

Monthly Arakan Review

Center for Arakan Studies

No.27. January. 2025

Conflict Dynamics and Socio-Economic Impacts in Arakan

Monitoring of a brief situation of political tension, economic issues, social issues, and humanitarian issues in Arakan in January 2025.



Photo Credit- APM via Western News

Key Remarks

- In January 2025, the SAC struggled in Rakhine, failing to conduct a full census and intensifying attacks, including deadly airstrikes in Kan Htaung Gyi, Ponnagyun, and Kyauk Ni Maw. It reinforced positions in Sittwe, Kyaukphyu, and Shwe Thauung Yan while increasing arrests of Arakanese youths and Rakhine ID cardholders. Meanwhile, the AA seized key military positions, cleared landmines, and trained locals. By late January, it captured more junta camps and punished soldiers for war crimes, while the SAC faced desertions and logistical failures.
- Arakan's economy saw high demand for winter crops and local alcohol, while the crab industry found new markets. The AA enforced financial measures, detained and later released Burmese cargoes to Bangladesh, and restricted fuel storage to prevent fires. Trade disruptions included the suspension of the Yangon-Teknaf route and a decline in tourism at Chaung Tha beach due to conflict threats. Meanwhile, illegal fishing by Bangladeshis persisted, cement prices dropped due to imports, and reports surfaced of Rakhine women being trafficked as 'Chinese wives.'
- Arakan faced severe social challenges as the junta navy detained over 200 Arakanese and restricted medicine and food transport. Hospitals struggled with blood shortages, while displaced communities suffered from disease and poor conditions. Economic hardships forced parents to seek adoption for their child, locals in Sittwe to survive on boiled rice, and fishermen to endure

junta extortion. Schools closed, air travel from Kyaukphyu was restricted, and healthcare services lacked funding.

- In January 2025, junta airstrikes and shelling displaced thousands, with major evacuations in Ann, Kyaukphyu, and Chaung Tha. The APG and ULA provided aid, while junta forces detained Arakanese in Yangon and Ayeyarwady. Displaced communities faced severe hardships, especially in Lemyethna. The ULA allowed Hindus and Muslims to return to Maungdaw, but airstrikes in Kyauktaw forced more evacuations.

Political Affairs

In the political sector, the news related to the SAC's activities include the conduction of population census, its air strikes and civilian casualties, fortification and reinforcement, artillery shelling, and extortion, etc.

On January 1, 2025, it was said that the SAC could not conduct a census of over 86 percent of the total population in Rakhine state. In the next day, it was reported that the junta Forces in Yangon targeted Arakanese youths, coercing them to remove shirts to inspect for Arakan-linked tattoos. Then, on January 3, the junta's airstrike on Kan Htaung Gyi killed elderly woman and destroyed school and hospital buildings. It was followed by the junta airstrikes killing 3 women, a child, also injure several Ponnagyun residents on January 6, 2025. Three days ago, horrible news said that the junta's airstrikes killed 41 at Kyauk Ni Maw village of Ramree and left 52 injured and 500 houses destroyed. The AA said it was a war crime.

On January 10, it was reported that the SAC fortified defence in Sittwe by recruiting more than 1000 Muslim recruits. One day later, it was mentioned that the junta's airstrikes killed 9 civilians and injured 30 others in Kyauktaw town. Then, on January 12, the junta conducted 2 airstrikes on Taung Maw Oo village in Pauktaw, several buildings destroyed. In the southern part of Arakan, it was said that the junta intensified the military readiness in Shwe Thaung Yan, Ayeyarwady Region. Then, the junta conducted air strikes against War-Bo and Sabar Htar village on the same day of January 16, 2025.

As of January 18, it was said that the junta also increased its military fortification in Kyaukphyu. In the next, the junta airstrikes on temporary detention sites for Prisoners of War and their families resulted in 28 deaths and 25 injuries and the majority were women and children. Then, the junta also increased its arrests on the people who hold ID cards from Rakhine state.

Then, a news on January 27, said that the junta navies are still present near the controlled areas of AA. At the same time, the junta also planted landmines to hinder the AA's attacks in Kyaukphyu. On the next day of January 28, junta's Bridger General Kaung Mrat along with 150 fled from the Moe-Htik-Taung military camp after it was captured by the AA. Then, in Kyaukphyu's prison, the authorities demanded a monthly fee from the prisoners.

In the case of AA's actions during January, on January 6, 2025, it was said that the AA seized Taung Sauk Camp Guarding Chinese gas pipeline substation in Ann. Then, on January 15, it was mentioned that the AA controlled the whole Arakan Roma Mountain range. Then, five days later, the AA warned to use the internet and phone cautiously not to invite air strikes from the SAC. On January 21, the AA captured 2 junta camps in the Arakan mountains 40 miles away from Ann. Two days later, the AA removed more than 100 landmines on the main access road in front of NaKhaKha-5 in Maungdaw. On the same day, the AA claimed soldiers penalized for war crimes featured in Fortify Rights' Video.

Then, on January 24, the AA admitted providing basic military training to locals and denied recruiting minors. Then, on the same day, it was reported that the AA provided security training to those in Maungdaw. Three days later, it was reported that the AA seized Moe Hti Taung Camp in Taungup, Point-263 and Point-369 Camps in Ayeyarwady Region.

Economic Situations

Regarding the economic news in Arakan, on January 1, 2025, it was reported that winter crops in Arakan were demanded at high prices. On the same day, the AA warned to take action if shops refused to accept old banknotes. And, on January 15, it was also said that the Arakan crab industry saw new markets. On the same day, the SAC also spoke out about the continued implementation of the Kyaukphyu SEZ.

On January 18, the AA detained 3 cargos carrying Burmese goods to Bangladesh and in the next, Bangladeshi authorities said that they were in contact with the AA for solving that problem. Two days later, the AA released these cargos. On January 21, the news said that illegal fishing from Bangladesh in Arakan territorial waters continued due to the lack of fishing by locals.

And, on the southern front of Arakan, it was said that tourists in Chaung Tha beach stopped visiting due to the threat of war and on January 24, the junta [suspended](#) the Yangon-Teknaf trade route.

A trader said, *"Today, the Myanmar side has closed the Bangladesh route. The ships carrying goods have to turn back. Now everything has come to a halt. Even a frozen fish cargo ship has been forced to turn around."*

Moreover, it was also mentioned that the overnight guest registration and military service law drive young Arakanese women in Yangon to seek employment abroad. On another front, cement costs in Arakan were dropped because of imports from Bangladesh. Then, the AA [prohibited](#) storage of fuel to prevent fire-incidents in towns and villages.

"We can't store fuel within the town. It can be done on the outskirts only. Storing it in the town will lead to punishment. These measures are being taken to prevent the incidents of fire," said a trader.

On January 29, it was reported that 15 percent of women sold as 'Chinese wives' are Rakhine women, and natural beanseed cooking oil in Kyauktaw is in high demand. Finally, as of January 30, it was reported that local alcohol sales in Arakan were high due to the blockage on external imports.

Social Issues

On January 4, 2025, shocking news said that the junta navy held a cargo vessel transporting more than 200 Arakanese close to Haingyi island. Three days later, the Arakan People's Government distributed HIV & tuberculosis medicines in 16 townships of Arakan. Then, in the health sector, there was a scarcity of blood for patients in hospitals in Arakan. As of January 11, it was said that only a few people came and took free medicines in Arakan due to the lack of communication.

Moreover, in Kyauktaw port, three cargo vessels were destroyed by fire at Kyauktaw jetty. One week later, a sad news article mentioned that parents carried a one-month-old baby girl in Kyauktaw town market and looked for adoptive parents because of financial struggles.

Daw Ma Chey from Kyauktaw Town [informed](#), *"The mother of the baby is unable to produce milk. The family lacks sufficient funds for feeding bottles, formula, or other essential items. Consequently, they have chosen to place the baby for adoption. Up until now, nobody has stepped up to take her in."*

On the same day, the news said that schools were closed in Shwe Thaung Yan and Chaung Thar due to escalating tensions in Ayeyarwaddy region. Then, the Mro Community in Maungdaw township also faced urgent need for healthcare services.

As of January 23, Kyaukphyu locals were reportedly prevented from air traveling to the Burma side. One day later, it said that some locals in Sittway have to eat 'boiled rice' due to the livelihood difficulties. More importantly, on January 27, the news said that nearly 1,000 IDPs in Thandwe [experienced](#) skin disorders and the fishing community in that township also faced their incomes.

"While escaping the conflict, they found themselves in a densely populated setting. There were numerous individuals, and the clothing, blankets, and pillows were unclean. They needed soap for their personal cleanliness," said a person assisting the displaced community.

Besides, the junta authorities in Nga-Thike-Chaung township in Ayeyarwaddy also pressured locals not to transport medicines and foods. On January 30, it was mentioned that locals and IPDs in at least 12 villages in Gwa suffered from skin diseases. Moreover, it was said that Kyun-Thar-Yar artillery base in Myebon regularly detained, assaulted, and demanded money from local fishermen. Finally, it was mentioned that Sae-Ta-Nar Arakha Public Welfare Clinic faced challenges in securing funds for offering free healthcare services.

Humanitarian Issues

On January 2, 2025, it was [mentioned](#) that the junta's frequent airstrikes on Ann prevented residents from returning homes.

"Fighter jets are conducting airstrikes regularly. A bomb hit the Thar Li Swa grocery store and damaged the whole shop. Fortunately, no one was injured as the owner had already left the place," said a resident.

Four days later, Arakan People's Government (APG) offered food aid to people at Ah Nauk Ye Muslim IDP camps in Pauktaw. On January 10, around 150 displaced individuals from Arakan in Lemyethna township of Ayeyarwady region [encountered](#) challenges in earning a living.

"They are residing in tents on sandy areas by the creek in Le Khon Gyi village, Kwin Gyi village-tract, Lemyethna Township. Sixty families make up a total of 150 individuals. They urgently need assistance, such as food, medicine, warm clothing, and blankets," a social worker explained.

On January 12, the ULA donated rice to the air strikes' affected people. On the same day, 16 displaced Arakanese youth were detained in Kyonpyaw in Ayeyarwady region. Then, three days later, the junta's arrests of Arakanese individuals in Yangon and compilation of the IDP lists in Sittwe raised public alarm.

On January 22, moreover, it was said that around 20000 Rakhine IDPs have to again move from Chaung Tha due to the impacts of war. Two days later, it was mentioned that combat ceased in Arakan for over a year, but the junta airstrikes hindered residents' homecoming. Then, the AA's offensive in Ayeyarwady region also heightened strain on the IDP communities. On January 25, it was said that 9 Arakanese residents including displaced women were detained in Ayeyarwady over AA links.

On the next day, it [was said](#) that the junta navy conducted indiscriminate shelling and compelled residents of 10 villages to flee in Kyaukphyu township.

"There has been more shelling this month. They are targeting villagers in the mountains and those along the coast. There has been no fighting recently, but the villagers fled due to the threat of shelling," said a male resident of Kyaukphyu.

Then, two days later, the ULA permitted the displaced Hindus and Muslims from Maungdaw to come back to town. Finally, on January 30, many Kyauktaw inhabitants reportedly evacuated the town due to concerns over junta airstrikes.

About the Report

This report is part of the CAS's monthly series, which delves into four key areas of the state of Arakan. The first section addresses political concerns, including the armed revolution, junta activities, and issues of political freedom. The second examines the state's economic climate, focusing on rising prices, declining demand, foreign direct investment, and border trade. The third and fourth sections cover social and humanitarian issues, respectively; these include education, health, migration, and the internally displaced persons (IDP) population.

Key data in the report are sourced from local media outlets, such as DMG, Western News, among others. The aim of this report is to shed new light on the situation for observers endeavoring to comprehend the dynamics at play in the region.

About Center for Arakan Studies (CAS)

The Center is an independent, non-partisan research institution established in December 2021 by a group of young professionals, including journalists, political analysts, researchers, and social workers. The Center aims to promote understanding of human rights, political, economic, and social dynamics in Arakan and related issues within Myanmar and beyond. Through rigorous research and reporting, the Center seeks to address the policy gaps with analysis and recommendations to support democratic change and collective solutions.

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