

**United League of Arakan**  
**Humanitarian and Development Coordination Office**



**A Factual and Evidentiary Assessment of the  
Htan Shauk Khan Battle**

*Reviewing the Evidence, Military Context, and Post-Battle Record*

**June 16, 2026**



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**Cover photograph.** A resident of New Htan Shauk Khan explaining during a site visit that no security checkpoint is present on the village access road, Buthidaung Township, May 2026.

# 1. Executive Summary

This assessment presents the findings of the Humanitarian and Development Coordination Office (HDCO) concerning the events in and around Htan Shauk Khan between 2 and 4 May 2024. Human Rights Watch (HRW) refers to the village as “Hoyyar Siri”; this assessment uses the name Htan Shauk Khan, as reflected in the official and local records reviewed by HDCO.

The assessment focuses primarily on HRW’s report of 18 May 2026, *“Skeletons and Skulls Scattered Everywhere”*: *Arakan Army Massacre of Rohingya Muslims in Hoyyar Siri, Myanmar*, because it provides the most detailed and extensive published reconstruction of the events. It also compares HRW’s account with reports published by the Kaladan Press Network (KPN) on 24 September 2025 and Fortify Rights on 9 April 2026, particularly where their accounts differ concerning the timing and direction of civilian movement, evacuation routes, the conduct of armed actors, alleged incident locations, and reported casualty figures.

The evidence reviewed does not substantiate the central allegation that Arakan Army personnel massacred Muslim civilians at Htan Shauk Khan. HDCO finds that the village became part of an intense, multi-actor military confrontation involving several armed forces and forms of attack, rather than the site of a one-sided assault on an isolated civilian settlement.

## 1.1 Military Context

Htan Shauk Khan was located close to MOC-15 and LIB-551 and became increasingly affected by military operations as the AA advanced against the remaining Myanmar military positions in Buthidaung Township.

Contemporaneous reporting indicates that Myanmar military personnel, local Muslim combatants recruited by the Myanmar military, members of armed groups—including the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO), and the Arakan Rohingya Army (ARA)—as well as military dependants and civilians were present in and around the area.

Following the fall of MOC-15 on 2 May, retreating Myanmar military personnel moved toward Htan Shauk Khan and LIB-551. After LIB-551 fell on 3 May, additional retreating personnel withdrew into Htan Shauk Khan and joined armed groups aligned with the Myanmar military that were already operating there.

The village subsequently became part of an active battlefield involving ground combat, artillery fire from Myanmar military positions in Buthidaung town, repeated aerial attacks, and the use of civilian structures as defensive positions by Myanmar military personnel and armed groups allied with them.

## 1.2 Witness Testimony and Investigative Methodology

HRW supports its allegations through witness interviews, photographs, videos, satellite imagery, and remote forensic review. These materials require careful assessment but do not independently establish the identities or status of the deceased, the timing and causes of death, or responsibility for each incident.

HRW relied substantially on pseudonymous testimony collected outside the conflict area and did not conduct comprehensive on-site forensic identification, autopsies, DNA testing, or ballistic analysis. The resulting accounts contain unresolved differences concerning evacuation routes, troop movements, alleged shooting locations, fire progression, and the number and status of those reportedly killed.

## 1.3 Witness Risk and Unequal Evidentiary Assumptions Across Bangladesh and Arakan

Testimony collected in Bangladesh should not be dismissed because of the interview setting. However, residence outside ULA/AA-administered territory cannot automatically be treated as evidence that testimony was independent, voluntary, or free from external influence, while accounts obtained inside ULA/AA-administered areas are presumed coerced or scripted. The location of an interview is not a substitute for examining the actual conditions under which the testimony was given.

This is particularly important in the Bangladesh refugee camps, where armed groups and criminal networks have been documented as engaging in killings, abductions, intimidation, forced recruitment, extortion, and violence against refugees, community leaders, and perceived opponents.

Witnesses on both sides of the border may face insecurity, dependency, political pressure, armed-group influence, community expectations, or concerns for relatives living elsewhere. Their accounts should therefore be assessed according to the same evidentiary standards, including direct knowledge, internal consistency, interview conditions, possible coercion or affiliation, and independent corroboration.

Applying heightened suspicion to testimony obtained in ULA/AA-administered areas while treating testimony collected in Bangladesh as inherently independent creates an unequal methodological standard and risks distorting the evidentiary record.

## 1.4 Civilian Warnings, Evacuation, and Registration

Beginning in mid-April 2024, local ULA authorities, Muslim community leaders, and community representatives discussed evacuation arrangements for Htan Shauk Khan and surrounding villages. At approximately 6:00 a.m. on 2 May, ULA representatives and local community leaders began issuing loudspeaker warnings and organizing the evacuation of residents in response to indications that retreating Myanmar military personnel and allied armed actors were moving toward Htan Shauk Khan. Although residents were urged to leave as soon as possible, large numbers began emerging from the village and moving westward toward U Hla Hpay and nearby areas at approximately 8:00 a.m.

Evacuees were initially accommodated in the U Hla Hpay madrasa and surrounding communities before being relocated among ten host villages. On 10 May 2024, the Htan Shauk Khan village committee conducted a further registration exercise and accounted for slightly more than 910 residents.

### *Key Population Finding*

A 2023 annual population registration and verification exercise conducted under the previous administration recorded **933** permanent Htan Shauk Khan residents. **More than 910** residents were identified across the host villages within days of the battle, and a later signed reconciliation accounted for **928** residents living in Buthidaung Township or abroad. The later total differs from the pre-battle baseline by only five persons, although the records were compiled at different times and for different administrative purposes.

This close correspondence materially challenges any interpretation that HRW's entire figure of **more than 170** persons killed or missing concerned permanent Htan Shauk Khan residents. HRW does not clearly distinguish permanent residents from displaced persons who had temporarily taken shelter in the village. A name-by-name reconciliation of residence, status, and outcome is therefore essential.

## 1.5 Human Remains and Destruction

The identities and status of the human remains documented in and around Htan Shauk Khan have not been conclusively established. ULA/AA operational information and accounts from local sources indicate that Myanmar military personnel, local Muslim combatants recruited by the Myanmar military, members of armed groups—including ARSA, the ARA, and the RSO—military dependants, and civilians were present during the battle.

ULA/AA records state that 930 persons surrendered during the final phase of the fighting in and around Htan Shauk Khan: 406 Myanmar military personnel, 11 members of armed groups

allied with the Myanmar military, and 513 military family members and dependants. These figures demonstrate that a substantial military and military-associated population was present in the area.

Without forensic identification, the remains cannot responsibly be identified as belonging to civilians or attributed solely to the AA. The same caution applies to damaged houses and other structures, which were exposed to ground fighting, artillery fire, aerial attacks, and military use.

## 1.6 Post-Battle Humanitarian Response

Following the battle, displaced Htan Shauk Khan residents were registered and temporarily accommodated in nearby host villages. Before New Htan Shauk Khan was established, they received food, essential household items, cash assistance, healthcare, and other basic support through coordination among humanitarian organisations, HDCO, the Arakkha authorities, Muslim community leaders, and local public-service departments.

Assistance continued during the planning, construction, and settlement of New Htan Shauk Khan and included shelter materials, water facilities, education support, religious infrastructure, healthcare, and livelihood assistance.

By May 2026, approximately 700 residents were living in New Htan Shauk Khan village, where humanitarian agencies, including international organisations, continued to provide assistance through the applicable coordination arrangements. These records do not establish that every humanitarian need was met, but they are inconsistent with a categorical portrayal of the community as having been entirely abandoned or wholly denied humanitarian support.

## 2. Methodology, Sources, and Limitations

This assessment examines the events in and around Htan Shauk Khan between 2 and 4 May 2024 and the allegations subsequently published by HRW and other organisations. It draws on interviews, ULA/AA operational information, local administrative and population records, humanitarian and health documentation, maps and satellite imagery, correspondence with HRW, and publicly available reports and media coverage.

Information was obtained from Htan Shauk Khan residents, Muslim community leaders, village administrators, healthcare and humanitarian personnel, public-service representatives, and individuals with direct or operational knowledge of the battle and its aftermath. Where information originated from ULA/AA personnel or institutions, that institutional connection was considered when assessing the evidence.

Witness accounts were evaluated according to direct knowledge, presence at the relevant time and location, internal consistency, and corroboration through unrelated testimony, records,

imagery, medical information, or other evidence. The same standards were applied to testimony obtained in Bangladesh and in ULA/AA-administered areas. A witness's ethnicity, religion, place of residence, or use of a pseudonym was not treated, by itself, as a reason to accept or reject an account.

The assessment compared population, evacuation, alleged casualty, missing-person, surrender, displacement, and border-crossing information according to date, source, and population category. It sought to distinguish permanent residents from temporary arrivals, civilians from armed participants, persons alleged to have died from those reported missing, and persons who surrendered from those who fled, relocated, crossed into Bangladesh, or were later located.

Maps and satellite imagery were used to assess geography, distances, reported movement routes, physical damage, and changes to the settlement. Such imagery was not treated as sufficient by itself to establish identity, ownership, coercion, civilian or combatant status, cause of death, or responsibility for particular incidents.

The assessment distinguishes among verified records, witness testimony, institutional accounts, estimates, allegations, and unresolved questions. Information that could not be independently confirmed is identified as reported, alleged, estimated, or unverified.

Certain names and records are withheld to protect witnesses, public servants, humanitarian personnel, beneficiaries, and others exposed to security risks. The identities of humanitarian organisations are also withheld where disclosure could affect staff safety, confidentiality, neutrality, operational security, or continued access.

This assessment was prepared by HDCO. Some records and sources reviewed are institutionally connected to the ULA/AA. That relationship is disclosed for transparency and was considered during the evaluation of the material; it does not, by itself, determine the reliability or unreliability of the evidence.

HDCO did not have access to HRW's complete list of persons classified as killed or missing, or to all of the photographic and video materials requested for verification. No comprehensive on-site forensic identification, DNA analysis, autopsy examination, or ballistic investigation of the reported human remains was available. The material reviewed therefore does not independently establish that the remains belonged to civilian residents of Htan Shauk Khan, that the persons identified by HRW were killed or remain missing in the circumstances alleged, or that the AA was responsible for any alleged death or disappearance.

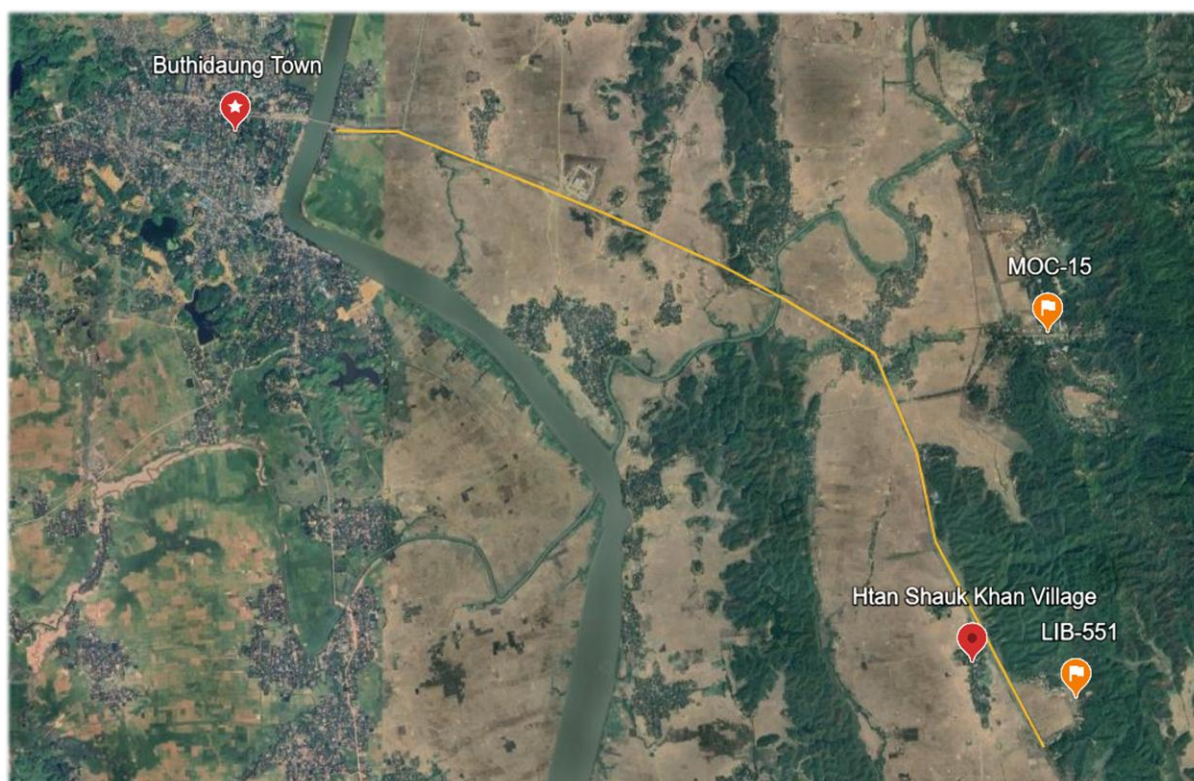
These limitations do not support acceptance of HRW's casualty figures, victim classifications, or attribution of responsibility. On the contrary, the absence of access to the underlying casualty list, comprehensive forensic identification, and a full examination of the presence and conduct of all armed actors prevents HRW's central allegation from being treated as independently verified or evidentially established. Its conclusions cannot be reliably sustained without a transparent, name-by-name reconciliation of the alleged casualties with population, evacuation, post-evacuation registration, displacement, surrender, and migration records, together with

forensic identification of the reported remains and a comprehensive assessment of all plausible causes and responsible actors.

# Part I: Context and Assessment of the Allegations

## I-A Situation Prior to the Htan Shauk Khan Battle

Htan Shauk Khan is located approximately 5.5 kilometres southeast of Buthidaung town along the main route connecting Buthidaung and Rathedaung, close to Military Operations Command (MOC)-15 and Light Infantry Battalion (LIB)-551. After armed conflict resumed in Arakan on 13 November 2023, fighting intensified across Rathedaung, Buthidaung, and Maungdaw during the first half of 2024. Following the AA’s capture of Rathedaung on 17 March 2024, the Myanmar military sought to reinforce and defend its remaining positions in Buthidaung and Maungdaw, while the wider area around Htan Shauk Khan became increasingly affected by troop movements, military operations, population displacement, and the recruitment and training of local Muslim men by the Myanmar military. The most intensive fighting in and around the village occurred between 2 and 4 May 2024, following the fall of MOC-15, during the continuing battle for LIB-551, and as retreating Myanmar military personnel and allied armed actors moved into Htan Shauk Khan.



**Figure 1.** Locations of Buthidaung town, MOC-15, LIB-551, and Htan Shauk Khan village.

Contemporaneous reporting indicates that the Myanmar military recruited local Muslim men through both voluntary enlistment and coercive practices and cooperated with members of

ARSA, the RSO, and the ARA. Reports also suggested that recruitment extended across northern Arakan and into the refugee camps in Bangladesh, contributing to a substantial mobilisation of junta-aligned armed personnel before the Htan Shauk Khan battle.

Following the capture of Rathedaung on 17 March 2024, the AA intensified operations against the remaining Myanmar military positions in Buthidaung Township. On 24 March, the AA announced operations against Light Infantry Battalion (LIB)-552 and stated that persons participating in military operations alongside Myanmar military forces would be treated as combatants. LIB-552 fell on 26 March, followed by LIB-564 on 5 April.

Between 11 and 21 April 2024, widespread arson and destruction of civilian property were reported in Buthidaung town. According to witness accounts, victim records, video footage, and HDCO assessments, locally recruited Muslim personnel aligned with the Myanmar military and members of armed groups—including ARSA, the RSO, and the ARA—set fire to large numbers of homes belonging to Arakanese, Hindu, Mro, and other non-Muslim residents. These incidents caused substantial displacement and further heightened insecurity and communal tensions across the township.

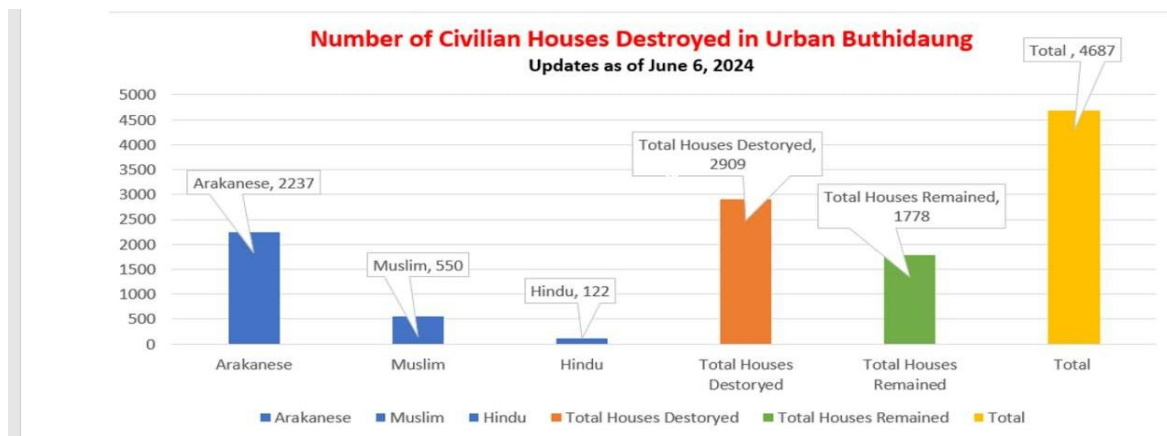


Figure 2

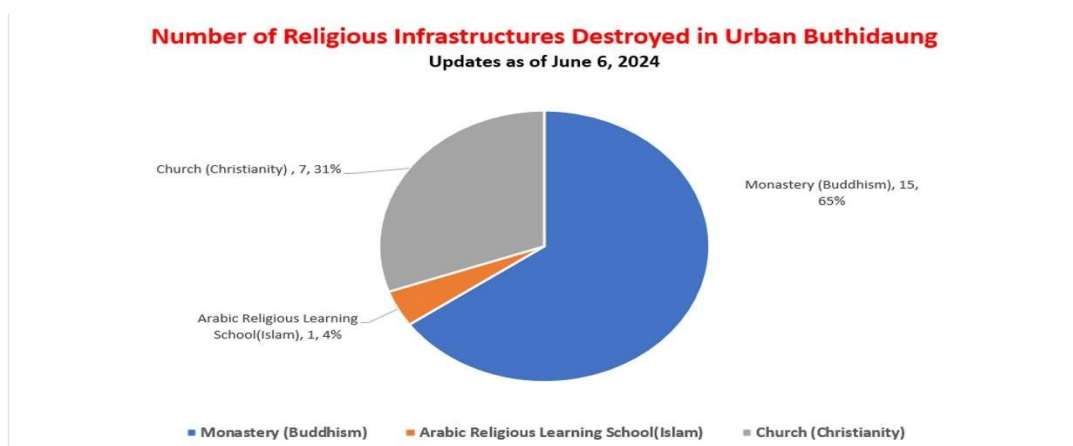


Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

**Figures 2–5.** Damage resulting from the reported burning of more than 2,300 homes belonging primarily to Arakanese, Hindu, Mro, and other non-Muslim residents in Buthidaung town between 11 and 21 April 2024.

The AA captured LIB-565 on 24 April. As the military and security situation continued to deteriorate, the ULA/AA announced emergency measures on 26 April, including a curfew in parts of Buthidaung and Maungdaw Townships. According to the announcement, these measures were intended to prevent further nighttime arson and property destruction, reduce risks to civilians, and stabilise the security situation.

The AA subsequently intensified its offensives against the remaining Myanmar military positions. MOC-15 headquarters fell on 2 May after approximately twelve days of sustained fighting, followed by LIB-551 on 3 May. The loss of these positions dismantled the Myanmar military’s principal defensive network in Buthidaung and directly shaped the movement of retreating forces and the fighting that followed in and around Htan Shauk Khan.

## I-B Military Actors and Operational Context

A central weakness in HRW’s reconstruction is its limited examination of the wider military environment in and around Htan Shauk Khan before and during the events of 2–4 May 2024. HRW refers to Htan Shauk Khan as a village that “survived when others did not” during the violence of 2017. This framing risks creating the impression that Htan Shauk Khan had historically functioned as a uniquely protected civilian safe zone. However, the pattern of destruction in 2017 was geographically uneven. The Myanmar military’s 2017 operations were concentrated primarily in Maungdaw Township and parts of southern Buthidaung along the lower Mayu River, while many villages in the upper Mayu area—including, but not limited to, Htan Shauk Khan—were not destroyed.

More importantly, the fact that Htan Shauk Khan was not destroyed in 2017 does not establish that it remained demilitarised or separate from armed activity in 2024. By April and May 2024, Htan Shauk Khan’s proximity to MOC-15 and LIB-551, the recruitment and training of local armed personnel by the Myanmar military, the presence of ARSA and other armed groups, and the movement of retreating Myanmar military forces had materially altered the village’s military environment. Its status in 2024 must therefore be assessed on the basis of conditions existing at that time, rather than inferred from what occurred seven years earlier.

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HRW also states:

“In April and May 2024, both sides committed abuses against civilians as Arakan Army forces advanced in Buthidaung Township. The military engaged in forced recruitment of Rohingya, including boys, which intensified communal tensions between Rohingya Muslim and Rakhine Buddhist communities.”

This passage acknowledges the Myanmar military’s forced recruitment of local Muslims. However, it gives insufficient attention to the scale and operational significance of the mobilisation, including the activities of forcibly recruited personnel, voluntary recruits, and members of ARSA, the RSO, and the ARA operating alongside Myanmar military forces. Contemporaneous reports indicate that recruitment involved a combination of coercion and

inducements and that members of ARSA and other armed groups participated in recruitment, training, weapons instruction, patrols, intelligence gathering, support for Myanmar military supply chains, and other military operations across northern Arakan.

In early May 2024, the International Institute for Strategic Studies estimated that as many as 5,000 Muslim recruits and armed personnel may have been mobilised in cooperation with the Myanmar military, drawing from communities within Arakan and the refugee camps in Bangladesh. The precise number of personnel, their affiliations, their locations, and the extent to which their participation was voluntary or coerced require careful verification. Nevertheless, even as an estimate, the reported scale of mobilisation is materially relevant to understanding the military and security environment surrounding Htan Shauk Khan. It cannot be treated as isolated, incidental, or unrelated to the fighting.

By referring mainly to forced recruitment and communal tension, HRW gives insufficient attention to the subsequent deployment and operational roles of personnel operating on the Myanmar military's side, including forcibly recruited and voluntary Muslim combatants, retreating Myanmar military forces, members of ARSA, the RSO, and the ARA, and other Myanmar military-aligned actors. This omission materially affects any assessment of who was present in and around Htan Shauk Khan, what roles they performed, and whether persons encountered during the fighting could automatically be classified as civilians.

Other reporting also indicates that Htan Shauk Khan had become increasingly militarised because of its proximity to MOC-15 and LIB-551. The Kaladan Press Network reported that, in mid-April 2024, the Myanmar military forcibly recruited approximately 100 male residents of Htan Shauk Khan and trained them as a local militia inside the LIB-551 base. According to the report, five ARSA members based at LIB-551 assisted with recruitment and rifle training. The recruits reportedly trained inside the base during the day, returned home at night, and were later observed patrolling around the village alongside Myanmar military personnel (Kaladan Press Network, 2025, p. 12).

The reported movement of recruits between LIB-551 and Htan Shauk Khan, their training and patrol activities, the presence of ARSA-linked personnel, and HRW's own references to labour provided to the Myanmar military indicate a significant operational relationship between the village, nearby military installations, and Myanmar junta-aligned actors. These circumstances do not imply that the civilian population collectively supported the Myanmar military, but they are directly relevant to determining who was present in and around the village and what roles particular individuals performed during the fighting.

In addition, the chief of the newly established Htan Shauk Khan village told a journalist that the former village had included strong ARSA supporters and that a substantial number of ARSA members and locally trained recruits had been based there for several months.

HRW's framing produces a materially incomplete account of the battle. The fall of MOC-15 did not mark the disappearance of Myanmar military forces from the wider area or the end of active hostilities. Contemporaneous reporting and ULA/AA operational information indicate

that personnel retreating from MOC-15 moved toward LIB-551 and Htan Shauk Khan while pursuit operations and armed clashes continued. After LIB-551 fell, surviving Myanmar military personnel withdrew further into the village and joined locally recruited Muslim combatants and members of ARSA, the ARA, the RSO, and other junta-aligned armed actors already operating there.

Htan Shauk Khan therefore became part of a continuing battlefield involving retreating and regrouping forces, defensive positions established in or around civilian structures, Myanmar military artillery fire from the Buthidaung area, and repeated aerial attacks. These circumstances are directly relevant to identifying the actors present and assessing the possible causes and attribution of deaths and property destruction.

A later statement by Myanmar junta spokesperson Zaw Min Tun claimed that no Myanmar military or police personnel remained east of the Mayu River during the Htan Shauk Khan events. This assertion is difficult to reconcile with reports of retreating personnel, continued armed resistance around LIB-551, and the subsequent surrender in the Htan Shauk Khan area of hundreds of Myanmar military personnel, members of armed groups aligned with the Myanmar military, and military family members and dependants.

Although HRW does not expressly endorse the junta's assertion, its reconstruction produces a comparable analytical effect by giving insufficient attention to the continued presence, movement, and operational role of Myanmar military personnel and their allied armed groups. This omission substantially narrows the range of actors and causes examined and leaves the AA as the principal armed force against which deaths, destruction, and responsibility are assessed. In practical terms, HRW's limited treatment of these forces risks reproducing the central implication of the junta's account: that meaningful Myanmar military and allied armed presence had effectively disappeared from the area during the relevant events.

This omission materially affects any assessment of who was present in and around Htan Shauk Khan, what roles they performed, and whether persons encountered during the fighting could automatically be classified as civilians. From mid-April 2024 onward, Htan Shauk Khan should therefore be understood as a civilian-populated area within an increasingly militarised conflict zone. Civilians remained fully protected under international humanitarian law, but their continued presence did not place the village outside the surrounding hostilities, which were shaped by the operations of Myanmar military forces, retreating personnel, locally recruited combatants, and other junta-aligned armed actors. HRW's limited treatment of this military context materially weakens its assessment of the events and its attribution of responsibility.

In a statement concerning the fighting on 4 May 2024, the AA reported that combat remained intense as its forces pursued personnel retreating from MOC-15 and LIB-551. According to the statement, some of those forces regrouped and continued resisting from within the Htan Shauk Khan area, while pursuit operations and efforts to secure the area continued. The statement also acknowledged losses among AA personnel, including fighters who were killed and others who lost limbs during the fighting.

The statement is relevant because it contemporaneously identified Htan Shauk Khan as a location of sustained armed resistance and continuing military operations. Its acknowledgment of serious losses among AA personnel further indicates that the area was the site of intense combat, rather than a location isolated from the surrounding hostilities.

## I-C Overview of Allegations Relating to the Htan Shauk Khan Events

Public allegations of a massacre at Htan Shauk Khan did not emerge in the major reports reviewed immediately after the fighting of 2–4 May 2024. The first major published allegation identified in this assessment appeared on 4 August 2025, approximately fifteen months later. Subsequent organisations used different descriptions of the incident and reported widely varying casualty figures:

- **4 August 2025:** The Arakan Rohingya National Council (ARNC) alleged that the AA had massacred “over 600 Rohingya.”
- **29 August 2025:** The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) referred to “hundreds of civilian casualties” and the “death of scores” of civilians.
- **24 September 2025:** Kaladan Press Network (KPN) alleged that the AA had massacred “hundreds of Rohingya civilians.”
- **9 April 2026:** Fortify Rights reported the “killing of scores of Rohingya civilians.”
- **18 May 2026:** Human Rights Watch alleged that the AA had “massacred or disappeared over 170 villagers.”

The allegations vary substantially in their casualty estimates, descriptions of the alleged victims, and characterisations of the events. Reported figures range from “scores” to more than 600, yet the reports generally identify the AA as the primary or sole perpetrator. These variations raise questions concerning the sources, methodologies, casualty classifications, and evidentiary standards underlying the different accounts and demonstrate the need for careful scrutiny and independent verification.

Among the reports reviewed, HRW’s report of 18 May 2026 provides the most detailed and extensive published account. This assessment therefore gives particular attention to HRW’s methodology, evidentiary basis, and conclusions, while comparing its reconstruction with those of KPN, Fortify Rights, and other organisations. HDCO’s review identified significant concerns regarding the verification of casualty figures, the transparency of supporting evidence, the reliability and corroboration of witness testimony, the methods used to collect and assess evidence, and the extent to which the wider military context was incorporated into the analysis.

## I-D HRW's Central Allegation and the Request for Verification

On 18 May 2026, Human Rights Watch published a 57-page report entitled "*Skeletons and Skulls Scattered Everywhere*": *Arakan Army Massacre of Rohingya Muslims in Hoyyar Siri, Myanmar*. HRW alleges that it identified by name more than 170 Htan Shauk Khan residents who were killed or remain missing, including at least 90 children.

Given the seriousness of this allegation, the ULA contacted HRW on 20 May 2026 and requested the casualty list and the photographic and video materials cited in the report. The purpose was to compare the alleged cases with village population records, household information, post-evacuation registration, family records, battlefield documentation, and information concerning persons who relocated or crossed into Bangladesh.

HRW declined to provide the requested information, citing concerns for the safety of surviving relatives and persons living in ULA/AA-administered areas. The HDCO recognises that confidential witnesses and informants require protection. However, the request concerned persons whom HRW had classified as dead or missing, not the identities of those who provided testimony. HRW does not explain why a secure verification process using redacted information, anonymised identifiers, restricted access, or an agreed independent mechanism could not have been established.

HRW's decision not to provide even redacted, anonymised, or independently reviewable information concerning the persons it classified as killed or missing limits external scrutiny of its findings. An organisation making allegations of this gravity should explain how its casualty figures, victim classifications, and attribution of responsibility can be independently tested while protecting confidential sources. Without access to the underlying casualty information, cited visual materials, or an agreed secure verification mechanism, HRW's central numerical claim remains insufficiently transparent, independently unverifiable, and subject to serious questions concerning its evidentiary sufficiency.

## I-E Witness Verification and the Use of Pseudonyms

HRW states that it interviewed 41 individuals, while its published report appears to cite 19 interviewees under pseudonyms. The use of pseudonyms may be necessary for witness protection, but it limits independent verification of interviewees' identities, places of origin, presence at the relevant locations, direct knowledge, and possible affiliations.

This concern is illustrated by the account of Ansar Ullah, who appeared in an Al Jazeera report in August 2025 and was presented as having direct knowledge of the Htan Shauk Khan events. Local administrative records and corroborating information reviewed by HDCO establish that he originated from Nan Yar Kone village, had lived in Bangladesh since 2017, and was not a

resident of Htan Shauk Khan at the time of the events. Additional information reviewed by HDCO indicates that he had previously been associated with ARSA.

His presentation as a direct eyewitness to events at Htan Shauk Khan was therefore false and materially misleading. This case demonstrates the importance of verifying a person's residence, presence, direct knowledge, and possible armed-group affiliations before relying on that person as an eyewitness



**Figure 6.** Ansar Ullah appearing in an Al Jazeera report in August 2025 and presenting himself as a direct eyewitness to the Htan Shauk Khan events. Records and corroborating information reviewed by HDCO indicate that he originated from Nan Yar Kone village, had lived in Bangladesh since 2017, and was not present at Htan Shauk Khan during the relevant events. HDCO therefore assesses his eyewitness account as false and materially misleading.

## I-F Witness Reliability and Unequal Assessment of Risk Across the Arakan–Bangladesh Border

The environment in which testimony concerning Htan Shauk Khan was collected is an important methodological consideration. Testimony from refugees in Bangladesh should not be treated as inherently unreliable, but neither should it automatically be presumed independent or free from coercion, intimidation, armed-group influence, political pressure, or other external factors. The same scrutiny should be applied to testimony from residents in ULA/AA-administered areas, whose accounts are often treated with immediate suspicion on the assumption that they cannot speak freely.

Concerns regarding the safety and freedom of people living under ULA/AA administration should be taken seriously, but they should not be examined in isolation. Serious insecurity within the Bangladesh refugee camps has also been documented by multiple organisations.

In its 18 March 2025 report, *“I May Be Killed Any Moment”*: Killings, Abductions, Torture, and Other Serious Violations by Rohingya Militant Groups in Bangladesh, Fortify Rights documented killings, abductions, torture, intimidation, forced recruitment, and violence against perceived opponents, community leaders, activists, and other refugees.

Joint protection monitoring recorded 424 serious security incidents affecting 611 refugees across all 33 camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf during the final quarter of 2024, including 157 abductions or kidnappings, 97 serious physical assaults, 80 cases of extortion, 33 recruitment cases, 25 firearm-related incidents, and 14 killings (Protection Sector Cox’s Bazar, 2025). UNHCR likewise reported deteriorating security caused by increasing violence by organised groups, while HRW itself previously documented killings, abductions, and intimidation by armed groups and criminal networks, particularly against community leaders and refugees believed to be cooperating with Bangladeshi authorities (Fortify Rights, 2025; Human Rights Watch, 2023; UNHCR, 2025).

These documented conditions do not invalidate testimony collected in Bangladesh, but they demonstrate that residence outside ULA/AA-administered territory does not automatically guarantee independence or freedom from pressure. Witnesses in the camps may face influence or intimidation from armed groups, criminal networks, political actors, community authorities, smugglers, or other intermediaries. Cross-border family ties may also create concerns about consequences for relatives living elsewhere.

Recently displaced persons may depend on intermediaries or seek shelter, humanitarian protection, legal recognition, family reunification, or permission to remain. These circumstances do not invalidate their experiences or testimony, but they require investigators to consider whether insecurity, dependency, armed-group influence, or fear of contradicting dominant narratives affected the conditions in which accounts were provided.

HRW states that its interviews were private and voluntary, that participants could decline questions or end the interview, and that no financial compensation was provided. These are relevant safeguards, but they do not establish that witnesses were free from external pressure before or after the interviews. Repeated interviews may test consistency or clarify an account, but they do not constitute independent corroboration unless the information is confirmed through unrelated witnesses, contemporaneous records, medical or forensic evidence, imagery, or other independent sources.

Because HRW relied on interpreters, intermediaries, and community-based data collectors without unrestricted field access, greater transparency is needed regarding witness selection, possible affiliations or conflicts of interest, translation accuracy, interview procedures, and safeguards against leading questions, prior coordination, and circular corroboration.

## I-G Media Access, Site Visits, and the Generalised Dismissal of Field Reporting

The ULA facilitated visits to Htan Shauk Khan and other areas under the Arakkha administration for journalists, media representatives, and observers. According to ULA records, approximately 15 participants representing five media organisations joined the August 2025 visit and were given opportunities to inspect relevant locations and speak with residents, Muslim community leaders, administrative personnel, and others with knowledge of the battle and its aftermath.

Media access was not limited to the earlier media visit. On 8 February 2026, Rajeev Bhattacharyya, a correspondent for *The Diplomat*, separately visited New Htan Shauk Khan and interviewed three residents, including village chief Mohammad Juloddin. His subsequent reporting examined competing accounts of the May 2024 events, the surrounding military context, the relocation of residents, and the establishment of New Htan Shauk Khan.

Bhattacharyya's report identified residents' accounts concerning Myanmar military recruitment, ARSA involvement, shelling and airstrikes, the presence of armed personnel, evacuation efforts, and post-battle relocation. It also compared those accounts with allegations advanced by human-rights organisations.



**Figure 7.** Journalist Rajeev Bhattacharyya interviewing New Htan Shauk Khan village chief Mohammad Juloddin, seated in the centre, and other residents during his visit to the village in February 2026. Photograph by Rajeev Bhattacharyya; source: *The Diplomat*.

Some commentators dismissed Bhattacharyya's report largely because the interviews were conducted in ULA/AA-administered territory, with one diaspora journalist publicly

characterising the article as effectively “dictated” by the AA. HRW similarly questions the August 2025 media visit on the basis of allegations that some residents were instructed or pressured regarding what to say. Such concerns should be assessed in relation to the specific interviews involved, but the location of an interview does not, by itself, establish that testimony was scripted, every participant was coached, or the visiting journalists lacked professional independence. The dismissal of reporting conducted in ULA/AA-administered territory reflects a broader tendency to presume that such interviews were coerced or scripted, while testimony collected in Bangladesh is more readily treated as independent.

The Irrawaddy reported that participating media outlets interviewed approximately 40 residents invited by the AA, as well as other Htan Shauk Khan residents and people from nearby villages who had not been brought to the interviews by the AA. Many participants were village leaders, community representatives, and other individuals who held responsibilities within their communities and were accustomed to expressing views and making decisions on local matters. They should not therefore be characterised simply as passive participants incapable of providing their own accounts.

Their positions do not, by themselves, exclude the possibility of influence or pressure, but neither do they support a categorical assumption that every interviewee was selected, coached, or controlled by the authorities. The resulting reporting should be assessed according to each journalist’s methods, including interview conditions, freedom to select questions and participants, possible interference, the direct knowledge of those interviewed, and corroboration through independent evidence—not rejected solely because the interviews occurred in ULA/AA-administered territory.



**Figure 8**



**Figure 9**

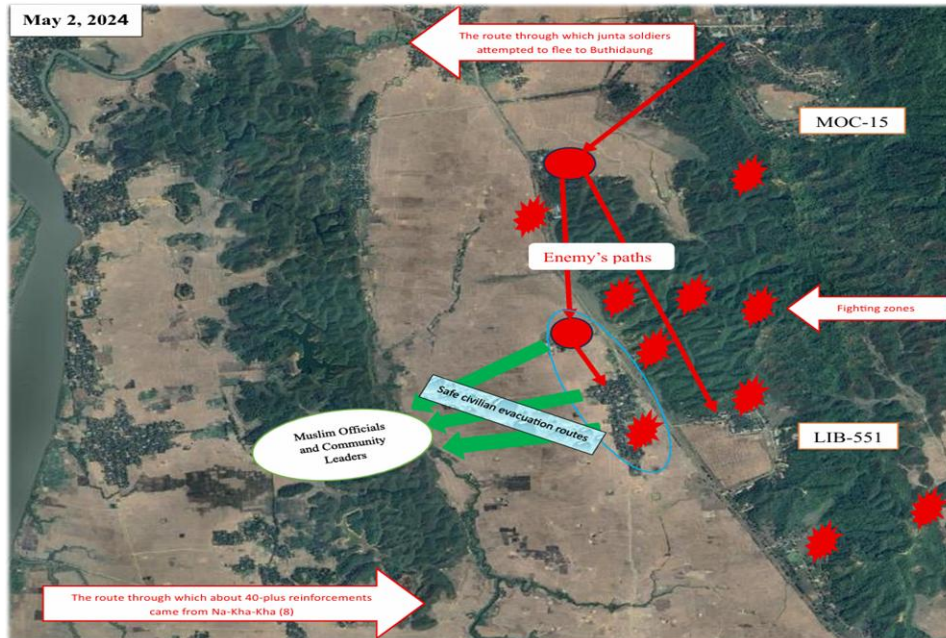


**Figure 10**

**Figures 8–10.** Journalists and observers interviewing Htan Shauk Khan residents, village leaders, community representatives, and other local participants during the August 2025 media visit.

## Part II: Events During the Htan Shauk Khan Battle

### II-A The Battle of Htan Shauk Khan



**Figure 11.** Map showing the reported battle situation on 2 May 2024 and the evacuation routes used by Htan Shauk Khan residents toward designated reception areas.

Following the capture of Light Infantry Battalion (LIB)-565 on 24 April 2024, AA forces intensified operations against Military Operations Command (MOC)-15. During the subsequent fighting, Myanmar military units positioned in Buthidaung town and at LIB-551 conducted repeated artillery strikes against locations they believed were occupied by AA forces surrounding MOC-15. Myanmar military aircraft, including Y-12 aircraft and fighter jets, also carried out repeated operations, including airstrikes and the delivery of reinforcements and supplies.

Myanmar military forces based in Buthidaung made several attempts to reach and reinforce MOC-15 but were unable to break through AA positions. ULA/AA records further state that troops from Border Guard Police Battalion No. 8, commonly referred to as Na-Kha-Kha (8), crossed the Mayu River and advanced toward the U Hla Hpay area. According to the ULA/AA account, these forces were intercepted and defeated before reaching MOC-15.

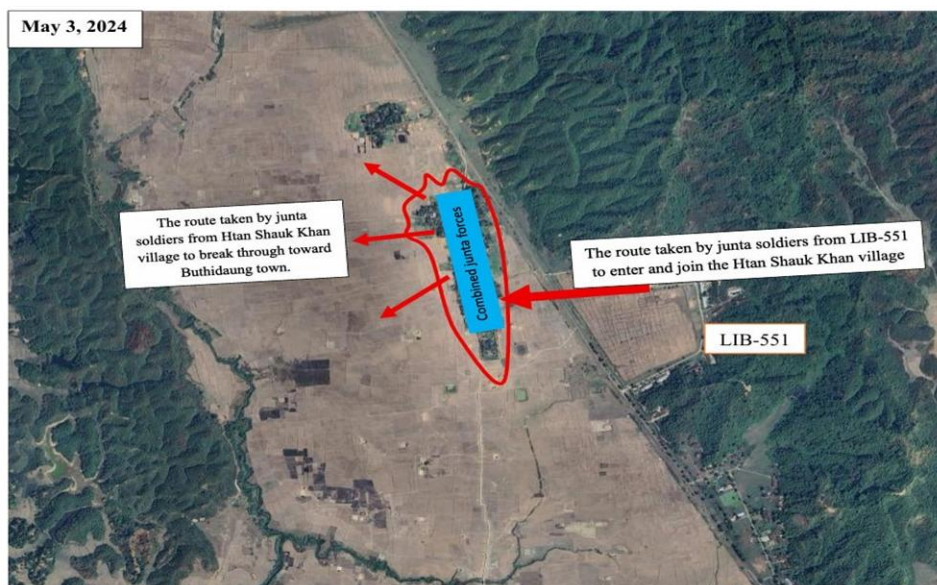
After approximately six days of sustained offensives, AA units penetrated parts of the inner MOC-15 compound. Junta troops subsequently attempted to withdraw toward Buthidaung town but encountered strong AA resistance. Following heavy clashes and significant casualties, the withdrawing forces reportedly returned to the MOC-15 compound.

A further AA offensive eventually forced the remaining Myanmar military personnel to abandon MOC-15. At approximately 8:56 a.m. on 2 May 2024, retreating junta forces moved from MOC-15 toward Htan Shauk Khan and LIB-551. AA units pursued them, and further engagements occurred along the withdrawal route.

At the same time, the AA continued its assault on LIB-551. Heavy fighting continued amid artillery fire from Myanmar military positions in Buthidaung town and repeated aerial attacks affecting the areas around Htan Shauk Khan and LIB-551. The AA captured LIB-551 at approximately 2:40 p.m. on 3 May 2024.

The fall of LIB-551 did not end the fighting. Personnel retreating from LIB-551 joined other Myanmar military personnel, locally recruited Muslim combatants, and members of armed groups—including ARSA, the ARA, and the RSO—already present in or around Htan Shauk Khan. These combined forces established defensive positions within the village and prepared to resist further AA advances.

The AA subsequently advanced toward Htan Shauk Khan. During the ensuing fighting, the combined forces fired on advancing AA units while using civilian houses and other structures as defensive positions. Intense armed confrontations continued throughout the day, accompanied by repeated artillery fire from Myanmar military positions in Buthidaung town and aerial attacks affecting Htan Shauk Khan and the surrounding area.



**Figure 12.** Map showing the reported battle situation on 3 May 2024 and the routes along which Myanmar military personnel attempted to break through AA positions.

On 4 May 2024, Myanmar military personnel made another attempt to break through AA positions, particularly along the northern side of Htan Shauk Khan, in order to reach Buthidaung town. However, the attempt failed and resulted in further casualties among the retreating forces.

As the fighting continued, AA personnel heard women shouting and children crying from within the surrounding area. At approximately 4:30 a.m., a group of around 20 women approached while raising white flags and calling out, “Thar-Li-Swa par, Thar-Li-Swa par,” indicating an intention to surrender or seek safe passage.

AA personnel then instructed the group to bring forward the commanding officers of the remaining forces. Shortly afterward, Colonel Kaung Myat, the deputy commander of MOC-15, emerged with other personnel while raising white flags.

## II-B Civilian Early Warning and Evacuation Measures

According to ULA/AA records and accounts from local sources, the Arakkha Government began early warning and civilian evacuation preparations for Htan Shauk Khan and surrounding villages in mid-April 2024, as the possibility of armed clashes in the area increased.

Meetings were held with village elders, community leaders, and local officials from Htan Shauk Khan and nearby villages, including U Hla Hpay, Kun Taung, Thin Taung, Yout Nyo Taung, and Phon Nyo Leik. These discussions focused on evacuation routes, temporary shelter arrangements, and measures to protect civilians in the event that fighting expanded toward the village.

The evacuation effort intensified at approximately 6:00 a.m. on 2 May 2024, when loudspeaker announcements were made warning residents of the imminent risk of fighting. This followed indications that retreating Myanmar military personnel from MOC-15 were moving toward Htan Shauk Khan and that armed clashes could soon reach the village.

Although evacuation warnings and preparations began at approximately 6:00 a.m., large numbers of residents began leaving the village at around 8:00 a.m. With assistance from ULA representatives, Muslim community leaders, and local officials, they moved westward across the rice fields toward designated reception areas near U Hla Hpay village. According to local records and accounts, hundreds of civilians used this route before the most intensive phase of the fighting.



**Figure 13**



**Figure 14**

**Figures 13–14.** Video stills showing a community representative involved in the evacuation, together with other responsible local personnel, using a loudspeaker to direct Htan Shauk Khan residents toward the designated evacuation route near U Hla Hpay village on 2 May 2024.

As illustrated in Figure 13–14, AA personnel coordinated the evacuation with Muslim community leaders, local administrative officials, and representatives involved in community justice and dispute-resolution structures. Arrangements were also made to provide evacuees with food, basic medical assistance, and temporary support at designated reception areas.

These preparations—including meetings with community leaders, loudspeaker warnings, designated evacuation routes, and arrangements for food, medical assistance, and temporary

shelter—indicate that the risk to civilians was anticipated and that efforts were made to move residents away from the expected area of confrontation before the fighting intensified. HRW’s limited treatment of these measures affects its assessment of the sequence of events and the intent underlying the evacuation.

## II-C Competing Accounts of Civilian Movement on 2 May 2024

The narratives presented by Human Rights Watch (HRW), Fortify Rights (FR), and the Kaladan Press Network (KPN) differ significantly in their descriptions of how Htan Shauk Khan residents moved on 2 May 2024, when they began to flee, and how they interacted with Myanmar military and AA personnel.

According to HRW’s reconstruction, villagers learned during the early hours of 2 May that MOC-15 had fallen, and that LIB-551 could become the AA’s next objective. HRW states that Myanmar military personnel initially prevented residents from leaving. When retreating junta forces from MOC-15 later entered Htan Shauk Khan, villagers reportedly became alarmed and began to flee.

HRW’s account indicates that, between approximately 7:00 and 8:00 a.m., most residents of Bor Para moved in a north-westerly direction, while a smaller number travelled west toward the U Hla Hpay area. HRW alleges that shootings subsequently occurred at Toinna Mura and Fatailla Para. Based on this chronology, the principal alleged killings would have taken place between approximately 7:00 and 8:00 a.m.

Fortify Rights presents a materially different account. Based on interviews with 15 survivors, eyewitnesses, and others with direct knowledge of the events, it reports that villagers began leaving before dawn on 2 May 2024 in at least two large groups numbering in the hundreds. According to this account, one group fled westward toward downtown Buthidaung, while the other moved eastward (Fortify Rights, 2026).

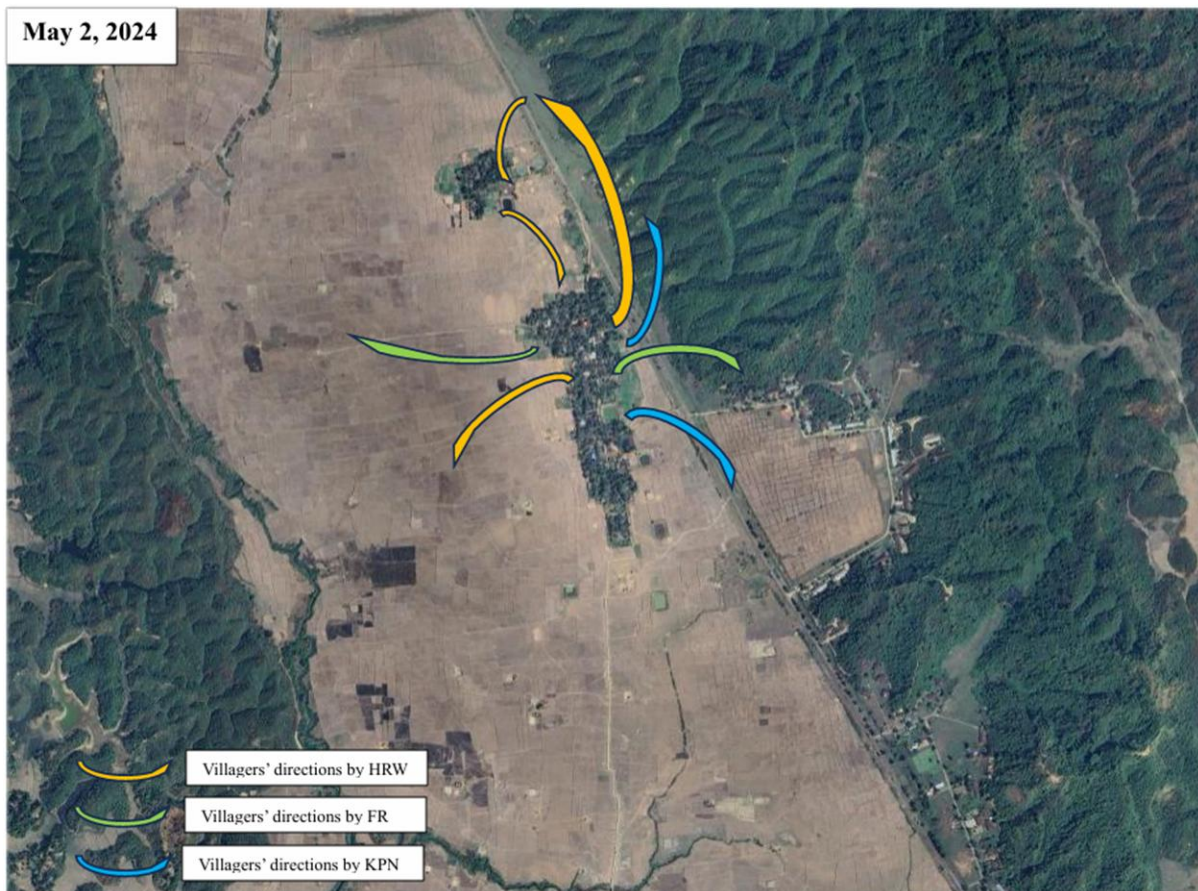
The Kaladan Press Network provides another distinct reconstruction. Based on interviews with 19 Muslim refugees, KPN reports that a large contingent of Myanmar military personnel entered the area, with approximately half moving into Htan Shauk Khan village and the remainder proceeding toward LIB-551. According to KPN, junta personnel then instructed villagers to leave their homes. Soon afterward, hundreds of AA troops reportedly entered the village and also ordered residents to leave. KPN states that one large group moved toward the main road east of the village, while another fled northward (Kaladan Press Network, 2025, pp. 9, 14–15).

These accounts differ in several important respects:

- whether villagers began fleeing before dawn or only after retreating junta forces entered the village;
- whether junta personnel initially prevented residents from leaving or instead ordered them to evacuate;

- whether AA forces entered after the evacuation had begun and ordered residents to leave;
- whether the principal directions of movement were northwest and west, west and east, or east and north; and
- the timing and sequence of the alleged shootings in relation to those movements.

The figure below provides a schematic comparison of the different directions of movement described by HRW, Fortify Rights, and KPN. The yellow arrows represent directions attributed to villagers in HRW’s account, the green arrows represent those described by FR, and the blue arrows represent those reported by KPN.



**Figure 15.** Schematic comparison of the different routes and directions of civilian movement described by Human Rights Watch (HRW), Fortify Rights (FR), and Kaladan Press Network (KPN) for the morning of 2 May 2024.

The scale of these discrepancies requires explanation, particularly because all three organisations present their accounts as reconstructions of the same morning and rely heavily on witness testimony collected after the events. The differences concern not merely minor details, but the timing, starting locations, directions of movement, involvement of armed actors, and sequence of the alleged shootings. Unless these accounts are reconciled with time-stamped imagery, battlefield developments, local administrative records, and testimony from witnesses

positioned in different parts of the village, no single reconstruction—including HRW’s—can reliably be treated as an established account of civilian movement on the morning of 2 May 2024.

Despite their differences, all three reports contain references to precautionary or evacuation-related measures undertaken before or during the battle. They describe, in varying terms, warnings, instructions to leave, or movements facilitated by local Muslim leaders and ULA/AA authorities. This shared element indicates that the movement of residents occurred within an anticipated and rapidly evolving military situation, rather than as part of an entirely unexpected or isolated incident.

## II-D Site Geography and Alleged Incident Locations

HRW distinguishes the alleged incidents at Fatailla Para and Toinna Mura from the deaths documented at Bor Para partly because military equipment was reportedly visible at Bor Para but not at the two northern sites. Relying on witness accounts, photographs, video footage, satellite imagery, and remote forensic review, HRW concludes that the persons allegedly killed at Fatailla Para and Toinna Mura were civilians.

The absence of visible military equipment in selected images does not, by itself, establish the identities or civilian status of the deceased or demonstrate that armed actors had not operated at those locations. The available material does not establish who accessed the sites before filming, whether the scenes remained undisturbed, or whether weapons, uniforms, ammunition, or other relevant items had been removed, relocated, concealed, or placed outside the recorded field of view. Without a documented chain of custody, it cannot be excluded that the condition of the sites had changed before the photographs and videos were recorded.

Without authenticated original files, verifiable metadata, individual identification of the deceased, on-site forensic examination, and an assessment of ground fighting, troop movements, artillery fire, and aerial attacks, the available material cannot independently establish that the remains belonged to civilian residents or that the AA was responsible for their deaths.

The absence of visible military equipment in selected images does not establish that the deceased were civilians or that armed personnel had not operated at the sites. HRW’s materials do not establish who accessed the locations before filming, whether the scenes remained undisturbed, or whether relevant objects had been removed, relocated, concealed, or excluded from view.

Without authenticated original files, verifiable metadata, a documented chain of custody, individual identification, and on-site forensic examination, the visual material cannot independently establish either the civilian status of the remains or responsibility for their deaths.



**Figure 16.** Locations of Bor Para, Fatailla Para, and Toinna Mura—the three sites identified by HRW in connection with the alleged incidents—together with MOC-15 and LIB-551.

## II-E Assessment of Witness Testimony

HRW relies substantially on witness testimony to reconstruct the alleged incidents at Toinna Mura and Fatailla Para. The accounts contain unresolved questions concerning the witnesses' precise locations, visibility conditions, distances from the alleged events, timing, movement routes, identification of the alleged attackers, and consistency with available imagery and battlefield developments.

Some testimony is accompanied by photographs or other supporting material, including evidence of injuries. Such material may support the occurrence of injury or violence but does not, by itself, establish when or where the injury occurred, the identity or status of the persons involved, or responsibility for the incident.

These accounts should therefore be assessed through independent corroboration, including contemporaneous medical records, authenticated visual material, time-stamped imagery, terrain and line-of-sight analysis, forensic examination, and testimony from unrelated witnesses. Without such corroboration, the testimony cannot independently establish the full chronology, civilian status of the deceased, or attribution of responsibility to the AA.

## II-F Casualty Claims and Population-Record Reconciliation

A central evidentiary concern is HRW's claim that more than 170 people associated with Htan Shauk Khan were killed or remain missing, including at least 90 children. As explained in Section I-D, HRW did not provide the casualty information requested for comparison with

village population records, household information, post-evacuation registration lists, family records, displacement information, battlefield records, and information concerning persons who later relocated or crossed into Bangladesh. The absence of access to this information prevents a transparent, name-by-name reconciliation of HRW’s figure.

HRW’s description of the affected population is also insufficiently precise. It refers to more than 170 “villagers” allegedly killed or missing but does not clearly establish whether every person included in its figure was a permanent resident of Htan Shauk Khan. This distinction is important because HRW also reports that people displaced from surrounding villages had taken shelter there before the fighting.

A credible casualty assessment should distinguish permanent Htan Shauk Khan residents from temporary arrivals; civilians from Myanmar military personnel, locally recruited Muslim combatants, and members of armed groups—including ARSA, the RSO, and the ARA; confirmed deaths from unresolved missing-person cases; and persons who fled, relocated, surrendered, were detained, crossed into Bangladesh, or were subsequently located.

Without these distinctions, the general term “villagers” risks combining persons with different origins, roles, and outcomes. HRW’s published report does not provide sufficient information to verify the residence, status, or circumstances of each person included in its figure.

All civilians remain entitled to protection regardless of their ethnicity, religion, residence, political views, or family associations. For casualty-recording and attribution purposes, however, the available evidence should be assessed individually before each person is classified as a civilian, an armed participant, or a person of undetermined status. A credible casualty assessment should establish each alleged victim’s identity, place of residence, presence at the relevant location, status at the time of the incident, and circumstances of death or disappearance.

## II-F.1 Population Baseline

HRW states that, before the events of 2 May 2024, Htan Shauk Khan had a population of nearly 1,200. It separately reports that, by the time of the fighting, hundreds of people displaced from surrounding villages had also moved into Htan Shauk Khan, with some houses accommodating two or three families. HRW’s wording therefore appears to distinguish the nearly 1,200 claimed village residents from the additional displaced population present at the time of the incident. The available administrative records provide a materially different population baseline. The 2023 annual population registration and verification exercise conducted under the previous administration recorded 114 households and 933 permanent residents in Htan Shauk Khan. The underlying registration data are retained by HDCO and are not reproduced in full because they contain personal and household information.

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လူဝင်မှုကြီးကြပ်ရေးနှင့် ပြည်သူ့အင်အားဝန်ကြီးဌာန  
အိမ်ထောင်စုလူဦးရေစာရင်း

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(အိမ်ထောင်စုစာရင်းဖြည့်သွင်း)  
ပြည်နယ်/တိုင်း- ရန်ကင်းပြည်နယ်

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ပျက်စီးလေ့ရှိသည့်ရက်စွဲ

၁၅-၁-၂၀၂၃  
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မြို့နယ်- ဘူးသီးတောင်    ခရိုင်-    မြို့နယ်အုပ်စု-    အတွင်း/ပြင်ပ-    ကျေးရွာ-    တန်းရွာကိစ္စ

စဉ်	အမည်	ရွေးသည့်ရာခိုင်နှုန်း			အိမ်အမည်	အိမ်အမည်	ဦးစီးနှင့် တော်စပ်ပုံ	အလုပ်အကိုင်	မှတ်ပုံတင်အမှတ်			လူမျိုး	နိုင်ငံသား	တာဝန်	မှတ်ချက်	နိုင်ငံ(ပြင်ပ)လွှဲချက်	
		ရက်	လ	နှစ်					မြို့နယ်	နိုင်ငံသား	နိုင်ငံ						
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၁	မဟာမတ်ဆော်ဇော်	၁၅	၇	၁၉၈၇	ကျား	မဟာမတ်တာဝန်		စီးစီး	ပိုမို			ဘင်္ဂါလီ	အခြား	အလုပ်		၅၇၀၀၀	
၂	ဆော်ဇော်	၁၅	၇	၁၉၉၀	ကျား	မဟာမတ်တာဝန်	၈၅၀၀၀	ပိုမို				ဘင်္ဂါလီ	အခြား	အလုပ်			
၃	ရွာသောက်ရာရာ	၁၅	၇	၁၉၉၀	မ	ရွာသောက်ရာရာ	၈၅၀၀၀	ပိုမို				ဘင်္ဂါလီ	အခြား	အလုပ်			

CheckId:1564

**Figure 17.** Redacted extract from the electronic household-registration system maintained under the previous administration. The available copy was printed on 6 December 2022 and is included to illustrate the registration system. The village-wide total of 933 permanent residents derives from the subsequent 2023 annual population registration and verification exercise, the underlying data for which are retained by HDCO.

**II-F.2 Post-Evacuation Registration**

Following the evacuation, Htan Shauk Khan residents initially took refuge in U Hla Hpay and nearby communities, including Wet Ma Kya, Nghet Thae, and Kyauk Sheik. Many were temporarily accommodated at the U Hla Hpay madrasa, where village committee members began compiling a register of displaced residents. After the fighting had subsided, the displaced population was relocated among ten nearby host villages.

On 10 May 2024, the Htan Shauk Khan village committee conducted a further verification of displaced-person lists across the ten host villages. According to committee records, slightly more than 910 Htan Shauk Khan residents were identified and accounted for.

The registration of more than 910 permanent Htan Shauk Khan residents within days of the battle is the most time-proximate administrative evidence available for assessing how many permanent residents remained unaccounted for. Compared with the 2023 baseline of 933 permanent residents, the numerical difference is substantially smaller than HRW’s overall figure of more than 170 persons described as villagers killed or missing. However, HRW does not clearly state how many persons included in that figure were permanent Htan Shauk Khan residents and how many were displaced persons from surrounding villages who had temporarily taken shelter there. The registration evidence therefore materially challenges any interpretation that HRW’s entire figure concerns permanent Htan Shauk Khan residents and makes a name-by-name reconciliation of residence, status, and outcome essential.

A separate, signed post-battle population reconciliation classified Htan Shauk Khan residents according to their displacement, resettlement, departure abroad, and current residence status. That record accounted for 790 residents within Buthidaung Township and 138 living abroad, for a total of 928 individuals. Because the later exercise was designed to trace displaced residents rather than conduct a new household census, its household categories are not treated as directly comparable with those used in the 2023 registration.

-အတွင်းရိုး-



ရက်ပိုင်အမျိုးသားအဖွဲ့ချုပ်  
မောင်တောခရိုင်  
ပုလဲခရိုင်ရုံး

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ရက်စွဲ၊ ၂၀၂၆ ခုနှစ်၊ မေလ( ၁၉ )ရက်

သို့

ဧကန်  
ခရိုင်ပုလဲကော်မတီ

အကြောင်းအရာ၊ တန်းလျှောက်ခံရွာ လူဦးရေစာရင်းအားတင်ပြခြင်း

အထက်ပါအကြောင်းအရာကိစ္စနဲ့ပတ်သက်၍ မောင်တောခရိုင် ဘူးသီးတောင်မြို့နယ် တန်းလျှောက်ခံရွာမှ ပြည်သူများအား ဘူးသီးတောင်မြို့သိမ်းတိုက်ပွဲအလွန် အရိုးပေါ်လုံခြုံစိမ့်အဖွဲ့မှ ဘူးသီးတောင်မြို့နယ် ရပ်ရွာများတွင် နီရာချထားပီးပြီးနောက် တန်းလျှောက်ခံရွာသစ်တည်ပြီး ပြန်လည်နီရာချထားပီးပါသည်။

တန်းလျှောက်ခံရွာပုလဲလူဦးရေစာရင်း

စဉ်	အိမ်ထောင်စု	ကျား	မ	ပေါင်း	မှတ်ချက်
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၂	၂၈			၁၃၈	စစ်ယောင်နီစဉ် ပြည်ပထွက်ပြီး(ရပ်ရွာလူကြီးများ၏ ပြောကြားချက်)
၃	၁၂၃	၃၃၉	၃၅၄	၆၉၃	ရွာသစ်တည်ဆောက်ပြီး နီရာချထားပီးခ
၄	၁၉	၃၃	၆၄	၉၇	ရွာသစ်တည်ဆောက်ပြီး နီရာချထားပီးပြီးနောက် ပြည်ပထွက်ခွာ
၅	၁၁၉	၃၂၅	၃၃၇	၆၆၂	အဂုလက်ဟီ လူဦးရေစာရင်း(၂၆၀၄၂၈) ရက်နီကောက်ယူခ
၆	၄	၁၄	၁၇	၃၁	ပြည်ပထွက်ခွာ
၇	၉	၁၄	၂၇	၄၁	တန်းလျှောက်ခံရွာမှ အခြားရွာများသို့ ပြောင်းရွှေ့နီထိုင်သူများ
၈	၁၁၉	၃၂၄	၃၃၅	၆၅၉	အဂုလက်ဟီ လူဦးရေစာရင်း(၂၆၀၅၁၆) ရက်နီကောက်ယူခ/ဖွီးတိုး(၂၂၆းဟီ
၉	-	၁	၂	၃	(၂၆၀၅၀၉)ရက်နီတွင် ပြည်ပထွက်ခွာ

-အတွင်းရိုး-

**Figure 18.** Post-battle population reconciliation for Htan Shauk Khan, dated 19 May 2026, classifying residents by displacement, resettlement, departure abroad, and current residence status.

The close correspondence between the two separately compiled population totals—933 permanent residents recorded before the battle and 928 individuals accounted for afterward— is significant. The totals differ by only five persons, although the records were compiled at different times and for different administrative purposes. This documentary evidence materially challenges HRW’s estimate of nearly 1,200 permanent residents and requires HRW to explain the source and composition of that figure.

Without a transparent, name-by-name reconciliation of HRW’s casualty list with the pre-battle and post-battle administrative records, neither its population estimate nor its figure of more than 170 persons killed or missing can be treated as independently verified. The same requirement applies to claims that HRW’s figure is an undercount or that the number of victims was higher. Repetition of larger estimates does not constitute independent verification; each estimate must be reconciled with the permanent village population, temporary arrivals, post-evacuation registration, persons who fled or crossed into Bangladesh, surrendered or detained persons, armed-participant casualties, unidentified remains, and persons subsequently located.

## II-G Causes and Attribution of Property Destruction

The extensive destruction in Htan Shauk Khan occurred during nearly three days of ground fighting, artillery fire from Myanmar military positions in Buthidaung town, repeated aerial attacks, fires, and the reported use of civilian structures as defensive positions.

HRW attributes substantial responsibility to the AA for houses allegedly burned or destroyed on the morning of 2 May. However, the report does not adequately distinguish among damage caused at different times, by different weapons, or by different actors. Village chief Mohammad Juloddin’s account that Myanmar military shelling and airstrikes struck the village from approximately 8:00 a.m. is directly relevant to assessing the cause of the early destruction.

Responsibility should therefore be determined through a building-by-building and time-specific assessment using dated imagery, munition remnants, impact patterns, fire progression, witness locations, artillery and airstrike records, and evidence concerning the military use of particular structures. The available evidence does not support attributing all destruction in Htan Shauk Khan exclusively to the AA.

## II-H Identity and Possible Causes of Death of the Human Remains

The identity and circumstances of death of the human remains documented in and around Htan Shauk Khan are central to assessing HRW’s allegation.

According to Colonel Kaung Myat, deputy commander of MOC-15, the group that withdrew from LIB-551 toward Htan Shauk Khan on 3 May 2024 included approximately 400 to 500 Myanmar military personnel, more than 200 Muslim armed personnel, and over 500 military family members. Myanmar military personnel retreating from MOC-15, locally recruited Muslim combatants, and members of armed groups—including ARSA, the ARA, and the RSO—were also present in and around the area.

As documented in the preceding battle chronology, ULA/AA records state that 930 persons surrendered during the final phase of the fighting, including substantial numbers of Myanmar

military personnel, members of armed groups, and military family members and dependants. These records demonstrate that any assessment of the remains must account for the documented presence of a substantial military and military-associated population in the Htan Shauk Khan area.

The locations identified by HRW were also affected by ground combat, Myanmar military artillery fire, and aerial attacks. Village chief Mohammad Juloddin stated:

“At 8 a.m. on May 2, there was shelling and airstrikes on our village by the Myanmar military because it assumed that the settlement had already been captured by the Arakan Army.”

The available battlefield and surrender records document the presence in and around Htan Shauk Khan of substantial numbers of Myanmar military personnel, locally recruited combatants, members of armed groups—including ARSA, the ARA, and the RSO—and military-associated persons. In these circumstances, there is a substantial and unresolved possibility that at least some of the remains belonged to armed personnel or other military-associated individuals rather than permanent civilian residents.

HRW’s classification of the remains as civilian therefore goes beyond what the available witness testimony, visual material, and remote forensic review can reliably establish. Without individual identification, on-site forensic examination, authenticated casualty records, and reliable findings concerning the location, timing, and cause of each death, the remains cannot responsibly be classified collectively as civilian residents or attributed exclusively to the AA.

## Part III: Developments After the Battle

### III-A Assessment of Post-Battle Allegations

HRW cites four pseudonymous individuals in support of allegations concerning the treatment of Htan Shauk Khan residents after the battle. These include looting, livestock confiscation, arbitrary detention, removal of women and girls, coercion to provide false testimony, confinement in detention-like settlements, forced labour, movement restrictions, and inadequate access to medicine and livelihoods.

These allegations should not be treated as a single category. Claims of detention, enforced removal, looting, coercion, and forced labour require case-specific evidence identifying the persons affected, dates, locations, responsible actors, duration, and available corroboration. Concerns relating to shelter, medicine, communications, livelihoods, and humanitarian assistance should be assessed separately within the wider conditions of conflict and displacement.

The following sections examine these allegations against local administrative records, community accounts, humanitarian documentation, and information concerning the establishment and operation of New Htan Shauk Khan.

### III-B Post-Evacuation Shelter and Registration

Following the evacuation, Htan Shauk Khan residents were initially accommodated in U Hla Hpay and nearby communities before being relocated among ten host villages: U Hla Hpay, Ye Roe Taung, Sein Taung, Nghet Thae, Kyauk Sheik, Phon Nyo Leik, Wet Htee Hla, Alaychaung, Sein Owe Kyant, and Ka Kya Pyi.

Village representatives compiled and verified displaced-person lists across these locations, while humanitarian organisations provided essential relief assistance. The population figures and registration records are examined in detail in Section II-F.2.

### III-C Allegations Concerning Livestock, Site Structures, and Forced Labour

HRW alleges that structures constructed in the former Htan Shauk Khan area include a possible AA checkpoint and sheds used to hold cattle and other livestock allegedly taken from villagers. It also cites an individual who claimed that he was taken from New Htan Shauk Khan village (Nassawr Para) to tend cattle at the site.

These allegations require a clear distinction between what satellite imagery demonstrates and what depends on witness testimony. Imagery may show buildings, fenced areas, or livestock-related structures, but it cannot establish ownership of the animals, how they were acquired, whether the structures restricted civilian movement, or whether any individual was compelled to work there.

### III-C.1 Livestock Ownership and Alleged Confiscation

According to ULA/AA records, livestock farming has long formed part of the AA's food-security system. Cattle and agricultural activities were maintained at military bases and other locations across Arakan before the AA gained effective control over several townships. ULA/AA information states that the cattle later kept in the former Htan Shauk Khan area came from herds already maintained by the AA and were relocated because the area provided more reliable access to water and grazing land. It denies that the animals were confiscated from displaced residents.

HRW's description of sheds containing "stolen cattle and livestock" is based on witness claims rather than information that can be verified through imagery. Establishing theft would require identification of the alleged owners, descriptions and numbers of the animals, the dates and circumstances in which they were reportedly taken, and corroborating evidence of prior ownership.

### III-C.2 Alleged Checkpoint and Movement Restrictions

The structures described by HRW as a possible checkpoint were associated with the management and protection of the livestock site. According to information provided by local residents and observations made during an HDCO site visit, no checkpoint was found controlling the movement of residents in New Htan Shauk Khan. The former battle area, the livestock site, and the new residential settlement should therefore be clearly distinguished.



**Figure 19**



**Figure 20**

**Figures 19–20.** Residents of New Htan Shauk Khan indicating the village entrance, where no security gate is visible.

### III-C.3 Allegation of Forced Labour

The allegation that an individual was compelled to tend cattle likewise requires case-specific verification, including who issued the instruction, whether the person was free to refuse or leave, how long the work continued, and whether threats or penalties were imposed. The ULA does not permit civilians to be compelled to perform livestock management or any other form of labour. Where sufficient identifying information and supporting evidence are provided, the allegation should be confidentially recorded and investigated, with appropriate disciplinary or legal action taken if responsibility is established.

HRW's account combines three distinct issues—the ownership of livestock, the purpose of structures at the livestock site, and an individual allegation of coerced labour. Each requires separate, case-specific evidence. Satellite imagery may identify structures and physical features, but it cannot by itself establish confiscation, restrictions on civilian movement, or forced labour.

### III-D Clarification of Htan Shauk Khan Village Leadership

HRW's report appears to confuse the identities and periods of service of Htan Shauk Khan's village leaders. Village records identify Muhammad Sway Yod—not Sway Yod Norbi—as the village chief at the time of the May 2024 fighting.

HRW states that Muhammad Sway Yod and his entire family were killed. Residents report that he survived and later crossed into Bangladesh. HDCO has not independently confirmed his present whereabouts, but the available local information conflicts with HRW's account.

After New Htan Shauk Khan was established, Sway Yod Norbi served as village chief from August to September 2025. He had remained with the displaced residents throughout the evacuation, temporary accommodation, and resettlement process. He later stepped down because of illness, after which residents elected Mohammad Juloddin, who continues to serve as the current village chief.

#### **Clarification of the “Former Village Head” Reference**

The AA Commander-in-Chief's reference to a “former village head” living in New Htan Shauk Khan concerned Sway Yod Norbi, who remained with the displaced residents and later served briefly as chief of the new village. It did not refer to Muhammad Sway Yod, who had served as village chief at the time of the May 2024 fighting.

The allegation that the statement was false therefore appears to result from the conflation of two different individuals who served as village chief at different times.

No.	Name of Village Chief	Current Age	Term of Office
1	Sway Yod Norbi	65 years	1997–1998
2	Muhammad Sway Yod	Approximately 50 years	1999–2024
3	Sway Yod Norbi	65 years	August 2025–September 2025
4	Mohammad Juloddin	52 years	October 2025–present

**Table 1.** Village Chiefs of Htan Shauk Khan and Their Terms of Office

### III-E Humanitarian Assistance and Reconstruction by the Arakkha People’s Revolutionary Government

Following the battle, displaced Htan Shauk Khan residents were temporarily accommodated across ten nearby villages in Buthidaung Township through arrangements coordinated with Muslim community leaders, village representatives, local administrative bodies, and community justice and dispute-resolution structures. Residents remained in the host communities while plans were developed for a permanent settlement. Construction of New Htan Shauk Khan began in late 2025, and by May 2026 approximately 700 residents were living there.

Residents participated in constructing their homes with material, logistical, and technical assistance from the Arakkha authorities and in cooperation with Muslim community representatives. Support included tarpaulins, bamboo, thatch panels, timber posts, food, medicines, cash assistance, mosquito nets, and machinery for excavating a drinking-water pond. Community facilities established or supported included a mosque, madrasa, school, and water facilities.

HDCO records document at least six rounds of assistance between July 2025 and March 2026, while the Arakkha Health Department conducted three rounds of routine childhood immunisation between November 2025 and January 2026 for a target population of 101 children. International humanitarian organisations were also granted access to New Htan Shauk Khan and provided food, cash assistance, healthcare, and other support through the applicable coordination arrangements. Their identities are withheld to protect staff safety, confidentiality, humanitarian neutrality, and the continuity of assistance.

These records show that Htan Shauk Khan residents received multiple forms of shelter, material, livelihood, religious, healthcare, and public-health assistance during their relocation and resettlement. They do not establish that every humanitarian need was met, but they are inconsistent with a categorical claim that the community was entirely abandoned or wholly denied humanitarian support.

The documented assistance provided between July 2025 and March 2026 included the following, together with additional support later provided for the Qurbani festival:

No	Assistance
1	An allocation of 5,880,000 MMK by the ULA administration for the construction of a drinking-water pond
2	148 tarpaulin sheets
3	618 bags of rice (25 kg each)
4	37,620,000 MMK cash assistance
5	489 viss of salt
6	246 litres of cooking oil
7	331 courses of medication
8	123 mosquito nets
9	22,200 lengths of bamboo
10	13,800 thatch panels
11	582 wooden house posts
12	540 pieces of black bamboo
13	Two bulls provided for the Qurbani festival

**Table 2.** Documented Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance Provided to Htan Shauk Khan Residents

### III-E.1 Healthcare and Immunisation Services

The Arakkha Health Department provided healthcare and routine immunisation services to residents of New Htan Shauk Khan. The photographs and records below document instances of service delivery. They are relevant to assessing HRW’s claim that residents lacked access to medical treatment.



**Figure 21.** Healthcare services being provided to residents of New Htan Shauk Khan by the Arakkha Health Department.

The Arakkha Health Department also provided routine immunisation services, including DPT, oral polio vaccine, MMR, and Japanese encephalitis vaccines. The available vaccination records document three rounds of immunisation conducted between November 2025 and January 2026, as summarised in Table 3.

Round	Date	Target Population	DPT	OPV	MMR	JE
1st Round	11 Nov 2025	101	48	10	89	91
2nd Round	20 Dec 2025	101	46	9	-	-
3rd Round	20 Jan 2026	101	46	9	-	-

**Table 3.** Expanded Programme on Immunisation Records for New Htan Shauk Khan

တန့်:လျှောက်ဘဲ ကျေးဇူးတင် EPI ကာကွယ်ဆေး (1<sup>st</sup> / 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup>) Round  
ဆိုးဒိုဒ် ဓာတ်ခွဲ: ကူးစီးဝေကွဲ ဖြေ

No	Date	Target Pop	DPT	OPV	MMR	JE
1 <sup>st</sup> Round	11.11.2025	101	48	10	89	91
2 <sup>nd</sup> Round	20.12.2025	101	46	9		
3 <sup>rd</sup> Round	20.1.2026	101	46	9		

**Figure 22.** Handwritten Arakkha Health Department record documenting three rounds of routine childhood immunisation in New Htan Shauk Khan between November 2025 and January 2026.



**Figure 23.** Children and other residents of New Htan Shauk Khan receiving routine immunisation services from the Arakkha Health Department.

### III-F Communication and Internet Access in New Htan Shauk Khan

Following the resumption of armed conflict on 13 November 2023, telephone and internet services across Arakan were progressively disrupted amid Myanmar military restrictions, damage to infrastructure, equipment shortages, and continuing hostilities. In these conditions, the ULA administration has sought to provide or restore alternative communication services, although coverage remains limited and insufficient in many communities.

Available local information indicates that residents of New Htan Shauk Khan are not prohibited from using the internet. Internet cafés and other shared access points operate where connections are available. Figures 24–25 document residents using mobile phones and internet-connected devices in May 2026. These images demonstrate instances of access, although they do not establish that service is adequate for all residents.



**Figure 24**



**Figure 25**

**Figures 24–25.** Residents of New Htan Shauk Khan using mobile phones and internet-connected devices in May 2026.

### III-G Broader Humanitarian Access and Assistance Across Arakan

Myanmar military airstrikes, suicide-drone and naval attacks causing civilian deaths and injuries, widespread displacement, and damage to civilian infrastructure, humanitarian and development activities have continued across northern, central, and southern Arakan. Available records indicate that these projects support conflict-affected Muslim, Arakanese, and other ethnic and religious communities according to identified needs. Assistance to New Htan Shauk Khan was therefore neither isolated nor exceptional but formed part of a wider humanitarian system operating across Arakan through cooperation among Arakkha authorities, public-service departments, community representatives, and humanitarian organisations.

The continuation of humanitarian access and assistance does not mean that existing support is sufficient. Communities across Arakan continue to face substantial unmet needs arising from conflict, displacement, transportation restrictions, economic disruption, communications difficulties, and damage to civilian infrastructure.

The humanitarian and development projects recorded across Arakan in 2026 are summarised below.

No	Region	Townships	Number of Townships	Number of Projects
1	Northern Arakan	Rathedaung Buthidaung Maungdaw	3	187
2	Central Arakan	Ponnagyun Kyauktaw Mrauk-U Paletwa Minbya Pauktaw Myebon	7	172
3	Southern Arakan	Kyaukphyu Ann Ramree Taungup Thandwe Gwa	6	44

**Table 4.** Humanitarian and Development Projects Recorded Across Arakan in 2026

### III-H Muslim Participation in Arakkha Government and Administration

The broader humanitarian framework described above also operates alongside the participation of Muslim residents in Arakkha governmental, administrative, and public-service institutions. According to administrative records, more than 5,000 Muslims serve in roles including township and local administration, education, healthcare, policing, community representation, public institutions, and local justice and dispute-resolution bodies.

Hundreds of Muslim teachers work within the education system, while others contribute to healthcare, public administration, community security, humanitarian coordination, aid distribution, dispute resolution, and reconstruction activities.

This participation is relevant to understanding the broader relationship between the Arakkha authorities and Muslim communities. It indicates that Muslim residents are not categorically

excluded from public institutions, administrative responsibilities, humanitarian assistance, or community decision-making.

The Arakkha authorities recognise that Muslim, Arakanese, and other communities across Arakan continue to face serious hardship resulting from conflict, displacement, economic disruption, and limited access to essential goods and services.

## Part IV: Broader Civilian-Protection Concerns

HDCO considers that abuses committed by all armed actors in northern Arakan require equal, sustained, and impartial examination. The assessment of the Htan Shauk Khan allegations should not result in the neglect of civilians from other ethnic and religious communities who have been killed, injured, abducted, threatened, or forcibly disappeared in incidents attributed to the Myanmar military, ARSA, the RSO, the ARA, and other armed actors.

HDCO acknowledges that HRW has reported a number of serious abuses affecting Rakhine and other non-Muslim civilians. These include the reported killing of dozens of villagers by Myanmar military personnel at Byine Phyu in May 2024, indiscriminate Myanmar military attacks affecting civilians across Rakhine State, and arson attacks on Rakhine villages and neighbourhoods reportedly carried out by Myanmar military forces and armed groups allied with them in April 2024. The issue is therefore not that HRW has remained entirely silent about these victims, but whether such incidents have received comparable levels of sustained investigation, evidentiary scrutiny, public prominence, follow-up, and demands for accountability.

Serious abuses should not receive less rigorous examination because the victims belong to different ethnic or religious communities or because the alleged perpetrators fall outside the principal focus of international reporting. Unequal depth of investigation risks producing a distorted evidentiary record in which some victims are extensively documented, repeatedly publicised, and formally recognised, while others remain marginalised, insufficiently investigated, or effectively invisible. Consistent human-rights practice requires the same concern, methodological rigour, and commitment to accountability regardless of the identity of either the victims or the alleged perpetrators.

Amnesty International's investigation into the August 2017 attacks in the Kha Maung Seik area attributed the killing of 53 Hindu villagers at Ah Nauk Kha Maung Seik to ARSA. It also documented the disappearance of 46 Hindu residents from the neighbouring village of Ye Bauk Kyar, whose relatives and community members believed they had been killed by the same perpetrators, bringing the reported total from the two villages to as many as 99. The victims included men, women, and children.

Based on community records, local reports, and accounts provided by affected civilians and community representatives, HDCO compiled information concerning 162 civilian deaths, 22 injuries, and 30 abductions or disappearances in northern Arakan between November 2023 and January 2026. These incidents were attributed principally to ARSA and other organised armed groups. The victims included Arakanese, Muslim, Hindu, Khumei, Mro, Daingnet, and other residents. HDCO did not independently investigate every individual incident but compiled the information from affected communities and locally available records.

These cases require serious attention from HRW and other international human-rights organisations. HDCO encourages them to examine the available records, interview survivors

and affected families, visit relevant incident sites, and investigate the affiliations, command structures, and conduct of the armed groups concerned according to the same evidentiary standards applied to allegations against the AA.

Referring to these incidents should not be understood as diminishing, deflecting, or prejudging the allegations concerning Htan Shauk Khan. Equal attention is necessary to ensure that civilian protection, truth, accountability, and recognition are not determined by the ethnicity or religion of the victims or by the identity of the alleged perpetrator.

HDCO remains prepared to cooperate with credible independent investigators by sharing available documentation, facilitating communication with affected communities and families where possible, and supporting appropriate verification arrangements consistent with witness protection, security, and humanitarian neutrality.

## Part V: Conclusion

Taking into account the military context, witness evidence, population and registration records, available imagery, post-battle documentation, and the limitations identified in this assessment, HDSCO concludes that the evidence reviewed does not substantiate the allegation that the Arakan Army massacred civilians at Htan Shauk Khan.

The available record instead indicates that Htan Shauk Khan became the site of an intense, multi-actor military confrontation following the fall of MOC-15 and during and after the battle for LIB-551. The fighting involved advancing AA forces, retreating Myanmar military personnel, locally recruited Muslim combatants, members of ARSA, the ARA, and the RSO operating on the Myanmar military's side, artillery fire, repeated aerial attacks, and the military use of civilian structures. HRW's limited treatment of this wider context materially weakens its attribution of deaths and destruction primarily to the AA.

The identities and status of the human remains documented in the area have not been forensically established, and HRW's figure of more than 170 persons killed or missing has not been reconciled with available population, evacuation, surrender, displacement, registration, and migration records. Without individual identification and a clear distinction among permanent residents, temporary arrivals, armed participants, missing persons, and persons subsequently located, neither the civilian classification of the remains nor responsibility for the alleged deaths can be treated as established.

HRW's witness evidence requires consistent scrutiny. Although pseudonyms may be necessary for protection, they limit external verification of witnesses' origins, presence, affiliations, and direct knowledge. Testimony collected in Bangladesh should neither be dismissed because of the interview setting nor presumed independent while accounts from ULA/AA-administered areas are treated as coerced; all accounts should be assessed according to the same standards of interview conditions, internal consistency, possible external pressure, and independent corroboration.

The conduct of the Arakkha authorities before and after the battle is relevant to the report's evacuation and post-battle allegations. Early-warning and evacuation measures were undertaken before the fighting intensified, while displaced residents were subsequently registered, accommodated in surrounding communities, and assisted in establishing New Htan Shauk Khan. By May 2026, approximately 700 residents were living in the settlement and receiving humanitarian and public-service support. These records do not resolve the allegations concerning deaths during the battle, but they are inconsistent with a categorical portrayal of the community as having been entirely abandoned, confined, or denied assistance after the fighting.

Civilian-protection obligations remained fully applicable throughout the fighting, including where armed personnel operated within populated areas or used civilian structures for military

purposes. Any specific allegation of death, injury, disappearance, property loss, coercion, or other misconduct should be examined individually through verifiable records, forensic evidence, and reliable information concerning all plausible actors and causes of harm.

HDCO therefore concludes that the available evidence does not support HRW's allegation that a massacre occurred at Htan Shauk Khan or that the AA carried out such an act.

## Photo Section



**Photo caption.** The distribution of food and humanitarian aid to the Htan Shauk Khan villagers.



**Photo caption.** Villagers worshipping at the pagoda and young people playing football.



**Photo caption.** A meeting between the villagers and the Arakan authorities, along with scenes of cows being donated to the villagers on Qurbani Festival.



**Photo caption.** Young residents of New Htan Shauk Khan playing chinlone, also known as cane ball, in May 2026.

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