya villages are still not accessible for humanitarian relief supplies, restrictions to some areas have somewhat eased off, and relief supplies to those Rohingya villages have been reported arriving during the past couple of weeks. However, diversion of the relief goods to local Buddhist Rakhine villages by the local Myanmar authorities is reportedly widespread. There have been numerous reports of raids of Rohingya homes by Myanmar police and confiscation of the relief supplies that they received. Rohingya families in some villages have been forced to buy back their confiscated relief supplies from the police.

While a number of Rohingya villages are providing shelter to those who have lost their homes or the entire village, the host families are facing severe difficulties in providing supports to the their families and to those seeking shelter. Almost all the host families are farmers, fishermen, and hard labors. The widespread grain crop loss due to Government restrictions on Rohingya farms during the previous harvest season and the current fencing restrictions on vegetable farms in Rohingya villages have caused shortage of food reserve and farm-generated incomes. Currently, due to the government's ban on operation of all kinds of manual or powered Rohingya fishing boats the fishing community is facing immense economic hardship.

Arakan Rohingya Union, a global Rohingya umbrella organization representing 61 Rohingya organizations worldwide, was formed under the patronage of the OIC Secretary General (38th OIC-CFM Resolution No.4/37-MM) as a united Rohingya coordinated council to reclaim the rights of Rohingya people in their homeland. Arakan Rohingya Union is registered in the United States and recognized by the 57 member states of OIC as the official representative organization of the Rohingya people.