

Burma

Myanmar Military Regime Removes Arakan Army From List of Terrorist Groups

Friday 12 March 2021, by [Nyein Nyein](#), [The Irrawaddy](#) (Date first published: 11 March 2021).

Myanmar's military regime removed the ethnic armed group, the Arakan Army (AA), from its list of terrorist groups on Wednesday with the approval of the military's governing body, the State Administrative Council (SAC).

The Central Committee for Counterterrorism on March 23, 2020, declared the ethnic Rakhine United League for Arakan or AA a terrorist organization, following attacks on the security forces *[see article below]*. The AA intensified fighting with the military from November 2018 to early November 2020. The conflict caused hundreds of civilian fatalities and left more than 200,000 residents displaced. Myanmar's military and the civilian government sued hundreds of Rakhine residents, including the family of AA chief Major General Tun Myat Naing, accusing them of affiliation with the group and charging them under the Counterterrorism Law.

Last year's order, signed by the military-appointed minister of home affairs, Lieutenant General Soe Htut, who is also chairman of the counterterrorism committee, said the AA was declared a terrorist group that incited "fears and threats" to civilians in northern Rakhine State, attacked the military, police and security outposts and used civilians as human shields.

Wednesday's announcement said the AA is no longer carrying out terrorist acts as the SAC works to establish nationwide peace.

The AA has held two rounds of talks with the military since late November and apparently agreed to stop the fighting.

The military seized power on Feb. 1 and has detained more than 2,000 people, including President U Win Myint, State Counselor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, ministers, activists and peaceful protesters opposing the regime.

More than 60, many of them young, were killed during police and military crackdowns on peaceful anti-regime protests nationwide since last month.

The Irrawaddy

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<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-military-regime-removes-arakan-army-list-terrorist-groups.html>

2020: Myanmar Govt Declares Arakan Army a Terrorist Group

The Myanmar government declared the Arakan Army (AA) ethnic armed group to be a terrorist group and an unlawful association on Monday, saying the AA's actions pose risks to the public and disrupt law and order, peace and the stability of the country. The AA is currently in an active conflict with the Myanmar military in western Myanmar.

According to the order issued Monday, President U Win Myint has declared that the actions and objectives of the AA, its political wing the United League of Arakan (ULA) and affiliated groups and individuals "have constituted a danger to law and order, peace and stability of the country and public peace" and are unlawful under Section 15 (2) of the Unlawful Associations Act. The order was signed by Minister of Home Affairs Lieutenant General Soe Htut, who also serves as chairman of the Central Committee for Counterterrorism.

Lt-Gen Soe Htut also signed an order declaring the ULA and AA to be terrorist groups that have incited "fears and threats to local people in northern Rakhine State," organized attacks against the military, police and security outposts and used local civilians as human shields.

Military spokesman Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun told The Irrawaddy shortly after the announcement on Monday night that the government and the Myanmar military, known as the Tatmadaw, had included the AA in the peace process "but they have kept committing violent acts."

"As they keep committing foolish acts, they have been declared an unlawful association. The Tatmadaw have been urging the government to declare the group as such and now the government has. This measure should be in place," he said.

Since 2012, Myanmar's various ethnic armed groups fighting for equality and self-determination have been in peace talks with the government. Half of the country's 20-some non-state armed groups have signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement and are moving towards political dialogue to build a democratic federalist union.

The AA was also negotiating a bilateral ceasefire with the government but there have been no talks between the sides since February.

"We have to be able to distinguish between the groups, to tell which do not want to achieve peace, and tackle this issue decisively through both legal and military actions," Brig-Gen Zaw Min Tun added.

The spokesman said that anyone, including local residents in Rakhine State and journalists, will be subject to prosecution if they have communicated with the group. "The law is the same for everyone," he added.

The Central Committee for Counterterrorism also outlined a series of crimes that the AA has allegedly committed.

"They also arrested, killed and tortured village administrators, civil service staff and innocent civilians, in addition to carrying out shootings and landmine attacks in villages," the committee said,

adding that “[The AA] conducted terrorist attacks on registered vessels, airplanes and motorized vehicles” while based in the country and that their actions “have caused serious losses of public security, lives, property, important infrastructure for the public and private sector, state-owned buildings, vehicles, equipment and materials.”

Fighting between the AA and the military has intensified since November 2018, leaving nearly 130,000 people displaced in 10 townships in Rakhine State, according to figures from the Rakhine Ethnic Congress (REC) at the end of February.

Tens of thousands more are affected by the fighting in Paletwa Township, Chin State, according to the Chin State government.

REC figures show that since February, houses have been burned in at least 18 villages in Rathedaung, Buthidaung, Mrauk-U and Kyauktaw townships, allegedly due to artillery fired by the Myanmar military.

In 2019, the AA detained a Chin parliamentarian from Paletwa for more than two months and also detained two National League for Democracy members from the party’s Rakhine office and other civilians on suspicions that they were spies for the military.

The government and military also arrested and sued hundreds of locals in Rakhine, including the family members of AA chief Major General Tun Myat Naing, accusing them of affiliation with the AA and charging them under the Counterterrorism Law.

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• The Irrawaddy 24 March 2020:

<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-govt-declares-arakan-army-terrorist-group.html>
