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AFTER MYANMAR MILITARY JUNTA, NOW IT'S AA'S TURN

The Human Rights Watch (HRW) has accused the Arakan Army (AA), a powerful ethnic resistance force fighting the Myanmar military junta in Rakhaine State of Myanmar, of unleashing severe repression on and control over the Rohingya population.

In a statement issued on Monday last, the HRW, a New York-based rights organisation, alleged that the AA has enforced severe restrictions on the movement of Rohingyas and resorted to looting of their property, detention and forcible enrolment in the army.

Another rights organization Fortify Rights in a statement, issued on July 23, not only echoed the accusations made by the HRW, but also alleged even far more brutal activities on the part of the AA members. A new investigation carried out the by the Fortify Rights



Arakan Army troops in Ayeyarwady Region near the border with Rakhine State of Myanmar —www.irrawaddy.com Photo

unearthed serious human rights violations such as abduction, torture, killings and beheadings of Rohingya civilians. It urged the International Criminal Court to investigate war crimes being committed by the AA against Rohingyas.

"The Arakan Army is responsible for widespread abductions, brutal torture and murder of Rohingyas, some of whom were found beheaded, in blatant violation of laws of

war", said Ejaj Min Khant, HR specialists at Fortify Rights.

From April to July 2025, Fortify Rights interviewed 39 Rohingya individuals, including eight women, who survived and witnessed AA abuses in 2024 and 2025. The organisation reportedly also viewed and analysed photographic and videographic evidences of AA crimes. The victims of AA atrocities elaborated during the interviews the extent of

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brutality of the AA members. The Fortify Rights itself also claimed to have documented how the AA mistreated and killed Rohingya civilians in ad-hoc detention centres in Rakhine State.

Fortify Rights reportedly sent a letter to the AA on July 14 last requesting a meeting to discuss the allegations made by a number of Rohingyas. "In response, the AA asked for more details about the incidents. On July 18 Fortify provided a three-page document containing testimonials and accounts of killings and torture of Rohingya civilians by the AA, and again requested a response." After two days the AA replied in writing' and categorically rejected the allegations describing those as false and defamatory.

The ill-fated Rohingyas until the emergence of the AA and their occupation of a large part of Rakhine State faced all sort of repressions, including murder, arson and eviction from their homes by the Myanmar Army. Now AA members who have been fighting the Myanmar Army for a separate homeland are carrying out identical brutality, as the world watches their plight from safe distance.

■ Source: thefinancialexpress.com.bd

WHY IS THE US EASING SANCTIONS ON MYANMAR'S JUNTA?

In a significant policy shift, the US last week announced the partial lifting of sanctions on Myanmar's junta. The new measures allow transactions involving Myanmar's central bank and certain state-owned enterprises, including Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise. The move came shortly after news that Myanmar's top general had written to President Donald Trump, expressing optimism for improved relations.

US officials clarified there was no connection between the sanctions decision and the letter. Nevertheless, the timing and scope of the changes merit close examination, especially considering their impact on the ongoing civil war, the Rohingya crisis and broader regional dynamics.

Myanmar remains locked in a violent civil conflict that erupted following the 2021 military coup. Resistance movements – including the national unity government and various ethnic armed groups – have gained significant momentum across the country. The military regime has responded with airstrikes, mass arrests and the restriction of humanitarian access, particularly in

contested areas. Against this backdrop, sanctions targeting Myanmar's central bank and the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise had served as a key element of international pressure, restricting the regime's access to foreign currency and limiting its ability to finance military operations. The easing of these restrictions comes at a moment when the junta is under increasing pressure on the battlefield and in international forums.




Supporters of the policy change point to the need for humanitarian flexibility and concerns over unintended consequences in the region's financial sector. Several banks in Southeast Asia had reportedly begun derisking operations involving Myanmar, making it harder for aid organizations and third-party financial institutions to operate. The updated policy aims to mitigate those effects while continuing to target individuals and entities directly involved in abuses. The policy shift has important consequences for the Rohingya, who remain some of the most vulnerable people in Myanmar.




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