

Monthly Arakan Review

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Blood, Water, and Displacement: Arakan's War-Torn Reality

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



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Executive Summary

The ongoing conflict in Arakan, known as Rakhine state, has intensified political tensions, with the Arakan Army (AA) in Rakhine, and generally in Myanmar, revolutionary forces asserting control over key areas while facing resistance from opposing factions. The Arakan People's Revolutionary Government demonstrated governance capabilities by repairing critical infrastructure, such as the Ponnagyun–Maungdaw trade road, despite continued hostilities. Political fragmentation was evident as local and revolutionary groups coordinated rescue and aid efforts, highlighting a shift toward localized authority.

Economic activities in Arakan have been severely disrupted by both conflict and environmental challenges, with damaged infrastructure—like the Ponnagyun–Maungdaw trade road—hampering border trade. Heavy monsoon rains and flooding further strained local economies, particularly in Thandwe and Ponnagyun, where displacement and infrastructure damage have limited access to markets and resources.

The social fabric of Arakan has been strained by widespread displacement, with communities in AA-controlled areas, Sittwe, and Ponnagyun facing acute survival challenges. Community-led initiatives, such as the “People for People” program across Rakhine, Karenni, Sagaing, and Magway, have fostered resilience but remain insufficient to address the scale of need. The return of some Muslims from Bangladesh refugee camps to Arakan has introduced additional social complexities, exacerbating resource competition.

The humanitarian crisis in Arakan deepened in June 2025 due to conflict, flooding, and displacement, with urgent needs for food, shelter, and aid in AA-controlled areas, Sittwe, and Ponnagyun. Heavy rains and the overflow of the Thuzaychaung Dam in Thandwe displaced over 200 families, while Rakhine migrant workers in Kachin faced severe shortages. The AA and revolutionary forces provided critical food and shelter in Paletwa and three Rakhine towns, but ongoing airstrike threats have hindered rebuilding efforts. The scale of displacement and resource scarcity necessitates immediate and sustained international humanitarian intervention.

Key Developments

A. Politics and Armed Conflicts

1. Intensified Fighting in Kyaukphyu Despite Ceasefire Declarations

On June 3, shortly after the Myanmar junta and the Three Brotherhood Alliance extended a temporary truce, fierce clashes erupted in Kyaukphyu. Junta forces bombarded the area, and by June 4, fighting had continued near Kap Hsay village. On June 5, the Arakan Army (AA) secured a strategic plateau outpost along the Ann–Padan Road. Throughout June, the junta deployed airstrikes, naval artillery, and ground assaults, resulting in significant civilian casualties—including a woman killed on June 9 and a 12-year-old girl among four people killed in Thandwe on June 8. By June 16, AA shelling targeted military battalions, and fighting escalated, with junta troops suffering heavy losses and retreating by June 30.

2. AA's Strategic Advances and Territorial Control

On June 5, the AA fully secured a strategic plateau outpost along the Ann–Padan Road. By June 10, they had repelled a junta counteroffensive at the Nat Yae Kan MPT tower outpost, capturing three soldiers who had escaped from an air defense base. On June 13, the AA, alongside revolutionary forces, attacked the Ngathaingchaung Artillery Battalion (344) in

Ayeyarwady, forcing junta troops to retreat with heavy losses. On June 15, the last key artillery base in Myebon Township was withdrawn, and army units in Kyaukphyu surrendered—with their arsenal—to the AA.

3. Civilian Impact and Human Rights Concerns

Civilian suffering was widespread, with over 30 civilian deaths and 90 injuries reported by HDCO due to junta attacks in multiple townships during the ceasefire period (as of June 27). A 9-year-old girl was raped and murdered in Minbya, and the AA arrested eight suspects (June 5). In Pauktaw, villagers demanded justice for a murder involving a village administrator (June 14). The junta intensified forced conscription, targeting Rakhine youth in Yangon (June 10) and detaining individuals attempting to flee junta-controlled areas in Ann (June 7). Landmine incidents along the Rakhine–Bangladesh border injured several civilians, including two Bangladeshi youths (June 22 and 28).

4. General Overview

In June 2025, Myanmar—particularly Rakhine State—experienced heightened conflict despite a temporary truce extended by the Myanmar junta and the Three Brotherhood Alliance on June 1 and 2, following an earthquake. The Arakan Army (AA) made significant territorial gains, capturing strategic outposts such as the Ann–Padan Road plateau and repelling junta counteroffensives. Kyaukphyu emerged as a focal point of intense fighting, with the junta employing airstrikes, naval artillery, and ground assaults, leading to heavy military and civilian casualties.

The AA's military successes were complemented by organizational developments, including the formation of a new executive committee at the AASYC conference (June 5) and the enactment of a National Defense Emergency Provision (June 30). Civilian suffering was acute, marked by widespread casualties, forced conscription, and human rights abuses—including the murder of a child in Minbya and landmine-related injuries along the Rakhine–Bangladesh border.

The junta's plans for elections in 267 townships (June 7) and the approval of a new Rakhine party (June 10) suggest political maneuvering amid the escalating violence. The intensification of conflict, particularly in Kyaukphyu and Ayeyarwady, signals a deepening struggle between the junta and revolutionary forces, with serious humanitarian and regional implications.

B. Economy

1. Skyrocketing Commodity Prices in Rakhine State

Throughout June 2025, Rakhine State experienced severe price surges for essential goods. On June 2, cooking and fuel oil prices spiked in Maungdaw. By June 4, general commodity prices across Rakhine had doubled, significantly impacting daily laborers (June 7). Specific increases included onions in Maungdaw (June 6), rice in Kyaukphyu (June 27), and construction materials in Maungdaw, which doubled in cost by June 30. Fertilizer and fuel prices also rose, exacerbating struggles for farmers (June 23).

2. Banknote Crisis in AA-Controlled Areas

On June 8, worn-out banknotes in AA-controlled areas became unusable, forcing residents to exchange them at half value, with some merchants buying old notes at reduced prices. By

June 14, locals were demanding ULA/AA intervention to address the crisis. On June 30, 50-, 100-, and 200-kyat notes were reported unusable, further complicating daily transactions.

3. Agricultural and Trade Disruptions

Farmers faced mounting challenges. On June 5, Rakhine farmers began plowing despite suffering annual losses. In Gwa, shortages of seeds and farming tools hindered planting efforts (June 10), while tractor equipment prices surged fivefold. The junta also forced rice cultivation in Kyaukphyu amid ongoing fighting nearby (June 24). Trade was severely affected, including a two-month ban on cattle exports to Bangladesh (June 7) and significant losses in India–Rakhine trade due to poor monsoon road conditions (June 11). Additionally, six individuals were arrested for smuggling fertilizer into Rakhine (June 15).

4. General Overview

In June 2025, Rakhine State and surrounding areas experienced a deepening economic crisis fueled by conflict, logistical disruptions, and governance challenges. Prices of essential commodities—such as food, fuel, and construction materials—surged dramatically, with reports of prices doubling or more in Maungdaw, Kyaukphyu, and across the state. This inflation severely impacted farmers and daily laborers.

A banknote crisis in AA-controlled areas rendered low-denomination and worn-out notes unusable, forcing exchanges at half value and prompting widespread calls for ULA/AA intervention. Agricultural activities were strained by shortages of seeds and tools, as well as soaring equipment costs. The junta’s enforcement of rice cultivation in active conflict zones added further pressure.

Trade disruptions—including a cattle export ban to Bangladesh and losses in India–Rakhine trade—compounded the economic hardship. Arrests of Myanmar migrant workers in Malaysia and the seizure of smuggled fertilizer highlighted regional tensions. These mounting challenges, rooted in ongoing conflict and exacerbated by monsoon-related blockages, posed serious threats to food security, local economies, and livelihoods—especially in AA-controlled and contested areas.

C. Social Issues

1. Worsening Health Crisis in Rakhine State

Rakhine faced multiple health challenges in June 2025. Intense rainfall caused flooding in low-lying areas of Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, and Minbya (June 2), exacerbating health risks. Malaria cases surged in Ponnagyun, Kyauktaw, Buthidaung, Maungdaw, Rathedaung, Mrauk-U, Minbya, and Ann (June 10, 20, 26), with a young woman dying from malaria in Ponnagyun (June 7). Seasonal flu and dengue fever outbreaks were also reported in several townships (June 8). Inadequate healthcare services led to an increase in stillbirths in Buthidaung (June 25) and the death of a woman in Kyauktaw due to the lack of emergency blood supplies (June 26). Severe medicine shortages in Sittwe (June 28) and limited social assistance further strained access to emergency healthcare (June 18).

2. Humanitarian Struggles of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

IDPs continued to face dire conditions. On Pauktaw’s Myaenoe Island, IDPs suffered from extreme food and shelter shortages (June 3). In Kyaukphyu, a charity clinic was established to support both IDPs and local residents (June 13). Rising malaria cases among IDPs were reported in Ann Township (June 26). Civilians foraging in forests for survival during the

monsoon season faced heightened landmine risks (June 16), prompting the AA to issue warnings in Taungup to avoid mined areas (June 17). Human trafficking networks targeted Rakhine civilians traveling to Yangon (June 18), while forced conscription intensified vulnerabilities—six youths were arrested in Pyay and sent to Taunggyi for military service (June 16).

3. Educational and Social Disruptions

Education was significantly disrupted. Textbook prices soared in Maungdaw due to supply shortages (June 9) and continued rising in AA-controlled areas (June 11). Despite ongoing conflict, schools in Kyaukphyu remained open under military pressure (June 18), while Sittwe reported critically low university attendance (June 23). The AA announced plans to establish free education centers for impoverished students in 11 liberated townships (June 10).

Socially, the AA supported Eid celebrations by donating sacrificial animals (June 7). However, illegal activities persisted, including the arrest of a monk for excavating and selling ancient land in Mrauk-U (June 14), and continued illegal gambling in Maungdaw, Buthidaung, and Rathedaung despite AA bans (June 26, 27).

4. General Overview

In June 2025, Rakhine State grappled with severe humanitarian and social challenges amid ongoing conflict and environmental stress. Heavy rainfall and flooding in multiple townships (June 2, 18) compounded a growing health crisis marked by surges in malaria, dengue, and seasonal flu. Inadequate healthcare infrastructure led to preventable deaths and stillbirths. Internally displaced persons, particularly in Pauktaw and Kyaukphyu, faced acute food and shelter shortages, growing landmine threats, and exploitation through trafficking and forced conscription.

Educational disruption was severe, driven by high textbook costs and declining attendance, although the AA announced free education initiatives in liberated areas. While the AA supported religious events such as Eid, illegal gambling and artifact smuggling persisted despite enforcement efforts.

Junta actions—such as extortion of fishermen in Manaung, forced conscription in Pyay, and skyrocketing travel costs (with Kyaukphyu–Yangon flights reaching 1.1 million Kyat)—further strained civilian life. Despite some infrastructure efforts by the Arakan People’s Revolutionary Government and the ULA/AA, including the repair of trade roads and bridges in Paletwa and the provision of communication services, the region’s humanitarian and social fabric remained under severe pressure from conflict, displacement, and deepening resource scarcity.

D. Humanitarian Issue

1. Urgent Humanitarian Needs for Displaced Civilians in Rakhine

Displaced civilians in Arakan, particularly in AA-controlled areas, faced dire conditions requiring urgent humanitarian aid for basic survival (June 1). In Sittwe, those trapped amid the conflict needed immediate assistance (June 3). In Ponnagyun, heavy rains flooded more than 200 displaced families (June 18). Arakanese organizations abroad provided critical support to Rakhine IDPs (June 20), and the AA supplied food and shelter to displaced communities in Paletwa and three Rakhine towns (June 24). Additionally, Rakhine migrant

workers displaced by fighting in Hpakant, Kachin State, faced severe food and shelter shortages (June 18, 24).

2. Environmental and Conflict-Related Displacement Risks

Heavy rainfall and flooding posed major risks. In Thandwe, the Thuzaychaung Dam exceeded danger levels, prompting the ULA/AA to issue urgent evacuation warnings for nearby residents (June 4). In Ponnagyun, over 200 families were displaced by floods (June 18). Conflict-related displacement continued as Rakhine IDPs trapped in Ayeyarwady during clashes required rescue by the AA and revolutionary forces (June 20). Meanwhile, the return of some Muslims from Bangladesh refugee camps to Arakan, driven by hardship, further strained limited resources (June 23).

3. Community and Revolutionary Support Initiatives

The Arakan People's Revolutionary Government repaired a key border trade road in Ponnagyun–Maungdaw that had been damaged by conflict and rain (June 4). The AA and revolutionary forces rescued trapped IDPs in Ayeyarwady (June 20) and provided food and shelter in Paletwa and three Rakhine towns (June 24). The “People for People” program, implemented across Rakhine, Karenni, Sagaing, and Magway, aimed to support struggling communities (June 8). Additionally, urgent aid was requested for disabled victims of the conflict (June 10).

4. General Overview

In June 2025, Rakhine State and surrounding regions faced a deepening humanitarian crisis driven by conflict, displacement, and environmental challenges. Displaced civilians in AA-controlled areas, Sittwe, and beyond urgently required food, shelter, and medical assistance. Thousands of Rakhine migrant workers in Hpakant also struggled with basic survival. Heavy monsoon rains triggered widespread flooding, particularly in Ponnagyun and Thandwe, where dam overflows prompted emergency evacuations. The return of displaced Muslims from Bangladesh refugee camps to Arakan added additional pressure on already strained local resources. Conflict-related dangers, especially fighting in Ayeyarwady, left IDPs trapped and in need of rescue operations.

The Arakan People's Revolutionary Government and the AA responded by repairing critical infrastructure—such as the Ponnagyun–Maungdaw trade road—delivering food and shelter, and launching community support programs like “People for People” across several regions. Despite these efforts, ongoing airstrike threats hindered reconstruction efforts. The scale of displacement and the deepening scarcity of resources underscored the urgent need for sustained international humanitarian intervention in Rakhine and beyond.

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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