

Burma: New Violence in Arakan State Human Rights Watch 27 October 2012 The government of Burma should take immediate steps to stop sectarian violence against the Rohingya Muslim population in Arakan State, in western Burma, and ensure protection and aid to both Rohingyas and Arakanese in the state, Human Rights Watch said today. New satellite imagery obtained by Human Rights Watch shows extensive destruction of homes and other property in a predominantly Rohingya Muslim area of the coastal town of Kyauk Pyu – one of several areas of new violence and displacement.

Human Rights Watch identified 811 destroyed structures on the eastern coastal edge of Kyauk Pyu following arson attacks reportedly conducted on October 24, 2012, less than 24 hours before the satellite images were captured. (...)

Violence renewed between Arakan Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims on October 21 and continued all week in at least five townships: Minbya, Mrak-U, Myebon, Rathedaung, and Kyauk Pyu. This was the first time violence had reached Kyauk Pyu and most of these other parts of the state since the sectarian violence and related abuses by state security forces against the Rohingya began in early June. The Rohingya have suffered the brunt of the violence.

“Burma’s government urgently needs to provide security for the Rohingya in Arakan State, who are under vicious attack,” said Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director at Human Rights Watch. “Unless the authorities also start addressing the root causes of the violence, it is only likely to get worse.” (...)

Sittwe’s estimated population of 200,000 people had been divided evenly between Buddhists and Muslims. Now the Rohingya and non-Rohingya Muslim population of Sittwe has been largely segregated to the IDP camps, and Sittwe is nearly devoid of Muslims.

The Burmese government denies citizenship to most Rohingya and the protections that come with it. Since communal violence between Rohingya and Arakanese erupted in June, many Rohingya have been compelled to live in squalid camps in Arakan State, where they have been denied access to adequate humanitarian aid and vulnerable to attack from Arakan militants.

President Thein Sein appointed an investigative commission earlier in 2012 to determine the causes of violence, but has yet to propose any policies to address those causes. He has at times called for the segregation of the Rohingya and even their expulsion from Burma, which feeds popular animosity against the Rohingya from the general population. The opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi has called for establishing the rule of law in the Arakan State, but has not used her moral authority to urge reconciliation or end discriminatory treatment of the Rohingya under Burma’s nationality law. (...)

“Deploying sufficient security forces to restore order impartially and protect basic rights in Arakan State is necessary, but not enough,” Robertson said. “Burmese government officials and opposition leaders need to condemn the violence and work for lasting solutions to Arakan’s ethnic problems.” **Read [full article](#) .**