

INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT

THE ALLEGED HTAN SHAUK KHAN MASSACRE INCIDENT IN BUTHIDAUNG, RAKHINE STATE, MYANMAR:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report synthesizes findings from a series of investigative interviews conducted to document first-hand accounts of accused 600- Muslim massacre reportedly occurred in and around Htun Chauk Khan village. The inquiry focused on three central themes: life under the military junta, witness experiences of the May 3-4, 2024 clash between the combined force of the Military Junta, its Muslim conscripts, Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army soldiers and the Arakan Army (AA) in the Htan Shauk Khan village, and the subsequent displacement of villagers. A key objective was to investigate the allegations of a mass civilian casualty event, reportedly on the date of May 2, 2024, involving 600 Muslims committed by the Arakan Army.

Life under Military Junta: The accounts of witnesses of Htan Shauk Khan villagers consistently emphasized the repressive conditions under Myanmar Military Junta rule. Since the village proximity of the Military Junta bases; No. 551 tactical battalion baseⁱ and Sa Sa Ka (15), the villagers faced forced detention, forced labor, exploitative tributes, arbitrary fines on farming and trade, and strict travel limitations. These restrictions placed the community under sustained socio-economic hardship long before the outbreak of the clashes.

Regarding the 2024 May 3–4 clashes, witnesses of Htan Shauk Khan recalled an atmosphere of fear and confusion as the Arakan Army advanced toward nearby villages and military junta soldiers entered the village. The presence of the Junta soldiers, artillery fire, junta airstrikes, and the Arakan Army imminent attack heightened the danger. In response, evacuation actions were organized collaboratively by villagers, Arakan Army, and local village leaders, with assistance from administration support jury member in nearby settlements. Testimonies confirmed that these measures were effective in limiting civilian harm.

Importantly, all testimony witnesses accounts distinguished between civilian and Militarily engaging soldiers deaths. The witnesses consistently reported that **around 100 casualties** included military junta soldiers, Muslim soldiers of the Junta conscripts, and Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army and **2 civilian deaths**. The Witnesses described the ages, numbers, military equipment, and locations of death bodies, which were verified against existing records.

The verified findings against a set of population data of 2023 census, displacement in both nearby settlements of Htan Shauk Kha village and Bangladesh and other supported evidences confirm that **the allegation was contradicted**, cited by both the witnesses and other respondents, supported by the reported accounts of number of **some 100 death bodies of the Junta** soldiers found in the village and evidence of abandoned military equipment.

They indicated that out of **more than 910 individuals** as of 2023 census data, the entire displaced population from Htan Shauk Khan village **approximately 800 individuals** living in villages nearby now, with a few more than **100 individuals** having fled to Bangladesh. **These figures are inconsistent** with the alleged scale of civilian causality. No credible evidence was found to substantiate the **alleged claims of 600 civilian individuals massacre** of the Htan Shauk Khan village.

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE REPORT: This investigation report on the accused incident of 600 Muslims massacre committed by Arakan Army in Htan Shauk Khan village is to primarily uncover the truth and verifiable accounts of the alleged incident with firsthand evidence of witness's testimony, and more broadly, to promote communal trust, peaceful co-existence, and social harmony between Rakhine and Muslim communities in Rakhine State. The incident report is structured into three parts namely brief accounts of socio-economic experience before 2024 May armed clash, firsthand experience during the armed clash and current displacement figures.

WHO DID THE INVESTIGATION: On September 9, 2025, A group of Rakhine-based independent civil society organizations which focuses on human rights, justice, legal protection, humanitarian, and peace in Rakhine State. The names of the involving organizations are kept anonymous for its safety reason.

METHODOLOGY OF THE INVESTIGATION: For this investigation report, group interviews approach was employed by purposively selection of the witness, along with supplementary document reviews. The interviews were conducted with the witness of the alleged massacre site, human remains (death bodies, bones and skulls), and remains of military equipment. To facilitate open dialogue, narrative and story telling techniques were applied. Additional sources reviewed included such as eyewitness accounts, photo evidence, voice recordings and demographic data drawn from data of the village displacement records and 2023 census.

A total of nine Muslim Male respondents participated in the interviews, organized into two cohorts.

- Cohort 1 (5 individuals): Direct witness of human remains in the village and residents of Htan Shauk Khan who experienced the security situation before, during and after the armed clashes of May 3-4 2024
- Cohort 2 (4 individuals): Elderly representatives from District Muslim Affairs Committee and local administrative support jury member, who provided a broader experience of their involvement in the investigation into the alleged massacre of 600 Muslims in Htan Shauk Khan village.

Throughout the interviews, ethical standards were strictly followed. This included the use of anonymous status, the right to reject questions, neutrality and independence. Safety and security measures were also prioritized for both the respondents and investigation organizations.

COLLECTIONS OF THE REPORTED ALLEGATION and MEDIA OUTLETS MONITORING:

Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General released on August 29, 2025ⁱⁱ

39. In an incident in Htan Shauk Khan village, Buthidaung Township, Rakhine State, on 2 May 2024, in which hundreds of civilian casualties were reported, multiple sources alleged that over 1,000 Rohingya villagers had fled in fear of possible clashes. Witnesses described having been stopped by Arakan Army elements, divided into three groups in paddy fields and fired upon, with the death of scores. One interviewee depicted the scene as “a river of blood. ... I saw shooting. I saw mass killing. It was a lot of guns, people were shot in the legs and chest”. Another survivor recounted the killing of 20 relatives, including 3 children.

The Alza zeera Media interview with Mr. Nay San Lwin who has conducted media interview, pointed out the massacre of more than 600 villagers including children, women, babies and persons with disabilities of Htan Shauk Khan village, Buthidaung.ⁱⁱⁱ

Arakan Rohingya National Coalition statement release dated on August 4,2025: Arakan Army(AA)'s Massacre of Over 600 Rohingya in Htan Shauk Khan Village/ Clear evidence of Genocide and War Crimes^{iv}

Denial of the alleged massacre of Htan Shauk Khan villager by the Buthidaung and Maung Daw religious leaders^v

Irrawaddy media out news on fake witness (self-claimed survivor) interviewed on Al Jazeera media to corroborate the Htan Shauk Khan Massacre claim^{vi}

Verified with the village head of the self-claimed survivor/witness, named Ansar Ullah by local journalist interview^{vii} with the fake witness interviewed on Al Jazeera: ANSAR ULLAH, not a native of the Htan Shauk Khan village and not presented in the incident location, but in Bangladesh since 2017.^{viii}

BACKGROUND OF THE VILLAGE

The Htan Shauk Khan village is located Southeast of Buthidaung town in Northern Rakhine State, Myanmar, with fairly 50 minutes from the town to the village, and along the roadside of the road to Phon Nyo Leik village. The village is adjacent to State Administrative Council military bases; Sa Sa Kha (15) north and 551 tactical battalion east. It is 114 households-size small village, accounted for 128 families^{ix} and a total of 933 in population according to the state administration council immigration census data of 2023, expressed by the village committee representatives. The village backbone livelihoods are agriculture farming, small scale livestock breeding and bamboo logging near Sai Daung waterfall, with a few construction hard labor as main income source. At present, the village is administrated under village committee comprising 5 village male heads designated as chairman, deputy chairman, secretary 1 and 2,etc, governing, and managing the village affairs, and was administrated by 100-households head in the past under state administration council and previous governments. The village has been totally destroyed by SAC artillery shelling, air strikes and crossfire amid active 2024 May armed clashes between Arakan Army and SAC military forces, and all villagers has been displaced and taken shelter in nearby villages and more than 100 individual fled to Bangladesh.

Life under military oppression of 20 years under previous governments

The nearby **No. 551 and Sa Ka Kha (15)** systematically extorted, threatened, and coerced the villagers through military power, exploitation, and other forms of intimidation. The villagers were imposed on forced payment for travel, access to livelihoods activities and the use of pastureland. The villagers were forced to give money, livestock (chickens, goats, and cows), and gasoline.

Villagers were fined with exorbitant sums of money, and Failure to pay resulted in detention of villagers and animals and forced labor in the military bases as arbitrary punishment.

The respondents of the Htan Shauk Khan village, expressed “villagers had to pay 100,000 MMK if a cow passed through the road in front of the village and if not given money, we were detained for 10 or 15 days

and imposed on hard labor in the military base.” And “we had to pay 45,000 MMK per a cow breeding and 45,000 MMK for use of pastureland annually” added.

Detailed accounts of voice recording transcripts About the May-2024-armed clash and evacuation of the villagers: The deadly and intense clash occurred on **May 3 and 4** between Arakan Army and State Administration Council military forces which is a combined force of Sa Sa Ka (15), 551 tactical base and 4 or 5 Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army soldiers and some 40 Muslims Myanmar Military Junta conscripts engaged with Arakan Army force. The Buthidaung Based Military fired artillery shelling and two fighter jets of Myanmar Military Junta joined the clash by dropping bombs.

Evacuation efforts: *Some 15 days before the May 3-4 clash, there were evacuation actions, were expressed by the respondents, reconfirmed by the district Muslim Affairs Committee and Administration Support Jury member, who actively involved in the evacuation of the Htan Shauk Khan villagers.*

There were some meetings held with villagers’ elders and leaders about the evacuation in nearby villages of Htan Shauk Khan village such as U Hla Pe, Kun Taung, Thin Taung, Yout Nyo Taung and Phon Nyo Leik villages due to the anticipated armed clashes between SAC military forces and Arakan Army around the Htan Shauk Khan village, which is the nearest location of the SAC military bases as Arakan Army advancement to the villages.

May 2, 2024: *The military Junta’ Sa Sa Ka (15) entered the Htan Shauk Khan village and later on the same day, there were message called out by loudspeaker **from U Hla Pe village situated west** of the Htan Shauk Khan, saying that villagers to leave the Htan Shauk Khan village. All villagers rushed into the U Hla Pe village, and took temporary shelter in villages nearby the village stated above and Wet Ma Kya, Nghet Thae and Kyauk Sheik, Villagers were temporarily stationed in **U Hla Pe Arabi School** (Madrasas School) on the day, and the Htan Shauk Kan village committee has collected the villagers list on the day. All the villagers are on the list. And, the villagers were relocated to take shelter in nearby 10 villages a few days after the clash of May 3 and 4 2024. The 10 villages are mentioned by the respondents where the Htun Chauk Khan villagers took shelter then.*

- 1) U Hla Pe
- 2) Ye Roe Taung
- 3) Sein Taung
- 4) Nghet Thae
- 5) Kyauk Sheik
- 6) Phon Nyo Leik
- 7) Wet Htee Hla
- 8) A lay chaung
- 9) Sein Owe Kyant
- 10) Ka Kya Pyin

*Again, on 10 of May, Friday, the villager list were checked by us (the witnesses are the collectors of the list) in the above-mentioned villages and they are all in the list. We found that **a few more than 910 villagers** in the list.*

The remaining in the village on May-2-2024: *Military Junta Tactical battalion (551) and Sa Sa Ka (15) with some 40 Muslims soldiers (it is the figure stated by the Htan Shauk Khan villagers still tried to fled to U Hla Pe village on May 2 2024) including 4 or 5 Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army soldiers. A state administration council previously appointed village 100-households head family (a civilian family) remained in the village with the Myanmar Military Junta forces. There were no Arakan Army soldiers on May 2, 2024 in the village, expressed by the respondents and witness and no active armed clash between the forces. 26 State Administration Council conscripts' Muslim soldiers out of the 40 are origins of Htan Shauk Khan village and the remaining soldiers are not from the village.*

The May 3-4 2024: *The Arakan Army and the combined forces of Myanmar Military Junta force engaged in intense armed clash in the Htan Shauk Khan village. The Arakan Army seized and totally controlled the village on 4 May 2024.. In results, The village were left totally destroyed due to the Myanmar Military Junta artillery shelling fired by Buthidaung town military bases and other bases and airstrikes conducted by the two Junta fighter jets and crossfire.*

The May 7 2024: *A group of 10 villagers including two witnesses (interview respondents) went to the Htan Shauk Khan village from U Hla Pe village at 6:00 AM in the early morning. Around 100 death bodies were witnessed all over the village. **Two civilians** were among the 100, named **Marmu Sultan (82 years old: male)** and **Sha Lone (42 years old: female)**. The rest are all Myanmar military junta soldiers, identified with Junta military uniforms, military boots and Helmets including **2 junta conscripts** Muslim soldiers worn with junta uniform and **2 Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army**.*

October 2024: *5 months after the clash, Arakan Army searched the Htan Shauk Khan villagers and formed a committee to collect displacement data to provide rice, edible oil and tarpaulin sheets. The committee found a total of 800 villagers, accounted for 100 families in the villages nearby the Htan Shauk Khan village, and more than 20 families fled to Bangladesh, accounted for more than 100 villagers. And, one previously appointed civilian family under the military junta were not in the list that remained in the Htan Shauk Khan village during the clash.*

EVIDENCE AND FINDINGS

List of evidence:

1. **Displacement data:** 790 displaced heads in villages in Buthidaung (documented data collected, dated on October 2024- 5 months after the 2024 May clash): **Annex I**
2. **Bangladesh displacement data (the displaced data of the Htan Shauk Khan village fled to Bangladesh):** 138 displaced heads sheltered in Bangladesh (documented data collected, dated on 17, October, 2025: **Annex II**
3. **Transcripts of Voice records of witness: Annex II**
4. **Photos of interviews: Annex IV: Blurred faces of the witness and respondents**

Summary of findings:

The first cohort of in-person interview in the format of Focus Group was intended for the Htan Shauk Khan villagers (5 Witnesses), conducted in Kun Taung village situated near the Htan Shauk Khan and second cohort of the same format with 4 representatives of the committee and administration supporting jury member conducted in Buthidaung town.

The respondents shared forced detention, labor, tributes and exploitation imposed on the villagers, and socio-economic restrictions such as arbitrary fines impose for farming, trade of goods and vegetables and use of pastureland, etc and travel restrictions are among the interviews accounts as the first exploration part of life experience under Military Junta.

The firsthand accounts of articulation expressed by the first cohort witnesses has highlighted chaotic and frightening state of the villagers when Arakan Army advancement to the villages nearby the Htan Shauk Khan village, being prepared ready to attack the military junta soldiers presented in the village. The brief accounts of artillery fires and jet fighter bombing and fear of loss of lives, and preparation actions of evacuation of the villagers in collaboration with Arakan Army and other village leaders, supported by administration jury member assistance nearby the villagers are key underline of narrative.

The narratives underscored the data of population documented by township immigration officers of military Junta in 2023, and displaced persons at different intervals after the clash in 2024 and 2025. A series of event occurrence dates are clearly stated in sequence with concise illustration of pre-during-post incidents process.

The number of military junta soldiers' death, combined with Muslims conscripts and Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army soldiers during the intense clash in the village are assertively underlined, clearly supported with information, describing age, numbers and clear distinction of civilian and military soldiers and witness numbers of the death bodies, military equipment and location.

All respondents and Witnesses categorically refuted the allegation of 600 massacre of the Htan Shauk Khan village civilian with supporting population data evidence and, indicating nearly displaced data of 800 taken shelter nearby the Htan Shauk Khan village with more than 100 individuals having fled to Bangladesh.

All respondents feel highly concerned with the self-interest and orchestrated and misguided narratives, supported by alleged motive of earning 5000 BT Taka for a piece of wrong information for fake witness, that may reverse the positive phenomena of inter-communal trust and slowly progressive conditions of social harmony and cohesion between Rakhine and Muslim communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

For the Rakhine and Muslims communities residing in Rakhine

- It is sincerely encouraged to be cautious and vigilant on misinformation, misguided narratives and hate speeches, taking the brutal and deadly inter-communal riots lessons in the past, which led to both communities' casualties into sensible consideration.
- It is sincerely encouraged to maintain mutual trust to the best of both communities ability and promote social cohesion, trust and harmony.
- It is sincerely encouraged to show solidarity with respect of rights and recognition of both communities' loss of lives and properties in the past.
- It is sincerely encouraged to report human rights abuses, atrocities and arbitrary detention and killings by any parties to United Nations Human Rights and Accountability Mechanism through safe channels to seek justice.

For United Nations Human Rights and Accountability Mechanism:

- It is strongly urged that UN Entities to take differing narratives and testimonies accounts of different witnesses into consideration, which is contradicting one another on the allegation of Htan Shauk Khan Massare.
- It is strongly urged OHCHR to take immediate steps in ensure the accurate, and factual and credible verification on the Htan Shauk Khan Massare.
- It is strongly urged OHCHR to annul the incident of Htan Shauk Khan Massacre, allegedly committed by the Arakan Army in the released report of the United Nations high commissioner for human rights and office for the high commissioner and the Secretary-General due to the **lack of systematic, independent and credible investigation.**
- It is strongly urged OHCHR to **systematically re-verify witness and victim information** and data again due to the fact that one of the witnesses of the Htan Shauk Khan incident reportedly is not the native of the village and lived in Bangladesh Camp since 2017 and reach out to more witness accounts that are contradictory to the OHCHR report^x
- It is strongly urged OHCHR to systematically re-monitor media and social media as a sound and impartial methodological tool involving differing narratives on the incident to analyze the alleged incident.
- It is strongly recommended that the United Nations Human Rights Entities and Rights Organizations such as Fortify Rights Organizations and Myanmar Based UN entities to collaborate with Rakhine-based independent local organizations on the incident.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Endnotes:

ⁱ Myanmar Military Junta base

ⁱⁱ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session60/advance-version/a-hrc-60-20-aev.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W7487zCY8uE>:

^{iv} <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=122137996250710446&set=pcb.122137996334710446>
<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=122137996214710446&set=pcb.122137996334710446>

^v <https://www.facebook.com/narinjaratv/videos/1332866195112541>

^{vi} https://burma.irrawaddy.com/article/2025/09/15/405712.html?fbclid=IwdGRjcAM-TE9leHRuA2FlbQIxMQABHkXug8SWstb4TKUfUqn0A50ly6FvUywirIyBR5MXQrsY5lC054Q3amkga0Ua_aem_GHeT-e8b8KW3u033Xp2-gw

^{vii} Myanmar military Junta base name

viii <https://www.facebook.com/reel/1588773442532752/?v&fs=e&s=TIeQ9V&fs=e&fs=e>

ix In Rakhine, more than 1 family is found under the same household title. Thus, the number of families outnumbers the ones of households.

x The report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights released on August 29 2025. Paragraph 39 under section IV: Human Rights situation of Rohingya Muslims