

Monthly Arakan Review

CENTER FOR ARAKAN STUDIES

N0.35. September. 2025

Escalating Conflict, Humanitarian Crisis, and Socioeconomic Instability

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



Photo Credit via Ni Mi Tun Journalist

Executive Summary

- From September 1 to 30, 2025, Rakhine State faced intense conflict, with a junta airstrike killing 23 students in Kyauktaw on September 12–13. The Arakan Army (AA) forced ARSA and RSO militants to withdraw from Maungdaw on September 25 and detained 64 Bangladeshi poachers. The AA reopened the Maungdaw Jame Mosque on September 16 to promote reconciliation, but alleged human rights abuses drew UN and BROUK scrutiny. Junta airstrikes, border tensions with Bangladesh, and civilian suffering highlighted the region's ongoing crisis.
- From September 1 to 29, 2025, Rakhine's economy faced disruptions from conflict and smuggling, with the AA detaining 11 drug dealers in Ponnagyun on September 2. On September 23, Bangladesh seized fertilizers and arrested a Maungdaw youth with 1 million yaba pills, impacting local markets. Farmers struggled with low rice prices and planting issues, though sesame prices soared, while junta inspections secured Kyaukphyu's pipeline on September 29. Youth migration surged amid economic strain and ongoing clashes.
- From September 1 to 30, 2025, Rakhine faced a severe social crisis, with a junta airstrike on September 15 closing Kyauktaw schools after killing 23 students. The AA's malaria testing in Maungdaw on September 30 identified 17 cases, but border restrictions limited healthcare access. The junta detained 13 Muslim fishermen in Pauktaw on September 25, targeting civilians. Food and medicine shortages, dengue deaths, and violence against women worsened the humanitarian situation.
- From September 3 to 26, 2025, Rakhine faced a humanitarian crisis, with ULA distributing 1,164 rice bags to 2,188 Thandwe households on September 3. Phyu Phyu Kyaw Thein donated 100 million MMK in aid to IDPs in multiple townships on September 7, and AA's HDSCO supported 5,000 Muslims in Maungdaw and Buthidaung on September 26. Over 40,000 Kyaukphyu refugees sought aid, with 500 million MMK donated for Kyauktaw airstrike victims on September 17. AA's alleged Rohingya repatriation restrictions and junta attacks worsened the crisis.

Key Developments

A. Politics and Armed Conflicts

1. Junta Airstrike on Kyauktaw Boarding Schools Kills 23 (September 12–13, 2025)

On September 12, 2025, the Myanmar junta conducted an airstrike on two private boarding schools in Kyauktaw Township, killing at least 18 students and injuring over 20 others. By September 13, the death toll [rose to 23](#), with an additional student succumbing to injuries. The attack drew condemnation from UNICEF and sparked an online campaign by Arakanese youths targeting the junta Air Force, highlighting the severe impact on civilian education infrastructure.

2. ARSA and RSO Infiltrators Withdraw from Maungdaw Border (September 25, 2025)

On September 25, 2025, ARSA and RSO militants, responsible for attacks on non-Muslims near the Rakhine-Bangladesh border, [withdrew to Bangladesh](#) following AA counter-terrorism operations in Maungdaw. The AA reported that hundreds of these extremist militants were killed during the operations, underscoring heightened border tensions and AA's efforts to secure the region against terrorist activities.

3. ULA/AA Reopens Maungdaw Jame Mosque (September 15–16, 2025)

On September 15, 2025, the Arakan Army Chief [met with Muslim leaders](#) in Maungdaw, leading to the reopening of the Maungdaw Jame Mosque on September 16 after a decade-long closure. This event was seen as a step toward fostering understanding and peace between communities, though concerns persisted among Rohingya about AA's broader policies and alleged property seizures in the township.

General Overview

From September 1 to September 30, 2025, Rakhine State and adjacent areas faced intensified conflict and humanitarian challenges. The Myanmar junta escalated airstrikes and artillery attacks, notably killing 23 students in Kyauktaw (September 12–13) and causing civilian casualties in Mrauk-U, Paletwa, and Rathedaung. The Arakan Army (AA) countered junta forces, capturing military bases and personnel, while detaining 64 Bangladeshi poachers for illegal fishing in the Naf River. Tensions with ARSA and RSO persisted, with their withdrawal from Maungdaw on September 25 following AA operations. Allegations of human rights abuses by both the junta and AA, including civilian detentions and property seizures, fueled international concern, with UN reports and BROUK calling for accountability. The AA's reopening of the Maungdaw Jame Mosque signaled efforts toward community reconciliation, but ongoing border tensions with Bangladesh, junta election preparations, and civilian suffering underscored the region's volatile situation.

B. Economy

1. AA Detains 11 Drug Dealers in Ponnagyun (September 2, 2025)

On September 2, 2025, the Arakan Army (AA) [detained 11 individuals](#) involved in drug trafficking in Ponnagyun Township, including 7 members of the police force called the DLEPS. This operation targeted a network exploiting conflict zones for narcotics distribution, highlighting AA efforts to curb illegal activities amid ongoing instability.

2. Bangladesh Coast Guard Seizes Fertilizers and Arrests Smugglers (September 23, 2025)

On September 23, 2025, the Bangladesh Coast Guard [intercepted shipments](#) of chemical fertilizers and paddy seeds bound for Rakhine State, along with arresting a Maungdaw Township youth carrying over 1 million stimulant pills (yaba). This incident underscored escalating cross-border smuggling of agricultural and narcotic goods into AA-controlled areas, exacerbating local economic and security challenges.

3. Security Inspection in Kyaukphyu Oil and Gas Pipeline Amid Clashes (Sept 29, 2025)

On September 29, 2025, Rakhine State Military Commission Chairman U Htain Lin [visited and inspected](#) security measures around the oil and natural gas pipeline project area in Kyaukphyu Township, where active fighting between junta forces and the AA continues. The assessment focused on protecting critical infrastructure despite the volatile environment.

General Overview

From September 1 to September 29, 2025, Rakhine State grappled with intertwined economic hardships, cross-border smuggling, and conflict-related disruptions. Farmers faced declining rice prices, shortages of buyers, and difficulties in winter crop planting due to instability in AA-controlled areas, while sesame yields fetched high prices (up to 7 million kyats per 25 viss). The junta promoted ongoing Kyaukphyu development projects, including pipeline security inspections amid clashes. Youth migration from Rakhine and Yangon surged, reflecting broader desperation. Border tensions intensified with Bangladesh authorities seizing smuggling operations—cargo trawlers (September 16), food products (September 21), and fertilizers alongside a major yaba bust (September 23)—involving 10–11 nationals. The AA's arrest

of 11 drug dealers in Ponnagyun on September 2 further addressed narcotics flows, painting a picture of a region strained by economic woes, illicit trade, and wartime vulnerabilities.

C. Social Issues

1. Junta Airstrike Forces Closure of Private Schools in Kyauktaw (September 15, 2025)

On September 15, 2025, a Myanmar junta airstrike targeted private schools in Kyauktaw Township, [forcing their closure](#) and severely disrupting education. This attack followed a deadly airstrike on September 12–13 that killed 23 students, exacerbating fears among students and families and highlighting the junta's targeting of civilian infrastructure in AA-controlled areas.

2. ULA Conducts Malaria Testing in Maungdaw Minority Villages (September 30, 2025)

On September 30, 2025, the Arakan Army (AA) [tested approximately 100 residents](#) from eight minority villages in Maungdaw Township for malaria, identifying 17 cases. This health initiative aimed to address public health needs but occurred amid AA-imposed border restrictions that have severely limited healthcare access, worsening conditions for local communities.

3. Junta Navy Detains Muslim Fishermen in Pauktaw (September 25, 2025)

On September 25, 2025, the junta navy [detained 13 Muslim fishermen](#) from Pauktaw Township, who remained out of contact with their families for nine days. This incident, combined with the detention of seven fishermen on September 20 near Sittwe-Pauktaw, reflects the junta's ongoing targeting of civilians, particularly Muslims, in conflict zones.

General Overview

From September 1 to September 30, 2025, Rakhine State faced escalating conflict and humanitarian crises. The Myanmar junta intensified attacks, with airstrikes forcing school closures in Kyauktaw (September 15) and detaining civilians, including 13 Muslim fishermen in Pauktaw (September 25) and others in Kyaukphyu (September 20). The Arakan Army (AA) implemented border security measures, issuing temporary crossing permits along the India border (September 3) and conducting malaria testing in Maungdaw (September 30), but faced accusations of threatening Rohingya students' education, extorting internet users, and restricting healthcare access. Civilian suffering was widespread, with food shortages in Sittwe (September 28), medicine scarcity in Gwa (September 15), and dengue deaths in Paletwa (September 16). Reports of violence against women, including sexual assaults in Kyauktaw and Mrauk-U, and restricted movement due to junta drone and artillery attacks in AA-controlled areas further compounded the region's challenges.

D. Humanitarian Issue

1. ULA Distributes Rice to Households in Thandwe (September 3, 2025)

On September 3, 2025, the United League of Arakan (ULA) [distributed 1,164 rice bags](#) to 2,188 households in Thandwe Township, providing critical food assistance to communities affected by ongoing conflict and displacement in the region.

2. Phyu Phyu Kyaw Thein Donates Aid to Arakan IDPs (September 7, 2025)

On September 7, 2025, vocalist Phyu Phyu Kyaw Thein [donated rice bags](#) and shelter materials worth 100 million MMK to internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Pauktaw, Ann, Ramree, and Kyaukphyu townships, addressing urgent humanitarian needs amid escalating conflict.

3. ULA's HDCO Provides Aid to Muslims in Maungdaw and Buthidaung (Sept 26, 2025)

On September 26, 2025, the Arakan Army's Humanitarian and Development Coordination Office (HDCO) [provided food, housing, cash](#), and medicine to over 5,000 Muslims in Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships, aiming to support vulnerable communities despite allegations of AA restrictions on Rohingya repatriation.

General Overview

From September 3 to September 26, 2025, Rakhine State faced severe humanitarian challenges amid ongoing conflict. The United League of Arakan (ULA) and Arakan Army (AA) provided significant aid, including 1,164 rice bags to 2,188 households in Thandwe (September 3) and support for over 5,000 Muslims in Maungdaw and Buthidaung (September 26). Vocalist Phyu Phyu Kyaw Thein contributed 100 million MMK worth of rice and shelter materials to IDPs in multiple townships (September 7), while a charity group donated over 500 million MMK for victims of a junta airstrike on a Kyauktaw school (September 17). Over 40,000 war refugees in Kyaukphyu desperately sought aid (September 22), and the junta reported just over 7,000 displaced people in Sittwe (September 7). Humanitarian updates highlighted the dire situation, with accusations that the AA was obstructing Rohingya repatriation efforts, exacerbating tensions in the region.

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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