

Monthly Arakan Review

CENTER FOR ARAKAN STUDIES

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Displacement, Air Strikes and Civilian Suffering in Arakan

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



Photo Credit to Triple T (Local Communities Fleeing Ongoing Armed Clashes in Kyaukphyu)

Executive Summary

- In November 2025, it is reported that the Arakan Army crushed a major junta offensive in Kyaukphyu (1–9 Nov), routing all three assault columns. The regime responded with relentless airstrikes and artillery, killing 115–120 civilians—the deadliest month in years. On 9 November, AA released over 80 Muslim detainees as a goodwill gesture on its commander’s birthday. While the junta lost ground and pushed its rejected “sham election,” AA strengthened control and civilian suffering reached catastrophic levels.
- In November 2025, farmers in Rakhine faced a devastating triple blow: unseasonal heavy rains destroyed winter-crop planting, high input costs triggered widespread debt, and a total paddy market collapse left harvested rice unsold due to closed trade routes and zero export demand. Junta troops in Kyaukphyu looted abandoned early-season rice fields, further worsening food insecurity for displaced families. Livestock diseases killed pigs and tobacco demand vanished, while only minor recoveries in dried-fish and small-scale poultry offered faint relief. November became one of the bleakest months in years for Arakanese rural livelihoods.
- In November 2025, the ULA/AA rolled out major health initiatives in its areas, vaccinating children under 3 for the first time in nearly two years and distributing scarce HIV medicines, while a deadly diarrhea outbreak in Paletwa killed 6, infected more than 300, and shut the vital Mizoram trade route for two weeks. In junta-held towns like Sittwe and Kyaukphyu, residents and IDPs suffered skyrocketing prices, food shortages, fishing bans, movement restrictions, and extortion, with boats fleeing Sittwe even fired upon.
- In November 2025, intense junta shelling and airstrikes in Kyaukphyu (especially from November 19), Ponnagyun, and Rathedaung triggered thousands of new displacements and forced repeated relocations of IDPs. Nearly 5,000 IDPs in Thandwe and Mro communities in the north remained in critical need of food and shelter, while some Gwa displaced dared to return home despite ongoing risks. The AA distributed rice to over 1,000 IDPs in Paletwa, Taungup, and Ann (November 12) and rescued trapped civilians in Kyaukphyu, supported by diaspora donations from Japan. November saw Rakhine’s humanitarian crisis worsens sharply, with surging displacement, acute shortages, and an underfunded response amid relentless military assaults.

Key Developments

A. Politics: Three Key Highlights

1. November 2025 (entire month, cumulative total announced 29-Nov)

At least 115–120 civilians killed by junta airstrikes and artillery The military launched one of the deadliest aerial and artillery campaigns in recent Rakhine history, killing at [least 115 civilians](#) (including many children and women) and injuring scores more in just 30 days. Notable single-day massacres included 7–8 Nov (11+ killed), 22 Nov (4 killed, 8 injured), and 28 Nov (7 killed in Kyauktaw). Villages, schools, and monasteries across Pauktaw, Ponnagyun, Minbya, Kyaukphyu, Rathedaung, and other townships were systematically targeted.

2. 1-9 November-25: Decisive AA victory in the Battle of Kyaukphyu

After a week-long major offensive using land, sea, and air forces, the Myanmar junta suffered a crushing defeat in Kyaukphyu Township. Two of three assault columns were [destroyed by 3-Nov](#); the final column, despite heavy reinforcements, collapsed on 9-Nov with troops disbanding and fleeing in chaos.

3. 9 Nov-25: AA releases over 80 Rohingya Muslim detainees on Commander Twan Mrat Naing's 47th birthday

In a highly symbolic goodwill gesture amid intense fighting, the Arakan Army [freed more](#) than 80 detained Muslims (mostly Rohingya) to mark the birthday of its leader General Twan Mrat Naing. The move was widely seen as an effort to ease ethnic tensions and counter junta propaganda portraying AA as anti-Muslim.

Summarized Overview

From 1-Nov to 30-Nov-25, Rakhine State saw a dramatic escalation of conflict and civilian suffering. The Arakan Army inflicted a major defeat on the junta in the strategic battle of Kyaukphyu (1–9 Nov), forcing regime troops into a chaotic retreat despite massive air and naval support. Throughout the month, the military responded with relentless and indiscriminate airstrikes and artillery bombardment, killing at least 115–120 civilians—the highest monthly civilian death toll in years—and destroying homes, schools, and monasteries.

Simultaneously, the junta accelerated preparations for its planned 2026 “sham election” in Rakhine, with parties like Rakhine Nationalities Party (RNP) and USDP aggressively campaigning, coercing IDPs, and distributing aid for votes. The AA rejected the election outright, strengthened governance in controlled areas (tax collection, civil servant recruitment, justice mechanisms), and continued detaining Bangladeshi poachers while releasing Muslim prisoners as goodwill gestures. Border tensions with Bangladesh persisted (BGB incidents, ARSA abductions), but no major cross-border escalation occurred. By month's end, the military regime had lost further ground, legitimacy, and morale in the Arakan front while civilian casualties reached catastrophic levels.

B. Economic Fall down: Three Key Highlights

1. 6–7 Nov-25: Junta troops loot early-harvested paddy from displaced farmers in Kyaukphyu

While local villagers were forced to flee intense fighting, regime soldiers [entered abandoned villages](#) in Kyaukphyu Township and harvested standing early-season rice crops for themselves, further deepening food insecurity and anger among displaced Arakanese farming families.

2. November 2025 (ongoing, worsened by continuous rains): Severe crisis for winter-crop farmers across Rakhine

Unseasonal heavy rains, high input costs, and flood damage [destroyed or delayed](#) winter crop planting (pulses, onions, vegetables) in multiple townships. Combined with earlier battlefield displacement and lack of assistance in AA-controlled areas, thousands of farmers faced crop failure and mounting debt (reports: 2-Nov, 5-Nov, 7-Nov, 10-Nov).

3. 21 Nov-25 & throughout the month: Collapse of the paddy market leaves Arakanese farmers unable to sell their harvest

Despite the rice harvest starting in November, farmers across Rakhine State could not find buyers [due to closed](#) trade routes (especially Mizoram-Paletwa Road), lack of export demand, and overall economic blockade. Paddy prices remained extremely low or unsold, pushing many farming households into financial ruin (major reports: 13-Nov, 21-Nov, 27-Nov).

Summarized Overview

From 1–30 Nov-25, the region’s rural economy and farming communities suffered a devastating compound crisis. Unseasonal heavy rains and flooding ruined winter-crop planting while high fertilizer/fuel prices made cultivation nearly impossible for many. Farmers who managed to harvest early paddy found no buyers due to closed borders, disrupted transport (Mizoram route shutdown), and collapsed external demand, causing rice prices to stay rock-bottom or go unsold.

In conflict zones, especially Kyaukphyu, fleeing villagers returned to find their ripe paddy already looted by junta troops. Livestock sectors faced additional blows: pig deaths surged from suspected disease outbreaks, and tobacco farmers saw demand vanish. Small bright spots emerged—dried-fish production resumed in Pauktaw with decent prices, backyard poultry and candle-making slowly restarted in some liberated areas—but these were minor compared to widespread agricultural collapse. Smuggling of cement, pulses, and drugs across the Bangladesh border continued in both directions, highlighting the breakdown of normal trade. Overall, November 2025 marked one of the worst periods in recent years for Arakanese farmers and rural livelihoods.

C. Social Issues: Three Key Highlights

1. 3 & 11 Nov-25: ULA launches major health recovery programs in controlled areas

The ULA-led government began free mass vaccination of [all children under 3](#) (who had received no vaccines for nearly two years) and distributed long-out-of-stock ART medicines for [HIV patients](#) across all AA-governed townships — marking the first systematic public-health intervention since the breakdown of the junta system.

2. 13–24 Nov-25: Deadly diarrhea outbreak in Paletwa

The outbreak kills 6, infects over 300, [forces two-week closure](#) of vital Mizoram-Paletwa trade route A severe diarrhea epidemic (suspected cholera/contaminated water) swept Paletwa, killing at least six people and hospitalising hundreds. Authorities closed the critical India–Myanmar trade and supply road from 13–24 Nov, leaving hundreds stranded and [causing acute shortages](#) of food and medicine in southern Chin and Rakhine areas.

3. November 2025 (ongoing): Extreme hardship for IDPs and urban residents under junta control

In junta-held towns, especially Sittwe and Kyaukphyu, displaced people and ordinary residents faced skyrocketing prices, severe food shortages, arbitrary movement bans, and naval blockades on fishing.

Boats trying to flee Sittwe for food were [shot at and detained](#) (16-Nov), while even passengers [arriving by air](#) in Kyaukphyu were confined, extorted, or jailed (30-Nov).

Summarized Overview

From 1–30 Nov-25, the civilian population of Rakhine State endured deepening humanitarian distress. In AA-controlled areas, the ULA/AA stepped in to fill the health-care vacuum: free child vaccinations, HIV treatment distribution, return of stolen motorcycles, heritage protection, and diarrhea-prevention campaigns — while students anxiously awaited the restart of university education.

In contrast, junta-controlled zones (Sittwe, Kyaukphyu, Gwa, Thandwe) saw worsening living conditions: naval attacks and fishing bans destroyed coastal livelihoods, food and medicine prices soared, IDP women struggled to feed families, and residents were trapped by movement restrictions and extortion. A deadly diarrhea outbreak in Paletwa forced the two-week closure of the vital Mizoram trade lifeline, triggering shortages across the region. Malaria, landmine injuries, and rising mitragyna (kratom) use added to the health crisis, while 80 % of landmine-victim families reported destroyed livelihoods. Despite small cultural bright spots (preparations for Tansaungdaing festival in Sittwe), November 2025 highlighted a stark divide: functioning basic services slowly returning in AA areas versus acute survival struggles under military rule.

D. Humanitarian Issue: Three Key Highlights

1. 19 Nov-25: Thousands flee intensified junta assaults in Kyaukphyu Township

Heavy daily shelling and gunfire from regime [forces targeted villages](#) near Minbya and Thaing Chaung, forcing thousands of residents to abandon homes and seek safety elsewhere. This marked a sharp escalation in displacement during the ongoing Battle of Kyaukphyu, with AA conducting rescue operations for [trapped civilians](#) by month's end (28-Nov).

2. 3 & 19 Nov-25: Airstrike fears drive mass relocations in Ponnagyun and Rathedaung

In Ponnagyun, impending junta airstrikes prompted hundreds of IDPs [to urgently relocate](#) to safer areas; similarly, [Rathedaung villagers](#) fled en masse to evade aerial bombings. These movements compounded the crisis, leaving nearly 5,000 IDPs in Thandwe without adequate food or shelter.

3. 12 Nov-25: AA distributes rice aid to over 1,000 IDPs in southern and western Rakhine

The Arakan Army provided essential rice supplies [to displaced families](#) in Paletwa, Taungup, and Ann townships amid severe shortages. This followed international support, including a 100-million-kyat donation from Japan's Arakan National Democratic Party (ANDP) for blankets to Kyaukphyu IDPs, highlighting grassroots and diaspora efforts amid limited UN access.

Summarized Overview

From 1–30 Nov-25, the State's humanitarian crisis deepened dramatically, with conflict-driven displacement surging to affect thousands more families. Junta airstrikes and artillery barrages in Ponnagyun, Rathedaung, and especially Kyaukphyu forced repeated relocations and village evacuations, while nearly 5,000 IDPs in Thandwe and Mro communities in northern Maungdaw/Buthidaung faced

acute food and shelter shortages amid ARSA threats. OCHA's regional snapshots (6 & 13 Nov) underscored civilians bearing the brunt of hostilities, including child casualties from shelling in Pauktaw (29-Oct, reported early Nov).

Aid efforts persisted despite access barriers: AA delivered rice to over 1,000 IDPs in Paletwa, Taungup, and Ann (12-Nov), Japanese diaspora groups funded blankets for Kyaukphyu (12-Nov) and organized fundraisers (10-Nov), and calls grew for China to support Kyaukphyu displaced (21-Nov). Some Gwa IDPs risked returning home despite airstrike dangers (3-Nov), while Mrauk-U IDPs appealed for urgent help (22-Nov). Arakan ranked among Myanmar's worst-affected regions, with over 2.8 million nationwide displaced by ongoing violence—exacerbating needs in a severely underfunded response.

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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