

Issue Brief

Women's Security and Dignity under Interim Governance and Judicial Systems in Arakan

No. (9/2026)
Women's Issues



Distribution of menstrual pads in Arakan (source@burmanewsinternational)

August 20, 2026

1. Introduction

(a) Main Focus	This study examines incidents of rape, attempted rape, killings, and threats against women and girls in the ULA/AA controlled areas, with particular attention to the rule of law, accountability, and judicial responses to such incidents.
(b) Geographic Scope	Areas under control of the ULA/AA
(c) Time Period	From September 2024 to August 2026

Background and Context

Following the resurgence of armed conflict in Arakan/Rakhine State in November 2023, significant changes have taken place in the security, governance, and social conditions across the state alongside the expansion of the Arakan Army’s (AA) territorial control. In areas under AA control, governance mechanisms related to security and the rule of law have been established. At the same time, reports of rape and sexual violence against women and children, including cases in which victims were killed after being raped, have raised growing concerns about the safety of women and their access to justice.

While perpetrators in some of these cases have reportedly been arrested, investigated, prosecuted, and sentenced to imprisonment or the maximum available penalties, other cases have raised concerns over perpetrators remaining at large, prolonged proceedings without a verdict, suspects being released on bail, and questions regarding the transparency and effectiveness of judicial processes. These circumstances have further heightened concerns about access to justice for survivors and their families, as well as the safety and protection of women and children.

This study provides an overview of reported cases of rape and related crimes that occurred between 2024 and 2026 in areas of Rakhine State under AA control. It examines the patterns of these incidents, their impacts on survivors, and the status of measures taken against perpetrators, including arrests, legal action, judicial proceedings, and sentencing. The study compiles and presents information based on data and reports obtained from local media outlets.

2. Summary of Findings

September 2024

(1) Chin woman allegedly gang-raped in Sami town; suspected perpetrator remains at large

On 24 September 2024, a local Chin woman was reportedly [gang-raped](#) by a group of unidentified men near an AA camp in Sami town, Paletwa Township. According to local residents, the woman was beaten until she lost consciousness and was subsequently abandoned near a stream.

A 24-year-old man identified as Ko Kyaw Tun Lin was reportedly accused of being one of the perpetrators and remained at large. The AA reportedly issued an arrest warrant for him. Details of the warrant were disclosed on social media on 21 April 2025 by a person close to the AA. However, as the alleged perpetrator had not been effectively apprehended or brought to justice, local residents reportedly expressed concerns and criticism regarding the rule of law.

April 2025

(2) Two AA soldiers allegedly rape woman in AA-controlled Paletwa Township

On 5 April 2025, in Seim Zin Wa Village, Paletwa Township, Chin State, which is under AA control, two AA soldiers reportedly [raped a Khumi woman](#) and subsequently attempted to kill her. She reportedly survived after a family member arrived at the scene. The two soldiers reportedly confessed to the offence and were subsequently sentenced to death.

(3) 12-year-old girl in Maungdaw Township allegedly raped by Stepfather for Several Months

In Chee Yar Tan Village, southern Maungdaw Township, [a 12-year-old girl](#) was reportedly sexually abused by her 40-year-old stepfather over several months, beginning in November 2024. The alleged perpetrator reportedly threatened the girl and her mother in an attempt to prevent the abuse from being disclosed. Following a complaint from local residents, the AA reportedly arrested the alleged perpetrator on 27 April 2025. Local residents called for the perpetrator to receive an appropriate punishment.

May 2025

(4) 9-year-old girl in Myinbya Township raped and killed

In Pha Pyaw Village, Myinbya Township, [a 9-year-old girl](#) was reportedly raped and killed on 2 May 2025. Her body was reportedly found tied to a tree near the village. In connection with the case, a man in his 30s, identified as Maung Mya Than, was arrested by the Department of Law Enforcement and Public Security (DLEPS) on 6 May.

Following the incident, [11 Rakhine Civil Society Organizations \(CSOs\)](#) called on the judicial authorities of the Arakan People's Revolutionary Government (APRG) to conduct an impartial and timely investigation, take effective legal action against the perpetrator, ensure justice for the bereaved family, and establish preventive measures to protect women and children from similar acts of violence.

(5) Two women allegedly raped and killed in the Sami Area

In May 2025, [two women](#) were reportedly raped and brutally killed in the Sami area of Paletwa Township. On 23 May, a 27-year-old woman from Pi Wa Village, Sami, was reportedly raped and killed. Her body, with her hands and feet bound with rope, was found by local residents between Pi Wa and Kyi Wa villages.

On 26 May, a 68-year-old woman from Shwe Laing Pwe Village was also reportedly raped and killed. Villagers found her body on 29 May with knife and blunt-force injuries, as well as injuries indicating that her hair had been cut and her genital area had been severely injured. These incidents reportedly heightened concerns among residents of the Sami area regarding women's safety and the rule of law.

June 2025

(6) Suspect re-arrested in Minbya after year-long investigation into attempted rape

On 20 June 2024, in Lun Lon Pike Village, Minbya Township, Rakhine State, a 23-year-old woman was reportedly attacked by a 24-year-old man identified as Tha Maung Chay (also known as Myo Thet Naing) while she was going to the toilet. He allegedly strangled her and attempted to rape and kill her. The woman escaped after a villager discovered the incident.

Following the incident, the ULA/AA reportedly arrested the suspect, but he was [released on bail](#) approximately 10 days later. According to the victim's family, no significant progress was made in the case for more than a year, during which the alleged perpetrator remained at liberty. The victim and her family reportedly experienced psychological distress as a result of the incident and were forced to relocate.

On 28 June 2025, DLEPS reportedly [re-arrested the suspect](#) and questioned the judge who had granted him bail. The victim's family called for an effective investigation and appropriate punishment for the alleged perpetrator.

September 2025

(7) Arakan People's Revolutionary Government sentences man who confessed to raping 11 women to 40 Years in Prison

A 25-year-old man, Maung Zaw Zaw Naing, also known as La Phyu Chay, who reportedly confessed to raping 11 women in Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, and Ponnagyun townships between 2024 and 2025, was [sentenced to a total of 40 years in prison](#) for four cases by the Arakan People's Revolutionary Government. The remaining seven cases were reportedly still under investigation.

Some of the survivors were reportedly underage. In one case, a 14-year-old girl was allegedly lured under the false promise of employment, threatened, and repeatedly raped.

(8) Father allegedly sexually abused daughter for six years in Ann Township; Arrested by DLEPS

In Khyui Kwe Seik Village, Rakkha Tain Village Tract, Ann Township, a 38-year-old father reportedly sexually abused his biological daughter for [six years](#), beginning when she was 12 years old. At the age of 18, the daughter was reportedly two months pregnant as a result of the abuse.

The alleged perpetrator was reportedly reported to DLEPS by his own mother. DLEPS subsequently arrested U Nyi Hla and reportedly initiated legal proceedings against him. Women's organizations highlighted the need not only to hold the perpetrator accountable but also to provide the survivor with physical and psychological recovery support.

(9) Village administrator arrested for allegedly attempting to rape displaced woman in Mrauk-U

On the night of 5 September 2025, a 47-year-old village administrator, U Maung Aye Nyunt, allegedly [attempted to rape a woman displaced](#) from Sittwe who was staying at an IDP camp in Sin Khyin Village, Mrauk-U Township. He reportedly entered the woman's residence while intoxicated, removed her clothing, and attempted to rape her.

In connection with the incident, DLEPS reportedly arrested and detained U Maung Aye Nyunt.

November 2025

(10) Man allegedly raped 16-year-old girl in Paletwa and resisted arrest with a knife

On 9 November 2025, in Dalat Kine Village, Paletwa Township, Chin State, a 46-year-old man, U Tun Hlaing, allegedly forcibly took a 16-year-old girl to an area near the forest and [raped her three times](#).

The girl subsequently told her father about the incident, and her father reported the case to DLEPS

on the same day. DLEPS reportedly searched for the suspect to arrest him, but he initially fled. He was subsequently found at his home on 19 November.

During the arrest, U Tun Hlaing reportedly resisted with a knife, but DLEPS personnel were able to apprehend him. A case was reportedly filed against him under Section 376 of the Penal Code. The survivor was also reportedly taken to hospital for a medical examination.

January 2026

(11) 6-year-old girl allegedly Raped in Maungdaw Township

In Aung Thukha Village, southern Maungdaw Township, [a six-year-old girl](#) was reportedly taken to a house by a 50-year-old man and raped. The incident reportedly occurred on 17 January 2026, and DLEPS arrested the alleged perpetrator on 18 January and opened an investigation. Local residents and civil society organizations called for effective legal action against the perpetrator in accordance with the law and for justice to be ensured for the victim and her family, given the nature of the case as child sexual abuse.

March 2026

(12) 8-year-old girl Allegedly Raped in Pauktaw; Suspect Remains at Large

On 3 March 2026, in Pha Du Gyi Village, Alay Phyu Kyaung Island, Pauktaw Township, an area under AA control in Rakhine State, [an eight-year-old girl](#) was reportedly raped by a man in his 40s identified as U Tun Aung Chay. The alleged perpetrator was arrested on 4 March but was reportedly later released due to negligence by DLEPS and remained [at large for more than five months](#) as of July.

The case reportedly remained at No. 4 Police Station and had not yet reached the prosecution stage, raising concerns among the victim's family that it could be dropped. The family called for the alleged perpetrator to be re-arrested as soon as possible and held accountable, and for action to be taken against those responsible for his release.

(13) AA announces life imprisonment or up to 20 years for rape of girls under 12

On 23 March 2026, the Department of Law Enforcement and Public Security (DLEPS) of the Arakan People's Revolutionary Government announced that perpetrators convicted of raping girls under the age of 12 in Rakhine State would face severe penalties, including [life imprisonment or up to 20 years in prison](#).

According to the announcement, rape of children under 12 is classified as a serious offence under Section 376(3) of the Penal Code. It also stated that an attempt to commit rape could be punishable by up to 10 years of imprisonment with hard labour under Sections 376/511 of the Penal Code.

DLEPS also called on parents to take preventive measures to protect children from sexual violence, create an environment in which children can communicate openly, and report suspected incidents to the relevant authorities.

(14) DLEPS arrests monastic school teacher accused of attempting to rape four girls in Mrauk-U

DLEPS reportedly arrested a 56-year-old teacher, U Maung Nge, also known as Maung Tin Nu, from a monastic education school in Mrauk-U for allegedly sexually abusing four underage girls and attempting to rape them.

An investigation reportedly found that the teacher had sexually abused [an eight-year-old KG student](#) in February 2026 and had committed similar acts against three other female students aged six, seven, and eight during 2025. Following complaints from the parents, DLEPS reportedly opened a case under Sections 376/511 of the Penal Code, arrested the teacher, and initiated legal proceedings against him.

The report also called for strong legal action against perpetrators to effectively prevent child sexual abuse in Rakhine State and urged parents to take preventive measures to protect children's safety.

April 2026

(15) DLEPS arrests man accused of raping four-year-old girl in Mrauk-U Township

In Pauk Pin Kwin Village, Mrauk-U Township, Rakhine State, a 60-year-old man reportedly lured [a four-year-old girl](#) away and raped her. The incident reportedly occurred on 22 April 2026. DLEPS of the Arakan People's Revolutionary Government reportedly arrested the alleged perpetrator and opened a case for investigation.

(16) Suspect in child rape and attempted concealment of body released, raising concerns among victim's family

In Aung Thukha Village, Maungdaw Township, a 3-year-old girl was reportedly raped and killed by a 16-year-old boy, who allegedly attempted to [conceal the body](#). The suspect's mother was reportedly arrested by DLEPS in connection with the case but was released on 17 April.

The victim's family called for legal action in relation to the alleged rape, murder, attempted concealment of the body, and theft of property. However, the family reportedly expressed dissatisfaction over the mother's release and the lack of transparency regarding the case and judicial decisions. Villagers and members of the victim's family reportedly held a protest outside the court on 19 April, calling for justice.

(17) 13-year-old girl with a disability allegedly gang-raped and killed in Thandwe; One Suspect Remains at Large

On 11 April 2026, in Ngapali town, Thandwe Township, an area under AA control, five men from the same ward reportedly took a 13-year-old girl with a disability on the pretext of going to eat at a community meal and subsequently gang-raped and killed her.

Of the five suspects, four were reportedly arrested by the AA's DLEPS, while [one remained at large](#). According to people close to the family, the investigation had been delayed because not all of the suspects had been apprehended and the case could not yet proceed.

May 2026

(18) DLEPS arrests two men accused of raping woman with congenital polio in Gwa Township

On 1 May 2026, in Kyway Chaing Village, Gwa Township, an area under AA control in Rakhine State, a [25-year-old woman with congenital polio](#) was reportedly raped by two men from the same village, identified as Nga Aung, aged 37, and Sithu Win, aged 38.

After the survivor disclosed the incident, village elders and members of the local administrative body reportedly notified the relevant township authorities. DLEPS of the Arakan Army subsequently reportedly arrested the two suspects and opened a case for investigation.

(19) Calls for effective action as child rape cases increase in Rakhine

According to media reports, [eight rape cases](#) were reported in Rakhine State between January and May 2026, seven of which reportedly involved minors and therefore constituted cases of child sexual abuse. The reported incidents occurred in Mrauk-U, Pauktaw, Maungdaw, Gwa, Thandwe, Kyauktaw, and Buthidaung townships. While some alleged perpetrators had reportedly been arrested, others remained at large.

Rakhine women's groups called for alleged perpetrators to be arrested promptly and for decisive and effective legal action to be taken. Local women reportedly noted that inadequate accountability had increased concerns about the safety of women and children and called on DLEPS, judicial authorities, and administrative bodies to strengthen the implementation of the rule of law. According to an AA announcement, perpetrators of child rape may face life imprisonment or a sentence of up to 20 years.

July 2026

(20) DLEPS re-arrests rape convict who escaped from prison

U Kyaw Win Chay, a 51-year-old man from Pauktaw Township, Rakhine State, escaped from

prison on 7 May 2026 along with another rape convict while serving a sentence under Section 376 of the Penal Code for rape. He had been arrested and imprisoned for allegedly raping a woman who was staying at an IDP camp in Ponnagyun Township.

On 26 July, DLEPS reportedly [re-arrested](#) him in Pyin Wun Village, Myebon Township. At the time of his arrest, authorities reportedly found a boat, a Honda engine, and two mobile phones in his possession.

The other man who escaped with him, U Bo Than Win from Rathedaung Township, remained at large, and DLEPS was reportedly continuing its search for him.

(21) DLEPS arrests man accused of sexually assaulting two sisters more than three months after he fled

In April 2026, in Thein Tan Village, Thayet Ta Pin Village Tract, Kyauktaw Township, Rakhine State, a man in his 40s, U Maung Aye Hla, allegedly raped a 14-year-old girl and attempted to sexually abuse her eight-year-old younger sister.

The alleged perpetrator reportedly took advantage of the girls' parents working on his farm. He allegedly raped the older girl on the way after telling her that he would accompany her to her parents, and later attempted to sexually abuse the younger girl at her home while her parents were away.

The parents reported the case to the judicial authorities and DLEPS on 14 May 2026, but the alleged perpetrator reportedly fled and remained at large. DMG reported that he was subsequently [arrested in Tha Yet Ta Pin Village on 29 July](#).

August 2026

(22) Rakhine women call for transparent and effective action against sexual violence

Sexual violence against women and children reportedly continues to occur in areas under AA control, while Rakhine women activists have criticized the lack of transparency in the investigation, prosecution, and sentencing of such cases.

According to data from DMG, at [least 16 cases of sexual violence](#) were reported in Rakhine and Paletwa areas between [January 2024 and July 2026](#), with perpetrators reportedly remaining at large in three cases. Rakhine women activists called on the ULA/AA's DLEPS and judicial authorities to conduct effective investigations and take appropriate legal action, publicly disclose information regarding sentences, and ensure women's safety and public confidence in the justice system.

(23) Three perpetrators sentenced for rape and murder of woman in Ponnagyun

A 23-year-old woman from Aung Seik Village, Ponnagyun Township, went missing on 18 July 2026. Her body was found near Tin Swei Village on 22 July, reportedly showing signs that she had been [raped and brutally killed](#).

The victim reportedly sustained multiple knife wounds across her body. Her hands had been handcuffed and her legs tied with rope. She was reportedly raped before being brutally killed.

DLEPS opened an investigation under [Section 302 of the Penal Code on 23 July](#) and arrested and questioned Maung Tin Win, Maung Pu, and Nga Lone in connection with the case. According to the investigation, Maung Tin Win was identified as having committed the rape and murder, while Maung Pu and Nga Lone were found to have participated in taking the victim to the location and handcuffing her.

On 5 August, the Sittwe District Court reportedly sentenced Maung Tin Win to [death under Section 302\(1\)\(c\) of the Penal Code](#). Maung Pu and Nga Lone were each [sentenced to 20 years in prison under Section 364 of the Penal Code](#).



Source: Arakan Crime and Related News Information and Reporting Group)

(24) Attempted rape of 16-year-old girl in Thandwe; Suspect Released on Bail

In Nyaung Pin Kwin village, Thandwe Township, a 28-year-old married man reportedly forcibly dragged a 16-year-old girl to the bank of a stream and [attempted to rape](#) her. He reportedly fled when nearby people saw the incident and intervened. He also reportedly threatened to kill the girl if she told her parents about the incident.

The girl's family filed a complaint at a DLEPS station. However, a judge from the Thandwe District Court reportedly [released the suspect on bail](#). Following his release, the victim's family expressed concern that he [might retaliate or pose a further threat](#) to the girl's safety and called on the ULA/AA judicial authorities to take effective action against him.

3. Key Findings

1. Between 2025 and 2026, cases of rape, gang rape, rape followed by murder, and attempts to conceal victims' bodies continued to be reported in areas under the control of the Arakan Army (AA). Based on publicly reported cases, news sources indicate that at least 16 incidents could be documented. Survivors included children, young women, and older women, indicating that sexual violence was not confined to any particular age group. Some cases also involved children with disabilities and very young children.

2. The incidents involved not only sexual violence but also other forms of physical violence, including beating, stabbing, tying victims with ropes, killing, and attempts to conceal bodies. This indicates a high level of violence in some of the reported crimes. Cases were reported in areas including Paletwa, Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, Myinbya, Pauktaw, Ponnagyun, Maungdaw, and Thandwe, suggesting that the issue is not confined to a single locality but has emerged as a broader protection and security concern across Rakhine State.

3. In some cases, relevant ULA/AA authorities reportedly arrested suspects, opened investigations, conducted judicial proceedings, and imposed sentences. For example, two AA personnel were reportedly sentenced to death in a case in Paletwa, while a death sentence and lengthy prison terms were imposed in the Ponnagyun case. These cases demonstrate that measures have been taken against some perpetrators. However, effective action remains urgently needed in the other reported cases.

4. The status of legal action has not been consistent across all cases. Some suspects have reportedly not been apprehended or remain at large, while in other cases, local residents have reported that suspects were released after being arrested. In some cases, information regarding the final outcome of judicial proceedings remains unavailable. In particular, although some high-profile cases from previous years were reportedly brought before the courts, information concerning appeals, implementation of final sentences, and subsequent developments has not been clearly disclosed to the public.

5. Women's rights activists and local residents have highlighted the continued occurrence of sexual violence, the fact that some alleged perpetrators remain at large, and delays in judicial proceedings. They have called for effective legal action and greater transparency in judicial processes. At the same time, criticism continues regarding the transparency of judicial procedures, the disclosure of case outcomes, and the accountability of judicial authorities.

4. Analysis

In areas under the control of the United League of Arakan (ULA) and the Arakan People's Revolutionary Government, reports of rape, sexual violence, rape followed by murder, and sexual exploitation and abuse against women and girls have occasionally appeared in local media. These incidents have also drawn increasing criticism and concern from the public and observers. This study compiles developments and reported cases from September 2024 to August 2026, covering a period of one year and eleven months.

Given the sensitive nature of sexual violence and the social and cultural norms surrounding shame and fear within Arakan society, the actual number of incidents may be considerably higher than those reported by the media. For example, although 25-year-old Maung Zaw Zaw Naing, also known as La Phyu Chay, reportedly raped 11 women in Mrauk-U and Ponnagyun townships during 2024–2025, the full extent of the cases only became publicly known at a later stage. This suggests that underreporting remains a significant concern when assessing the prevalence of sexual violence in the region.

The repeated occurrence of rape and other forms of sexual violence in the Arakan region places a significant responsibility on the governance and judicial systems. However, addressing the issue requires a broader approach. In particular, responses can be considered in terms of prevention and reduction of sexual violence before incidents occur, and effective enforcement, accountability, and punishment following incidents. This requires coordinated engagement not only from the authorities but also from community leaders, religious leaders, women's rights activists, and the media.

More broadly, rape and sexual violence do not result from a single cause. They may be influenced by harmful social and cultural norms, socioeconomic inequalities and disparities, environmental and security conditions, and the individual motivations of perpetrators. At the same time, in conflict-affected and unstable environments such as the Arakan region, where communities face insecurity and socioeconomic hardship, women and girls may face heightened risks of becoming victims of sexual violence.

Most importantly, perpetrators of sexual violence should be held accountable through clear and effective legal mechanisms, with accountability and transparency demonstrated not only by the wider community but also by governing authorities. Sexual violence should not be treated merely as an ordinary social offence; rather, it requires a clear and effective legal response. Information concerning criminal investigations, judicial proceedings, and court decisions should be disclosed

regularly and transparently, while appropriate and effective penalties should be imposed within a reasonable timeframe.

Such transparency and accountability can serve both to deter potential perpetrators and to strengthen public confidence in the justice system. More importantly, effective prevention, accountability, and judicial responses are essential to protecting the safety, dignity, and rights of women and girls in the Arakan region.

About Center for Arakan Studies

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