

Monthly Arakan Review

CENTER FOR ARAKAN STUDIES

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Conflict Escalation, Flood Disasters, and Humanitarian Response in Arakan

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



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Executive Summary

- In July 2025, fighting in Kyaukphyu intensified despite a ceasefire, with the Myanmar military launching airstrikes and ground assaults, resulting in civilian casualties and displacement. The Arakan Army (AA) made strategic territorial gains by capturing key outposts and supply routes, while both sides suffered heavy losses in ongoing clashes.
- Arakan faced significant economic challenges, with soaring food prices and severe flooding that damaged crops and disrupted trade. The ULA expanded its influence by promoting local economic activities, such as increasing local alcohol production and providing agricultural support, despite the ongoing conflict. Regional developments, including India's Kaladan River Project and new trade routes, aimed to enhance connectivity, while corruption within the military was exposed through bribery cases. Overall, the region remained volatile, grappling with environmental crises, ongoing conflict, and efforts toward economic resilience amid widespread hardship.
- Severe flooding caused by relentless rains resulted in widespread displacement, food shortages, and infrastructure damage. Violence and crime surged in junta-controlled areas, with forced recruitment, landmine threats, and human rights abuses affecting local communities. Socioeconomic hardships worsened as malnutrition, theft, and lack of access to medical care created a dire humanitarian situation.
- Intensified violence in Kyaukphyu led to over 22,000 IDPs, while ongoing conflict caused long-term displacement across multiple townships, with many struggling to access basic needs. Heavy rains and rising rivers triggered severe flooding across districts such as Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, and Thandwe, displacing thousands and damaging homes, further worsening the humanitarian crisis. Despite these hardships, local and regional organizations, including foundations, mobilized funds and aid efforts to support flood-affected communities and refugees, though challenges such as insecurity and limited resources remained.

Key Developments

A. Politics and Armed Conflicts

1. Intensified Fighting in Kyaukphyu Despite Ceasefire Declarations

On July 2, shortly after the Myanmar military announced a ceasefire extension, fierce clashes erupted once again in Kyaukphyu. Junta forces launched airstrikes and ground assaults in the area, escalating the conflict. By July 5, [fighting had intensified](#) along the Kyaukphyu coast and nearby villages, with reports of civilians caught in the crossfire. The Arakan Army (AA) responded with shelling of military positions, gaining control of key strategic locations. Throughout early July, the fighting resulted in civilian casualties, including injuries from shelling and airstrikes, and the displacement of local communities. On July 10, the battle resumed in multiple locations after a brief standoff, with both sides suffering casualties.

2. AA's Territorial Gains and Military Strategy

On July 7, the AA launched a coordinated attack on a junta-held outpost along the Ann-Padan Road, capturing territory and damaging military equipment. By July 12, AA shelling targeted junta positions near Kyaukphyu, causing significant damage and forcing retreating troops to abandon several strategic sites. The AA also made advances along the coast, securing control of key fishing and supply routes. On July 17, reports indicated that the AA [detained and](#)

[forcibly recruited local youth](#), while the junta responded with increased military reinforcements. The conflict saw the AA consolidating territorial positions, with the junta struggling to regain lost ground. On July 23, intense air raids by the junta targeted AA-controlled areas, but the AA claimed to have inflicted heavy losses on regime forces, including the destruction of military vehicles.

3. Civilian Suffering and Humanitarian Concerns

Civilian communities in Kyaukphyu and surrounding areas endured severe hardship. On July 10, a woman was injured by shelling, and reports emerged of displacement as villagers fled ongoing battles. Human rights organizations condemned the use of landmines along the Rakhine-Bangladesh border, which [injured two young Bangladeshi fishermen on July 22 and 28](#). Additionally, there were reports of forced recruitment of young men by both sides, with some civilians abducted from their homes to join the conflict. Civilians also suffered from airstrikes targeting residential areas, including the bombing of a monastery on July 31, which resulted in civilian casualties. The escalation of violence created a dire humanitarian situation, with urgent calls for a ceasefire and the protection of civilians amid ongoing hostilities.

4. General Overview

In July 2025, the conflict in Rakhine State, particularly in Kyaukphyu, escalated despite initial attempts at ceasefire extensions. The Arakan Army (AA) made significant territorial advances, capturing strategic outposts along key supply routes and resisting junta counterattacks through shelling and coordinated assaults. The Myanmar military responded with intensified airstrikes, land-based assaults, and reinforcements, leading to heavy casualties and the displacement of civilians. Civilian suffering was exacerbated by shelling, landmine injuries, forced recruitment, and attacks on religious sites. The conflict reflected a broader struggle for control, with both sides suffering losses and civilians bearing the brunt of the violence. Human rights concerns and calls for a ceasefire grew louder as the violence threatened regional stability and worsened humanitarian conditions.

B. Economy

1. Economic Challenges and Humanitarian Issues in Rakhine and Surrounding Areas

On July 6, the prices of basic food items and essentials in Arakan (Rakhine) soared sharply, deepening the hardships faced by local residents amid ongoing conflict and instability. Flooding events in July severely impacted agriculture, with thousands of paddy acres flooded across five townships—including Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, Buthidaung, Maungdaw, and Minbya—damaging crops and disrupting livelihoods. The floods [persisted, with additional damage reported on July 12](#), compounding the agricultural crisis. As a result, rice prices surged, and trade along the Arakan-Bangladesh border came to a standstill, affecting cross-border commerce. Meanwhile, farmers urgently appealed for fertilizer aid to support their struggling crops, underscoring the ongoing agricultural distress.

2. Arakan Army's Control and Social Initiatives

In July, the AA expanded its influence in Rakhine, notably selling previously restricted alcohol in their controlled areas—indicating growing economic activity despite conflict. The AA also distributed free rice seeds to farmers in liberated regions, aiming to bolster local food security and gain community support. Additionally, the AA's health department reported that locally made [alcohol contained up to 12% methanol](#), a lethal toxin, raising health concerns among

residents (July 16). In Maungdaw, the local market for motorcycles grew significantly, reflecting increased mobility and economic activity in the conflict zones.

3. Regional and International Developments

On July 9, the Indian government announced that the Kaladan River Project, a vital infrastructure link between India and Myanmar, was scheduled for completion by 2027, highlighting regional cooperation and development efforts. The construction of a new trade route connecting Paletwa with India also commenced, promising to boost cross-border trade and economic integration. Meanwhile, on July 15, [four senior military officials](#) received the death penalty or extended jail sentences for accepting bribes to facilitate goods into Rakhine, exposing corruption within the military ranks amid ongoing tensions.

4. General Overview

In July 2025, Rakhine State and surrounding regions faced mounting economic difficulties due to soaring food prices, severe flooding that damaged crops, and disrupted trade. The Arakan Army strengthened its control, engaging in local economic initiatives such as distributing rice seeds, while health concerns arose from the consumption of toxic locally made alcohol. Regional development projects, such as the Kaladan River Project and new trade routes to India, continued amid ongoing military corruption cases. The region's socio-economic landscape remained volatile, with conflict, environmental crises, and attempts at economic resilience shaping the local dynamics.

C. Social Issues

1. Floods, Food Shortages, and Displacement in Rakhine

On July 1, incessant rains caused severe flooding in Maungdaw Township, leading to food shortages and disrupted communications, according to residents. Heavy rains continued throughout the month, damaging infrastructure, including the Maungdaw-Angumaw road on July 5. Flooding persisted in various areas, such as Kyauktaw and Minbya, causing significant distress. On July 11, IDPs faced severe food shortages during the rainy season, and on July 14, [hunger drove some individuals in Sittwe to commit suicide](#). Displaced children urgently needed medical care, and residents in Maungdaw called for the repair of damaged rural roads.

2. Violence, Crime, and Human Rights Violations

Violence and crime surged in junta-controlled areas. Dozens were detained at the Pyay checkpoint on July 1, with reports of forced recruitment by the regime. In Kyaukphyu, crime rates increased, and a woman was murdered during a robbery on July 26. A soldier and a local drowned while fishing in Mrauk-U on July 3. On July 12, [two brothers from Minbya were detained and forced to join the military](#) while traveling to China for work. On July 15, over 20 Arakanese youths deported from Malaysia were arrested at Sittwe airport. Landmine threats persisted in Mrauk-U, with grassroots communities struggling to survive amid these dangers. Several residents faced threats, and some were extorted or arrested during military operations.

3. Health and Socioeconomic Struggles

Displaced students in AA-controlled areas began education programs on July 8. In Sittwe, rising theft, robbery, and prostitution caused hardship, and some families resorted to selling jewelry and money to survive. Hunger and lack of medicines contributed to the deaths of a

man with HIV in Pauktaw and a woman murdered during a robbery in Kyauktaw. Children in Rakhine suffered from malnutrition, requiring urgent aid. The reduced cost of internet access in AA-controlled townships was welcomed by residents, indicating a desire for connectivity and education opportunities amid ongoing conflict.

4. General Overview

In July 2025, Rakhine State experienced severe flooding, food shortages, and displacement due to relentless rains, compounded by ongoing conflict and infrastructure damage. Violence, crime, and human rights abuses increased, with arrests, forced conscriptions, and landmine threats impacting local communities. Socioeconomic struggles intensified, with malnutrition, violence, and restricted access to essential services prevalent. Despite these hardships, efforts to enhance education, regional connectivity, and cultural heritage preservation persisted amid the complex humanitarian and security landscape.

D. Humanitarian Issue

1. Mass Displacement Due to Violence and Conflict

On July 1, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Kyaukphyu exceeded 22,000 as violence intensified in the region. Additionally, by July 15, [thousands of IDPs across Maungdaw](#), Buthidaung, Ponnagyun, Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, and Pauktaw faced long-term challenges in returning and rebuilding their lives, with many struggling to access basic necessities amid ongoing insecurity.

2. Widespread Flooding and Environmental Disasters

Heavy rains and rising river levels caused severe flooding across multiple townships, including Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, Minbya, Thandwe, and others, displacing hundreds of residents and destroying homes. On July 22, [over 10,000 people in 90 flooded villages](#) urgently needed aid, while by July 29, at least four townships were inundated, worsening the humanitarian crisis.

3. Critical Humanitarian and Community Support Efforts

Despite ongoing hardships, local and regional actors, including foundations like [Phyu Phyu Kyaw Thein's, contributed significant funds \(over 100 million kyats\)](#) to aid flood-affected communities and refugees. Humanitarian agencies highlighted the urgent need for food, medical supplies, and shelter, especially for IDPs in camps like Ponnagyun and Pauktaw, where needs remained dire.

4. General Overview

In July 2025, Rakhine State faced escalating humanitarian crises driven by intensified conflict, environmental disasters, and displacement. Violence in Kyaukphyu on July 1 resulted in over 22,000 IDPs, reflecting the worsening security situation. Throughout the month, floods caused by heavy rains and rising river levels affected numerous districts, including Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, Minbya, Thandwe, and others, displacing thousands of residents, destroying homes, and disrupting daily life.

By mid-July, humanitarian agencies reported that over 10,000 people across 90 villages required urgent assistance with food, medicine, and shelter. Camps like Ponnagyun and Pauktaw faced critical shortages, and displaced families continued to endure hardship in

AA-controlled areas. Community efforts, including donations from prominent foundations, contributed to relief initiatives, but challenges persisted due to ongoing insecurity, environmental damage, and limited access to essential services.

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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