

Renewed Arakan State violence underscores government's failure to protect minorities and to prevent ethnic cleansing International Federation of Human Rights 30 October 2012 (...)

Renewed communal violence in Arakan State has exposed the Burmese government's failure to stop ethnic cleansing, protect minority groups, especially Muslim Rohingya, and implement reforms to address the root causes of human rights violations targeting these groups, said the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and its member organisation, the Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma (Altsean-Burma). FIDH and Altsean-Burma call on all State security forces to protect all communities from violence and other abuses without discrimination, in light of credible allegations of their role in excessive use of force and arbitrary arrests primarily targeting Muslims since the violence began in June.

This latest round of violence between Buddhist Rakhine and Muslim Rohingya broke out on 21 October in Minbya and Mrauk U Townships and quickly escalated, spreading to Kyaukpyu, Kyauktaw, Rathidaung, Pauktaw, Thandwe, and Rambree Townships. It is not yet clear what triggered the latest violence. Several reports documented attacks against Muslim Rohingya as well as Muslims from the officially recognised Kaman ethnic group.

On 28 October, state-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar said that from 21 to 27 October 84 people had been killed and 2,950 houses and 14 religious buildings had been destroyed. On 29 October, authorities said the death toll from the unrest had reached 88. FIDH and Altsean-Burma fear that the death toll is much higher.

On 26 October, the Lower House's Rule of Law Committee, chaired by Aung San Suu Kyi, submitted an emergency proposal regarding the latest violent clashes, which called on the central government to increase security in the region in order to quell the rioting and to investigate human rights abuses through transparent judicial procedures. In August, the government formed a 27-member investigative commission to probe the Arakan State violence. However, the commission's independence and impartiality have been questioned as some commission members have publicly expressed strong anti-Rohingya sentiments while none of the members are Rohingya. (...)

A fully independent, impartial, and thorough investigation conducted by persons of high moral character and recognised competence in the field of human rights is essential to establish the facts surrounding the violence since June, identify perpetrators, and address the root causes of racial discrimination and ethnic tension in Arakan State.

Security forces should act immediately to protect all residents in Arakan State without discrimination. (...)

The latest outbreak of violence has displaced at least 28,000 people, most of whom are Muslims. (...)

This spike in IDPs will add to the 75,000 people that have already been displaced by the June violence and who remain in overcrowded camps in squalid conditions. The number of IDPs resulting from the Arakan violence and the ongoing armed conflict in Kachin State has now reached well over 200,000. Humanitarian access in both Arakan and Kachin States remains

inadequate and the government must ensure the safe and unfettered delivery of humanitarian aid by both the UN and other organizations able and prepared to provide such aid to all those in need. (...)

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