

South Asia Analysis Group

Published on *South Asia Analysis Group* (<http://www.southasiaanalysis.org>)

[Home](#) > Myanmar: Is the Army pushing for a state of emergency in Northern Rakhine?

Myanmar: Is the Army pushing for a state of emergency in Northern Rakhine?

Submitted by asiaadmin2 on Fri, 06/19/2020 - 13:24

Paper No. 6603

Dated 19-June-2020

By Dr. S.Chandrasekharan

An unusually strong denial in a Press Conference by the Myanmar Government Representative, this 15th of June gives the impression that the Tatmadaw (Myanmar Army) is pushing for an emergency in the Northern Rakhine and Sitwe area. The war in that region is not going on well and the Army unlike earlier times is not in position to deal with the conflict successfully. But they need the conflict for other reasons which I would explain later.

Emergency provisions are covered in Articles 412, 413, 417, 418 and 419 in Myanmar 2008 Constitution. According to Article 413 (b), the President may if necessary declare a military administrative order where the executive and judicial powers could be conferred on the Chief of the Army. Article 417 makes a specific mention of the sovereignty of nation being affected due to “insurgency.”

The caveat however is that the President should co-ordinate (not consult) with the National Defence and Security Council before declaring the emergency. The National Defence Council unfortunately is weighted in favor of the Army with its Representatives holding a majority in the Council and this is perhaps one of the reasons why it has not met ever since NLD took over in 2015. The NLD’s attempt to dilute the presence of the Army Generals in the Constitutional Reforms proposal in the Parliament was also rejected by the Army and could not therefore get the desired majority for the amendment!

The Government Representative said that attacks by the Arakan Army in Rakhine neither pose a threat to the administration of the State nor will they cause the Military to take administrative Control of Region. The latter part of the Statement of involving the Army is a little puzzling and one wonders whether indeed the Army is pushing for such a development.

U Myin Than, Director General of the Ministry of Office of Union Government defended the performance/non performance of the Rakhine

State Government and said that the State Administration is “working hard” for peace and for the administrative mechanisms to function in the conflict area.

This statement is being made when many of the civil administrators have resigned in Mrauk-U, Myebon, Minbya and Pnnagyun townships citing security concerns. But it could also be out of sympathy for the Insurgents. There are only a few local bodies who are continuing out of fear from both the Army and the AA Insurgents..

One local administrator said that he had sent a complaint about Myanmar Army’s killing and abduction of administrators and as yet there has been no response from the Capital.

The civil war is not going according to Army’s calculations. The Army had rejected the extension of cease-fire declared unilaterally by the Arakan Army and thousands of civilians are getting uprooted. Aerial bombing and artillery are being used frequently resulting in civilian casualties and each side is blaming the other, while the civilians caught up in the war are suffering.

The Tatmadaw was put to some embarrassment when the Arakan Army released an interview given by one of the Captured Army Officers, Captain Nyi Nyi Zaw of 345th Light Infantry Division who stated that the Myanmar Army made wanton of killing innocent Rohingya Muslims after the ARSA attacks.

A video showing the torture and beating of suspected Arakan Army members has gone viral. It is said that those being beaten up are innocent civilians and not connected with the Arakan Army.

The Spokesman of the Arakan Army, Khaing Thu Kha unlike earlier times has now said that the prisoners(there are quite a few from the Myanmar Army) will be released only when the detained Arakan people are released. Some of the close relatives of the leaders of the Arakan Army have been taken into custody by the Myanmar Army from places even outside Myanmar. The AA Chief’s family who were arrested in Thailand has been given asylum in Switzerland.

It is interesting to hear some Foreign experts who have described the situation in the Rakhine State and that of the leaders of the Arakan Army. They had this to say

1. The leadership in the Arakan Army is relatively well educated compared to other ethnic Armed outfits.
2. It has a more sophisticated organization and more strategically organized.

3. It consists mostly of sophisticated young people and the conflict this time is more intensive and impactful

4 There are reports of hundreds of civilians being killed and the response of the Myanmar army has been the use of overwhelming “fire power”

5. The Arakanese are a proud people and had been ignored for over 200 years. There has been no development either. Their historical greatness has not been recognised.

I would add that the Arakan Army has given the Rakhine Buddhists some pride of their ancient culture and heritage and the people are therefore supportive of the idea- their dream of Rakhita.

In my paper of 6590 dated 3rd June of this year I had mentioned that the civilian Government for the first time made bold to reduce the budget the Army asked for, in view of the operations in the Rakhine State.

It is also surprising to see that the media has highlighted the conflict of interest of the top Army Generals, in procuring stores and equipment from companies run by the Army itself and the firms are headed by the very same Generals.

Of the many instances, the involvement of the Quarter Master General Kyaw Swar Lin is of interest. He runs the Myanmar Electric Corporation- a vast military owned Conglomerate and at the same time he manages the military budget and procures stores for the Army. To quote- it said “the merger of the Armed Forces as a State Institution and Enterprises for personal profit is unprecedented.”

Another example is that of Major Gen. Khin Maung Than as Director of Military Procurement is also serving as Director in at least 19 public and private companies,

It is no wonder that the Army would like the conflict in Rakhine State to continue and as said the conflict of interest gives the military financial incentive to continue to inflame the civil war. This also provides the military with a justification to maintain power and block democratic reforms so that they can continue to profit.

Surely, Suu Kyi should be aware of the consequences of the order she had given to the Army to go all out against the Arakan Army. The best way would be to acknowledge its existence and go for peace talks.

(Note- the terms Tatmadaw, Myanmar Army and Myanmar Military have been used and all the three are interchangeable.)

Tags:

Tatmadaw [1]

Arakan Army and Suu Kyi [2]

Category:

Papers [3]

Countries:

Myanmar [4]

Topics:

Insurgency [5]

Copyright ©2012. All Rights are Reserved.

Source URL: <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/node/2632>

Links

[1] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/taxonomy/term/1334>

[2] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/taxonomy/term/2114>

[3] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/papers>

[4] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/myanmar>

[5] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/insurgency>