Rakhine State
Needs Assessment

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Executive Summary

Rakhine is the second poorest state in Myanmar, characterized by malnutrition, low income poverty and weak infrastructure compounded by natural hazards. On top of this, Rakhine State has been characterized by a lack of peaceful cohabitation between the Buddhist and Muslim communities residing in the state. Although clashes have happened sporadically since the end of the British rule, the underlying grievances of both communities have given rise, since June 2012, to a wave of severe intercommunal violence that has contributed to the deterioration of living conditions in the state for both communities. Today, some 140,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), the vast majority of whom are Muslim, remain in camps with inadequate access to food, shelter, and livelihoods while the rest of the population in the state continues to face challenges in meeting their basic needs. If not tackled and solved appropriately, this issue is likely to have a highly disruptive effect on the country's transition towards development, peace and reconciliation.

Despite the numerous challenges facing Rakhine State, there has not yet been a systematic and comprehensive assessment that simultaneously addresses humanitarian needs and underdevelopment, conflict prevention, and reconciliation. CDNH's research helps to fill this knowledge gap through detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis of the needs of both Rakhine and Muslim communities. This report serves to inform the work of government officials, humanitarian and development and peacebuilding practitioners, as well as community-based organisations in Rakhine State.

Humanitarian Needs and Underdevelopment

- Overall, the situation faced by all residents of Rakhine State is challenging, with all communities experiencing high levels of poverty and inadequate access to livelihoods, food, and quality health and education services. These challenges are compounded by historic underspending on infrastructure and human capital.

- While all Rakhine residents face difficulties in meeting their basic needs, Muslim communities, especially those displaced by conflict, face particularly acute challenges, in large part because of their lack of citizenship. This results in a cascade of negative effects, including a lack of protection for basic rights and restrictions on freedom of movement, which inhibits adequate access to livelihoods, healthcare, and education (including higher education). Muslims were also much more likely than Rakhine to report in the questionnaires and interviews a deterioration of their conditions over the past few years.

- Inadequate access to livelihoods is a significant concern and perhaps explains low levels of satisfaction with income levels among Rakhine and Muslims. Incomes for most Rakhine and Muslims are reported to have declined in the past three years and more than 70% of Muslims surveyed in eight out of ten townships said their income was poor or very poor or that they had no income. Low levels of cash and savings mean that Rakhine State residents are extremely vulnerable to shocks in their income, whether from conflict, natural disasters, or health emergencies. Among Muslims, IDPs' fear of movement or actual movement restrictions limit income generating activities for large segments of the population, who have no or very little access to

productive lands and markets and rely almost exclusively on food assistance.

- Most of those internally displaced by conflict in Rakhine State are from the Muslim community. In addition to chronic poverty, they face a range of humanitarian needs associated with their displacement. In the past three years, the situation has deteriorated for most Muslims, many of whom face challenging conditions in IDP camps.

- Food is the main expenditure for most households in Rakhine State, and has become an increasing concern over the past three years; food shortages were cited as one of the main difficulties faced by Rakhine and Muslims in the past six months. Access to adequate food appeared especially low in Mrauk-U and Kyauktaw, in Northern Rakhine State, and among IDPs and those with little or no income.

- Second to food, access to healthcare was cited as the biggest challenge in Rakhine State. Access to healthcare services appeared especially poor in Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, Myebon, and Pauktaw. Access to healthcare is especially difficult for Muslims, who often lack access to township hospitals and must rely on station hospitals, rural heath centers, or clinics. For serious health problems or emergencies, Muslims must seek permission from the township authorities and pay for the costs of transportation, exacerbating emergency situations and contributing to a more precarious health situation. Although efforts to construct new hospitals, clinics and rural health centers have increased since 2014, government medical facilities still lack sufficiently qualified and trained staff, even in populated areas. There is also a disparity between rural and urban access to and quality of health services, with rural populations of all identity-based groups seeming more disadvantaged across all health indicators included in the survey.

- Education was reported as widely available, with a vast majority of respondents saying that some form of education is available in their ward or village, although the quality of education remains a serious concern for all populations in Rakhine State. Rakhine have near universal access to Government schools. Many Muslims support education through community schools, in part because Government schools feature few Muslim teachers. Another major concern, unique to Muslim populations, is a lack of access to higher education. Because of restrictions on movement and prohibition on being able to sit exams at Sittwe University, Muslim residents in Rakhine have not been able to attend university within or outside Rakhine State.

- Due to historic under-investment, infrastructure across Rakhine State—electricity, roads, bridges, irrigation, jetties, etc.—remains poor and underdeveloped. While acknowledging the recent small improvements in infrastructure, both Rakhine and Muslims believe that much more needs to be done.

- Although there were few significant differences across age groups and gender, low-income earners displayed lower levels of satisfaction on all indicators. Some geographical variations emerged, with respondents from Northern Rakhine State and Kyauktaw and Mrauk-U reporting higher rates of poverty and underdevelopment than those from southern townships, like Thandwe.

Conflict Prevention

- Both Rakhine and Muslim communities reported being afraid of communal violence, though Muslims were more confident than Rakhine that conflict would not reoccur, perhaps because of the large military and police presence in Rakhine State. Rakhine living in close proximity to Muslim populations reported feeling insecure, especially in Maungdaw District, where the Muslim population is a large majority. Women, especially Muslim women, feel less safe than men. Nonetheless, half the residents in Rakhine State said the security situation had improved over the past three years. There is, however, a great deal of uncertainty about security in the future.

- Both Rakhine and Muslim communities have strong expectations of the military and police and more broadly, the government to prevent violence and improve security. Communities generally do not view themselves as being able to prevent conflict.

- The vast majority of Muslims surveyed said they are willing to meet with Rakhine to prevent violence, though the vast majority of Rakhine said they are not, mostly because of a lack of trust.

- Stemming from a legacy of years of military dictatorship and state control of media, levels of trust in media outlets is low, although the Burmese language transmission of foreign radio stations remains popular. Moreover, the way information is conveyed and spread across Rakhine State serves to entrench positions and exacerbate polarization, reinforcing divisions between communities. Beyond this, both Rakhine and Muslims rely on other members of their communities for information and communities have become a significant source of rumour. The majority of both groups claimed they try to verify rumours, although Rakhine reported doing so at greater rates than Muslims.

Reconciliation

- Our findings make clear that Muslims and Rakhine have very different perceptions of one another and disparate aspirations about what the future of Rakhine State should look like. Understanding these views is essential in identifying common ground and for shifting Rakhine State toward an integrated society that will allow for peace and stability in the long-term and enable it and its people to achieve their potential.

- If Rakhine and Muslims' disparate perspectives are any indication, reconciliation is going to be extraordinarily challenging in Rakhine State. On almost all questions related to reconciliation, Muslims expressed a strong desire to develop improved relations with Rakhine, while Rakhine expressed the opposite. The overridding picture with little variation by township, gender, or age is one of a Muslim community that strongly desires to live peacefully with the Rakhine and a Rakhine community that is, on the whole, unwilling to entertain such a prospect. While this paints a picture of severe polarization, these results may provide a better reflection of social pressures on both communities to exert particular views than of genuine desire for action.

- Restrictions on movement and the increasing insularity of Rakhine and Muslim com-

munities have led to a decrease in interactions. While both Rakhine and Muslims recognize this decrease, they have different perceptions about their levels of interaction with one another. Muslims, for example, report having many friends from other religions and participating in others' religious festivals, whereas most Rakhine said they have no close friends from other religions and only rarely participate in others' festivals and celebrations. During follow-up interviews, it became apparent that this difference was less evidence of competing interpretations and more a reflection of a difference in the way both communities interpreted the question. While Muslims viewed the question as regarding their friendships prior to outbreaks of communal violence, Rakhine viewed it as regarding their current friendship levels.

- Economic interactions between Rakhine and Muslims have suffered most, with both Muslims and Rakhine reporting large decreases in interactions (though Muslims expressed much higher levels of interaction than Rakhine, both today and in the past). Despite this deterioration, some Rakhine and Muslims noted that in some places economic interactions are slowly increasing (though often with Muslims in a subservient role).

- Whereas most Muslims reported hearing from their community that people of other religions and ethnicities are "decent people," only few Rakhine reported hearing the same. Rakhine also reported hearing that they should not trust people from other religions and ethnicities at a much higher rate than Muslims. This translated into expressions of actual distrust with an overwhelming majority of Rakhine reporting that they do not trust Muslims (compared to less than half of Muslims). Again, follow up interviews shed further light on these findings. While the desire to trust on the part of Muslims may be genuine, reflecting a realisation that such trust is a perequisite for improved relations, it does not necessarily translate into trusting actions. For example, Rakhine distrust can trigger pre-emptive actions on the part of Muslims that are in turn perceived as untrusting. Many Rakhine cited the citizenship issue as being at the crux of continued distrust and communal tensions.

- A majority of Rakhine said that they do not want to live in an area where all communities can live peacefully. In contrast, a majority of Muslims said they want to live in a place where all can live peacefully. Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews broadly support the survey findings, though they reveal a more complex picture. Many Rakhine said simply that they do not want to live with Muslims, mainly because of distrust and fear of renewed conflict.

- While a large majority of Muslims expressed the desire to be involved in reconciliation initiatives, most Rakhine did not. Rakhine women viewed reconciliation initiatives more negatively than Rakhine men.

- The Union Government was selected most frequently by both Muslims and Rakhine among a list of leaders most trusted to solve communal problems. Rakhine are also relatively trusting of the Rakhine State Government and, to a lesser extent, of village administrators, the local police and the military, while Muslims trust religious leaders, international organisations, and the Union Government most.

Recommendations

The recommendations put forward in the present report come from an analysis of the survey's findings, lessons drawn from direct observations on the ground, as well as a series of consultations with the international community, government officials, scholars and experts on a range of thematic issues.

Humanitarian Assistance and Deveopment

- *Freedom of Movement*

  Restrictions on freedom of movement in Rakhine State have been an impediment to the protection to Muslims' basic rights. They have also affected the economic development and recovery in Rakhine State, as it has strongly hampered interaction between the Rakhine and the Muslim community, thus hindering employment and trade. Restrictions on the freedom of movement for foreign humanitarian and development workers have also made their work less efficient and balanced. The Union and State Governments should respect the right to freedom of movement for all citizens. Moreover, the Union and State Governments should take steps to protect the right of people to move and travel for medical or family purposes. The Union and State Governments should ensure that foreign humanitarian and development workers have necessary access in a timely manner.

- *Living Conditions and Income*

  The Union and State Governments, together with local communities and private sector should lead the design of a poverty alleviation strategy. This would aim at enhancing the work skills of labour in Rakhine State and creating job opportunities so that people do not have to become indebted in order to be able to buy food. In the short-term, while infrastructure and human capacity remains weak, the State Government could expand cash-for-work programs equally to all residents of Rakhine State, including women.

- *Expand Access to Livelihood Opportunities*

  Arguably, the best way to improve living conditions in Rakhine State is to make sure all individuals residing in the state are able to move around freely and have unobstructed access to livelihood opportunities that increase income. More specifically, the Union and State Governments should assess in greater detail the value chains in which Rakhine State has a comparative advantage over other parts of Myanmar. The State Government should work with the private sector and the international community to expand the scope and depth of vocational training available to all residents of Rakhine State, especially in the following sectors: agriculture and livestock management; farming technologies; fisheries management; textiles; IT and computer skills; and tourism. These trainings should be tailored to the geographical locations best suited to the development of such skills. For low-income residents, including those living in the IDP camps, the State Government should undertake an assessment of their skills and capabilities.

- *Savings and Loans*

  Limited savings and access to finance remain significant barriers to improved livelihoods both at the personal level and in the business sector. At the household level, the Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank should move its loan cycle forward so as to better meet the needs of farmers. In the same vein, industrial banks across Rakhine State should be encouraged to provide loans to SMEs more easily. To complement these efforts, the State Government should commission a feasibility assessment to examine the potential for an expanded microfinance market across Rakhine (access now remains quite limited). Access to loan and saving schemes should be made accessible in particular to women.

- *Continue to Develop Physical Infrastructure*

  Poor infrastructure further impedes socioeconomic development. Although considerable investments have been made in Rakhine State's transportation and road network as well as electric grid over the past two years, much greater investment is needed to lift residents out of poverty and to unblock and unleash their entrepreneurial potential. More specifically, investment in the construction of roads and bridges and in irrigation infrastructure should be continued and access to the electric grid should be further expanded. In addition, efforts to improve ports and jetties should be doubled and markets should be built where there is high demand and access is limited. It should be noted that for all physical infrastructure projects, the highest standards of transparency and accountability in the contracting and implementation processes should be upheld.

- *Need for more Development Activities and Actors*

  Development organisations should initiate and scale-up development activities that have impact on both communities in Rakhine State. This will not only counter the perception of some elements in the Rakhine community that the international community is biased in favour of the Muslim community, but will also help to meet the crucial needs of all residents in Rakhine State.

- *Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)*

  Efforts to reduce disaster risks must be systematically integrated into policies, plans and programmes for development and poverty reduction in Rakhine State.

- *Return and Relocation for Internally Displaced persons (IDPs)*

  Continued efforts to enable the return and relocation of displaced populations will be crucial for the future of Rakhine State. In consultation with communities, return should be allowed where possible. Above all, return/relocation should be voluntary. For returnees and those relocated, the Government of Myanmar and humanitarian and development actors should prioritize early recovery efforts as well as initiatives to improve acceptance within host communities. Before return or relocation takes place, shelters should be rehabilitated so that they are habitable and able to withstand heavy

rains. Given the distressing episode that displacement constituted for most affected interviewees, treatment for post-traumatic stress experienced by affected individuals of all communities should be provided free of charge.

- *Role and Rights of Women*

  Generally, women play a limited role in shaping sociopolitical life in Rakhine State. Their role should be strenghtened for a more inclusive development of Rakhine State. More specifically, women should be involved in Camp Management Committees (CMC) so that women's issues are better taken into account and are dealt with more seriously. Women should also be systematically included in decision-making processes. The Union and State Governments as well as national and international partners should work directly with local communities, especially Muslim communities, on the encouragement and improvement of girls' education. Moreover, international humanitarian partners should improve safe access to water and ensure that "women-friendly spaces" are created in villages and IDP camps, which may help to address some of the proximate causes of gender-based violence (GBV).

- *Education*

  All children, regardless of their race, faith, ethnicity or gender, should be given access to public school. Improving the quality of education for all communities is an essential component of the broader effort to improve socioeconomic development in Rakhine State as well as access to livelihoods.. Moreover, teachers should be incentivized to work in rural Rakhine as well as in Muslim villages and camps. Crucially, the Union and State Governments should reverse the restrictions that prevent many Muslim students from attending university in Sittwe and Myanmar more broadly, and ensure that they are given assistance to catch up for lost study years.

- *Food Security and Nutrition*

  A concerted effort is needed to prepare for longer-term food security, meet food shortages, and address malnutrition, especially young child malnutrition. This will improve if access to livelihoods is enhanced, as the generation of income enabled by better access to livelihoods will generally allow for better access to food. Enhanced access to livelihoods will be enabled by: (1) lifting restrictions on movement; (2) and encouraging more development activities in Rakhine State. That said, development will not solve the situation immediately and reducing the dependence on food assistance is likely to take time. In the meantime, support should continue to be provided by humanitarian partners to enable and facilitate the transition.

- *Water*

  There is an urgent need to construct new and rehabilitate existing safe water supplies (drinking water ponds) both in camps and villages, in particular for high-density zones where public health risk is higher. Moreover, monitoring household treatment solutions such as ceramic filters should be expanded and social management of water resources should be encouraged. Particular attention should be paid to areas outside

the camps, as access for villagers is apparently worse than in IDP camps.

- *Sanitation*

  Latrines should be upgraded and repaired on a regular basis in order to maintain functionality. Fostering social management of latrines should be considered a priority (phasing out payment of latrine cleaners is required). While a sufficient level of knowledge about hygiene practices has now been reached, improvement of hygiene practices and behaviour change is needed, and should be particularly reinforced in villages. Finally, cross-cutting issues should be more systematically mainstreamed in the WASH response.

- *Healthcare*

  The Union and State Governments should ensure that treatment in public health facilities is provided equally irrespective of religion, ethnicity, race, gender or citizenship. This involves equal access to heath facilities, but also equal prices for all communities and equal handling of patients. Moreover, efforts to expand and upgrade health infrastructure should be spread throughout the State. Yet, it is crucial to note that new infrastructure is not useful if there are no trained people that can staff hospitals/clinics or operate equipment. As such, capacity building is needed everywhere, in particular for doctors, nurses, and midwives. Particular attention should be paid to all health issues in Mrauk-U and Kyauktaw, as these townships rated poorly on most health indicators.

Conflict Prevention

The current policy of separating communities, designed to maintain stability has served its short-term purpose but surveys and interviews highlighted that the flip-side has been that the restoration of "normal" interactions and relationships has been hindered. Restoring interaction must be gradual, and measures must be taken to foster environments and safe spaces where this is encouraged to happen.

- *Citizenship*

  More than any feature of Rakhine State today, both communities view the citizenship issue as the main cause of conflict and tensions. The longer the situation remains unresolved, the more difficult it will be to ensure that Rakhine State enjoys a future that is both stable and peaceful—a precondition to sustainable development for the state. As such, the rights of all citizens must be respected and protected without discrimination. With regards to the non-Kaman Muslims, it is crucial that the Union Government facilitates a common understanding among all parties to recognize that a compromise solution must be found when looking at the eligibility of the non-Kaman Muslims for citizenship, while recognizing the fears that lie behind the positions. For those not granted citizenship, the Union Government, along with local communities, must respect Myanmar law and the rights afforded to all human beings under Myanmar's international human rights obligations.

- *Security*

  When responding to communal violence in Rakhine State, an admittedly difficult environment, the Union and State Governments must ensure first and foremost that the security and human rights of all people are respected and protected. Given the reported feeling of fear of communal violence and insecurity from all residents in Rakhine State, the capacity and the capability of the security personnel needs to be enhanced, especially in public areas (schools, hospitals). This will notably enhance Muslims' access to these areas and help to reduce Rakhine fears. The security forces as the public face of the Union and State Governments must be seen as impartial and fair, acting without bias. Particular care should be taken in their interactions with women and children.

- *Rule of Law*

  Strengthening the rule of law will contribute to political stability and social harmony, paving the way for the prevention of further conflict. The authorities should thus be encouraged to adhere to due legal process and international human rights norms. Human rights are universal values that must be guaranteed irrespective of race, religion, ethnicity, gender or citizenship considerations. The Union and State Governments should take firm action against any group, individual, institution or organisation inciting or instigating hatred, conflict or violence on the basis of race, religion, language, ethnicity, gender or culture.

- *Other Types of Engagement Beyond Security*

  Curbing extremism while promoting moderate discourses is essential. To that end, putting in place repressive and punitive measures will not be sufficient, if not totally counter-productive. At the same time as extremist voices are monitored, moderate ones should be promoted to show that an alternative is not only possible, but also desirable. Awareness raising and empowerment are key at the grassroots level to making conflict prevention measures more effective and sustainable. As such, building the capacity of local organisations and individuals to work in their own communities and support them to develop initiatives that address intercommunal violence will be a useful step.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation between Rakhine and Muslim communities will be a long-term endeavor, requiring changes in mindsets that have hardened since 2012. Efforts are likely to be particularly challenging prior to the 2015 general elections as there will be little political will to address such a divisive issue. Moreover, any and all reconciliation efforts must be calibrated with conflict prevention efforts, so that short-term conflict prevention, through a separation of Rakhine and Muslim communities, for example, does not impede national reconciliation.

In addition to resolving long-standing citizenship issues and travel restrictions, it is critical to encourage informal engagement, and broaden and deepen dialogue to promote a peaceful and

stable Rakhine in the future. Crucially, it should be acknowledged that communities cannot be "forced" to reconcile. Such a process should naturally emanate from the grassroots, and, if it is to be sustainable, should be voluntary. Yet, at the same time, government and leaders should facilitate this change in behaviour and mindest, through clear messaging from the top. Some segments of both communities do not seem ripe for reconciliation at this time. Instead of initiating artificial processes of reconciliation in these segments, the focus should be on changing mindsets, notably through civic education. This messaging also has to be reinforced through a "zero tolerance" policy.

Additional Recommendations: Transparency and Accountability

In the eyes of the residents of Rakhine State, a lack of transparency, ranging from government contracting to the citizenship verification process, has created distrust of the government and between communities. The Union and State Governments should be more proactive in explaining their policies to local communities.

Rakhine State Map

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INTRODUCTION

In order to understand the current perspectives and needs of Rakhine State's residents, it is crucial to understand the context. While it is beyond the scope of this introduction to offer a full and detailed contextual analysis, we offer insights into recent conflict in Rakhine State through an examination of the history and grievances of both the Rakhine and Muslim communities. These grievances have shaped contemporary perceptions of basic needs, development, conflict prevention, and reconciliation.

Physical and Demographic Context

Rakhine State is Myanmar's westernmost state, with a long coastline along the Bay of Bengal to the west, and a shorter border with the Chittagong division of Bangladesh to the northwest. It shares internal borders with Chin State in the north and Magwe, Bago and Ayeyarwady Regions in the east. Rakhine is separated from the rest of the country by a chain of mountains, the Rakhine Yoma, which rises up to 3,000 feet and extends to Chin State. Communications between Rakhine State and the rest of the country are poor, with only three roads connecting the state to its neighbors: Magway to Ann, Pyay to Toungup, and Yegyi to Gwa. Rakhine State is divided into 5 districts and 17 townships. From north to south, these districts are: Maungdaw District (Maungdaw and Buthidaung Townships), Sittwe District (Sittwe, Ponnagyun, Pauktaw and Rathedaung Townships), Mrauk-U District (Mrauk-U, Kyauktaw, Minbya and Myebon Townships), Kyaukphyu District (Kyaukphyu, Ramree, Munaung and Ann Townships) and Thandwe District (Thandwe, Toungup and Gwa Townships). Apart from Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine State, the population is predominantly rural.

Rakhine State is ethnically and religiously diverse. The largest group in the state is ethnic Rakhine, who are Buddhist, speak a Burmese dialect, and account for about 60% of the 3.19 million total population.[1] Rakhine State is inhabited by a sizeable Muslim population, which accounts for 30% of the population of the state and comprises two main groups: the Kaman Muslims, who predominantly live in the southern part of the state and are considered indigenous and therefore formally recognized by the Government of Myanmar as one of the 135 official ethnic nationalities; and the "Non-Kaman Muslims",[2] who account for the majority of the Muslim community in Rakhine and are not recognized as an official ethnic group by

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[1] It should be noted, however, that the figure of the total population of the state comes from the provisional results of the 2014 census and that given the sensitivity and complexity of the political situation on the ground, the detailed breakdowns along religious and ethnic lines will not be available before 2016. Furthermore, the majority of the Muslim population of Rakhine was not taken into account since it refused to participate due to the name issue.

[2] The choice of terms to name groups carries strong value judgments in Myanmar. The authors have decided to use the terms "ethnic Rakhine," "non-Kaman Muslims" to define and refer to the two main communities in Rakhine State. This reference to the religion shared by the latter community does not imply that the authors consider the conflict as being religious in nature. Rather, it stems from a recognition that the use of certain terms to define the Muslim population is not neutral and carries with them the idea of acceptance or rejection of their roots in Myanmar. In the same vein, the use of the term "ethnic Rakhine" should not be interpreted as the view that the Muslims are necessarily not from Rakhine State. It should also be noted that, while the paper uses the terms Myanmar and Rakhine State—which have been officialized in 1989—when referring to historical episodes, the authors resort to their ancient appellations, respectively Burma and Arakan.

the Myanmar authorities. The Chin (Buddhist, Christian or animist), a small Bamar population and a range of other minorities, including the Shan, the Dinet, the Khami, the Maramargyi and the Mro account for the remaining 10% of the population.

Rakhine State can be divided into three blocks: in Maungdaw District in Northern Rakhine State, the Muslim population represents the majority (over 90%); In Sittwe and Mrauk-U districts in Central Rakhine State, the population is more mixed, with a Buddhist Rakhine majority, but also a significant minority Muslim population (15-20% outside of Sittwe Township and higher within Sittwe); finally, in Southern Rakhine, in Kyaukphyu and Thandwe Districts, the Muslim population is smaller and primarily Kaman.

A Brief History of the Arakan Kingdom and Rakhine State

Disconnected from the rest of Myanmar by an imposing chain of mountains, Rakhine State has long enjoyed either a separate rule or a degree of autonomy from both the Burmese and colonial central authorities.

Over four periods dating from BC 3000, independent kingdoms flourished in what is now Rakhine State. The "golden age" for Rakhine was the Mrauk-U period, which began in 1430 with the establishment of the Arakan Kingdom with Mrauk-U as its capital. Originally a tributary to the Sultan of Bengal, it gained independence in 1531 with the rise of the Arakanese King Man Pa. Considered the founding father of Arakan, King Man Pa defended the state against Burmese and Portuguese invasions after leading a successful campaign against southeastern Bengal in which he conquered Chittagong. Under his influence, the Arakan Kingdom grew from a small agrarian state with its center in Kaladan Valley to a considerable regional power. That position of influence across the northern coasts of the Bay of Bengal lasted until the early 17th century.

A palace coup in 1638 ushered in a period of instability and decline in the Arakanese Kingdom which would later culminate in a civil war at the end of the 17th century and a loss of control over southeastern Bengal.[3] Arakan was invaded by the Burmese King Bodawphaya in 1784 and, subsequently, the famous Mahamuni statue—which, according to local tradition, was modeled during a visit of Buddha himself into northern Arakan—was taken to Mandalay.[4] This attempt to control Arakan and limit its autonomy was the first of many by the ethnic Bamar, a theme that continues to influence Rakhine perceptions to this day. Although this humiliation helped to bring Rakhine into the Burmese Kingdom, it was never successfully incorporated into Burma Proper.

The first Anglo-Burmese War (1824-26) resulted in the annexation of Arakan, which paved the way for its incorporation into British India. The lifting of immigration restrictions fostered migration of Muslim labourers from the subcontinent to Arakan. Even before British annexation, however, some Muslims lived within Arakan as the boundaries between Northern Arakan and Bengal were relatively porous. With the influx of labour from the Indian subcontinent, the British Raj built a powerful economy, but the modification of the delicate

[3] Van Galen, S. E. A. (2008) Arakan and Bengal: The rise and decline of the Mrauk U kingdom (Burma) from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century AD. Doctoral thesis. Universiteit leiden. 176-203.
[4] Leider, J. (2011). "Rediscovering Arakan: Studying cultural change on an Asian." Available at: http://www.iias.nl/iiasn/25/theme/25T2.html.

ethno-religious balance triggered resentment among Rakhine Buddhists.

In 1948, Arakan was incorporated into the newly independent Union of Burma, though Rakhine residents continued to be frustrated by Bamar attempts to dominate local affairs. Although the 1974 Constitution enacted by General Ne Win recognized a separate Rakhine State along with 13 other states and regions, true power was perceived as lying in the hands of the Bamar-dominated central government. Following the crackdown of student protestors in 1988, and the 1990 elections which were subsequently invalidated, Rakhine (and other parts of Myanmar) were increasingly militarized and greater Bamar control was exerted.

In 2008, Myanmar adopted a new Constitution through a referendum. Like the 1974 Constitution, the 2008 Constitution recognized Rakhine State as having the same characteristics of internal administration as six other ethnic states. However, some ethnic leaders in Rakhine and elsewhere viewed the Constitution as entrenching Bamar power and authority over the seven ethnic states and remain dissatisfied with the central management of local affairs stipulated by the Constitution.

Inter-communal Relations and Conflict in Rakhine

Rakhine State has historically been at the crossroads of the Muslim and Buddhist worlds in Asia. This has played a considerable role in shaping the Rakhine identity, formed in reaction to a perception of two parallel pressures: the Bamar Buddhist majority on one side trying to control Arakan, integrating it into its broader orbit and threatening the Rakhine identity by not recognizing the specificity of Rakhine culture and history, and the Muslim minority on the other side, perceived as a threat to Rakhine culture, livelihoods and personal security.

Though the foundation for friction between Rakhine and Muslims was laid with an influx of Muslim labourers after Arakan was annexed by the British, tensions between the Muslims and the Arakanese grew during the Second World War with most Muslims supporting the British and most Arakanese backing the Japanese. Massacres were reported on both sides in 1942-43. Among the episodes of conflict between the two groups, the Rakhine community still refers to the 1942 episode as the worst outbreak of violence.

In the aftermath of the Second World War a Muslim rebellion flared in Arakan with the goal of creating an autonomous Muslim territory. The rebellion was defeated, though the creation of a Mayu Frontier Administration in Northern Rakhine State in 1961—governed from Rangoon instead of Arakanese-dominated Sittwe—contributed to Rakhine perceptions of outside domination and control by the Bamar as well as fears that Rakhine territory would be lost to Muslims. The Mayu Frontier Administration was quickly dissolved after the 1962 coup led by General Ne Win.

Perceptions that Muslims sought to secede from Northern Rakhine State were exacerbated by the proposed creation of a self-administered area comparable to the Mayu Frontier Administration in the mid-1970s, though this was never approved. Meanwhile, with conflict along the periphery, the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) grew concerned about the fracturing of the Union and thus viewed the Muslim community as a suspect faction. From 1977 onwards, the BSPP launched a countrywide operation aimed at preventing illegal immigration—the Naga-Min Campaign. The operation resulted in the expulsion of around 200,000 Muslims

to Bangladesh. Although pressure from the Government of Bangladesh triggered the return of the majority of these Muslims to Rakhine State in 1978, they were never properly reintegrated and most never acquired citizenship documentation. The return of these Muslims to Burma was seen by the Rakhine as a diplomatic failure by the Government of Burma. This event profoundly shaped Rakhine public perceptions against these so-called "migrants." Today Rakhine still refer to a diplomatic cable by the then British Ambassador in Rangoon, Mr. O'Brien, who citing the then Bangladeshi Ambassador to Rangoon, Mr. Kaiser, wrote in 1975: "He (Mr. Kaiser) admitted that they were upward of ½ million Bangalee trespassers in Arakan whom the Burmese had some right to eject."[5]

Aside from the Muslims repatriated from Bangladesh in 1978, many Muslims living in Myanmar held National Registration Cards (NRCs) from 1951 until the early 1980s. Although NRCs were not considered conclusive proof of citizenship, in practice NRC holders were treated as citizens. A new citizenship law, issued in 1982 and still in effect today, was more restrictive than its predecessor, creating three paths to citizenship: by birth as a member of one of 135 recognized ethnic groups; as an associate citizen for those who had applied for citizenship under the previous 1948 law, but whose status had not yet been determined; and by naturalization through proof of residence prior to 1948. The Kaman, a minority with longstanding roots in what is now Myanmar, was the only Muslim community recognized as an indigenous ethnic group (and, as a result are entitled to citizenship by birth).[6] A citizenship inspection process was implemented in 1989, and people meeting the criteria of the 1982 Law saw their NRCs replaced by new Citizenship Scrutiny Cards (CSCs). Most Muslims in Rakhine State abandoned their NRCs, but were never provided with CSCs, thereby rendering them stateless. From 1995 onwards, the government started to provide Muslims (and others in Myanmar who did not have identity documents) with Temporary Registration Cards (TRCs), which are also known as "white cards." TRCs do not confer citizenship status to the holder and do not award the same rights as those held by full or naturalized citizens. Although these cards were supposed to be temporary, many Muslims have held these cards for decades, although the government recently cancelled TRCs (see below).

Between the late 1990s and 2008 there were sporadic clashes between Rakhine and Muslim communities in Rakhine State. In February 2001, for example, riots broke out in the capital of Rakhine State, Sittwe, and extended to Maungdaw Township in Northern Rakhine State. There were further clashes between Rakhine and Muslim students at Sittwe University in 2004.

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[5] H. of C. Talk with Mr. K.M. Kaiser, Bangladesh Ambassador in Rangoon. 25 December 1975.

[6] Burma Citizenship Law. (Pyithu Hluttaw Law No. 4 of 1982). Chapter II. Citizenship : « Article 4. The Council of State may decide whether any ethnic group is national or not. Article 5. Every national and every person born of parents, both of whom are nationals are citizens by birth. Article 6. A person who is already a citizen on the date this Law cones into force is a citizen. Action, however shall be taken under section 18 for infringement of the provision of that section. Article 7. The following persons born in or outside the State are also citizens: (a) persons born of parents, both of whom are citizens ;(b) persons born of parents, one of whom is a citizen and the other an associate citizen; (c) persons born of parents, one of whom and the other a naturalized citizen; (d) persons born of parents one of whom is (i) a citizen; or (ii) an associate citizen; or (iii) a naturalized citizen; and the other is born of parents, both of whom are associate citizens; (e) persons born of parents, one of whom is (i) a citizen; or (ii) an associate citizen; or (iii) a naturalized citizen; and the other is born of parents, both of whom are naturalized citizens; (f) persons born of parents one of whom is (i) a citizen; or (ii) an associate citizen; or (iii) a naturalized citizen; and the other is born of parents, one of whom is an associate citizen and the other a naturalized citizen.8. (a) The Council of State may, in the interest of the State confer on any person citizenship or associate citizenship or naturalized citizenship. (b) The Council of State may, in the interest of the State revoke the citizenship or associate citizenship or naturalized citizenship of any person except a citizen by birth. » Available online at http://www.ibiblio.org/obl/docs/Citizenship%20Law.htm.

In 2010, Myanmar held elections for the first time under the 2008 Constitution. While the Rakhine National Development Party (RNDP) became the second largest ethnic bloc in the Union Parliament and won a plurality in the Rakhine State Parliament, ethnic Rakhine view the elections as deeply flawed. On the one hand, there were widespread allegations of fraud and intimidation against supporters of Rakhine parties by the government-aligned Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP). On the other hand, Muslim temporary certificate holders were allowed to vote under the election laws issued in March 2010. This delegitimized the elections in the eyes of the Rakhine because they do not consider Muslims especially Muslim TRC holders to be legitimate voters. Additionally, allowing TRC holders to vote was perceived as a deliberate strategy by the USDP to prevent the RNDP from further dominating local politics.

Widespread communal violence between Rakhine Buddhists and non-Kaman Muslims, and to a lesser extent Kaman Muslims, erupted across Rakhine State in June 2012. Shortly after the violence began, a state of emergency was declared and additional troops were deployed to conflict-affected areas. Tensions simmered, however, and another seemingly more organized wave of violence broke out in October 2012.[7] The violence was widespread, affecting large swathes of Rakhine State and both Muslim and Rakhine communities. Further conflict erupted between Rakhine and Kaman Muslims in Thandwe Township in October 2013 and in Maungdaw in January 2014. In March 2014, Rakhine rioters, upset by the perceived bias of international humanitarian and development assistance in favor of Muslims, ransacked the offices of international organisations and forced the evacuation of aid workers. In addition to the physical damage between 2012 and 2014—hundreds were killed or injured, tens of thousands displaced, and thousands of buildings were destroyed—recurrent clashes increased tension and deepened distrust between Rakhine and Muslims, between Rakhine and the government at both levels, and between Rakhine and the international community.

Although the immediate trigger for the 2012 violence was the alleged rape and murder of a Rakhine woman by Muslim men and retaliatory attacks by Rakhine on Muslims, it has deeper roots in historical and contemporary grievances, including the social and economic marginalization of Rakhine State within Myanmar, perceptions among ethnic Rakhine of the need to protect Rakhine land and Buddhist culture from a Muslim influx, and persistent perceived and actual political and socioeconomic discrimination against Muslim communities.

Rakhine and Muslim Grievances: Understanding Inter-communal Tensions

Rakhine Grievances

Rakhine grievances against other communities were initially racial rather than religious in nature. As previsouly outlined, although both Rakhine and Bamar shared the same Theravada Buddhist affiliation, ethnic Rakhine were primarily resentful for annihilating Arakan's golden era in the 18th Century. This narrative of "Bamar domination" over Rakhine is a theme that continues to influence Rakhine perceptions to this day and which has fed not only Rakhine grievances towards the central government, but also the feelings of paranoia and threatened identity amongst the Rakhine. The fact that Rakhine State is one of the poorest areas of a very

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[7] International Crisis group (ICG). (2014). "Myanmar: The Politics of Rakhine State". Asia Report. N°261. 8.

poor country adds to this deep-rooted feeling of economic exclusion. Indeed, half a million Rakhine people have already left Rakhine State due to poor economic situation and the lack of job opportunities.

In parallel, in part a response to historic Muslim demands for an autonomous region in Northern Rakhine in the 1950s, many Rakhine continue to fear that Muslims wish to take over Rakhine land and dominate the Rakhine race. They depict the higher birthrates among Muslims as evidence of an ever-increasing demand for land, and a threat to Rakhine economic livelihoods. The fact that Rakhine State is one of the poorest areas of a very poor country has added to the sense of economic pressure. Such were the levels of perceived threat of foreign domination that some Rakhine appeared to have decided that if the government would not take any action against those they consider to be illegal migrants, then they would have to fight themselves.

Following the outbreak of communal violence in 2012-13, Rakhine grievances took on a religious nature, as Buddhist nationalist movements such as 969 and Ma-Ba-Tha entered the scene. The conviction that the growth of the Muslim population would jeopardize Rakhine Buddhist culture began to strengthen. Rakhine Buddhists began to mobilize against the Muslim community, depicting Rakhine State as the western gate of Buddhist Myanmar, citing the need to defend the country against the looming invasion of Muslims from adjacent Bangladesh. Anti-Muslim discourses developed around the idea of shielding the "Amyo, Barthar, Thartana" triad (race, language and religion), in which religion is synonymous with Buddhism.[8] Rakhine political parties resorted to nationalism, recalling the rich past of the Arakanese Kingdom that dominated the area until locally sympathetic historians narrated the double humiliation from the Bamar in the 18th century and subsequently Muslims in the 19th and 20th centuries.

As a result of many recurring episodes of segregation and prosecution, Muslims were unable to—or chose not to—assimilate to Myanmar society, further compounding the resentment of Rakhine who have used this as a justification that Muslims do not belong to Rakhine land. In interviews, a sizeable number of Rakhine accused the Muslim community of being disrespectful towards the country. In particular, Muslims were blamed for being offensive against security forces in the areas where they account for the majority, and for being insolent towards Myanmar itself by refusing to sing the national anthem or pay respect to the national flag.

Muslim Grievances in Rakhine State

Muslim grievances have also developed over time. It was only in the 1990s that restrictions on movement began to be implemented, and only in 2012 that these became severe. The debate around the term "Rohingya" is also a relatively recent affair, as Muslims did not themselves claim the title until after Myanmar's independence.

Today, Muslim communities in Rakhine state denounce their gradual marginalization from social and political life and the denial of full citizenship, citing it as the major barrier to improvements in their health, education, livelihoods and well-being. Their shared grievances have contributed to a strenghtened collective identity, evidenced by the recent endorsement

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8 Sai Latt (2012). "The Arakan Conflict and Ethnic Harmony In Burma". Available at : http://burmanationalnews. org/burma/index.php?option=com_ content&view=article&id=2464:news-headlines-july-22-2012&catid=48: news-headlines.

of the name "Rohingya" by the majority of the non-Kaman Muslim population in Rakhine State. A cohesive reaction to the predicament they are facing, the attachment to the name gives their cause a collective appeal.

Many Muslims inside the country see themselves as intimately tied to Myanmar. They highlight the presence of their older relatives in Rakhine State for generations and their acceptance of local languages and culture. Muslims—especially those who have a long history in Rakhine—reject the term "Bengali" mainly because of the concern that accepting the term might be viewed as validating the alleged accusation that they are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. While this accusation is made only by a handful of Rakhine extremists, to make matters worse, some activists within the Muslim community—especially after the outbreak of violence in 2012—have constructed it as if the accusation is propagated by the Rakhine community as a whole. Furthermore, pior to 2012, the term "Rohingya" was reportedly not an issue to the extent it is today for most Muslims. After the outbreak of violence in 2012, however, followed by the confinement of Muslims in specific areas, a large majority came to accept the term, which provided a sense of Muslim cohesion in misery and gave their struggle a broader collective appeal.

Very few non-Kaman Muslims have voluntarily identified as Bengali as the ongoing citizenship verification process requires. Due to the increasing marginalization they are facing and to the poor economic situation in Rakhine State, a growing number of Muslims are fleeing the country. According to UNHCR, since mid-2012, as many as 130,000 Muslims have left from Myanmar by boat, many hoping to reach Malaysia.[9]

Along with extreme frustration with their current situation, many Muslims express a sense of powerlessness to affect change. More than any other stakeholders, the non-Kaman Muslims tend to view the union level government as responsible for their plight, which they often blame for inciting, or at least being complicit in the wave of communal violence in 2012, failing to provide them with adequate security, allowing impunity of Rakhine crimes, and continuing to restrict their mobility and access to livelihoods, health, and education. Finally, Muslims tend to see international use of the term as an important source of legitimacy and support for their rights.

The Role of the Government

The Union Government has played a complex role in Rakhine State since independence in 1948, and both Rakhine and Muslims blame the government more than any other actor for continued conflict as well as for low levels of development.

After independence from the British, Myanmar's 1948-1962 parliamentary government recognized the Rohingya as citizens. Prime Minister U Nu's reference to the group by the name "Rohingya" is still held up today by Muslim communities in Rakhine State as evidence of their belonging to the country. During the parliamentary period, Muslim communities in Rakhine were issued government identification cards and official documents and enjoyed all the benefits of citizenship. The national public radio even broadcast several episodes a week in their local language, although this was interpreted by some observers as an opportunistic attempt by the ruling party to gain votes from the Muslim population. Regardless of political motiva-

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[9] RFA. August 2015. Available at: http://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/rohingya-boat-people-held-at-refugee-camp-in-southern-thailand-05182015162819.html.

tions, until the 1950s, cabinet ministers at the Union level comprised of both citizens from Indian descent and Muslim citizens.

The status of Muslims in Rakhine State changed following the beginning of General Ne Win's military rule in 1962. A distinction between the concept of nationality and citizenship was increasingly made, one that continues to affect communities today. The 1982 Citizenship Law defines full citizens as members of ethnic groups that had permanently settled within the boundaries of modern-day Myanmar prior to 1823. Under this law, members of groups later listed as taingyinthar, "ethnic nationalities," are entitled to a number of privileges beyond those granted to citizens of non-listed groups. The status of "ethnic nationality" under the 2008 Constitution allows groups to enjoy particular legal rights, including the right to a self-administered zone and special parliamentary representation. This distinction between nationality and citizenship is central to today's debate in Rakhine State, particularly regarding the naming of non-Kaman Muslims. Many Rakhine believe that identification under the name 'Rohingya' would lead to ethnic nationality status beyond basic citizenship rights.

While the 1982 Citizenship Law introduced the distinction between indigenous nationalities and foreign citizens, this was further exacerbated by the 2008 Constitution. Its clear discrepancy between the rights enjoyed by different ethnic groups triggered tensions between both communities.

Today, some Rakhine continue to believe that the Union Government's ultimate objective is to exert control over Rakhine State and to promote Bamar over Rakhine interests. Some Rakhine activists distrust the government and blame it for: enacting post-independence constitutions that favor the Bamar over minority ethnic groups; failing to enforce the 1982 Citizenship Law; playing politics with the Muslims in Rakhine, for example by granting non-citizen TRC holders the right to vote in 2010; neglecting socioeconomic development of Rakhine State for decades; and a divide-and-rule approach that created animosity between Rakhine and Muslims where it did not previously exist (many Rakhine believe, for example, that the government incited violence in Rakhine as a pretext to exert further control). In parallel, many Muslims blame the government for its divide-and-rule approach as well as for withholding citizenship (and the rights it confers) from even those Muslims that meet the necessary criteria and for failing to provide basic security and permitting widespread abuses against Muslims with impunity.

Finally, the Government of Myanmar also has its own stance on the situation in Rakhine State. Both the Union and State Governemnts claim that they inherited the communal problems from previous governments who have not managed to appropriately address the situation in Rakhine. The Union and State Governments further maintain that they have endeavored to improve the situation in Rakhine State more than any previous administration. In terms of maintaining law and order, the Union and State Governments took punitive actions against both Rakhine and Muslim who broke the law. As a matter of fact, senior government officials argue that the overall situation in 2014 was better than it was in 2013 which in turn was better than 2012, thereby pointing to a gradual improvement in restoring order and stability in Rakhine State. In addition, these senior officials also noted that the citizenship issue has to be resolved first before dealing with other issues affecting Rakhine State. The term officially recognized by the Union and State Governments is "Bangali", although they accept that not all Muslims are illegal immigrants.[10]

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[10] Speech from the previous Chief Minister Maung Maung Ohn. 9 October 2014.

Rakhine State Today

Tensions continue to simmer in Rakhine State today. Some 140,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), the majority of whom are Muslim, remain in camps with inadequate access to food, shelter, and livelihoods. Muslims contend with significant restrictions on their freedom of movement, which limits their access to livelihoods and impedes interactions between Rakhine and Muslims communities. Non-Muslims who were directly affected by communal violence continue to face challenges in meeting their basic needs. Beyond those directly affected, the economy is weak and Rakhine State has low levels of socioeconomic development.

Since the violence of 2012 and 2013, rhetoric has been scaled up and positions on both sides have become more entrenched. The situation has been exacerbated by the recent intensification of the internationalization of Rakhine State issues. International media, donors, and NGOs tend to focus on the Muslim narrative, failing to understand the Rakhine perspective and fueling Rakhine suspicions of international engagement in Rakhine. Rakhine believe that there is a strong bias in favor of Muslims in the international media and among international organisations and NGOs. They bemoan the seemingly disproportionate flow of humanitarian and development assistance to Muslims and are upset by the lack of international attention for the poor socioeconomic situation of ethnic Rakhine.

Recent communal violence has also led to a deterioration of the already poor socioeconomic situation in Rakhine. Rakhine State currently ranks as the second worst performing State or Region in terms of overall poverty,[11] with a poverty rate of 78% against 38% nationally, and fares poorly on most social development indicators including malnutrition, low education levels, poor health, and susceptibility to natural hazards.

Lingering distrust stemming from recent violence is likely to increase as the elections approach, particularly vis-à-vis the political rights of TRC holders. The Government of Myanmar embarked on a pilot citizenship verification exercise in June 2014, whereby non-Kaman TRC holders in Myebon Township could apply for citizenship provided that they agreed to be identified as "Bengali," instead of "Rohingya." The first round of the process granted full citizenship to 40 TRC holders and naturalized citizenship to 169 TRC holders out of 1,094 applicants. Even these small numbers generated strong Rakhine protests, forcing the government to postpone verification of the remaining applicants. The process was restarted across all of Rakhine State in January 2015, but interest in the process has remained low, with only small numbers of non-Kaman Muslims willing to self-identify as "Bengali".

In September 2014, the Union Hluttaw (Parliament) amended the Political Party Registration Law to bar all TRC holders in Myanmar from serving as political party leaders or members. However, in early february 2015, a national referendum bill was approved allowing TRC holders to vote in the upcoming constitutional referendum. The referendum bill's passage was met with fierce resistance and protests from the Rakhine as well as nationalist Buddhist monks and, after just a few days, the government abruptly announced that white cards would expire on 31st March, automatically nullifying the voting rights of all TRC holders of the country for both the planned constitutional referendum and the general elections. The Constitutional Tribunal subsequently ruled that, under the 2008 Constitution, only citizens are eligible to vote in the proposed constitutional referendum and in the general elections. That said, it is not clear what will transpire before the elections and many in the Rakhine community remain

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[11] Integrated Household living Condition Survey (2009-10).

convinced that the government will manipulate the elections so as to prevent the Rakhine from increasing their power and autonomy.[12] Beginning in June 2015, the State's Immigration and Population Department began issuing new identification cards, the "turquoise cards," formally called "identity card for national verification" in 14 townships, to the Muslims who had already returned their white cards to the government. While authorities claim these new cards create a path to citizenship for the Muslim community, many Muslims fear they will instead leave them further from citizenship viewing these new cards as disqualifying their status of citizenship by birth.

The conflict that erupted in 2012 exacerbated existing grievances and intensified distrust between Rakhine and Muslims as well as between each community and the government. The sensitive nature of the current situation has made it difficult to address underlying basic, development, conflict prevention, and reconciliation needs. The repercussions of the latest bouts of communal violence in 2012—and the manner in which underlying grievances are addressed—will determine whether Rakhine State can develop peacefully or whether it will succumb to further violence. This report aims to offer insights into the needs of both communities and identify opportunities to promote sustainable and peaceful development in Rakhine State.

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[12] In-depth Interview. 12 July 2015. Sittwe Township.

METHODOLOGY

SECTION - 2

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

Despite the numerous challenges facing Rakhine State, there has not yet been a systematic and comprehensive assessment that simultaneously addresses humanitarian needs, under development, conflict prevention, and reconciliation. Assessments to date have been either limited in scope to one or a few townships or to a specific sector, such as health or education.[13] CDNH's research helps to fill this knowledge gap through detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis of the needs of both Rakhine and (Kaman and non-Kaman) Muslim communities. This report serves to inform the work of government officials, humanitarian, peacebuilding and development practitioners, and community-based organisations in Rakhine State.

Structure and Scope

The assessment is structured around three issues across Rakhine State: humanitarian needs and underdevelopment, conflict prevention, and reconciliation.

The section on humanitarian needs and underdevelopment encompasses humanitarian needs as well as basic and development needs. This includes the structures and resources necessary for basic survival and for improved socioeconomic development over the medium- to long-term. The research focuses primarily on the following components: basic rights and physical security; shelter and return; food and nutrition; health and sanitation; infrastructure (roads, electricity, markets, ports); education; livelihoods (including vocational training) and access to finance.

Conflict prevention refers to measures aimed at avoiding violence in the short-term and at addressing triggers of conflict.[14] The conflict prevention portion of the assessment, which will draw heavily upon focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews, focuses on issues such as: effect of conflict on Rakhines and Muslims; physical security and the role of security forces; community conflict prevention mechanisms (monitoring, community watches, etc.); coordination between local communities and security officials; and triggers for conflict.

Finally, we use reconciliation to refer to efforts to improve long-term relations between conflict-affected communities. While reconciliation can serve as a conflict prevention tool, it is

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[13] The UN's cluster system, for example, regularly reports on the basic humanitarian needs (food, shelter, etc.) for displaced populations, but, by design, their analyses do not examine the dynamics of conflict and reconciliation. Other humanitarian organisations have conducted detailed nutrition and malnutrition surveys on particular sectors (such as malnutrition) only in small areas where they operate, but conflict dynamics are again absent. At the other end of the spectrum, conflict analyses provide detailed information about conflict dynamics, but often gloss over the humanitarian situation or development needs. In another example, UNDP's recent local governance mapping of Rakhine State does not explicitly address conflict issues and was implemented in only small portions of four townships (Kyauktaw, Rathedaung, Thandwe, and Gwa).

[14] See, for example, "Commission from the Commission on Conflict Prevention." Commission of the European Communities. 11 April 2001. Available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2001:0211:FIN:EN:PDF.

primarily long-term in nature. The reconciliation element of the research, which also relies on FGDs and in-depth interviews, will address: ethnic Rakhine's knowledge of Islam and attitudes towards and interaction with Muslims; Muslims' knowledge of Buddhism and attitude towards and interaction with Rakhine; the identification of confidence and trust-building measures (such as improvements in access to basic rights and increased social and economic interaction through the construction of shared markets or factories).

It should be noted that in order not to inflame an already tense environment, questions specifically dealing with citizenship were not included in the written survey, although they were systematically addressed in oral in-depth interviews.

Methodology

Over the course of a month between mid-March and mid-April 2015, CDNH employed mixed quantitative and qualitative methodologies to capture the perspectives of the general populace as well as government officials, community leaders, and subject-matter experts. A survey, focus group discussions (FGDs), and in-depth interviews complement informal observations and a review of secondary research to cover ten townships across Rakhine State: Maungdaw and Buthidaung in Maungdaw District; Mrauk-U, Kyauktaw, and Myebon in Mrauk-U District; Sittwe and Pauktaw in Sittwe District; Kyaukphyu and Ramree in Kyaukphyu District; and Thandwe in Thandwe District. Follow-up interviews were conducted with the international community and government officials in Rakhine state and Yangon from April to August 2015. Finally, after the preliminary draft of the present report was completed, the research team returned to Rakhine State to crosscheck the findings highlighted by the survey results with observations on the ground.

It should be noted that this needs assessment was conducted prior to the widespread flooding

crisis across 12 of the country's 14 states and regions in July and August 2015. According to official sources, 111,568 people in Rakhine State were affected by the floods,[15] with serious consequences on living conditions. It is estimated that 125,151 houses were destroyed, and that 69 health facilities and 360 schools were damaged.[16] Moreover, the humanitarian organisation REACH reported an overall drop in household livelihood security and a weakened ability to withstand future shocks.[17] Farming communities have seen their paddy destroyed and, even if replanting, can expect well below-average yields. Some secondary productive assets such as livestock were also damaged.[18] To be sure, these floods would have had an impact on some of the answers of respondents. Regardless, most residents in Rakhine State already reported their conditions to be poor. It is likely that, despite the humanitarian efforts on the ground, their assessment of living conditions would have reportedly been worse than in April 2015. That said, the findings of the survey still shed light on the general gaps and needs that continue to affect Rakhine State.

Quantitative Research: Survey

CDNH surveyed 2,342 people across ten townships from all five districts in Rakhine State.[19] Surveys were distributed in towns and villages as well as in IDP camps; enumerators manually recorded the responses of illiterate respondents. Target villages were selected in consultation with township officials, with some villages identified specifically because of their direct experience of communal violence. In selecting survey respondents within individual wards and village tracts, we used snow-balling methods, and whenever possible quota and stratified method. Responses were collected according to the below sampling.

The survey questionnaires comprised of several sections, covering respondents' views on issues such as basic needs (food and shelter), livelihoods, health, education, infrastructure, safety and security, and communal violence and reconciliation.

Survey Sample

	Total	Buddhist	Muslim
Buthidaung	186	54	132
Kyaukphyu	269	223	46
Kyauktaw	166	64	102
Maungdaw	292	54	238
Mrauk-U	343	248	95
Myebon	197	147	50
Pauktaw	114	73	41
Ramree	181	162	19
Sittwe	380	249	131
Thandwe	214	181	33
Total	2,342	1,455	887

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[15] OCHA. MYANMAR: Floods and Cyclone Response. Multi-cluster/sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA) report (as of 03 Sep 2015). Available online at : http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/MIRA%20report_FINAL.pdf

[16] Ibid.

[17] REACH. Cyclone Komen Early Recovery Assessment, Rakhine State Kyauktaw, Ponnagyun, Mrauk-U and Minbya townships. August 2015.

[18] Ibid.

[19] CDNH employed one questionnaire with slight variations in questions for Rakhine, Muslim, and Muslim IDP respondents.

Villages, Wards, and Camps Surveyed

Township	Village	Ward	Camp
Buthidaung	• Kan Pyin (Mixed) • Maung Ni (Muslim) • Oe Thei (Muslim) • Tat Yar (Mixed) • Ka Kyet Bet (Muslim) • Say Thi Taung (Mixed) • Ywar Ma Rakhine (Rakhine) • Ywar Ma Mu Sa Lin (Muslim)		
Kyaukphyu	• Ka Nyin Taw (Rakhine) • Ku Lar Bar Taung (Rakhine) • Taung Yin* (Mixed) • Mya Kan Thar (Rakhine)	• Ah Nauk Paing* (Mixed) • Than Pan Chaung* (Mixed)	• Kyauk Ta Lone (Muslim)
Kyauktaw	• Apauk Wa* (Mixed)	• Myo Thit* (Mixed before violence, now only Rakhine)	• Khaung Doke* (Mixed)
Maungdaw	• Du Chee Yar Tan (Muslim) • Ka Nyin Tan (Mixed) • Kin Chaung (Mixed) • Maw Ya Wadi (Rakhine) • Ohn Taw (Muslim) • Ah Lel Tan Kyaw (Mixed) • Kyee Kan Pyin (Mixed) • Nyaung Chaung (Mixed) • Pan Taw Pyin (Muslim) • Bo Hmuu* (Mixed)	• Myo Ma (South) (Mixed)	
Mrauk-U	• Ahtoke Tal Ma (Rakhine) • Bu Chaung (Rakhine) • Shout Pone Kyun (Rakhine) • Pa Yein Kone (Rakhine)		• Pa Yein* (Mixed) • Yin Thei* (Mixed)
Myebon	• Kan Thar Htwat Wa* (Mixed before violence, now only Rakhine) • Ah Gu Maw (Rakhine)		• Taung Paw* (Muslim)
Pauktaw	• Sin Tet Maw (Mixed)	• Ah Nauk Pyin* (Muslim) • Ba Wan Chaung Wa Su* (Mixed before violence, now only Rakhine)	• Sin Tet Maw Camp (Muslim)

Ramree		• No. (3) Ward* (Mixed) • No. (4) Ward* (Mixed) • No. (5) Ward* (Mixed) • No. (6) Ward* (Mixed)	• Ramree Camp (Kaman)
Sittwe		• Set Yoe Kya (Rakhine) • Set Yone Su 1* (Mixed before violence, now only Rakhine) • Set Yone Su 3* (Mixed before violence, now only Rakhine)	• Thae Chaung (Mixed) • Dar Pine (Muslim) • Khaung Doke Kar (Muslim) • Say Tha Mar Gyi (Muslim) • Ohn Daw Gyi (Muslim)
Thandwe	• Kha Yan Maw (Mixed) • Lin Mu Taung* (Mixed) • Gyeik Taw* (Mixed) • Zee Hpyu Kone (Mixed) • Tha Byu Chaing* (Mixed) • Shwe Hlay* (Mixed) • Chan Pyin (Mixed) • Nga Pa Li (Rakhine)	• No. (1) Ward (Rakhine) • No. (3) Ward (Rakhine)	
*Indicates village tract or ward was directly affected by communal conflict (reported deaths, injuries, or buildings destroyed as a result of communal violence).			

The survey questionnaires comprised of several sections, covering respondents' views on issues such as basic needs (food and shelter), livelihoods, health, education, infrastructure, safety and security, and communal violence and reconciliation.

Qualitative Research: Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and In-depth Interviews and Direct Observations

To complement the quantitative survey methodology, CDNH conducted 26 FGDs and 46 in-depth interviews across all ten townships. CDNH also conducted a series of interviews in Yangon. Most experts interviewed in Yangon expressed the desire to remain anonymous and are therefore subsequently referred to as "Yangon-based experts on Rakhine issues". FGDs targeted both active and influential members of urban and rural communities and groups that might otherwise be underrepresented (such as women, youth and minorities). In-depth interviews targeted:

- Government officials: state and township-level officials focused on planning, immigration, health, and education; district, township, and village administrators; district and township police officers; and township Emergency Coordination Centres
- Community and religious leaders
- Local and international humanitarian, development, and community-based organisations.

In addition to primary research encompassing focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, CDNH conducted a literature review of secondary source documents and needs assessments covering a broad range of issues in Rakhine State.

Methodological Limitations

Quantitative and qualitative research in Rakhine State poses numerous challenges which required us to come up with additional measures to overcome them. These challenges have an impact on the quality of the data we present here as well as how we analyse this data and the recommendations we propose on the basis of this analysis. These challenges include:

1. We could not follow the random-sampling method in selecting the locations for implementing the survey (as well as some focus group discussions and in-depth interviews). While some locations were selected on the recommendation of government officials because of their knowledge of the local situation at the state and township level, these locations are relevant for our purposes. Further locations were selected precisely because they were directly affected by communal conflict in 2012 or 2013. Despite these limitations, we made sure that the research locations selected were reflective of the demographics of Rakhine State.

2. In some instances, some respondents were directly selected by the village administrator. Moreover, police, military, or other government officials were sometimes present for survey enumeration—particularly in Muslim villages and IDP camps—and may have influenced respondents' answers. However, when we considered that answers were tainted, we decided not to use them in our analysis. Enumerators also faced difficulties recruiting female respondents and, as a result, women are underrepresented, particularly among Muslim respondents. However, we conducted a number of focus-group disucssions and in-depth interviews with women.

3. CDNH was unable to completely implement its planned sampling strategy for the survey tool, resulting in shortcomings in some elements of the survey design. For example, despite plans for 51% of the sample to be women, the full sample was only 37% female because of the difficulty conducting surveys among Muslim women (while 48% of the Rakhine sample was female, only 19% of Muslim respondents were women). However, to overcome this limitation, we conducted a number of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with women. Moreover, we verified the survey data through meticulous direct observations on the ground.

4. Finally, when analyzing data using different demographic subgroups (or the responses of Muslim women, for example), the sample sizes become very small, that could result in a very large margin of error for reported results (in some cases, well over 10% with a 90% confidence interval). However, again, to overcome this limitation, we verified the survey data through meticulous direct observations on the ground.

Regardless of these limitations, the present report nonetheless provides a detailed and analytically plausible picture of the Rakhine State context, shedding light on poverty and development needs across Rakhine State as well as of citizens' and experts' views on communal conflict and reconciliation. Viewed in the context of the locations in which the survey was carried out, findings are highly applicable and serve to show ongoing trends across the State.

Humanitarian Needs and Underdevelopment

SECTION - 3

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HUMANITARIAN NEEDS AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT

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In this section, we cover humanitarian needs and underdevelopment for Rakhine and (Kaman and non-Kaman) Muslims in Rakhine State. For the purposes of this assessment, "humanitarian needs" refers to populations affected by violent conflict or natural disaster, or deprived of basic rights in a systematic manner. Underdevelopment looks at indicators such as socio-economic gaps that help account for the level of extreme poverty observed in the state. By looking at these two factors together, we are able to assess overall needs whether or not the respondent has been directly affected by conflict. This is crucial given that some basic needs of both Rakhine and Muslim communities, as well as those of some other minorities in Rakhine State unaffected by conflict, remain unmet. This section covers a broad range of issues including: overall well-being; shelter, housing and return; food and nutrition; access to basic health services and drinking water; roads and electricity; and education.

The aim of this section is to develop a shared understanding of the current situation in Rakhine State and to inform decision-making and response planning to the benefit of all residents of Rakhine State. As expounded in more detail in the recommendations, responses to the situation in Rakhine State will have to cover both humanitarian assistance and development assistance.

The present report first presents the current situation as best we understand it—with the caveat that good data on development indicators is limited—before presenting the findings from our primary research using data from the survey tool, focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and direct observations on the ground.

Introduction

Rakhine State: An Ethnic State Plagued by Extreme Poverty and Underdevelopment

There are few comprehensive studies examining the state of development in Rakhine State, especially since the outbreak of the most recent round of communal violence in 2012.[20] That said, existing reports and anecdotal evidence suggest that Rakhine State has very low levels of socioeconomic development, both in the global context and in comparison to Myanmar's other States and Regions. Over the past five decades Rakhine State's development has suffered because of Myanmar's international isolation, Rakhine's isolation within Myanmar, and the successive neglect of local development by post-independence administrations.

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[20] There are two comprehensive studies that were implemented in 2009 and 2010, both of which are cited extensively here: 1) the Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey was implemented in 2009 and 2010 by the United Nations Development Programme and is a survey covering nearly 20,000 households and 2) the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey implemented by Myanmar's Ministry of Health and Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development covering nearly 30,000 households with a focus on child and maternal health. As each of these studies are dated—and occurred before communal violence in 2012—they should be taken with a grain of salt.

According to the World Bank, Rakhine State has the highest poverty rate of all States and Regions in the country (78% of the population compared to 38% nationally).[21] Furthermore, the situation does not appear to be improving: between 2005 and 2010, when the poverty rate across Myanmar decreased from 32.1% to 25.6%, the rate in Rakhine experienced the largest increase of any State or Region.[22] In mid-2013, average monthly incomes in Rakhine were approximately 42,000 kyat (about US$500 per year), which would place the per capita income in Rakhine at less than half that of the national average.[23] The situation for those directly affected by conflict is likely even worse, especially for the Muslim communities that continue to face significant restrictions on freedom of movement, which adversely affects their access to livelihoods. High rates of poverty and low income levels in Rakhine result from a range of factors, including poor infrastructure, low levels of education, weak health indicators, and a predominantly rural population (of approximately 85%)[24] that is heavily reliant on fishing and subsistence farming.

[21] UNDP. The State of Local Governance: Trends in Rakhine. Available at: http://www.mm.undp.org/content/dam/myanmar/docs/Publications/PovRedu/Local%20Governance%20Mapping/UNDP_MM_State_of_Local_Governance_Rakhine_ENG.pdf.

[22] Ibid, pg. 16.

[23] Republic of the Union of Myanmar. "Final Report of Inquiry Commission on Sectarian Violence in Rakhine State." 8 July 2013. Pg. 27. Available at: http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/Rakhine_Commission_Report-en-red.pdf. See also United Nations Statistics Division. "Myanmar." 2015. Available at: https://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=MYANMAR.

[24] UNICEF. "Rakhine State: A Snapshot of Child Wellbeing." 2014. Available at: http://www.unicef.org/myanmar/Rakhine_State_Profile_Final.pdf. Though enumeration was highly flawed in Rakhine State, the provisional results of the 2014 census revealed similar proportions of the population living in urban and rural areas. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar. "Population and Housing Census of Myanmar 2014, Provisional Results." Department of Population, Ministry of Immigration and Population. August 2014. p. 10. Available at: http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/myanmar/drive/Census_Provisional_Results_2014_ENG.pdf.

Communal Violence as a Contributor to Poverty and Development Needs since 2012

Communal violence in 2012 exacerbated already inadequate access to basic needs and hindered development efforts. Aside from the loss of life and the destruction of property, the most visible and lasting feature of the conflict is widespread displacement. 139,310 people, the vast majority of whom are Muslims, remain displaced in Rakhine State[25] with another 277,300 in need of humanitarian assistance.[26] The successive waves of inter-communal violence also raised severe humanitarian and protection concerns that need to be addressed in both communities.[27] There is a consensus among humanitarian practitioners that ongoing tensions have prevented equal and adequate access to basic services and livelihoods opportunities.[28] Moreover, the Muslim residents of Rakhine State face significant restrictions on their freedom of movement, which further constrains their access to health, education, and other essential services.

An Overview of Poverty and Underdevelopment in Rakhine State

Shelter and housing conditions vary, with the worst conditions reported in IDP camps inhabited mostly by Muslims. Although the shelters were initially designed to be temporary, they have now been occupied through two rainy seasons and their condition has significantly

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[25] Of these 139,310 people, 116,183 are in IDP camps, 14,969 are displaced within their village of origin, while 8,158 are living with host families or in individual housing. See Mimu. 2015 Humanitarian Overview. Available at:http://www.themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/Ref_Doc_Humanitarian_Needs_Overview_2015.pdf.

[26] Mimu. 2015 Humanitarian Overview. Available at: http://www.themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/Ref_Doc_Humanitarian_Needs_Overview_2015.pdf.

[27] Mimu. 2015 Humanitarian Overview. Available at: http://www.themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/Ref_Doc_Humanitarian_Needs_Overview_2015.pdf.

[28] See Section 3 on "Development needs" for more detailed information about the impact of the conflict on livelihoods for both communities.

deteriorated. On top of that, many IDP camps are located in flood-prone areas with poor drainage and ground water filtration.

More precisely, a month after the first wave of the conflict in June 2012, the Union Ministry for Border Affairs published a shelter response plan targeting 7,110 households displaced from areas within urban Sittwe. By the end of 2012, 525 temporary shelters, covering the needs of approximately 29,000 IDPs, had been constructed (first phase of shelter construction).[29] During the second phase of construction, only 262 temporary additional shelters were constructed.[30] In 2013, following strong advocacy from humanitarian actors and donors regarding the urgency of the situation in camps, the State Government decided to scale-up shelter construction prior to the rainy season. They achieved an extremely rapid construction pace and by November 2013, temporary shelters had been constructed for 99% of all eligible IDPs across all affected townships of Rakhine State. Of the 2,843 multi-family temporary shelters, 45% were funded and constructed by the State Government.[31] Shelters were provided in the form of collective shelters, each housing eight families (8-unit buildings).[32] Despite the life-saving necessity of shelter construction in IDP camps, concerns were raised over the segregation of the two communities, believing that this could lead to a permanent divide. As a result of the dilemma, it was clarified that the shelters were designed to be temporary, and that durable solutions are to be found in the future by the government.

The temporary shelters constructed in 2013, designed to last until durable solutions could be identified, have rapidly deteriorated, explaining the very poor ratings of IDP respondents when probed about their shelter condition (see below). Against a backdrop of a lack of progress towards resolving intercommunal tensions and the continued physical separation of communities, especially in larger camps where alternative options to segregation and next steps are likely to take longer, there have been some efforts to address the shelter situation. In the first quarter of 2015, a programme of shelter repair, maintenance & improvements began in a few townships, including Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, and Minbya. Two shelter options were outlined: 1) repair, maintenance and upgrading of temporary shelters; and 2) construction of individual shelters, where and when possible. In April 2015, the State Government provided money to households in Mrauk-U, enabling them to build individual shelters. This happened after the completion of this field research, which may have possible implications on the satisfaction level. In Sittwe, shelter conditions reportedly have not been improved upon, although some camp management organisations have provided some roofing repair and renovations. According to observations on the ground, about three quarters of shelters need to undergo major renovations, if not reconstruction, especially to withstand heavy rains.

Rakhine State also fares badly in numerous health and sanitation indicators. Rakhine State has low levels of antenatal coverage (67%) and only 55% of births are attended by a skilled health practitioner (with only 11.7% of births occurring in a health facility, the second lowest of all States and Regions).[33] Across Rakhine State, only 50-58% have access to safe drinking water.[34]

[29] Shelter Case Studies. Myanmar - Inter-communal violence. Shelter Projects 2013-2014. Available at: http://www.sheltercasestudies.org/shelterprojects2013-2014/SP13-14_A16-Myanmar-2012.pdf.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Interview with UNHCR. Yangon. 5 July 2015.

[33] See UNDP, p. xv and Myanmar Ministry of Health and Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, p. 39.

[34] UNDP, p. 64 and Myanmar Ministry of Health and Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, p. 33..

While access is lowest in IDP camps, many non-displaced Rakhine and Muslim villages face similar challenges. The low quality and scarcity of drinking water threatens the health of an estimated 16,000 people every year. There is heavy reliance on emergency water supply, especially during the dry season.

Rakhine State also has by far the lowest levels of access to sanitation in Myanmar (48-54%) and some 41% of the population of Rakhine has no access to sanitation whatsoever.[35] The situation is particularly acute for IDPs and rural Rakhine and Muslims. Access to healthcare is limited in Rakhine state. Even if health clinics are accessible, they are often understaffed and lack adequate equipment and supplies. Muslim villagers and IDPs must contend with an additional challenge: even if they are close to urban health facilities, they face threats and intimidation directed at both the health care providers and patients.[36] Most Muslim villagers and IDPs continue to rely on essential health care services provided by NGOs due to limited access to previously accessible government run primary and secondary healthcare facilities.[37]

In terms of food security, WFP's latest findings indicated that, although the most vulnerable populations in Rakhine State receive regular food rations, they still tend to struggle to cover their basic food needs (in particular female/child-headed households, widows, elderly, children and the disabled). While the national average for food insecurity is 4.8%, in Rakhine State 10% of the population is identified as "food poor."[38] The limited access to agricultural land and the poor quality of land are further triggers for food insecurity across the state. As a result, Rakhine has the highest levels of malnutrition in Myanmar (53%), a 16.3% prevalence of severe malnutrition, and more than one third of children are either moderately or severely underweight.[39] Malnutrition is particularly severe in Buthidaung and Maungdaw Townships, where the Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate is reported to reach 21.4% and 20% respectively.[40]

Poor access to basic needs across Rakhine State has resulted in a heavy reliance on humanitarian and development assistance to meet basic needs.[41] The situation was complicated, however, in February 2014, when Myanmar authorities ordered Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), an essential provider of humanitarian and health services to populations affected by the humanitarian crisis, to halt its activities in Rakhine State, following accusations of favoritism towards the Muslim community. Shortly thereafter, in March 2014, a number of offices of international organisations in Rakhine State were ransacked by Rakhine,[42] causing over $1 million in losses.[43] These incidents brought humanitarian and development assistance to a standstill for a month, resulting in a major impact on the lives of vulnerable individuals.

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[35] UNDP, p. 66 and Myanmar Ministry of Health and Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, p. 35.
[36] 2014 STRATEGIC RESPONSE PLAN Myanmar. Health Rakhine.
[37] 2014 STRATEGIC RESPONSE PLAN Myanmar. Health Rakhine.
[38] "Food poverty" here is defined as insufficient household income to meet minimum caloric requirements.
[39] UNDP, p. xv and Myanmar Ministry of Health and Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, p. 15.
[40] Food Security Information network. 2014. "Food Security Update - June 2014 Early Warning and Situation Reports".
[41] Mimu. 2015 Humanitarian Overview. Available at: http://www.themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/Ref_Doc_Humanitarian_Needs_Overview_2015.pdf.
[42] It has been reported that 33 premises, including offices, residences and warehouses were looted and ransacked.
[43] "Humanitarian Bulletin, Myanmar". UNOCHA, Issue 3, March 2014, pp. 1-31.

In general, however, humanitarian and development partners in Myanmar highlighted a slight improvement in access to basic needs since incidences of communal violence in 2012, while emphasizing the need to move forward towards long-term and sustainable solutions, especially for the vulnerable populations in IDP camps. Although the government invited MSF to return and to gradually resume its activities in Rakhine State, the situation has not yet returned to the levels of January 2014, which were themselves inadequate. Though INGOs and NGOs have access to all the main IDP camps, humanitarian workers are required to get travel authorization to reach certain areas.

Socioeconomic development in Rakhine State is also hindered by poor infrastructure. Physical infrastructure remains extremely poor, with under-investment and a landscape scattered with mountains and waterways complicating efforts to improve roads, waterways, and access to electricity. Rakhine is connected to the rest of Myanmar by only three roads (Ann to Magway, Tongup to Pyay, and Gwa to Yegyi), all in the southern half of the state. Furthermore, transportation links within the state remain poor: as of mid-2013, there were only about 200 miles of road connecting Rakhine's towns and cities with a further 150 miles of road within towns and cities (this in a land area comprising approximately 14,000 square miles).[44] Such lack of infrastructure "constitutes one of the biggest hurdles to the economic development of Rakhine State" and "also has a negative impact on the social development of communities living in more remote areas."[45] Similarly, electrification rates across Rakhine State remain very low: as recently as 2010, only 26% of people in Rakhine State had access to electricity.[46]

To its credit, the Rakhine State Government has placed significant emphasis on infrastructure improvements over the past year, with tangible progress evident on major arteries and continued work to upgrade boats and improve public boat transportation. In addition, substantial efforts are being made to expand access: although probably over-ambitious, the Rakhine State Government plans for all towns and cities in Rakhine to be connected to the national grid in the 2015-2016 fiscal year and the Union Government aims to achieve universal electrification by 2030.[47]

Rakhine State also ranks poorly in the education sector. While it is estimated that 76,000 children are in need of quality education in Rakhine State, only 35,653 (46%) were estimated to have been reached in December 2014 by the government.[48] More specifically, Rakhine has the lowest rates of early childhood education (5.4%), primary school enrolment (71-76%), and secondary school enrolment (31-32%) in Myanmar.[49] Consequently, literacy levels—at 75% overall and 55% for women[50]—are the lowest in Myanmar, where the overall literacy rate is

[44] Republic of the Union of Myanmar. "Final Report of Inquiry Commission on Sectarian Violence in Rakhine State.

[45] Ibid, p. 33.

[46] UNDP, p. xiv.

[47] Nai, Aye. "And then there was light… Sittwe connects to the Grid." Democratic Voice of Burma. 5 December 2014. https://www.dvb.no/news/and-then-there-was-light-sittwe-connects-to-the-grid-arakan-burma-myanmar-rakhine/46329.

[48] Inter-cluster Coordination Group for the Humanitarian Country Team. Periodic Monitoring Report 2014 Strategic Response Plan—Myanmar. Available at: http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/myanmar_2014_strategic_response_plan_periodic_monitoring_report_january_-_december_2014.pdf.

[49] See Myanmar Ministry of Health and Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, pgs. 42-44. See also UNDP, pg. xvi.

[50] Myanmar Ministry of Health and Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development. "Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2009-2010." October 2011. Pg. 47. http://www.unicef.org/myanmar/MICS_Myan-

around 90% according to UNDP.[51] Communal violence in 2012 almost certainly resulted in a deterioration of these figures as populations were displaced and schools were closed.[52] However, progress has been made in 2014 to improve access to learning opportunities for children and adolescents (3-17 years old) displaced and affected by conflict in Rakhine. Coverage of education for primary school-age IDP boys and girls has increased from 50% at the beginning of 2014, to approximately 70% (24,759 enrolled as of end Nov 2014).[53]

Overall, the instability in Rakhine State combined with poor infrastructure and low education levels has created an unfavorable climate for investment. At the micro level, the well-being of a significant percentage of the population directly affected by communal conflict (nearly 5% of Rakhine State's total population remains displaced) has deteriorated significantly. Furthermore, weak access to basic needs and low levels of socioeconomic development afflict both Rakhine and Muslim populations.

As a result of inadequate access to basic needs, many IDPs and other vulnerable people, especially in the central and northern parts of Rakhine State, are attempting to flee the state to reach other countries in the region.[54] In the first several months of 2015, it is estimated that more than 25,000 people, most of whom lack citizenship, left Northern Rakhine State, mostly by dangerous sea crossing.[55] Although there is a lack of data on economic migration that also affects ethnic Rakhine, an informal survey conducted by a local NGO worker estimates that due to the economic plight in Rakhine State, more than 300,000 ethnic Rakhine have already left for Kachin State, 400,000 for Thailand and 300,000 for Malaysia, China and Singapore, albeit not by boat.

Findings

Summary

In terms of basic and development needs, the situation faced by both Rakhine and Muslim communities is challenging. That said, Muslim respondents expressed lower levels of satisfaction across a range of issues, suggesting that their situation—or their perception thereof—is more acute. Most of the internally displaced in Rakhine State are from the Muslim community and are thus facing a range of humanitarian needs in addition to chronic poverty. Beyond this general trend there are a number of discrepancies within communities with Muslim camp residents displaying lower levels of satisfaction than Muslim villagers. There are also significant geographical variations: rates of poverty and underdevelopment are generally higher in Northern Rakhine State and in Kyauktaw and Mrauk-U and lower in southern townships, like

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mar_Report_2009-10.pdf.

[51] UNDP, pgs. xv-xvi.

[52] UNICEF Myanmar. "Initial Rapid Assessment in Communal Violence in Sittwe Township." 6 July 2012. See also Save the Children. "Education in Rakhine—Next Steps for the Sector." November 2013. http://www.themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/assessment_report_-_sc_education_next-steps_-_rakhinesummary_nov13.pdf.

[53] Inter-cluster Coordination Group for the Humanitarian Country Team. Periodic Monitoring Report 2014 Strategic Response Plan—Myanmar. Available at: http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/myanmar_2014_strategic_response_plan_periodic_monitoring_report_january_-_december_2014.pdf.

[54] UNHCR. South-East Asia irregular Maritime Movements. January – November 2014. Available at: http://www.unhcr.org/53f1c5fc9.html.

[55] UNHCR. 8 May 2015. Available at : http://www.unhcr.org/554c8adf9.html.

Thandwe. There are few significant differences across age groups and gender is only a source of minor variation across a few indicators. Low-income earners displayed lower levels of satisfaction on all indicators, highlighting their vulnerability.

While investment in physical infrastructure in Rakhine State has been historically low—especially in the immediate aftermath of the communal conflict in 2012, when implementation was particularly challenging—spending has increased since the appointment of a new Chief Minister in 2014, who received close support from the President and his cabinet ministers. Using "special funds,"[56] the Union and Rakhine State Governments have made considerable investments in building roads, high schools (3), middle schools (3) and temporary schools (28), hospitals (4) and temporary clinics (28), bridges, and one airport. While such investments contribute to improved living standards in Rakhine, they are perceived as disproportionately benefiting ethnic Rakhine. Moreover, they have been blamed for not sufficiently focusing on human capital, i.e., providing doctors, nurses, qualified teachers to deliver the services from these infrastructure improvements. This has resulted in some improvements in infrastructure, but infrastructure alone does not compensate for the remaining lack of capacity in the health and education sectors, with insufficient numbers of health professionals and qualified teachers.

Most Muslims, many of whom were displaced by conflict and face challenging conditions in IDP camps, have seen their situation deteriorate. While a small number of Muslims continue to do well, a Rakhine expert in Yangon emphasized that, "although both Muslims and Rakhine were already poor prior to 2012, the Muslims were generally poorer, despite sometimes owning lands and working as casual labourers. After 2012, the Muslim community has become even poorer.[57]


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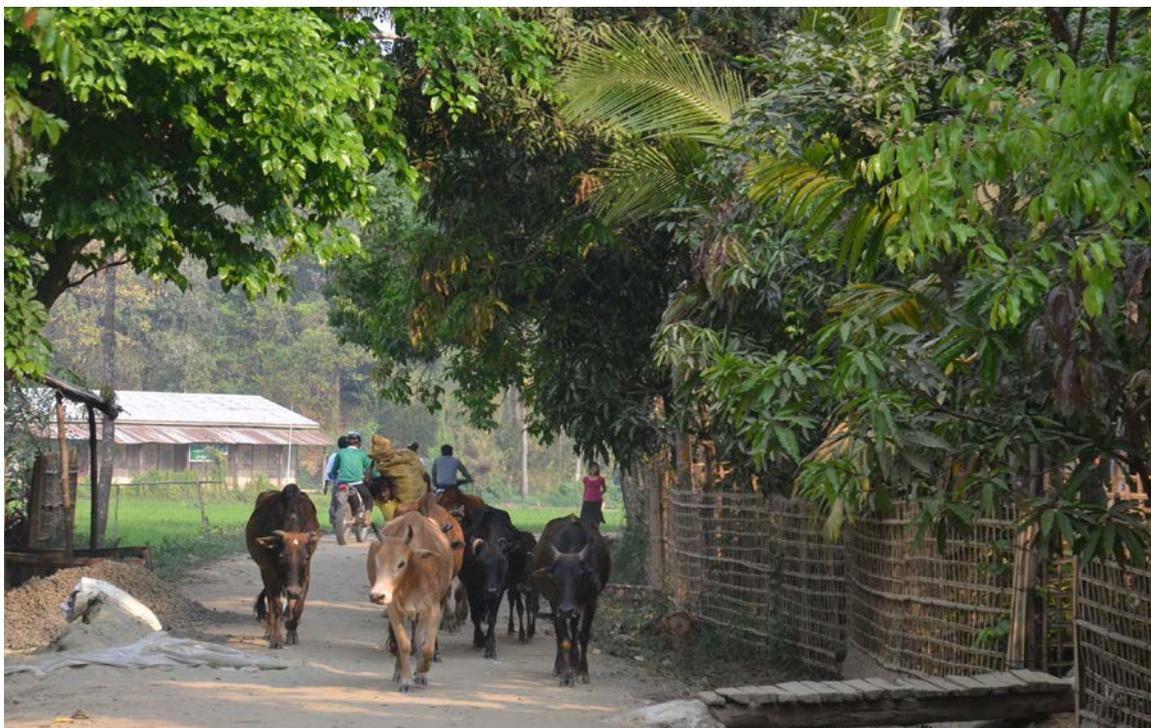
[56] The amount of special fund for 2014-2015 Fiscal Year is 15 billions Myanmar kyat.
[57] In-depth Interview. 9 June 2014. Yangon.

Living Conditions and Income

Across all townships and demographics, people in Rakhine State are dissatisfied with their current living conditions. Only 14% of respondents rated their current living conditions as either "excellent" or "great," while 59% rated their conditions as "fair" and 25% rated them as "very bad" (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Overall Living Conditions
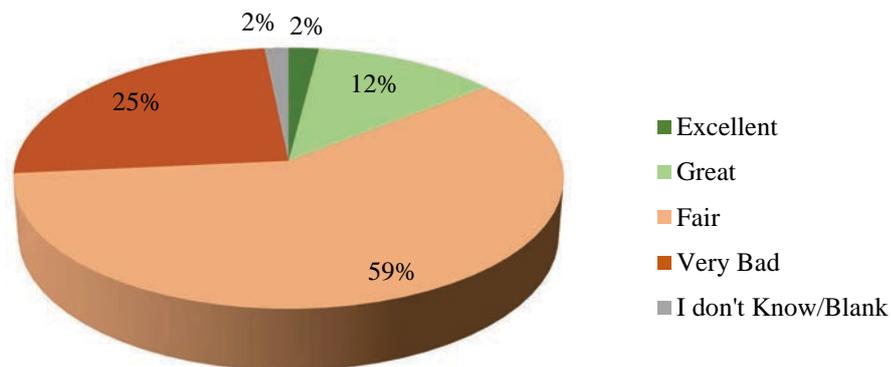
These sentiments were consistent across ethnic Rakhine and Muslims, though Muslims reported slightly worse conditions. Thirty-five percent of Muslims said their living conditions are very bad, while only 19% of Rakhine said the same (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Living Conditions by Community and Income Level
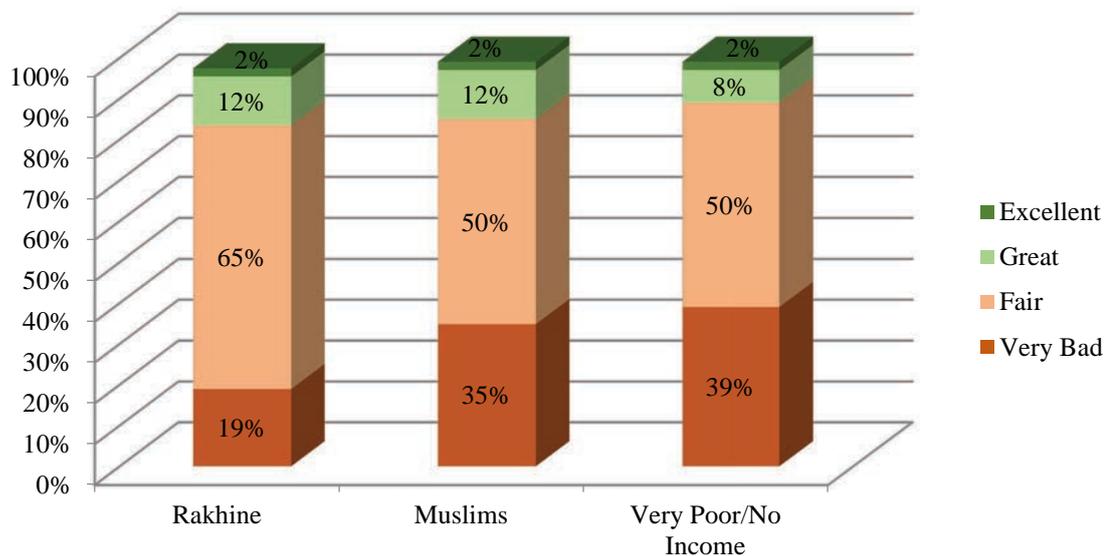
Moreover, in half of the townships surveyed, more than 90% of Muslims thought their living conditions were either fair or very bad and in Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, and Sittwe, more than 50% of Muslims reported very bad living conditions. The Rakhine fared better, with Myebon the only township in which more than 30% of respondents said their living conditions are very bad (Figure 3). A small sample of Muslim women was particularly pessimistic about their living conditions, with 42% saying they are very bad, compared to 33% of Muslim men, 23%

of Rakhine women, and 15% of Rakhine men. As might be expected, those who reported having very poor income or no income at all also rated their living conditions poorly, with 39% saying they are very bad.

Figure 3: Poor and Very Poor Living Conditions by Township
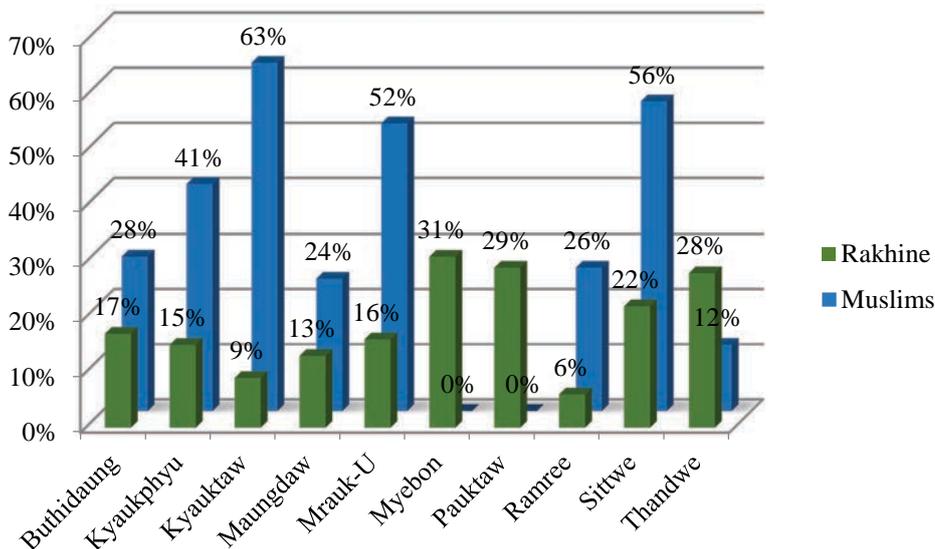
Figure 4: Living Conditions Compared to Three Years Ago
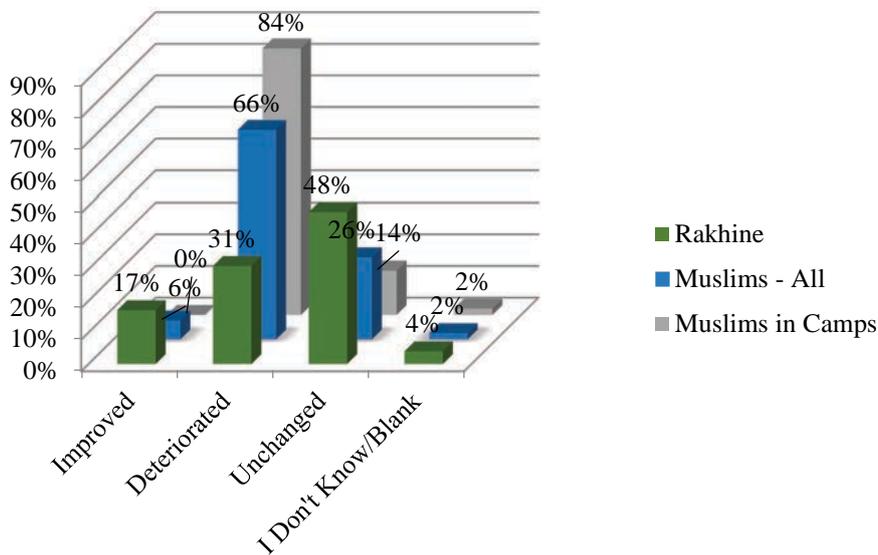
From the perspective of most Rakhine State residents, living conditions have not improved in the past three years: 40% of respondents said their living conditions have not changed and 44% said they have in fact deteriorated. More than twice as many Muslims said their conditions have deteriorated than Rakhine (66% compared to 31%) and Muslims were much less likely to say their conditions have improved (6% compared to 17%); a plurality of Rakhine (48%) said their living conditions have not changed in the past three years (Figure 4). Muslims living in IDP camps in Kyaukphyu, Myebon, Ramree, Pauktaw, and Sittwe reported deteri-

oration at much greater rates than other Muslims or Rakhine, with 84% of camp residents reporting a deterioration in their conditions compared to pre-displacement. Ethnic Rakhine living in wards, i.e., in urban areas, saw deterioration in greater numbers than those in villages, i.e., in rural areas (39% compared to 25%).

Figure 5: Deteriorated Living Conditions Compared to Three Years Ago by Township
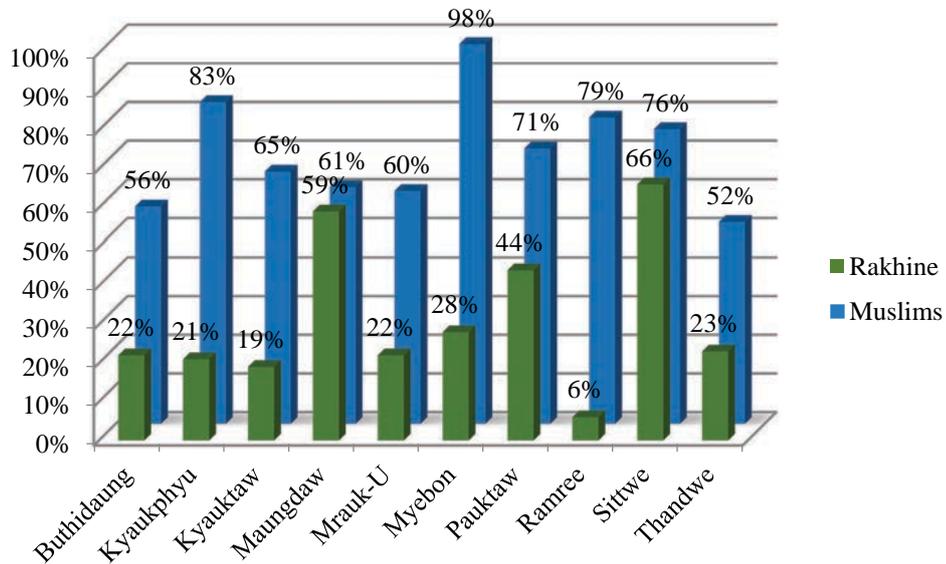
The small sample of Rakhine in Buthidaung reported the highest levels of improvement (33%) and those in Sittwe (66%) and Maungdaw (59%) reported the greatest deterioration in living conditions (Figure 5). There was very limited variation in perceptions of changes in living conditions among women as compared to men or among different age groups (Figures 6, 7).

Figure 6: Very Poor Income/No Income by Gender and Community
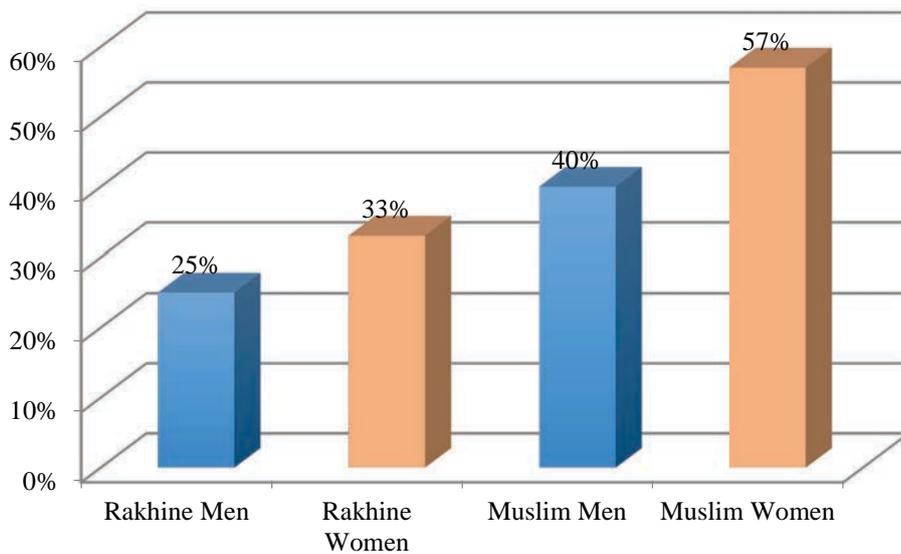
Figure 7: Perception of Income Level by Age for Rakhine and Muslims

a-Rakhine
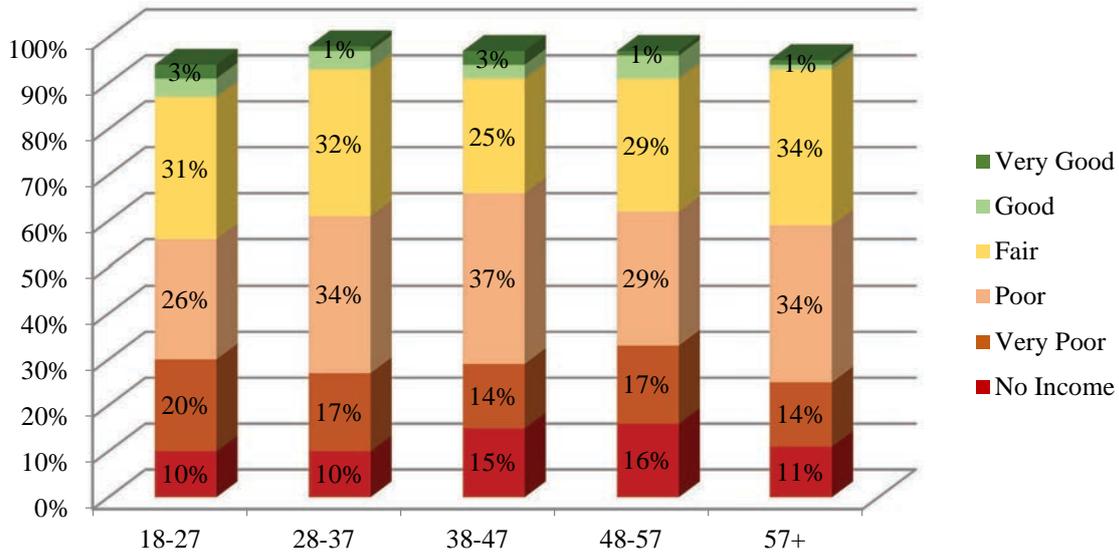
b-Muslims
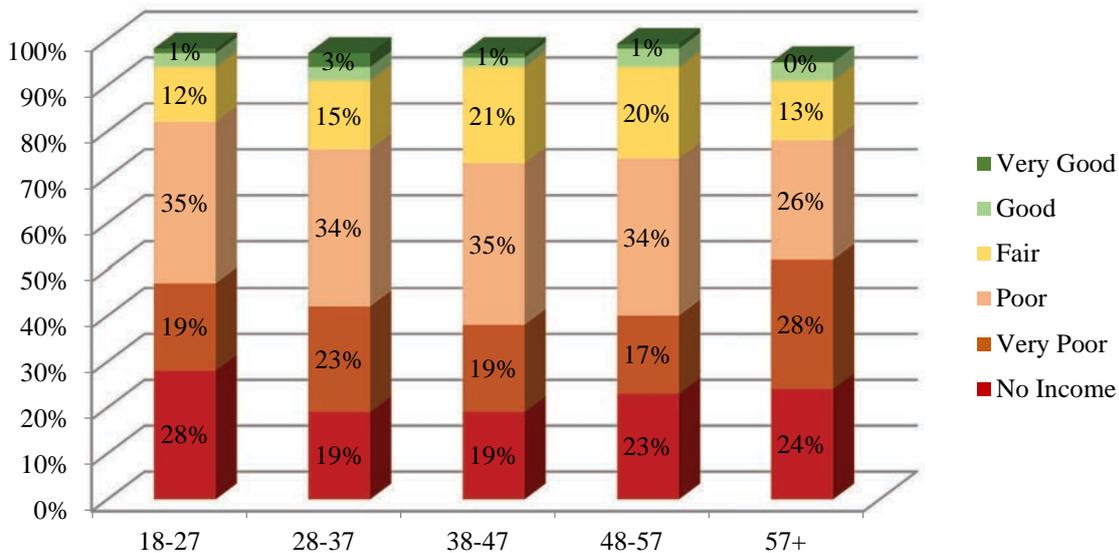
Mirroring responses about living conditions, all respondents had very low ratings of their income. Almost no one rated their income as either good or very good (only 5% of respondents overall) and more than 50% said their income was poor or very poor. Meanwhile, 16% reported having no income at all. Again, while the situation appeared unsatisfactory for both Rakhine and Muslim communities, Muslims reported worse conditions than Rakhine: 21% of Muslims reported having very poor income (compared to 12% of Rakhine) and 22% of Muslims reported having no income at all (again compared to 12% of Rakhine) (Figure 8).

In 8 of 10 townships, more than 70% of Muslims said their income was poor or very poor or they had no income (Figure 9). The situation appeared more acute for those living in IDP camps, where more than half of respondents (52%) reported having no income at all. Muslim

camp residents in Sittwe noted that restrictions on freedom of movement are a significant barrier to livelihoods. As one camp resident said, "People living in the camps have skills, but no opportunities."[58]

Figure 8: Perception of Income Level[59] by Community
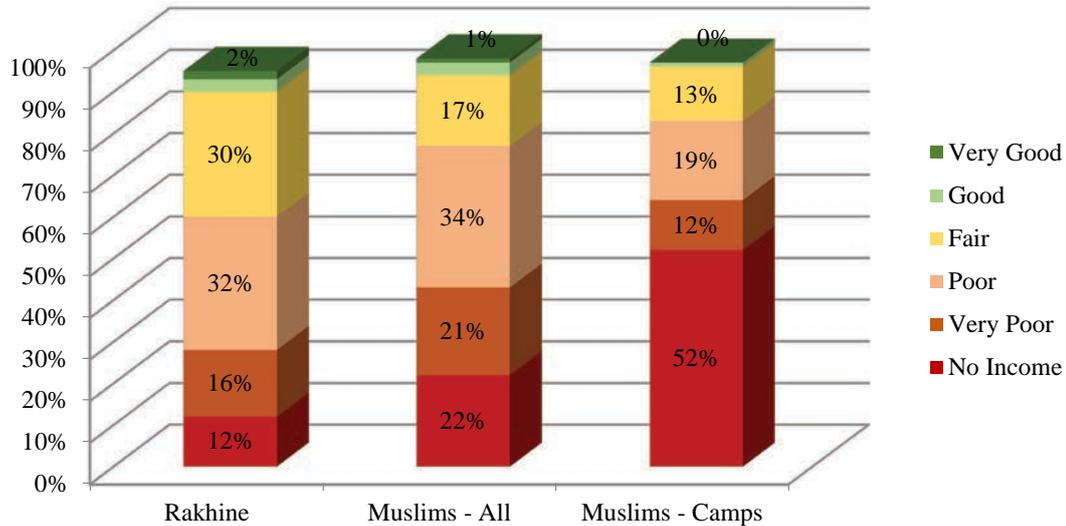
Figure 9: Very Poor Income/No Income by Township
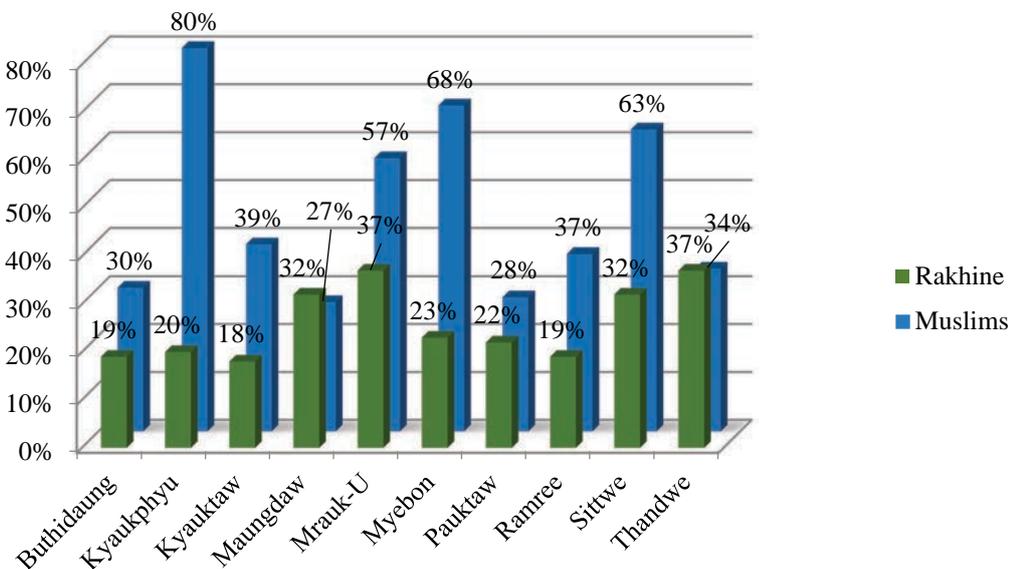
In other areas, Muslims are able to work as day labourers: in Ramree, for example, camp residents said their income has improved compared to a few years ago, now that they are able to work for daily wages and earn 3,000-5,000 kyat per day.[60] Those affected by conflict and who lost possessions and livestock during episodes of communal conflict, however, are less able

[58] In-depth Interview. 24 March 2015. Sittwe Township.
[59] Members of the research team noted that respondents, particularly Muslim respondents, have a tendency to underreport their income. While it was beyond the scope of this study to examine discrepancies in reported and actual income in detail, this should be kept in mind when reviewing this section.
[60] In-depth Interview and Focus Group Discussion. 28 March 2015. Ramree Township.

to effectively farm their land or raise livestock.[61] A lack of technical knowledge on farming techniques, animal husbandry, and fish farming was also mentioned in several interviews by both Muslims and Rakhine as a barrier to better livelihoods.[62]

As with living conditions, most respondents reported a deterioration in income compared to three years ago, a finding that was largely consistent across township, gender, and age variables. Again, however, when examined by religion, Muslims reported deterioration at much greater levels than did Rakhine: 72% of Muslims—and 87% of Muslims in camps—said their income had decreased compared to three years ago compared to only 40% of Rakhine (Figure 10) and at least 50% of Muslims in each of the ten townships surveyed reported a deterioration.

Figure 10: Perception of Income Compared to Three Years Ago
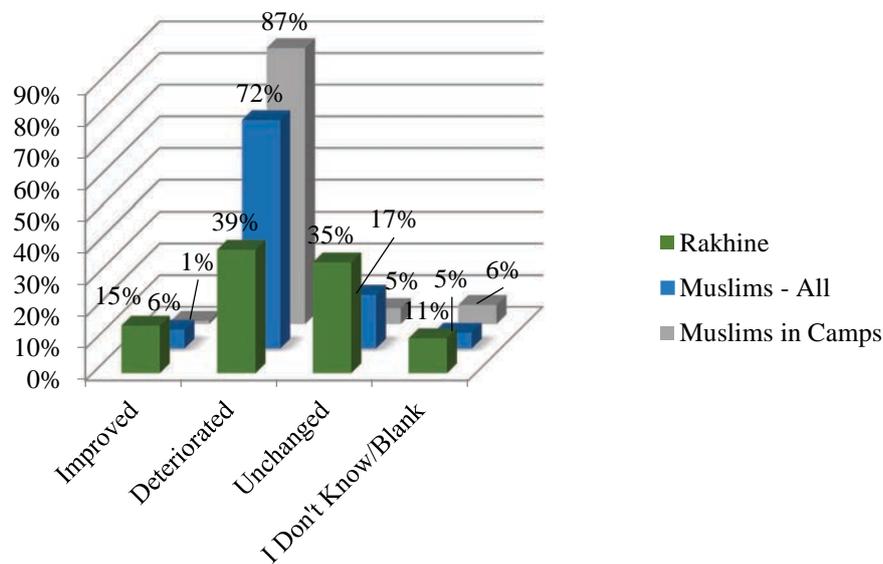
Figure 11: Rakhine Reporting Deterioration of Income by Township

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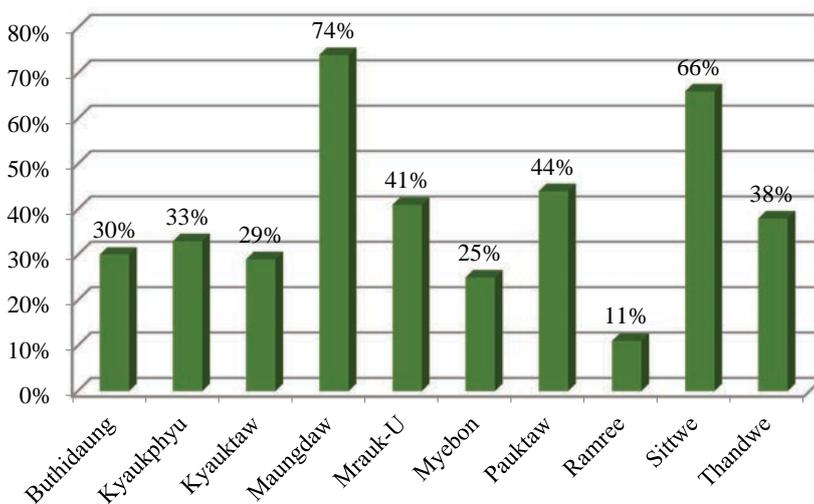
[61] In-depth Interview. 25 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township.
[62] In-depth Interview. 26 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township; In-depth Interview. 27 and 28 March 2015. Mrauk-U Township; In-depth Interview. 31 March 2015. Thandwe Township.

While reports of worsening income were consistent across townships among Muslims, there was quite a bit of variation among Rakhine respondents. Rakhine surveyed in Maungdaw and Sittwe reported fairly high levels of decline (74% and 66%, respectively), compared to Ramree and Myebon, where only 11% and 25% reported deterioration in their incomes compared to three years ago (Figure 11).

Across interviews and focus group discussions, both Rakhine and Muslims cited insufficient access to livelihoods as a significant challenge, further compounded by an educational system and infrastructure network that, although improving, remains poor (these issues are covered separately and in more detail below). A Muslim in Buthidaung expressed the same sentiment as many other interviewees: "the lack of safety is the biggest challenge we face."[63] Insufficient access to livelihoods has led to relatively high rates of migration, (though only small numbers of survey respondents indicated a desire to emigrate from Myanmar).[64] Large numbers have sought to leave Myanmar to try and illegally enter other Southeast Asian countries, begging for humanitarian support from potential host countries. In May 2015, thousands of Muslim people from Bangladesh and Myanmar, collectively dubbed as "boat people" by international media, were found at sea while trying to reach Southeast Asian countries including Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand, by boats via the waters of the Straits of Malacca and the Andaman Sea. However, this problem of exodus is not confined to the Muslim community. Rakhine and Muslims as well as other minorities in several townships highlighted this as a concern: Rakhine in Kyauktaw town worried that "people are leaving for migrant work," a concern echoed by Rakhine in a Kyauktaw village, who said "there are not enough opportunities, especially for young men, and a lot of people leave the village for migrant labour purposes"; Rakhine elders in Mrauk-U noted that there are "high levels of migrant workers leaving from Rakhine"; "our Rakhine youth become migrant workers in neighboring countries," said Rakhine in Ramree; and members of the Mro and Khami expressed concern about the "women and girls traveling to Thailand for work that is poorly paid."[65]

Many of those who stay, including both Rakhine and Muslims, said the members of their communities are mainly reliant on casual labour, subsistence agriculture or fishing to earn income. Muslims and Rakhine from Buthidaung to Thandwe spoke of their reliance on daily wages and agriculture for their income, noting the uncertainty that comes with such work and, in the case of casual labourers, the notion of their being underemployed.

The diagnosis of the lack of jobs and livelihood opportunities varied by community, though all agreed that further infrastructure and investment is necessary. At the township level, there appeared to be a strong interest, particularly among urban Rakhine, in the creation of industrial zones, like the one being developed in Ponnagyun Township. Rakhine in Kyauktaw town explained they wanted "the creation of an industrial zone like Ponnagyun to reduce the number of migrant workers" and Rakhine in Mrauk-U expressed a similar interest with a focus on rice mills, timber mills, and food processing plants, which would add value to raw materials and reduce the cost of processing them elsewhere.[66] Several individuals in Ramree and Thandwe also mentioned the utility of industrial zones as a way to create jobs and increase the

[63] In-depth Interview. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.
[64] Less than 8% of survey respondents said they wanted to emigrate (though this number was somewhat higher—11%—for Muslim respondents and higher still, at 16%, for the subset of Muslims living in camps.
[65] In-depth Interviews. 25 and 26 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township; Focus Group Discussion. 28 March 2015. Mrauk-U Township. Focus Group Discussion. 2 April. Ramree Township.
[66] In-depth Interview. 25 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township; Focus Group Discussion. 28 March 2015. Mrauk-U Township.

number of people with full-time employment.[67]

Vocational training was also widely cited as necessary to improve job prospects and market-ability for both low-skilled and skilled workers. Several sectors were mentioned repeatedly, including agriculture, fisheries, livestock management, textiles for women, and, to a lesser extent, forest management and computer skills.[68] To complement the skills provided as a part of agricultural training, men in a Mrauk-U focus group explained that it would be important for the Government to provide farmers with higher-quality seeds than they have now.[69] Although a Ministry of Education official in Kyauktaw noted that vocational training is included in the curriculum for middle school and high school students and that there is a school within Kyauktaw dedicated to vocational training, this is clearly insufficient.[70] A Rakhine elder neatly summed up this sentiment: "instead of leaving to work, people should stay here and learn skills."[71]

The Chin community living in Rakhine State also voiced concerns about the lack of job opportunities and the historic discrimination by the successive military governments towards Chin people in Rakhine: "It is especially difficult for us to get military jobs. Even though some Chin students are highly qualified, they struggle to get a job."[72] This statement was however nuanced by another group of Chin interviewees: "The situation has now improved. Rakhine

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[67] In-depth Interview. 31 March 2015. Thandwe Township; In-depth Interview. 28 March 2015. Ramree Township.

[68] In-depth Interviews. 25 and 26 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township; In-depth Interview. 31 March 2015. Thandwe Township; Focus Group Discussion. 28 March 2015. Mrauk-U Township.

[69] Focus Group Discussion. 28 March 2015. Mrauk-U Township.

[70] In-depth Interview. 25 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township.

[71] In-depth Interview. 26 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township.

[72] In-depth Interview. 30 March 2015. Kyaukphyu Township

don't want to go to difficult areas so the government has recruited some Chin people in the villages. Yet, there is only one Chin in the Rakhine State cabinet."[73]

Rakhine, Muslims, and other ethnic groups thus shared all of the aforementioned concerns across Rakhine State, though a number of issues were raised specifically by Muslims and other minorities. The fundamental concerns for Muslims were restrictions on freedom of movement and access to citizenship (both of which are covered in greater detail below), superseding worries about infrastructure, industrial zones, and vocational and skills training. Separately, other minorities lamented discrimination in opportunities for employment. Mro and Khami in Kyauktaw said they are never employed in government health and education departments. Additionally, Kaman Muslims in Thandwe complained that they face difficulties in getting jobs with the government or in the private sector.[74]

Freedom of Movement

Restrictions on freedom of movement distinguish the situation of both Kaman and non-Kaman Muslims from that of ethnic Rakhine in Rakhine State. However, it is important to note that restoring freedom of movement, whilst an important step, will not in itself serve to solve all problems as the issue is inseparable from a number of wider concerns—notably citizenship, hardening mindsets, security and job opportunities. Unless all these issues are addressed simultaneously, there can be no guarantee that any improvement will be achieved.

That said, restoring freedom of movement is one of the highest priorities for Muslims in Ra-

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[73] Focus Group Discussion. 30 March 2015. Kyaukphyu Township.
[74] Focus Group Discussions. 25 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township; Focus Group Discussions. 2 April 2015. Thandwe Township.

khine State. Dozens of survey respondents said that freedom of movement was the biggest challenge they faced, even though it was not one of the options provided in the questionnaire. Among all Muslims surveyed, more than 60% said they could not move freely at all, with only 26% saying they can travel to surrounding villages and 12% saying they can travel to neighboring townships. Less than 1% of Muslims surveyed said they are able to travel either to neighboring districts or to Yangon. Restrictions on freedom of movement are the most severe for Muslims living in camps, where 78% said they could not leave the camp at all, only 23% are able to travel to surrounding villages, and none are able to travel to neighboring townships or districts or to Yangon.


In Kyauktaw and Mrauk-U, 96% and 82% of Muslim respondents respectively said they are not able to move freely at all. This may be due to a lengthy and burdensome travel authorization process, though some Muslims in Kyauktaw can access neighboring villages without first gaining permission.[75] While Muslims in Thandwe are legally able to travel freely to rural areas, they face unofficial restrictions in leaving Thandwe town.[76]

Sittwe provides an illustration of this complex situation. Muslims cannot access Sittwe urban area, where they originally come from, thus restricting their access to public services. They can move around in the different camps and villages between Bu May and Yay Chan Pyin (see map below), without having to cross checkpoints. If they inform security, they can also travel without having to pay any fee to some villages beyond the military compound—between 6am to 6pm—notably to Than Daw Li and Let Ma Chay. Aung Mingalar, a Muslim ward in the heart of the Rakhine area in downtown Sittwe, is an exception, where the Muslim community is surrounded by Rakhine and highly restricted in movement. The government arranges a

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[75] In-depth Interview. 9 June 2015. Yangon.
[76] These unofficial restrictions are mainly intimidations from some Ma-Ba-Tha members when Kaman Muslims want to use public transportation. (Source: local NGO workers in Rakhine State).

ferry three times a week from Aung Mingalar to the main Muslim area for trading and getting goods. In case of emergency, a standby ferry can be arranged by the authorities although the price is reported to be very high, acting as a significant barrier to access healthcare services.
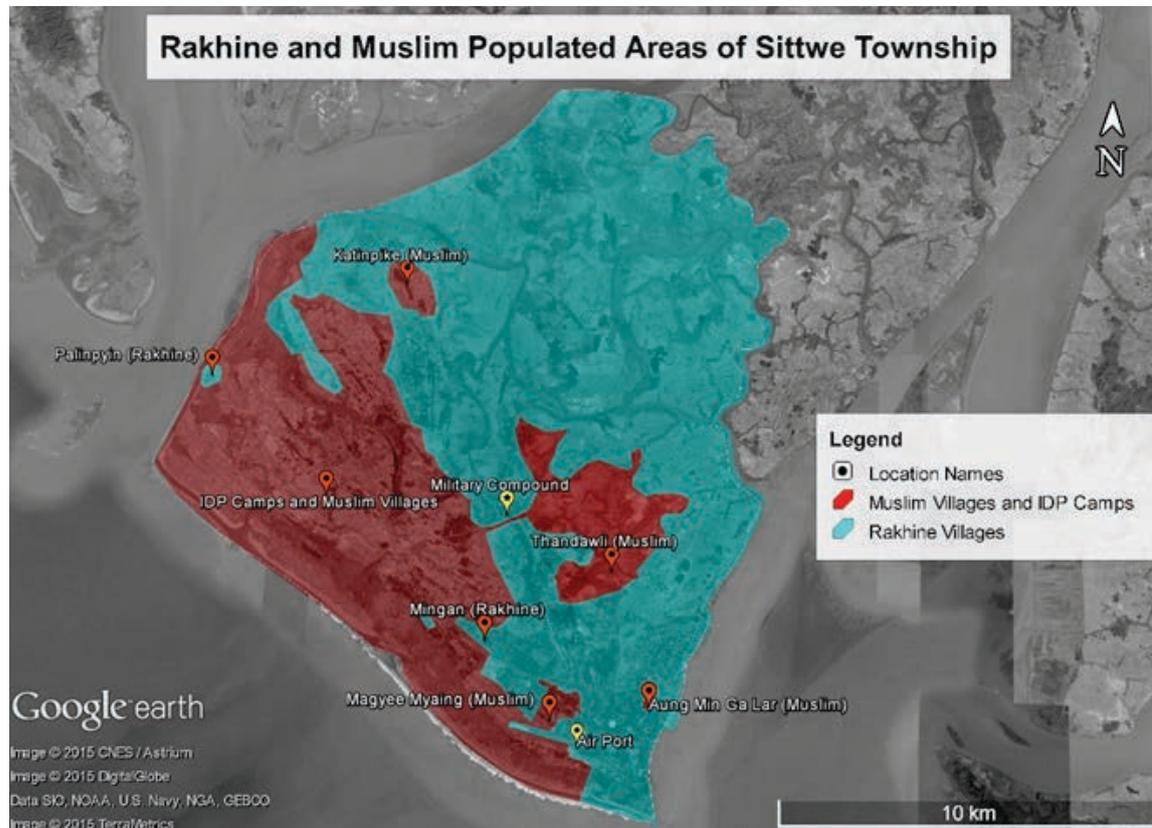
In Maungdaw and Buthidaung, Muslims are mostly permitted to travel between the two townships, as well as to reach Bangladesh through Maungdaw official immigration gate. Nonetheless, a burdensome travel authorization process coupled with checkpoints along major routes make regular travel prohibitively expensive, especially when travelling for trade purposes (500-1,000 kyat per checkpoint). Nearly 70% of Muslims in Maungdaw and Buthidaung reported having to make payments to leave their immediate areas, a percentage far higher than other townships (aside from Mrauk-U, where 68% reported having to pay to leave their immediate area), compared to 47% of respondents overall. One woman in Maungdaw noted that "it requires so much money to get permission to leave that most people cannot afford it. We are even restricted from going from one village to another. For instance, between here and another village, there are 5 checkpoints, and each time you have to pay 200 to 500 kyat."[77]

Payments to leave camps and villages vary widely, perhaps based on authorities' expectations of residents' ability to pay: in Myebon, average payments to leave the camp are only 500 kyat, while the small number of those who reported being able to leave the camps in Pauktaw paid an average of 8,500 kyat.

While Muslims in Ramree can access the local market, Kaman in Thandwe reported that the restrictions on movement limit their ability to trade[78] given the high cost of accessing the market (as well as the hospital) in Sittwe from Pauktaw (reportedly 10,000-15,000 kyats round-

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[77] Focus Group Discussion. 17 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[78] In-depth Interview. 2 April 2015. Thandwe Township.

trip).[79] Moreover, the cost of gaining access to fishing grounds and markets is also reported to be expensive. As a Maungdaw resident explained, "Now we can go out to sea, but we have to pay tax to some government officials. The rate is 10,000 kyats for a small boat and 20,000 kyats for a big boat."[80]

Access to health services is particularly problematic. The situation is especially bad in Myebon and Kyauktaw, where camp and village residents are unable to use the health facilities in Myebon or Kyauktaw town.[81] In the case of Kyauktaw, it is possible to get permission to go to Sittwe for treatment, but doing so takes time and arranging the necessary escort is very expensive.[82] Similar challenges were reported in Kyaukphyu and Maungdaw, where delays in receiving permission for emergency medical assistance resulted in the deaths of patients.[83] It should be noted, however, that although respondents keep refering to these episodes as if they had happened recently, respondents sometimes struggle to give concrete examples, or the examples they provide are dated (most of the time dating back from 2012). This suggests that the fear of dying because of untimely medical treatment is prevalent, but not necessarily borne out by facts. In Mrauk-U, Muslims are able to travel to the station hospital in Myaunbwe, although they are not allowed to stay overnight.[84]

In addition to restricted access to health services, several Muslims lamented an inability to send their children to university because of travel and citizenship restrictions.[85] These issues of access to health services and higer education are discussed more thoroughly in the next sections.

Restrictions on freedom of movement and the fees required for permission to travel curtail Muslims' access to livelihoods and social services. There is an increasing perception among the Muslim community that lifting restrictions on freedom of movement would provide a comprehensive solution. As one Muslim youth said, "the most basic needs are livelihoods and education; freedom of movement is the solution for both needs."[86] A group of Muslims in Sittwe agreed, saying that "access to livelihoods is largely dependent on citizenship and freedom of movement" and that, although "the people in the camps have skills, there are no opportunities for them."[87] Others said: "with the restrictions on mobility, we are becoming more poor."[88] Several interviewees noted in particular the adverse effects that restrictions on freedom of movement have on their ability to access rivers (for fishing) and forests (for firewood collection).[89] As a Myebon camp resident explained, "we can't continue our livelihoods in the camp after the violence. Few people can access fishing areas near the camp; they first need to get permission from the security forces for fishing and also for collecting firewood."[90]

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[79] In-depth Interview. 9 June 2015. Yangon.

[80] In-depth Interview. 16 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.

[81] In-depth Interview. 31 March 2015. Myebon Township.

[82] In-depth Interviews. 20 December 2014 and 26 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township.

[83] In-depth Interview. 27 March 2015. Kyaukphyu Township; In-depth Interview. 14 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.

[84] In-depth Interview. 9 June 2015. Yangon.

[85] In-depth Interviews. 1 April 2015. Thandwe Township. In-depth Interview. 14 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.

[86] Focus Group Discussion. 18 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.

[87] Focus Group Discussion. 24 March 2015. Sittwe Township.

[88] In-depth Interview. 14 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.

[89] In-depth Interviews. 14 and 16 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.

[90] In-depth Interview. 31 March 2015. Myebon Township.

According to a Muslim in Maungdaw, "the restrictions have significantly decreased livelihood opportunities" with the Muslim community working hard "to compensate for the difficulty of accessing the forest."[91]

While restrictions on freedom of movement undeniably impact Muslim livelihoods, the issue cannot be detached from the provision of job opportunities. Given the lack of job opportunities available for all residents across Rakhine state, the immediate lifting of restrictions on movement, without providing increased job opportunities, would lead to greater competition for already scarce livelihood opportunities. This could, in turn, lead to increased tensions, further exacerbating the situation. As a result, there is a need to address freedom of movement while simultaneously providing for increased job opportunities.

Further linked to freedom of movement, the issue of citizenship was widely cited by Muslims as one of their greatest challenges, while many Rakhine also identified citizenship as being at the crux of continued distrust and communal tensions. The vast majority of Muslims in Rakhine State lack citizenship, resulting in a series of negative effects that freedom of movement alone will not alleviate. These effects include a lack of protection for other basic rights which inhibits adequate access to livelihoods, healthcare, and education (including higher education).

While basic living conditions and access to livelihoods, healthcare, and education are very poor for Rakhine (as described throughout this section), low levels of citizenship among Muslims coupled with severe (or expensive) restrictions on freedom of movement result in greater challenges in protecting basic rights and a degraded socioeconomic situation for Muslim populations. Non-citizen Muslims and other non-citizens around the country face greater abuse at the hands of authorities than citizens, are paid lower wages and are barred from attending university as well as from joining certain professions (such as law or medicine).

While issues of citizenship were not widely discussed as part of the survey instrument (no direct questions about citizenship were included in order not to inflame an already tense environment), the topic came up frequently in interviews and focus group discussions. Muslims in a Sittwe camp, for example, explained that citizenship is their "most important need" because it "will lead to equality and other human rights" and is the "entry point" to relocation.[92] "It's the main problem for us," clarified a Muslim man from Buthidaung. "Unless this is changed, conditions will deteriorate."[93] A Muslim in Maungdaw agreed: "If the current administration does not change our citizenship status, we have no prospect for a better future."[94]

The Rakhine held a different view of granting citizenship to Muslim populations in Rakhine State, mostly calling for a strict implementation of the 1982 Citizenship Law, believing that such an interpretation will result in only limited numbers of Muslims gaining citizenship. The view of a Rakhine man in Maungdaw was typical: all Muslims "should obey the [1982 Citizenship] Law."[95] While one Rakhine from Maungdaw said "if the government gives citizenship to the Muslims, we will be okay with it,"[96] many others agreed with a Rakhine in

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[91] In-depth Interview. 16 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[92] Focus Group Discussions. 24 March 2015. Sittwe Township.
[93] Interview in Buthidaung, 18 March 2015.
[94] Interview in Maungdaw, 14 March 2015.
[95] In-depth Interview. 15 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[96] In-depth Interview. 14 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.

Ramree who was worried that citizenship would be granted to those who are not eligible.[97] An expert on Rakhine issues explained that a number of Rakhine people are critical of the verification process because they generally misunderstand and have wrong expectations of the process.[98] "The number of citizenships granted in Myebon has exceeded the number of applications,"[99] deplored for example a Rakhine man in Myebon Townsip, which highlights a deep misunderstanding, since offsprings of people who are granted citizenship automatically become citizens as well.

Just as freedom of movement will not in itself necessarily lead to improvement, citizenship alone is unlikely to significantly improve the situation of Muslims in Rakhine. In fact, even full, naturalized, and associate citizens who are Muslim face restrictions on their movement, demonstrating the need to address both issues simultaneously. For example, Muslims that previously held white cards are no longer able to vote (although they were able to do so in the 2008 Constitutional Referendum and in the 2010 election). Although 209 Muslims were given citizenship documentation in Myebon, they still face significant restrictions on their movement and on access to social services. Moreover, Kaman Muslims continue to face restrictions even though, as one of 135 ethnic groups recognized by the 2008 Constitution, they should more or less automatically receive citizenship. Even an ethnic Rakhine man, whose grandfather had married a Muslim woman, faced many of the same restrictions on movement and access to services as his non-Rakhine Muslim counterparts.[100] A Kayin-Mon woman who now resides in Maungdaw faced similar constraints: "Even though I speak Burmese and have lived almost all of my life in Taunggyi, people say I am a Bengali. I cannot visit my relatives in Yangon or Mandalay because I am a Muslim."[101]

Freedom of movement is also closely linked to the external security situation. In particular, restrictions on movement have limited the amount of interaction that can occur between Rakhine and Muslims; though such an approach may have contributed to an improved security environment in the short-term,[102] this lack of interaction has contributed to a hardening of attitudes towards other communities and has prevented the social and economic interdependence that once existed in many areas. As a result, even if freedom of movement is restored, the growing distrust between the two communities may not be conducive to a safe environment, as the combination of greater movement and hardened attitudes could bring about a deterioration in the security situation.

Mindsets on both sides will need to be addressed before freedom of movement can be fully realized in a safe and sustainable manner. Just as perceptions of each community towards the other may have hardened as a result of decreased interactions, interviews revealed a younger generation of Muslims IDPs that are increasingly aware of their plight and less willing to tolerate continued discrimination and restrictions. This alteration further highlights the need to ensure that the issues of freedom of movement, citizenship, job opportunities and security are addressed simultaneously. Without addressing all issues together, freedom of movement alone could serve to further frustrate this generation of Muslims, broadening rather than narrowing the chasm between both communities.

[97] In-depth Interview. 27 March 2015. Ramree Township.
[98] In-depth Interview. 28 August 2015. Yangon.
[99] In-depth Interview. 01 April 2015. Myebon Township.
[100] In-depth Interview. December 2014. Mrauk-U Township.
[101] In-depth Interview. 17 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[102] This is supported by our findings in the Conflict Prevention section.

Overall, the situation regarding freedom of movement revealed a complexity often over-looked—that the issue of movement, whilst a deeply important step towards reconciliation and development, is inextricably tied to a plethora of other issues. Without addressing these issues together, there can be no guarantee of such reconciliation being achieved.

Savings and Loans

Very few respondents reported having cash or savings (only 14%, see Figure 12), with Ra-khine having savings at slightly higher rates than Muslims (17% compared to 7%). Such low savings mean that Rakhine State residents are extremely vulnerable to shocks in their income, whether from conflict, natural disasters, or health emergencies.

Figure 12: Savings
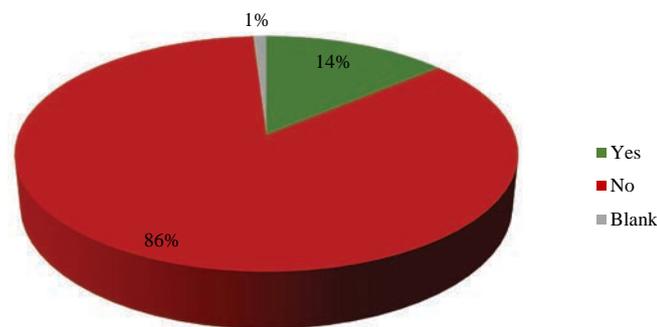
A large percentage of those surveyed (about 60% overall and equal percentages of the Rakh-ine and Muslims surveyed) reported having loans of some kind (Figure 13), with those taking out loans largely reliant on local lenders and family members (only about 13% of those who had loans got them from banks). Loans are used overwhelmingly for immediate needs: 71% of those with loans use it for food and 47% use them for healthcare, while less than 5% use loans for business, investment, or agriculture (Figure 14). Moreover, due to immediate and prolonged impacts of the flooding in July and August 2015, many anticipate taking on more to cope with the worsened situation.[103]

Figure 13: Loans
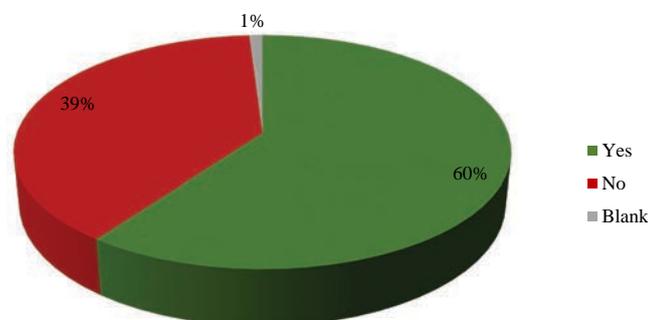
Rakhine elders in Mrauk-U said that, although government loans are available, they are dis-bursed too late for farmers, forcing them to take out higher interest loans from local lenders.[104]

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[103] Cyclone Komen Early Recovery Assessment, Rakhine State Kyauktaw, Ponnagyun, Mrauk-U and Minbya townships.August 2015.
[104] In-depth Interview. 28 March 2015. Mrauk-U Township.

Ethnic Mro and Khami leaders in Kyauktaw said a lack of capacity and resources for farming led to a "cycle of indebtedness" whereby farmers take out loans at high rates, but with insufficient capacity or knowledge to pay them off through their agricultural efforts.[105] Indeed, there is a general perception that small farmers suffer from unfavorable loan conditions: many farmers are unable to secure loans for themselves, so they rely on wealthy businessmen and community members that take out larger loans and subsequently make small loans at higher rates to those with weaker access to credit.[106] Additionally, Some Muslim villagers cited a lack of access to finance as inhibiting their entrepreneurial spirit.[107]

Figure 14: Purpose of Loans
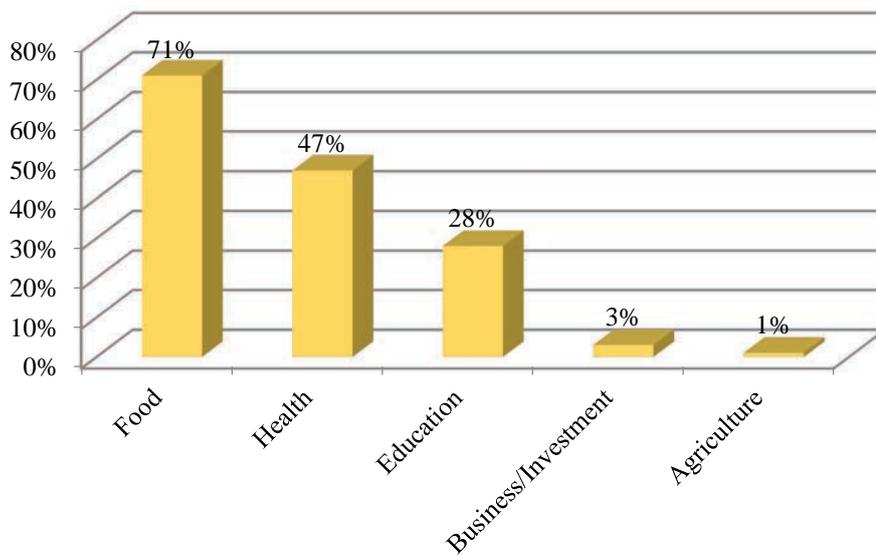
Main Expenses

Households' main expenditure is on food (74%) with healthcare costs coming in a distant second with only 13% of respondents selecting it as their main expense (Figure 15). These findings were consistent across Rakhine and Muslim communities and all other variables, including gender, age, and township.

Figure 15: Main Expense

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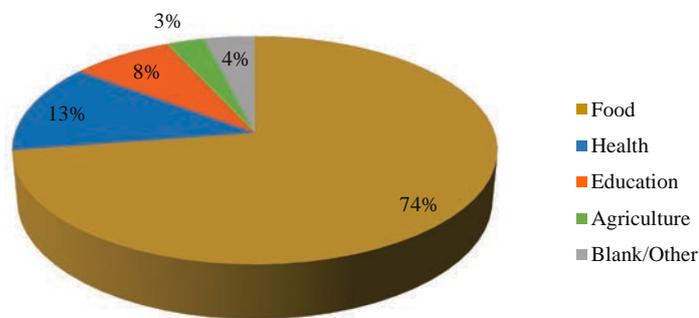
[105] In-depth Interview. 25 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township.
[106] In-depth Interview. 9 June 2015. Yangon.
[107] In-depth Interview. 26 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township.

Main Difficulties

The main difficulties faced by Rakhine and Muslim communities in the past six months are consistent with each other, although the difficulties faced by Muslims are reportedly more acute. Across all respondents, health problems and food shortages and, to a lesser extent, education, were perceived to be the biggest difficulties faced. Surprisingly, security was mentioned only rarely, with only 17% choosing it as a main difficulty (including 20% of Rakhine and 14% of Muslims) (Figure 16). In fact, among a list of five options, security was chosen least frequently, though it was mentioned as a significant concern among Rakhine and Muslims in Thandwe and by Rakhine in Buthidaung, Maungdaw, and Sittwe. Moreover, security came up frequently as a challenge in focus group discussions and interviews, especially in Buthidaung and Maungdaw.[108]

Figure 16: Main Difficulty

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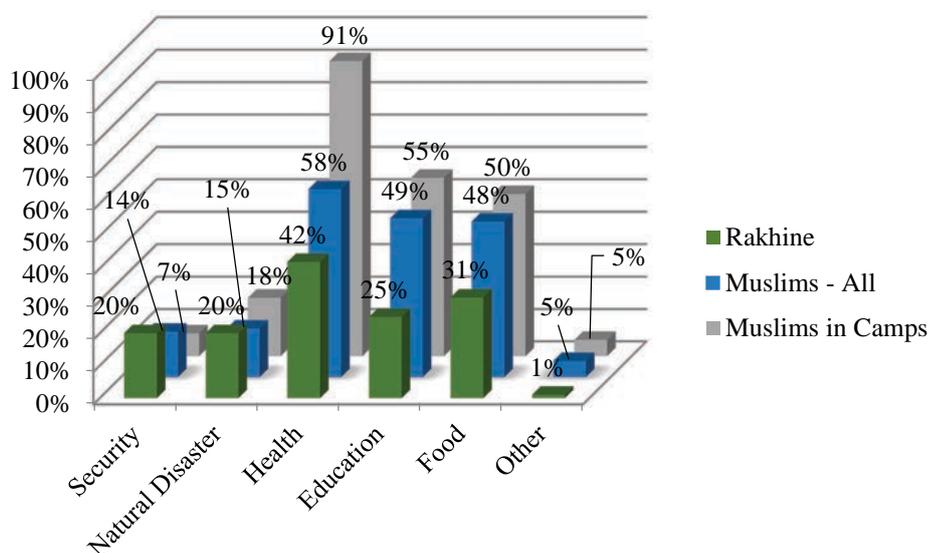
[108] Focus Group Discussions and In-depth Interviews. 15 March 2015. Buthidaung Township; Focus Group Discussions and In-depth Interviews. 14 and 18 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.

Figure 17: Main Difficulty by Township
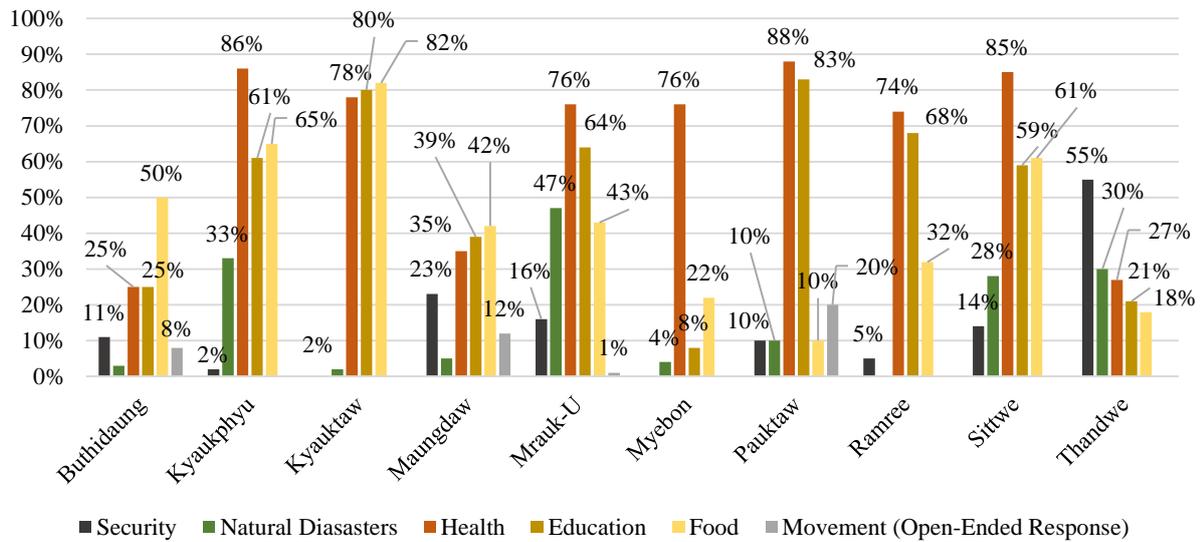
Muslims reported facing difficulties in much greater numbers than Rakhine: whereas 58% of Muslims (and 91% of Muslims in IDP camps) said they faced health difficulties, 42% of Rakhine said they faced such difficulties; although 49% of Muslims reported deficiencies in education, only 25% of Rakhine did; and while 48% of Muslims faced food shortages, only 31% of Rakhine did. Muslims in Kyaukphyu, Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, and Sittwe reported facing several difficulties simultaneously, with at least 50% of respondents from each township reporting at least three difficulties (primarily health, education, and food). In contrast, only Rakhine in Sittwe were especially negative about the difficulties they are facing, with at least 47% selecting each of the five possible answers and 96% and 83% respectively citing difficulties with food and health (Figure 17). Again, Muslim women were more pessimistic, citing greater difficulties than Muslim men (or Rakhine men or women) with healthcare, education, food shortages, and natural disasters (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Main Difficulty by Gender
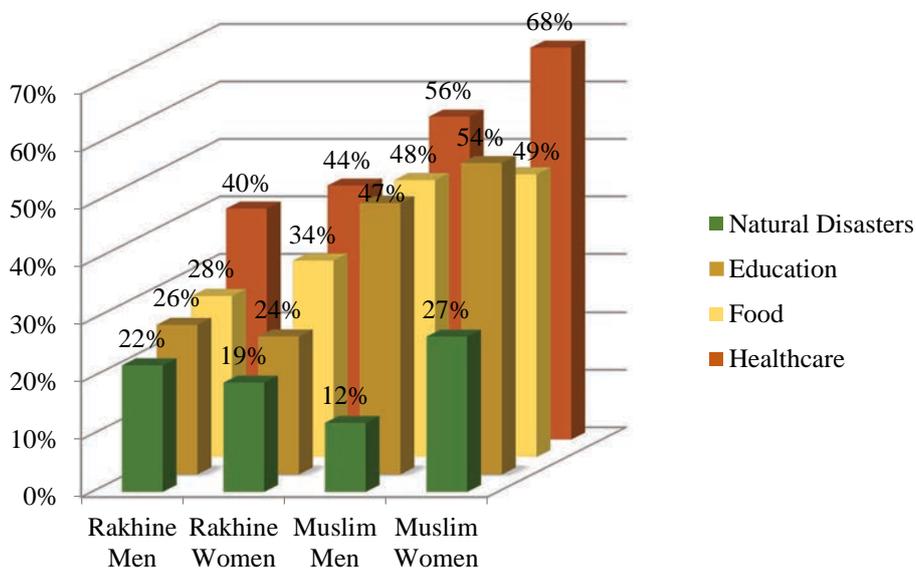
Further Insights on Gender: Issue of Women Rights

When probed about women's rights, both groups of respondents (41% of Muslims and 40% of Rakhine) agreed on the need to ensure better chances of education for women. Yet, more Rakhine (30%) than Muslims (21%) said women should get better chances of leading business activities. Similarly, more Rakhine (29%) than Muslims (20%) claimed women should get better chances of decision-making within their community. Among Muslims, while more IDPs said women should have better chances of leading business activities (26% compared to 21% Muslims overall) and of gaining decision making roles in the community (25% compared to 20% Muslims overall), they appeared less supportive of defending women's rights to education (25% compared to 41% Muslims overall) and marriage (25% compared to 32% Muslims overall) (Figure 19). An NGO worker explained that women in IDP camps felt extremely unsafe, especially using the latrines at night, and that some cases of rapes in the camps had been reported, although the victims did not have any means to denounce the aggressor.[109] On a different note, another NGO worker reported that in remote areas, especially in the northern part of the state, women were not allowed to leave the house after the sun sets and that some women had been abused after the death of their husbands, decrying that Muslim women barely had any rights.[110]

Figure 19: Openness to Improving Women Rights by Community
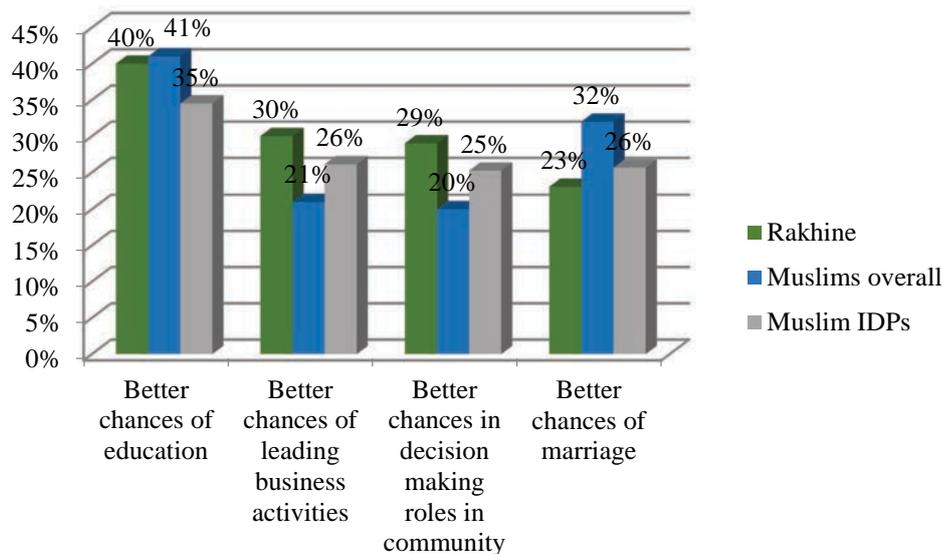
Muslims in Sittwe appeared more reluctant than elsewhere to see women granted more rights, with only 26% of Muslim respondents affirming women should get better chances of education, 10% better chances of leading business activities, 17% better chances in decision-making roles in the community and 19% better chances of marriage (Figure 20). By contrast, Muslim respondents in Thandwe appeared more willing to promote women's rights, with 58% affirming women should get better chances of education, 39% better chances of leading business activities, 42% better chances in decision-making roles in the community and 55% better chances of marriage.

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[109] In-depth Interview. 28 August 2015. Yangon.
[110] Ibid.

Figure 20: Openness to Improving Women Rights between the Muslim Community in Sittwe & Thandwe
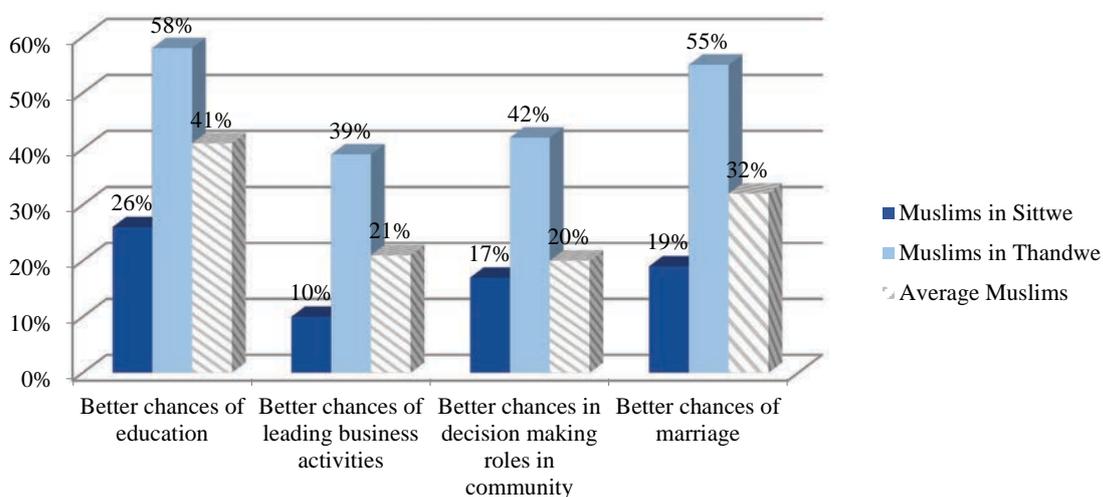
Muslim women respondents did not appear to favor better chances of education more than men (38% for women compared to 42% for men). In contrast, Rakhine women felt more strongly about women's rights than men on all fronts, especially in terms of education, with 50% of Rakhine women reporting women should get better chances of education compared to 30% of Rakhine men (Figure 21). "Even for Muslim women who graduated from universities, there are no job opportunities. They stay inside because it is in the culture of Islam. This comes from our ancestors," explained a Muslim woman in Buthidaung.[111]

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[111] In-depth Interview. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.

Figure 21: Openness to Improving Women Rights by Gender

a-Rakhine
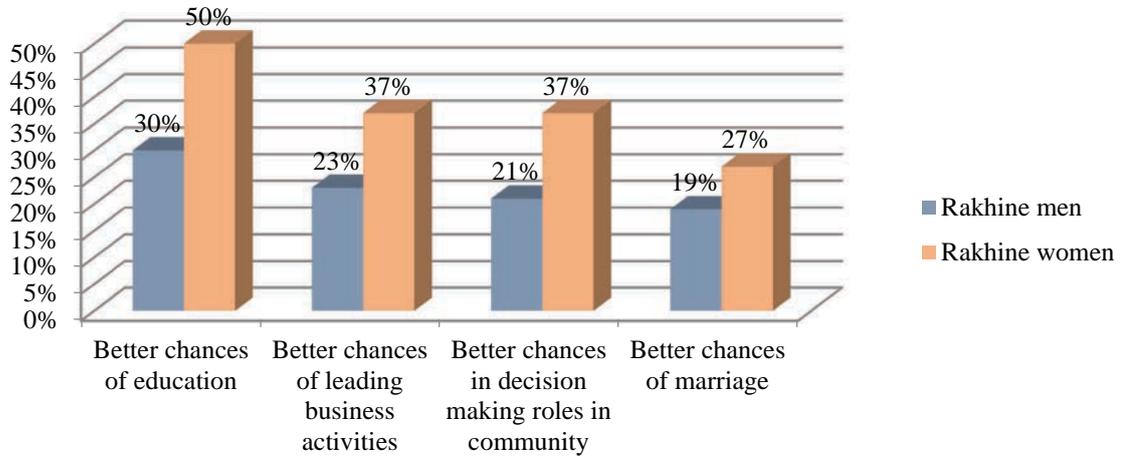
a-Muslim
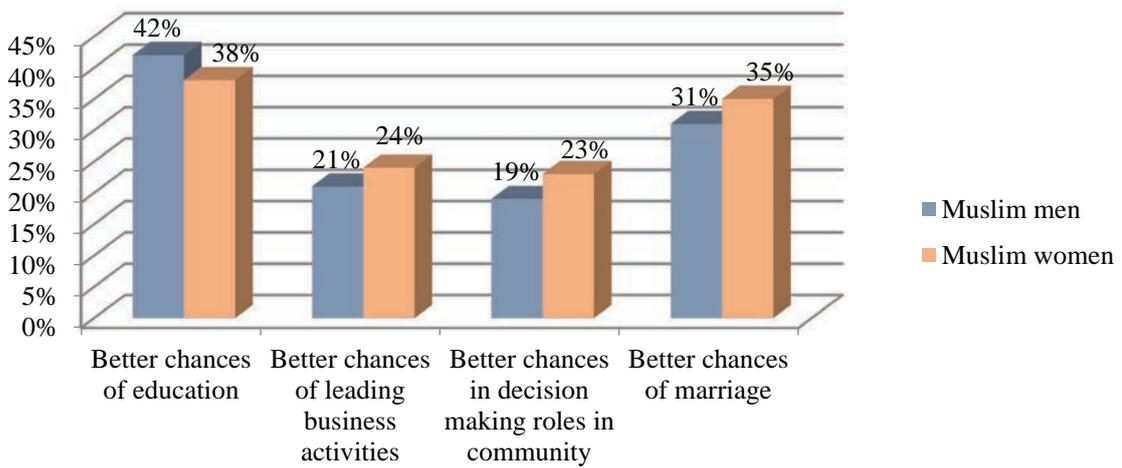
Future Concerns

Rakhine were also somewhat more optimistic than Muslims about their future living conditions and the difficulties they will face in the next six months. While a large majority of Rakhine and Muslims were unsure about their living conditions over the next three years, 29% of Rakhine reported expecting improvements and 23% reported expecting deterioration (Figure 22) compared to only 19% of Muslims who reported anticipating conditions to improve and 33% who believed they will deteriorate (Figure 23). Interestingly, Rakhine were most optimistic in Kyaukphyu and Ramree, perhaps because Rakhine were less affected by conflict and accounted for the majority in these areas, while Muslims were most pessimistic in these same areas, perhaps because they are isolated in camps and are few in number. Overall, 41% of Muslim camp residents reported expecting conditions to deteriorate in the future and a further 38% were unsure (only 8% expect improvements) (Figure 24). Whereas Muslims appeared more worried about health, education, and food over the next six months, Rakhines' biggest reported concern was natural disaster, especially in Myebon where it was mentioned by 81% of those surveyed. Again, few reported security as a serious concern, though Muslims mentioned it frequently in Mrauk-U and Thandwe and Rakhine in Maungdaw, Sittwe, and Thandwe.

Figure 22: Living Conditions in the Future—Rakhine
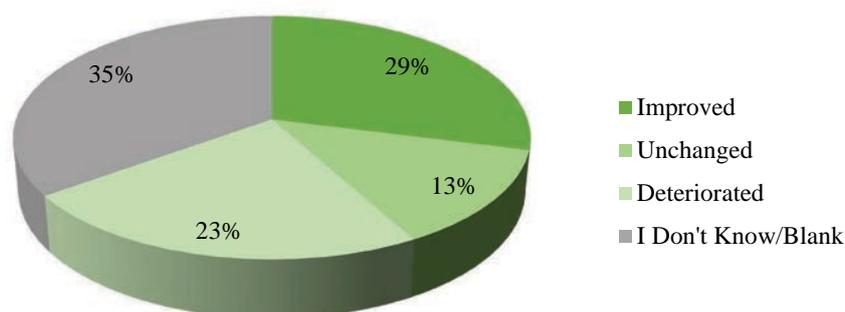
Figure 23: Living Conditions in the Future—Muslims
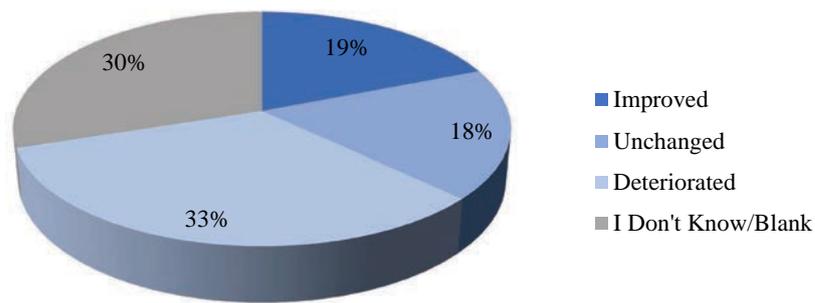
Figure 24: Living Conditions in the Future—Muslims in Camps
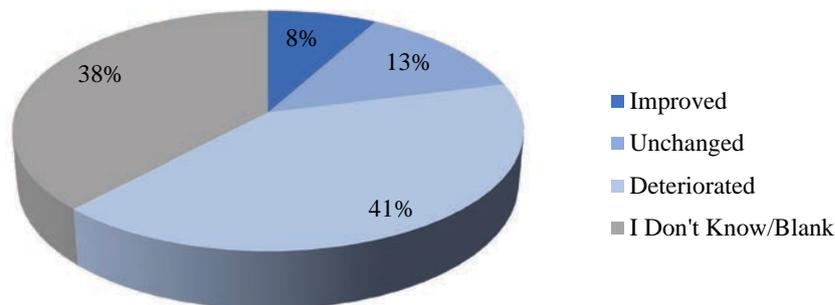
Displacement[112]

Intercommunal violence in Rakhine State broke out in early June 2012 and flared again in October 2012. 10,100 buildings, including homes, churches and public buildings were damaged or destroyed and 140,000 people were displaced (95% Muslim; 5% Rakhine).[113] There were two distinct categories of IDPs: those displaced from urban areas and those from rural areas. The IDP camps in rural Sittwe were home to 88,500 Muslim IDPs (63% of all IDPs) who fled from Sittwe and surrounding areas. Most IDPs originating from rural areas were generally displaced only a small distance from their original villages.

Overall, 46% of total respondents of the survey reported having been displaced at least once (Figure 25). Amongst these, more Muslim (53%) respondents than Rakhine (42%) reported so. Women (51%) also appeared to have been subject to displacement more than men (42%), while there was no significant difference across ages. While respondents in Buthidaung and Maungdaw were less affected by displacement (10% and 24% respectively), respondents in Sittwe were particularly badly affected: 86% of Sittwe respondents reported having been displaced at least once, likely because a significant percentage of them were living in IDP camps (Figure 26).

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[112] It is however important to note that respondents likely understood displacement not only as a result of conflict, but also of natural disasters, which accounts for the fact that almost half of respondents reported having been displaced at least once; that the townships of Kyaukphyu, Pauktaw and Myebon have been considerably affected by natural disasters, such as Cyclone Giri in 2010.

[113] Shelter Case Studies. Myanmar - Inter-communal violence. Shelter Projects 2013-2014. Available at: http://www.sheltercasestudies.org/shelterprojects2013-2014/SP13-14_A16-Myanmar-2012.pdf.

Figure 25: Levels of Displacement in Rakhine State
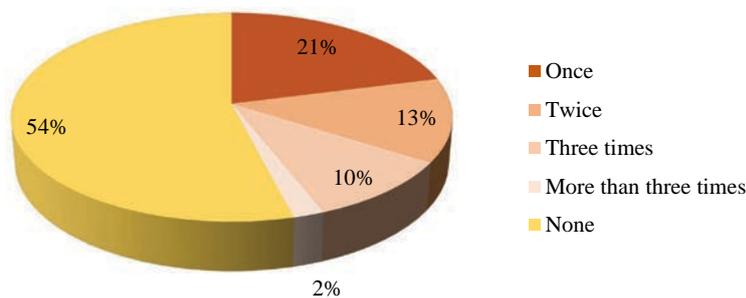
Figure 26: Percentage of Persons Displaced at least Once by Township[114]
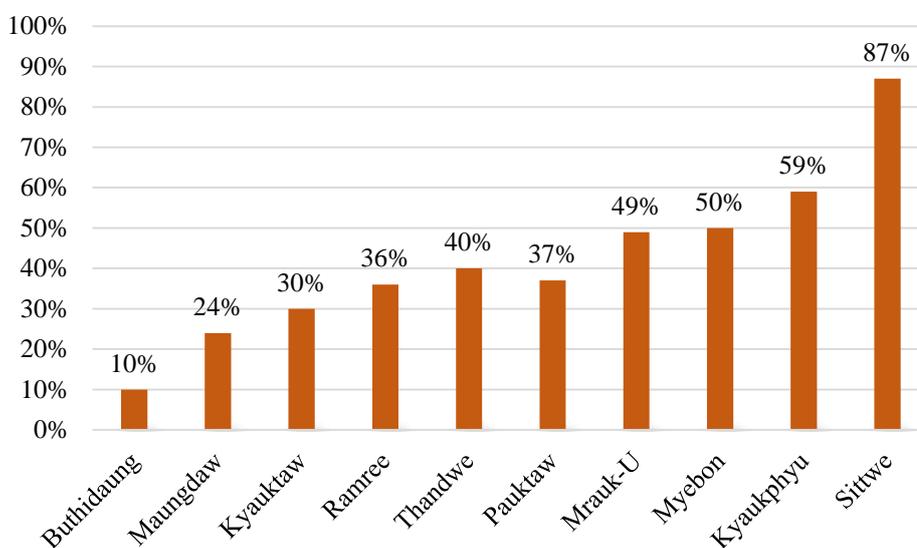
This issue of displacement in highly-affected townships like Sittwe was portrayed by interviewees not only as a traumatic experience but also as a matter of serious concern both for the present and the future:"the biggest challenge is that the majority of us have been displaced and we won't be relocated in the future," expressed a group of Muslim men in a camp on the outskirts of Sittwe. "Yet, it is impossible for us to stay in this camp forever."[115]

While return will certainly prove more difficult in politically sensitive areas with large displaced populations like Sittwe, the issue of displacement is being addressed by the government in some other areas.

The issues of displacement, return, relocation and local integration are highly fluid processes in Rakhine State, evolving according to the specificities of local contexts. Overall, the first phase of the government plan is to support 5,000 families, i.e., approximately 25,000 IDPs in seven townships to return. Return for IDPs has already started in Kyauktaw, for instance, where those displaced near their place of origin have started to return, while those displaced further away from their place of origin will be provided with land and houses by the government in new locations. In particular, in Taung Bwe and Ah Lel, about half of the long-hous-

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[114] NB : This is not the percentage of total population displaced at least once from the township, but the percentage of the sample population displaced at least once from the township.
[115] Focus Group Discussion. 21 March 2015. Sittwe Township.

es had been dismantled at the time of writing and families were given $1,000 to rebuild an individual house. Overall, villagers in this location reported being generally satisfied with the new arrangements,[116] which contrasts with the appraisal of shelter conditions by Muslims in Kyauktaw overall, 63% of whom report their current housing to be poor or very poor.

From mid-March 2015 onwards, return also started for small numbers of Muslim IDPs in Minbya (7 villages), Mrauk-U (4 villages) and Rathedaung (2 villages). In Maungdaw, some Rakhine IDPs have also started to return to their place of origin, as in Pauktaw, although the process has not yet started for Muslim IDPs.

Generally, this illustrates a positive step, since the alternative provided to IDPs is better than the long-shelters in which they have lived since 2012. The process has not triggered major concerns, and the fact that people have been allowed to directly participate in it through the construction of their own individual houses, illustrates a rare flexibility, although it is too early to draw definitive conclusions.

For now, return and relocation in Sittwe, Myebon, Kyaukphyu, Ramree and the majority of areas in Pauktaw (mostly Muslim areas) is still pending. Resentment about the impossibility of Muslim IDPs' return to their place of origin is particularly high in Kyaukphyu, where most houses were not destroyed by communal conflict and remain intact.[117] An alternative plan was not accepted by the Muslim community because the new location offered, at the bottom of a mountain, is vulnerable to cyclones and flooding during the rainy season. The fact that the local communities were able to refuse a proposed location also highlights a form of progress in the ability of IDPs to shape of their future. Meanwhile, the Rakhine community in Kyauk-phyu has resisted the return of Muslims to their original location.

Housing Conditions

Overall, residents expressed a very low satisfaction with their housing condition. While only 12% reported the condition of their shelter to be very good or good, 38% designated it as fair, and 47% reported their shelter to be poor or very poor (Figure 27). Respondents reporting no income or a poor income were more likely to describe their shelter as poor or very poor (62%).

Figure 27: Shelter Conditions in Rakhine State

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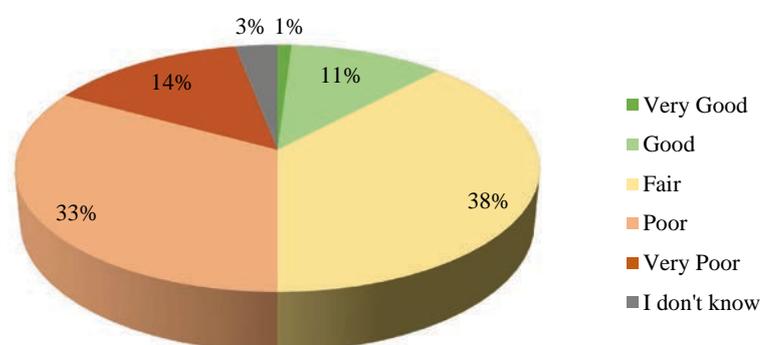
[116] In-depth Interview. 25 March 2015. Kaung Htoke, Kyauktaw Township; In-depth interview. 26 March 2015. Ah Pauk Wa, Kyauktaw Townhsip.

[117] In-depth Interview. 9 June 2015. Yangon.

Although the general condition of housing was perceived as poor by both groups, the feeling was more acute among Muslims, with 56% of Muslim respondents saying that the condition of their shelter was poor or very poor, compared to 40% of Rakhine respondents (Figure 28).

Figure 28: Comparison of Shelter Conditions per Community
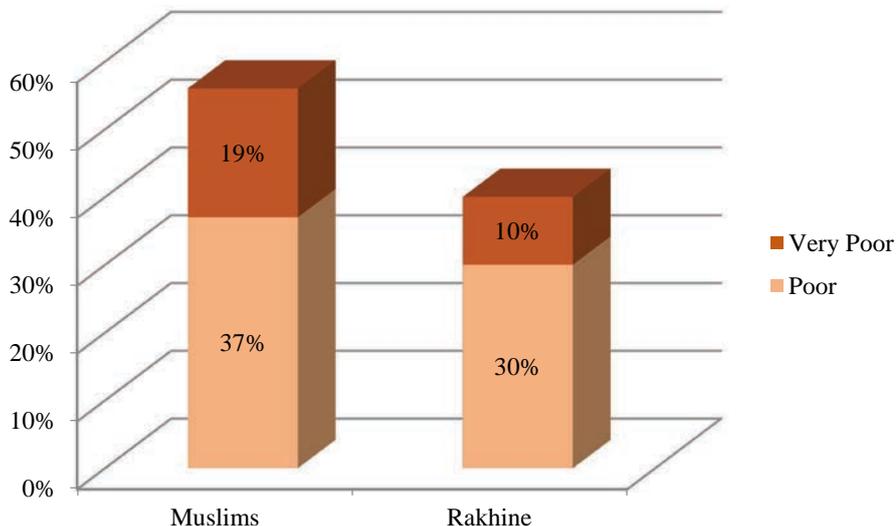
Within communities there were wide discrepancies across townships. For Muslims, the situation was reported as better in Buthidaung Township, with 26% of respondents assessing their shelter condition as very good or good and Myebon Township (28% very good or good), while it was perceived as worse in Kyaukphyu (98% poor and very poor), Mrauk-U (78% poor and very poor), Ramree (89% poor and very poor), Sittwe (42% very poor) and Pauktaw (44% very poor) (Figure 29). Moreover, in general, Muslims in camps were much more likely to report the condition of their shelter as very poor (37% compared to 13% for Muslims in villages) (Figure 30).

Figure 29: Shelter Conditions for Muslims By Township
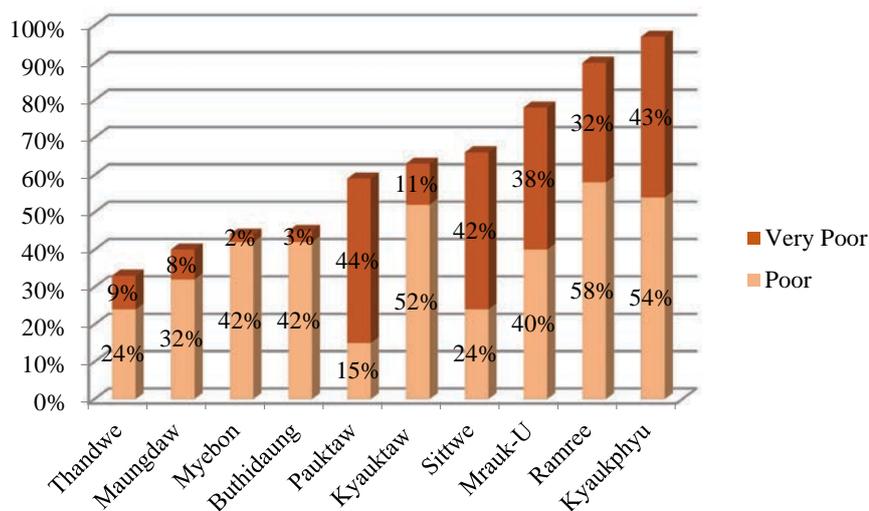
It should be noted, however, that the low rating of shelter conditions in Ramree may not reflect the situation on the ground because of the very small number of Muslims respondents in this township (19). The low numbers of Muslim respondents in Myebon reporting their shelter conditions as poor or very poor can be explained by observations that Myebon sur-

vey respondents were able to construct their own shelters supplementing building materials provided by the government with small amounts of income (from, for example, work with NGOs or daily labour on construction within the camps).

Figure 30: Poor/Very Poor Shelter Conditions for Muslims in Camps Compared to Villages
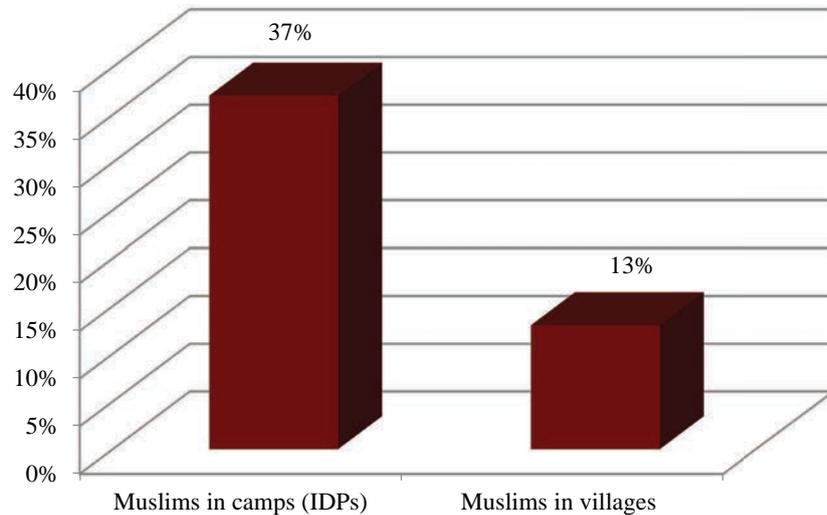
This poor appraisal of the current housing situation by respondents—especially from the Muslim IDP community—was confirmed by in-depth interviews. A Muslim IDP living in Kyaukphyu explained: "We live with all the family in one same room. In these long shelters we are deprived of any kind of privacy. It is so noisy and hot..."[118] This was corroborated by a group of Muslim women in a camp in Sittwe: "During the rainy season, the whole camp is muddy and flooded and we have holes in the roof. Most of the time, babies cannot fall asleep because of the heat, and many people in the camp do not have enough money to build a bathroom. This is especially problematic for young women who have to go to the well and get water to shower, without any privacy."[119] Men in the same camp added: "this place is not for human beings, it is barely for animals."[120]

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[118] In-depth Interview. 27 March 2015. Kyaukphyu Township.
[119] Focus Group Discussion. 21 March 2015. Sittwe Township.
[120] Focus Group Discussion. 21 March 2015. Sittwe Township.

Even some villagers who were provided with new houses by the government expressed some dissatisfaction, as in a Kaman village in Thandwe: "The government gave building rights to contractors but we did not have any say over how our new houses were built."[121]A Rakhine expert indeed confirmed that this issue of contractors was increasingly problematic across Rakhine State, especially in Mrauk-U and Kyauktaw.[122] Village and camp administrators are often accused of misusing funds and of using low quality materials.

Among ethnic Rakhine, the situation appeared better in Maungdaw and Ramree, with 41% and 25% of respondents respectively reporting living in a very good or good shelter, while it seemed worse in Mrauk-U, with 70% of respondents saying their shelter is poor or very poor (Figure 31). Additionally, more Rakhine in rural areas (46%) reported their shelter to be poor or very poor than Rakhine in urban areas (34%) (Figure 32).

Figure 31: Shelter Conditions for Rakhine by Township
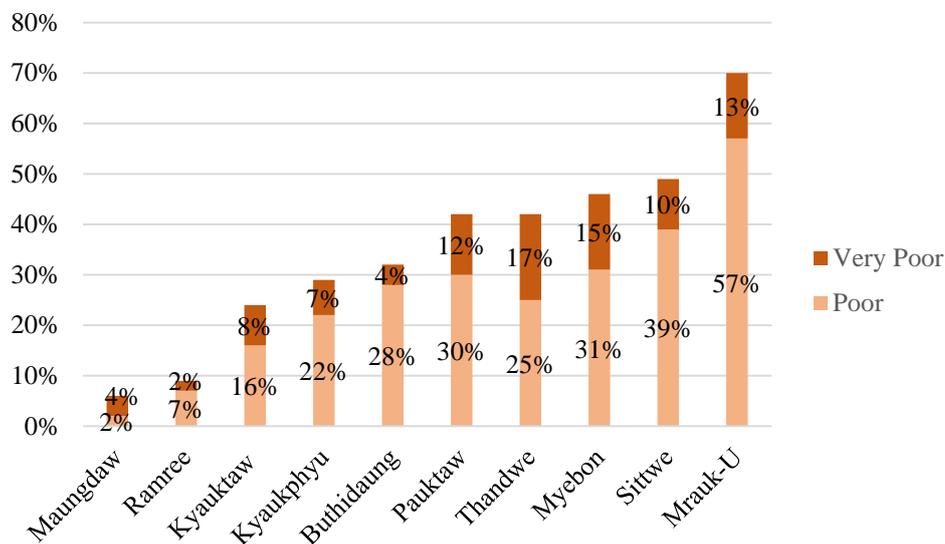
Figure 32: Shelter Conditions for Rakhine—Comparison of Rural (Villages) and Urban Areas (Wards)

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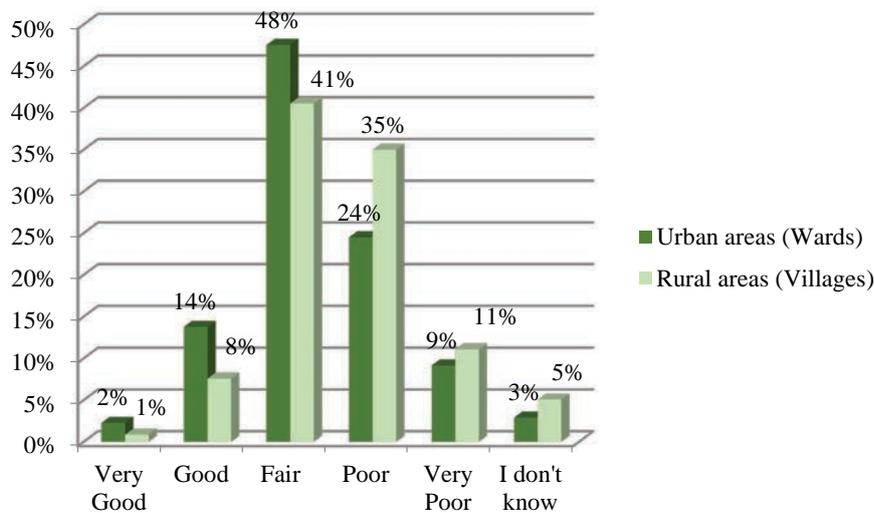
[121] In-depth Interview. 01 April 2015. Kaman, village, Thandwe Township.
[122] In-depth Interview. 9 June 2015. Yangon.

Finally, most respondents (59%) reported having enough blankets and clothing, while low-income respondents fared slightly poorer, with only 50% reporting having enough clothing and 53% having blankets. Here again, there was a wide gap between camp and village residents, with 35% of IDPs reporting sufficient clothing compared to 62% of Muslim villagers (62%). Unsurprisingly, Mrauk-U stood out for this indicator, with only 20% of Muslims and 40% of Rakhine reporting having enough clothing and blankets, 32% and 28% respectively. Although no questions were included in the survey concerning mosquito nets, in-depth interviews with local communities and consultations with humanitarian partners highlighted the lack of mosquito nets in the shelters of most households.

Food Security and Nutrition

Overall, the findings from the survey highlight that access to adequate food was rated as poor or very poor by 65% of respondents (Figure 33). Access to adequate food appeared especially severe for Mrauk-U and Kyauktaw, where 87% and 79% respectively said their access was either poor or very poor, and for respondents reporting no income or a very poor level of income, 70% of whom rated their access to food as poor or very poor.

There were some distinctions, however, between isolated and non-isolated areas. On the one hand, in some isolated villages—even some of those affected by violence—access to food remains adequate, since many people still have access to lands and can continue growing food and raising livestock. Northern Rakhine State, however, is an exception, with high population density and low levels of arable land triggering high rates of malnutrition. In Kyaukphyu, Sittwe and Myebon, where the majority of the Muslim population lives in highly populated IDP camps, food security is an issue. Fear of movement or movement restrictions limits income generating activities for large segments of the population, who have no or very little access to productive lands and markets and rely almost exclusively on food assistance.[123]

Figure 33: Access to Adequate Food in Rakhine State

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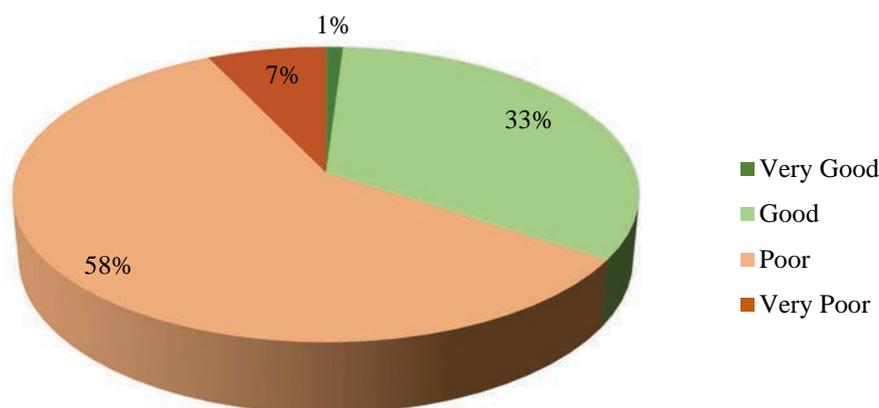
[123] In-depth Interview. 23 March 2015. Sittwe Township.

While women from both communities appeared slightly more affected by the lack of access to food than men (Figure 34), no significant differences were reported about access to food across age groups (Figure 35).

Figure 34: Access to Adequate Food by Gender
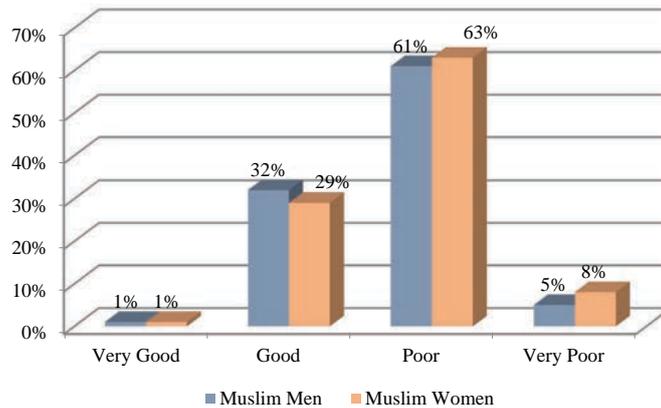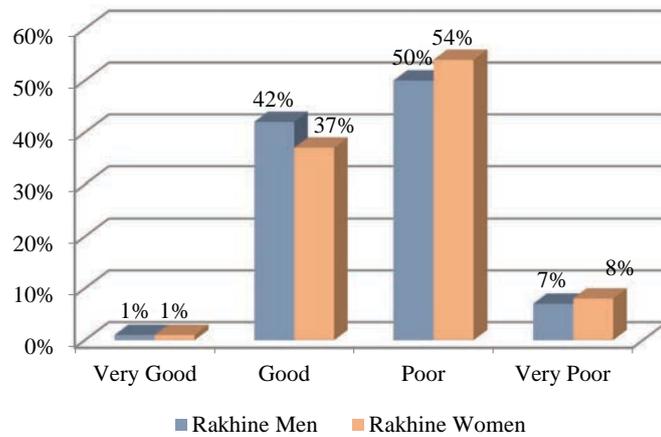
Figure 35: Access to Adequate Food by Age

a-Rakine
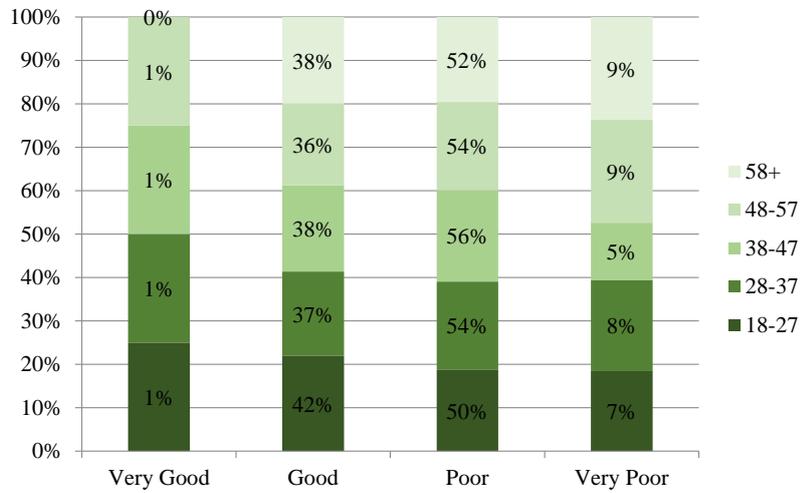
b-Muslims
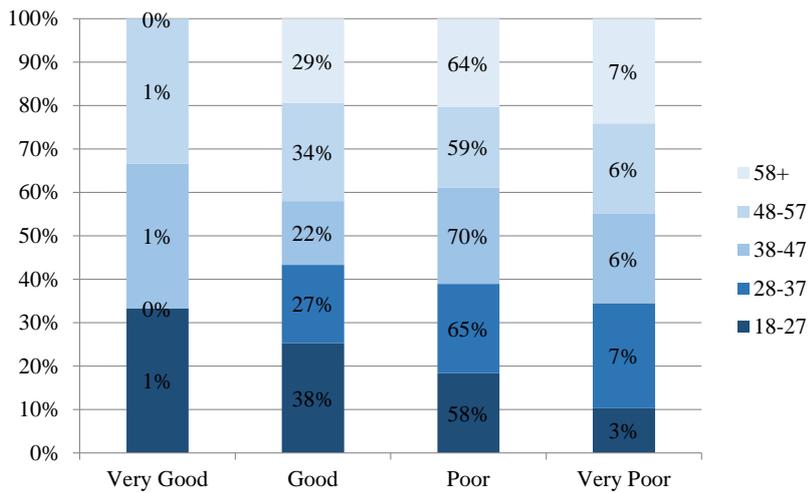
The majority of respondents also reported that access to food has deteriorated (54%) in the last three years, and only 9% thought access has improved, with the rest reporting access as unchanged (Figure 36).

Figure 36: Access to Food Compared to Three Years Ago in Rakhine State
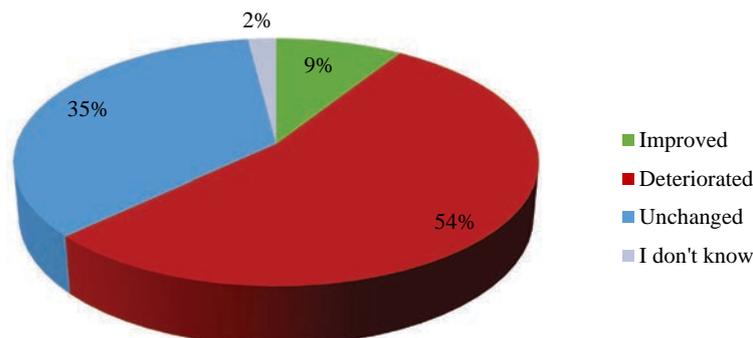
Again, low-income respondents appeared to be worst affected, with 62% reporting a deterioration in their access to food, even though 50% of respondents in this group continue to purchase food for themselves (a smaller number, 37%, receive it from humanitarian partners). Geographically, Sittwe stands out with 72% of those surveyed saying their access to food has deteriorated in the past three years, with access nearly as bad in Kyauktaw (70%) and Maungdaw (62%) (Figure 37). Indeed, as a Yangon-based Rakhine expert explained, after 2012, many people in Rakhine State lost their livelihoods and income, which has considerably impacted their access to food, thereby explaining the deterioration in access to food compared to three years ago.

Figure 37: Deterioration in Access to Food Compared to Three Years Ago by Township
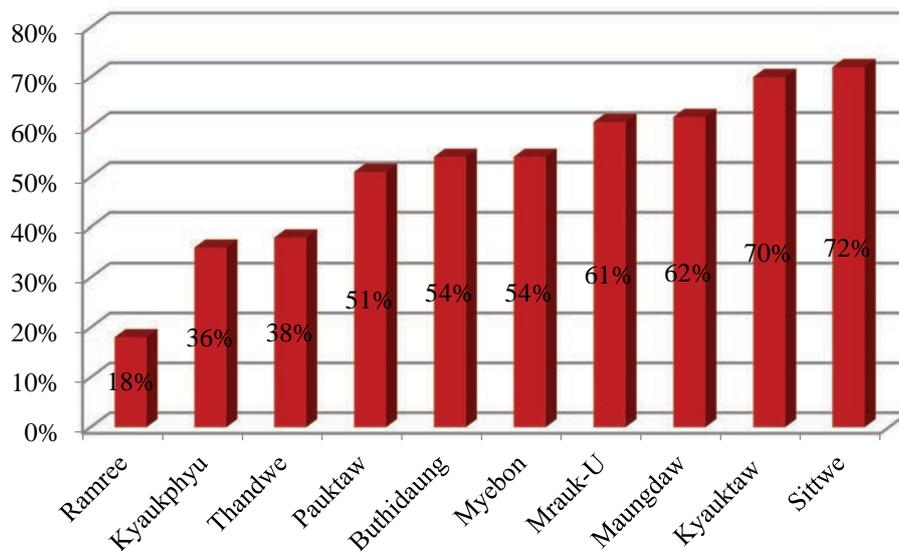
"The food security situation is getting worse and worse, and most Muslim families eat almost exclusively rice," explained a Muslim woman from Northern Rakhine currently living in Maungdaw, blaming a reliance on other parts of Rakhine and Myanmar for their food.[124] Another Muslim woman from Maungdaw, who worked for the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) for years, corroborated this: "The government took away our farms. Because of the restrictions placed on us, we cannot go to the forest or the river, and most of us are too poor to buy food. The consequence is that the Muslim community in Maungdaw does not generally have enough food, and that so many are fleeing to Malaysia, with the hope of finding a job and sending money back to feed their families."[125] According to the WFP, "the main problem is that, compared to the situation before the violence broke out, the forest and the river are not accessible anymore for the Muslim community. It has thus become increasingly difficult for the people to reach a satisfactory nutrition level, mainly because of the restrictions imposed by the government, which have considerably reduced livelihoods opportunities and thus their access to food."[126]

At the community level, although both Muslims and Rakhine rated their access to food as poor, the situation was perceived as slightly more acute for Muslims than Rakhine: 68% of Muslims reported their access to adequate food as being poor or very poor, as opposed to

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[124] In-depth Interview. 14 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[125] In-depth Interview. 16 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[126] In-depth Interview. 16 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.

60% of Rakhine (Figure 38). Again, the situation in terms of access to food appeared much poorer in areas where a large proportion of the Muslim population resides in IDP camps, with 93% of Muslim respondents in Kyaukphyu and 88% in Sittwe reporting their access to food as poor or very poor. This was echoed in interviews as well: "Our children see us eating other people's food. This is not a good example, this is not the way we want to educate our children, but we don't have a choice," explained a Muslim man in a camp in Sittwe. "I leave my house before my kids get up, because I am ashamed not to be able to give them anything if they ask me for food or money."[127]

Figure 38: Comparison of Access to Food between Rakhine and Muslims
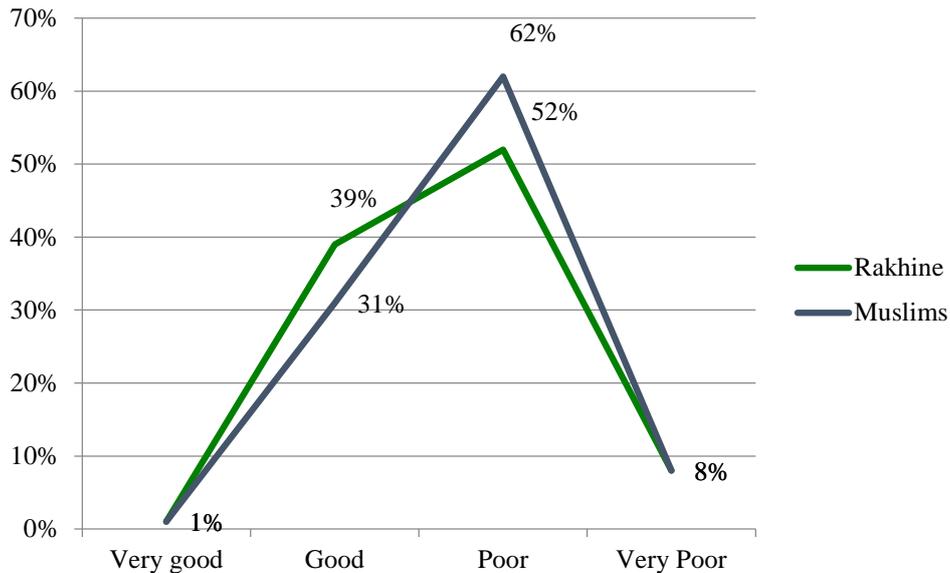
Figure 39: Change in Access to Food in the Last Three Years

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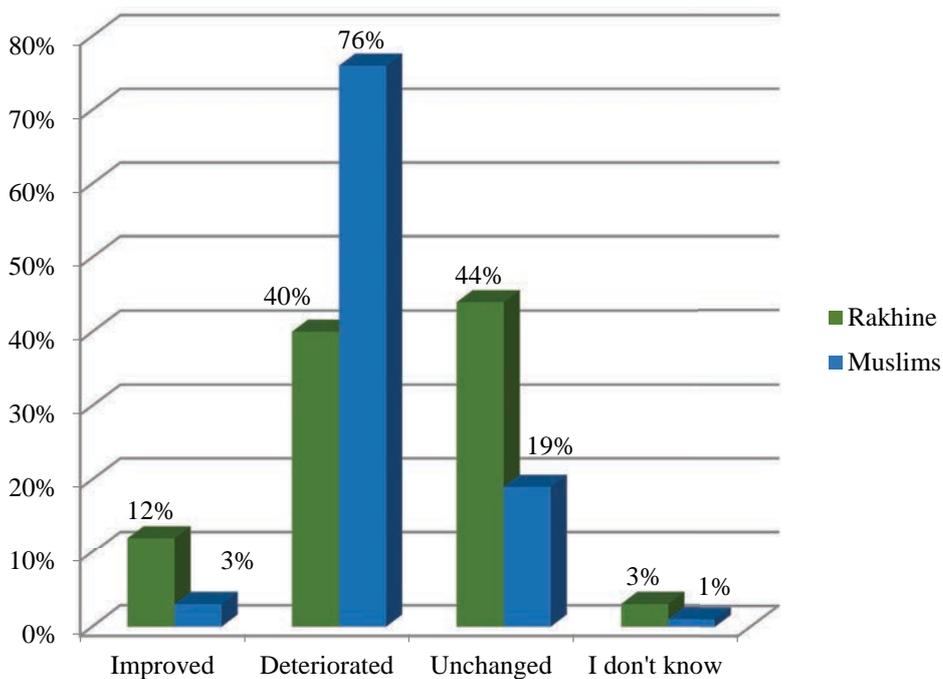
[127] Focus Group Discussion. 21 March 2015. Sittwe Township.

For Rakhine respondents, the situation appeared worse in Mrauk-U and Myebon Townships, where 87% and 74% respectively assessed their access to adequate food as poor or very poor. While a plurality of Rakhine said access to food has remained unchanged (44%) in the last three years (compared to 40% deteriorated), a vast majority (76%) of Muslim respondents reported a deterioration in their access to food over the last three years (Figure 39). Nearly all Muslims living in camps reported their access to food as having deteriorated (90%).

Figure 40: Access to Food for Muslims—Comparison of IDP Camps and Villages
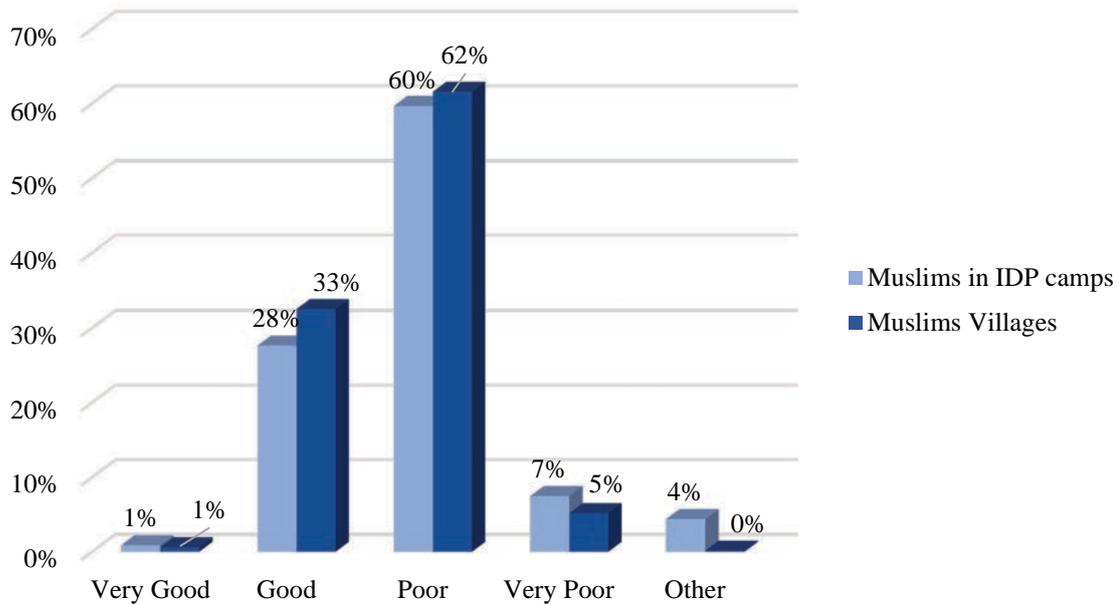
Figure 41: Change in Access to Food in the Last Three Years for Muslims—Comparison of IDP Camps and Villages
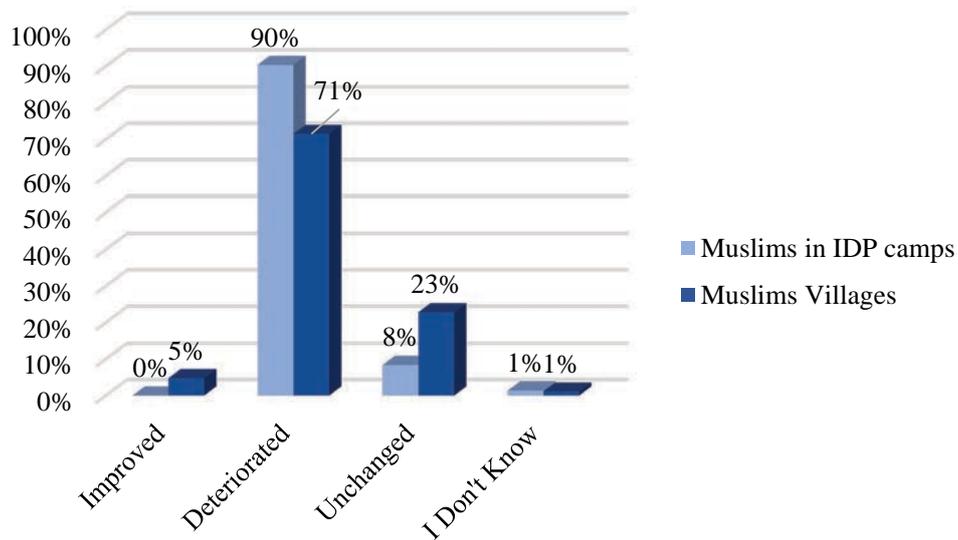
No significant distinctions were reported between Muslims in IDP camps and Muslims in villages regarding access to food (Figure 40). Yet more Muslims in IDP camps (90%) reported a deterioration of the situation than Muslims in villages (71%). The latter were also more likely to report that access to food has remained the same more than the former (23% compared to 8%) (Figure 41).

Among Rakhine, respondents from urban areas reported better access to food than respondents in rural areas (Figure 42). This can be explained by the fact that urban dwellers are wealthier and have better access to markets and products. Yet both groups reported the same level of deterioration (44% in urban areas and 45% in rural areas reported access to food to have deteriorated in the past three years).

Figure 42: Access to Food for Rakhine—Comparison of Urban and Rural Areas
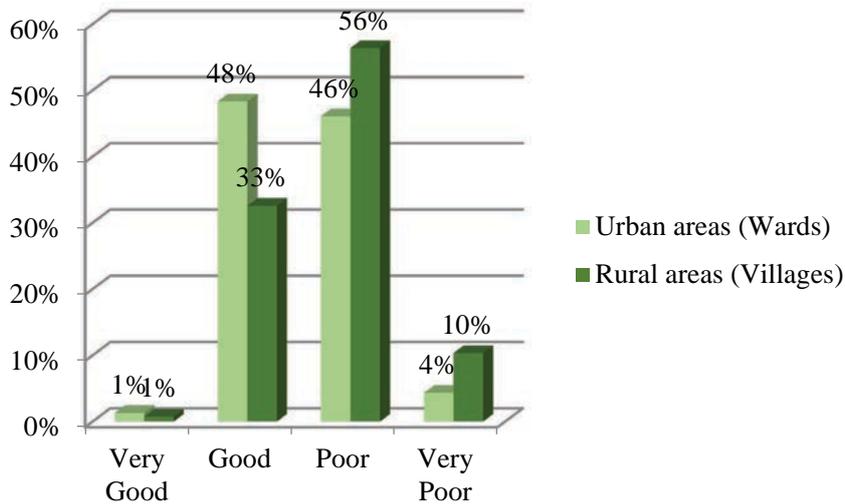
Figure 43: Source of Food for Rakhine
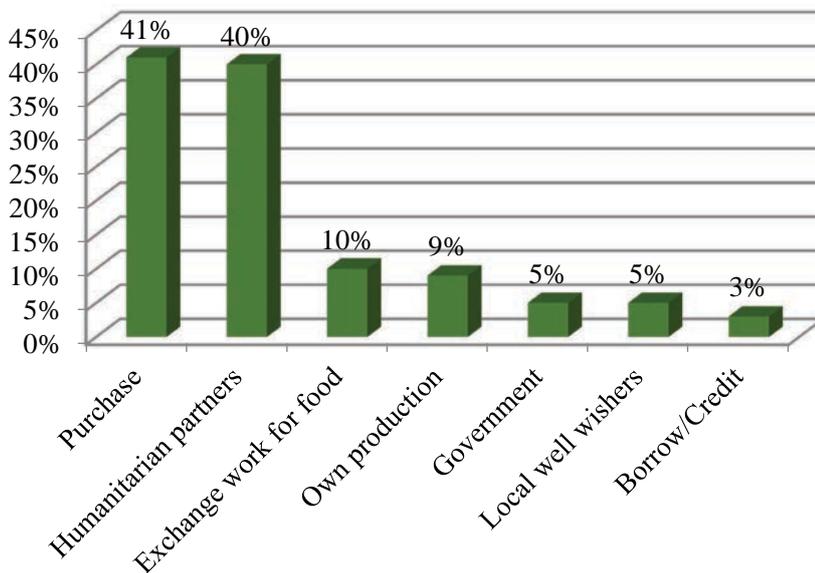
It is also interesting to note differences in the source of food for Rakhine and Muslims. Within the Rakhine community, an overwhelming majority of respondents purchase food (68%) (Figure 43), especially in Thandwe (84%), while only 20% receives food from humanitarian partners. Moreover, while the level of responses citing "own production" is similar for Rakhine respondents in urban (11%) and rural areas (12%), Rakhine respondents in urban areas tend to rely more on humanitarian partners (29%) than their rural counterparts (14%) (Figure 44). As the FAO explained, substantial numbers of households in Rakhine State have no food stocks, and in many cases, are dependent on fluctuating market prices to meet the

majority of their food needs.[128] To be sure, the floodings in July-August 2015 have worsened this situation.[129]

Figure 44: Source of Food for Rakhine—Comparison of Urban (Wards) and Rural (Villages) Areas
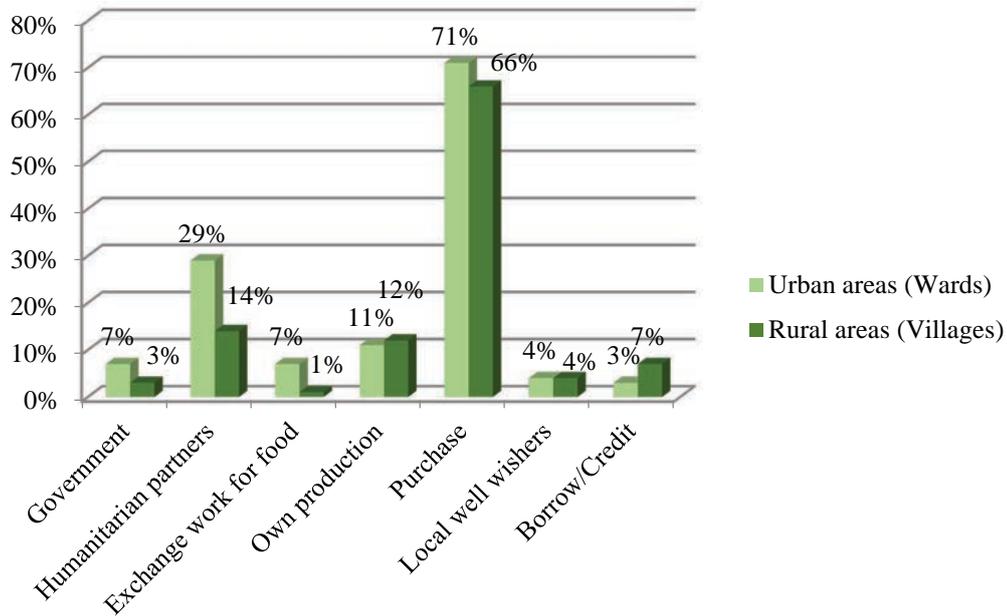
That said, there were significant distinctions between townships: in Maungdaw, for example, 54% of Rakhine reported receiving food from humanitarian partners compared to only 2% of Muslims.

Among Muslim respondents, 41% reported purchasing their food (Figure 45), especially in Buthidaung (88%) and Maungdaw (70%), while 40% reported receiving food from humanitarian partners, especially in Sittwe (95%), Ramree (100%), and Kyaukphyu (93%), areas where a high proportion of Muslims live in IDP camps. Indeed, Muslims residing in camps reported being much more reliant on humanitarian assistance than villagers (91% compared to 21%).

IDPs receive monthly food rations consisting of rice, cooking oil, beans, and salt from the WFP. However, the WFP estimates that across Rakhine State about 20% of food rations are sold by Muslim IDPs, in part to Rakhine villages, in order to obtain different or more diversified products.[130] This was confirmed by most interviewees in the camps: "The ration we get from WFP helps us to feed all the family but it is very basic. So, when we want fish or meat for our kids, we sell the oil from our ration in the village, in order to buy other products. We never keep the cash for us, it is only to try and improve what our kids eat."[131] Firewood, which is very expensive, is not provided in the ration, and is very difficult for IDPs to obtain given the current economic situation.[132]

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[128] Interview. 12 July 2015. Yangon.
[129] MYANMAR: Floods and Cyclone Response. Multi-cluster/sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA) report (as of 03 Sep 2015). Available at : http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/MIRA%20report_FINAL.pdf.
[130] In-depth Interview. 23 March 2015. Sittwe Township.
[131] Focus Group Discussion. 21 March 2015. Sittwe township.
[132] In-depth Interview. 9 June 2015. Yangon.

Figure 45: Source of Food for Muslims (IDPs and non-IDPs)
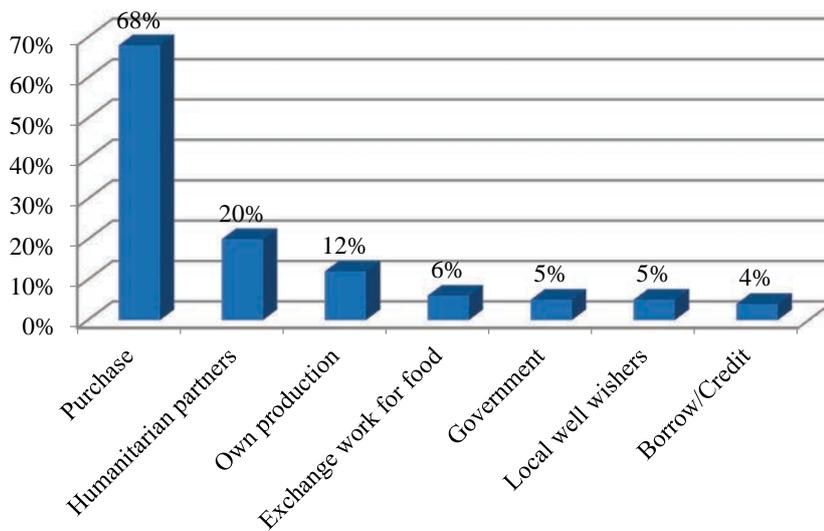
Furthermore, as a Rakhine expert based in Yangon explained, WFP provides 0.45 kg per person, while the actual need is 1.3 kg. The rations are collected and distributed by camp management committees, triggering concerns that they overestimate the number of camp residents and fail to distribute the full rations so as to benefit personally.

This food assistance, which mainly targets Muslim IDPs, serves to exacerbate tensions between both communities. The discrepancy between the percentage of Muslims and Rakhine receiving food assistance (despite similar reports of poor access to adequate food) combined with the fact that Muslims sell portions of their food ration fuels the perception of many Rakhine that humanitarian actors are biased in favor of Muslims and that Muslims are not actually in need of food assistance. "WFP only provides supplies to Muslims while both sides suffer from poverty," complained a Rakhine man in Maungdaw, before adding: "There is no justice from INGOs, they support only Bengalis."[133] This was corroborated by a Rakhine man in Buthidaung: "We never got anything from those organisations. We don't need them anyway. Since they don't help Buddhist people, they can leave our country."[134]

Figure 46: Source of Food for Muslims—Comparison of IDP Camps and Villages

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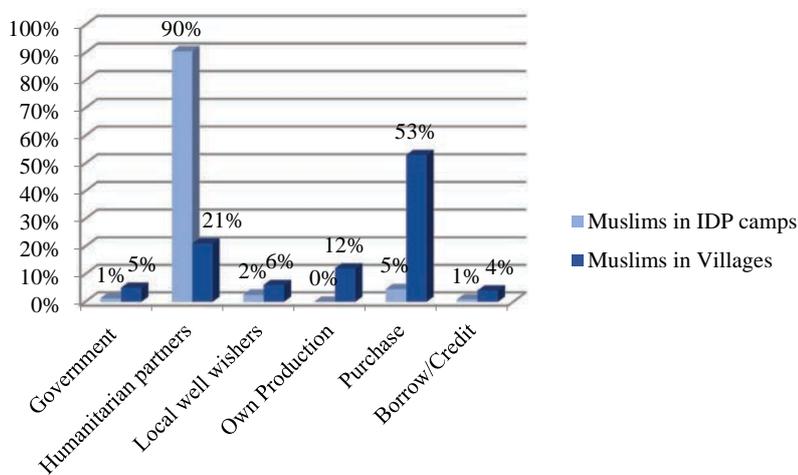
[133] In-depth Interview. 17 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[134] In-depth Interview. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.

Despite food assistance targeting mainly Muslims, there are significant differences between IDP camps and villages. Ninety percent of Muslims in camps reported receiving food from humanitarian partners, as opposed to 21% of Muslims in villages. Similarly, 53% of Muslims in villages said they received food from their own production, as opposed to 5% of Muslims in IDP camps (Figure 46).

According to WFP, this heavy reliance on humanitarian aid in camps is becoming increasingly problematic: "There is no more food emergency in the camps. This does not mean that there are no needs anymore. But nutrition levels in the camps are, in general, less alarming than in Northern Rakhine State, notably in Maungdaw. We [humanitarian organisations] have created a serious issue of dependency: the main problem is that there is a critical lack of livelihoods activities, which makes them [Muslims] exclusively dependent on food aid because they do not have any other alternative. An improvement in terms of food security will thus depend on the willingness of other agencies to provide more livelihoods activities."[135]

Access to Drinking Water and Sanitation

The geological setting of Rakhine state presents a high degree of complexity. Very dissimilar conditions are found in locations only a couple of kilometers apart and both the quality and the sources of water differ widely. According to the WASH Cluster, initial water test results in Rakhine State indicated that there is no geological or hydrological pattern of contamination of the ground water between rainy and dry season and that borehole water is often contaminated.

Overall, only half (54%) respondents reported having access to safe drinking water, though there was wide variance across townships: 76% in Ramree and 75% in Sittwe reported having access compared to 19% in Kyauktaw and 33% in Myebon (Figure 47). This difference can be explained by the high humanitarian presence in Ramree and Sittwe, which has enabled communities to take advantage of large water supplies. It is worth noting that the survey findings

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[135] In-depth Interview. 23 March 2015. Sittwe Township.

in Myebon and Kyauktaw were likely affected by the timing of the survey, March 2015, when water levels were particularly low in these areas.

Figure 47: Access to Drinking Water by Township
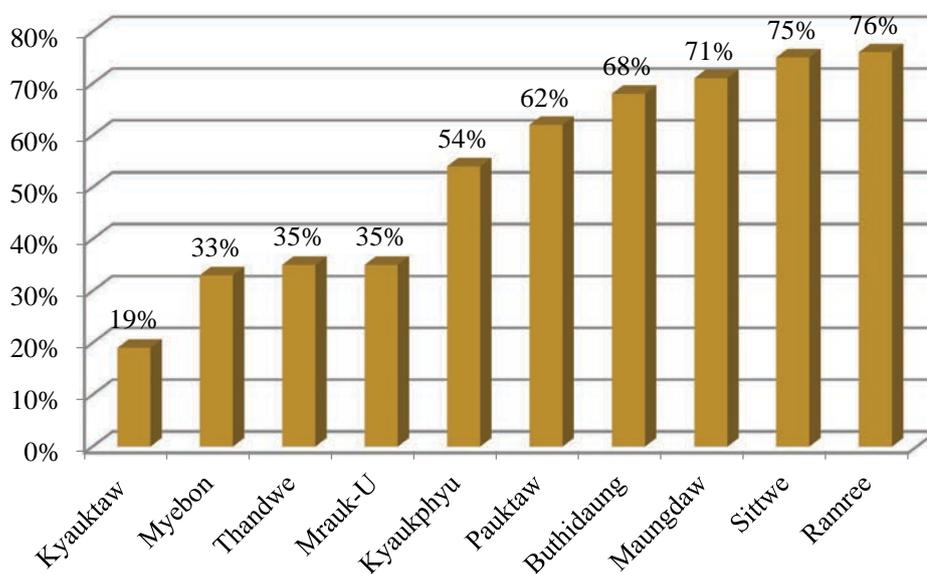
Rainwater collected in traditional ponds is the most common water source in Rakhine state. In order to increase their storage capacity, ponds are currently being upgraded—enlarged, deepened and raised. In addition, to reduce the contamination risk of open water sources, jetties and pontoons are being equipped with fences to prevent animals from approaching. These interventions appeared to be generally welcomed by beneficiaries. In addition ceramic water filters (CWF) are being deployed as complementary household water treatment systems. According to the WASH Cluster, initial results have shown a good acceptance from communties as well as appropriate usage.[136]

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[136] WASH Cluster. 2015. WASH CLUSTER STRATEGIC OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK. RAKHINE AND KACHIN STATES IDP CRISIS RESPONSE 2015.

Access to drinking water was reported to be very poor in Kyauktaw for Muslims (95% reported not having any access). For Rakhine, access appeared problematic in Mrauk-U (70% of respondents reported not having access), Myebon (69%), and Thandwe (68%) (Figure 48).

Moreover, while Rakhine women appeared to have better access to drinking water than men—who work away from home and have less access to water sources—Muslim women reported worse access (Figure 49). There were no significant differences across age groups.

Muslims in IDP camps were slightly more likely (60%) to report having access to drinking water than Muslims in villages (Figure 50). This is not surprising given that international aid is provided to the camps, although it highlights the need to intensify efforts in isolated villages, as noted in the recommendations below. Yet, even if the quality of water facilities is sometimes better in camps, sanitary risks remain higher, and overall, villagers have at their disposal better coping mechanisms than camp dwellers.[137]

Figure 48: Access to Drinking Water for Both Communities by Township
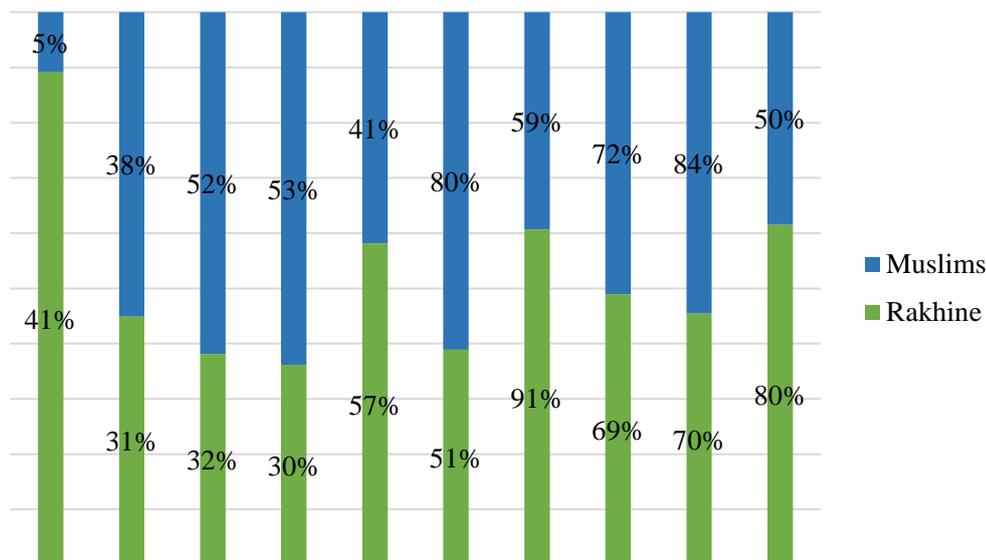
Finally, Rakhine in rural areas (42%) appeared to have less access to drinking water than Rakhine in urban areas (66%) (Figure 51).

Chin minority groups living in villages besides the main road also explained the difficulties they experience in accessing drinking water during the hot season. They mentioned that the construction of a small dam would help them to improve access.[138]

In terms of sanitation, the shift from emergency latrines to semi-permanent structures in IDP camps is almost complete and, according to the WASH cluster, overall coverage following a 1:20 ratio is close to being achieved. However, there remain a number of challenges.

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[137] Indeed, villagers are familiar with their own environment and, even if they lack latrines or drinking water, they are used to cope with these shortages. On the contrary, displaced populations do not have any other choice than relying on external help when facing difficulties.

[138] Focus Group Discussion. 26 March 2015. Kyaukphyu Township.

Figure 49: Access to Drinking Water by Gender
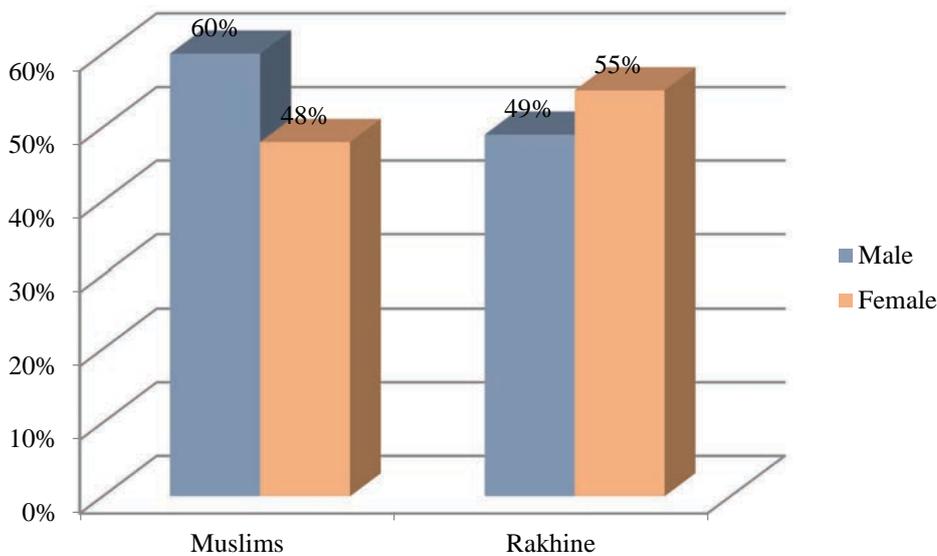
Figure 50: Access to Drinking Water for Muslims—Comparison of IDP Camps and Villages
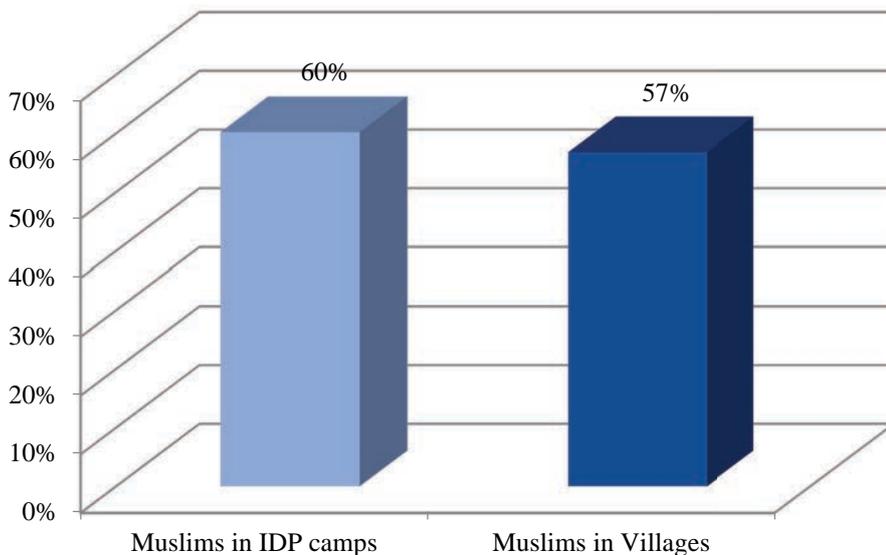
The availability of space on some IDP sites restricts the construction of additional latrines.[139] Furthermore, an issue noted during interviews and focus groups is the dismantlement of facilities (fences, bamboo walls, roofs, etc.) for firewood, highlighting a link with the lack of livelihood opportunities and insufficient income to buy firewood.

A further concern is the opportunity the construction of WASH facitilities provides for corruption. Their construction represents an important financial asset and is thus associated with high amounts of money being exchanged.[140] Camp Management Committees (CMCs) reportedly play a significant role in these corruption patterns.

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[139] WASH Cluster. 2015. WASH CLUSTER STRATEGIC OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK. RAKHINE AND KACHIN STATES IDP CRISIS RESPONSE 2015.
[140] WASH Cluster. 2015. WASH CLUSTER STRATEGIC OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK. RAKHINE AND KACHIN STATES IDP CRISIS RESPONSE 2015.

Figure 51: Access to Drinking Water for Rakhine—Comparison of Urban and Rural Areas
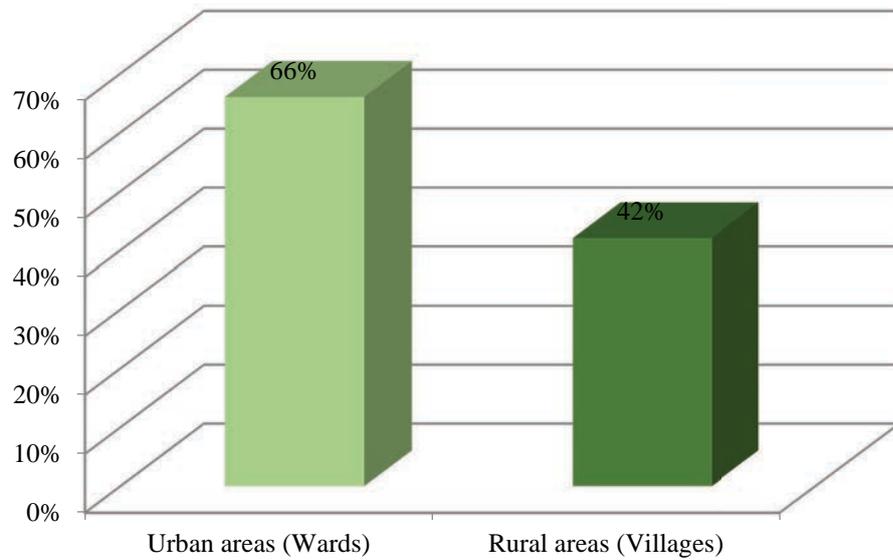
Furthermore, in IDP camps, latrines and bathing spaces were often reported as areas of concern for safety and security, largely due to damage, lack of gender separation, lack of lighting or locks, although since 2013 many of the latrines in the camps around Sittwe are now equipped with solar panels for light. Yet, a Yangon-based Rakhine expert explained that most of the time, only one solar panel was installed in the latrines, which implies that not all the latrines benefit from sufficient lighting. Moreover, latrines or bathing spaces are located far away from the shelters, which tends to worry women.

Additionally, in the aftermath of the flooding in July-August 2015, REACH has highlighted the need to pay attention to the major drop in access to sanitation across all assessed village tracts.[141]

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[141] REACH. Cyclone Komen Early Recovery Assessment, Rakhine State Kyauktaw, Ponnagyun, Mrauk-U and Minbya townships. August 2015.

Finally, in terms of hygiene practices, the situation appeared very challenging. This is in part a result of poor pre-existing hygiene practices and low knowledge of risks among local communities; Rakhine State has one of the highest levels of open defecation in the country.[142] Overall, IDPs appeared more aware of hygiene practices than villagers due to more frequent exposure to hygiene promotion initiatives by humanitarian partners compared to villagers.

Health

Access to healthcare services appeared especially poor in Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, Myebon, and Pauktaw, with the situation especially severe for Muslims who often lack access to township hospitals and must rely on station hospitals, rural heath centers, or clinics. For serious health problems or emergencies, Muslims can seek permission from the township authorities and pay for the costs of a police escort, though this exacerbates emergency situations and contributes to a more precarious health situation. Although efforts to construct new hospitals, clinics and rural health centers have increased since 2014, government medical facilities still lack sufficiently qualified staff, even in populated areas.

A large percentage of the total sample (45%) reported being ill or having been ill in the past three months. Low-income earners (48% ill) and Muslims (56% ill) were more vulnerable to health risks, compared to Rakhine (38%). Rates of illness were particularly high for Muslims in Kyauktaw (83%) and Mrauk-U (79%) (Figure 52). Overall, respondents reported suffering mostly from diarrhea (37%), though malaria, Hepatitis B and C were also frequently mentioned in the camps, highlighting problems of water quality and the need for mosquito nets.

Figure 52: Comparison of the Proportion of Ill Respondents between the Muslim and Rakhine Communities by Township
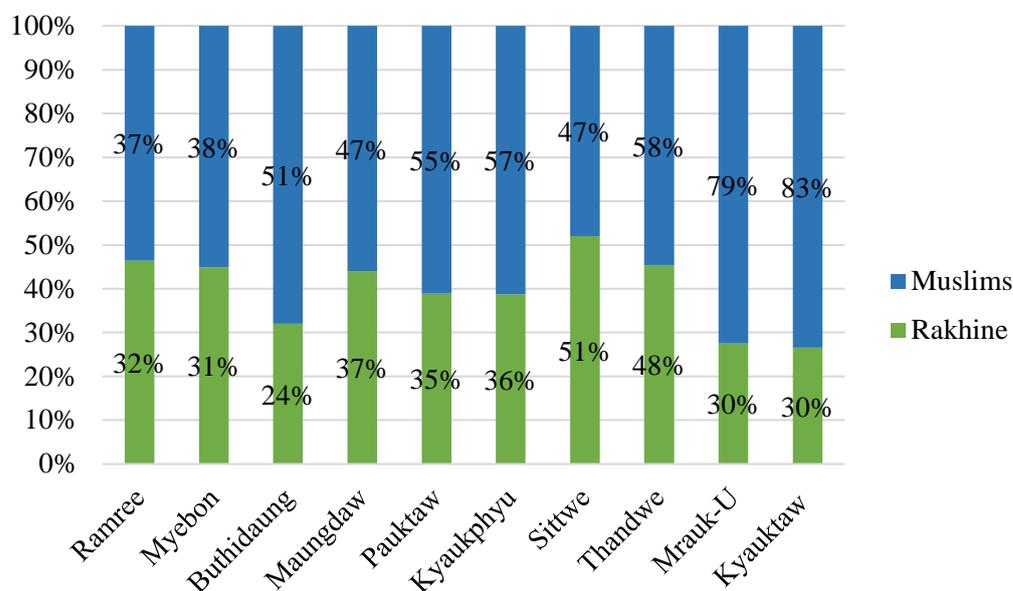
In terms of healthcare services, the rate of access to a clinic/hospital was only 36% overall, with a number of townships faring much worse, including Mrauk-U (14%), Myebon (21%), and Thandwe (25%). Ramree appeared to be an exception, with 61% of respondents report-

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[142] Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Indicators, Myanmar, 2009-2010.

ing having access to a clinic/hospital. Low-income respondents were also less likely (27%) to have access to a clinic/hospital (Figure 53). Muslim women (27%) reported having less access to a clinic/hospital than men (34%). On the contrary, Rakhine women (40%) appeared to have slightly better access than men (37%) (Figure 54).

Figure 53: Access to Clinic/Hospital
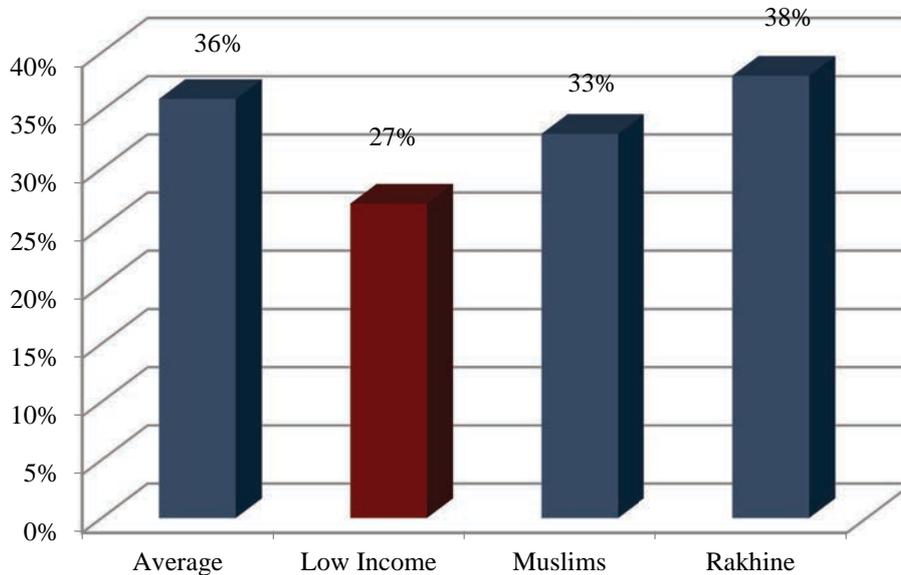
Figure 54: Access to Clinic/Hospital by Gender
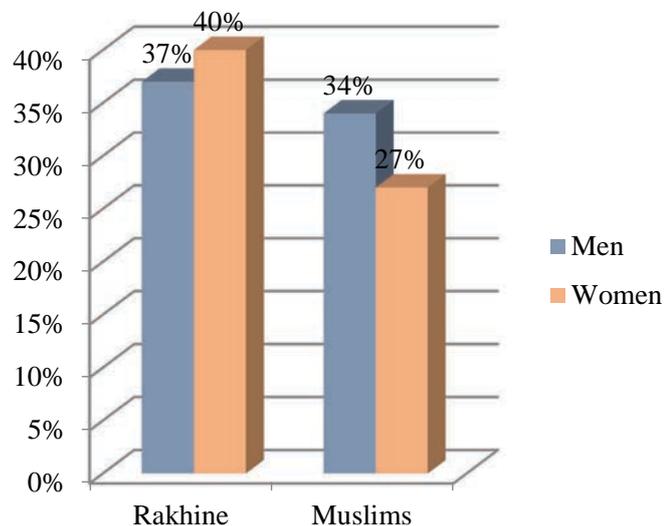
In terms of differences between communities, 33% of Muslims have access compared to 38% of Rakhine. Access was reported to be especially limited for Muslims in Ramree (5%), Kyaukphyu (11%), Sittwe (12%), who, for the most part live in camps, while ethnic Rakhine seemed to struggle to access hospitals and clinics in Myebon (19%), Kyauktaw (24%) and Thandwe (25%) (Figure 55). In Mrauk-U only 7% of Muslim respondents reported having access to a clinic or hospital compared to 17% of Rakhine while 6% of Muslims affirmed having adequate access to drugs and medication compared to 17% of Rakhine (Figure 56).

As for access to healthcare for the Chin minority, some interviewees stated that access to healthcare services was insufficient: "Just like schooling, Chin villages do not have their own clinic. There is one hospital per village tract, which is located in the Rakhine area. This means that Chin people need to go to Rakhine villages if they want to get medical treatment," explained a Chin NGO worker.[143]

Figure 55: Access to Clinic/Hospital by Township

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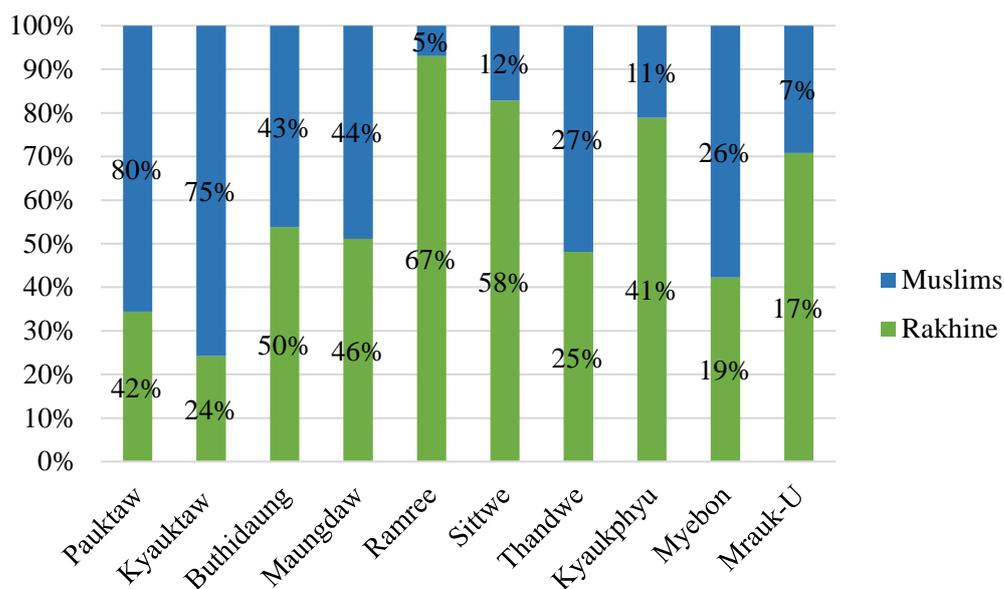
[143] In-depth Interview. 28 August 2015. Yangon.

Figure 56: Access to Drugs/Medication by Township
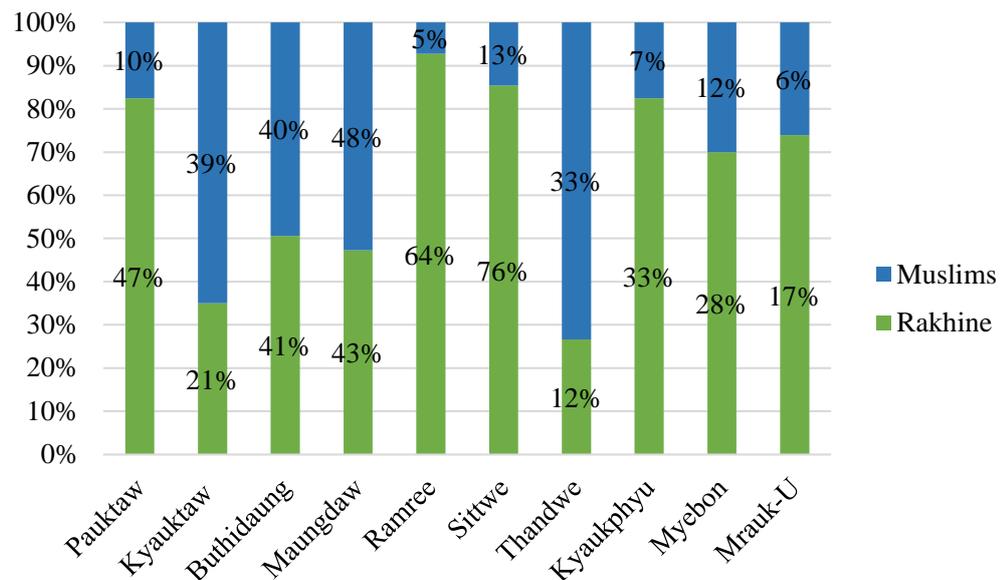
While access to clinic/hospital was reported as very poor for the Muslim population in Ramree and Kyaukphyu, it is worth noting that Muslims in these two townships can actually, to a certain extent, access the general hospital after having obtained the authorization from the township security forces to be escorted there. This possibility, however, is not synonymous with a guarantee of adequate healthcare due to potentially prohibitive bureaucratic delays in obtaining permission and the costs associated with permission. As a Kaman interviewee in a camp in Kyaukphyu highlighted: "because of the need to get permission from the local authorities to go to the township hospital, it is not unusual that people die because of the delay in obtaining a permit, even in case of emergencies."[144]

In Sittwe, the government has, since 2013, upgraded local health infrastructure, such as in Thaechaung. For major cases, Muslims in Sittwe and Pauktaw Township can also access the general hospital, although transportation remains a problem because of police escort requirements. Even if access is granted, quality of healthcare remains a concern given the poor quality of health personnel who tend not to be sufficiently qualified. Moreover, cases of discrimination at the township hospital have been reported. A group of Muslim women in Sittwe, where overall only 12% of Muslims in the township reported having access to a clinic or hospital, explained: "There's a good clinic in our camp, and the hospital is only 10 minutes walking from here. But this does not mean our access to health care is satisfactory. First, whatever the pain or disease is, the doctor only gives us painkiller like paracetamol and folic acid. That's it. Second, if we want to go to hospital, we have to get the permission from the camp doctor and from security forces first. But for him [the doctor], as long as we are still able to talk and walk, it means that we are healthy."[145]

Muslims in Myebon, however, tend to struggle more in terms of access to healthcare, since they cannot access Myebon general hospital and are located too far from Sittwe to be able to reach the Sittwe township hospital. As a Muslim IDP in Myebon put it: "We cannot go to town for medical assistance and other services, and MSF mobile clinic has not come for more than a year. It is becoming very tough for us." It should be noted, however, that emergency

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[144] Focus Group Discussion. 27 March 2015. Kyaukphyu Township.
[145] Focus Group Discussion. 21 March 2015. Sittwe Township.

evacuation can be requested from ICRC and Relief International for particularly severe cases.

In Kyauktaw, access to health services has deteriorated since 2012. After violence broke out, MSF deployed a mobile clinic with the capacity to cover medical treatment, but this stopped after March last year, thereby worsening the situation. The Ministry of Health has launched a mobile clinic to bridge this gap, but it only provides service twice a month and is insufficient to meet needs on the ground.

As might be expected, Muslims in IDP camps reported much lower access to clinics and hospitals (12%) compared to Muslim villagers (41%), poorer access to drugs (9% compared to 36%), and to health professionals (27% compared to 37%) (Figure 57).

Most Muslim IDPs interviewees complained about the health situation in the camps: "We have a temporary clinic and a rural health center but there are not enough doctors and nurses to handle the patient load of 200 people per day," reported a Muslim leader in a camp in Sittwe. "Moreover, we do not have access to clinics after 5pm, and there is a blatant lack of medicine and equipment. But for us, it's not an option to go the hospital in Sittwe, because it is too expensive, with the police escort costing between 30,000 and 40,000 kyat."[146]

However, it should be noted that this does not necessarily reflect the complexity of the situation in Rakhine State. Due to the presence of INGOs and NGOs in the camps, in some areas, notably highly isolated and remote Muslim and Rakhine villages, the situation tends to be worse than in camps, notably in terms of access to health professionals and drugs. Overall, general medical treatment thus tends to be better in IDP camps than in remote vllages. That said, access to the general hospital or to specialist treatment remains a critical issue for IDPs.

Figure 57: Comparison of Reported Access to Healthcare Between Muslim IDPs and Muslim Villagers
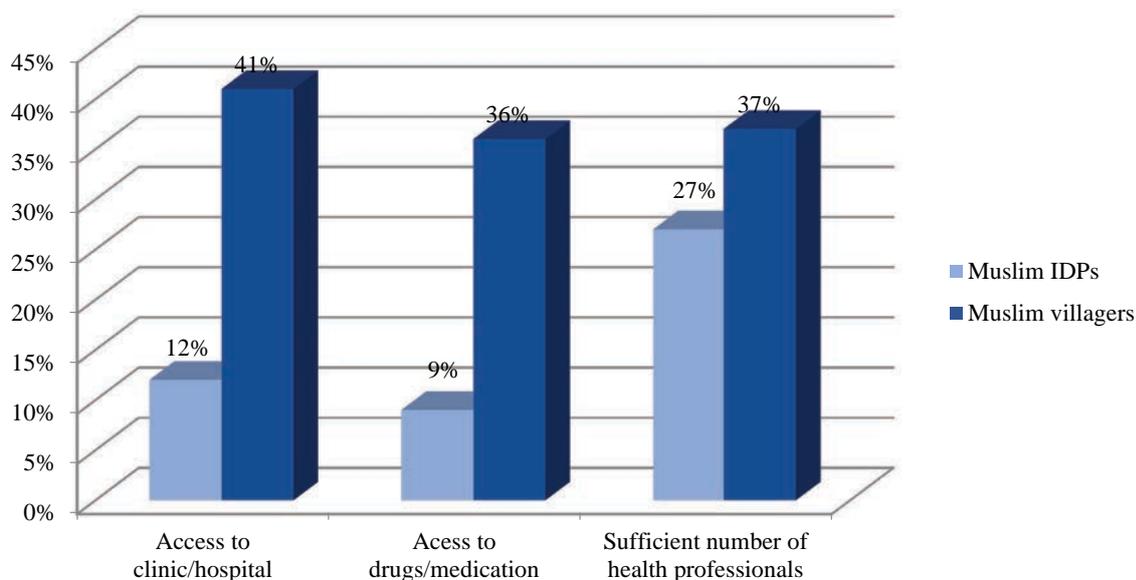
While both communities claimed they experienced difficulties in accessing health services during the rainy season, Muslims did so at a greater rate than Rakhine (67% compared to

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[146] In-depth Interview. 24 March 2015. Sittwe Township.

52%). This seems especially the case among the small number of Muslim respondents in Pauktaw, where 98% said they experience difficulties during the monsoon. Again, the situation appears more severe in Mrauk-U for both Muslims (95%) and ethnic Rakhine (82%) (Figure 58).

Figure 58: Difficulty in Accessing Health Services During the Monsoon for Rakhine and Muslims by Township
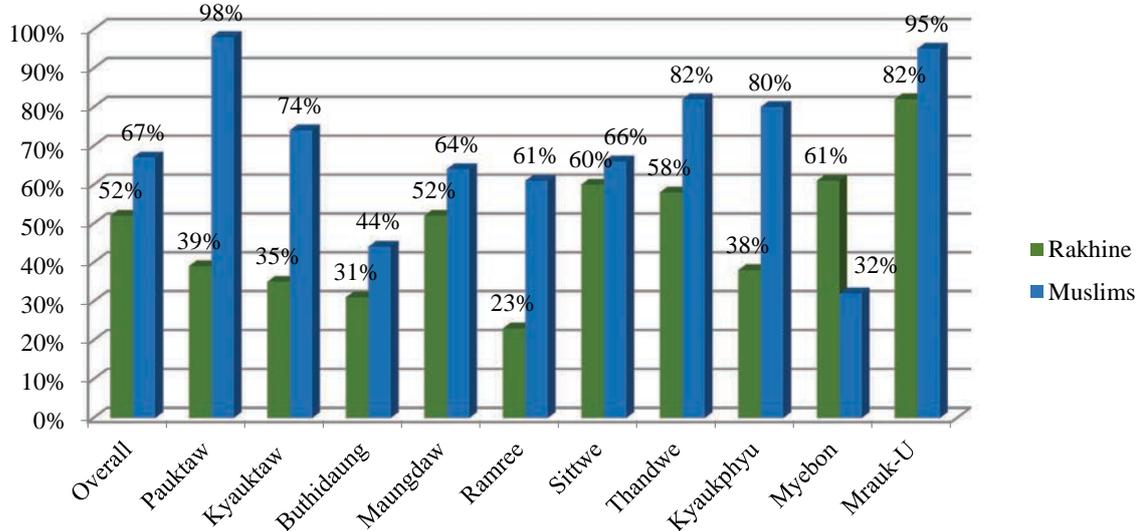
Access to medication and drugs appeared very low overall (32%), and was especially weak for low-income respondents (27%) (Figure 59). As one woman in a Muslim camp in Sittwe noted, "doctors write prescriptions but we cannot buy these medicines in this area."[147] Mrauk-U and Thandwe also stood out with only 14% and 15%, respectively of respondents reporting access to any kind of medication/drugs. On the other hand, Ramree again appeared better equipped (57%). The situation seemed particularly problematic for the Muslims in Ramree (5%) and Kyaukphyu (7%), while it appeared that ethnic Rakhine find it more difficult to find drugs and medication in Thandwe (12%).

Figure 59: Access to Medication/Drugs

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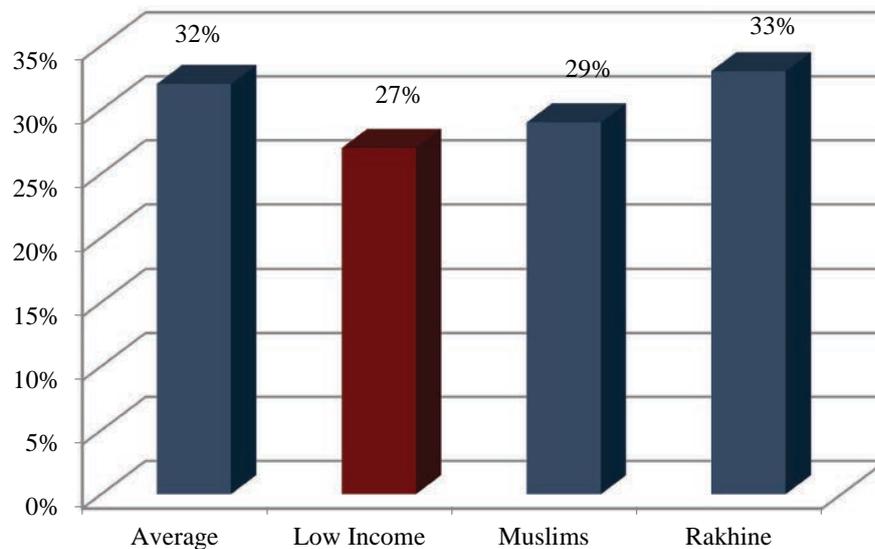
[147] Focus Group Discussion. 21 March 2015. Sittwe Township.

While there was no difference in access to drugs by gender among the Rakhine community (34% of women and 33% of men declared having access), for the Muslim community, women reported struggling considerably more than men (19% reported access to drugs compared to 34% men) (Figure 60).

Figure 60: Access to Medication/Drugs by Gender
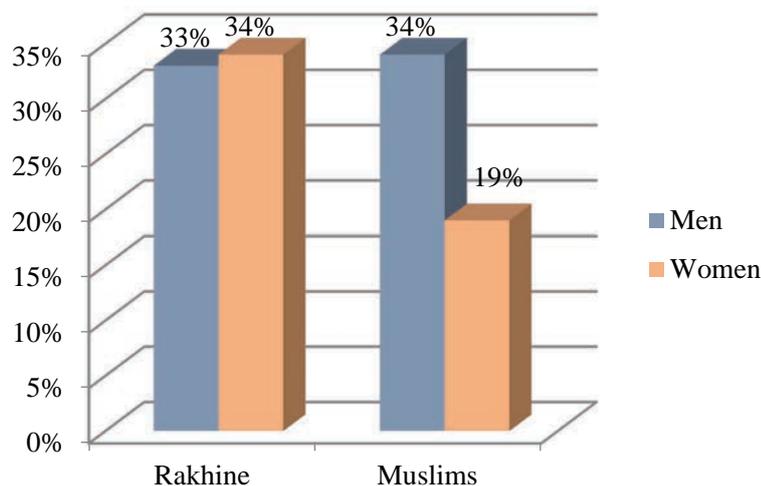
The quality and number of health professionals was repeatedly raised as an issue. While 53% of respondents overall reported the presence of a sufficient number of health professionals, there was wide variance at the township level (81% in Ramree and 79% in Buthidaung reported adequate access compared to 27% in Kyauktaw and 30% in Thandwe), although most respondents (76%) affirmed being able to see a health professional in less than a day. There were also wide discrepancies between Muslims and Rakhine: only 34% of Muslims reported a sufficient number of heath professionals compared to 64% of Rakhine. In Kyauktaw, interviews with Mro and Khami minorities also confirmed the lack of adequate health staff already noted by ethnic Rakhine.[148] While Muslims tended to think there is a lack of health professionals in Kyauktaw (only 1% of respondents reported enough health professionals) and Kyaukphyu (11%), Rakhine in Thandwe cited insufficient health professionals (69%) (Figure 61). In Mrauk-U, only 12% of Muslims thought there are enough health professionals compared to 37% of Rakhine.

This stark contrast between townships was echoed in the interviews conducted with local communities and officials in the field. In Thandwe, for instance, the Township Development Committee elaborated on the poor state of the health sector: "Although health infrastructure in Thandwe is slightly improved, there is a serious lack of staff (only one midwife), especially because remote areas are hard to access and health staff do not want to go work there."[149] By contrast, Rakhine community leaders in Buthidaung reported that they "can get to the hospital easily, and there are enough doctors and nurses. For medicine, it depends on the disease, but it's usually not too expensive"[150] From the Muslim community, a private teacher from a village adjacent to Buthidaung confirmed: "For severe diseases, we go to Buthidaung hospital. Although, for less serious cases, we usually go to the private Muslim clinic, which is

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[148] Focus Group Discussion. 25 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township.
[149] Focus Group Discussion. 31 March 2015. Thandwe Township.
[150] Focus Group Discussion. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.

cheaper than the public hospital."[151] In Maungdaw and Buthidaung, township hospitals have been upgraded, though the quality of healthcare remains a problem due to the lack of skilled heath professionals.

Figure 61: Adequate Number of Health Professionals by Township
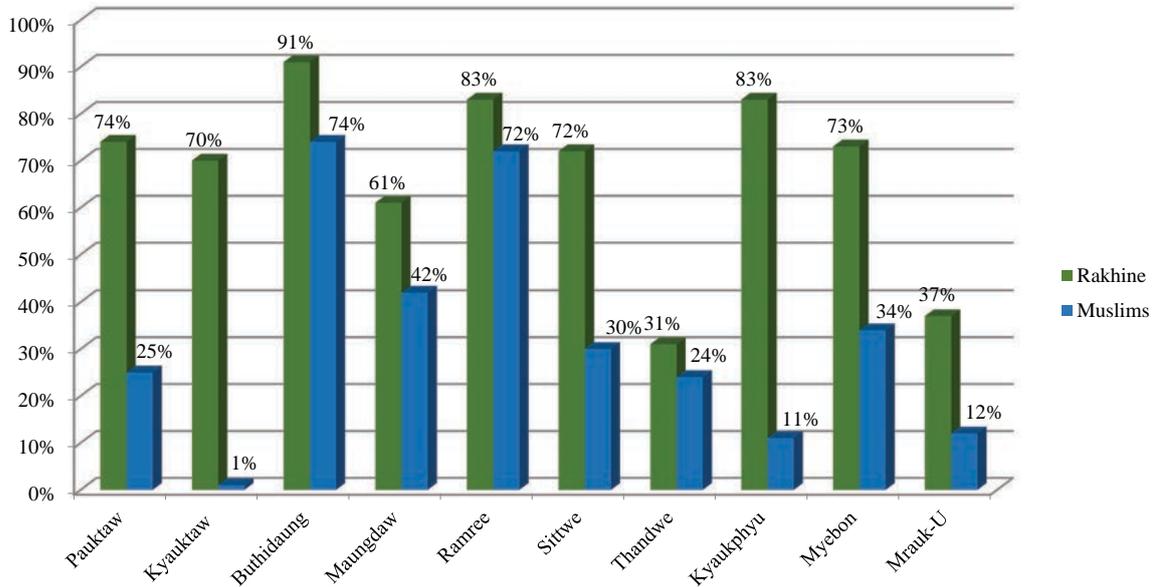
As with other health indicators, low-income respondents tended to display lower than average levels of satisfaction (47%) (Figure 62). While amongst the Rakhine, women and men expressed similar levels of contentment about the number of health professionals (respectively 65% and 63%), Muslim women reported lower levels of contentment (27%) than men (37%) (Figure 63). There were no significant differences across age groups.

Figure 62: Sufficient Health Professionals

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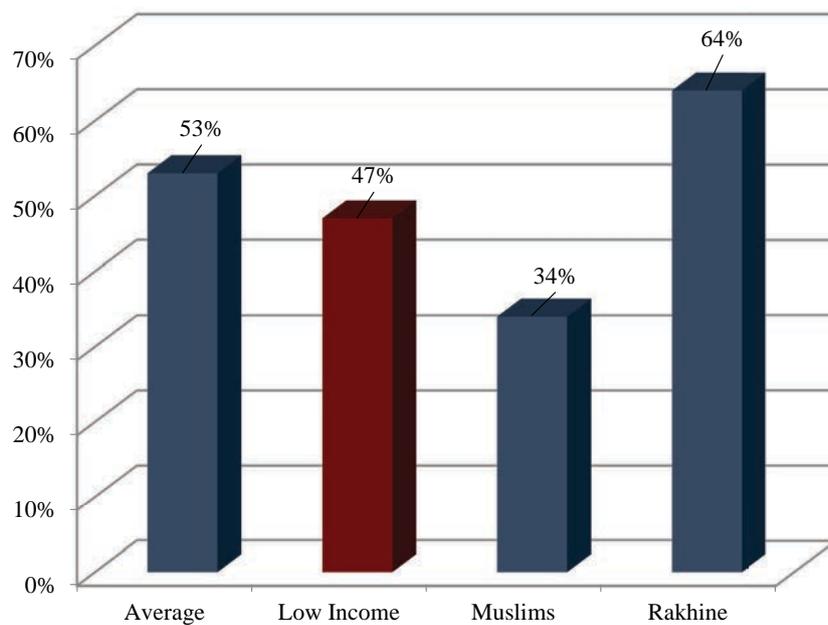
[151] In-depth Interview. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.

Figure 63: Sufficient Health Professionals by Gender
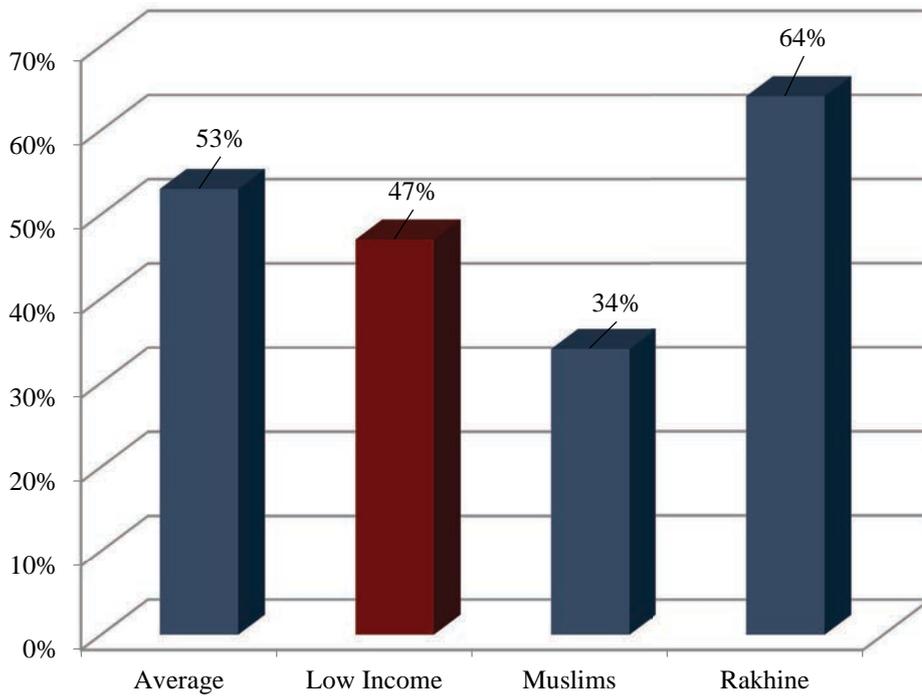
In addition, in terms of time needed to access health professionals, while 88% of Rakhine affirmed being able to see a health professional in less than a day, only 57% of Muslims did so (Figure 64). Moreover, while 91% of Rakhine women affirmed being able to see a health professional in a day, only 49% of Muslim women claimed so (Figure 65).

Figure 64: Access to Health Professionals in Less Than a Day
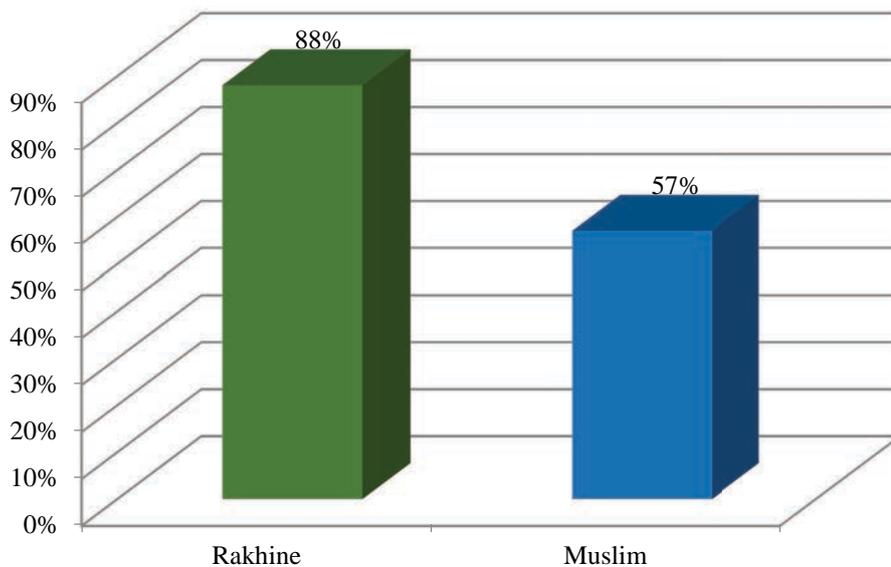
Figure 65: Access to Health Professionals in Less Than a Day by Gender
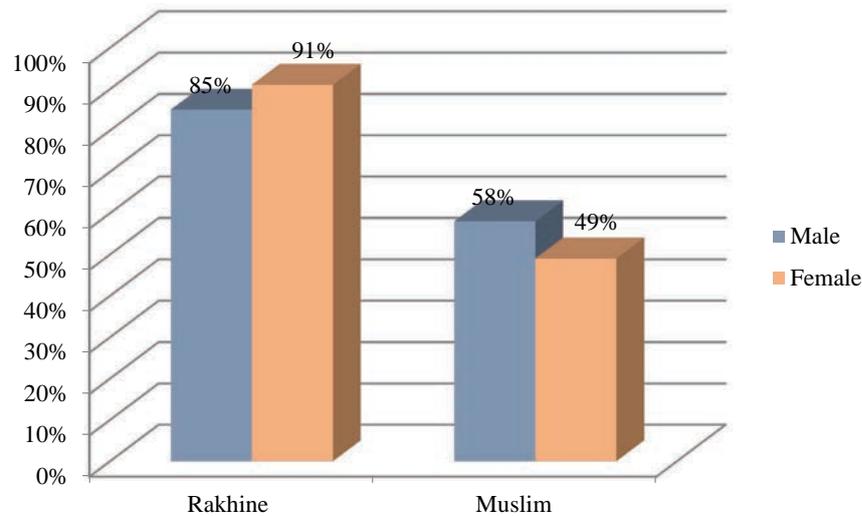
The perception of discrimination in treatment from the Muslim community was frequently mentioned. This view was particularly widespread in Maungdaw. "Rakhine receive many more services than we do at the public hospital," explained a retired Muslim teacher. "Often we also have to pay very expensive for drugs that they [the Rakhine] get for free. And the problem is that we cannot access private clinics because they are too expensive. In case of severe disease, an option is to go to neighboring Bangladesh to get cured, but less than 1% can afford going there. So these seriously ill people simply end up dying."[152] A Muslim woman in Maungdaw further detailed the hardships Muslim women face in terms of healthcare: "Often, pregnant Muslim women are not treated by the doctors, because of their ethnicity. So most Muslim women do not go to the hospital anymore."[153] A UNHCR official noted that "Access to the hospital is satisfactory, but there is some discriminatory treatment. This transpires on several aspects: the attitude of the staff, with some obvious cases of neglect, the unofficial fees inflicted on the Muslim community, and the impossibility for Muslims to be referred to Sittwe hospital, even in the case of serious sickness."[154]

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[152] Focus Group Discussion. 14 March 2015. Maungdaw Township
[153] In-depth Interview. 14 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[154] In-depth Interview.16 March 2015. Maungdaw Township

Most interviewees, however, said the biggest problem was not so much discrimination as the low government budget allocated to Northern Rakhine State, which results in a shortage of resources, along with the lack of skilled health staff: "The facilities are not accessible to most people, whatever their ethnicity. Moreover, there is a limited number of medical staff, a lack of medical supplies, and the hospital cannot accommodate the high number of sick people.

As a result, for many persons, both Muslim of Rakhine, the only option is the local healer in their villages, even though these people are not trained and sometimes make the situation worse,"[155] explained an official from WFP in Maungdaw. An NGO worker specializing in health added: "The government hospital is not fully operational. First, the staff are not paid according to the cost of life. Second, there is a lack of qualified health professionals (doctors, nurses, midwives) because Maungdaw is remote. Third, nobody wants to come to Maungdaw because of security reasons, further aggravating the lack of skilled personnel."[156] Finally, a Rakhine community leader explained that, because of the lack of education, "people tend to resort to traditional drugs, instead of systematically going to the hospital."[157]

Finally, although both Rakhine in villages and wards reported the same level of illness (37% in wards and 38% in villages), there is a gap between access to health and quality of health services reported by Rakhine in rural areas and Rakhine in urban areas, the former population being far more disadvantaged across all indicators (Figures 66-69). This demonstrates the need for increased assistance to the Rakhine population residing outside of urban centers, especially in isolated villages.

Figure 66: Access to Clinic/Hospital for Rakhine—Comparison of Urban and Rural Areas

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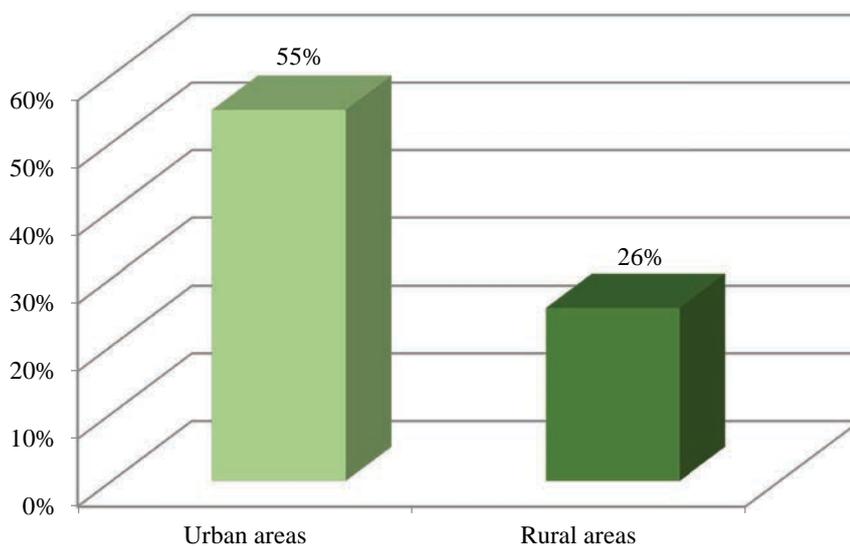
[155] In-depth Interview. 14 March. Maungdaw Township
[156] In-depth Interview. 17 March. Maungdaw Township
[157] In-depth Interview. 15 March. Maungdaw Township

Figure 67: Access to Drugs/Medication for Rakhine—Comparison of Urban and Rural Areas
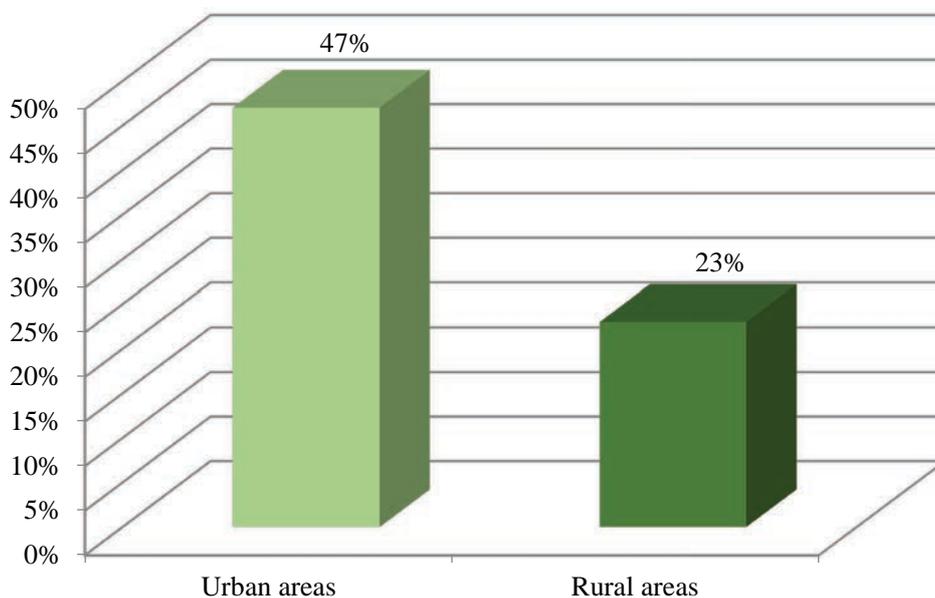
Figure 68: Time Needed to Access Heath Professionals for Rakhine—Comparison of Urban and Rural Areas
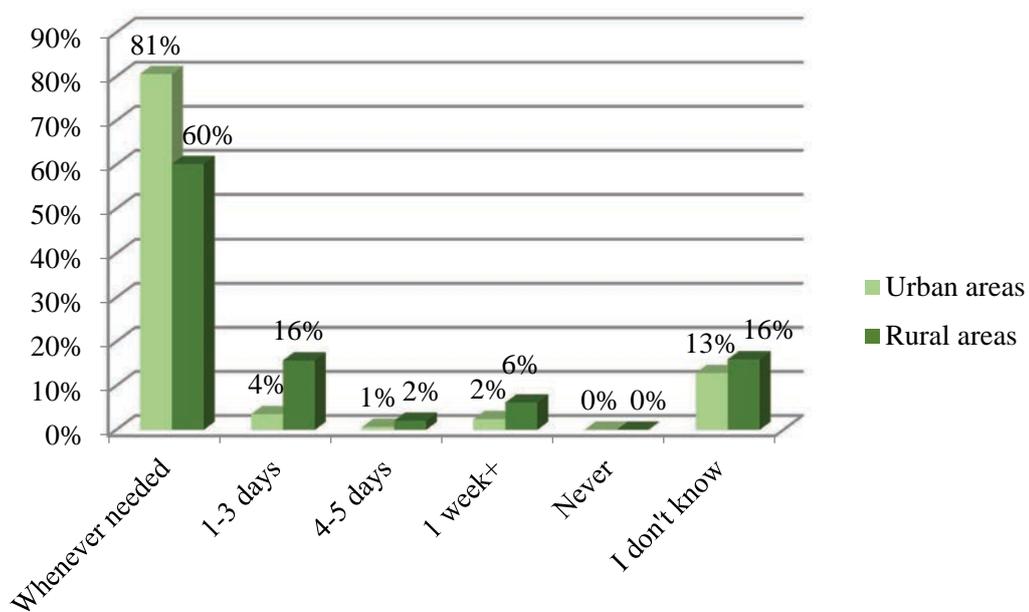
Figure (and Rural Areas
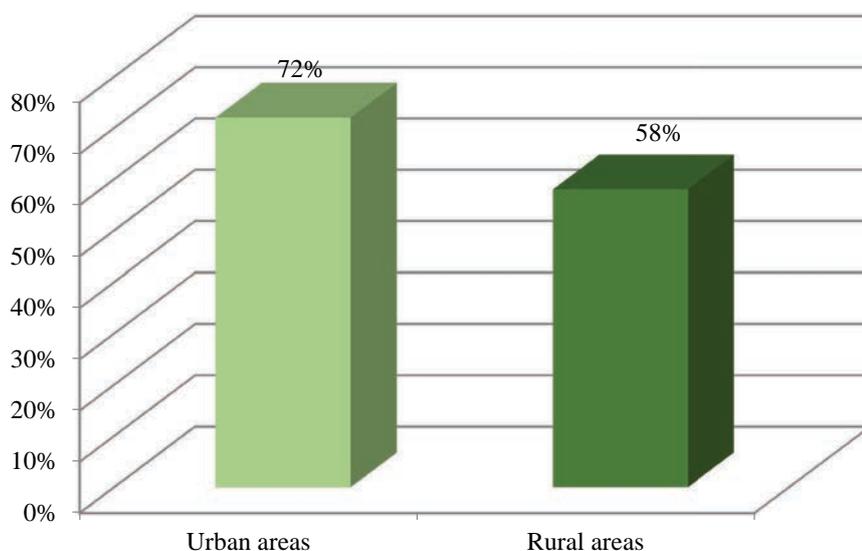
The Health Predicament in Mrauk-U

Although restrictions on travel render the situation even more complicated for Muslims, the poor health situation in Mrauk-U negatively affects both communities.

Firstly, there are only two hospitals in Mrauk-U (one with 25 beds in Mrauk-U town, the other with 60 beds in Myaungbway) to serve a population of 200,000 people. There are only 5 doctors in the whole township with no specialists and a serious lack of midwives (though the township aims to reach 1 midwife per village tract, this is still a distant goal). Training for midwives was cited as a main reason for this shortage as the standard training program takes 1.5-2 years. Equipment is also highly limited, with a critical need for diagnostic equipment like ultrasounds, ECGs, and x-ray machines.

Beyond problems of equipment and infrastructure, isolation for both communities impedes adequate access to healthcare services: "There is no rural health center or clinic at all in the village or around; the nearest clinic is one hour walk away, which causes us a lot of problems in case of emergency," notably explained a Rakhine villager.

Moreover, the travel restrictions imposed on the Muslim community are an increasing source of concern. Before 2012 they were able to access the general hospital, but after violence broke out their access has been restricted to Myaungbway station hospital, which has not yet been upgraded. On top of that, Muslims cannot stay overnight due to security concerns, and have to spend the night in surrounding Muslim villages to come back to hospital the next morning, which considerably complicates emergency cases: "we cannot access the town area because we are restricted to move, and, unfortunately, MSF mobile clinic have not come to our village since March 2014. As a result, most pregnant women are delivering at home with Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA) because they can't go to the township hospital. In case of complication, we can reach Myaungbway hospital but we are not allowed to stay overnight, because we are Muslims," lamented a Muslim man in Mrauk-U.

Infrastructure

Due to historic under-investment, infrastructure across Rakhine State remains poor and underdeveloped. Despite improvements in the last few years, significant investment is needed to improve living conditions and livelihood opportunities. While acknowledging the recent small improvements in infrastructure, both Rakhine and Muslims said that much more needs to be done.

Across Rakhine State road quality was, for the most part, rated as fair or not bad (by 46% of respondents), while 24% said they are excellent or very good and an equal percent said they are very bad. There were, however, significant geographic distinctions: 50% of respondents in Buthidaung and 38% in Maungdaw rated the quality of roads as excellent or great, while 50% in Kyauktaw and 37% in Mrauk-U and Pauktaw rated road quality as very bad (findings supported by interviews).[158] Particularly in interviews in Mrauk-U roads were cited as a significant barrier to access to markets and, as a result, to livelihoods.[159] Residents of Kyauktaw agreed, saying that poor transportation infrastructure, especially in remote areas, was a barrier to health, education, and livelihoods (particularly when it restricts access to markets).[160] Muslims were slightly less likely to rate road quality as excellent or very good and more than twice as likely as Rakhine to say that roads are very bad (37% compared to 16%) (Figure 70). Again there were significant differences in perceptions of road quality between Rakhine and Muslims by township: whereas only 8% of Rakhine in Kyaukphyu said roads are very bad, 52% of Muslims did; though only 11% of Rakhine said roads were very bad in Kyauktaw, 75%

[158] In-depth Interviews. 14-29 March 2015.Buthidaung, Kyauktaw, Maungdaw, Mrauk-U Townships.
[159] In-depth Interview. 27 March 2015. Mrauk-U Township.
[160] In-depth Interview. 25 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township.

of Muslims did; and while only 10% of Rakhine reported the roads in Myebon to be bad, 64% of Muslims did. A Muslim man explained that although roads had improved for both Rakhine and Muslims overall, the quality of roads was better in Rakhine areas.[161] Moreover, due to travel restrictions, Muslims consequently have less access to roads. Only in Mrauk-U and Sittwe did Rakhine and Muslims agree that the roads were very bad. Nonetheless, Rakhine elders in Mrauk-U town said road conditions were improving.[162]

Figure 70
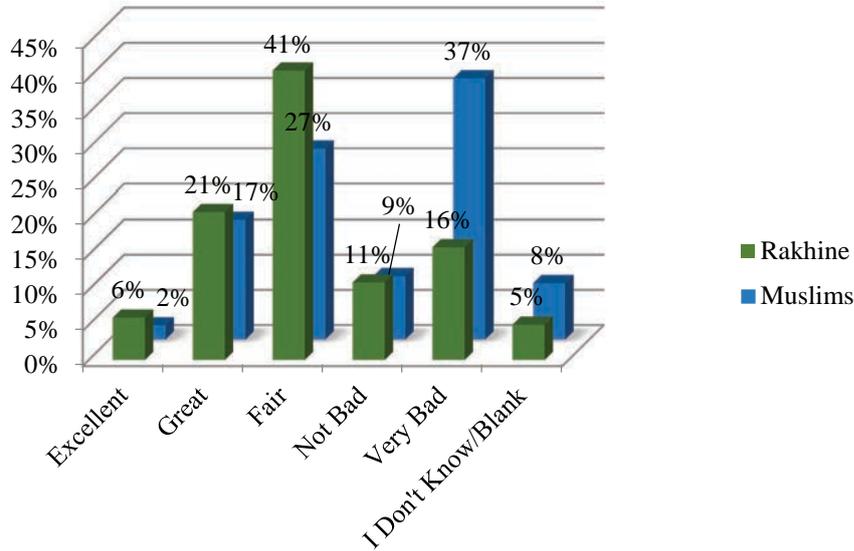
Despite mixed feelings about the quality of roads in Rakhine State, respondents reported fairly good access to markets and necessary products. A large majority (70%) reported being able to access markets within less then 30 minutes (Figure 71) and most (73%) reported having at least fairly good access to the products they need. Interestingly, Muslims reported having closer proximity to markets than Rakhine, with 77% of Muslims within 30 minutes of a market compared to 66% of Rakhine overall (and only 56% of Rakhine in villages). In contrast, however, Rakhine generally reported better access to products (83% said they have access totally, mostly, or fairly) than Muslims, only 58% of whom said the same. Moreover, whereas only 15% of Rakhine reported having hardly any access or none at all, 41% of Muslims reported the same (Figures 72 and 73). Camp residents reported even worse access to products with 68% saying they have hardly any access or none at all (Figure 74). Access appeared particularly bad in Myebon (98% said they do not have any access at all), Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, and Pauktaw, where 92%, 80%, and 73% respectively said they have no access at all or hardly any access to products. Muslims had better access in Buthidaung (88% access products totally or mostly) and Maungdaw (63%) (Figure 75).

Figure 71: Ti

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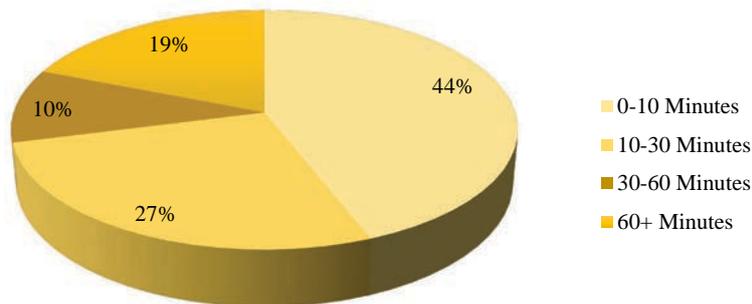
[161] Phone In-depth Interview. 28 August 2015. Yangon.
[162] In-depth Interview. 28 March 2015. Mrauk-U Township.

Figure 72: Acce

- Totally
- Mostly
- Fairly
- Hardly
- Not at All

Figure 73: Acc

- Totally
- Mostly
- Fairly
- Hardly
- Not at All

Figure 74: Acc

- Totally
- Mostly
- Fairly
- Hardly
- Not at All
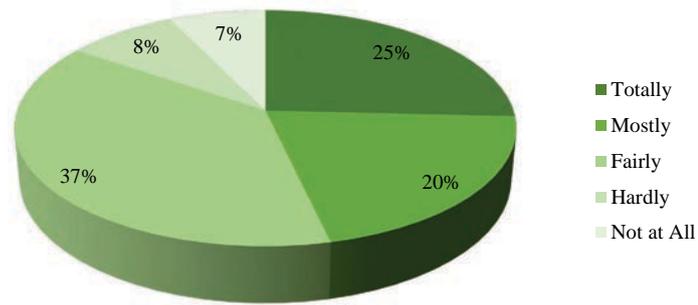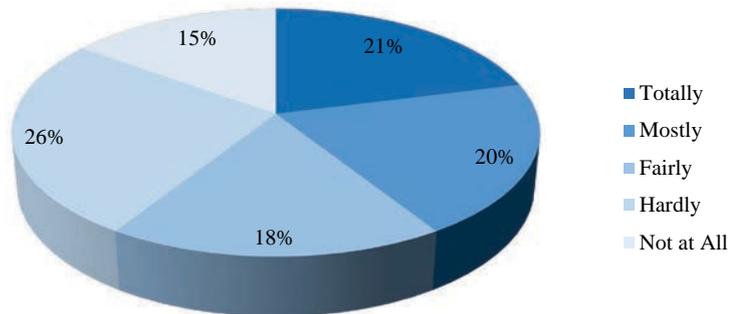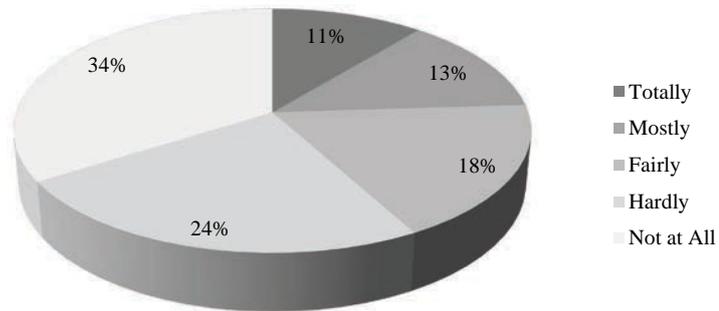
Figure 75: F
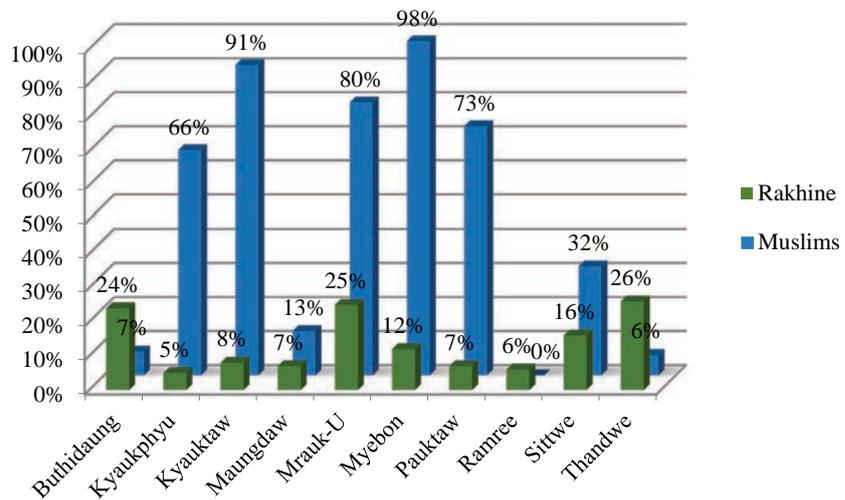
- Rakhine
- Muslims

While irrigation was not specifically addressed in the survey instrument, it was an issue that arose regularly in focus group discussions and in-depth interviews.[163] Rakhine elders in Mrauk-U lamented that only a small portion of arable land (they estimate 25%) can be farmed year-round because of poor irrigation.[164] While a government official in Thandwe agreed with the economic benefits of proper irrigation, he also said it is necessary as a means to reduce vulnerability to flooding and natural disasters.[165]

On average, survey respondents reported having access to 5.4 hours of electricity per day, though those who rated their income as very poor or who have no income reported having access to only 3.7 hours per day. According to observers, Kyaukphyu, Mrauk-U, Ramree, Sittwe, and Thandwe towns all have access to 24-hour electricity from the power grid, though other townships rely on only 4 hours of access per day provided through government generators. This is generally supported by survey findings, with large numbers of respondents in Kyaukphyu, Ramree, and Thandwe reporting they had access to the grid (and, thus, more hours of electricity per day).[166] There is also a significant difference in access between Rakhine and Muslims. Whereas Rakhine reported having, on average, 6.7 hours of electricity per day, Muslims said they have, on average, only 2.6 hours per day. This is perhaps in part because Muslims appeared much more reliant on generators and solar power than Rakhine; whereas 32% of Rakhine reported having access to the grid, only 7% of Muslims did so.

Figure 76:
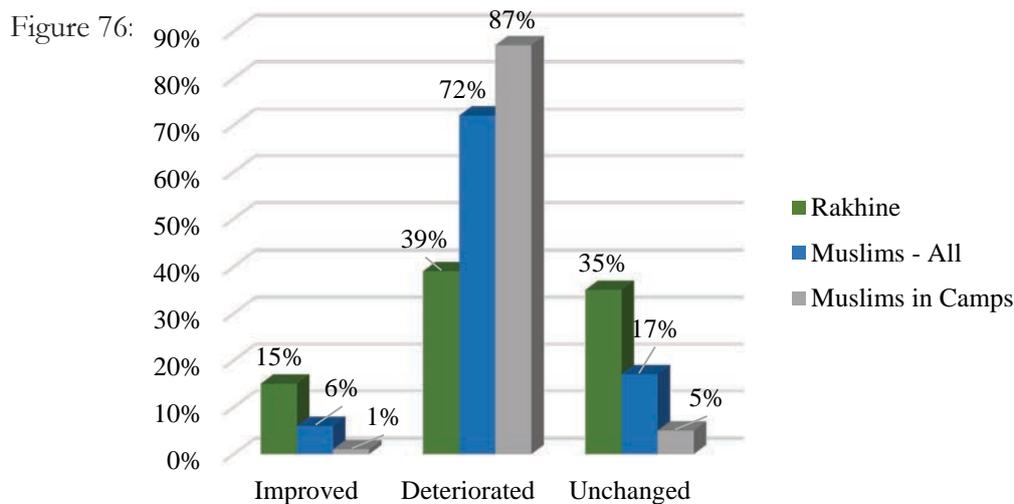
Given the high levels of investment in energy infrastructure in the past year—and public government pronouncements of 24-hour electricity access in several townships—it is notable that most survey respondents said they had not seen improvements in their electricity. A plurality (41%) said their electricity access was unchanged compared to three years ago while 24% said it had in fact deteriorated. Here too there is significant variation by township. Majorities of those surveyed in Ramree (83%) and Kyaukphyu (63%) saw improvements,

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[163] In-depth Interview. 27 March 2015. Mrauk-U Township.
[164] In-depth Interview. 28 March 2015. Mrauk-U Township.
[165] In-depth Interview. 31 March 2015. Thandwe Township.
[166] No surveys were conducted in Mrauk-U town or downtown Sittwe, so survey findings are not a reliable source of information on grid access in these areas.

while a majority of those in Sittwe (58%) said access had in fact deteriorated (though this is likely because no surveys were conducted in downtown Sittwe). Rakhine were more positive about improvements in access to electricity in the past three years, with 43% saying electricity had improved (including 50% of Rakhine in wards and 37% of Rakhine in villages) compared to 16% of Muslims (Figure 76). As noted above, however, access to the grid may be highly unequal as Rakhine reported improvements in significantly higher numbers than Muslims in the same townships: 89% of Rakhine in Buthidaung noted improvements in the past three years, though only 17% of Muslims did and, similarly, 75% Rakhine in Kyaukphyu saw improvements in electricity compared to only 9% of Muslims) (Figure 77). As might be expected, Muslim residents in camps reported a much greater deterioration than others, with 75% saying their access to electricity deteriorated in the past three years (compared to 33% of Muslim villagers and 18% of Rakhine). Concerning the cost of electricity, although in the past households tended to use locally generated diesel generators, which made the cost of electricity much higher, they now use the national grid, which has normalized prices.

Other minorities, notably Chin, in villages around Kyaukphyu and Ramree, reported that even though the towns had access to the grid, they could not access electricity.[167]

Figure
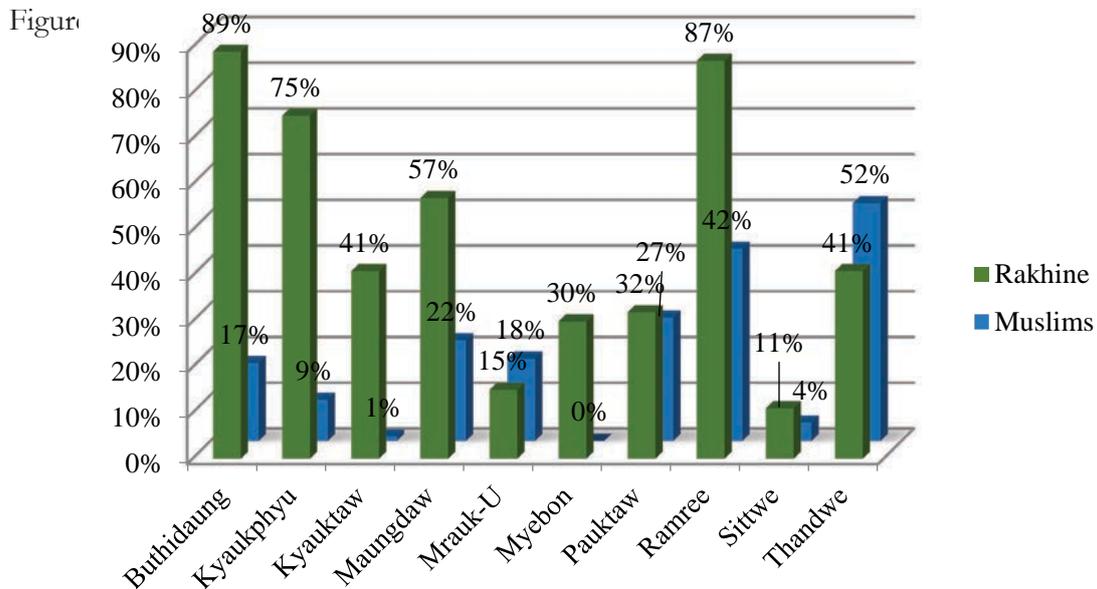
[167] In-depth Interview. 28 March 2015. Ramree Township.

Education

Education was reported as widely available, with more than 95% of respondents saying that some form of education is available in their ward or village. These findings were consistent across all townships, with at least 89% of respondents in each township saying there was a

school in their ward or village. Moreover, there was no difference by religion: 95% of Rakhine and 9~~ of M~~li~~ ~~ ~~ ~~bl~~ i~~ ~~ ~~ ~~ ~~l~~ ~~l~~ (~~i~~ ~~ ~~79)
Figur
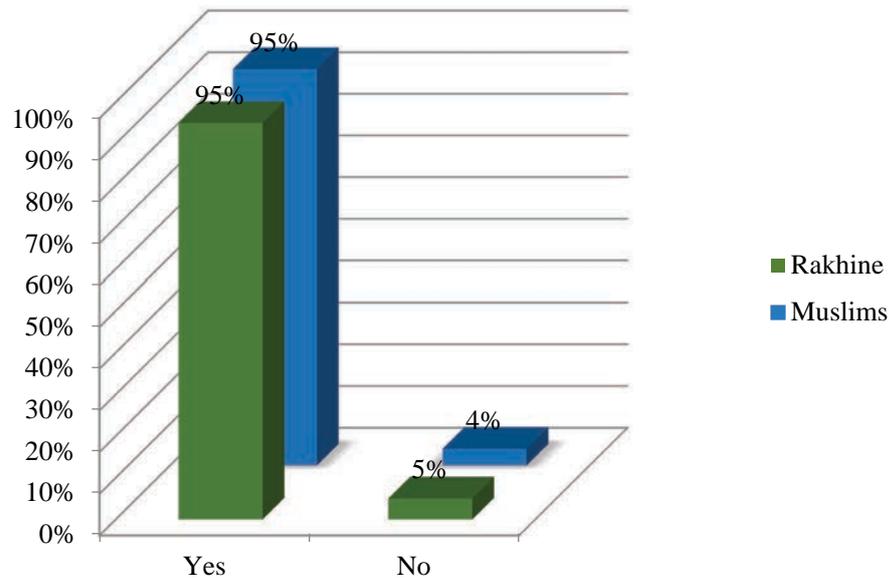
Nearly all Rakhine (92%), in wards or villages, reported having access to a government school, whereas only 63% of Muslim respondents reported so. By contrast, Muslims reported more reliance on community schools (17%)—especially in Kyauktaw and Mrauk-U where 91% and 33% respectively reported relying on community schools—and schools run by international organisations or NGOs (9%) or religious institutions (6%). Meanwhile, half of Muslims living in camps reported being dependent on temporary learning facilities for their education. In interviews in Kyauktaw and Sittwe, Muslims expressed concern that, although they have school buildings or temporary learning facilities, the community itself is responsible for paying teachers' salaries.[168] Despite these variations, large numbers of both Rakhine and Muslims— including Muslims in camps—reported sending their children to school (70% and 81% respectively), though there was some variation by township. Only 60% of respondents in Kyaukphyu and 67% of respondents in Myebon, for example, send their children to school.

While 56% of respondents overall reported having adequate access to teachers, there were wide geographical variations. Only 19% in Kyauktaw and 25% in Mrauk-U reported having access to sufficient teachers, whereas 80% in Thandwe and nearly 70% each in Buthidaung, Kyaukphyu, Pauktaw, and Ramree said they have sufficient teachers. There were also religious differences, with 62% of Rakhine having sufficient access to teachers while 45% of Muslims said they do not have adequate access (including 88% in Kyauktaw and 71% in Mrauk-U, see Figure 79) and 54% of camp residents said they did not have adequate teachers. As a humanitarian worker in Maungdaw explained, "In government schools, there are almost no Muslim teachers triggering a parallel education system whereby Muslim communities support themselves in affiliated schools. Community teachers are not necessarily trained teachers but anybody in the community who is somewhat educated, usually Mullahs, are used as teachers."[169] A Muslim in Maungdaw corroborated this, saying that his "community is organizing itself to

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[168] In-depth Interview. 24 March 2015. Sittwe Township; In-depth Interviews. 25 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township.

[169] In-depth Interview. 16 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.

hire teachers whose salaries are paid by the local communities."[170]

Muslims in camps appeared to face similar challenges. Muslim IDPs in Sittwe, for example, said that even though they have a temporary learning facility, their community must supplement low teacher salary support provided by NGOs.[171] For Muslim IDP camp residents outside of Sittwe and those in remote locations (including Rakhine and minority Mro and Khami populations), a lack of access to teachers was cited as a specific concern because teachers do not want to work in remote areas due to low living standards and safety concerns.[172] More broadly, teacher salaries remain low (as low as 30,000 kyat per month), with highly qualified candidates more likely to pursue other better paid opportunities, such as with NGOs. Though about half of Rakhine and Muslims overall reported sufficient access to desks and chairs, textbooks, and writing materials, only about 35% of camp residents reported sufficient access to these materials. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Rakhine in villages reported worse access to sufficient desks and chairs, writing materials, and drinking water.

Other minorities in Rakhine State, notably Chin, expressed concerns about access to education. "Chin villages all have a primary and an affiliated middle school. But if students want to further study and attend high school, they have to go to the Rakhine villages because the government provides only one high school for the main village tract," explained a Chin woman from Kyaukphyu."[173] A Chin woman born and raised in Rakhine State but now living in Yangon further elaborated on the quantity of teachers: "There used to be a real lack of teachers for Chin people in Rakhine State. But after 2010, the government recruited more Chin and Rakhine teachers, which has improved the situation in some parts of the state. Regardless, Chin areas tend to be difficult to access and teachers do not want to come to these areas. In these places, there is often more than 400 students for only 3 or 4 teachers."[174]

While it was difficult to get information on quality of education (or perceptions of quality of education), a Rakhine leader in Kyauktaw town noted significant room for improvement: the curriculum, which is "all rote learning, is not conducive to knowledge."[175] A former teacher in Thandwe agreed, also saying that the quality of education was hampered by teachers' fear of their supervisors, causing them to only follow direct orders rather than to address problems proactively or creatively.[176] One government official suggested that a change in approach was needed: rather than taking a "teacher-centered approach," a "child-centered approach" is necessary.[177] One Rakhine lamented that individuals that have a good relationship with the Township Education Officer can get a job teaching subjects for which they have no qualifications.[178] The villagers, often quality of teachers was also cited as a specific concern in Muslim community schools, where the most educated the local Mullah, serve as teachers even though they do not have proper training and, in most instances, do not teach in Burmese language.[179] It has to be noted that Rakhine State has the second lowest matriculation success rate in the

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[170] In-depth Interview. 15 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[171] In-depth Interview. 24 March 2015. Sittwe Township.
[172] In-depth Interview. 25 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township; In-depth Interviews. 28 March 2015. Mrauk-U Township.
[173] In-depth Interview. 26 March 2015. Kyaukphyu Township.
[174] In-depth Interview. 25 August 2015. Yangon.
[175] In-depth Interview. 25 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township.
[176] In-depth Interview. 31 March 2015. Thandwe Township.
[177] In-depth Interview. 31 March 2015. Thandwe Township.
[178] Focus Group Discussion. 28 March 2015. Ramree Township.
[179] In-depth Interview. 16 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.

country although in 2014-15, it increased by 5% compared to 2013-14.[180]

Figure
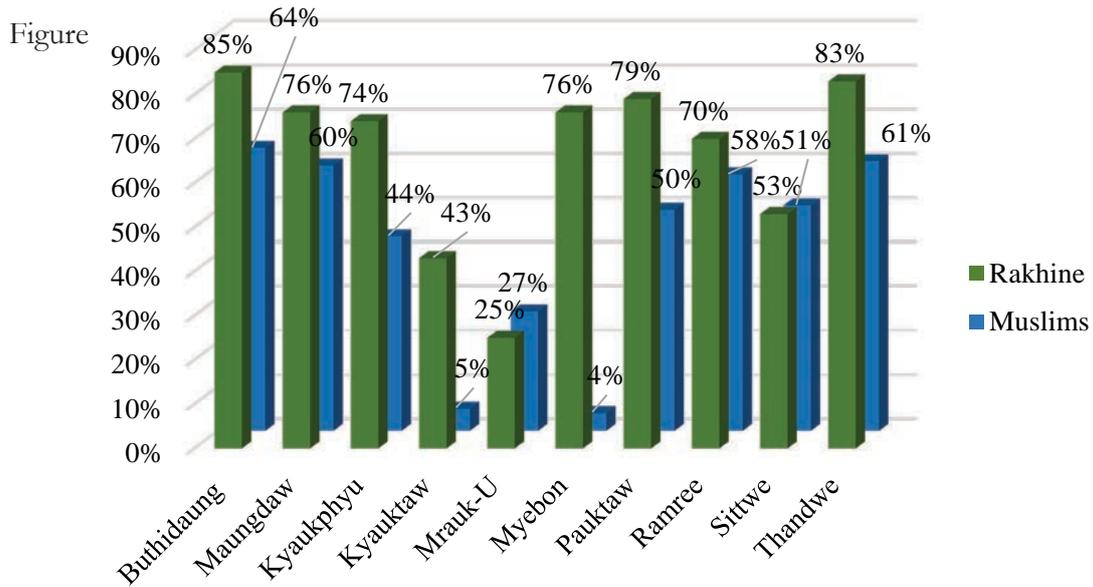
Finally, one central concern, unique to Muslim populations, is their lack of access to higher education.[181] Since 2000, Muslims have not been allowed to attend university in or outside of Rakhine State because of perceived discrimination and, more importantly, practical limitations on freedom of travel.

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[180] Matriculation rate: 2013-2014 Academic Year - 18%; 2014-2015 Academic Year - 23.13%.
[181] In-depth Interview. 24 March 2015. Sittwe Township. In-depth Interview. 1 April 2015. Thandwe Township.

Conflict Prevention

SECTION - 4

CONFLICT PREVENTION

Background

Although clashes have occurred sporadically in Rakhine State since the end of the British rule, widespread communal violence between Rakhine and Muslims erupted across Rakhine State in June 2012. Despite increased government security measures, tensions simmered and another more organized wave of violence broke out in October 2012. The violence was widespread, affecting both Muslim and Rakhine communities across large swathes of Rakhine State. Further conflict erupted between Rakhine and Muslims in Thandwe Township in October 2013 and in Maungdaw in January 2014. On top of this, in March 2014, Rakhine rioters, upset by the perceived bias of international humanitarian and development assistance in favor of Muslims, ransacked the offices of international organisations and forced the evacuation of aid workers. Between 2012 and 2014, hundreds were killed or injured, tens of thousands displaced, and thousands of buildings destroyed.

In the aftermath of the conflict in 2012 and successive waves in 2013 and 2014, the government attempted to address the situation and to put in place conflict prevention measures. The first such measure in the aftermath of 2012 was to separate the Rakhine and Muslim communities in Sittwe, banning Muslims from entering the city and confining them in IDP camps, while Rakhine were banned from entering Muslim areas.[182]

In parallel, the Rakhine Inquiry Commission was established in August 2012 under the authority of the President's Executive Order to uncover the root causes of communal violence and provide recommendations for the prevention of recurring violence in the future and the promotion of peaceful coexistence. The Commission highlighted the undesirability of separating communities[183] and made the observation that there were not enough security forces to guarantee the safety of all concerned. From October 2012 onwards, additional police units were deployed to Rakhine State, taking measures to increase security and help restore order in places where violence had broken out.[184]

Against this backdrop, the Commission drafted a report after conducting surveys and research in Rakhine State, providing a set of recommendations focusing on rule of law and more precise measures pertaining to security and conflict prevention. More specifically, the Commission recommended that: communities should be educated on the relevant laws and regulations; Rakhine State's civil service should be strengthened; systems for conflict resolution should be set up; Myanmar laws and regulations should be implemented and illegal immigration prevented; a conflict management centre should be established; security forces in Rakhine should not be withdrawn nor should force levels be reduced in any significant numbers in the short and medium-term; border security should be increased; security forces should be fully prepared to prevent violence with rapid deployment capabilities; the role

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[182] While in places like Aung Mingalar, this segregation was a governmental decision, in other areas, residents started moving by themsleves, although displacement was consolidated by the government and the international assistance.

[183] Final Report of Inquiry Commission on Sectarian Violence inRakhine State. July 2013. p.13. Available online at: http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs15/Rakhine_Commission_Report-en-red.pdf.

[184] Ibid. p.14.

of the Navy should be expanded and strengthened; a special team of civilians and military personnel should be established to gather intelligence on extremist organisations and violent groups; the organisation of Ministry of Immigration service personnel (La-Wa-Ka) in Rakhine State should be strengthened; the Border Immigration Headquarters personnel (Na-Sa-Ka) at that time, which was subsequently disbanded and replaced by Border Guard Police (BGP) in end of 2014, should assume security responsibility in a acoordaance with the law; and those who break the law should be prosecuted according to the law.[185] This list is not exhaustive but gives an overview of the conflict prevention measures that were advocated by the Rakhine Commission report to curb communal violence in Rakhine State.

Additionally, in response to outbreaks of communal conflict, the Union Government prepared a "Rakhine Action Plan", which has been reviewed and amended a number of times since then, based on feedback from international NGOs and UN agencies. Specifically, the chapter on "Security, stability and rule of law" of the Action Plan specifically deals with violence prevention. It focuses on three aspects: better border and maritime security to prevent illegal immigration; increased and better-trained police deployment across the state; and improved rule of law and conflict management. Parts of these recommendations have been implemented in two years.

In late October 2014, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approved a K37 billion (US $35 million) increase in spending for border security, as part of the Ministry of Home Affairs' supplementary budget request.[186] This increase more than doubled spending on security in this area: a border guard police force was formed with 3,600 personnel from Myanmar Police Force, the Immigration and National Registration Department and the Customs Department in addition to a Naval Police Force for security at sea. According to a senior government official, this raised the ratio of police and people to 1:500 in Rakhine State, as opposed to 1:900 in the rest of the country.[187]

Despite sporadic incidents, there has not been any major outbreak of communal violence since 2012. However, the lack of major conflict is not synonymous with safety, peace and stability in Rakhine State. The implementation of violence prevention measures is slow and, as our findings below highlight, residents in Rakhine State are not only still afraid of communal violence (73%), but also concerned about their personal safety (51% think they are unsafe). The situation remains highly volatile, especially in light of the upcoming elections in November 2015, increasing the risk of possible flashpoints.

Although they have not proved sufficient to restore stability, there have nevertheless been successful initiatives to promote conflict prevention in Rakhine State. In particular, CDNH has recently initiated a number of activities aimed at reinforcing conflict prevention and management.[188] For example, it has put in place a monitoring or "early warning" system that organizes and evaluates information on the precursors, drivers and consequences of violence. The system aims to identify and develop effective mechanisms for dealing with the threat of violence in real time, while also pointing to follow-up strategies for assessing responses and implementing mitigation measures.

[185] Ibid. pp. 45-53.
[186] MYANMAR TIMES, Friday, 21 November 2014.
[187] Euro-Burma Office. October 2014. https://euroburmaoffice.s3.amazonaws.com/filer_public/35f3/35f37e47-460d-40ee-932f-cbe455a2ea2c/pm_no_24_-_14-10-14.pdf.
[188] CDNH. http://www.cdnh.org/programs/conflict-prevention-and-management/.

Yet these efforts need to be expanded and intensified, since both conflict prevention and security remain colossal challenges in Rakhine State. Against this backdrop, this section analyses conflict prevention in a way that includes both "direct" prevention—short-term measures aimed at avoiding violence—and "longer-term" prevention measures to address the underlying causes of conflict.[189]

This section draws heavily upon the findings from the survey, FGDs and in-depth interviews and focuses on the following issues: triggers for conflict; perceptions of the conflict from Rakhine and Muslims; physical security and the role of security forces; community conflict prevention mechanisms (monitoring, community watches, etc.); coordination between local communities and security officials; and the double edged sword of the media and information sharing featuring both as a potential trigger for violence and a means for conflict prevention.

Findings

Summary

Overall, while both communities reported being afraid of communal violence, they also said they did not expect violence to occur in the future. Moreover, half of the sample reported feeling safe, although this sense was greater among the Rakhine community than the Muslim community. For a number of questions on safety, Rakhine respondents in urban areas reported feeling safer than respondents in rural areas. Overall people cited communal conflict as the main cause of insecurity, followed by a lack of law enforcement. Nonetheless, half of the sample stated that the safety situation had improved in the past three years, many of whom are Muslims, especially in IDP camps. By contrast, less than a quarter said it had deteriorated. There is, however, a lot of uncertainty about safety in the future. Interestingly, communities have strong expectations of the military and police in preventing violence and improving se-

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[189] See, For example, "Commission from the Commission on Conflict Prevention." Commission of the European Communities. 11 April 2001. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2001:0211:FIN:EN:PDF.

curity, while communities themselves are seen as factors of secondary importance. Interviews and focus-group discussions revealed the high expectations that both Rakhine and Muslim communities have of the government, which they saw as the main—if not the only—actor able to prevent conflict in the future.

While existing analyses in Rakhine State tend to focus on the discrepancy between Northern and Southern Rakhine State, the findings of this research highlighted that, in terms of security and conflict prevention, most of the differences occur at the township level rather than the sub-regional level. Finally, age did not appear to correlate with opinions on security and conflict prevention, while gender did, although not following any clear and regular pattern.

Perception of and Implication in the Communal Conflict

73% of respondents reported that they were afraid of communal violence, especially in Myebon (82%) and Thandwe (90%). Both Muslims (75%) and Rakhine (72%) reported being afraid of communal violence.

Yet, the levels of fear varied across townships: while 93% of Muslims in Pauktaw, 94% in Myebon and 91% in Thandwe reported being afraid, Buthidaung (96%), Maungdaw (85%) and Thandwe (89%, especially in villages) were the townships where Rakhine tended to be the most fearful of communal violence (Figure 80). This highlights that both communities tend to be more afraid of communal violence in areas where they are a minority: while Muslims are more afraid in the central and southern part of the state where they are the minority, Rakhine tend to be more afraid in the northern part, where Muslims account for a large majority, although Thandwe stood out as an exception.

Figure 80: Level of Fear of Communal Violence by Township
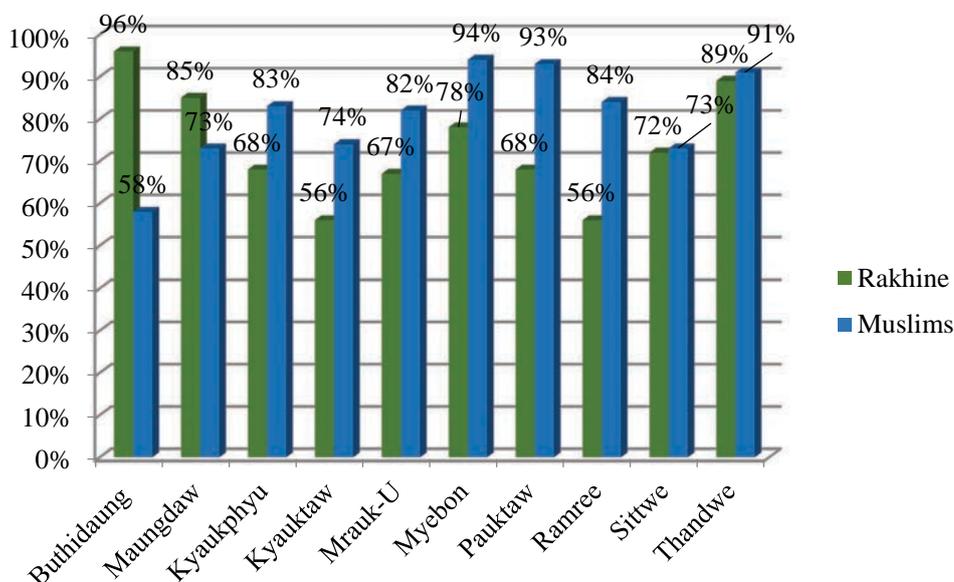
Women from both communities appeared more afraid than men (80% of Muslim women compared to 74% of men and 74% Rakhine women compared to 71% men) (Figure 81), though the feeling of fear was generally consistent across age groups (Figure 82).

Figure 81: Level of Fear of Communal Violence by Gender
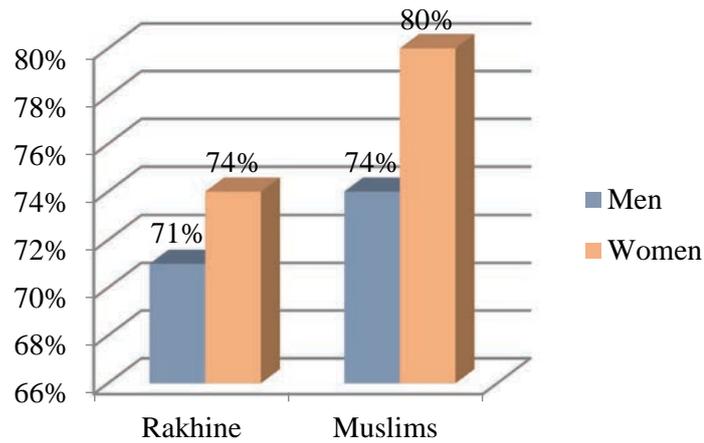
Figure 82: Level of Fear of Communal Violence by Age
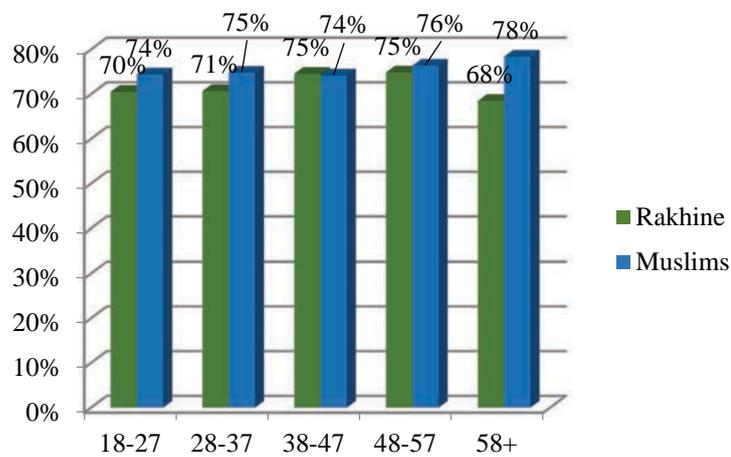
While people reported being afraid overall, they tended not to expect violence in their areas: only 14% said violence was very likely or likely. A further 36% said it was unlikely, but possible, and 31% expressed uncertainty (Figure 83). While respondents in Thandwe were most pessimistic about the likelihood of additional violence (30% of respondents defined the probability of conflict as likely or very likely), conflict in Maungdaw and Buthidaung was reported as very unlikely (respectively 40% and 41% of respondents). Indeed, in Northern Rakhine State, although the Rakhine community is the minority, the government has deployed a strong military presence, including Border Guard Police (BGP), the Navy, a military base in Buthidaung, and regular patrols, which are perceived as methods to prevent any violent outbreak.

Generally, the Muslim community seemed more confident than the Rakhine that conflict was not to be expected, with only 8% of Muslim respondents saying violence was very likely or likely compared to 18% of Rakhine. According to an expert on Rakhine issues, this can be understood as Muslims wanting to avoid further conflict because of the suffering they have undergone.[190] Muslims in camps (44%) were more unsure about whether violence would occur in the future than Muslims overall (28%) (Figure 84). Again there were no significant variations across gender and age groups (Figures 85 and 86). Attention should however be

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[190] In-depth Interview. 12 June 2014. Yangon.

drawn to the high percentage of people who stated that they didn't know (31%), especially Muslims in IDP camps (44%), which could be interpreted as a polite way of not saying the negative, and would increase the number of people who assume that some kind of communal conflict is likely.

Our findings highlight that the perception of the likelihood of additional conflict depends on the balance of demographic power between communities. While 56% of Muslims in Buthidaung and 49% in Maungdaw said additional conflict was very unlikely, 28% of Rakhine respondents in Buthidaung and 26% in Maungdaw said additional violence was likely or very likely in the future.

Rakhine are also more fearful where the Muslim population is largely dominant (94% in Maungdaw and 88% in Buthidaung). "Every day in my family, we talk about conflict in the future," explained a young Rakhine man in Maungdaw. "We have to worry because these problems can occur anytime. 80% of Muslims lack knowledge so they simply obey what the Mullah tells them. A lot of things can happen to us because of them."[191]

Figure 83: Overall Perception of the Likelihood of Further Communal Conflict
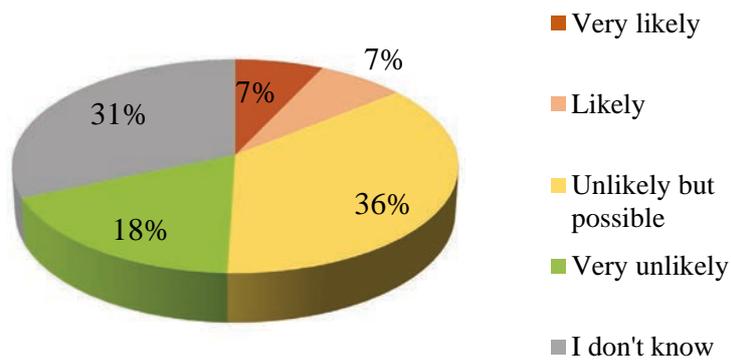
Figure 84: Perception of the Likelihood of Further Communal Conflict by Community

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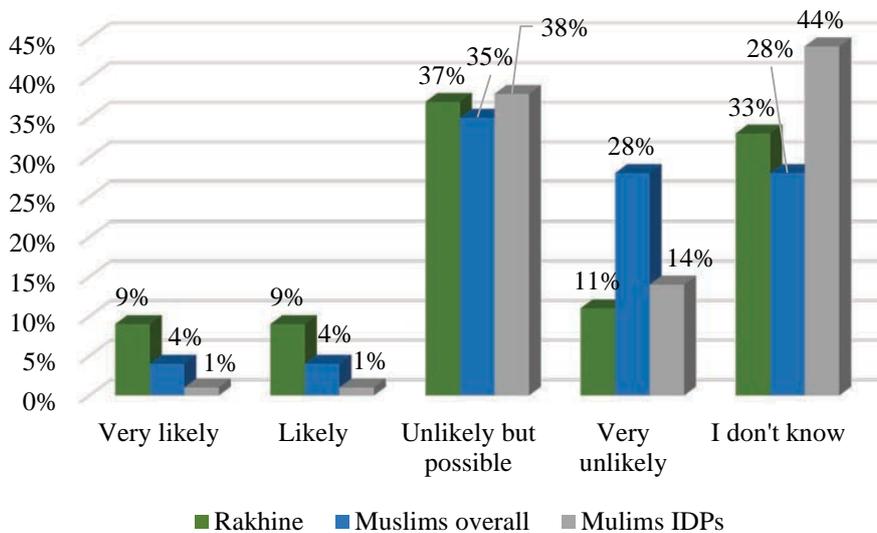
[191] In-depth Interview. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.

Figure 85: Perception of the Likelihood of Further Communal Conflict by Gender

a-Rakhine
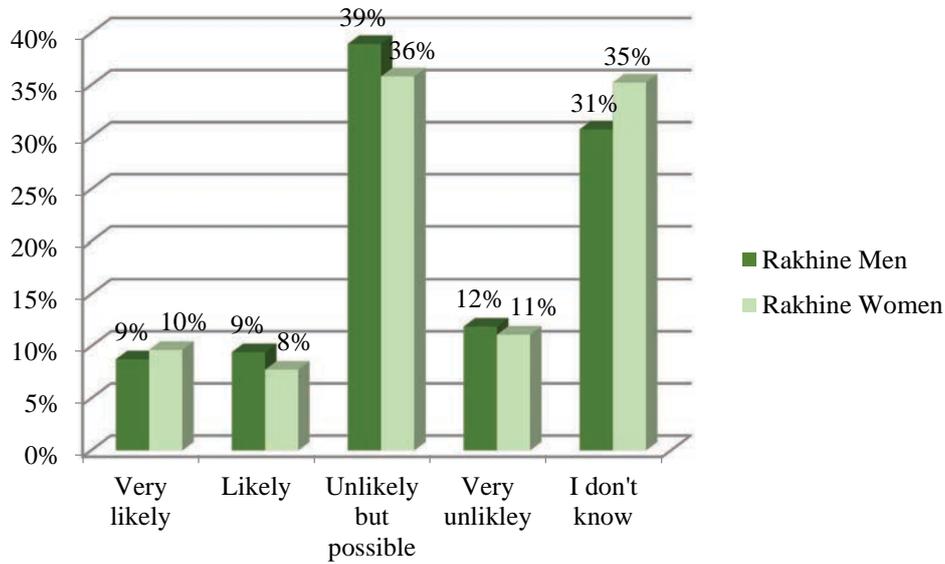
b-Muslims
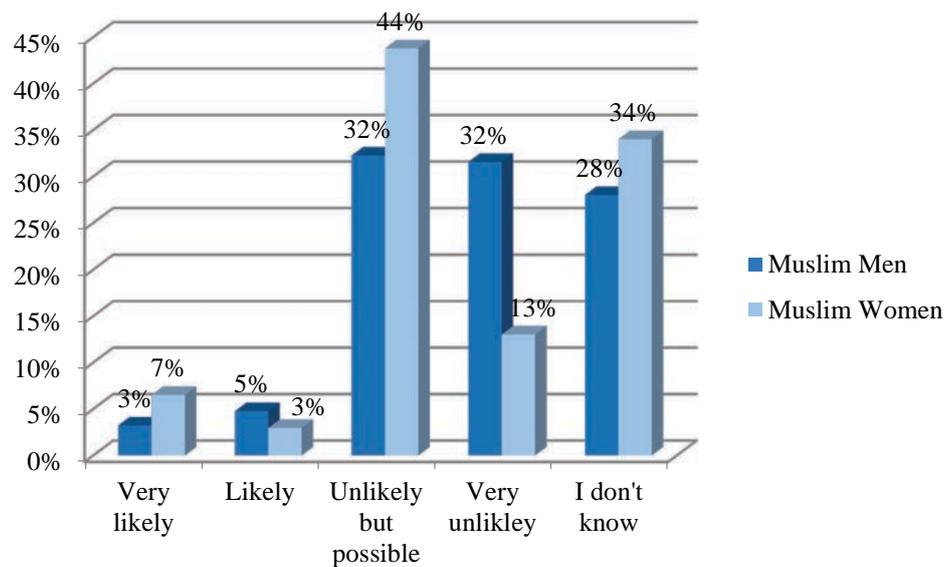
In Thandwe, both communities agreed that violence was more likley than elsewhere, with 27% of Muslims and 30% of Rakhine reporting violence to be likely or very likely in this township (Figure 87).

A Rakhine expert provided further insight into these trends. In Thandwe, the strong presence of MaBaTha, coupled with strong social mobilization (through public campaigns or demonstrations) supported by influential monks is perceived as a potential trigger for additional violence in the future. Moreover, the Rakhine population in Thandwe is under pressure from the Rakhine population from Taungup, who have employed a strict ban of Muslims from the city and would like Thandwe residents to do the same.[192] This combination of factors helps

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[192] In-depth Interview. 12 June 2015. Yangon.

explain the higher rates of belief in the prospect of future violence among Thandwe respondents.

Figure 86: Perception of the Likelihood of Further Communal Conflict by Age

a-Rakhine
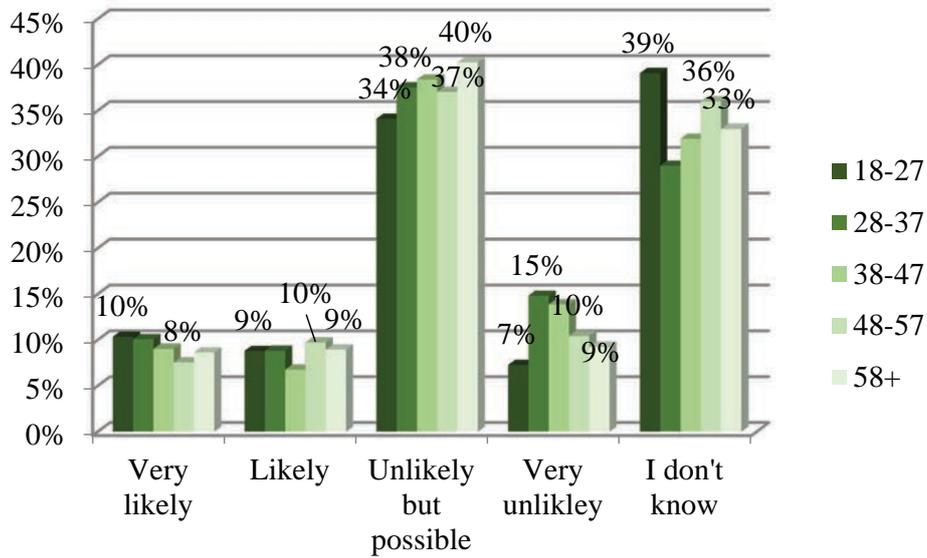
b-Muslims
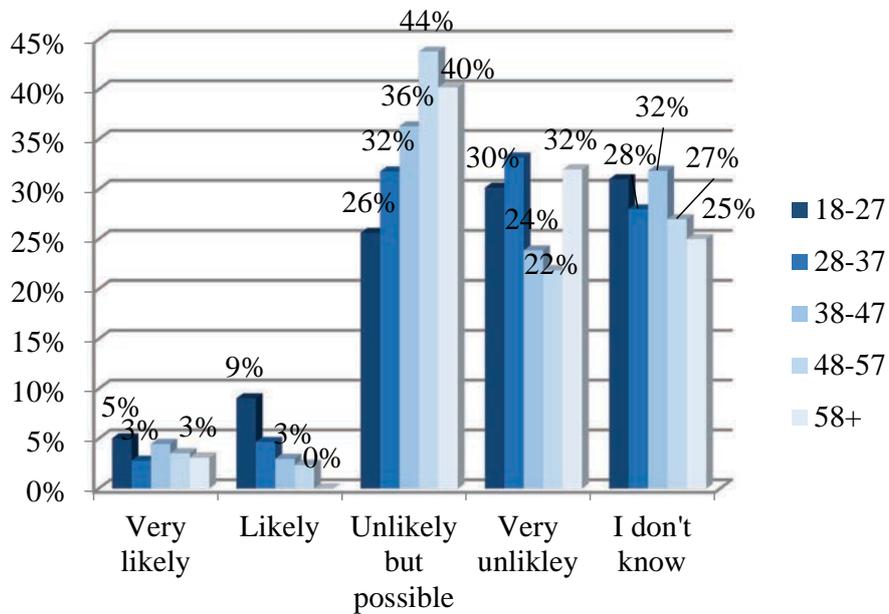
Figure 87: Perception of Very Likely or Likely Communal Conflict in the Future by Community and Township
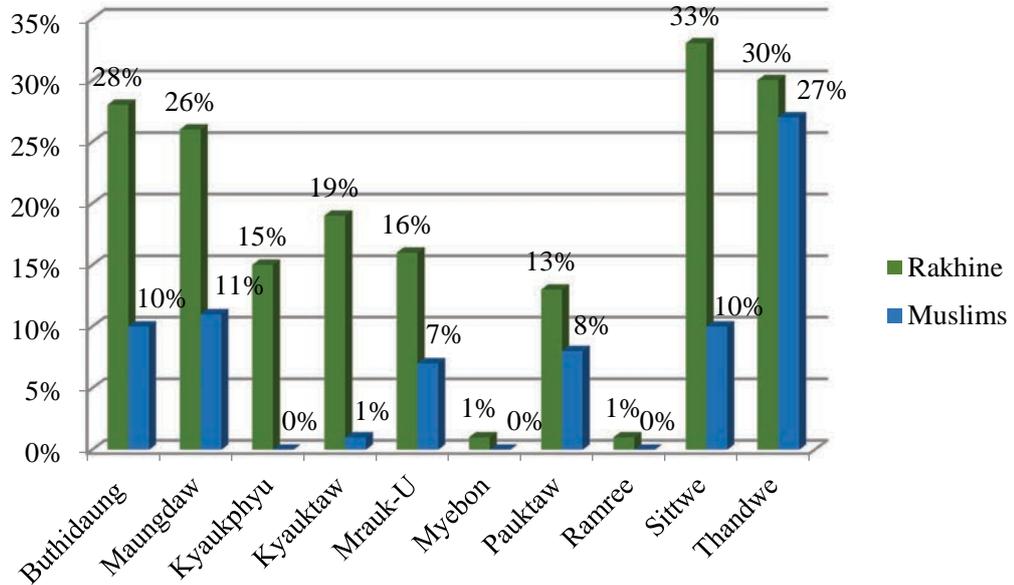
Safety and Security

About half of the sample (49%) reported the area where they live to be safe (Figure 88), though 76% respondents from Thandwe, 67% each from Kyauktaw and Myebon, and 66% from Mrauk-U reported feeling unsafe.

Figure 88: Overall Opinion on Safety in Rakhine State
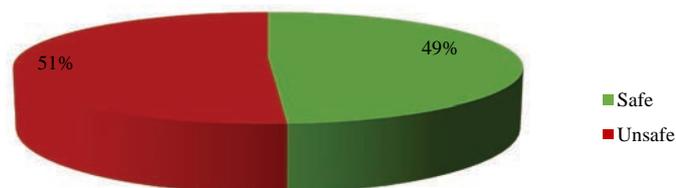
Figure 89: Do you think the area where you live is safe? Breakdown by Community
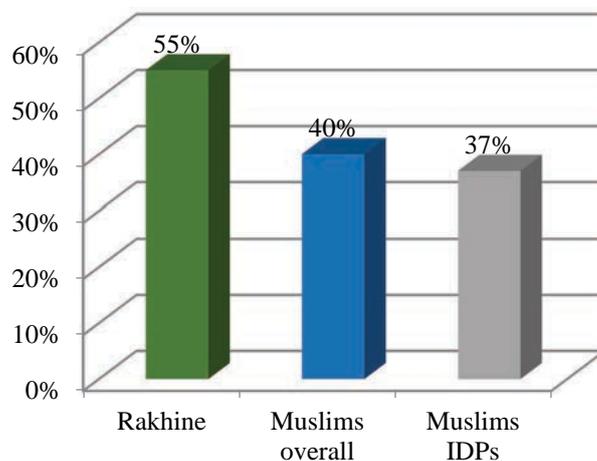
Overall, as shown in Figure 89, fewer Muslims (40%) than Rakhine (55%) appeared to think the area where they live is safe. According to an expert on Rakhine issues, because the Rakhine community is the majority in the State (approximately 60% of population), it is understandable that Rakhine respondents expressed feeling safer. This demographic power is reinforced by an administrative power (there are more Rakhine than Muslims government staff in Rakhine State at the village/ward level, although the majority at the State/District/Township level are Bamar),[193] an economic power (Rakhine people enjoy trading connections with other states and region across the country), and strong support from the Union Government for security. On top of that, Rakhine people can move to Yangon in case of an outbreak of violence, which is not the case for the Muslim community.[194] Muslim IDPs (37%) were only slightly less likely to report their area as safe than Muslims overall (40%) (Figure 89).

Rakhine respondents in wards (69%) reported feeling safer than respondents in villages (44%) (Figure 90). Indeed, in rural areas, the security response is often delayed because of distance and the difficulty of reaching isolated areas. Some Rakhine villages are surrounded by Muslim villages (and vice-versa), which adds to the feeling of insecurity.

Figure 90: Perception of Safety among Rakhine—Comparison of Urban (Ward) and Rural (Village) Areas
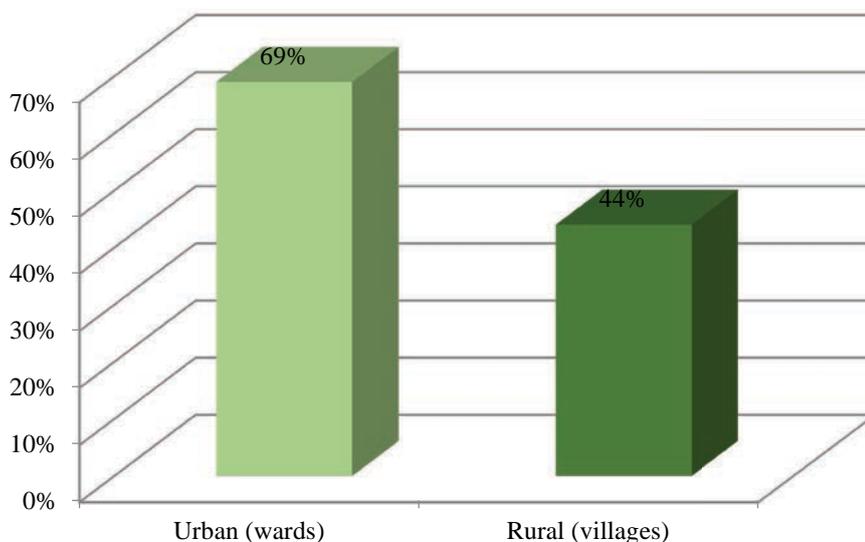
As Figure 91 shows, there were stark differences across townships. On the one hand, Muslims reported feeling more unsafe in Central and Southern Rakhine State, notably in Kyauktaw (94%), Mrauk-U (86%) and Thandwe (94%). These are not only the areas where Muslims account for the minority, but also the only places (except Northern Rakhine State) where Muslims live in villages in significant numbers (everywhere else they are primarily in camps), and as a result, where most Muslim villages are surrounded by Rakhine villages. On the contrary, Muslims felt safer in Northern Rakhine State, notably Buthidaung (75%) and Maungdaw (59%).

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[193] In-depth Interview. 12 June 2014. Yangon.
[194] In-depth Interview. 12 June 2014. Yangon.

Figure 91: Do You Think the Area Where You live Is Safe? Breakdown by Community and Township
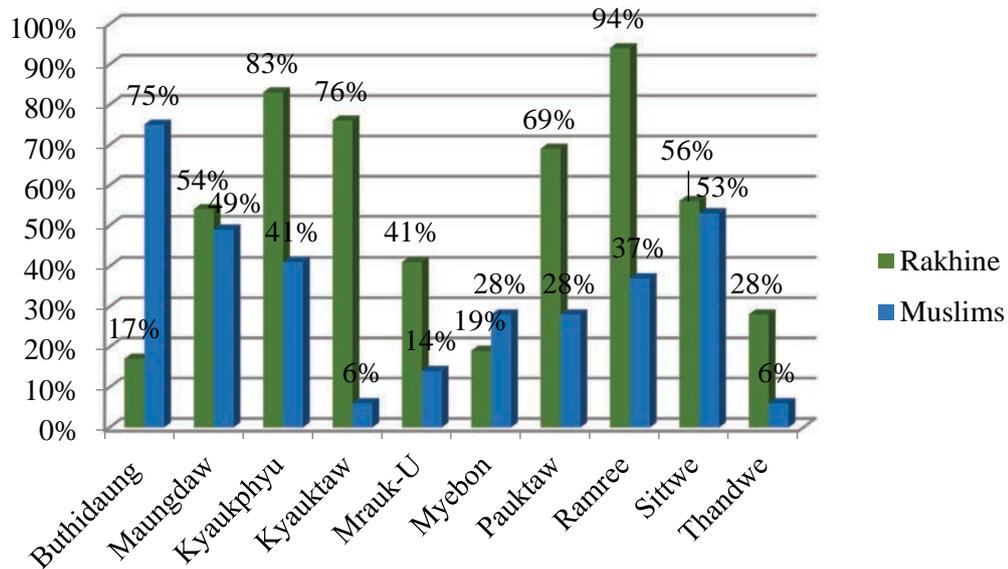
These findings were confirmed by interviews with the Muslim community, primarily the Kaman in Thandwe Township: "When you look superficially at Thandwe, the situation seems stable, but in reality it is not," explained a Kaman villager.[195] This was substantiated by another villager: "Neither the police nor the government provide security, since they anyway are linked to MaBaTha. Look, the police did not prevent our villages from burning in 2013…"[196] Another Kaman villager agreed: "We are afraid for our security because of increasing Rakhine nationalism. They resort to hate speech via loudspeaker, or the internet. Physical security is thus a real issue for us, because we are surrounded everywhere by Rakhine villages."[197]

In Kyauktaw, however, interviews with community leaders appeared to contradict the findings of the survey, with most of the interviewees explaining that the security level was currently acceptable, and had improved compared to three years ago, even if it will take a long time to be fully safe for them.[198] This was confirmed by discussions with Mro and Khami minorities[199] and with a government official who explained that stability was currently being discussed at all levels, and that Kyauktaw was relatively quiet at the moment, although the crisis was still fresh in people's memories.[200] This gap between the findings from the survey and the interviews can be explained by the fact that most survey respondents were grassroots people who might not be aware of the efforts that are being made at the higher level to improve security, while interviewees are most of the time community leaders and more educated people, aware of developments at the policy level. Additionally, most Rakhine interviewees lived in Kyauktaw town and are thus likely to be less worried about attacks since no Muslims actually live in downtown Kyauktaw. Nonetheless, while interviewees seemed to report a general improvement in safety, they felt there are still frictions on a daily basis: "We cannot access fields near Rakhine villages

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[195] In-depth Interview. 1 April 2015. Thandwe Township.
[196] In-depth Interview. 23 February 2015. Thandwe Township.
[197] In-depth Interview. 24 February 2015. Thandwe Township.
[198] In-depth Interview. 26 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township.
[199] Focus Group Discussion. 25 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township.
[200] In-depth Interview. 18 December 2014. Kyauktaw Township.

because they use slingshots against us,"[201] complained a Muslim man in Kyauktaw.

In Maungdaw and Buthidaung, most Muslim interviewees explained their feeling that the presence of security forces prevents conflict from reoccurring,[202] although some Muslims, especially in Maungdaw, expressed a sense that there was no guarantee of protection despite the heavy militarization of the city: "I don't feel safe because I know that anything can happen any time," explained a Muslim man in Maungdaw. "The government and the military have personal records and check everything: who participates at which workshop, what they say, etc. They have so many eyes and ears to control us."[203] This feeling of insecurity was confirmed by another Muslim man working as a teacher: "If anything occurs, nobody will protect us, we do not have any guarantee," adding, "I am optimistic because it is in my religion, but I know that there are still a lot of tensions, and that we are never safe in this state."[204] On the other hand, Rakhine respondents reported feeling unsafe in Buthidaung (83%) and Myebon (81%), while they reported feeling safe in Ramree (94%) and Kyaukphyu (83%).

"Safety is the biggest need in this area," explained a group of Rakhine men during a discussion in Buthidaung, citing the need for more security in order to conduct their business safely.[205] This was echoed by a Rakhine woman in a village adjacent to Buthidaung: "I cannot go to the school safely because I am afraid of the Muslims. There is no safety and no rule of law here."[206] Going one step further, another group of Rakhine men voiced their fears about what they depicted as the objectives of the Muslim community: "The ultimate aim of the Muslims is to get Rakhine State as their own land. As a matter of fact, community leaders from other Muslim countries tell them that they have to get more and more populated. Then, they will be able to take over, since they are the majority."[207] This fear of a Muslim takeover and high population growth as a direct threat to their safety was common among Rakhine; another group of Rakhine men said: "Many Muslims have too many wives, and therefore too many children. As a result, so many Rakhine villages now became Muslim villages, and I bet that in the next decade, all the villages will be fully Muslim, and that within five years, they will take back our land."[208] Finally, Rakhine in Buthidaung expressed their concerns about what they see as a lack of education from the Muslim community and concerns that they are being brainwashed by Muslim religious leaders—who, in their eyes, "incite Muslims to kill Rakhine villagers."[209] An expert on Rakhine issues based in Yangon added: "It is true that the Rakhine community in Buthidaung tends to feel unsafe because they are surrounded by Muslims, but there has not been actual violence in Buthidaung. They may feel unsafe because of what they hear in surrounding townships."[210]

Rakhine in Maungdaw provided similar explanations for their perception of a lack of safety although they placed greater focus on the anxiety associated with being a minority. "The Muslim population is the majority, only 2% of Rakhine people live in Maungdaw. We are therefore

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[201] In-depth Interview. 26 March 2014. Kyauktaw Township.
[202] In-depth Interviews. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township ; In-depth Interview. 19 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.
[203] In-depth Interview. 14 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[204] In-depth Interview. 14 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[205] Focus Group Discussion. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.
[206] In-depth Interview. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.
[207] Focus Group Discussion. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.
[208] Focus Group Discussion. 19 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.
[209] Focus Group Discussion. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.
[210] In-depth Interview. 12 June 2015. Yangon.

not secure when we travel from place to place. Even if we know that Maungdaw is not too unsafe, we are constantly afraid because we are the minority. Moreover, we know that the Tatmadaw and the police are behind us, but we cannot control this fear."[211]

Finally, even in Ramree and Kyaupkhyu—areas where the survey findings highlighted higher levels of safety—the Rakhine interviewed by the research team expressed some reservations about the general level of safety: "Safety is guaranteed in the block we live in, but when Muslims are involved, we always have to worry about conflicts arising," confided a group of Rakhine men in Kyaukphyu. In Ramree, a Rakhine villager explained that in some villages around Ramree town, the Rakhine community and village administrators had put in place some specific security measures to reduce insecurity: "Rakhine women are not allowed to marry Muslims and parents control their children not to interact with them," he expounded. "The reason is to avoid conflict in the future. When tensions arise, no Muslim is allowed to enter in those villages. One chief is assigned for every ten villages. We call that village discipline. It is not a law set by government, but a coordination between the Chief and the village administrator for security issues."[212]

While age did not seem to correlate with opinions on safety, male and female respondents had different perception of safety by community: Rakhine women (60%) reported feeling safer than men (40%), whereas fewer Muslim women reported being safe (32%) than men (42%) (Figure 92).

Figure 92: Do you think the area where you live is safe? Breakdown by Gender
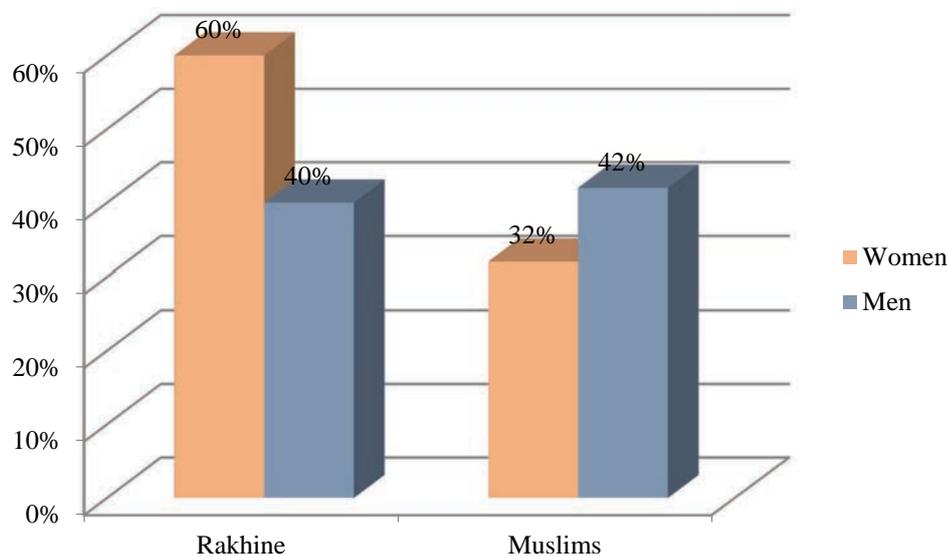
Other minorities, such as Hindus, also voiced concerns about safety: "We are extremely worried; we receive threats from some organisations and there are rumours saying that if religious violence occurs again, Hindus will be the first to suffer,"[213] lamented a Hindu man in Sittwe. One of his counterparts explained further: "If violence happens again, Rakhine from the town won't harm us as they know we are Hindus, but Rakhine people from other parts of

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[211] Focus Group Discussion. 14 March 2015. Maungdaw Township; In-depth Interview. 14 March 2015. Maungdaw Township; In-depth Interview. 15 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[212] In-depth Interview. 27 March 2015. Ramree Township.
[213] Focus Group Discussion. 20 March 2015. Sittwe Township.

the state might not know and kill us as we look like Muslims."[214] Another added: "I have already registered my children in Yangon and bought a house there. I cannot stay in Rakhine, even if I am paid 10 lakh kyats per month. We wear some hand chains related to Hinduism on our hands and put red dots on forehead to signal for being Hindus. Women also need to wear Sari."[215] Compared to the situation in 2012-2013, the safety and security situation has improved significantly. Even comparing to the findings from previous research conducted by CDNH in Rakhine State in June 2014 highlights that the security and safety situation has slightly improved compared to last year. At the time of the first survey, the majority of Rakhine respondents reported feeling unsafe (61%), compared with 45% in the present survey.[216]

When probed about the main causes of insecurity, most respondents (69%) blamed conflicts between different groups of people in the community, while 24% cited lack of law enforcement, 23% alcoholism and 7% sexual abuse. Both communities (68% of Muslims and 70% of Rakhine) agreed that conflicts between different groups of people in the community were the main reason for being unsafe. Compared to Muslims in general, Muslim IDPs tended to cite lack of law enforcement more frequently (31%) and conflicts less frequently (52%) as the main source of insecurity. They also expressed more uncertainty than the rest of the Muslims (18% said they do not know the cause of insecurity as opposed to 8% for Muslims overall) (Figure 93). Indeed, in camps, interviewees have a strong sense that violence occurred because of the lack of law enforcement. They see rule of law as a panacea that would enable them to obtain rights, return to their place of origin and get freedom of movement.[217] They also face some law enforcement issues within the camps themselves, with a number of IDPs depicting camp leaders as people who do not respect rule of law. Interviewees expressed that while action is often not taken immediately to sanction actual perpetrators, it is not infrequent that the police arrest people without proper cause.[218] The combination of these perceptions likely results in Muslims citing lack of law enforcement as the main reason for insecurity.

Figure 93: Main Causes of Insecurity by Community
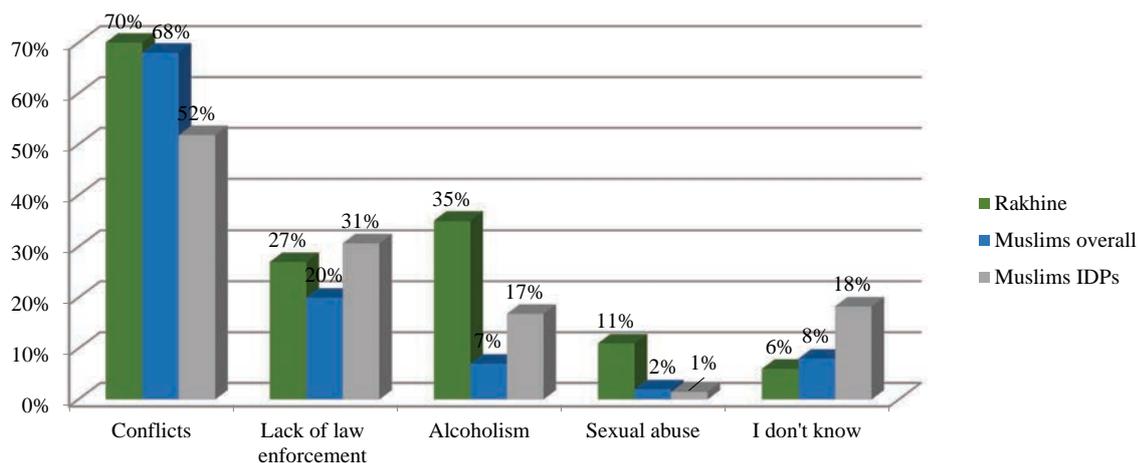
[214] Focus Group Discussion. 20 March 2015. Sittwe Township.

[215] Focus Group Discussion. 20 March 2015. Sittwe Township.

[216] Myanmar Peace Center. November 2014. Citizen voices in Myanmar's Transition : Rakhine State. pp.41-42. It is to be noted that this report solely focused on the voices of Rakhine residents. Therefore, no comparison can be drown for the Muslim community.

[217] In-depth Interview. 12 June 2015. Yangon.

[218] In-depth Interview. 12 June 2015. Yangon.

There were, however, important variations across townships (Figures 94 and 95). While Muslims blamed conflicts more in Kyauktaw (85%), Mrauk-U (82%), and Thandwe (89%), Rakhine tended to consider these conflicts as the main source of insecurity in Buthidaung (89%) and Thandwe (88%). Muslims in Ramree (83%) and Kyaukphyu (48%) appeared more preoccupied by the lack of law enforcement than by communal conflict, and 38% of Muslim respondents in Pauktaw cited alcoholism as a major source of insecurity (compared to 7% for Muslims overall). Rakhine respondents in Sittwe cited all indicators in greater numbers than Rakhine overall, with 59% of respondents citing lack of law enforcement (compared to 27% for Rakhine overall), 73% citing alcoholism (compared to 35% for Rakhine overall), and 21% citing sexual abuses (compared to 11% for Rakhine overall). The high figures citing lack of law enforcement reflects the situation in the Muslim area of Sittwe, in which there were alleged cases of human and drug trafficking. This situation is mirrored in a number of Muslim areas across Rakhine State. Noticeably, 29% of Rakhine respondents in Thandwe cited sexual abuses as a major factor of insecurity. This may be due to the fact that some elements within the Rakhine community blame the Muslim community for rape cases, with Buddhist religious leaders spreading this idea in town: "Muslim villagers are the most responsible for the conflict; it is not seldom that they rape Rakhine women, thereby inciting violence. Muslim leaders should do something,"[219] complained a monk in Thandwe, while a member of the ANP criticized the Muslims for "their bad behaviour, such as raping Rakhine women."[220]

Figure 94: Main Causes of Insecurity For the Muslim Community by Township
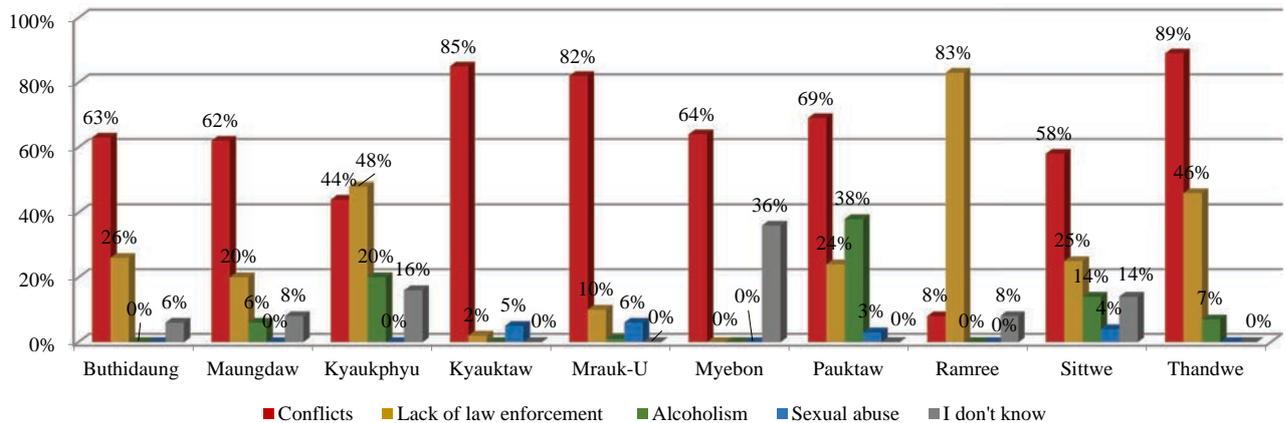
Figure 95: Main Causes of Insecurity For the Rakhine Community by Township
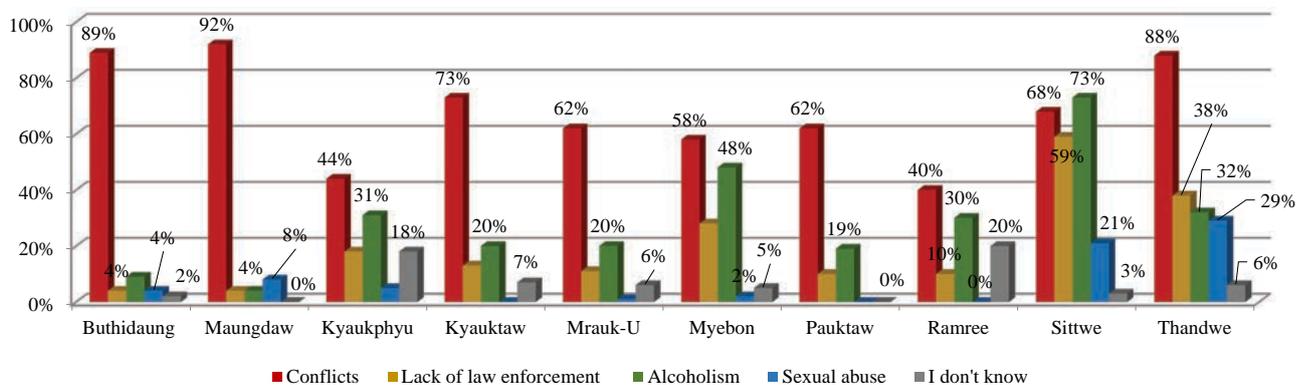
[219] In-depth Interview. 31 March 2015. Thandwe Township.
[220] In-depth Interview. 25 February 2015. Thandwe Township.

Nonetheless, 50% overall said the safety situation had improved in the past three years, compared to just 21% who said it had deteriorated. While 59% of Muslims thought the safety situation had improved in the past three years, only 44% of Rakhine did so. Amongst Muslims, IDPs were much more likely to report that the safety situation had improved (82%) than Muslims overall (59%) (Figure 96). This is understandable in light of the high presence of security forces around IDP camps, which contributes to the feeling of safety.

Additionally, an expert working on Rakhine issues explained that, in 2013, before U Maung Maung Ohn was appointed as Chief Minister, Rakhine activist networks were extremely strong, and put pressure on the government to prevent any economic relationship between the two communities. Some of these Rakhine extremist groups have now reduced the intensity of their activities, supporting the perception that security has improved. Finally, UN agencies can now access both sides, which contributes to this feeling of security from the Muslim community, including among IDPs.

Figure 96: Evolution of Safety Situation in the Past Three Years by Community
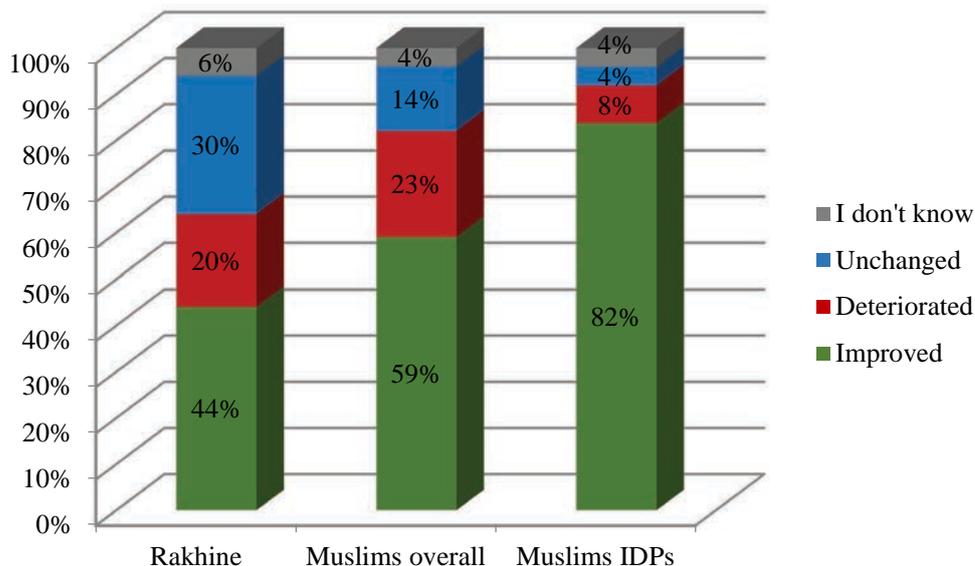
It should be noted that security is a highly subjective notion, often viewed by local communities as a holistic concept encompassing a number of indicators that go beyond security per se. In some places where interactions have improved (crossing each other's villages is possible again, trade can restart, etc.), security in itself has not necessarily improved but the perception that this place is safer to live has been considerably enhanced.

Moreover, more Rakhine in urban areas (25%) thought that the safety situation had improved, compared to Rakhine respondents in rural areas (16%) (Figure 97).

Figure 97: Evolution of Safety for Rakhine—Comparison of Urban (Ward) and Rural (Village) Areas
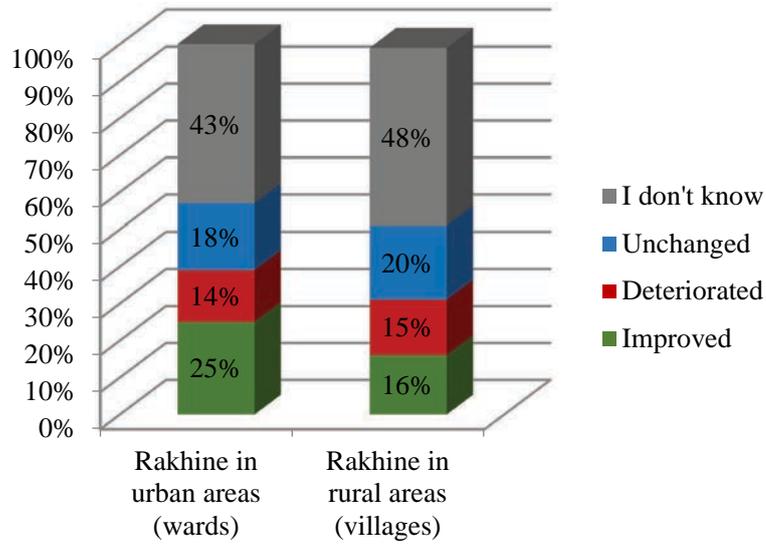
Muslims appeared to view the evolution of the safety situation as particularly favourable in Kyaukphyu (80%), Myebon (98%), Pauktaw (80%) and Sittwe (74%), while in Ramree they reported the greatest deterioration (32% compared to 23% overall) (Figure 98). Again, the fact that IDP camps are now surrounded by police and military forces and that there are less intimidations from Rakhine extremists, Muslims here tend view security as a whole, and to perceive humanitarian improvement in the camps as directly related to physical security and safety. Moreover, trade with the Rakhine community has resumed, and in some of these townships, Muslims IDPs can even get support from the township administration office to order food items.[221] As for Rakhine, they seemed to view the safety situation as having improved in Sittwe (76%) and as having deteriorated in Buthidaung (41%) and Mrauk-U (33%) (Figure 99).

Figure 98: Rakhine's Perception of the Evolution of Safety Situation in the Past Three Years by Township

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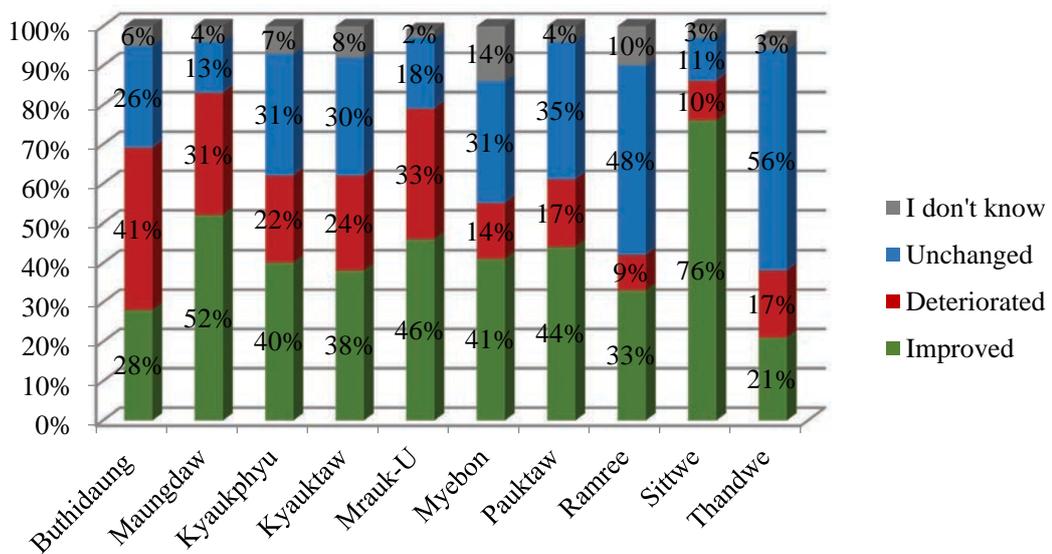
[221] In-depth Interview. 12 June 2015. Yangon.

Figure 99: Muslims' Perception of the Evolution of Safety Situation in the Past Three Years by Township
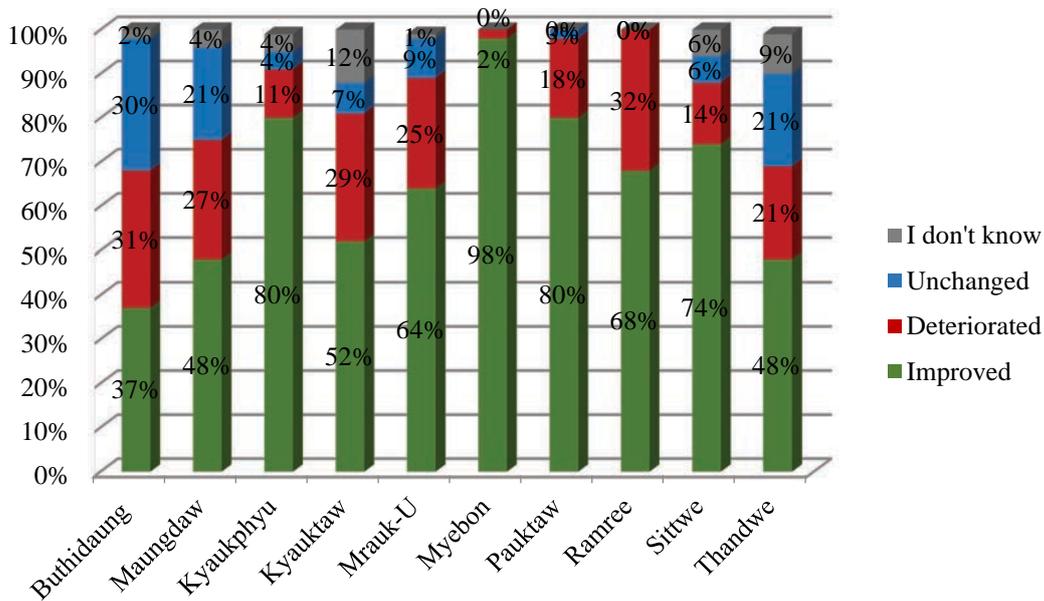
Both Muslims (47%) and Rakhine (53%) cited the enhancement of law enforcement as the main reason for the improved situation. This view extended to Muslim IDPs (63%) (Figure 100).

Figure 100: Reasons for the Improvement of Safety
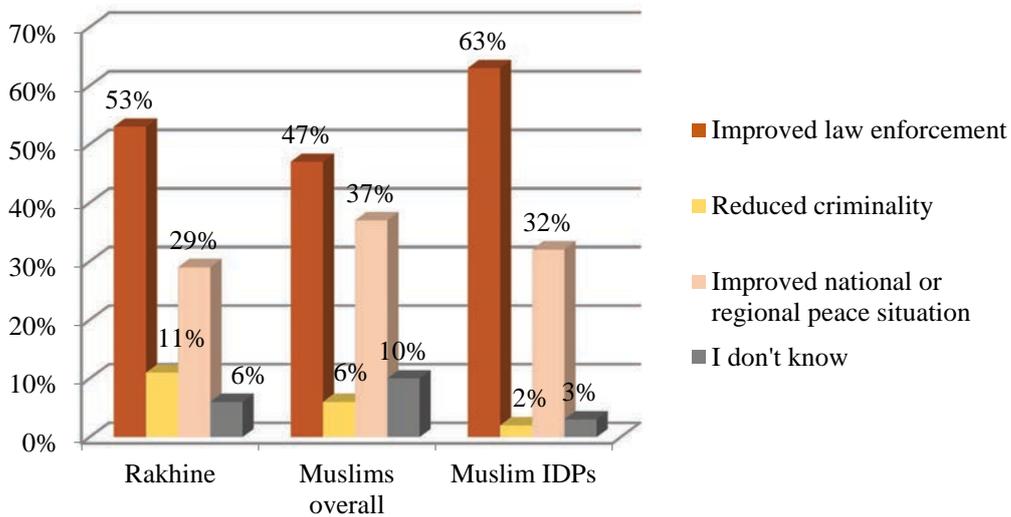
Once again, there were important fluctuations across townships. Among the Rakhine, 68% in Mrauk-U and 63% in Pauktaw said that safety had improved thanks to enhanced law enforcement, 61% in Myebon and 60% in Ramree cited the improved national or regional peace situation (Figure 101). As for Muslims, 80% in Kyaukphyu, 97% in Pauktaw and 77% in Ramree cited improved law enforcement as the main reason for enhanced safety, while 98% in Myebon and 85% in Kyauktaw cited the improved national or regional peace situation (Figure 102).

Figure 101: Rakhine's Reasons for the Improvement of Safety by Township
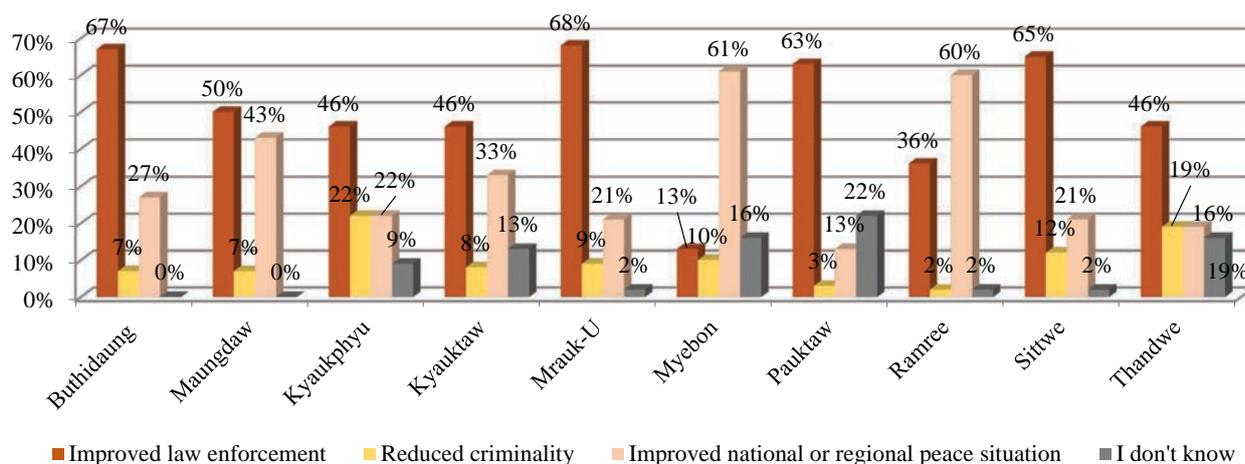
Figure 102: Muslims' Reasons for the Improvement of Safety by Township
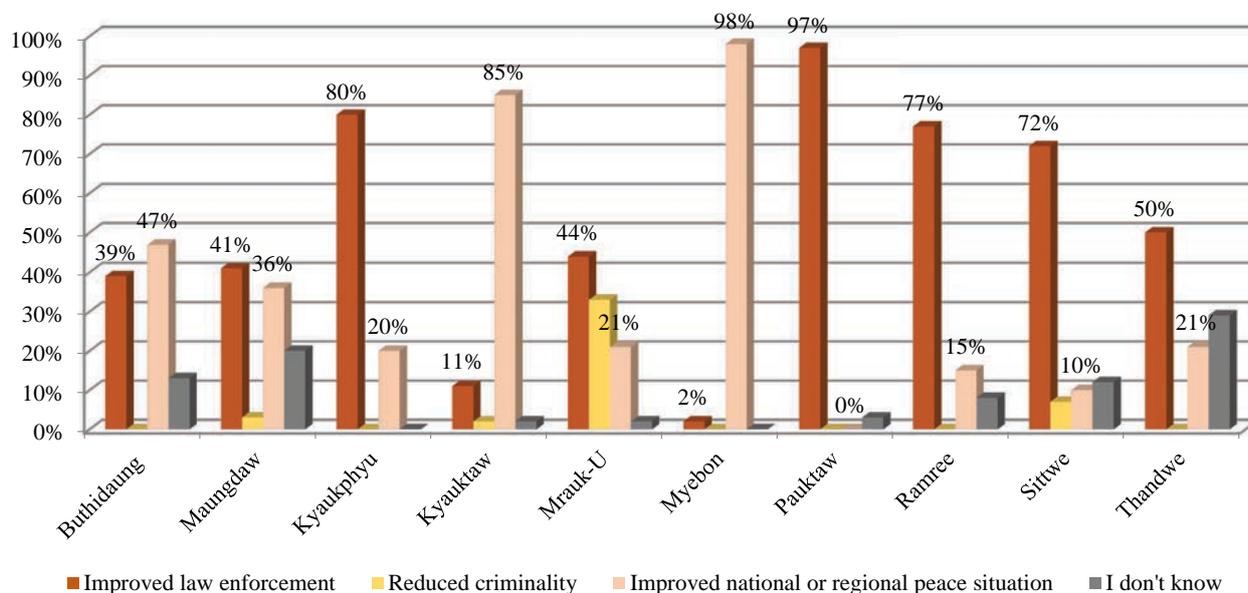
There is widespread uncertainty about future security. As Figure 103 shows, 46% of Muslims and 45% of Rakhine did not know how the situation would evolve in the future. This was consistent across all questions related to the future, which can be explained by the fact that people do not want to make predictions about the future, but also by the critical lack of information and communication, as explained by an expert on Rakhine issues in Yangon: "nobody knows about government policies, and the communication between local communities and UN or NGOs is still limited. Lack of information sharing and poor communication are mainly responsible for this high degree of uncertainty."[222]

Additionally, the proportion of respondents assuming that the situation will improve, deteriorate, or remain the same was similar between Rakhine and Muslims: respectively 20% and 19% thought it will improve, 14% and 17% thought it will deteriorate and 19% of each community thought it will remain the same. While Muslim IDPs were the most likely to report

[222] In-depth Interview. 12 June 2015. Yangon.

an improvement in the safety situation (82%) over the last three years, they were also slightly more pessimistic about the future, with 23% reporting that the situation is likely to deteriorate (Figure 103). "IDPs have experienced so much suffering in the past that they don't expect anything from the future," summarized an expert in Yangon.[223]

Figure 103: Expectations about Safety in the Future
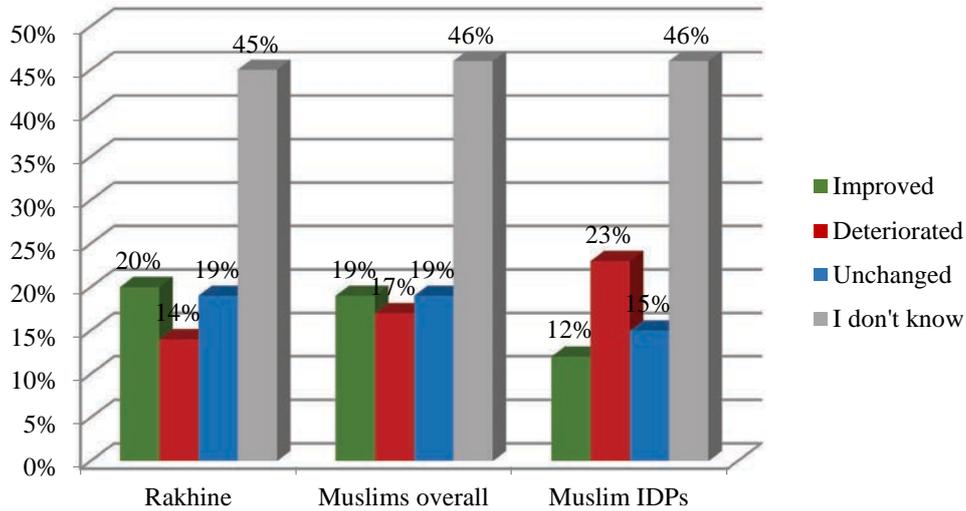
Beyond this general trend, Rakhine expressed more pessimism in Buthidaung and Thandwe (each 28%) (Figure 104). As for Muslims, they appeared more pessimistic about future safety in Kyaukphyu, Myebon and Thandwe (with respectively 33%, 32% and 36% of respondents reporting the safety situation would deteriorate) (Figure 105).

Figure 104: Rakhine Expectations about Safety in the Future by Township

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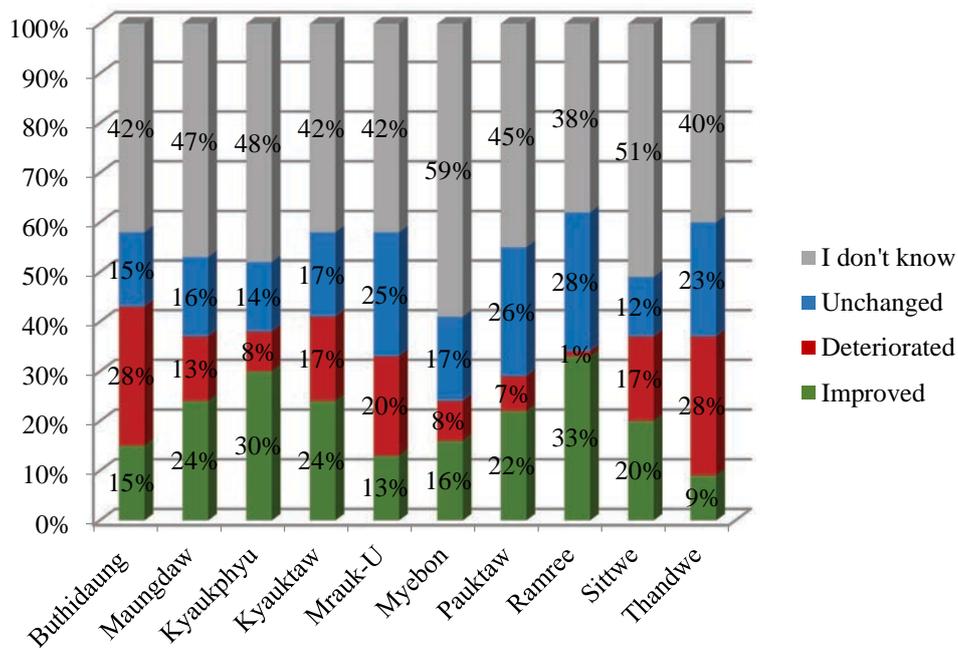
[223] In-depth Interview. 12 June 2015. Yangon.

When asked how they would protect themselves if violence reoccured, 52% of both Muslims and Rakhine responded that they will look for protection from the military and police. Muslim IDPs were the most likely to claim protection from security forces (54%), but also the most uncertain (30%), compared to Rakhine (14%) and Muslims overall (20%) (Figure 106). Rakhine appeared to rely on police and military especially in Maungdaw (87%), Pauktaw (69%) and Sittwe (81%), while it seemed to be more the case for Muslims in Kyaukphyu (80%), Kyauktaw (79%), Mrauk-U (74%), Pauktaw (85%) and Sittwe (70%). "Security is provided by the military, and this is good," a Muslim leader was pleased to say in Kyauktaw.[224] This was confirmed by a Muslim man from a village near Kyauktaw: "We trust the military to restore security more than the police because the latter participated in the violence in 2012."[225]

Figure 105: Muslim Expectations about Safety in the Future by Township
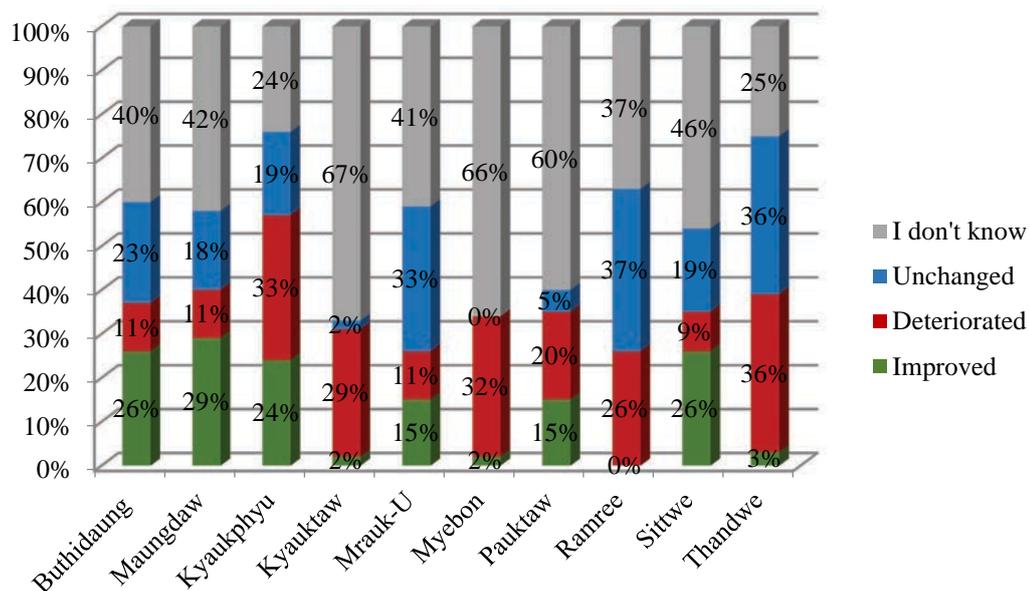
A large proportion of Rakhine (44%) also said they would rely on their own community, as compared to only 29% of Muslims, though 42% and 41% of the latter chose this option in Buthidaung and Maungdaw, which is not surprising given the large proportion of Muslims in this area compared to other townships in Rakhine. Crucially, almost no respondents (1% amongst Muslims and 4% amongst Rakhine) reported being willing to resort to violence to protect themselves. "We have suffered too much. We don't want to fight, we want rule of law," summed up a Muslim man in Maungdaw."[226]

"Answers to this question mainly depend on the balance of power between communities," explained an expert based in Yangon. "Security and police are particularly cited when the community is the minority. Look at IDPs; they simply have no other choices. On the contrary, Muslims in Maungdaw can rely on their community because they are strong, they are the majority"[227] More urban Rakhine respondents (57%) reported looking to the police or the military for security than respondents in rural areas (49%).

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[224] In-depth Interview. 12 December 2014. Kyauktaw Township.
[225] In-depth Interview. 26 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township.
[226] In-depth Interview. 17 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[227] In-depth Interview. 12 June 2015. Yangon.

Figure 106: How will you protect yourself and your community if there is violence again in your area?
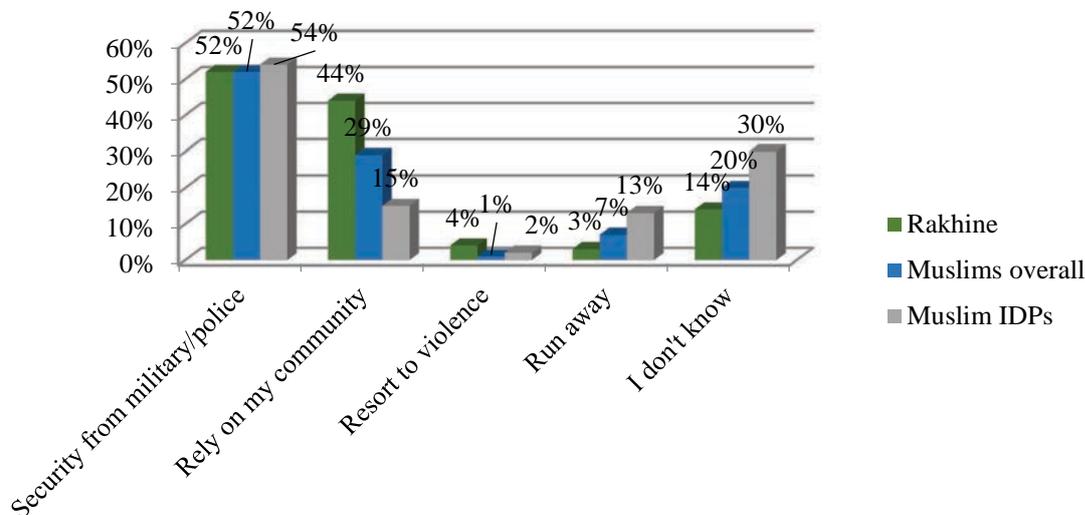
Respondents appeared undecided as to what can be done to improve security, with the greatest support (39%) for increasing numbers of security officials. There were however differences between communities: while Rakhine (46%) favoured increasing numbers of police, especially in Maungdaw (83%) and Sittwe (68%), most Muslims (44%) favoured a systematic implementation of law enforcement (Figure 107), especially in camps (54%), although 62% of Muslim respondents in Sittwe also appeared to see the increase of numbers of police as the surest way to improve security. Again, amongst the Rakhine, more respondents in urban areas (52%) favoured increasing the number of police than respondents in rural areas (41%).

Respondents from both groups seemed to view the role of the community as secondary to improving security. The answer "more community actions" was infrequently chosen by both groups (16% amongst Muslims, 15% amongst Rakhine). Indeed, apart from localised and sporadic initiatives, such as the aforementioned one in Kyaukphyu, both Rakhine and Muslims have not had much experience of community initiatives and activities to improve security. Awareness that communities can actually play a role appeared very low amongst interviewees, highlighting the need to reinforce this cognizance about the crucial responsibility local communities can have in preventing conflict themselves.

Interviews provided further insight into what could improve, in the mind of local communities, security in the areas in which they reside. Most interviewees, from both Rakhine and Muslim communities, expressed their heavy reliance on the government and see it as the main, if not the only, actor able to guarantee their security. "For now, we cannot live peacefully in Rakhine State," explained a Muslim in Buthidaung. "But if the government negotiates successfully with both communities, the situation might be tolerable at some point. That's the only way."[228]

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[228] Focus Group Discussion. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.

Figure 107: What could be done to improve the safety situation in the village?

■ Rakhine   ■ Muslims overall   ■ Muslim IDPs
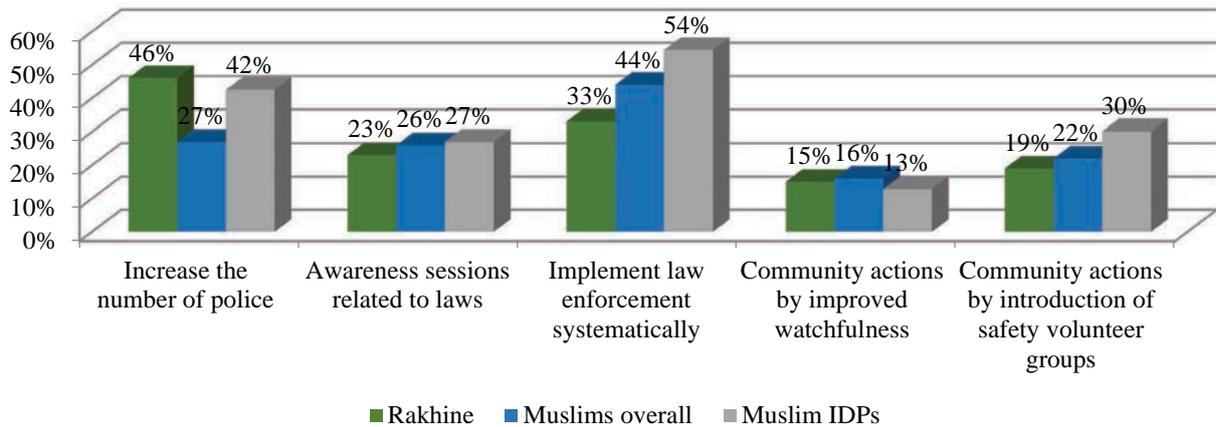
High expectations of the government were observed in all townships, whatever the community: "In terms of safety and security, the government is primarily responsible,"[229] claimed a Rakhine man in Thandwe, while a Rakhine man in Maungdaw explained: "We experience so many problems as a minority which cannot be solved without the willingness of the government and parliament members to actually do something to protect us."[230] In Buthidaung, a Muslim man explained that democracy was not enough to bring reconciliation, but that what was primarily needed was "to restore security," making clear that "only the government and the military can manage this."[231] A Rakhine man corroborated these views, while going one step further: "The main responsibility goes to the government. What they have done so far is not enough. They have to maintain safety for both communities and to educate the extremists."[232]

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[229] In-depth Interview. 30 March 2015. Thandwe Township.
[230] In-depth Interview. 14 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[231] In-depth Interview. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.
[232] In-depth Interview. 19 March 2015. Buthidaung Township..

Conflict Prevention

In terms of conflict prevention, the police and military were viewed as the most important actors for stopping future violence (41% of respondents), while education (15%) and economic development (8%) were not viewed as particularly helpful. However, opinions fluctuated by community with 39% of Muslims believing that community meetings could stop communal violence in the future, while Rakhine placed more faith in the police and military (47%) and rule of law (34%) (Figure 108).

On both sides, education and economic development were not viewed as particularly helpful, although Muslims seemed to view these two factors as more important than Rakhine (25% Muslims cited education compared to 9% Rakhine and 11% of Muslims cited economic development compared to 6% Rakhine). There was also modest support for community monitoring (31% for Muslims and 22% for Rakhine) to prevent conflict. Among Muslims, IDPs were more likely to cite the police and military (40% compared to 31% Muslims overall) and rule of law (62% compared to 36%), but also community monitoring (36% compared to 31%), education (35% compared to 25%) and economic development (17% compared to 11%).

Again, Rakhine in urban areas tended to favour the police and military (54%) more than Rakhine respondents in rural areas (42%) (Figure 109). Amongst Rakhine, the police and military were especially favoured in Buthidaung (74%) and Maungdaw (76%), due to Rakhine perceptions of threat brought about by demographic imbalance. Moreover, respondents from both communities appeared to view the police and military as the best way to stop communal violence in Sittwe in the future (77% of Rakhine and 64% of Muslims). Rakhine respondents were generally more prone to think joint community meetings could prevent further communal violence in Sittwe than in other townships (44% compared to 22% for Rakhine overall),

which contrasts with the noticeably tense situation and separation of both communities (Figure 110).

Figure 108: What do you think could be done to stop communal violence in the future?
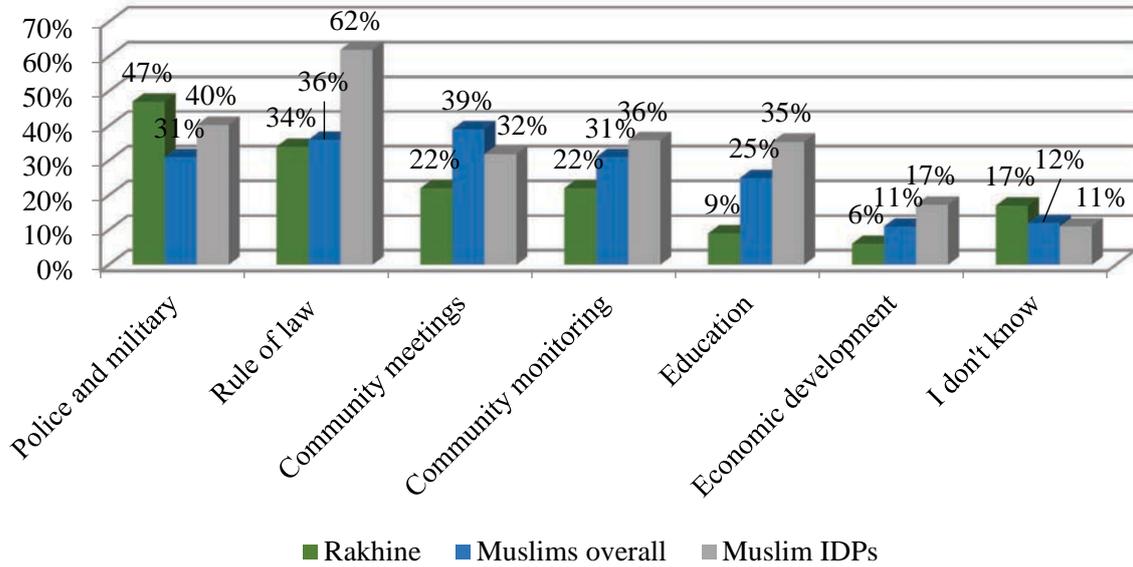
Figure 109: Rakhine Views on Ways to Stop Communal Violence in the Future Comparison of Urban and Rural Areas
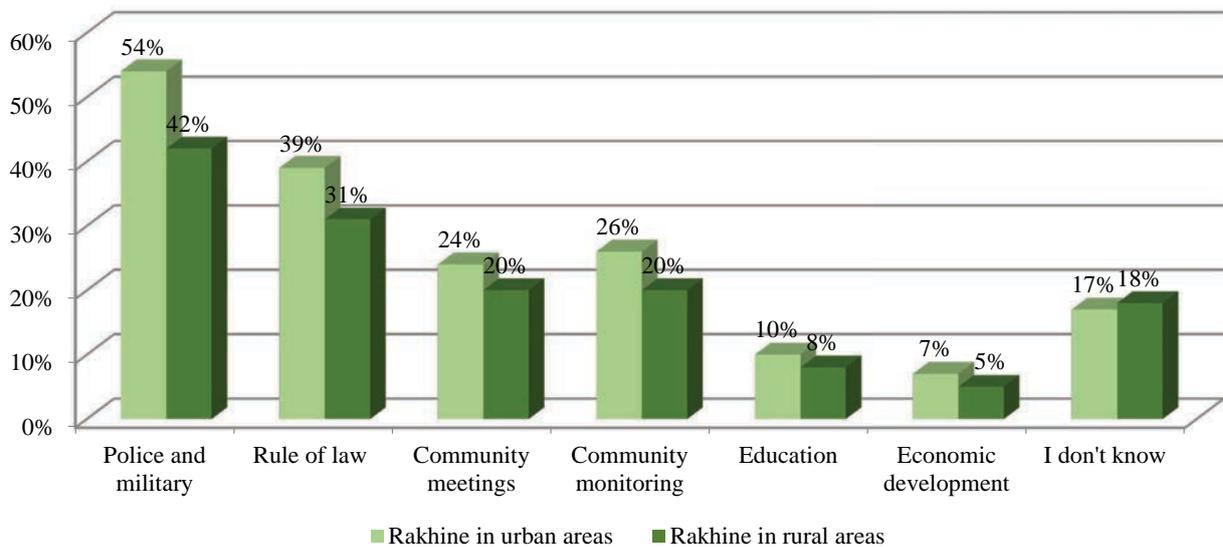
Muslims appeared to favour the enforcement of law and order, especially in Kyaukphyu (76%) and Pauktaw (68%). Most Muslims in Myebon (58%) viewed education as the best way to prevent violence in the future, and more Muslims in Pauktaw than in other townships (30% compared to 11% for Muslims overall) saw development as an important step towards curbing violence (Figure 111).

The perception of the government as the actor most capable of preventing future violence was also expressed during interviews in Kyauktaw, Thandwe, Sittwe, Maungdaw, Kyaukphyu and Ramree. Yet, while both communities expressed a heavy reliance on and strong expecta-

tions of the government, their perspectives on what needs to be done differed, based on their understanding of rule of law.

Figure 110: Rakhine's Preferred Solutions to Stop Communal Violence in the Future in a Selection of Townships
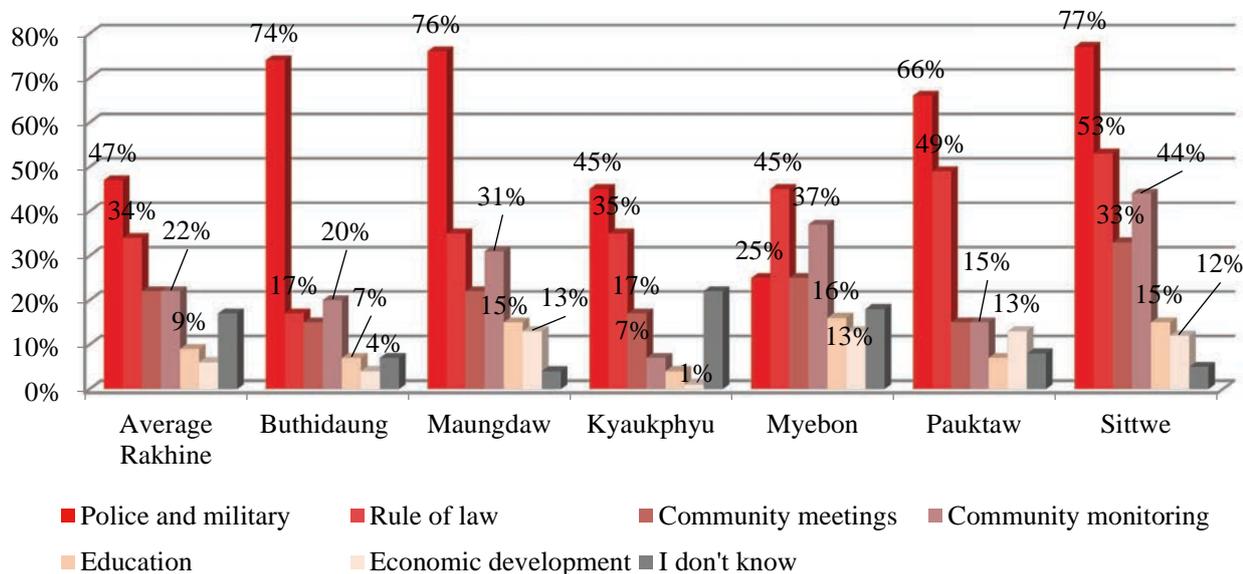
Figure 111: Muslims' Preferred Solutions to Stop Communal Violence in the Future in a Selection of Townships
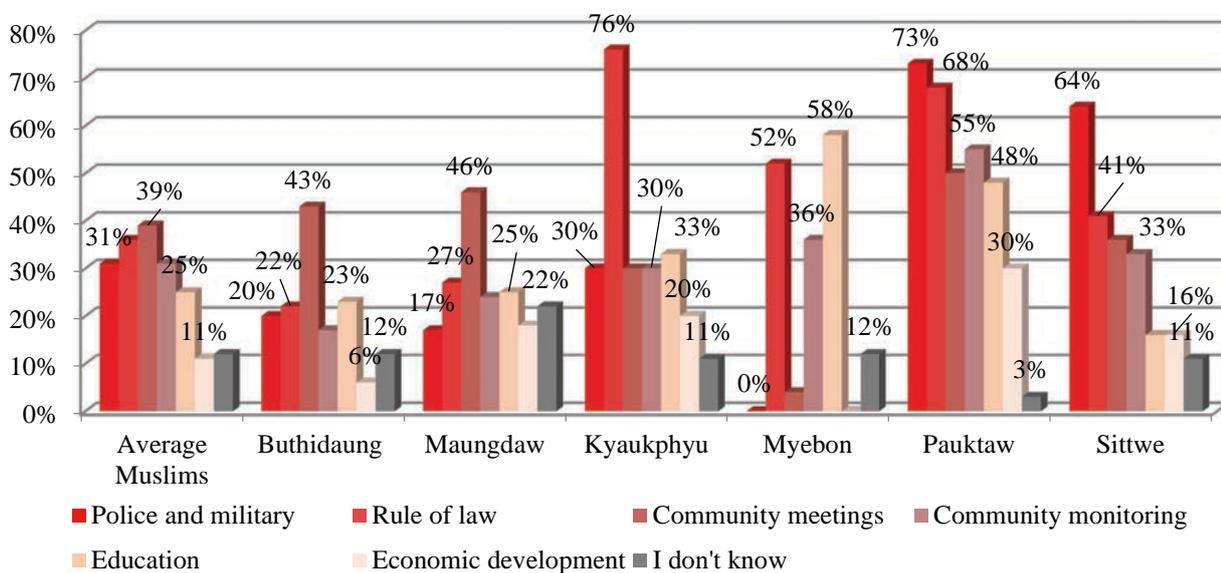
Muslims largely referred to the impartial enforcement of laws within society as a constraint upon behaviour, and highlighted the need for the government to organize meetings aimed at preventing further waves of violence. For instance, in Maungdaw, a Muslim woman explained: "The government is like the father of the family with different children, which are the ethnicities. He should make sure everybody is treated equally. He is thus the only one that can manage to prevent violence."[233] Similarly, Kaman villagers stated: "The government is mostly responsible for the lack of improvement… It should organize activities to bring both com-

[233] Focus Group Discussion. 17 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.

munities together and foster trust-building, while at the same time clamping down on hate speech, perpetrated by U Wirathu, 969 and MaBaTha."[234] In Sittwe a Muslim man explained: "The government hasn't solved the problem yet. It has only tried to control it. The government should implement and enforce rule of law in this area; not simply using military forces to try and control the situation, because this is getting nowhere."[235]

The Rakhine community expressed a different set of expectations of the government, emphasising the strict implementation of the 1982 Citizenship Law and control of immigration. For instance, a Rakhine man in Sittwe highlighted: "If the government can control the borders and strengthen the Border Guard Police to make sure no one enters Myanmar, the situation will surely get better,"[236] while a monk in Thandwe emphasized the need to deal with the issue of citizenship: "The government should decide which groups (Kaman, Bengali) should have which rights. 'Real' Kaman should be checked, and, above all, the 1982 Law should be strictly implemented."[237] In Kyauktaw Township, Rakhine expressed yet another kind of expectation from the government, explaining that the best way to prevent violence was simply to make sure both communities remained separated. "It's impossible that both communities live peacefully," explained a local NGO in Kyauktaw, "the situation will be much safer if the Muslims and Rakhine remain separate."[238] A leader from a Rakhine CSO agreed: "Communities should remain separate; as long as there is separation, there will be peace,"[239] while another Rakhine man stated: "The government should relocate them to some place far away from us. That's the only way to prevent violence in the future."[240]

Other minorities interviewed in Rakhine State, including Mro and Khami, also expressed high expectations of the government: "Leaders from both sides should discuss the conflict openly; the government is mostly to blame for why this has not happened yet."[241] Elaborating more on this view, a Catholic priest in Sittwe stated: "The government should engage in trust-building and seek to address impunity. It must also reach out and respect each community,"[242] while a group of Hindu men highlighted the need for the government to negotiate between Rakhine and Muslims in order to achieve reconciliation.

Overall, both groups agreed that local communities have tried to reduce violence so far (61% of Muslims and 54% of Rakhine did think so) (Figure 112). However, Rakhine (32%) were more uncertain than Muslims (20%) on this issue, especially in Ramree, where 43% of Rakhine respondents did not know what the role of local communities has been, while many of the small sample of Muslims (37%) thought local communities had fuelled the conflict in Ramree. Muslim IDPs (24%) also tended to be slightly more uncertain than Muslims overall (20%).

When asked what local communities could do to prevent the conflict, Muslims (56%) promoted community meetings (Figure 113), especially in conflict-affected areas (64% in Mrauk-U, 68% in Myebon, and 66% in Sittwe). Muslim IDPs were slightly more eager to promote community meetings (60%). In Myebon, 88% of Muslim respondents favoured community

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[234] Focus Group Discussion. 1 April 2015. ThandweTownship.
[235] In-depth Interview. 21 March 2015. Sittwe Township.
[236] In-depth Interview. 22 March 2015. Sittwe Township.
[237] In-depth Interview. 31 March 2015. Thandwe Township.
[238] In-depth Interview. 19 December 2015. Kyauktaw Township.
[239] In-depth Interview. 19 December 2015. Kyauktaw Township.
[240] In-depth Interview. 28 March 2015. Kyaukphyu Township.
[241] In-depth Interview. 25 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township.
[242] In-depth Interview. 24 March 2015. Sittwe Township.

monitoring, and among a small number of Muslim respondents in Ramree 47% did not think the local communities could do anything (Figure 114).

The fact that only 11% of Muslims stated that communities could meet to prevent violence in the future should not be viewed as evidence that the Muslim community does not feel the need to meet the Rakhine community, since this has already occurred and interactions between communities now seem more satisfactory. Muslims tend to favour community meetings rather than monitoring because they want to explain and communicate their views. "They feel more the need to share things about their community, which they view as largely misunderstood by the Rakhine community," explained an expert on Rakhine issues. "Now that the influence of some Rakhine activists has lessened, there are some windows of opportunities for meetings."[243]

Figure 112: What have local communities done about the violence so far?
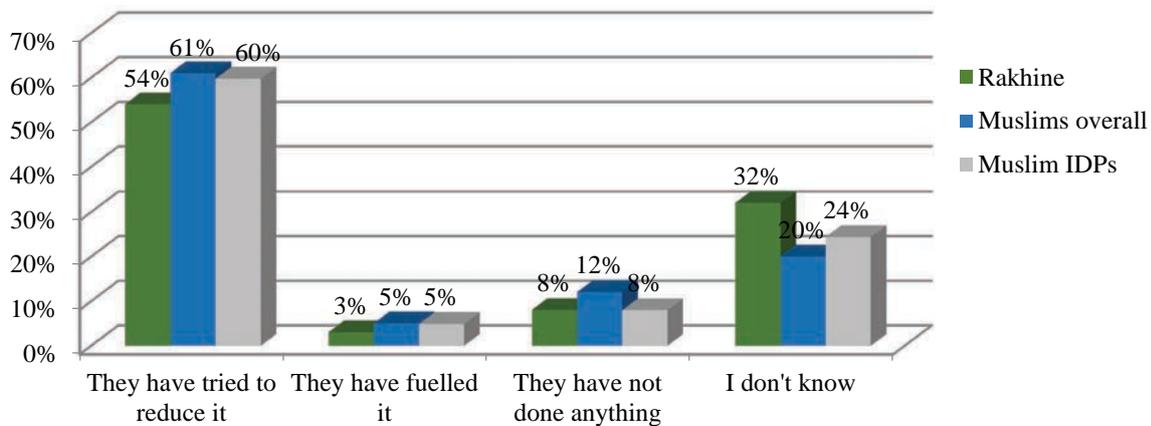
Figure 113: What could local communities do to prevent violence in the future?
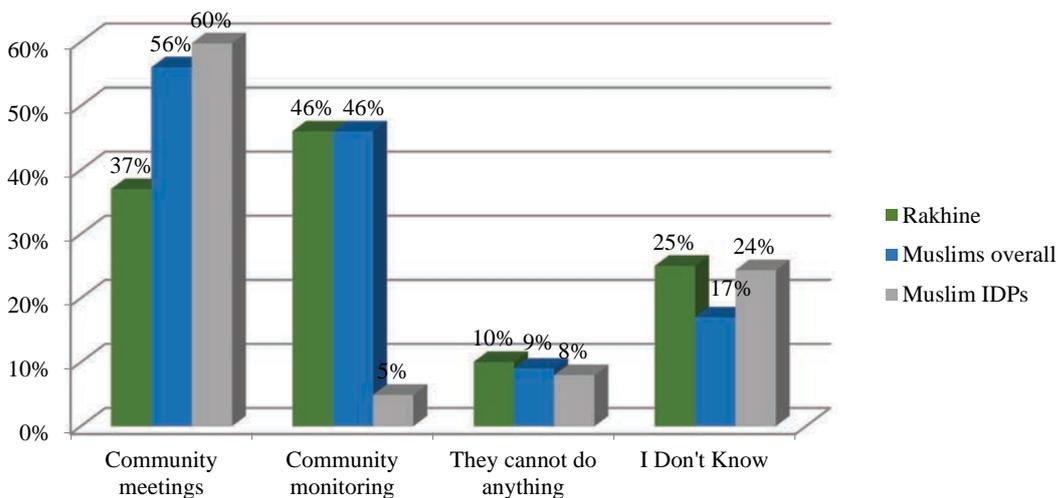
Rakhine appeared to view community monitoring as more important (46%) (Figure 115), especially in Sittwe (65%) and Buthidaung (57%). Overall, perceptions on the conflict were generally consistent across age.

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[243] In-depth Interview. 12 June 2015. Yangon.

Figure 114: What could local communities do to prevent violence in the future? Muslim Views By Township
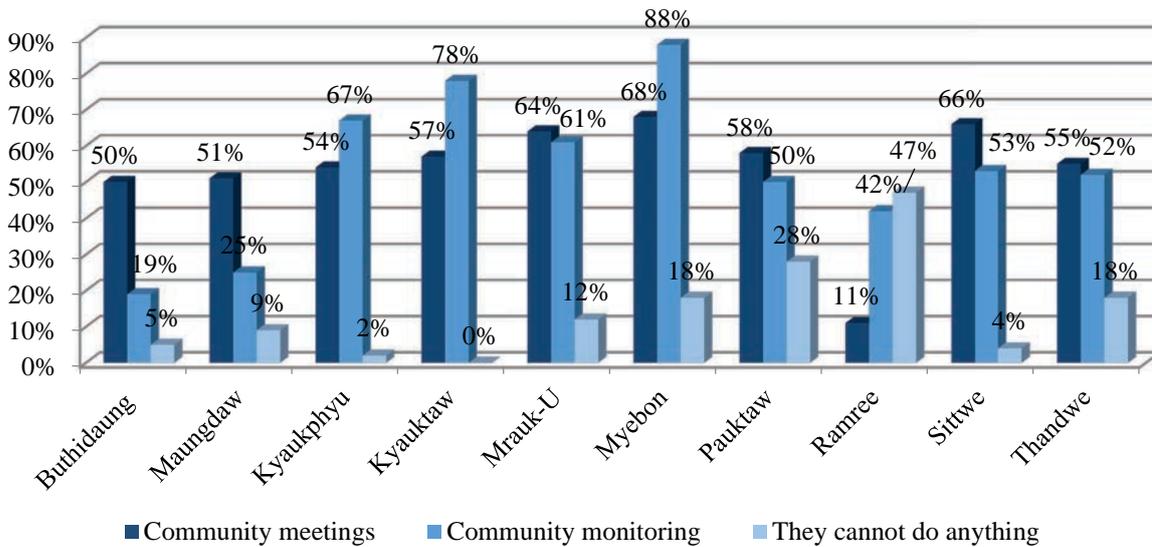
Figure 115: What could local communities do to prevent violence in the future? Rakhine Views By Township
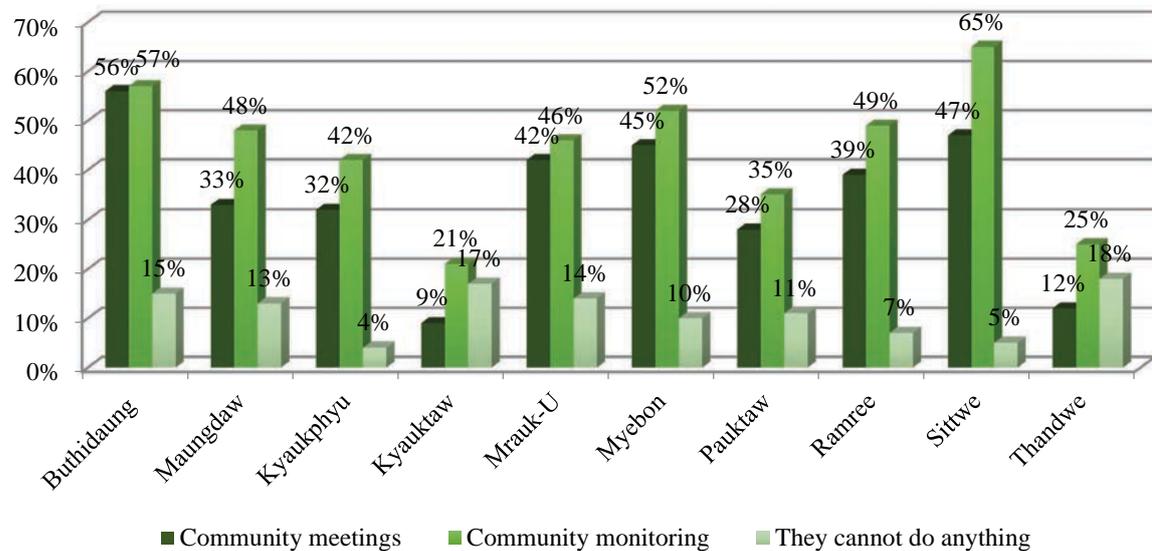
More Muslim women (62%) than men (42%) thought local communities should implement monitoring activities. An educated Muslim middle-aged man in Maungdaw departed from the widespread view of the government as the only actor able to act to prevent violence. "People do have to start. If the community does not initiate anything, the government will not do it either."[244]

Whereas 83% of Muslims reported being willing to meet with Rakhine to prevent violence, 83% of Rakhine said they were unwilling to meet with Muslims to prevent violence (Figure

[244] In-depth Interview. 14 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.

116). However, when NGOs in Rakhine State attempted to organize meetings, it turned out that Muslims were somewhat less inclined to participate than expected and that Rakhine were slightly less reluctant than expected. Regardless, it has remained highly challenging for NGOs to organize joint meetings in Rakhine. The survey highlighted a slightly greater willingness amongst Rakhine in Mrauk-U (26% said they are willing), Buthidaung (22%) and Pauktaw (23%). Of the Rakhine who reported being unwilling to meet, 74% said it was because they do not trust Muslims and 8% said it was because they were afraid of them (Figure 117). Answers were generally consistent across age groups but fluctuated across gender. While Rakhine men (15%) appeared slightly more inclined than women (12%) to meet with Muslims to prevent violence, Muslim women (85%) seemed more willing than men (83%).

Figure 116: Willingness to Meet with the Other Community to Prevent Violence in the Future
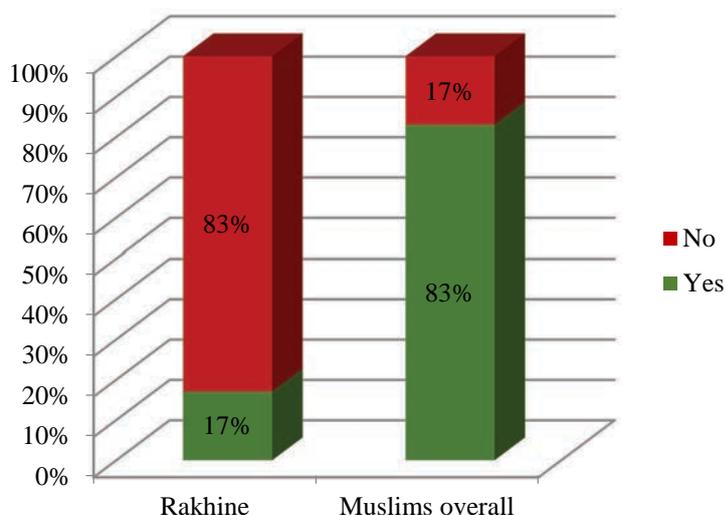
Figure 117: Rakhine's Reasons for not Taking Part in Meetings with the Muslims to Prevent Violence
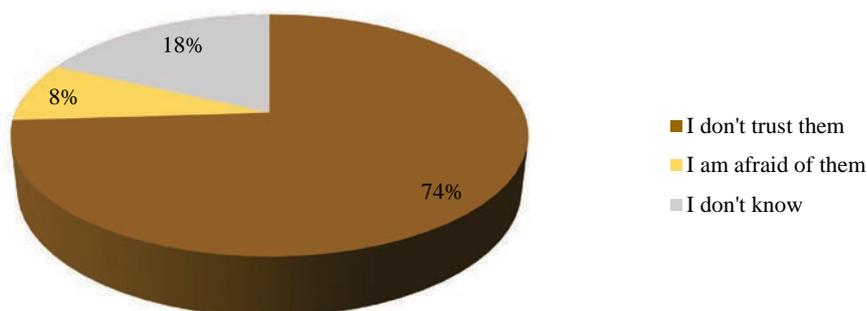
Additional Piece in the Conflict Prevention Puzzle: Information Sharing and the Media

Finally, although the media has not directly caused communal conflict in Rakhine, the way information is conveyed and spread has served to entrench positions and furthered extremism and polarisation, thus reinforcing divisions between communities. It is also worth remembering that, outside of Rakhine, in Mandalay Division, a picture of a Buddhist woman who had allegedly been raped by a Muslim man was circulated by local media, triggering physical violence between Buddhist and Muslim communities, notably in Okkan, Meiktila, Lashio, and Thaton (the rumour was later found to be untrue).

As such, the media and the way information is shared in Rakhine State should be viewed as a potential trigger for intensifying the prospect of violence through dehumanizing the "Other," serving as a megaphone for communal and religious hate speech, or spreading rumours. Consequently, communities' means of sharing information as well as access to and perception and consumption of the media should be scrutinised.

When asked how they get information about other villages and towns, Rakhine appeared heavily reliant on other community members (57%),[245] with radio coming in second (37%). In contrast, Muslims reported relying more on radio (42%), with the community as the second most important source of information (38%) (Figure 118). Amongst Rakhine, more respondents in urban areas (64%) reported relying on their community as a source of information than respondents in rural areas (51%). The latter reported depending more on TV (40%) than their counterparts in urban areas (33%). This heavy reliance on the community for obtaining information among Rakhine points to a low level of objective information received by local communities and the subsequent risk of distorted information serving to trigger conflict.

Figure 118: Main Source of Information about other Towns/Villages by Community
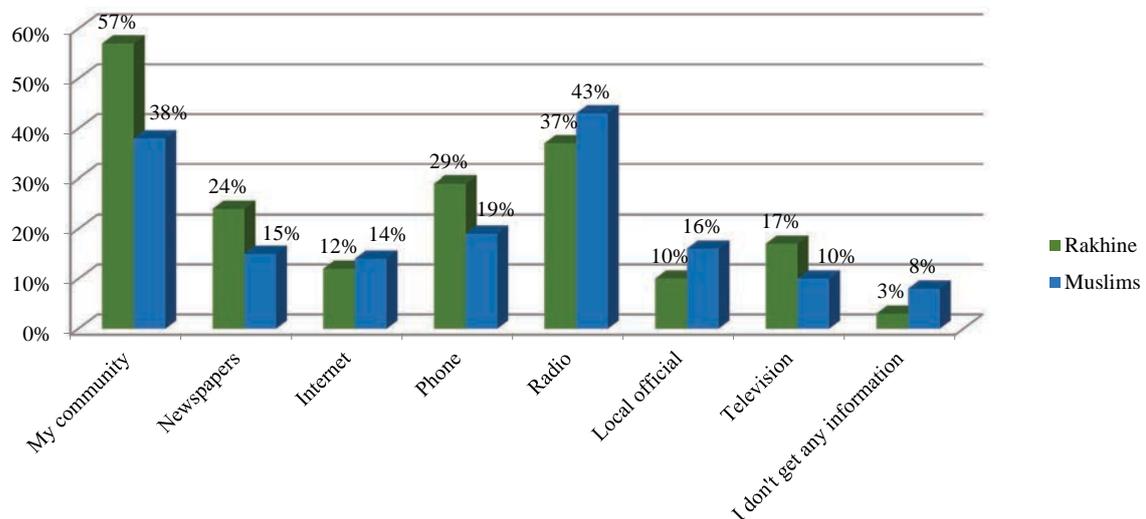
Although 45% of Muslims and 66% of Rakhine reported having access to both Governement and private newspapers, only 15% and 24% respectively cited it as a means to get information (Figure 119), even amongst younger generations. Interestingly, for both groups, phones (29% for Rakhine, 19% for Muslims) and the Internet (12% for Rakhine, 14% for Muslims) appeared to be of only secondary importance in getting information.

Overall, only 52% (52% of Muslims and 54% of Rakhine) of respondents reported being able to access any media in their village (Figure 120). This suggests that access to reliable and objective news, as opposed to word-of-mouth and prejudiced information, is low. Amongst Muslims, the level of access to media appeared better in Mrauk-U (77%) and Myebon (94%), while it seemed worse in Kyauktaw (64% report having no access) and among the small number of respondents in Ramree (79% reported having no access and 21% do not know). Within the Rakhine community, respondents in Buthidaung (74%) and Thandwe (77%) seemed to have better access, while in Myebon only 18% of respondents reported having access and 51% do not know. Within the Rakhine community more respondents in urban areas (59%) can access media than respondents in rural areas (48%).

[245] Via Facebook and word-of-mouth.

Figure 119: Access to Newspapers Compared to Use of Newspapers as a Source of Information by Community
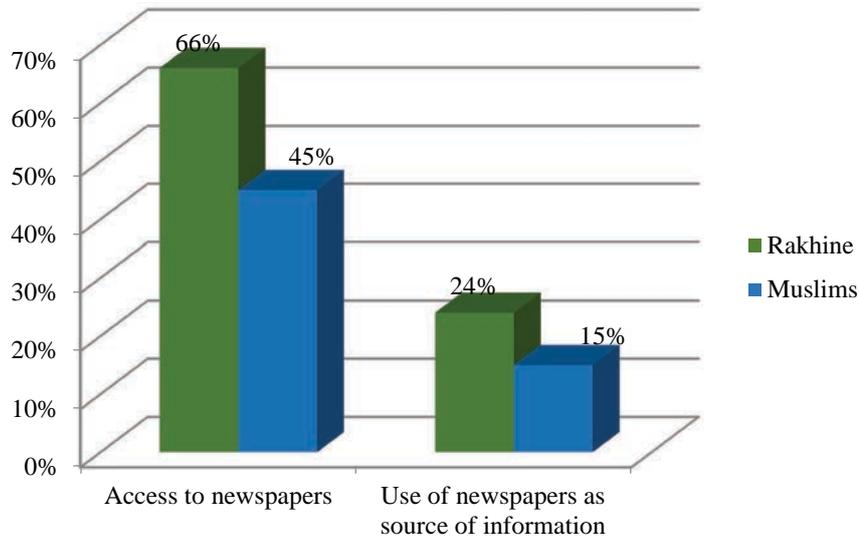
Amongst the Rakhine, more respondents in urban areas (45%) reported having access to newspapers than respondents in rural areas (29%). The same was true for other kinds of media: Internet (20% compared to 6%), radio (36% compared to 33%) and TV (30% compared to 15%) (Figure 123).

Figure 120: Access to Media in the Village by Community
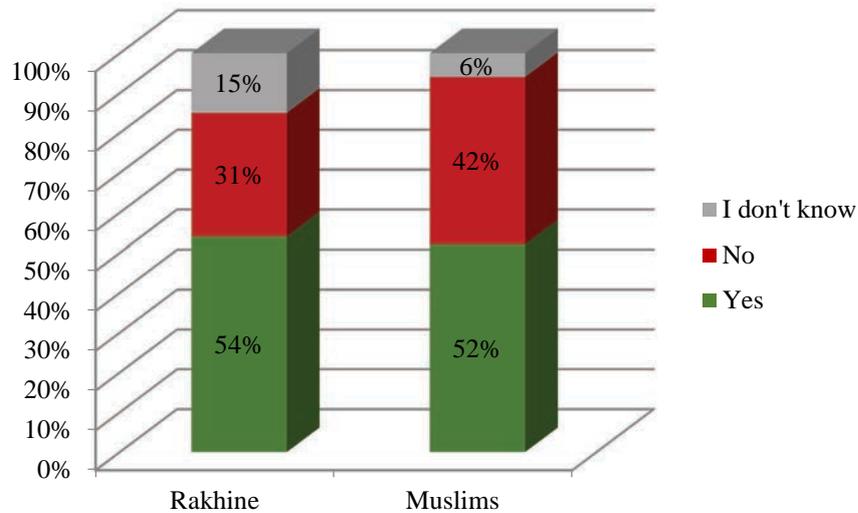
Figure 121: Access to Media in the Village by Township
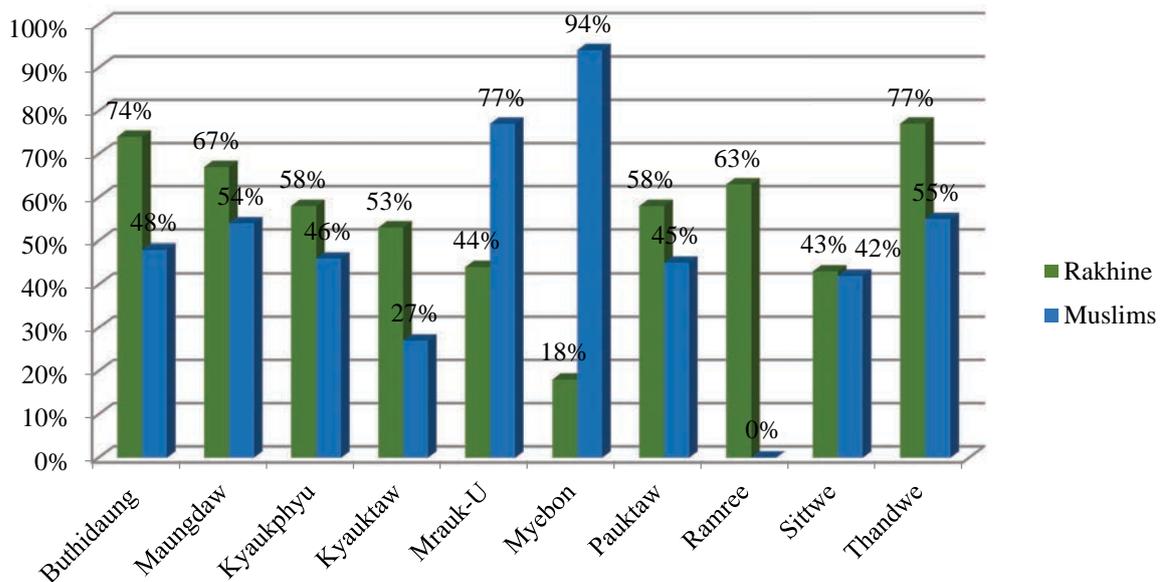
In terms of the types of media respondents can access, most Rakhine (66%) reported having access to newspapers, followed by radio (56%), TV (38%) and Internet (21%). In contrast, Muslims tended to have more access to radio (74%), followed by newspapers (45%), TV (21%) and Internet (16%) (Figure 122).

For Rakhine, access to newspapers appeared better in Buthidaung (78%), Ramree (72%) and Sittwe (79%), although television seemed more accessible in Kyaukphyu (60%), radio in Myebon (96%) and Pauktaw (83%), and Internet in Sittwe (41%), unsurprising given that it is the capital of Rakhine State and the main urban area. For the Muslim community, newspapers

seemed more accessible in Buthidaung (63%) and Maungdaw (75%), radio in Myebon (98%), television in Thandwe (73%) and Internet in Kyaukphyu (50%) and Thandwe (60%).

Figure 122: Type of Accessible Media in the Village by Community
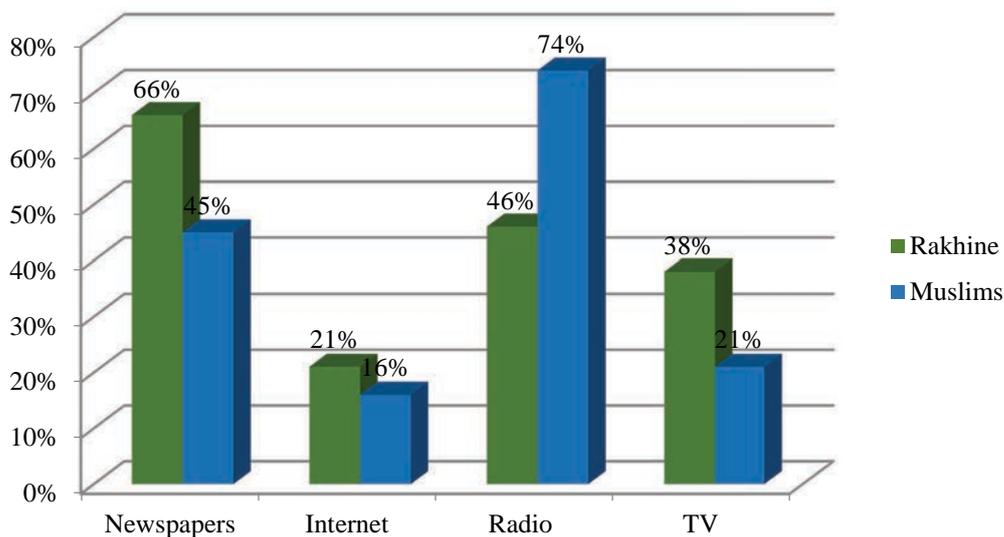
Figure 123: Type of Accessible Media for Rakhine—Comparison of Urban (Wards) and Rural (Villages) Areas
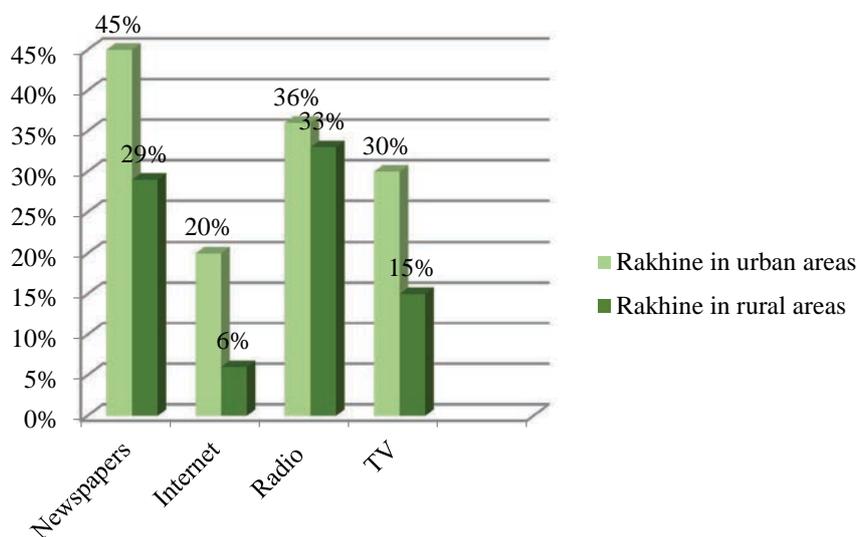
While most Rakhine (38%) reported having accessed the media less than a week ago, only 17% of Muslims did so, with many (27%) reporting having last accessed the media more than a month ago (Figure 124). Indeed, newspapers barely reach the camps and other sources of information (television, radio, internet) depend on the availability of electricity.

Figure 124: Last Access to the Media by Community
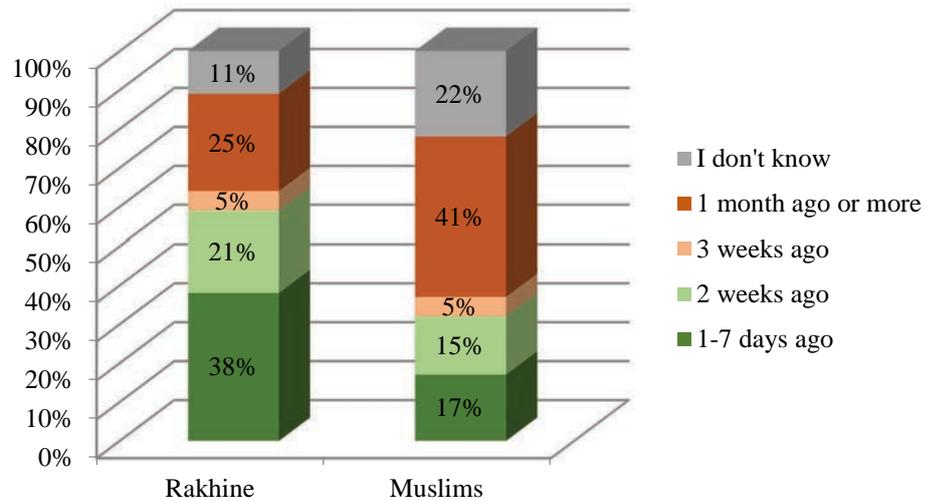
Perhaps stemming from a legacy of military dictatorship and state control of media, only 9% (11% of Muslims and 9% of Rakhine) said they trust all information from the media to be true (Figure 125). This, however, should be understoord in light of attitudes to different types of media. As a matter of fact, Muslims tend to trust foreign sources more than domestic sources, while Rakhine trust more government media when it comes to politics, and local private media when it comes to communal problems.

Figure 125: Do you think all the information you received from the media is true? By Community
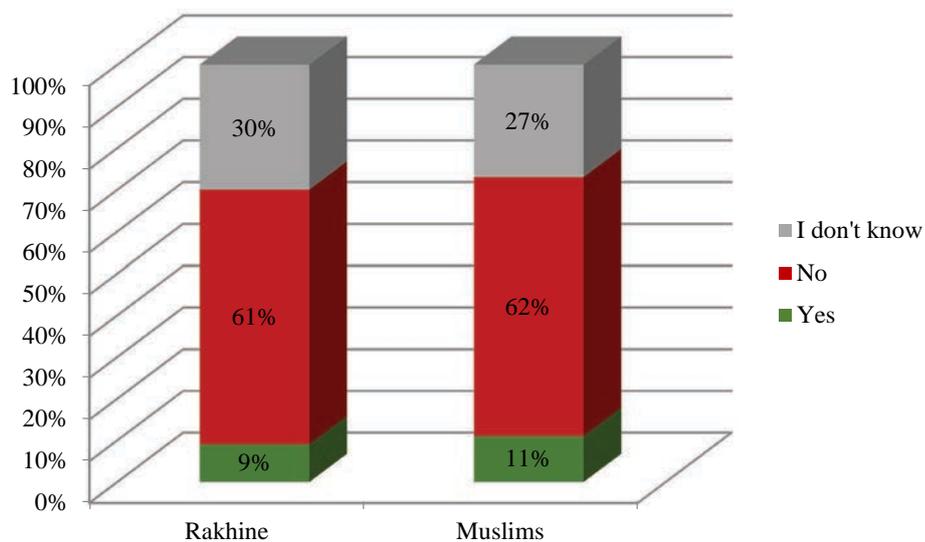
While Muslims seemed more cautious in Pauktaw and Thandwe, with respectively 83% and 76% of respondents reporting information from the media to sometimes be untrue, Rakhine in Sittwe (79%) and Thandwe (73%) appeared more circumspect. Muslim men (12%) were more likely to believe the information from the media to be true than women (5%). Amongst

Rakhine, women were more hesitant (34% said they do not know whether the information is true compared to 23% men). Rakhine respondents in urban areas appeared to believe more information from the media (13%) than Rakhine respondents in rural areas (5%).

A Rakhine man in Sittwe explained his reluctance to trust the media: "Since Muslim people can use Bengali networks with 3G they can spread news as they want. Rakhine media do not know how to spread news effectively. Even the Rakhine State Government is unable to do that. So all the news is biased and favors the Muslims because they are the only ones who know how to spread the information."[246] In Thandwe, a monk also blamed the international media for spreading conflict.[247]

In Maungdaw, Rakhine elders put forward another explanation to account for their distrust of the media: "The government hides information, which leads to a strong belief that the media is very biased."[248] The community was the greatest source of rumours, especially for Rakhine (72% compared to 63% of Muslims) (Figure 126). Rakhine from Buthidaung (83%) and Sittwe (88%) seemed most likely to receive rumours from their community, while Muslims from Myebon (98%) were more likely to do so, perhaps because of their isolation. Rakhine in urban areas also appeared to receive more rumours from their community (78%) than Rakhine in rural areas (68%).

Figure 126: Source of Rumours by Community
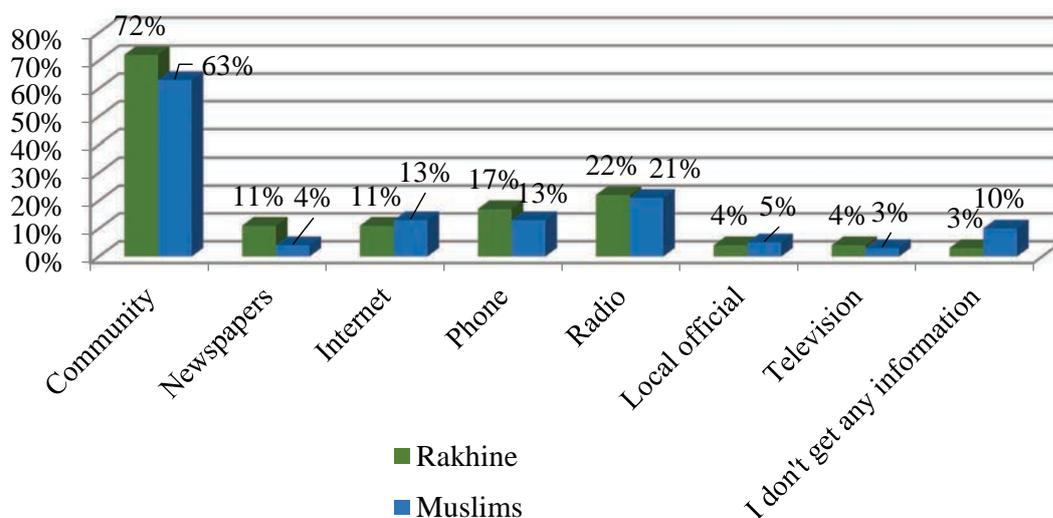
The majority of both communities claimed they try to verify rumours, although Rakhine said they do so at greater rates than Muslims (72% compared to 53%). While 20% of Muslims said they take rumours at face value, only 3% of Rakhine said so (Figure 127). Yet, these findings need to be nuanced, especially in light of the meaning people give to "verifying rumours". Most interviewees actually consider that asking people they trust what they think of the rumour constitutes an element of verification.

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[246] In-depth Interview. 21 March 2015. Sittwe Township.
[247] In-depth Interview. 31 March 2015. Thandwe Township.
[248] Focus Group Discussion. 21 December 2014. Mrauk-U Township.

Figure 127: Reaction towards Rumour by Community
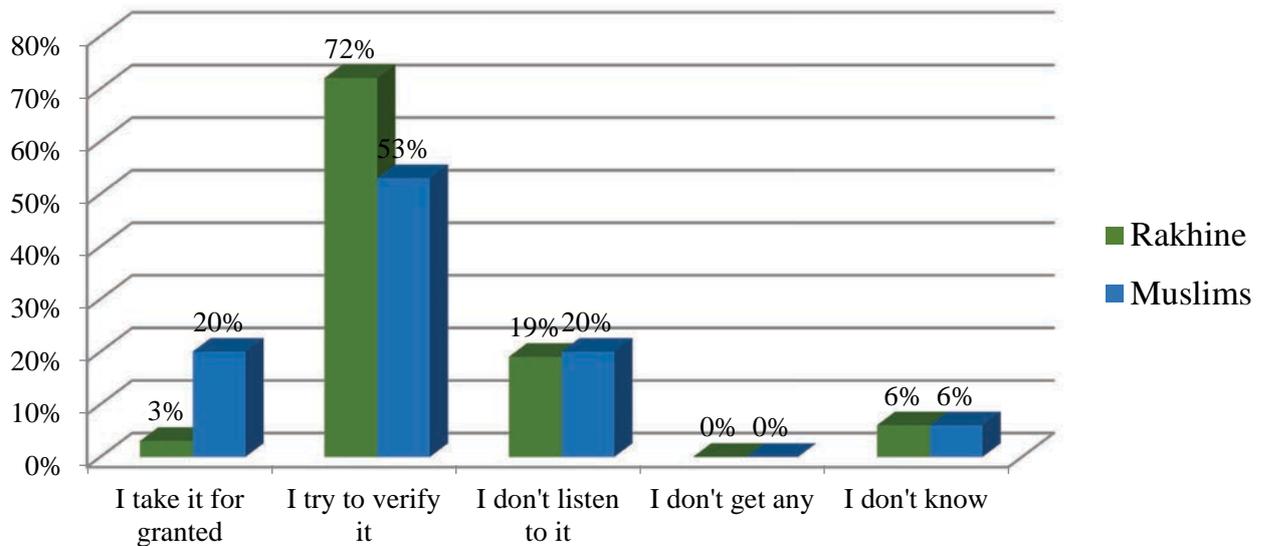
An expert on Rakhine issues suggested that "both communities tend to take rumours for granted, especially negative rumours, and spread them more than reported in the questionnaire. What they expressed in the survey can be seen as a socially desirable answer, but their behaviour turns out to be different in reality." He went on to explain that both communities had their own topic of interest for rumours. Influential Rakhine tend to spread rumours about the UN and NGOs, the Muslims, and the government. On the other hand, Muslims, especially IDPs, spread information about misuse of assistance and the mismanagement of food distribution. There is also a language issue amongst some Muslims, as translations from Rakhine or Myanmar to their local dialect are subject to interpretation or misinterpretation.[249] All of this highlights the need to provide both communities with access to reliable information in order to prevent violence in the future.

When asked how rumours could be controlled and curbed, a Rakhine man explained that it was the government's responsibility: "Right now, the State Government is unable to control rumours. They should take some measures and implement some policies to control these, because we, the Rakhine people, cannot do it because we have a very slow Internet."[250] In Thandwe, a government official explained that a "conflict resolution committee" had been set up to check the viability of rumours and clarify news in order to prevent the spread of misinformation.[251] However, this initiative, launched in the direct aftermath of 2013's violence, is no longer active.

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[249] In-depth Interview. 12 June 2015. Yangon.
[250] In-depth Interview. 21 March 2015. Sittwe Township.
[251] In-depth Interview. 2 April 2015. Thandwe Township.

RECONCILIATION

SECTION - 5

RECONCILIATION

Introduction

Relations between Rakhine and Muslims have deteriorated significantly since the outbreak of communal violence in 2012. Trust between the two communities has eroded and both sides have been socialized in ways that make reconciliation more difficult. Contributing to the challenge is a legacy of historical grievances that, in some ways, is felt more strongly today than in the past. Not only have stronger discourses emerged following the outbreak of violence in 2012, wider political space for freedom of expression in the aftermath of the 2011 reforms has contributed also to the shaping of public perceptions of the past. As a result, promoting reconciliation between Rakhine and Muslim communities in Rakhine State will be a long-term endeavor. Moreover, many efforts that contribute to conflict prevention in the short-term may in fact inhibit reconciliation in the medium- to long-term, so harmonizing these efforts is necessary to ensure that conflict prevention efforts in the near term do not result in a further calcification of relations in the future.

As noted in the introduction to this report, many elements of the recent conflicts between Rakhine and Muslims have historical roots, many of which date to British colonial rule. John S. Furnivall, a longtime British colonial civil servant, developed the notion of "plural societies" to describe colonial Burma, a concept which has some explanatory power for the situation in Rakhine today (though it is important to note that the concept of plural societies was not intended to be specific to what was then western Burma and is now Rakhine State). According to Furnivall, colonial free market policies unleashed a wave of immigration, thus increasing the ethnic and racial diversity of entities under direct colonial rule. In Furnivall's words, "economic forces [were] set free to remould the social order."[252] In Burma, the influx of migrants was largely from colonial British India and included a significant number of Muslims. While these societies were more economically vibrant thanks in part to new immigrants, wealth creation often came at the expense of local populations.

Despite the increase in diversity, however, cross-cultural interaction was superficial and driven primarily by the desire for material gain. As Furnivall argued, "it is just in the economic world that all men meet, if not on equal, yet on the same terms."[253] Thus, plural societies are "in the strictest sense a medley, for they mix but do not combine. Each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways. As individuals they meet, but only in the market-place in buying and selling."[254] The combination of shallow interactions and the perception that foreigners benefitted at the economic expense of locals triggered resentment among local populations that could only be kept in check by a colonial power, without which anarchy would reign; the plural society is "perilously balanced in unstable equilibrium and held in position only by pressure from the outside."[255] In other words, the union that is the plural

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[252] Furnivall, John S. Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956. p. 306.
[253] Ibid, p. 304.
[254] Ibid, pp. 304-305.
[255] Ibid, p. 506.

society "is not voluntary but is imposed by the colonial power and by the force of economic circumstances; and the union cannot be dissolved without the whole of society relapsing into anarchy."[256] Furnivall thus worried "about what would happen once the coercive power of the colonial authority was gone. Colonial protection was the chief impediment to immigrants being attacked by resentful indigenous peoples, or even clashing among themselves."[257]

Applied to Rakhine State, the notion of a plural society suggests that the ethnic Rakhine population and the Muslim population, largely of South Asian descent, never integrated; although they lived in the same places and interacted for business purposes, their relationships were mainly transactional. This view, however, is not a complete view and is overly simplistic. The manner in which the plural society is present in Rakhine is not uniform and should instead be viewed as both fluidly changing over time and as a continuum that ranges from a plural society to an economically and socially integrated society. During the Arakan Kingdom, for example, communal identities tended not to form around religious beliefs, with well-educated Muslims serving in the Arakan court in Mrauk-U.[258] Kaman Muslims, a recognized ethnic group, were traditionally fairly well integrated into society, with intermarriages between Kaman and Rakhine Buddhists not uncommon until recently. Interactions between Muslims and Rakhine in Maungdaw and Buthidaung have historically been more complex. However, in areas such as Sittwe, Kyauktaw, and Mrauk-U, the plural society was more prominent with weaker levels of social integration. Britain's colonial administration and successive military governments largely kept communal tensions in check, with occasional communal riots quickly contained.

A loosening of control after 2011, however, has unleashed the anarchy that Furnivall feared.[259] Feelings of distrust and sometimes hatred—often latent over prior decades—emerged in parallel with Myanmar's opening, contributing to the outbreak of widespread communal violence in 2012. As a result of this violence, Rakhine State has shifted toward the plural society as Furnivall imagined it and away from an integrated society. The displacement of tens of thousands of Muslims to IDP camps and restrictions on Muslims' freedom of movement across Rakhine State has resulted in a degree of separation that prevents even superficial economic exchanges from taking place. In some ways, the Rakhine belief that most Muslims are illegal immigrants undeserving of citizenship (or the rights that come with it) has become a sacred value. In the eyes of many Rakhine, devotion to this cause is, or should be, inviolable and has become a core part of Rakhine self-perception.[260]

These factors combine with high levels of socialization among ethnic Rakhine not to interact with Muslims (let alone accept the legitimacy of their claims to citizenship or ethnic recognition), further reinforcing the notion of the plural society. For example, Rakhine face significant social pressure not to speak out in favor of Muslims' rights or to do business with Muslims, especially since 2012. Meanwhile, some elements of the Muslim community,

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[256] Ibid, p. 307.

[257] "The Plural Society and Its Enemies." The Economist. 2 August 2014. Available online at: http://www.economist.com/news/asia/21610285-our-departing-south-east-asia-correspondent-explains-how-plural-society-remains-key .

[258] Sardiña Galache, Carlos. "Rohingya and National Identities in Burma." New Mandala. 22 September 2014. Available online at: http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/newmandala/2014/09/22/the-rohingya-and-national-identities-in-burma/.

[259] The Economist, 2 August 2014.

[260] Atran, Scott, et. al. "Sacred Barriers to Conflict Resolution." Science. Vol. 317, 24 August 2007. pp. 1039-40. Available online at: http://www.artisresearch.com/articles/Atran_Social_Science.pdf.

particularly in Buthidaung, Maungdaw and in isolated areas, are quite insular and have long remained socially separate from the Rakhine. Since communal conflict in 2012, competing historical narratives have been repeated and reinforced in both communities, as religion has become an increasingly prominent marker of identity, further complicating efforts to create an integrated society.

As our findings illustrate, Muslims and Rakhine have very different perceptions of one another and disparate aspirations about what the future of Rakhine State should look like. Understanding these views will be essential to identifying common ground and for shifting the whole of Rakhine State away from the plural society it has become and toward the integrated society that will allow for peace and stability in the long-term and enable it and its people to achieve their potential.

Findings

Summary

If Rakhine and Muslims' disparate perspectives are any indication, reconciliation is going to be extraordinarily challenging in Rakhine State. On almost all questions related to reconciliation Muslim survey respondents expressed a strong desire to develop improved relations with Rakhine, while Rakhine expressed the opposite. Perspectives on reconciliation are so different that it is as if Muslims and Rakhine were responding to different questions. While focus group discussions and in-depth interviews captured additional complexities, the overwhelming picture—with little variation by township, gender, or age—is one of a Muslim community that strongly desires to live peacefully with the Rakhine and a Rakhine community that is, on the whole, unwilling to entertain such a prospect.

Interactions Between Rakhine and Muslims

Rakhine and Muslims displayed very different perceptions about their past and present levels of interaction with one another, with Muslims reporting much more engagement with Rakhine than vice versa. For example, a majority of Muslims (73%) said they speak with people from other religions, while a larger majority of Rakhine (86%) said they do not (Figure 128) (though more said they speak with others in Buthidaung and Maungdaw at 28% each) (Figure 129). An even higher percentage of Rakhine in Myebon (98%), Thandwe (97%), and Sittwe (90%) said they do not speak with people from other religions. While this makes sense for Myebon, where the Muslim community is small and living in an IDP camp, and for Sittwe, where Muslims are no longer able to frequent Sittwe town, it is surprising that Rakhine reported such minimal interaction in Thandwe, especially given that 67% of Thandwe Muslims reported speaking with people from other religions. While larger numbers of Muslims said they do not speak with people from other religions in Kyaukphyu (48%), Pauktaw (48%), and Myebon (47%), this is likely because of these populations' isolation and their location within IDP camps. Indeed, only 54% of camp residents reported speaking with people from other religions compared to 79% of Muslim villagers.As the below figures illustrate, there was only very limited variation by age and gender (Figures 130 and 131).

Figure 128: Speak with People from other Religions
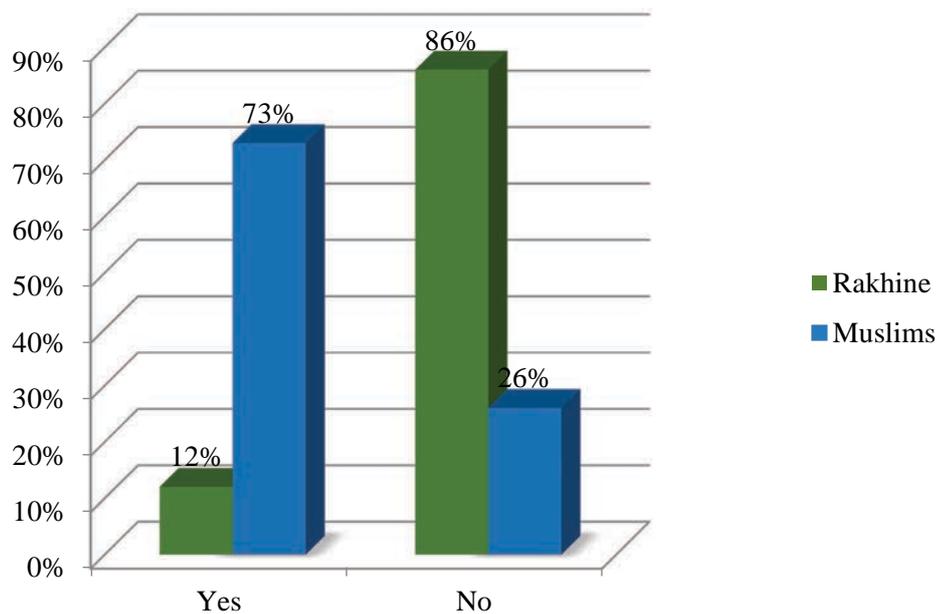
Figure 129: Speak with People from other Religions by Township
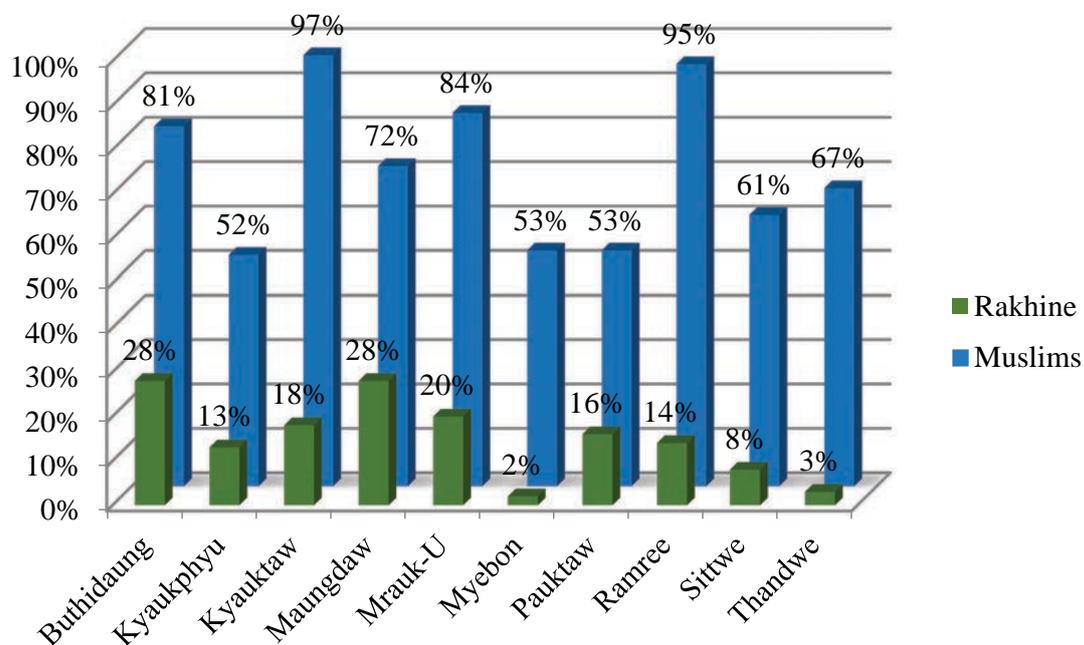
Figure 130: Speak with People from other Religions by Gender
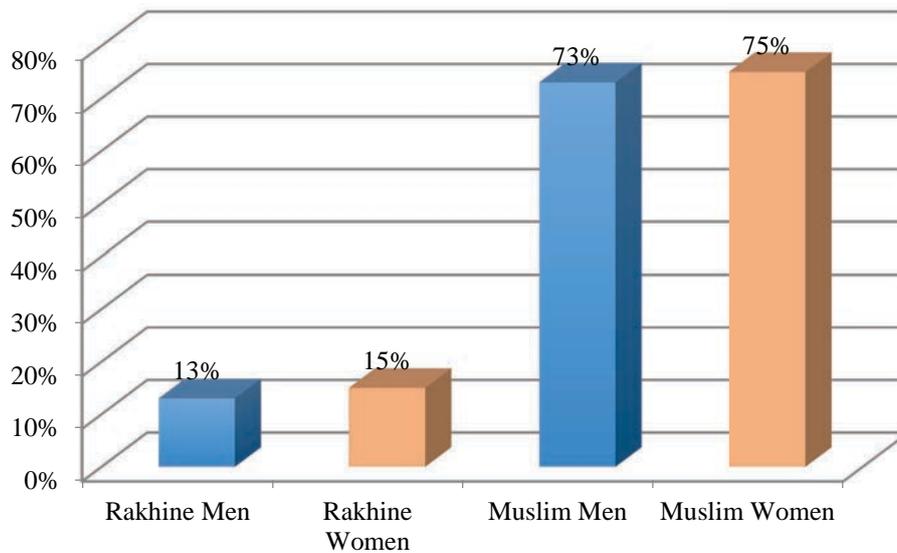
Figure 131: Speak with People from other Religions by Age
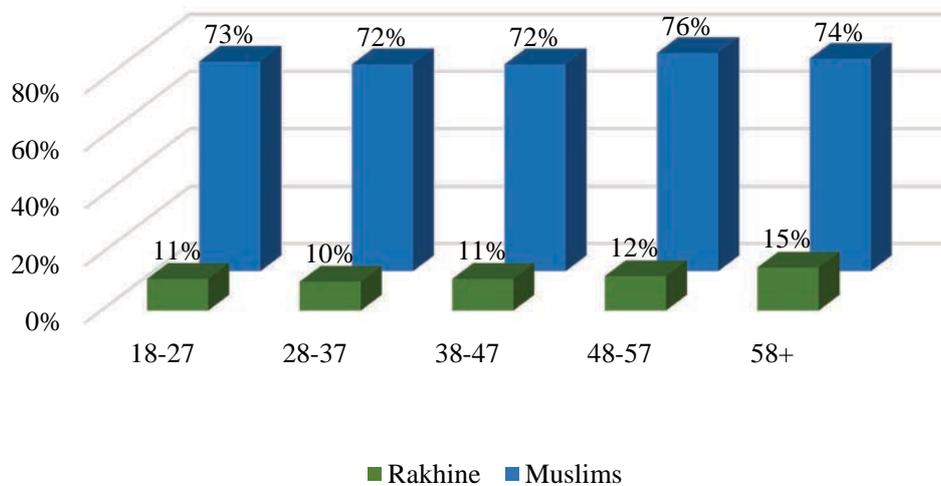
Restrictions on movement and the increasing separation of the Rakhine and Muslim communities have also led to a decrease in interactions, both planned and serendipitous. As a Muslim woman in Maungdaw said, "before 2012, there were so many interactions with Rakhine people. Now not so much."[261] Nonetheless, Muslims were somewhat more likely than Rakhine to report seeing people from other religions at the health clinic (53% compared to 33%), though this difference is likely because Rakhine visiting both public and private clinics and hospitals are much less likely to encounter Muslims (who, in most places, must acquire either a travel authorization or a referral if not both in order to access clinics and hospitals) than a Muslim is to encounter a Rakhine at clinics and hospitals that serve primarily Rakhine patients (Figure 132).

[261] In-depth Interview. 15 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.

Figure 132: Meet People from other Religions at Health Clinic
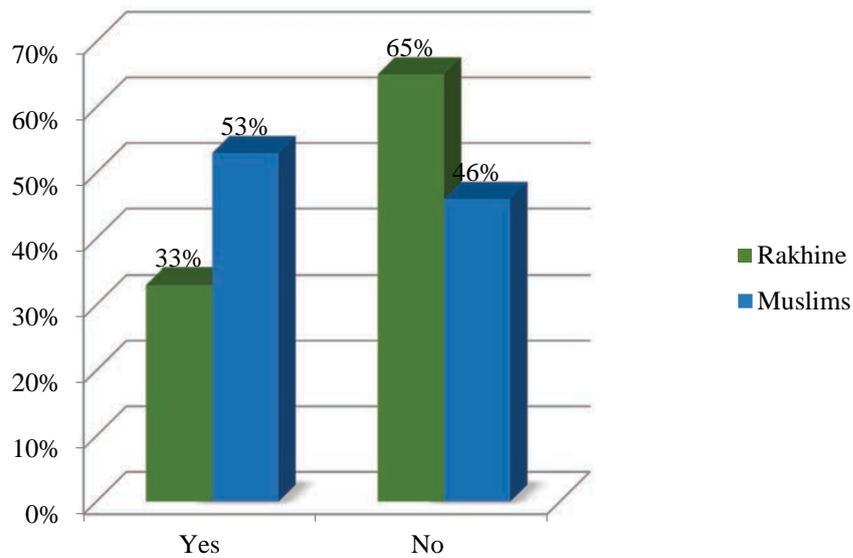
There was quite some variance by township, however, with 88% of Muslims and 72% of Rakhine in Buthidaung and 89% of Muslims and 78% of Rakhine in Maungdaw saying they meet other religions at the health clinic (Figure 133). This compares with 100% of Muslims in Kyauktaw, 95% of Muslims in Mrauk-U (and 82% of Rakhine), 97% of Rakhine in Myebon, and 79% of Rakhine in Sittwe who said that they do not meet people from other religions at the health clinic. Unsurprisingly, Muslims in camps were much less likely to meet others at the health clinic than Muslim villagers (30% compared to 53%). In Maungdaw, the Township Education Officer explained that Rakhine and Muslims still attend the same schools and that "there are no problems between Rakhine and Muslims in these schools."[262]

Figure 133: Meet People from other Religions at Health Clinic by Township
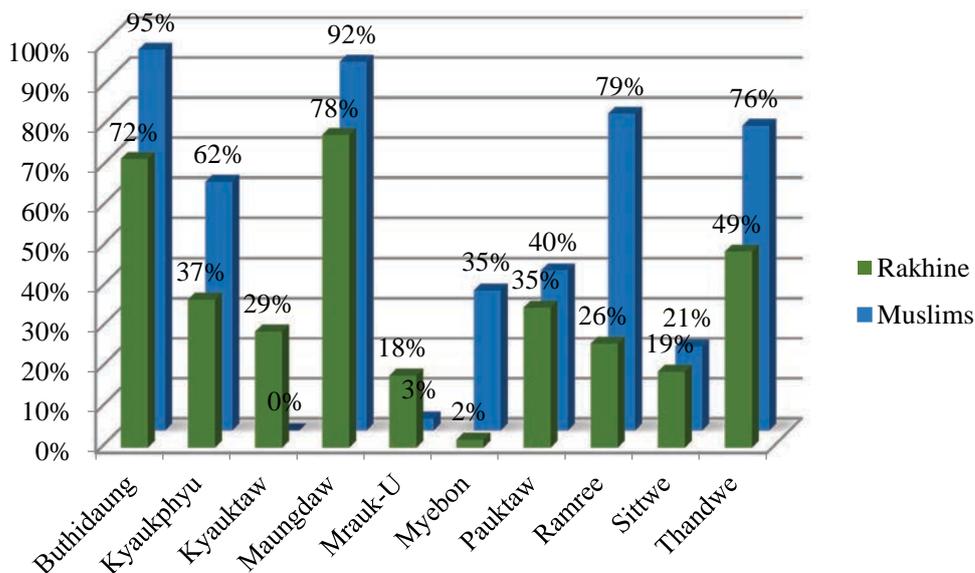
The drop in interactions between Rakhine and Muslims has been most pronounced in the economic realm. Nearly all Muslims (95%) reported doing business with people from other

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[262] In-depth Interview. 15 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.

religions in the past (including 100% of those living in camps), compared to only 48% of Rakhine (Figure 134).

Figure 134: Doing Business with People from other Religions
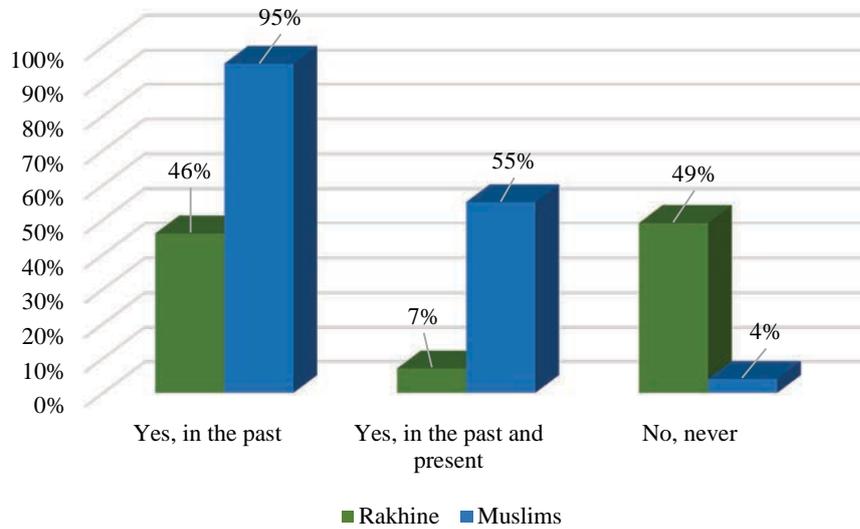
There was some variation across townships between Rakhine, with higher percentages saying that they did business with people from other religions in the past in Maungdaw (85%), Sittwe (72%), Mrauk-U (62%), and Buthidaung (57%). Nearly all Muslims and Rakhine, however, reported a tremendous drop in present levels of business interactions (Figures 135 and 136). While 95% of Muslims said they did business with people from other religions in the past, 55% said they do so now; the drop was even more precipitous for those living in camps, where it fell from 100% to 45%. The fall was equally dramatic among Rakhine, though starting from a lower base: while 48% of Rakhine reported doing business with people from other religions in the past, only 7% reported doing so now. Among a small sample of Muslims, the drop was most precipitous in Myebon, where only 18% reported doing business with others now, compared to 100% in the past.

Figure 135: Doing Business with People from other Religions—Rakhine
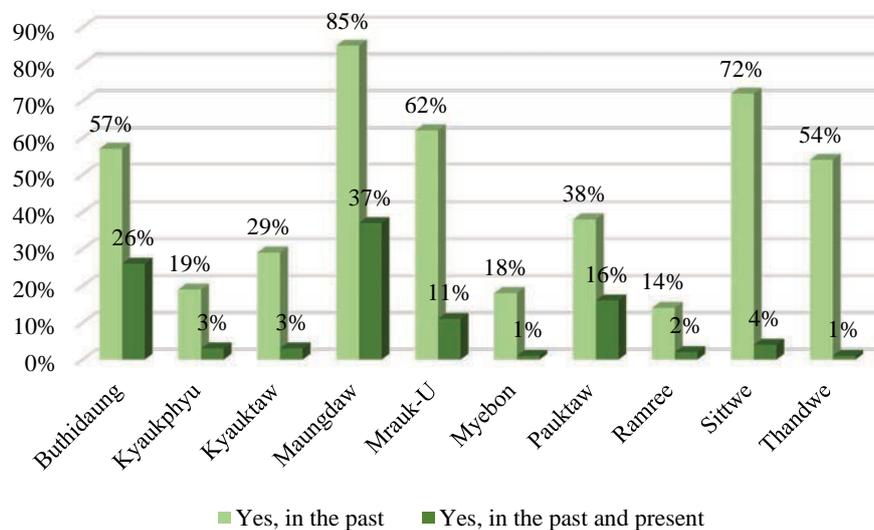
Figure 136: Doing Business with People from other Religions—Muslims
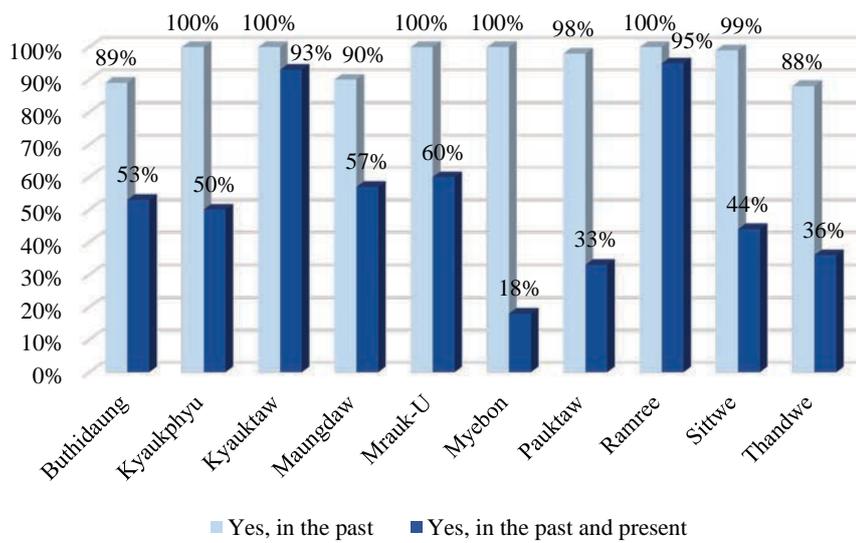
Contradicting the overall trend, high percentages of Muslims in Kyauktaw (93%) and Ramree (95%) said they still do business with people from other religions and no Muslims in these two townships said they had never done business with people from other religions. Rakhine in Kyauktaw and Ramree were even less likely to say that they do business with people from other religions at present: only 3% of those from Kyauktaw and 2% from Ramree reported such business dealings in the present and 59% and 74% respectively said they had never done business with people from other religions. Among Rakhine populations, the largest drops in business between Rakhine and other religions occurred in the townships in which interactions were highest in the past, dropping from 85% to 37% in Maungdaw, 72% to 4% in Sittwe, 62% to 11% in Mrauk-U, and 57% to 26% in Buthidaung. As described in greater detail below, this is likely because of the high degree of social pressure exerted by Rakhine networks on Rakhine traders not to conduct business with Muslim populations.

Although 55% of Muslims said they currently do business with people from other religions, 85% said they buy their goods from people of other religions (though this number is only 64% for Muslims in camps). This discrepancy could be explained in part by a counterintuitive increase in Muslim reliance on Rakhine for trade and access to goods in the last few years due to the increase in restrictions they face in terms of movement and access to livelihoods. Whereas Muslims could previously travel more freely to Sittwe to buy goods for shops and businesses, for example, they must now rely on Rakhine intermediaries to do so for them. That higher numbers of Muslims do not buy goods from others in areas where Muslim populations are concentrated in camps may be because of lower levels of interaction or higher levels of reliance on humanitarian organisations for assistance. Compared to 85% of Muslims who said they buy goods from people of other religions, 79% of Rakhine said they do not buy goods from people of other religions (though 25% of Rakhine in villages did report buying Muslims' goods) (Figure 137). Again, greater interaction was reported in Buthidaung and Maungdaw, where 85% and 72% of Rakhine respectively said they buy the goods of others and lower levels in Ramree and Thandwe where 93% and 94% said they do not. Of those Rakhine that do not buy goods from Muslims, an overwhelming majority (96%) said it is because they do not trust them.

Figure 137: Buying Goods from Members of other Religious Communities
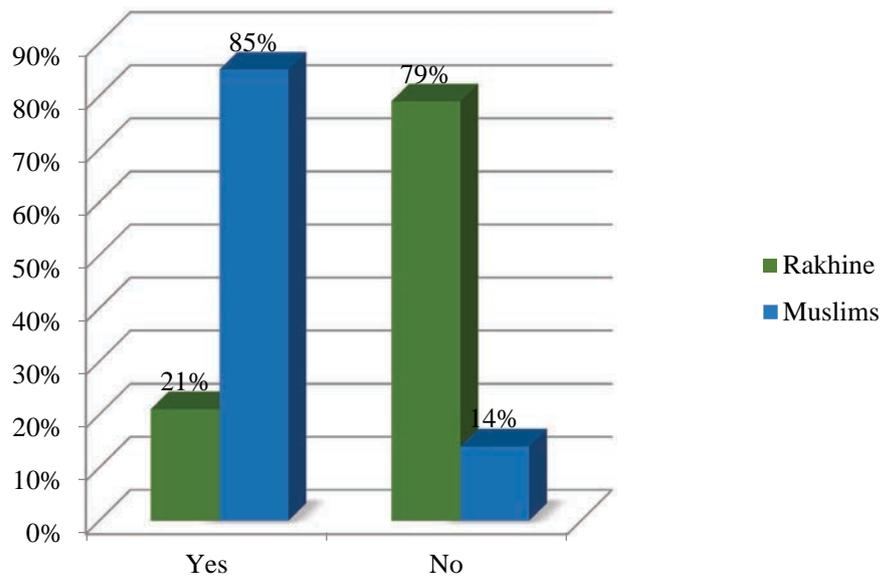
While the survey data presents a stark contrast between Rakhine and Muslim respondents, the qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions is more nuanced, with levels of context and trust varying by location. Some said the situation has categorically deteriorated. A Rakhine in Buthidaung summarized the situation: "If they [Rakhine and Muslims] don't trust each other, they don't buy things from the other community and they can't trade properly."[263] Others seemed to hint that the lack of trust was a barrier to business. As a Rakhine in Buthidaung said "I don't have any interactions with Muslims. I only buy my products from Rakhine shops. Before, I also bought from Muslims, but not anymore."[264] "Both groups fear each other, which impedes business from taking place," said a Rakhine in Maungdaw. "Moreover, it is difficult to travel because of the issue of security."[265] A Muslim woman in Maungdaw seemed to support this perspective: "Rakhine shopkeepers do not accept me even though I speak perfect Myanmar."[266] Meanwhile, a Rakhine youth in Mrauk-U noted that, although the situation has improved since the immediate aftermath of the conflict, Rakhine who conduct business with Muslims still face social pressure and social sanctions from other Rakhine.[267] Indeed, there are many examples of Rakhine social networks exerting pressure on Rakhine who conduct business with Muslim communities. A Yangon-based expert cited numerous extreme examples of crimes and social punishment exacted upon Rakhine that trade with Muslims by Rakhine social networks, including burning down one traders' house, beating and cutting the hair of traders in Kyauktaw, and forcing a trader in Mrauk-U to wear a signboard in her town saying "I trade with Muslims." While many Rakhine view actions that name and shame as too severe,[268] the government sees itself as having little ability to tackle the social pressure exerted by Rakhine networks.

While many noted deterioration since 2012, others noted that economic interactions are, in some places, slowly increasing (though often with Muslims in a subservient role). According to

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[263] In-depth Interview. 15 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[264] In-depth Interview. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.
[265] In-depth Interview. 15 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[266] In-depth Interview. 17 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[267] Focus Group Discussion 21 December 2014. Mrauk-U Township.
[268] In-depth Interview. 12 June 2015. Yangon.

a Rakhine villager in Kyauktaw "relationships between Rakhine and Muslims have improved: Rakhine hire Muslims as day labourers and Muslims sell their vegetables in the Rakhine village without any problems."[269] It was not uncommon, in fact, for Rakhine to cite examples of them hiring Muslims—who have a reputation to be hard-working—to work as casual labour with the additional benefit (to the employer) of coming at a lower cost than other workers. Indeed, markets in conflict-affected areas of Kyauktaw, closed during the conflict, have reopened and shops, owned by both Muslims and Rakhine, operate regularly.[270] A Muslim woman in a Sittwe camp agreed: "Now, Rakhine people and any other people can go freely: they can buy and sell things and they trade goods to the camps."[271] A Rakhine businessman in Maungdaw was even more optimistic: "I do business with the [Muslim] business community. I trust them and they trust me."[272] Not everyone, however, seemed to have benefitted from the improvements. The Mro and Khami communities in Kyauktaw complained that "although Rakhine are able to go to the Muslim communities for business purposes, selling goods at twice their price, we are not allowed to do the same."[273]

Several people, however, highlighted the fragility of economic interactions between Rakhine and Muslims. In Maungdaw, a Muslim humanitarian worker observed that "people buy from each other at the market," though "it will depend on both communities whether these interactions persist and intensify."[274] Similarly, a Sittwe-based humanitarian worker for the UN said there is a "visible improvement over the last year and some economic interdependence, but both communities are still in recovery mode."[275]

Chin interviewees explained that Chin people had interactions with all communities, but that they had been particularly solicited by Muslims after 2012, because they wanted to trade and to buy products from them. "The RNDP punished Chin women in Minbya, Mrauk-U and Kyauktaw because they were trading with the Muslims," reported a Chin woman in Mrauk-U.[276] Yet, the situation has changed since then and these kinds of events reportedly do not take place any longer.

Regardless, small- or medium-scale infrastructure projects that contribute to socioeconomic development as well as reconciliation could be encouraged. For example, in Mrauk-U, CDNH research team visited a cluster of conflict-affected villages in which the market, shared by Rakhine and Muslims, was destroyed by communal violence in 2012 and has yet to be rebuilt. A Rakhine man said that if the market were rehabilitated, both Rakhine and Muslims would feel safe using it and "the situation will return to normal if they are able to meet there every day."[277] While economic cooperation and interdependence alone will not foster reconciliation between Rakhine and Muslims, it is a step in the right direction. Moreover, in some areas, Rakhine landwoners explained that they used to hire Muslim day labourers to crop the fields. Yet, in the aftermath of the instauration of restrictions on freedom of movement, they had to hire Rakhine labour, whom they have to pay more. This has, according to these landowners, triggered a significant financial loss for them. Restoring links between communities would

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[269] In-depth Interview. 27 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township.
[270] In-depth Interview. 27 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township.
[271] In-depth Interview. 21 March 2015. Sittwe Township.
[272] In-depth Interview. 14 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[273] In-depth Interview. 19 December 2014. Kyauktaw Township.
[274] In-depth Interview. 15 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[275] In-depth Interview. 15 December 2014. Sittwe Township.
[276] In-depth Interview. 26 March. Mrauk-U Township.
[277] Focus Group Discussion in Mrauk-U, 27 March 2015.

thus make monetary sense for this segment of the population and this may be used as a point of entry for some reconciliation initiatives.

Muslims and Rakhine also have disparate narratives with respect to past and present participation in one another's celebrations and festivals. Whereas 35% of Muslims said they celebrated Buddhist festivals with the Rakhine in the past, only 10% of Rakhine said they joined Muslim celebrations in the past (Figure 138). Moreover, both communities suggested a significant drop in participation since incidents of communal conflict, with 17% of Muslims and only 4% of Rakhine saying they participate in the other community's celebrations and festivals now. Muslims provide similar responses when asked specifically about the water festival, with 40% saying they participated in the past and only 14% saying they participate now. Whereas 68% of Muslims said they invited Rakhine to Muslim celebrations in the past (and 29% said they do now), only 10% of Rakhine said they invited Muslims to celebrations in the past (and 5% do now).

Muslim respondents in Mrauk-U and Kyauktaw stood out as being especially unlikely to participate in Rakhine Buddhist celebrations and to invite Rakhine to Muslim celebrations; nearly 100% of respondents said they did not and do not celebrate Buddhist festivals with the Rakhine or invite Rakhine to Muslim celebrations. In contrast, large drops in participation in Rakhine celebrations were cited among Muslims in Kyaukphyu (70% to 11%), Myebon (78% to 26%), and Thandwe (61% to 21%). Muslims in camps were more likely to participate in Buddhist festivals in the past (50%) than Muslim villagers (30%) and are less likely to do so now (14% compared to 19%). Similarly, Muslims in camps were more likely to invite Rakhine to Muslim festivals in the past (91% compared to 61%) and are less likely to do so now (11% compared to 37%) (Figure 139).

Figure 138: Celebrate Festivals with People from other Religions
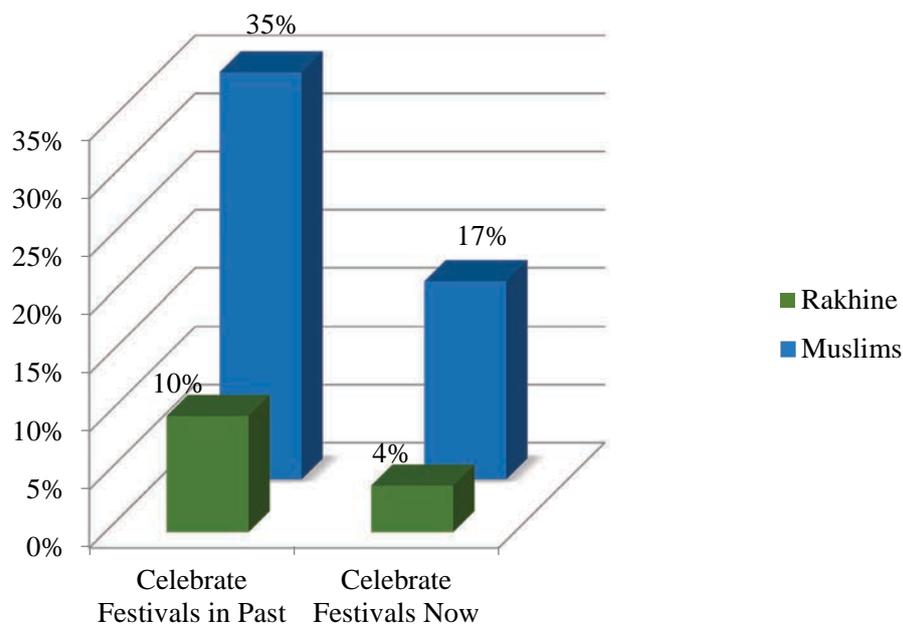
Figure 139: Celebrate Festivals with People from other Religions among Rakhine by Township
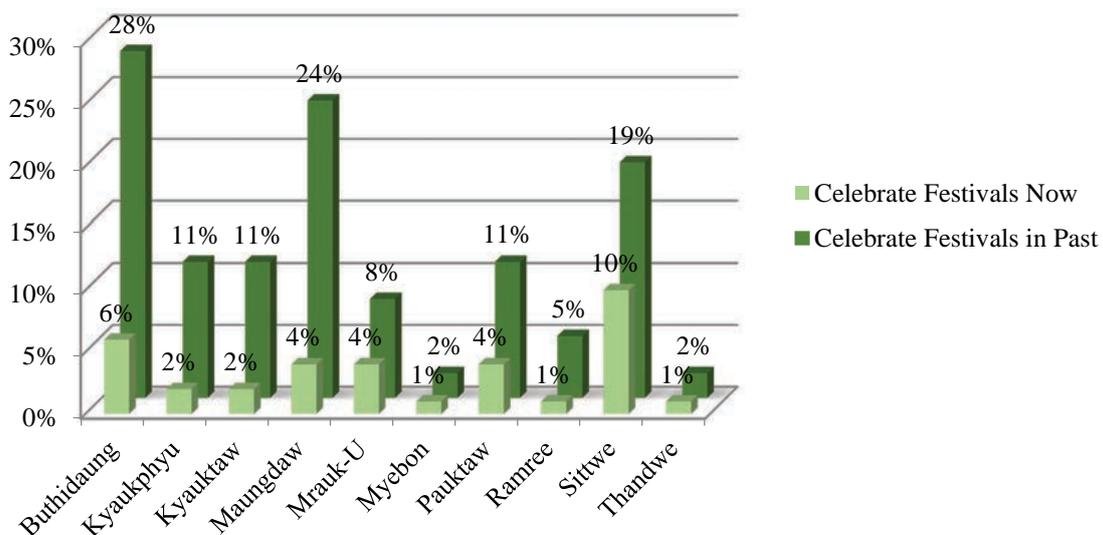
As one Muslim in Maungdaw noted, "previously we participated in Buddhist celebrations but after the violence, we don't participate any more. Muslim communities avoid going to Rakhine communities."[278] Another Muslim in Maungdaw, however, said "sometimes it is a bit different for weddings; I have been to some Buddhist weddings."[279] In some instances, it is clear that Rakhine are unwilling to welcome Muslims' participation. A monk in Thandwe town, for example, explained that Muslims should not be able to travel freely because they "will attack Buddhists festivals."[280] Others in Thandwe, however, explained that participating in one another's festivals and celebrations is a good way to bring the Rakhine and Muslims back together. As a Muslim villager in Thandwe put it, "Even though we participated in the Rakhines' celebrations and festivals before, we cannot now because of MaBaTha; both communities should attend each others' celebrations and festivals."[281]

Rakhine men in the neighboring village admitted that they thought Muslims might be scared to join one of their events and said they would go to a Muslim festival or celebration if invited: "It would be good if they [festivals and celebrations] were celebrated jointly as this would improve things in the future."[282] Recognition that such interaction could promote reconciliation was rare, however. Several Muslims in Maungdaw echoed the sentiments of one man who lamented that "it is simply impossible to take part in Water Festival…that's how it is."[283] The drop-off in participation is thus likely due to lower levels of trust, social pressure against Rakhine from participating (or inviting Muslims to join Rakhine celebrations and festivals), and the increased difficulty Muslims face in gaining approval for organizing large religious and social events.[284]

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[278] In-depth Interview. 15 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[279] In-depth Interview. 14 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[280] In-depth Interview. 31 March 2015. Thandwe Township.
[281] In-depth Interview. 1 April 2015. Thandwe Township.
[282] In-depth Interview. 1 Avril 2015. Thandwe Township.
[283] In-depth Interview. 14 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[284] In-depth Interview. 12 June 2015. Yangon.

Figure 140: Celebrate Festivals with People from other Religions among Muslims by Township
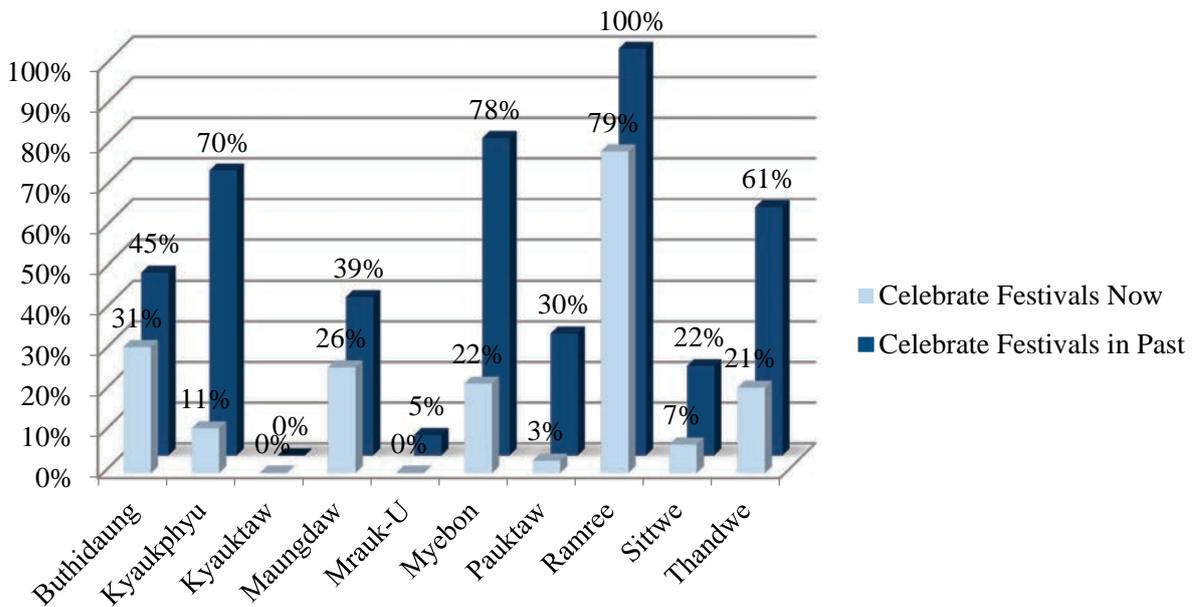
Figure 141: Celebrate Festivals with People from other Religions—Comparison of Muslim Villagers and Muslims in Camps
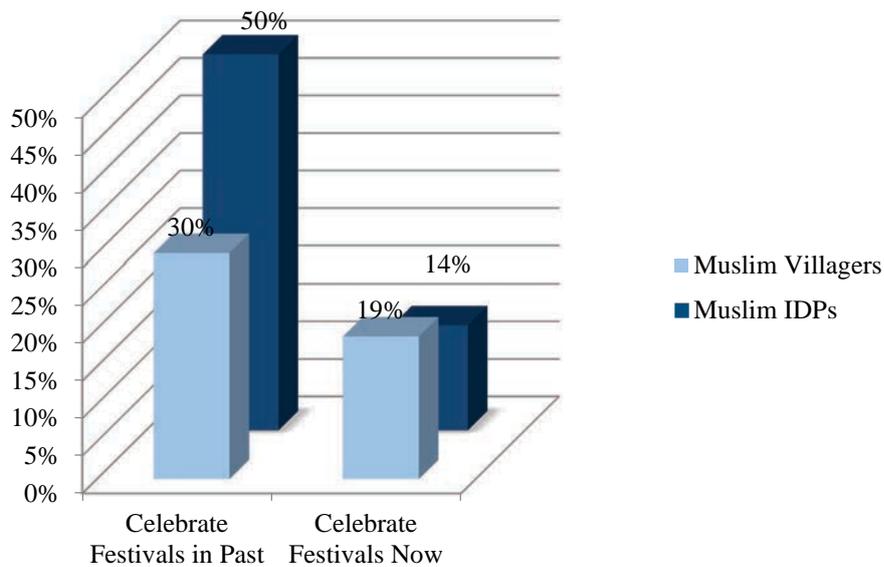
Muslims and Rakhine also painted distinct pictures of their close relationships. Whereas 63% of Muslims said they have at least ten close friends from another religion, only 13% of Rakhine did and large majorities of Rakhine (67%) said they do not have any close friends from another religion (Figure 142). These numbers may be somewhat inflated, however, if each side provided what they believed to be the socially desirable response (i.e. that Muslims have lots of non-Muslim friends and that Rakhine have few non-Buddhist friends). Only in Sittwe (26%) did more than one quarter of Rakhine respondents say they had more than ten friends from another religion and at least 84% of Rakhine respondents in Myebon, Pauktaw, and Myebon said they did not have any close friends from another religion (Figure 143). Interestingly, almost all Muslims in camps (99%) reported having more than ten friends from other religions, almost double the percentage of villagers that reported the same (50%). Muslims in

Buthidaung and Maungdaw were more likely to say they did not have any close friends from another religion (30% and 37% respectively) (Figure 144).

Figure 142: Close Friends from a Different Religion
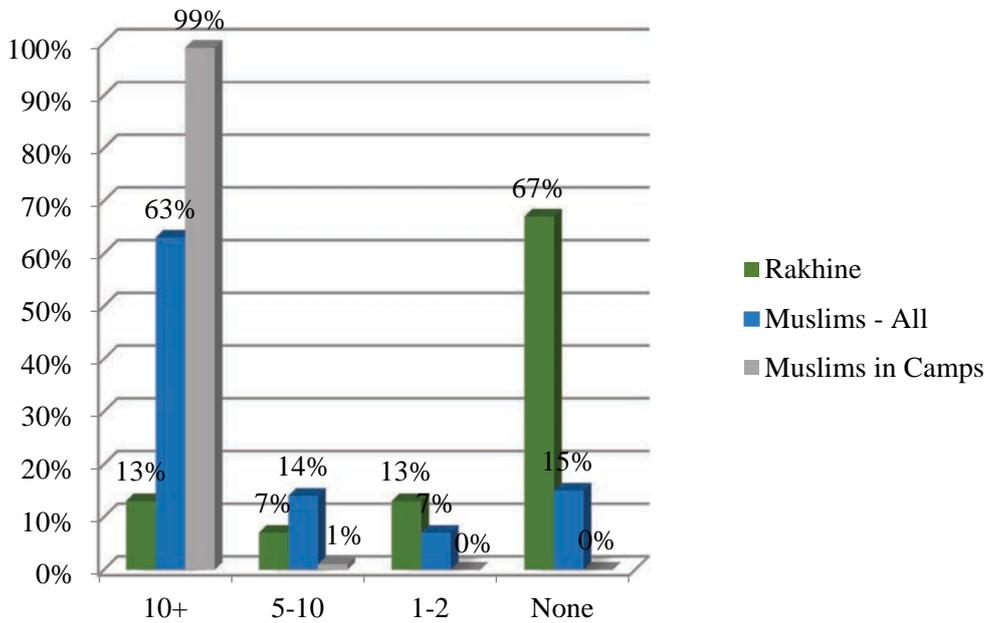
Figure 143: Rakhine with No Close Friends from a Different Religion
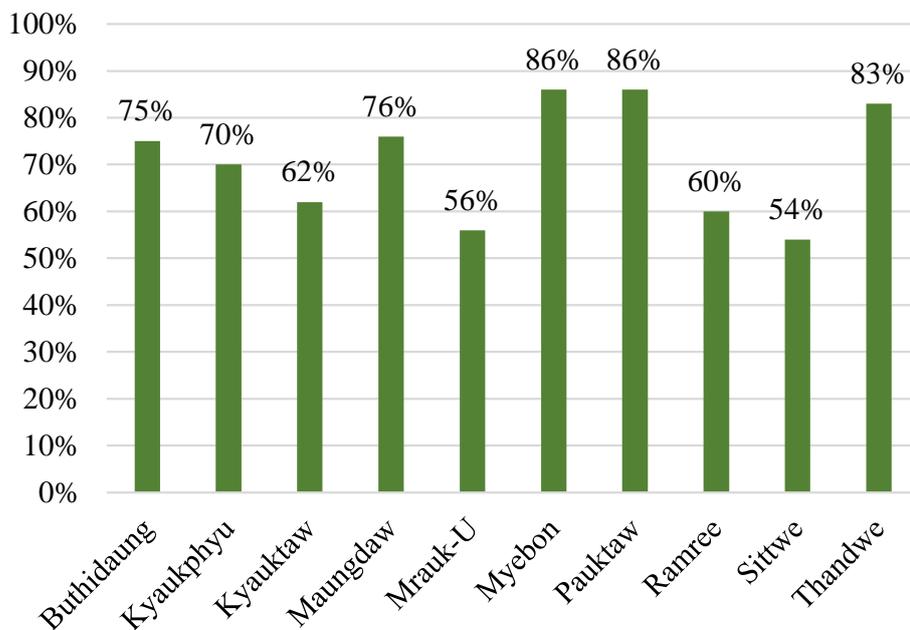
Figure 144: Muslims with 10+ Friends from a Different Religion
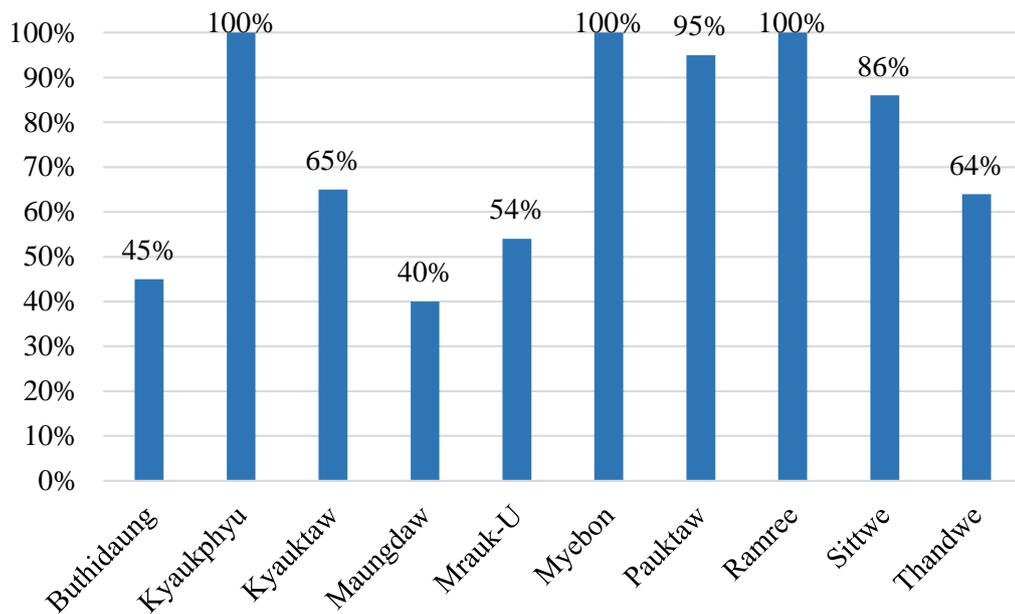
While findings across age and gender were remarkably consistent on most questions, there were some variations: Muslim women were somewhat more likely than men (76% compared to 60%) to say that they had more than ten close non-Muslim friends and 18-27 year-old Muslims somewhat more likely than other age groups to have no close non-Muslim friends (and concomitantly less likely than other age groups to have more than ten close non-Muslim friends).

Muslims' and Rakhines' views on friendship were broadly supported by focus group discussions and interviews. As a Muslim in Buthidaung said "some Rakhine live in the village. I sometimes go to their houses, and they come to my house as well. They are my friends and sometimes we work in the fields together and we also help each other in the community."[285] And although few Rakhine mentioned having close Muslim friends in interviews and focus groups, a few did: a Rakhine in Maungdaw, for example, said: "I have many Muslim friends, some come to my house."[286] It is not clear, however, how deep these interactions go; according to a Muslim in Maungdaw, "I have interactions with Rakhine people, but they are only superficial; we never share our emotions or feelings."[287]

Interviews and focus group discussions revealed a decrease in interactions and increase in distrust since the communal violence in 2012, while also demonstrating a difference in the way both communities responded to the survey. Once again, while Muslims responded as if asked about the pre-2012 situation, Rakhine respondents tended to respond as if being asked about the present situation. This helps account for the major disparity between both sides. "Before 2012, we interacted with the Muslims, but now we cannot even talk to each other," said a Rakhine in Sittwe.[288] A Muslim in Sittwe agreed, saying that before 2012, Rakhine and Muslims "helped each other," even mediating disputes within communities, a level of interaction that

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[285] In-depth Interview. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.
[286] In-depth Interview. 15 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[287] In-depth Interview. 14 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[288] In-depth Interview. 21 March 2015. Sittwe Township.

is no longer possible.[289] Moreover, a few Rakhine in Maungdaw noted deteriorating relations: "Before 2012, I had many Muslim friends. We spent time and ate together. After 2012, I still have relationships with them. But I do not trust them anymore."[290] Another agreed, saying that "Now it is not like before 2012. We [Rakhine and Muslims] talk and eat together. But I don't feel safe while talking with them [the Muslims]."[291] Thus, as with business interactions and participation in the other's celebrations and festivals, a decrease in trust and the social pressure faced by Rakhine not to interact with Muslims has resulted in lower levels of engagement.

Perceptions of the Other and Prospects for Reconciliation

Given the decreased levels of interaction between Muslims and Rakhine over the past several years, prospects for reconciliation are increasingly shaped by perceptions held within members' communities. 57% of Muslims (including 78% living in camps) reported hearing that other religions and ethnicities are "decent people" whereas only 15% of Rakhine reported hearing the same (Figures 145 and 146). Moreover, Rakhine reported hearing that they should not trust people from other religions and ethnicities at twice as high a rate as Muslims (30% compared to 15%). Amongst the Chin interviewees, most respondents said that they heard stories about Rakhine with Muslims and stories about Muslims with Rakhine. "I used to hear from Rakhine that Muslims were horrible, but now I am hearing from Muslims that Rakhine are cruel," explained a Chin woman in Kyaukphyu.[292]

Figure 145: What You Hear about People from other Religions

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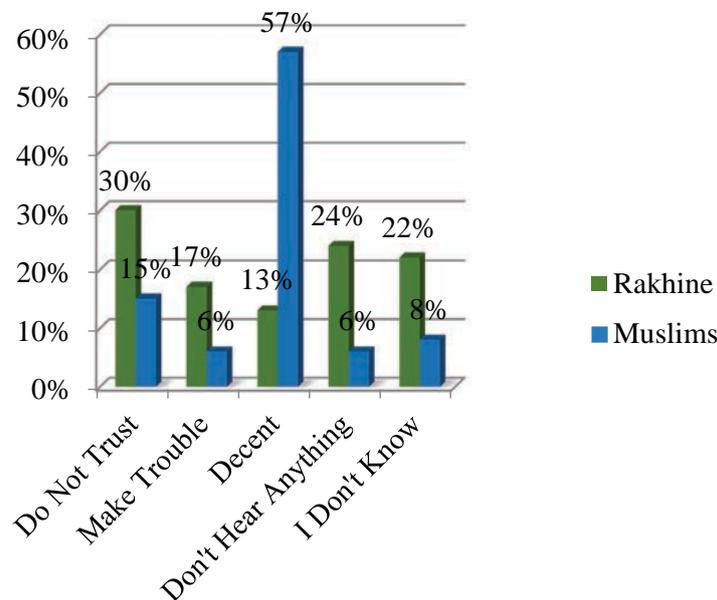
[289] In-depth Interview. 21 March 2015. Sittwe Township.
[290] In-depth Interview. 15 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[291] In-depth Interview. 15 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[292] In-depth Interview. 28 March 2015. Kyaukphyu Township.

Figure 146: Percentage of Respondents Who Have Heard that People from other Religions are Decent People
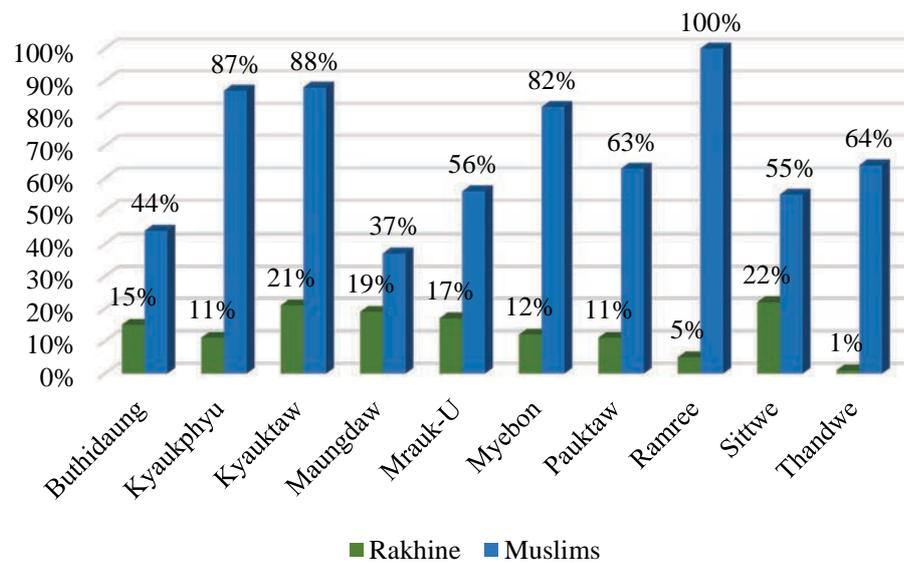
Large numbers of Rakhine (47%) said they do not hear anything or do not know, perhaps indicating that they did not want to reveal their true sentiments. Distrust appeared particularly high in Mrauk-U and Pauktaw among Muslims (28% and 30%, respectively) and Maungdaw (44%), Mrauk-U (40%), and Thandwe (38%) amongst Rakhine.

Muslims' primary source of information for learning about Rakhine is religious leaders, while Rakhine's primary source for learning about Muslims seemed to be community elders. In interviews and focus groups, both Muslims and Rakhine blamed leaders in the others' community for hurting communal relations. Muslims in Thandwe, for example, said that "Buddhists are only afraid of Muslims because of the hate speech that is shared from loudspeakers and on the Internet."[293] Meanwhile, numerous Rakhine blamed Muslim leaders for promoting violence, often without concrete evidence. As one Rakhine in Maungdaw said, "all the violence is because of the mosque. The mosque leaders tell Muslims what they should do. This is bad and it fosters violence."[294] Another Rakhine from Maungdaw went further, saying that "Islam is a bad religion because they are prodded into terrorism and extremism; 90% of Muslims become terrorists."[295] While most Rakhine expressed unfavorable views of Islam, Muslims were somewhat more likely to view Buddhism favorably, regularly expressing sentiments such as "I don't hate Buddhism" and "Buddhism is a peaceful religion".[296]

Trust is sorely lacking between the two communities. Whereas 35% of Muslims said they trust Rakhine (and a further 40% are ambivalent), 80% of Rakhine reported not trusting Muslims (Figure 147). Muslims' trust of Rakhine was especially high in Buthidaung (71%) and Maungdaw (61%), though it was lower in Mrauk-U and Thandwe (where 26% and 36% respectively said they do not trust Rakhine). Rakhine, meanwhile, were especially distrustful of Muslims in Myebon (91% said they do not trust people from other religions) and Pauktaw (87%) (Figure 148). Muslims in camps were less trusting of people from other religions than Muslim villagers, with only 17% saying they trust people from other religions.

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[293] In-depth Interview. 24 February 2015. Thandwe Township.
[294] In-depth Interview. 15 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[295] Ibid.
[296] In-depth Interview. 14 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.

Figure 147: Trust People from other Religions
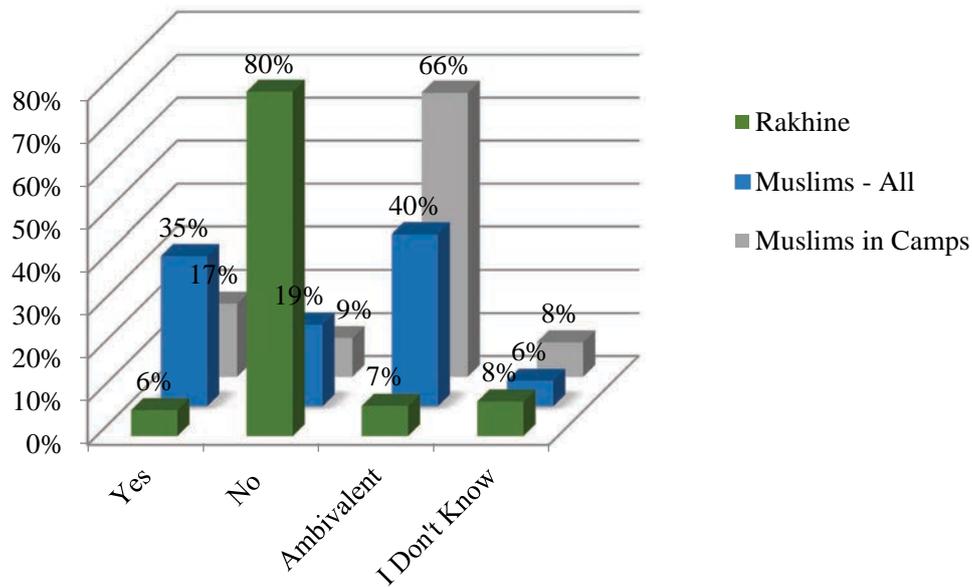
Figure 148: Do Not Trust People from other Religions
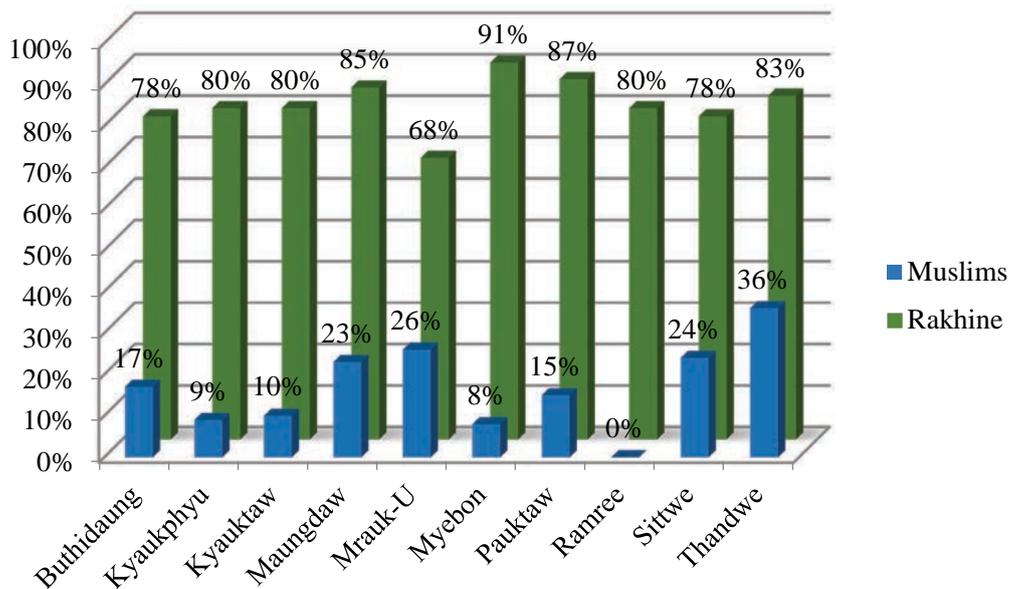
"The biggest challenge today," said one humanitarian worker in Maungdaw, "is the lack of trust from both communities. Ties were broken during the conflict."[297] Indeed, the prevalence of distrust was echoed in interviews and focus group discussions. Several Rakhine said flatly, "we trust Muslims no more"[298] or "we don't trust Muslims."[299] Some even suggested that implementation of the 1982 Citizenship Law was a prerequisite for building trust with a Rakhine in Thandwe saying that "only after citizenship has been verified" can trust be rebuilt.[300] Others, however, acknowledged that trust-building is important, but that it will take time. "A lack

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[297] In-depth Interview. 15 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[298] In-depth Interview. 27 March 2015. Kyaukphyu Township.
[299] Focus Group Discussion. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.
[300] In-depth Interview. 31 March 2015. Thandwe Township.

of mutual trust continues," said a Rakhine in Kyauktaw. "It will take time to build trust."[301] Another Rakhine in Ramree said that "there is a very low possibility to return to normalcy. We need time. We need to build trust."[302] A Rakhine businessman in Maungdaw echoed this sentiment: "It will be difficult to build trust and to cooperate at this stage because people are afraid. All they need is time."[303] One Rakhine in Maungdaw, however, said that Rakhine should not be afraid because "Rakhine community leaders and civil society organisations try to help the Rakhine not to be afraid of the Muslims; the Tatmadaw and the police are behind the Rakhine, so we should not be afraid."[304] Despite the acknowledgment that trust-building is important, there is also an understanding that it will not be easy. As the Kyauktaw Township administrator said, "trust is much easier to say than to achieve; mutual respect is needed for trust."[305]

Rakhines' lack of trust of Muslims leads to low levels of comfort towards living with them. Whereas 85% of Muslims reported being comfortable living with people from other religions (including 82% of Muslims in camps), 84% of Rakhine are not (Figure 149). While there was little variation by township among the Muslim community (at 74% comfortable living with others, those in Sittwe express the most skepticism), there was a much wider range in opinion among Rakhine (Figure 150). Interestingly, those areas where perceptions were most negative throughout much of the survey—Kyauktaw, Mrauk-U, and, to a lesser extent, Pauk-taw—are those where the Rakhine expressed the highest levels of comfort for living with non-Buddhists (though none express higher than 22% comfort). While the views of men and women were largely consistent, Rakhine women expressed greater discomfort living among non-Buddhists, with only 6% saying they would be comfortable with such arrangements and 87% saying they would not (compared to 12% and 80% for Rakhine men).

Figure 149: Comfort in Living with People from other Religions
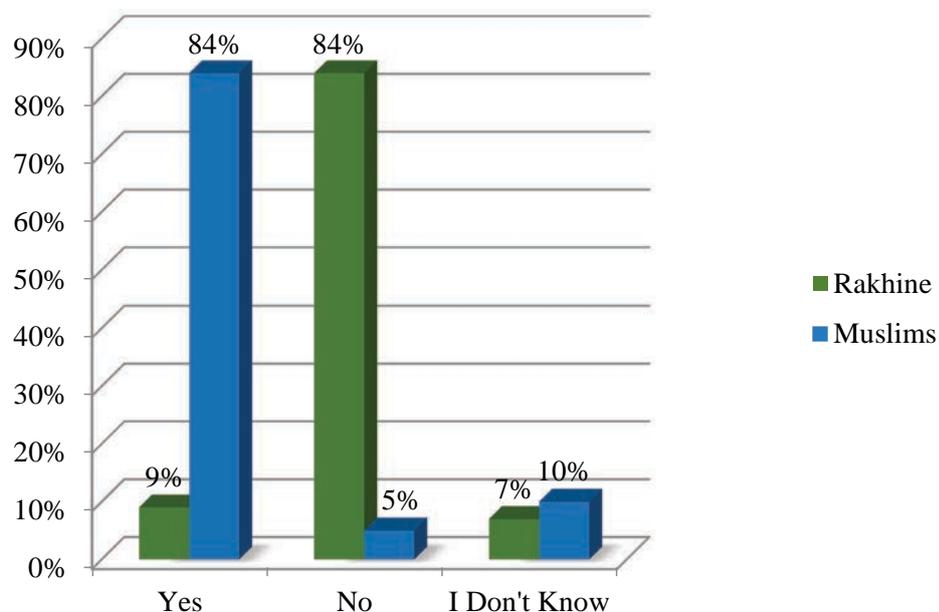
[301] In-depth Interview. 26 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township.
[302] In-depth Interview. 28 March 2015. Ramree Township.
[303] In-depth Interview. 14 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[304] In-depth Interview. 15 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[305] In-depth Interview. 18 December 2014. Kyauktaw Township.

Figure 150: Rakhine Not Comfortable Living with People from other Religions by Township
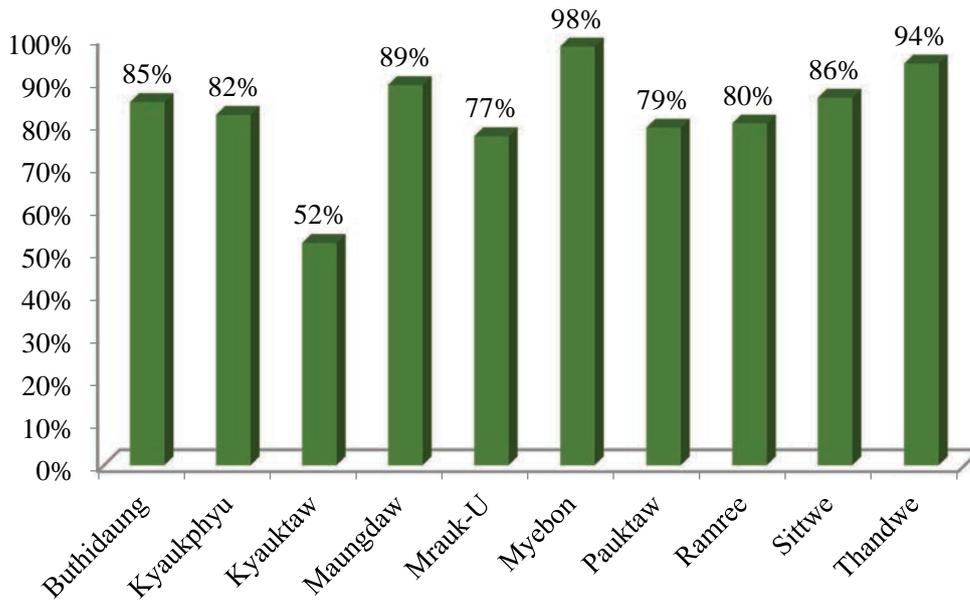
79% of Rakhine said they do not want to live in an area where all communities can live peacefully, including 97% in Thandwe and 87% in Sittwe; only 8% of Rakhine said they did want to live in such an area, likely because using the term "all" would imply Rakhine acceptance of Muslim communities. In contrast, 76% of Muslims said they want to live in a place where all can live peacefully (Figure 151). There was little geographic variation among Muslims, though Muslims in camps expressed more uncertainty: 56% said they would like to live peacefully with others, while 42% expressed being unsure. Among Rakhine there were some limited differences by township, with those in Buthidaung (19%) and Mrauk-U (18%) expressing slightly more desire to live peacefully with others.

Figure 151: Desire to Live in a Place Where All Can Live Peacefully
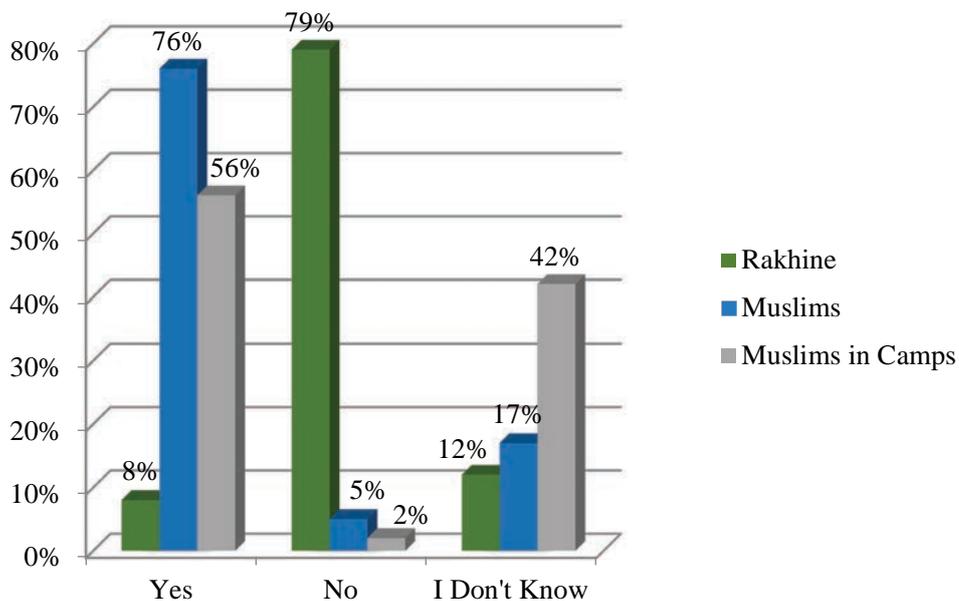
Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews broadly support the survey findings, though they reveal additional dynamics. Many Rakhine said simply that they do not want to live with Muslims, mainly because of distrust and fear of renewed conflict. "Rakhine communities don't want to live with Muslims again because of a lack of trust between the two groups," said a Rakhine in Pauktaw.[306] A Rakhine in Kyaukphyu agreed: "It is impossible for us to coexist like before. We trust Muslims no more."[307] And a Rakhine in Buthidaung said "we do not want to live peacefully with them. I don't like their mindset. Even if we do some things, violence will occur at any time."[308] Participants in a Rakhine focus group in Buthidaung said that although "they are free to choose their own religion, we don't want to live with Muslims."[309]

Other Rakhine took this line of logic further, saying that, not only do they not want to live with Muslims, but that they should be more formally segregated, a sentiment that was widespread across numerous townships (as noted in the conflict prevention section). "Muslims should not be allowed to live in Thandwe town" according to a local monk.[310] A government official in Thandwe noted the change in sentiment over the past few years: "Thandwe is mixed: before the conflict in 2013, people did not identify one another by their religion, only their name, but now the reverse is true," making it more difficult for the communities to live together.[311] A Rakhine working for a civil society organisation in Kyauktaw agreed, saying that "the communities should remain separate; as long as there is separation, there will be peace"[312] while a Rakhine elder in Kyauktaw said that, unequivocally, Rakhine and Muslim villages should be separated.[313] "In our opinion," said a Rakhine in Kyaukphyu, "the way to avert conflicts is to stay away from each other. They [Muslims] should be placed somewhere away from us because there is no way we can coexist."[314] "Before 2012, coexistence was okay," said a Rakhine NGO worker in Sittwe, "but now since the conflict started it is impossible. Muslims should be relocated to other places."[315] A Rakhine in Maungdaw went even further: "We will not live together peacefully. For a long time, we lived separately, Rakhine with Rakhine and Muslims with Muslims. So we cannot live together peacefully in the future. Anyway, we have too different lifestyles to live together peacefully. We don't want Muslims to live in our land. If another country would take them, we could live peacefully amongst ourselves."[316] Given that deporting all Muslims to another country is neither realistic nor desirable finding other solutions is necessary. And as a Catholic priest in Sittwe noted, "even though most Rakhine do not want to live together, living separately still poses a security challenge in the future."[317]

A few Rakhine interviewees and several Muslim interviewees noted that they are open to the possibility of living together, though some Rakhine set preconditions. Rakhine in Maungdaw offered a list of conditions for coexisting peacefully: "Rohingya word is forbidden; the media provides only true information that is not biased in favor of the Rohingyas; the UN and INGOs do not use the Rohingya name; both communities become flexible; and incorrect

[306] In-depth Interview. 22 March 2015. Pauktaw Township.
[307] In-depth Interview. 27 March 2015. Kyaukphyu Township.
[308] In-depth Interview. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.
[309] Focus Group Discussion. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.
[310] In-depth Interview. 31 March 2015. Thandwe Township.
[311] In-depth Interview. 2 April 2015. Thandwe Township.
[312] In-depth Interview. 19 December 2014. Kyauktaw Township.
[313] In-depth Interview. 26 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township.
[314] In-depth Interview. 27 March 2015. Kyaukphyu Township.
[315] In-depth Interview. 21 March 2015. Sittwe Township.
[316] In-depth Interview. 15 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[317] In-depth Interview. 24 March 2015. Sittwe Township.

news from Facebook is banned."[318] According to a Rakhine active in Rakhine networks in Thandwe, "only after citizenship has been verified can the Rakhine and the Muslims determine how to live together."[319] Rakhine in Maungdaw and Ramree seemed to concur. A Rakhine in Maungdaw said that he is "open to every religion. If the Muslim community can stay under the rule of law and the rules and regulations provided by the government, then both communities can live peacefully together without fear."[320] A Rakhine man in Ramree echoed these sentiments: "If they live peacefully and lawfully in line with the level of acceptance by the people of Rakhine State, it will be possible [to live together]. We were living like that before.... If they do not make any problems, it is okay. The local community suspects that they have a secret agenda, though, so their movements are restricted."[321]

A few Rakhine expressed sentiments more common amongst Muslims that peaceful coexistence was possible. A Rakhine villager in Kyauktaw, for example, said that "the situation will return to normal if the Rakhine are able to meet the Muslims every day."[322] A Rakhine villager in Mrauk-U agreed, saying that he would "like coexistence and to recreate the relationships that existed before the crisis."[323] As a Muslim in Buthidaung said, "the interactions with Rakhine here are peaceful. In the downtown area, many Rakhine and Muslims live and interact together."[324] Several others from Buthidaung echoed his sentiment, saying that they are "100% sure we will be able to live together peacefully"[325] and that "if leaders negotiate with each other and understand each other, both communities will live peacefully."[326] A Muslim in Maungdaw said simply "I want to live peacefully with them [the Rakhine] as we did before."[327] A Muslim humanitarian worker in Maungdaw noted that living together peacefully, however, requires a "change of mindset."[328] A Muslim leader in Kyauktaw acknowledged that living side-by-side would still pose challenges, though ones that can be overcome: "Problems between [Rakhine and Muslim] villages are like that of a family: brothers and sisters occasionally fight, but they will always be family."[329]

The competing narratives between Rakhine and Muslims continued through to the prospects for reconciliation. Whereas 72% of Muslims expressed the desire to be involved in reconciliation initiatives, 61% of Rakhine did not (only 15% did) (Figure 152). Muslims in camps were especially receptive to reconciliation initiatives (83% want to be involved) as were those in Kyaukphyu and Ramree (100% of small samples) and Kyauktaw (83%). Rakhine, on the other hand, were particularly unreceptive in Buthidaung and Thandwe, where 78% and 79%, respectively, said they do not want to join a reconciliation initiative (Figure 153). Rakhine were slightly more inclined in Mrauk-U (33% wanted to be involved) and Sittwe (22%). Rakhine women viewed reconciliation initiatives even more negatively than Rakhine men, with 64% saying they do not want to be involved and only 12% saying they do.

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[318] In-depth Interview. 15 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[319] In-depth Interview. 31 March 2015. Thandwe Township.
[320] In-depth Interview. 15 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[321] In-depth Interview. 28 March 2015. Ramree Township.
[322] In-depth Interview. 27 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township.
[323] In-depth Interview. 21 December 2014. Mrauk-U Township.
[324] In-depth Interview. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.
[325] In-depth Interview. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.
[326] In-depth Interview. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.
[327] In-depth Interview. 15 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[328] Ibid.
[329] In-depth Interview. 20 December 2014. Kyauktaw Township.

Figure 152: Desire to be Involved in Reconciliation Initiatives
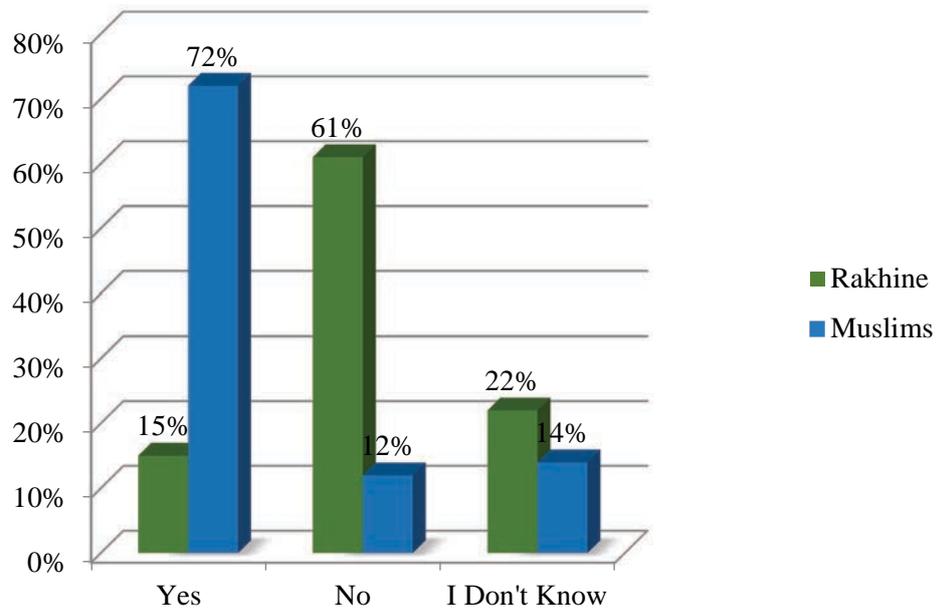
Figure 153: Desire to be Involved in Reconciliation Initiative by Township
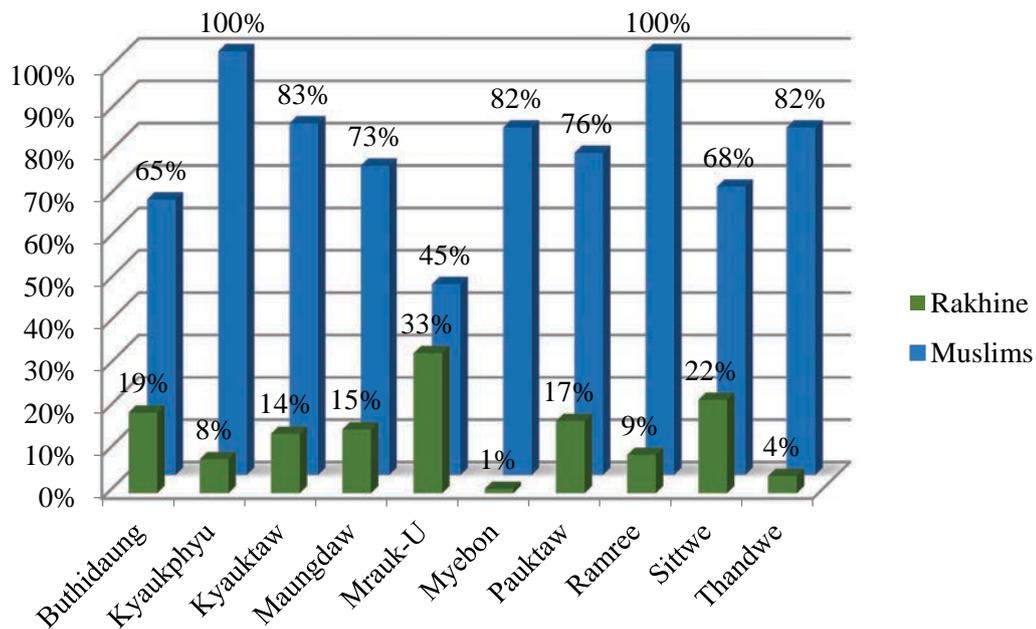
Again, interviews and focus group discussions broadly confirm these views. According to a Rakhine elder in Kyauktaw, "meetings between Rakhine and Muslims are not possible because jihad is their [Muslims] priority."[330] Rakhine participants in a focus group in Buthidaung left open the possibility for reconciliation if agreements could be enforced: "We do not want to take part in discussions about reconciliation. Muslims will all agree in the discussion, but they will not implement those agreements."[331] A few Rakhine also expressed interest, but, as noted in the conflict prevention section, there is a strong expectation that the government should

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[330] In-depth Interview. 26 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township.
[331] Focus Group Discussion. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.

organize such initiatives. A Rakhine in Buthidaung said "if the government negotiates with both communities it might be okay."[332] A Rakhine in Maungdaw agreed that the government should do more to resolve the situation—they "should organize workshops and meetings between the two groups"[333]—while a Rakhine businessman in Maungdaw said he "would like to be more involved" in reconciliation efforts.[334] A Rakhine villager in Thandwe went further, encouraging the research team to conduct interviews and meetings jointly in the future so as to promote mutual understanding.[335]

Meanwhile, Muslims expressed broad interest in being involved in reconciliation initiatives and a few hinted at prior involvement in dialogue with the Rakhine community. "I have not taken part in any peace initiative thus far," said a Muslim in Buthidaung, "but I want to take part."[336] A Muslim in Maungdaw agreed, saying that "both communities need to sit together and speak about their problems."[337] Like the Rakhine, many Muslims blame the government for a lack of dialogue. According to a Muslim in Kyauktaw, "Muslims are ready for meetings with Rakhine to prevent conflict. While Rakhine and the government are both to blame for a lack of meetings to date, it is mostly the government's fault."[338] Another Rakhine in Kyauktaw agreed, saying that "the government should broker meetings between community and religious elders, especially in areas where violence breaks out."[339] A Kaman man in Thandwe said the "government should organize activities to bring the communities together for trust-building and should also organize meetings between religious leaders."[340] Meanwhile, a Muslim in Mrauk-U was "hopeful that the government can mediate, even though it is not doing so yet."[341]

A few Muslims in Maungdaw said it was in fact the responsibility of local communities to start reconciliation. "Both communities have to be proactive and initiate things,"[342] said one, while another said that "we should show that we are proactive in terms of reconciliation… conceiving of each other as human beings starts at the community level. Communities should realize that we are all the same. Since now we cannot develop our lands, we have to cooperate and respect each other. We have to think that everybody has the same human values."[343] A Muslim in Maungdaw who had previously tried to engage in reconciliation efforts acknowledged, however, that such efforts face challenges because "the Rakhine did not like that…It will take some time to live peacefully, but it will eventually happen."[344]

The Union Government, chosen by 36% of respondents overall, was selected most frequently among a list of leaders most trusted to solve communal problems. The findings were broadly consistent among Muslims and Rakhine,[345] with 46% of Muslims selecting the Union

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[332] In-depth Interview. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.
[333] In-depth Interview. 15 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[334] Ibid.
[335] In-depth Interview. 1 April 2015. Thandwe Township.
[336] In-depth Interview. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.
[337] In-depth Interview. 15 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[338] In-depth Interview. 25 March 2015. Kyauktaw Township.
[339] In-depth Interview. 20 December 2014. Kyauktaw Township.
[340] In-depth Interview. 1 April 2015. Thandwe Township.
[341] In-depth Interview. 21 December 2014. Mrauk-U Township.
[342] In-depth Interview. 14 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.
[343] Ibid.
[344] Ibid.
[345] Interestingly, Muslims, on average, selected three leaders from the list, while Rakhine only picked two, so the absolute percentages of leaders selected by Rakhine are lower than for Muslims.

Government as their most trusted leader (ranking slightly behind religious leaders and the international organisations at 52% each) and 30% of Rakhine selecting the Union Government as their most trusted leader (just ahead of community leaders, also at 30%) (Figure 154).

Figure 154: Most Trusted Leaders
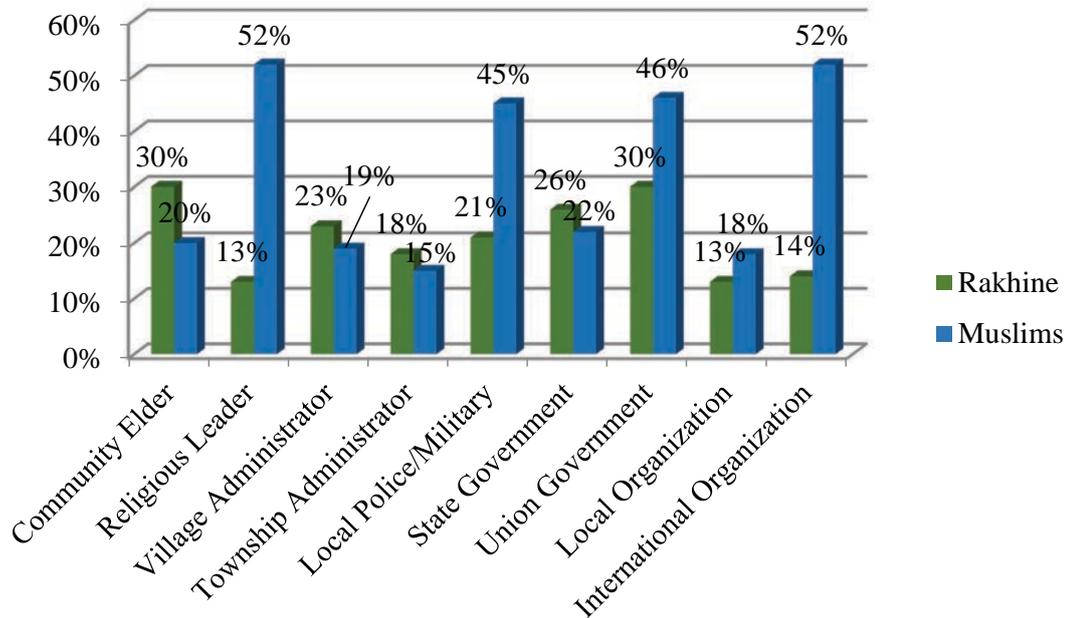
Rakhine were also relatively trusting of the Rakhine State Government (selected by 26%) and, to a lesser extent, village administrators (23%) and local police and military (21%). Lower on the list were township administrators (18%), international organisations (14%), local organisations (13%), and, least frequently, religious leaders (13%). Among Muslims, religious leaders, international organisations, and the Union Government were the most trusted leaders (as noted above) and, surprisingly, the local police and military were not far behind (selected by 45%). The Rakhine State Government (22%), community elders (20%), village administrators (19%), local organisations (18%), and township administrators (15%) were rated lower. Interestingly, Muslims in camps turned out more trusting of religious leaders (selected by 77% as compared to 42% of Muslim villagers) and, unsurprisingly, of international organisations (80% of Muslims in camps compared to 42% of Muslims in villages). Trust in the Union Government (36%) and local police and military (34%) was lower for Muslim IDPs. Although this was not reflected ub the survey, some young Muslims in IDP camps explained that they tended to tended trust more people who might be able to change their difficult lives. There is therefore a proclivity to listen to Muslim activists based in foreign countries via internet.

Perhaps because of the personalities of particular local leaders, there was a wide variance by township in most trusted leaders. Among Muslims in Kyauktaw and Mrauk-U, for example, religious leaders were very highly trusted (selected by 89% and 97% of respondents) as were the local police and military (81% and 87%, respectively), while township and village administrators were rated very poorly (less than 7% each) as was the State Government in Mrauk-U (4%). While international organisations ranked high among Muslims overall (selected by 52% of respondents), they were not viewed by Muslims in Buthidaung (32%) or Maungdaw (27%) in as favorable a light. Local organisations were viewed as more trustworthy in Ramree (58%) and Kyaukphyu (48%). Among Rakhine, those in Maungdaw selected each option as more

trustworthy than the average for all Rakhine, especially the Union Government (52% compared to 30%). Meanwhile, community elders appeared more trusted in Maungdaw (44%) and Mrauk-U (40%), the local police and military in Maungdaw and Sittwe (44% each), the State Government in Sittwe (48%), and, surprisingly given the citizenship verification process, the Myebon Township Administrator was more highly trusted (46%) than any other township administrator among Rakhine.

Views of the International Community

The role of the international community has been critical in shaping the conflict in Rakhine State, and has, at times, had a negative impact on national reconciliation. In particular, international media has conveyed polarised views on the issue, which has strengthened extremism on both sides. As Jacques Leider, a Rakhine history expert, wrote "While the international media have rhetorically encased the Muslims in a status of overall victimhood, devoid of any agency, the Buddhist Rakhine have been portrayed as perpetrators, solely enjoying a position to rule the action and devastating their neighbors. The corollary of this black and white division has been a denial of communication with the Buddhists on behalf of those who wanted to show their solidarity with the Muslims."[346]

As a result, since the outbreak of communal violence in Rakhine State in 2012, there has been a widespread perception within the Rakhine community that the international community—including foreign embassies, international media, the UN, and international humanitarian and development organisations—are biased against Rakhine and in favor of Muslims. The flow of humanitarian assistance to Muslim communities after the outbreak of violence in 2012 fuelled these perceptions, even though Muslims were disproportionately affected by the conflict, in terms of deaths and injuries, destruction of property, displacement in the immediate aftermath and subsequent inadequate access to healthcare and livelihoods (among other things). As such, it is not uncommon for Rakhine to complain that the international community cares only about the Muslim community (and not about poor Rakhine communities) and does not make adequate efforts to understand Rakhine perspectives. Rakhine resentment boiled over in March 2014, when riots against international organisations broke out in Sittwe prompted by the census, leading to the evacuation of aid workers, the destruction of approximately $1 million in property, and the suspension of humanitarian and development work in Rakhine State for several weeks. Since then, Rakhine relations with the international community have

[346] Leider, J. (2013) "Rohingya. The name. The movement. The quest for identity." Nation Building in Myanmar. Yangon: Myanmar EGRESS/Myanmar Peace Center. pp. 204-255.

remained fraught, especially in the context of additional scrutiny on the situation for Muslims in Rakhine State in the wake of a humanitarian crisis of migrants leaving the Bay of Bengal in the hopes of reaching Malaysia.

In this context, one might expect the Rakhine community to have very negative views of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs). In fact, the survey highlighted that 57% view them favorably (including 56% in Sittwe) and only 14% overall view them unfavorably.[347] These findings were broadly consistent by township, though there was some variation: 64% of Rakhine in Mrauk-U, for example, viewed INGOs favorably, while only 32% in Buthidaung and 26% in Thandwe did so. There was a stark contrast between survey responses, however, and the views expressed by Rakhine in focus group discussions and interviews. For example, the belief among Rakhine that INGOs and humanitarian organisations only help Muslims was widespread. According to Rakhine men in Buthidaung, "They only give supplies and support to Muslims; we never get anything from these organisations. We don't need them anyway. Since they don't help Buddhist people, they can leave Buthidaung."[348] A Rakhine businessman in Maungdaw agreed: "First they provided services only to Muslim communities, so the Rakhine community increased its distrust towards NGOs. Today it is still the same. They help only one community."[349]

Across focus groups and interviews, Rakhine mentioned the sinking of the Aung Takon ferry[350] as further evidence of the international community's bias against the Rakhine. Elders in Mrauk-U asked rhetorically why so little international attention and assistance focused on that accident which involved the death of many Rakhine.[351] Others blamed the international community, the media, and INGOs for spreading misinformation about the Rakhine and the situation within Rakhine State. A monk in Thandwe emphasized that it was important for the international community to "produce the 'right' information" about Rakhine and warned against "using the stick of human rights to beat the Rakhine" rather than thinking about whether or not "human rights are relevant to the Myanmar context."[352] More recently, against the backdrop of the flooding crisis that has affected Rakhine State in May 2015, some Rakhine individuals blamed the unbalanced distribution of relief materials to flood victims.[353] A number of factors may explain the discrepancy between the survey instrument and focus groups and interviews. Respondents may have viewed the survey organisation, CDNH, as an INGO and may not have wanted to denigrate INGOs in CDNH's presence. Another possibility is that the average Rakhine that has interacted with INGOs has benefitted or is expecting to benefit from their assistance and, as a result, views them more positively, whereas more prominent and educated community members are less likely to have benefitted from direct assistance, and, as a result, less inclined to show favor toward INGOs. Moreover, some Rakhine NGOs have started to realize the need to work with INGOs, which might have impacted

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[347] In comparison, previous surveys conducted by CDNH highlighted that in 2013, 75% of Rakhine people said they do not trust international organisations (sample size: 500) and in April 2014, in the aftermath of the wave of violence against INGOs in Rakhine, 80% reported not trusting international organisations (sample size: 300).

[348] Focus Group Discussion. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.

[349] In-depth Interview. 14 March 2015. Maungdaw Township.

[350] On 13 March 2015, the Aung Takon 3 ferry sank off the coast of Rakhine, resulting in an official death toll of 90. For more, see http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/14/burma-ferry-sinks-dozens-dead-rakhine-state and http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/14574-handful-of-payouts-after-rakhine-ferry-sinking.html.

[351] Focus Group Discussion. 28 March 2015. Mrauk-U Township.

[352] In-depth Interview. 31 March 2015. Thandwe Township.

[353] Phone Interview. 29 August 2015. Yangon.

the perception of some ethnic Rakhine. A Rakhine youth leader summarized the situation: "since the 2014 incident [the destruction of INGO offices by some angry Rakhine], INGOs have tried to do a better job to improve their relations with Rakhine people. However, we still think they are more sympathetic to Muslims and see Rakhine as trouble makers."[354]

Muslims displayed overwhelmingly positive views of INGOs. 92% of Muslims reported having favorable opinions of INGOs with 98% of women expressing positive views. This favorability was broadly consistent by township, though INGOs were not viewed in quite as positive a light in Buthidaung (80% favorable) and Maungdaw (86% favorable), possibly because of the unique challenges communities in these townships face in meeting their basic needs. As one Muslim villager in Buthidaung said, "I trust them [INGOs] because they give supplies and food to Muslim villages," but "they cannot take part in reconciliation because they have no authority here; only the government can do something."[355]

A main challenge for international organisations is thus to ensure that the public views their operations as ethical and impartial, especially in the complex environment of Rakhine State where two parties are in conflict.

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[354] Phone Interview. 28 August 2015. Yangon.
[355] In-depth Interview. 18 March 2015. Buthidaung Township.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SECTION - 6

RECOMMENDATIONS

The situation in Rakhine State is incredibly complex and the socioeconomic needs are tremendous. It will take a sustained investment of time and resources to create a Rakhine State that reaches the same level of socioeconomic indicators as other states and regions in Myanmar and to foster lasting peace and reconciliation. Yet, a number of projects designed to enable this large-scale shift in the longer-term could also, if properly implemented, bring about improvements in the short-term, notably in terms of conflict prevention.

The following recommendations result from the survey's findings, lessons drawn from direct observations on the ground as well as a series of consultations with the international community, government officials, scholars and experts on a range of thematic issues. These recommendations are organized to mirror the larger report; we begin with a set of recommendations to respond to each section of the report on humanitarian needs and underdevelopment, conflict prevention, and reconciliation prospects and finish with additional recommendations which are either overarching and cross-cutting or do not find a natural place under one of the existing headings.

Humanitarian Assistance and Development

Rakhine State remains the second poorest State or Region in Myanmar due to historic neglect and underinvestment in infrastructure and human capital over the last several decades. While improvements have been made in the past two years, much more needs to be done to improve the socioeconomic status of all residents. The best way to improve living standards in Rakhine State is to expand access to livelihoods so that both Rakhine and Muslims are better able to provide for their own needs. To achieve this, however, the Union and State Governments must create an enabling environment that is peaceful and stable with improved infrastructure and human capacity and a stronger network of social service provision.

This report recognizes that there is huge potential for economic development and investment in Rakhine State that is waiting to be unlocked. As soon as discrimination and restrictions are removed, the development of the state is likely to gain momentum and benefit the economic development of the whole of the Union of Myanmar.

Freedom of Movement

Restrictions on freedom of movement in Rakhine State have been an impediment to the protection to Muslims' basic rights. They have also affected the economic development and recovery in Rakhine State, as it has strongly hampered interaction between the Rakhine and the Muslim community, thus hindering employment and trade. Restrictions on the freedom of movement for foreign humanitarian and development workers have also made their work less efficient and balanced. Finally, displacement has proved to be a phenomenon that has disproportionately affected almost all the residents in Rakhine State be it due to violence or to disasters further affecting the economy and development of the state.

- The Union and State Governments should respect the right to freedom of movement for all citizens.

- The Union and State Governments should take steps to protect the right of people to move and travel for medical or family purposes.

- The Union and State Governments should ensure that civil servants and other government officials recognize and respect the right to freedom of movement and other rights of those who are Myanmar citizens, including the recognized ethnic group of Kaman, those already verified as full or naturalized citizens, and those from other recognized ethnic groups who live in or belong to Muslim communities.

- The Union and State Governments should ensure that foreign humanitarian and development workers have necessary access in a timely manner.

Living Conditions and Income

According to the survey and interviews, over half of the respondents from both communities reported having fair to very poor living conditions and poor to no income levels. This is compounded by high levels of debt and economic migration abroad or to other parts of the country, thus underscoring a brain-drain and spiral in which Rakhine State is losing its most important asset: human resources.

- The Union and State Governments, together with the local communities and private sector should lead the design of a poverty alleviation strategy. This would aim at enhancing the work skills of labour in Rakhine State and creating job opportunities so that people do not have to become indebted in order to be able to buy food.

- In the short-term, while infrastructure and human capacity remains weak, the State Government could expand cash-for-work programs equally to all residents of Rakhine State, including women. Such programs would have the dual benefit of providing much needed cash flows to large numbers of workers and of improving infrastructure across Rakhine State. So as to avoid corruption and ensure that high-quality work is undertaken, the contracting mechanisms should be transparent and monitored by the State Government.

- Finally, as shown in Myebon, the State Government in collaboration with international organisations should consider cash grants to low-income residents as a means to enhance their living conditions and to kick-start economic activity.

Expand Access to Livelihood Opportunities

Perhaps the best way to improve living conditions in Rakhine State is to stop restricting freedom of movement and to enhance livelihood opportunities that increase income. The restrictions on movement that have impact on the livelihoods of people from both communities contributes to the underdevelopment of Rakhine State. Low income and lack of livelihoods is seen as one of the main reasons for a strong economic migration out of Rakhine State. The Union and State Governments together with the local communities should take measures to

encourage people to stay in Rakhine State rather than leave. Amongst others:

- The Union and State Governments should encourage a systematic and detailed review of value chains in which Rakhine State has a comparative advantage over other parts of Myanmar. Rather than focusing primarily on the export of raw materials, efforts should be undertaken to assess and support the sectors in which Rakhine State can add value, such as the processing of fish, timber, and agricultural products.

- On agriculture specifically, efforts should be undertaken to improve crop yields, such as through the dissemination of high-quality seeds and fertilizers (see below Food Security). Such a focus will require sustained investment in infrastructure as well as an improved business environment more generally and improved education and vocational training (see below).

- The State Government should work with the private sector and the international community to expand the scope and depth of vocational training available to all residents of Rakhine State. Special measures for enhancing access for women to vocational training should be undertaken by the Union and State Governments. These could include scholarships targeting women to ensure their participation in the vocational training. Several potential sectors were regularly mentioned in focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, including: agriculture and livestock management; farming technologies, fisheries management; textiles; IT and computer skills; and tourism. These trainings should be tailored to the geographical locations best suited to the development of such skills. To complement such training efforts, general training on trade and business would be useful. The State Government could usefully be assisted by its international partners and the private sector in this. Beyond traditional vocational training, additional vocational training programmes could help girls and women build a wide set of soft skills, such as conflict resolution, team building, and communication, which would also increase their participation in public life and decision-making in Rakhine State.

- The State Government should undertake or encourage an assessment of skills and capabilities of low-income residents, including in the IDP camps. Training could then be tailored to both needs and interests, with a focus on income-generating activities (such as textiles) and agriculture (especially farming technologies to enhance subsistence and resilience) in the near term and a focus on those sectors mentioned above over the medium- to long-term.

- The Union and State Governments should review their own hiring policies so that they do not appear discriminatory against non-Rakhine citizens.

- The State Government together with its national and international partners should ensure that all these measures take the particular needs of women into consideration and include measures to enhance women's access to credit, vocational skills training and increased value chains.

Savings and Loans

Through the surveys and interviews, it became clear that an overwhelming majority of the population, both Rakhine and Muslim, had no savings and were forced to take out loans in order to be able to pay for their food. Although this needs to be addressed in part through enhanced food production (see livelihoods recommendations), this also needs to be remedied as part of the poverty alleviation strategy in order to ensure that the downwards spiral of indebtedness and poverty does not continue to drag Rakhine State down in the national indicators.

- The State Government together with the private and banking sector and international development partners should encourage saving schemes, in particular for those who are not part of a state pension scheme and for low-income earners.

- Limited savings and access to finance remains a significant barrier to improved livelihoods both at the personal level and in the business sector. At the level of the household, the Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank should move its loan cycle forward so as to better meet the needs of farmers, many of whom complained that low-interest loans through the bank came too late for the planting season. In the same vein, industrial banks across Rakhine State should be encouraged to provide loans to SMEs more easily. To complement these efforts, the State Government should commission a feasibility assessment to examine the potential for an expanded microfinance market across Rakhine (access now remains quite limited). Moreover, to improve resilience among farmers and those susceptible to natural disasters, providing insurance or micro-insurance should be considered. An additional advantage is that microfinance programs can target women specifically, which other poverty alleviation mechanisms do not necessarily do.

- Gender discussions should be integrated into training, for instance at village savings and loans associations, village development committees and field schools. This would prevent gender issues from being aired and would root them directly into daily activities.

- The State Government, together with the banking and lending sectors, should encourage access to micro-credit and to low interest loans that are targeted at low and middle-level income earners.

- Access to loan and saving schemes should be made accessible in particular to women.

Main Expenses

The surveys and interviews highlighted that almost three quarters of the population spends most of its money on purchasing food.

- The Union and State Governments together with its national and international development partners should commission a comparative study of successful strategies implemented in other countries that allowed people to eat in dignity without having to resort to debt in order to feed themselves and their families, with a view to implementing measures to address this.

Continue to Develop Physical Infrastructure

Although considerable investments have been made in Rakhine State's road network and electric grid over the past two years, much greater investment is needed to lift residents out of poverty and to unblock and unleash their entrepreneurial potential. Just as restrictions on freedom of movement are a barrier to adequate access to livelihoods, health and education, poor infrastructure also impedes socioeconomic development. Poor roads make it time-consuming and challenging to gain access to markets; low levels of access to electricity hinder the operation (or increase the cost) of electricity-intensive industries; and an underdeveloped irrigation network limits many farmers in Rakhine to one growing season. Such investments should not focus solely on the Rakhine community, but should benefit all residents of Rakhine State.

- The private sector and development partners should be encouraged to invest significant resources in the construction of roads and bridges, with a continued focus on both coverage and quality.

- The Union and State Governments should continue its efforts to expand access to the electric grid wherever possible. Where grid access is unlikely in the near-term, such as in some remote rural villages or very remote IDP camps, access to home and micro-solar systems should be facilitated.

- The Union and State Government should consider increasing its expenditures on irrigation infrastructure. In order to complement this, improving paddy embankments to prevent the salinization of agricultural lands will be crucial (see below Food Security).

- Together with the private sector and development partners, efforts to improve ports and jetties should be increased so as to develop the connectedness of towns and villages that mainly rely on waterways for trade and transportation.

- The Union and State Governments, in collaboration with the private sector and/or international partners, should undertake an assessment of market access and build markets where there is high demand and access is limited. Particular attention needs to be paid to enhancing women's access to markets.

- For all physical infrastructure projects, the Union and State Governments must promote the highest standards of transparency and accountability in the contracting and implementation processes. Experience has shown that if such projects are implemented at inflated costs or with low quality materials, the benefits of such investments are diluted and hinder broader efforts to improve socioeconomic developments in Rakhine State. International partners are invited to share international best practices in establishing credible and functional monitoring systems.

Need for More Development Activities and Actors

- So far, most organisations operating in Rakhine State have focused mainly on humanitarian assistance. This has reinforced the sentiment that the international community is biased in favour of the Muslim community. The international community has a responsibility to ensure that its development organisations initiate and scale-up de-

velopment activities in Rakhine State that have impact on all communities. This will not only counter the perception of some elements in the Rakhine community that the international community is biased, but will also ensure that the needs of all residents in Rakhine State are met.

Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)[356]

Rakhine State was affected in recent years by three major disasters: flood and mudslides in Northern Rakhine in June 2010 affecting 29,000, cyclone Giri in October 2010, affecting 260,000 people, [357] and floods and landslides in August 2015, affecting 111,568 and causing loss of lives and livelihoods.[358] Against this backdrop, there is a need to make sure that efforts to reduce disaster risks are systematically integrated into policies, plans and programmes for development and poverty reduction in Rakhine State. Prevention of displacement should be more systematically encouraged where possible.

- The Union and State Governments should ensure that implications of disasters are taken into account as an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development actions, policies and programmes at all levels and in all thematic areas and sectors.

- National and international humanitarian partners should be encouraged to provide technical support for the integration of DRR into poverty reduction initiatives in Rakhine State.

- The State Government should initiate public awareness campaigns that are specific to local needs. Community awareness programmes through CBOs and schools should also be implemented.

- National and international humanitarian partners should foster community-based participatory assessment in all flood-affected districts and facilitate the creation of local disaster information centres, taking into consideration the need to involve and consult in particular with women and children.

- The State Government together with its humanitarian partners should ensure that the places to which people will flee in the event of a disaster are clearly identified in advance and that there are plans in place to ensure the safe return or relocation of these IDPs once the threat or effects of the disaster have passed.

Return and Relocation for Internally Displaced Persons

- The issue of displacement was portrayed by interviewees as a matter of serious concern both for the present and the future. Yet IDPs who have started to return reported being generally satisfied with the new arrangements provided by the State Govern-

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[356] This recommendation on DRR is not a result from the findings of the survey, which did not include any specific question on that topic, but does stem from consultations with the international community.
[357] UNOCHA, 2013.
[358] OCHA. MYANMAR: Floods and Cyclone Response. Multi-cluster/sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA) report (as of 03 Sep 2015). Available online at : http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/MIRA%20report_FINAL.pdf.

ment. Continued efforts to enable the return and relocation of displaced populations will be crucial for the future of the state. In consultation with communities, return should be allowed where possible. Above all, return/relocation should be voluntary.

- The State Government and the international community have the responsibility to support ending displacement in a safe and dignified manner. Yet, these interventions should remain temporary, until infrastructure is handed over to the community and they are sufficiently empowered to take care of it.

  ➢ In cases where the process of return/relocation has started:

- For returnees and those relocated, the Union Government and humanitarian and development actors should prioritize early recovery efforts as well as initiatives to improve acceptance within host communities.

- Interviewees tended to complain about the lack of transparency in the tendering process for the construction of new shelters. The State Government should ensure that a public and transparent tendering process is put in place for the construction of new shelters as well as renovation of existing shelters. In particular, the tendering process should include standards for building materials. This implies that the State Government should monitor construction and fund expenditures. Specific attention should be given to Mrauk-U, Minbya, and Pauktaw, where local communities reported that the State Government provided shelter construction in places of origin but that the quality of the new houses was below minimum standards.

- Psychosocial support for reintegration should be provided by the competent services of the Ministry of Health or national or international partners, understanding that gender roles mean that reintegration and return will be experienced differently by men and women.

- Security should be provided by the Union and State Governments for returnees.

  ➢ Before return/relocation takes place:

- The State Government should ensure that the shelters are rehabilitated so that they are habitable and will remain intact, even in case of heavy rain.

- A public and transparent tendering process for construction of new shelters as well as rehabilitation of existing shelters should be ensured by the relevant organs of the State Parliament, CSOs and the Office of the Attorney General.

- Quality control should be made more systematic. Punitive actions must be taken against those contractors that do not fulfill the requirements.

- Given the distressing episode that displacement constituted for most affected interviewees, treatment for post-traumatic stress experienced by affected individuals of all communities should be provided free of charge.

Role and Rights of Women

- Generally, women appeared to play an undersized role in shaping sociopolitical life in Rakhine State. In-depth interviews notably revealed the limited opportunity for women to discuss issues that directly concern them. Initiatives to promote the equal participation of women and girls both at the household and community levels and in public decision-making and governance (including participation in development and peacebuilding fora) should be increased for a more inclusive development of Rakhine State.

- Women should be systematically included in decision-making processes. More generally, women's voices should be elevated by systematically seeking them out and publicly asking for and validating their input, even if the discussions happen in private focus groups. The State Government, INGOs and NGOs should organize women's leadership training programmes to develop their confidence to speak up.

- The Union and State Governments and national and international partners should work directly with local communities, especially Muslim communities, on the encouragement and improvement of girls' education. Conditional cash transfers or providing free meals at public schools may help to improve girls' attendance rates, particularly after primary school.

- Girls' empowerment in the economic arena will naturally depend on availability of jobs, but also on protective policy environments and community-based support for their entry into the workplace. The Union Government must ensure that laws promote gender equality in the job market.

- Women should be involved in Camp Management Committees (CMC) and Village Development Committees (VDC) so that women's issues are better taken into account and are dealt with more seriously.

- In some areas, sexual abuse and gender-based violence (GBV) were cited as significant concerns by both communities. International humanitarian partners should improve safe access to water and ensure that "women-friendly spaces" are created in IDP camps and villages, which may help to address some of the proximate causes of GBV. The State Government, as well as humanitarian and development partners, should undertake more awareness raising and advocacy efforts to reduce the stigma of GBV and to ensure that perpetrators do not commit crimes with impunity.

- Gender-friendly corners in police stations should also be created, so that women are not afraid to talk and denounce GBV to police forces. More generally, police forces should receive gender-sensitive trainings in order to deal properly with women's issues and ensure that each station has women officers from all communities trained to deal with allegations of GBV.

- The State Government and international humanitarian and development partners should ensure that effective psychosocial support is provided to survivors of GBV and their families. Outreach activities designed to provide communities with information on where women and girls can access GBV services should also be developed.

Improve Access to Education

Although education was reported as widely available, with a vast majority of respondents saying that some form of education is available in their ward or village, quality remains low. This not only limits livelihood opportunities, but also makes it difficult to increase the value chain and get out of poverty sustainably. Improving the quality of education for both Rakhine and Muslim communities is an essential component of broader efforts to improve socioeconomic development in Rakhine State as well as access to livelihoods.

- All children, regardless of their race, faith, ethnicity and gender, should be given access to public school. This is crucial for state-building and nation-building efforts in Rakhine State.

- Many teachers, Rakhine or otherwise, do not want to work in Rakhine State, particularly rural areas, because of low salaries and perceptions of high levels of insecurity. Teachers should be incentivized to work in rural Rakhine as well as in Muslim villages and camps. Such incentives could include a higher salary, faster promotion process or improved benefits and hardship allowance, enhanced security measures (including security guarantees form the local community and security forces), and priority access to training opportunities.

- In some Muslim villages, IDP camps, and Rakhine isolated areas, residents are responsible for paying teacher salaries. Where this is the case, the Ministry of Education should offer to cover the costs of such salaries and ensure that teachers, whether Rakhine or Muslim, meet minimum quality standards.

- The Union Government in conjunction with the State Government and local community organisations should establish a committee to review the educational curriculum for Rakhine State to ensure it meets the needs of children and youth in Rakhine State.

- The Union and State Governments should ensure that vocational training is better incorporated into the school curriculum. In particular, technical high schools and agricultural institutes should be reopened and made accessible to all residents.

- The Union and State Governments should promote literacy campaigns, targeting all residents of Rakhine State.

- The Union and State Governments should reverse the restrictions that prevent many Muslim students from attending university in Sittwe and Myanmar more broadly, and ensure that they are given assistance to catch up for lost study years.

- Though the number of schools and access to books and materials continue to improve, the State Government needs to continue to invest in the construction of schools, furniture, books, and teaching materials. Although the number of teachers, school supplies and teaching materials tend to be adequate in urban areas, there is a significant shortage in rural areas which needs to be tackled, especially in Mrauk-U, Kyauktaw, Minbya, Buthidaung, Rathedaung and Sittwe Townships.

- To complement efforts to improve educational infrastructure and teacher quality, education and awareness-raising campaigns that emphasize the importance of continuing education through high school, especially among Muslim girls, should be conducted. Moreover, the State Government should provide incentives to parents in order to invest in the education of girls. This will, in the long-term, create more opportunities for women.

Food Security and Nutrition

A concerted effort is needed to prepare for longer-term food security, meet food shortages, and address malnutrition, especially young child malnutrition. As a matter of fact, food security appeared problematic for both communities (the findings from the survey highlighted that access to adequate food was rated as poor or very poor by 65% of respondents). Moreover, those with very poor or no income appeared to be the worst-affected (70% of them rated their access to food as poor or very poor). It is thus crucial to note that this area will be improved if access to livelihoods is enhanced, the generation of income enabled by a better access to livelihoods generally allowing for a better access to food. Although both communities suffer from a lack of livelihoods, the situation appeared even more acute for Muslims IDPs, notably due to restrictions on movement.

This enhancement in the access of livelihoods will be enabled by: (1) lifting restrictions on movement; (2) and encouraging more development activities in Rakhine State. That said, development will not solve the situation overnight and reducing the dependence on food assistance is likely to take time. In the meantime, support should continue to be provided by humanitarian partners to enable and facilitate the transition.

Across the board, a range of activities should be initiated:

- International NGOs, UN agencies, development agencies and the private sector should be supported in putting in place development initiatives. In the meantime, while the food security situation remains severe, they should be granted full and unimpeded humanitarian access to provide food and nutrition assistance where and when it is needed.

- As previously highlighted, the Union and State Governments and the private sector should encourage intensified investment in irrigation and better water management. This will increase the intensification of production and yields and thereby enable an extension of the growing period.

- Where possible, the Union and State Governments should put policies and facilities in place to improve overall productivity, such as fostering double crops or a diversification to more nutritious or high yield crops. As aforementioned, higher quality seeds and fertilizers should also be made more easily available to farmers, as well as micro-credits and enhanced loans to help them improve their returns.

- As emphasized in the Physical Infrastructure and DRR sections, investment in river and paddy embankments should also be promoted to prevent salinization and flooding.

- The State Government should prioritize the improvement of access to markets, especially for the isolated areas and Muslim communities. More specifically, vegetables and other nutritious products should be made available.

- Alternative solutions to the shortage of cooking fuel should also be found and be made available as its scarcity has been a source of conflict in many cases.

- Plans for product diversification should be fostered, and associated with campaigns emphasizing the importance of nutrition.

- In parallel, the State Government should keep in mind that encouraging environmental projects and natural resource management will benefit the whole sector in the long-term. More specifically, the focus should be put on the following:
  - Projects tackling soil erosion and degradation
  - Sustainable fisheries
  - Sustainable management of energy resources

- In the meantime, it is important to continue tackling the consequences of poor access to food, and food assistance for the poorest and most vulnerable should continue on the basis of nutritional needs. More specifically, micronutrient supplementation should be provided to pregnant and lactating women and children under-five. Going one step further, it is important to recognize that malnutrition is cumulative over time, and has impact on the nutritional status of the next generation. Women need to be empowered to look after their own nutrition as well as those of their families.

- In particular for isolated villagers and IDPs, there is a short-term need to provide trainings and support to enable people to better provide for their own food needs: income-generating (textiles and other job opportunities) or agricultural (vegetable gardening in camps for instance) activities.

- More generally, humanitarian organisations should note that this issue affects both Rakhine (60% reported their access to food as poor or very poor) and Muslim communities (68%) and that enabling both communities to bridge this gap may provide an opening to build the trust and support of Rakhine communities.

Water

- Currently, rainwater harvesting, springs and groundwater wells are the most common sources of drinking water in Rakhine State. Given the poor levels of access to drinking water for both communities (according to the survey, only 54% overall have access), there is an urgent need to construct new and rehabilitate existing safe water supplies (drinking ponds) both in camps and villages, in particular for high density zones where public health risk is higher. Water transportation, storage and purification needs must also be met. In that regard, usage of international standards needs to be developed.

- Monitoring of water quality should be expanded to all locations. While the impact of water point upgrade on the level of contamination still needs to be explored, prevention measures—both software and hardware—should be deployed permanently.

In addition, the presence of nitrate as the most commonly found chemical and the partial presence of arsenic may have impacts on the long-term health and must be further analyzed.

- Crucially, social management of water resources should be fostered. Community-led maintenance and repair of non-functional infrastructure should be promoted and supported.

- As shown in the survey and in-depth interviews, Muslim women tend to have less access to drinking water than Muslim men. To resolve this issue, the State Government, international organisations and local communities should foster the establishment of local water users' groups composed of a majority of women for the management of community water sources. This would enable better access for women to water sources. This should be accompanied by awareness campaigns targeting men to make them more supportive of allowing women to spend time outside of the home, encourage them to accept the role of women in water maintenance, and to let them participate in the program.

- Monitoring household treatment solutions such as ceramic filters should be expanded.

- In the longer term, embankments could also be constructed to prevent salinization of drinking ponds (see above Physical Infrastructure). Furthermore, reliable alternative sources to emergency water supply should be more systematically identified through hydrological and environmental surveys.

- Rakhine villagers in rural areas appeared at risk with only 42% of respondents reporting having access to drinking water. Particular attention needs to be given to these rural isolated areas outside IDP camps (in which 60% reported having access to drinking water compared to 54% overall).

- Access to water should be ensured in a manner that enhances the safety of users, in particular women and children.

Sanitation

- In terms of sanitation, latrines should be upgraded and repaired on a regular basis in order to maintain their functionality. The use of materials with a longer durability and reduced dislodging frequency is needed, in order to maintain the functionality of latrines and ease their maintenance by the community. As for water facilities, fostering social management of latrines should be considered a priority (phasing out payment of latrine cleaners is required).

- On-site sludge treatment systems should be developed in remote townships.

- Improvement of hygiene practices and behaviour change is needed, and should be particularly reinforced in villages. While a sufficient level of knowledge about hygiene practices has now been reached, the focus should be put on behavioural change. Specific objectives and methods should be defined and implemented for women, men, girls, boys, elders and people with disabilities. Hygiene promoting campaigns should

also take into account the specificities of the location, and should go hand in hand with the distribution of items in relation to the topic, including soap and other hygiene items. This, indeed, serves as encouragement or reward and enables accelerated behaviour change, while at the same time empowering beneficiaries.

- Finally, cross cutting issues should be mainstreamed in the WASH response. As such, additional consideration of gender sensitivity should be included in the WASH programming. Furthermore, more efforts should be invested in improving the safety in latrines through solar lighting. More generally, hygiene kits and facilities in IDP camps should be more adapted to the specific requirements of children and adults with disabilities, women and girls.

- Although more transparency has been achieved at the ministerial level, more coordination is needed between WASH organisations and the authorities at the township level.

- In places where return has started, in combination with recommendations stated above, the Union and State Governments and international organisations should ensure they adopt an integrative shelter/WASH approach.

  o Moreover, in these locations, it is very unlikely that humanitarian organisations will continue their work, since the situation will not require an emergency response anymore. The State Government and international organisations should ensure that support to returnees is addressed within the scope of the development intervention at the state and local levels. In this context, a transition from humanitarian assistance to development will thus be needed in the next few months.

  o Due to the differing needs of the communities, a distinction should be made between: populations which remain in their village of origin; IDPs returning to a site that already has inhabitants; IDPs returning to totally abandoned or destroyed villages of origin and IDPs returning to new locations. These highly diverse contexts highlight the need for case-by-case interventions depending on the environment.

Healthcare

According to the surveys and interviews, healthcare was found wanting throughout all segments of the population, even if the population that is restricted in its movements has an additional hurdle to accessing health services. This obstacle seems to be particularly addressed when it comes to the women.

- Treatment in public health facilities should be provided equally irrespective of religion, ethnicity, race, gender or citizenship. This naturally involves equal access to heath facilities, but also equal health cost applied to all communities as well as equal handling of patients.

- Efforts to expand and upgrade health infrastructure should be sustained throughout

Rakhine State, although the need for infrastructure is less severe in Sittwe and Buthid-aung. In particular, new hospitals, clinics and rural health centers should be built, but also properly equipped (ultrasound, ECG, x-ray machines).

- It is crucial to note that new infrastructure is not useful if there are no trained people that can staff hospitals and clinics or operate equipment. As such, capacity building is needed everywhere, in particular for doctors, nurses, and midwives.

- In order to counter the lack of health professionals in Rakhine State, incentives (high-er salary, better benefits, providing adequate safety, making sure travel costs to remote areas are covered by Ministry of Health and not from their own salaries) should be given to doctors, nurses and midwives to work in Rakhine State.

- Emergency healthcare services should be reviewed in order to be able to guarantee access to health facilities in case of emergencies both in urban and in rural areas.

- In terms of medical supplies, the overall situation is adequate, although isolated rural areas encounter more difficulties to have access to adequate drugs than urban areas. However, due to economic pressure evidenced in the survey especially for IDPs and villagers in Northern Rakhine State, people are prompted to get drugs at the clinic to resell them, thereby creating shortages in terms of drugs in health facilities. This further highlights the need to improve livelihoods and income generating activities for both communities in order to prevent avoidable misuse.

- As highlighted, respondents throughout the state reported suffering or having suf-fered from malaria. This highlights the need for the State Government and humani-tarian partners to distribute mosquito nets more systematically.

- More blankets and clothing should be provided (especially in Mrauk-U, where only 20% of Muslims and 40% of Rakhine reported having enough clothing and 32% and 28% respectively enough blankets).

- More generally, particular attention should be paid to all health issues in Mrauk-U and Kyauktaw, as these townships rated poorly on most health indicators.

- It should also be noted that restricting healthcare access to a subset of the population in Rakhine State also implies restricting reproductive heath, including family planning. The Union and State Governments should ensure that women are guaranteed the right to quality and affordable healthcare including sexual and reproductive health. More specifically, family planning should be provided for all households, including in IDP camps. The Union Government should refrain from implementing non-volun-tary measures, seen as discriminatory and inconsistent with human rights standards.

- Overall, villagers in rural areas appeared the worst-affected, highlighting the need for sustained efforts in these locations.

- The State Government and health care providers should ensure that access to health for women is guaranteed.

- Prevention and control of communicable diseases should be improved. Prevention campaigns, notably around the causes and prevention of diarrhea and malaria could be put in place.

- Disease surveillance should be strengthened to ensure timely detection of outbreaks and necessary precautions. Outbreak response capability should also be enhanced to prevent outbreaks of disease, which regularly arise during the monsoon season throughout Rakhine State.

  o The Department of Health should be more proactive in this area, especially in Sittwe. At the moment, it still heavily relies on the information of NGOs but does not have its own standards in terms of disease surveillance. The DOH should recruit health staff to collect disease surveillance information, but also facilitate the mobility of key health personnel and MOH's Rapid Response Team for active surveillance, prompt investigation of cases, active search of cases and verification of reported outbreaks. Collection, compilation and analysis of surveillance data should also be strengthened to direct actions, monitor disease trends, generate maps, reports and communicate to health partners.

Although the aforementioned recommendations apply to IDP camps as well, IDPs face additional constraints and needs which should be addressed separately, partly through humanitarian assistance:

- Unimpeded access for humanitarian health organisations should be ensured.

- Impediments to receiving emergency referrals for Muslim IDPs and Muslims living in enclosed or remote areas should be reduced (notably informal costs and travel barriers should be reduced).

- Referral services for acutely ill patients and high risk pregnant women should be fostered.

- Training for midwives and auxiliary nurses is especially needed for camp clinics.

- Emergency obstetric care and maternal health care including access to contraceptives should be more systematically provided.

Conflict Prevention

Overall, in terms of conflict prevention, the Union and State Governments should be more proactive than reactive. The current policy of separating the two communities which has maintained stability has served its short-term purpose, but the surveys and interviews highlighted that the flip-side has been that the restoration of "normal" interactions and relationships has been hindered. As long as the communities do not interact, hostile perception of each other will remain unchallenged and will continue to foster resentment and fear, which in turn will increase hard-line positions among different sectors of society. The interaction must be gradual, but measures must be taken to foster environments and safe spaces where this

can happen and is encouraged to happen. Fostering interaction naturally also links back to the reconciliation efforts that are on-going and need to be gradually enhanced.

Citizenship

More than any feature of Rakhine State today, both communities view the citizenship issue as the main source of continuing tensions. Moreover, a failure to resolve this contributes to misunderstandings between the Rakhine and Muslim communities. The longer the situation remains unresolved, the more difficult it will be to ensure that Rakhine State enjoys a future that is both stable and peaceful—a precondition to sustainable development for the state. In 2014, the government launched a process of verification aimed at granting citizenship to eligible Muslims. Yet, the issue surrounding the name "Rohingya," that both the government and Rakhine communities refuse to recognize, and that the Muslim community refuses to relinquish, remains a barrier to the process. But even towards people who are recognized as citizens according to the 1982 Citizenship Law, the Union and State Governments can do more to integrate and promote their well-being.

- The rights of all citizens must be respected and protected without discrimination.

As regards the non-Kaman Muslims:

- It is crucial that the Union Government facilitates a common understanding among all parties to recognize that a compromise solution must be found when looking at the eligibility of the non-Kaman Muslims for citizenship, while recognizing the fears that lie behind the positions. As long as this is not acted on, the issue will remain stuck on the binary "Rohingya" and "Bengali" terms and the citizenship issue, which both sides recognize as being key to solving some of the issues will not be addressed.

- The Union Government, in particular the Ministry of Immigration, should engage in a dissemination process so that all communities understand who is eligible for citizenship, the process for applying, the manner in which applications will be reviewed, and the options available to those not granted citizenship status, while being firm on what within the law is not negotiable. The process for applying for verification and citizenship must be voluntary. Broad consultations should be held to identify solutions and ways of overcoming the disagreement over how people should be identified.

- For those not granted citizenship, the Union Government, along with local communities, must respect Myanmar law and the rights afforded to all human beings under Myanmar's international human rights obligations. As with foreign nationals living and working elsewhere in the country, the Union Government should endeavor to find solutions that allow it to regularize the situation of those who either do not qualify for citizenship or who have not gone through the process, by finding solutions such as status of temporary aliens or migrant workers, (semi-)permanent residency, or stay permits on humanitarian grounds for instance for elderly or disabled people.

- A perceived lack of transparency about the citizenship verification process makes the Union and State Governments vulnerable to claims of corruption and sows further distrust from the Rakhine community; the Union Government should impose a clear citizenship application structure, and investigate and sanction any officials found

guilty of malfeasance. Although the Union and State Governments has admittedly made efforts to ensure the transparency of this process, it should intensify its communication with all local communities.

Safety and Security

Although not necessarily highlighted as the main concern for most interviewees, the lack of safety and security was often put forward as a reason for displacement and the fear of future conflicts was mentioned as a potential source of worry. On the one hand, findings from the survey, in-depth interviews, focus-group discussions and direct observations highlight that increasing the number of security forces on the ground is needed; on the other hand, too much emphasis on security has impeded the restoration of healthy relationships and interaction among the different communities, thus hindering the return to normality and fostering fear. The capacity and the capability of the security personnel however needs to be enhanced.

- When responding to communal violence in Rakhine State, an admittedly tricky environment, the Union and State Governments must ensure first and foremost, that the security and human dignity of all people are respected and protected.

- Given the reported feeling of fear of communal violence and insecurity from all residents in Rakhine State (73% overall expressed being fearful), the Union Government should maintain the current levels of security forces on the ground.

- The Border Guard Police should be maintained along border areas. Even when interacting with those who break the law, the Border Guard Police personnel should follow due process and act within the legal framework.

- Safety and security should be enhanced in public areas (schools, hospitals). This will notably enhance access for Muslims to these areas and help to reduce Rakhine fears.

- As noted both in the Rakhine Commission Report and observed during the interviews implemented during the present research, the State Government tends to be blamed for being prejudiced because of the prevalence of ethnic Rakhine administrative and security personnel. Based on this observation, the government should endeavor that the diversity of the State is better represented in the composition of the administrative and security personnel in Rakhine State and more efforts should be made to recruit women, especially for positions of leadership.

- Scaling-up police training on crowd control and community-policing is necessary. More specifically, police training for dealing with riots should be continued. Trainings on early warning and on operating in diverse environments should be fostered. All necessary administrative support should be provided on that purpose by the Union and State Governments.

- Greater incentives should be provided to security forces in order to enable them to perform their duties professionally.

- An internal accountability mechanism should be set up within the police force to

sanction officers who do not appropriately protect civilians and to exonerate those who have behaved properly.

- The security forces as the public face of the Union and State Governments must be seen as impartial and fair, acting without bias. Particular care should be taken in their interactions with women and children.

Rule of Law

Strengthening the rule of law will contribute to political stability and social harmony, paving the way for the prevention of further conflict. The authorities should thus be encouraged to adhere to due legal process and international human rights norms.

- Human rights are universal values that must be guaranteed irrespective of race, religion, ethnicity, gender or citizenship considerations.

- Impunity breeds injustice and a sense of inequality and unfairness. This contributes to fostering conflict. The Union and State Governments should take firm action against any group, individual, institution or organisation inciting or instigating hatred, conflict or violence on the basis of race, religion, language, ethnicity, gender or culture.

- In particular, existing criminal laws must be applied and enforced impartially and effectively to not only punish those who break these laws, but also to serve as deterrents.

- Existing judicial and dispute-resolution mechanisms should be strengthened in Rakhine State so they can serve their intended purpose of solving problems within the legal framework.

- The issue of corruption should be systematically addressed by the Union and State Governments. As stated above, the principle of transparency should be enforced to prevent abuse of power or misappropriation of public goods.

- In particular, allegations of corruption within Camp Management Committees should be tackled through the careful implementation of rules and regulations, appropriate auditing and putting an end to a culture of impunity within camps.

- All residents in Rakhine State have little knowledge of the Constitution, existing laws, and administrative rules and regulations. It is thus vital for residents to be informed of the laws so that they can enjoy protection under these laws. Regular civic education workshops should be organised, where people are informed about these legal structures, but also where concrete examples of law enforcement are provided to the audience to show them that law is actually enforced in Rakhine State and that impunity cannot happen any longer. In order to reach targeted groups, different methods of awareness raising and civic education should be developed (videos, CDs etc).

- In order to enforce rule of law in some villages, some administrative reforms will be needed. So far, village administrators, even for Muslim villages, could only be ethnic Rakhine. In some areas, Muslims were appointed as village administrators, but did not get any salary, which has, at times, been a trigger for not following rules and

regulations. In order to make sure rule of law is effectively respected, the State Government should employ them with greater incentives for responsible and law-abiding behaviour.

- The Union and State Governments should work with community leaders to enforce law and order in Muslim and Buddhist areas throughout Rakhine State. Residents and community leaders should be given incentives to be law-abiding and those who break the law should be dealt with in a just and transparent manner.

- Women in particular should be given information on the laws that protect them and their rights.

Other Types of Engagement Beyond Security

First, highlighted in the survey and interviews, both communities still have strong fears of communal violence. There is thus a need to take seriously and address underlying fears of both communities that further feed into tensions and conflict.

- On the one hand, many Rakhine expressed that the Muslim community is closed to them, and that there is little knowledge of what is going on at the Mosque or in the Madrasas, providing room for conspiracy theories and feeding the rumour mill. To address this issue, initiatives that promote transparency, and respond to rumours should be fostered.

- On the other hand, Muslim IDPs expressed fears about their own community. For example, the camp committee is often the source of various worries and accusations of abuse of power. To address these concerns, effective reporting, communication, and accountability channels as well as complaint mechanisms should be put in place by the State Government so IDPs feel better protected. Moreover, the legitimacy of Camp Management Committees must be reinforced, as well as made more accountable and democratic.

- The Union and State Governments as well as the international community should foster a more transparent engagement with local communities (to tell them what they are doing, what they have planned, etc.).

Second, in order to prevent violence in the future, curbing extremism while promoting moderate discourses is essential. Indeed, putting in place repressive and punitive measures will not be sufficient, if not totally counter-productive. At the same time as extremist voices are monitored, moderate ones should be promoted to show that an alternative is not only possible, but also desirable.

- More sustained efforts should focus on monitoring people or organisations which promote extremism or violence of any kind. An effective way to do so is to support the development of early warning systems, like the one recently put in place by CDNH, that obtain accurate information on the ground, conduct stakeholder analyses, examine possible hot spots, inform relevant authorities of potential rumours being spread, and promote preventative measures.

- Beyond monitoring, the State Government should also engage with religious schools to bring in trusted partners that promote tolerance, peace and foster a change of mindset in these institutions.

- To counter extremism and violence, the voices of moderate religious and community leaders should be elevated:

  o For Muslims, for instance, moderate Muslim leaders from Yangon should be encouraged to lead the reform efforts in the Islamic religious schools in Rakhine State, especially in places where extremist elements are prevalent.

  o For Rakhine, moderate voices and interpretations of Buddhism should be empowered. One solution could be to involve them into tolerance campaigns and local conflict resolution activities in areas where there is already a window of opportunity. Additionally, Rakhine leaders could be sent on study tours focusing on promoting social harmony in diverse societies.

  o At the same time, promoting a greater understanding of the cost of violence among communities could be a useful step.

- Interfaith dialogue meetings should be organized in villages across the Rakhine State with an aim of preventing the eruption of additional violence at the local level (discussed further below).

- Because of the lack of prospects about the future, young people from both communities in Rakhine State have turned into drugs and alcohol. Community leaders have started to worry that some of these young people might cause troubles which might turn into violence riots. The Union and State Governments should find a way to prevent these young people from falling into a spiral of violence. This includes creating jobs and improving education.

Third, another important component of engagement should focus on empowering communities to prevent conflict by themselves. Only few respondents reported that local communities could actually play a role in conflict prevention and security. Awareness raising and empowerment are key at the grassroots level to making conflict prevention measures more effective and sustainable.

- Efforts should be made to build the capacity of local organisations and individuals to work in their own communities and support them to develop initiatives that address the issues of intercommunal violence.

  o In particular, positive narratives should be highlighted in order to support organisations and individuals in areas where violence is not breaking out.

  o Communities should also be empowered to implement positive initiatives promoting tolerance and diversity.

  o Activities that counter misinformation and promote tolerance need to rec-

ognize the means by which most people receive and consume information in order to ensure maximum reach of the target.

- Joint Conflict Prevention Committees should be set up at the township-level or village-level. The Committee's priorities would be to find ways to prevent future conflict, curb the impact of rumours at the local level, and plan joint activities (small project development, capacity building, etc.), as is already the case in Maungdaw. These Committees could also work as informal dispute settlement mechanisms.

- Efforts to provide journalist trainings (especially conflict sensitive journalism) should be sustained, especially in light of the upcoming elections at the end of the year.

- Local communities and CSOs should also be empowered to implement social media monitoring.

- The State Government must ensure that it engages in effective rumour management, working with community leaders to provide clear and understandable information and verify rumours. Without making concerted efforts to do so, the government risks stoking tensions, as happened during the recent cancellation of white cards, for which the government provided an explanation only in Burmese, leading to the spread of a number of rumours as key messages became lost in translation.

- Additionally, information literacy trainings on how to verify information should be provided throughout Rakhine State for all communities.

Reconciliation

Efforts to reconcile Rakhine and Muslim communities are necessarily long-term endeavours and will require changes in mindsets that have hardened since 2012. Such efforts are likely to be particularly challenging prior to the 2015 general elections as there will be little political will to address such a divisive issue. Moreover, any and all reconciliation efforts must be calibrated with conflict prevention efforts, so that short-term conflict prevention, by separating Rakhine and Muslim communities, for example, does not impede reconciliation. In addition to resolving long-standing citizenship issues and travel restrictions as noted above, it is critical to encourage informal engagement, and broaden and deepen dialogue to promote a peaceful and stable Rakhine in the future.

Yet, crucially, it should be acknowledged that communities cannot be "forced" to reconcile. Such a process should naturally emanate from the grassroots, and, if it is to be sustainable, should be voluntary. At the same time, government and leaders should facilitate this change in behaviour and mindset, with a clear messaging from the top. Some segments of both communities do not seem ripe for reconciliation at this time. Instead of initiating artificial processes of reconciliation in these segments, the focus should be put on changing mindsets, notably through civic education and clear messaging from leaders about what is considered acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

Fostering Tolerant Mindsets

Since 2012, long-standing grievances have mixed with socialization and social pressures that encourage misinformation and intolerance. Negative views—particularly Rakhine views of Muslims—are calcifying. Though it will not yield benefits overnight, education and awareness-raising efforts are needed to overcome misinformation and social pressure.

- A public campaign aiming at explaining what reconciliation actually means and involves should be initiated.

- Education and awareness-raising activities should be undertaken to dispel misinformation about religions, especially Islam.

- A national tolerance campaign should be initiated throughout the country to educate people about diversity and national harmony. In that respect, TV and radio programmes promoting tolerance should be encouraged.

- Efforts that promote tolerance through cultural medium should be undertaken. There are numerous opportunities to subtly encourage understanding of others without provoking a response from hardline elements of either Rakhine or Muslims. Possible activities include: children's books or comic books; songs and music videos; and dramas or comedies that air on buses or ferries.

- To complement the curricular review mentioned in recommendations on Education, civic education and themes of tolerance should be incorporated at all levels of schooling. A training of trainers methodology could then be employed to ensure the changes reach a wide audience as well as to create a support network for teachers for lessons learned and best practice for covering this subject matter.

- Many Muslims in Rakhine State cannot speak or read the Myanmar or Rakhine languages; providing support to Muslim communities to learn Myanmar will enable them to better interact with their Rakhine and Bamar neighbors and, thereby, will help with assimilation efforts, demonstrate Muslim loyalties to the state of Myanmar, and remove one complaint common among Rakhine.

Encourage Informal Engagement

Restrictions on Muslims' freedom of movement have limited both planned and serendipitous interactions between Muslims and Rakhine. While this may contribute to a decrease in conflict in the short-term, it fosters misunderstanding and resentment that, left unaddressed, festers and leads to greater conflict in the future. To this end the Union and State Governments should lift travel restrictions on Muslims in order to promote opportunities for Muslims and Rakhine to engage informally.

- The State Government as well as local and international organisations should assess areas where return and relocation has been completed, is planned or in process. Such assessments should focus on the infrastructure needed for these communities to succeed (schools, clinics, markets, irrigation, drinking water, etc.) with an eye toward demonstrating that there are benefits to living with other groups as neighbors.

Such infrastructure projects would have the further benefit of encouraging informal engagement between the two communities. In particular, the focus should be put on links that existed before 2012 which could be re-established.

- While return and relocation sites should be prioritized, similar assessments should be undertaken across Rakhine State. Small- or medium-scale infrastructure projects that contribute to socioeconomic development as well as reconciliation should be encouraged. As evidenced in the interviews with local communities, restoring links between communities that existed prior to 2012 may be used as a point of entry for some reconciliation initiatives.

- Joint Rakhine-Muslim participation in festivals and celebrations should be encouraged as a means to rebuild ties between the two communities and improve mutual understanding and trust. CDNH researchers visited a village affected by communal conflict in Thandwe in which the level of interaction between Rakhine and Muslims decreased significantly. Nonetheless, in separate meetings, first with the Muslims and then with the Rakhine, both sides expressed a desire to participate in important events in the other community, but they lacked a go-between to facilitate such an invitation.[359] While such engagement may not be possible where levels of distrust remain high, in other places, communities only need a nudge from third parties to begin the reconciliation process.

- The process by which Muslims and Rakhine are socialized not to trust one another begins at a young age. To complement general education and awareness-raising activities on religion and tolerance, greater efforts must be made to counter negative socialization among children.

  o At present, public schools include both Rakhine and Muslims only in Buthidaung, Maungdaw, and Thandwe townships. Moreover, only in these townships and a few others (Myebon and Sittwe) are there Muslim teachers. The Ministry of Education should gradually expand the areas in which Muslims and Rakhine go to school together and in which Muslim teachers educate both Rakhine and Muslims in public schools.

  o Joint vocational training sessions should be organized for vulnerable or unemployed Muslim and Rakhine youth. Such sessions could be paired with training on other topics (such as civic education or tolerance).

  o Youth camps should be organized during the summer to bring both communities together.

Broaden and Deepen Dialogue

Opportunities for Rakhine and Muslims to engage in discrete dialogue processes remain limited because of limited trust and continued social pressure (particularly on Rakhine) not to participate. Nonetheless, direct dialogue is essential for establishing links between Rakhine

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[359] Focus Group Discussion in Thandwe, 1 April 2015.

and Muslim communities, building trust, and, eventually, for serving as a forum to build mutual understanding of one another's fears and aspirations and to address the root causes of the conflict.

- Nascent and small-scale efforts at dialogue, such as those facilitated by CDNH, should be expanded and, where possible, transferred to the local level. Moreover, to make such efforts sustainable, efforts should be undertaken to build the capacity of Rakhine and Muslim mediators so that they understand basic negotiation and mediation skills and are exposed to lessons and best practices from those that have faced similar circumstances elsewhere.

- To date, dialogue processes have been overwhelmingly focused on older male political leaders. Intermediaries should establish parallel tracks of dialogue with women and youth with the eventual aim of incorporating their views into one holistic conversation about the future of peace and development in Rakhine State. Because of the sensitivities of undertaking such dialogue, discussions may need to be held in Yangon initially.

- Ways to constructively engage and elevate the voices of moderate religious leaders should be found. Part of the answer lies in the aforementioned education and awareness-raising activities that, if successful, will blunt the influence of hardline leaders.

Additional Recommendations

Transparency and Accountability

In the eyes of the people residing in Rakhine State, a lack of transparency, ranging from government contracting to the citizenship verification process, has reinforced distrust of the Union and State Governments and between communities themselves. It has, according to respondents, created opportunities for corruption, thereby sowing the potential for further distrust. Moreover, despite the international community—and humanitarian organisations in particular—having made greater efforts to explain their work to the Union and State Governments and communities in Rakhine State, much skepticism remains of international organisations' intentions and work in Rakhine State, especially in the opinion of some ethnic Rakhine.

- The Union and State Governments should be more proactive in explaining their policies and actions to local communities; doing so would allow the government to get ahead of any possible misunderstandings and to build trust among all residents in Rakhine State, including minorities who have expressed concerns of distrust towards both Rakhine and Muslim communities.

- The State Government should revise its contracting procedures and communication efforts around them, particularly for infrastructure projects, so that they are more transparent allowing local residents to better hold officials accountable for expenditures and the quality of project implementation.

- In order to build the trust of the Rakhine, international actors must make greater efforts to understand the perspectives of all communities living in Rakhine State and

humanitarian organisations operating on the ground must go to greater lengths to explain their intentions and activities. Such efforts should help to expand the humanitarian space in Rakhine and will likely contribute to conflict prevention and reconciliation efforts.

Summary Table of Recommendations and Implementing Entities

Section	Recommendation	Implementing Entity
Humanitarian assistance and development		
Freedom of Movement	The Union and State Governments should respect the right to freedom of movement for *all* citizens.	Union and State Governments
Freedom of Movement	For those not granted citizenship, the Union and State Governments, along with local communities, must respect Myanmar law and the rights afforded to all human beings under Myanmar's international human rights obligations.	Union and State Governments

Local Communities |
Freedom of Movement	The Union and State Governments should take steps to protect the right of people to move and travel for medical or family purposes.	Union and State Governments
Freedom of Movement	The Union and State Governments should ensure that civil servants and other officials recognize and respect the rights to citizenship and freedom of movement of those that are Myanmar citizens, including the recognized ethnic group of Kaman, those already verified as full or naturalized citizens, and those from other recognized ethnic groups that live in and/or belong to Muslim communities.	Union and State Governments
Freedom of Movement	The Union and State Governments should ensure that foreign humanitarian and development workers have necessary access in a timely manner.	Union and State Governments
Living conditions and income	The Union and State Governments, together with the local communities and private sector should lead the design of a poverty alleviation strategy. This would aim at enhancing the work skills of labour in Rakhine State and creating job opportunities so that people do not have to become indebted in order to be able to buy food.	Union and State Governments

Local Communities

Private Sector |
| *Living conditions and income* | In the short-term, cash-for-work programs shoukd be expanded equally to all residents of Rakhine State, including women.

So as to avoid corruption and ensure that high-quality work is undertaken, the contracting mechanisms should be transparent and monitored by the State Government. | State Government |
| *Living conditions and income* | Cash grants should be provided to low-income residents as a means to enhance their living conditions and to kick-start economic activity. | State Government |
| *Expand Access to Livelihood Opportunities* | Value chains in which Rakhine State has a comparative advantage over other parts of Myanmar should be assessed in greater detail.

Rather than focusing primarily on the export of raw materials, efforts should be undertaken to assess and support the sectors in which Rakhine can add value, such as the processing of fish, timber, and agricultural products.

On agriculture specifically, efforts should be undertaken to improve crop yields, such as through the dissemination of high-quality seeds and fertilizers (see below *Food Security*. Such a focus will require sustained investment in infrastructure as well as an improved business environment more generally and improved education and vocational training (see below). | Union and State Governments

Business Associations

Both Local and International Development Organisations

Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Agriculture |
| *Expand Access to Livelihood Opportunities* | The scope and depth of vocational training (VT) available to all residents of Rakhine State should be expanded.

Several potential sectors include: agriculture and livestock management; farming technologies, fisheries management; textiles; IT and computer skills; and tourism. These trainings should be tailored to the geographical locations best suited to such skills development.

To complement such training efforts, general training on trade and business would be useful. | Union and State Governments

Ministry of Education, Ministry of Science and Technology

National and International Development Organisations

Private Sector and Business Associations |
| *Expand Access to Livelihood Opportunities* | An assessment of skills and capabilities of low-income residents, including in the IDP camps should be undertaken. Training could then be tailored to both needs and interests, with a focus on income-generating activities (such as textiles) and agriculture (especially farming technologies to enhance subsistence and resilience) in the near term and a focus on those sectors mentioned above over the medium- to long-term. | Union and State Governments

National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations |

Expand Access to Livelihood Opportunities	The Union and State Governments should review their own hiring policies so that they do not appear discriminatory against non-Rakhine nationals.	Union and State Governments
Expand Access to Livelihood Opportunities	The aforementioned measures should take the particular needs of women into consideration.	State Government National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
Savings and Loans	Saving schemes should be encouraged, in particular for those who are not part of a state pension scheme and for low-income earners.	State Government Private and Banking Sectors International Development Organisations
Savings and Loans	The Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank should move its loan cycle forward so as to better meet the needs of farmers. In the same vein, industrial banks across Rakhine State should be able to provide loans to SMEs more easily. To complement these efforts, a feasibility assessment should be undertaken to examine the potential for an expanded microfinance market across Rakhine. Moreover, to improve resilience among farmers and those susceptible to natural disaster, providing insurance or micro-insurance should be considered.	Union and State Governments National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations Ministry of National Planning, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development and Ministry of Industry Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank Industrial banks
Savings and Loans	Gender discussions should be integrated into training, for instance at village savings and loans associations, village development committees and field schools. This would prevent gender issues from being aired and would root them into directly to daily activities.	State Government Development and Humanitarian Organisations
Savings and Loans	Access to micro-credit and to low interest loans that are targeted at low and middle-level income earners should be encouraged.	State Government Banking and Lending Sectors
Main expenses	A comparative study of successful strategies implemented in other countries that allowed people to eat in dignity without having to resort to debt in order to feed themselves and their families should be implemented, so as to implement measures to address this.	Union and State Governments National and International Development partners
Develop Physical Infrastructure	Investing significant resources in the construction of roads and bridges, with a focus on both coverage and quality should be continued.	Union Government and State Government
Develop Physical Infrastructure	Access to the electric grid should be expanded wherever possible. Where grid access is unlikely in the near-term, such as in some very remote IDP camps, access to home and micro-solar systems should be facilitated.	Union and State Governments Development Organisations
Develop Physical Infrastructure	Spending on irrigation infrastructure should be increased. In order to complement this, improving paddy embankments to prevent the salinization of agricultural lands will be crucial (see below *Food Security)*.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Development Organisations
Develop Physical Infrastructure	Efforts to improve ports and jetties should be redoubled so as to improve the connectedness of towns and villages that mainly rely on waterways for trade and transportation.	Union and State Governments
Develop Physical Infrastructure	An assessment of market access and efforts to build markets where there is high demand and access is limited should be undertaken.	Union and State Governments Ministry of National Planning National and International Development Organisations Business Associations

Develop Physical Infrastructure	For all physical infrastructure projects, the highest standards of transparency and accountability in the contracting and implementation processes should be promoted.	Union and State Governments
Foster Development Activities and Actors	Development activities in Rakhine State should be initiated and scaled-up.	Union and State Governments National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)	The implications of disasters should be taken into account as an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of of development actions, policies and programmes at all levels and in all thematic areas and sectors.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Social Welfare State Government National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)	Technical support for the integration of DRR into the poverty reduction initiatives in Rakhine State should be provided.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Social Welfare National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)	Public awareness campaigns that are specific to local needs should be initiated. Community Awareness Programmes through CBOs and schools should also be implemented.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Social Welfare National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations Local Communities
Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)	Community-based participatory assessment in all flood-affected districts should be fostered. Local disaster information centres could also be created.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Social Welfare National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations Local Communities
Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)	The State Government together with its humanitarian partners should ensure that the places to which people will flee in the event of a disaster are clearly identified in advance and that there are plans in place to ensure the safe return or relocation of these IDPs once the threat or effects of the disaster have passed.	State Government Humanitarian Organisations
Return and Relocation for Internally Displaced Persons	In cases where this process of return/relocation has started: The Union Government and humanitarian and development partners should prioritize early recovery efforts as well as initiatives to improve acceptance within host communities. The State Government should ensure that a public and transparent tendering process is put in place for the construction of new shelters as well as renovation of existing shelters. In particular, the tendering process should include standards for building materials. This implies that the State Government should monitor the construction and fund expenditures.	State Government Ministry of Health National and International Development Organisations

	Specific attention should be given to Mrauk-U, Minbya, and Pauktaw, where local communities reported that the State Government provided shelter construction in places of origin but that the quality of the new houses was below minimum standards. Psychosocial support for reintegration should be provided by the competent services of the Ministry of Health or national or international partners, understanding that gender roles mean that reintegration and return will be experienced differently by men and women. Security should be provided by the Union and State Governments for returnees. - Before return/relocation takes place: The State Government should ensure that the shelters are rehabilitated so that they are habitable and will remain intact, even in case of heavy rain. A public and transparent tendering process for construction of new shelters as well as rehabilitation of existing shelters should be ensured. Quality control should be made more systematic. Punitive actions must be taken against those contractors that do not fulfill the requirements. Given the distressing episode that displacement constituted for most affected interviewees, treatment for post-traumatic stress experienced by affected individuals of all communities should be provided free of charge, understanding that gender roles mean that reintegration and return will be experienced differently by men and women.	State Parliament, CSOs and the Office of the Attorney General.
The Role and Rights of Women	Initiatives to promote the equal participation of women and girls both at the household and community levels and in public decision-making and governance (including participation in development and peacebuilding fora) should be increased for a more inclusive development of Rakhine State. The State Government, INGOs and NGOs should organize women's leadership training programmes to develop their confidence to speak up.	Union and State Governments National and International Development Organisations
The Role and Rights of Women	Work with local communities should be encouraged, especially Muslim communities, to improve girls' education. Conditional cash transfers or providing free meals at public schools may help to improve girls' attendance rates, particularly after primary school.	Union and State Governments National and International Development Organisations
The Role and Rights of Women	Improving access to water and creating "women-friendly spaces" in IDP camps may help to address some of the proximate causes of gender-based violence (GBV), but more efforts need to be taken to reduce the stigma of GBV and to ensure that perpetrators do not commit crimes with impunity.	Union and State Governments National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
The Role and Rights of Women	Gender-friendly corners in police stations should be created, so that women are not afraid to talk and denounce GBV to police forces. More generally, police forces should receive gender-sensitive trainings in order to deal properly with women issues.	Union and State Governments National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
The Role and Rights of Women	Effective psychosocial support should be provided to survivors of GBV and their families. Outreach activities designed to provide communities with information on where women and girls can access GBV services should also be developed.	Union and State Governments National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
The Role and Rights of Women	Women should be involved in Camp Management Committees (CMC) so women issues are better taken into account and can be dealt with seriously.	Union and State Governments
Improve Access to Education	All children, regardless of their race, faith, ethnicity, or gender, should be given access to public school.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Education
Improve Access to Education	Teachers should be incentivized to work in rural Rakhine as well as Muslim villages and camps. Such incentives could include a higher salary, faster promotion process or improved benefits and hardship allowance, enhanced security measures (including security guarantees form the local community and security forces), and priority access to training opportunities.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Education National and International Development Organisations

Improve Access to Education	In areas where residents are responsible for paying teacher salaries, the costs of such salaries should be covered. It should also be ensured that teachers, whether Rakhine or Muslim, meet minimum standards of quality.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Education National and International Development Organisations
Improve Access to Education	The educational curriculum for Rakhine State should be reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of Rakhine children and youth.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Education National and International Development Organisations Community Organisations
Improve Access to Education	Vocational training should be better incorporated into the curriculum of the schools.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Education Ministry of Science and Technology National and International Development Organisations
Improve Access to Education	In particular, technical high schools and agricultural institutes should be reopened.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Education Ministry of Science and Technology
Improve Access to Education	Literacy campaigns should be initiated, targeting all residents of Rakhine State.	Union and State Governments National and International Development Organisations
Improve Access to Education	Restrictions that prevent many Muslim students from attending university in Sittwe and Myanmar more broadly should be reversed.	Union and State Governments
Improve Access to Education	Though the number of schools and access to books and materials continue to improve, further investment is needed in the construction of schools, furniture, books, and teaching materials. Although the number of teachers, school supplies, teaching materials tend to be adequate in urban areas, there is a significant shortage in rural areas which needs to be tackled, especially in Mrauk-U, Kyauktaw, Minbya, Buthidaung, Rathedaung and Sittwe Townships.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Education National and International Development Organisations
Improve Access to Education	To complement efforts to improve educational infrastructure and teacher quality, education and awareness-raising campaigns that emphasize the importance of continuing education through high school, especially among Muslim girls, should be conducted.	National and International Development Organisations CSOs
Food security/Nutrition	A concerted effort is needed to prepare for longer-term food security, meet food shortages, and address malnutrition, especially young children malnutrition. As such, access to livelihoods should be enhanced, the generation of income enabled by a better access to livelihoods generally allowing for a better access to food. This will be enabled if: (1) restrictions on movement are lifted; (2) more development activities are implemented in Rakhine State. Yet, development will not solve the situation overnight and reducing the dependence on food assistance is likely to take time. In the meantime, support should thus continue to be provided by humanitarian partners to enable and facilitate the transition.	Union and State Governments National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
Food security/Nutrition	International NGOs and UN agencies should be supported in putting in place development initiatives.	Union and State Governments CSOs and Local Communities

Food security/Nutrition	Investment in irrigation should be intensified.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Rural Development National and International Development Organisations
Food security/Nutrition	Where possible, double crop should be fostered in order to improve overall productivity. Higher quality seeds and fertilisers should also be provided to farmers.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Rural Development National and International Development Organisations
Food security/Nutrition	Investment in river/paddy embankments should also be promoted to prevent salinization and flooding.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Transport Ministry of Rural Development Ministry of Border Affairs National and International Development Organisations
Food security/Nutrition	Access to markets, especially for the Muslim community and isolated areas, should be improved. More specifically, vegetables, legumes and other nutritious products should be made available. Alternative solutions to the shortage of cooking fuel should also be found and be made available.	Union and State Governments National and International Development Organisations
Food security/Nutrition	Plans for production diversification should be fostered, and associated campaigns emphasizing the importance of nutrition.	State Government National and International Development Organisations

Food security/Nutrition	Projects for natural resource management and environmental projects should be encouraged, notably:
	   o Projects tackling soil erosion and degradation
	   o Sustainable fisheries
	   o Sustainable management of energy resources
		State Government
		
		National and International Development Organisations CSOs

Food security/Nutrition	In the meantime, it is important to continue tackling the consequences of poor access to food, and food assistance for the poorest/most vulnerable populations should continue on the basis of nutritional needs. More specifically, micronutrient supplementation should be provided to pregnant and lactating women and under-five children.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Health National and International Humanitarian Organisations
Food security/Nutrition	In particular for isolated villagers and IDPs, trainings and support to enable people to better provide for their own food needs should be provided in the short-term: income-generating (textiles and other job activities) or agriculture (vegetable gardening in camps for instance) activities.	State Government National and International Development Organisations
Water	New safe water supplies (drinking ponds) should be constructed and existing ones should be rehabilitated, both in camps and villages, in particular for high density zones where public health risk is higher. Particular attention needs to be given to these rural isolated areas outside IDP camps (in which 60% reported having access to drinking water compared to 54% overall).	Union and State Governments Ministry of Health Ministry of Social Welfare National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations

Water	Water transportation, storage and purification needs must be met. In that regard, usage of international standards needs to be developed.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Health Ministry of Social Welfare National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
Water	Monitoring of water quality should be expanded to all locations. While the impact of water point upgrade on the level of contamination still needs to be explored, prevention measures should be deployed permanently—software and hardware. In addition, the presence of nitrate as the most commonly found chemical and the partial absence of arsenic may have impacts on the long-term health and must be further analysed.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Health Ministry of Social Welfare National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
Water	Social management of water resources should be fostered. Community-led maintenance and repair of non-functional infrastructure should be promoted and supported	Union and State Governments Ministry of Health Ministry of Social Welfare National and International Development Organisations CSOs and Local Communities
Water	Monitoring household treatment solutions such as ceramic filters should be expanded.	Humanitarian and Development Organisations
Water	Reliable alternative sources to emergency water supply should be more systematically identified through hydrological / environmental surveys.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Forestry National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
Water	Access to water should be ensured in a manner that enhances the safety of users, in particular women and children.	Union and State Governments Humanitarian and Development Organisations
Sanitation	In terms of sanitation, latrines should be upgraded and repaired on a regular basis in order to maintain functionality. The usage for parts of the structure of materials with a longer durability and reduced dislodging frequency is needed, in order to maintain their functionality and ease their maintenance by the community. In this regard, as for water facilities, fostering social management of latrines should be considered a priority (phasing out payment of latrine cleaners is required).	Union and State Governments Ministry of Health National and International Humanitarian Organisations
Sanitation	On-site sludge treatment systems should be developed in remote townships.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Health National and International Humanitarian Organisations
Sanitation	Improvement of hygiene practices and behaviour change should be fostered, and especially in villages. Specific objectives and methods should be defined and implemented for women, men, girls, boys, elders and people with disabilities. Hygiene promoting campaigns should also take into account the specificities of the location, and should go hand in hand with the distribution of items in relation to the topics, including soap and other hygiene items.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Health National and International Humanitarian Organisations

Sanitation	Cross cutting issues should be mainstreamed in the WASH response. As such, additional consideration of gender sensitivity should be included in the WASH programming. More efforts should also be invested on improving the safety in IDP camps latrines through solar lightening. More generally, hygiene kits and facilities should be more adapted to the specific requirements of children and adults with disabilities, women and girls.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Health National and International Humanitarian Organisations
Sanitation	Although more transparency has been achieved at the ministerial level, more coordination is needed between WASH organisations and the authorities at the township level.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Health National and International Humanitarian Organisations
Sanitation	In places where return has started, an integrative approach to shelter/WASH should be fostered. In these locations, it is very unlikely that humanitarian organisations will continue their work, since the situation will not require any emergency response anymore. This means that sanitation aspects should be addressed within the scope of the development intervention at state and local levels. In this context, a transition from humanitarian assistance to development will thus be needed in the next few months.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Health National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
Healthcare	Treatment in public health facilities should be provided equally irrespective of religion, ethnicity, race, gender or citizenship. This naturally involves equal access to heath facilities, but also equal cost applied to all communities as well as equal handling of patients.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Health National and International Humanitarian Organisations
Healthcare	Efforts to expand and upgrade health infrastructure should be sustained throughout the State, although the need for infrastructure is less severe in Sittwe and Buthidaung. In particular, new hospitals, clinics, rural health centers should be built, but also properly equipped (ultrasound, ECGs, x-ray machines).	Union and State Governments Ministry of Health National and International Humanitarian Organisations
Healthcare	Capacity building should be reinforced everywhere, in particular for doctors, nurses, and midwives.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Health National and International Humanitarian Organisations
Healthcare	In order to counter the lack of health professionals in Rakhine State, incentives (higher salary, better benefits, provide adequate safety, make sure travel costs to remote areas are covered by Ministry of Health and not from their own salaries) should be given to doctors/nurses/midwives to work in Rakhine State.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Health
Healthcare	Emergency healthcare services should be reviewed in order to be able to guarantee access to health facilities in case of emergencies both in urban and in rural areas.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Health
Healthcare	Isolated rural areas encounter more difficulties in accessing adequate drugs than urban areas. More supplies should be provided in these locations. Due to economic pressure, especially for IDPs and villagers in Northern Rakhine, some people are prodded into getting drugs at the clinic to resell them, thereby creating shortages in terms of drugs/medication in health facilities. This highlights the need to improve livelihoods and income generating activities for both communities in order to prevent avoidable misuse (see *Livelihoods*).	Union and State Governments National and International Development Organisations
Healthcare	Mosquito nets should be more systematically distributed.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Health National and International Humanitarian Organisations

Healthcare	More blankets and clothing should be provided (especially in Mrauk-U).	Ministry of Health State Government National and International Humanitarian Organisations
Healthcare	More generally, particular attention should be paid to all health issues in Mrauk-U and Kyauktaw, as these townships rated poorly on most health indicators.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Health National and International Humanitarian Organisations
Healthcare	Women should be guaranteed the right to quality and affordable healthcare including sexual and reproductive health. Family-planning should be provided for all households, including in IDP camps. The government should refrain from implementing non-voluntary measures, seen as discriminatory and inconsistent with human rights standards.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Health Humanitarian Organisations
Healthcare	The State Government and health care providers should ensure that access to health for women is guaranteed.	State Government Ministry of Health National and International Humanitarian Organisations
Healthcare	Prevention and control of communicable diseases should be improved. Prevention campaigns, notably around the causes and prevention of diarrhea and malaria could be put in place.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Health
Healthcare	Disease surveillance should be strengthened to ensure timely detection of outbreaks and the taking of necessary precautions. Outbreak response capability should also be enhanced to prevent outbreaks of disease, which especially arise during the monsoon season. The Department of Health (DOH) should be more proactive in this area, especially in Sittwe. The DOH should notably recruit health staff to collect disease surveillance information, but also facilitate the mobility of key health personnel and MOH's Rapid Response Team for active surveillance, prompt investigation of cases, active search of cases and verification of reported outbreak events. Collection, compilation and analysis of surveillance data should also be strengthened to direct actions, monitor disease trends, generate maps, reports and communicate to health partners.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Health
Healthcare - IDPs	Although the aforementioned recommendations apply for IDP camps as well, IDPs face additional constraints and needs which should be addressed separately through humanitarian assistance: - Unimpeded access for humanitarian organisations should be ensured. - Impediments to receiving emergency referrals for Muslim IDPs should be reduced (notably informal cost and travel barriers should be addressed). - Overcrowding in the camps should be addressed (potential solutions include limiting the number of persons per shelter and building more housing facilities where needed) - Training for midwives/auxiliary nurses is especially needed for camp clinics. - Referral services for acutely ill patients and high risk pregnant women should be supported. - Emergency obstetric care and maternal health care including access to contraceptives should be more systematically provided.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Health National and International Humanitarian Organisations
	Conflict Prevention	
Citizenship	The rights of all citizens to freedom of movement and other basic rights (equal access to health and education services) must be respected and protected without discrimination. In particular, the Union and State Governments should ensure that civil servants and other officials recognize and respect the rights of citizenship and freedom of movement of those that already possess citizenship, including the recognized ethnic group of Kaman, those already verified as full or naturalized citizens, and those from other recognized ethnic groups that live in Muslim communities.	Union and State Governments

Citizenship	As regards the non-Kaman Muslims:	Union and State Governments
	The Union Government should facilitate a common understanding among all parties to recognize that a compromise solution must be found when looking at the eligibility of the non-Kaman Muslims for citizenship, while recognizing the fears that lie behind the positions. As long as this is not acted on, the issue will remain stuck on the binary "Rohingya" and "Bengali" terms and the citizenship issue, which both sides recognize as being key to solving some of the issues will not be addressed.	Ministry of Immigration Local Communities
	The Union Government should engage in a dissemination process so that all communities understand who is eligible for citizenship, the process for applying, the manner in which applications will be reviewed, and the options available to those not granted citizenship status, while being firm on what within the law is not negotiable. The process for applying for verification and citizenship must be voluntary. Broad consultations should be held to identify solutions and ways of overcoming the disagreement over how the people should be identified.	
	For those not granted citizenship, the Union Government, along with local communities, must respect Myanmar law and the rights afforded to all under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As with foreign nationals living and working elsewhere in the country, the Union Government should endeavor to find solutions that allows it to regularize the situation of those who either do not qualify for citizenship or who have not gone through the process, by finding solutions such the status of temporary aliens or migrant workers, (semi-)permanent residency, or stay permits on humanitarian grounds for instance for elderly or disabled people.	
	A perceived lack of transparency about the citizenship verification process makes the Union and State Governments vulnerable to claims of corruption and sows further distrust from the Rakhine community; the Union Government should impose a clear citizenship application structure, and investigate and sanction any officials found guilty of malfeasance. Although the Union and State Governments has admittedly made efforts to ensure the transparency of this process, it should intensify its communication with all local communities.	
Security	When responding to communal violence in Rakhine State, an admittedly tricky environment, the security and human dignity of all people are respected and protected.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Home Affairs
Security	Given the reported feeling of fear of communal violence and insecurity from all residents in Rakhine State, current levels of security forces should be maintained on the ground.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Home Affairs
Security	In the same vein, the Border Guard Police (BGP) should be maintained along border areas. Even when interacting with those who break the law, the Border Guard Police personnel should follow due process and act within the legal framework.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Home Affairs
Security	Safety and security should be enhanced in public areas (schools, hospitals). This will notably enhance openness, access for Muslims to these areas and help to reduce Rakhine fears.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Home Affairs
Security	The government should endeavor that the diversity of the state is better represented in the composition of the administrative and security personnel in Rakhine State and more efforts should be made to recruit women, especially for positions of leadership. .	Union and State Governments Ministry of Home Affairs
Security	Scaling-up police training on crowd control and community-policing is necessary. More specifically, police training for dealing with riots should be continued. Additionally, trainings on early warning and on operating in diverse environments should be fostered. All necessary administrative support should be provided on that purpose by the Union and State Governments.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Home Affairs National and International Development Organisations
Security	Greater incentives should be provided to security forces in order to enable them to perform their duties professionally.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Home Affairs
Security	An internal accountability mechanism should be set up within the police force to sanction officers who do not appropriately protect civilians.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Home Affairs
Securiity	The security forces as the public face of the Union and State Governments must be seen as impartial and fair, acting without bias. Particular care should be taken in their interactions with women and children.	Union and State Governments

Rule of Law	Human rights are universal values that must be guaranteed irrespective of race, religion, ethnicity, gender or citizenship considerations.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Home Affairs Chief Justice General Attorney
Rule of Law	In order to crack down on impunity, firm action should be taken against any group, individual or institution or organisation inciting or instigating hatred, conflict or violence on the basis of race, religion, language, ethnicity, gender or culture.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Home Affairs Chief Justice General Attorney
Rule of Law	Existing criminal laws must be applied and enforced impartially and effectively to not only punish those who break these laws, but also to serve their deterrent purpose.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Home Affairs Chief Justice General Attorney
Rule of Law	Existing judicial and dispute-resolution mechanisms should be strengthened in Rakhine State so they can serve their intended purpose of solving problems within the legal framework.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Home Affairs Chief Justice General Attorney
Rule of Law	The issue of corruption should be systematically addressed. As stated above, the principle of transparency should be enforced to prevent abuse of power or misappropriation of public goods. In particular, allegations of corruption within Camp Management Committees should be tackled through the careful implementation of rules and regulations, appropriate auditing and putting an end to a culture of impunity within camps.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Home Affairs Chief Justice General Attorney CSOs
Rule of Law	All residents in Rakhine State have little knowledge of the Constitution, existing laws, and administrative rules and regulations. It is thus vital for residents to be informed of the laws so that they can enjoy protection under these laws. Regular civic education workshops should be organised, where people are informed about these legal structures. Additionally, concrete examples of law enforcement should be provided to the audience to show them that law is actually enforced in Rakhine State and that impunity cannot happen any longer. In order to reach targeted groups, different methods of awareness raising and civic education should be developed (videos, CDs etc).	Union and State Governments Ministry of Home Affairs CSOs
Rule of Law	In order to enforce rule of law in some villages, some administrative reforms are needed. So far, village administrators, even for Muslim villages, could only be ethnic Rakhine. In some areas, Muslims were appointed village administrators, but did not get any salary, which has, at times, been a trigger for not following rules and regulations. In order to make sure rule of law is effectively respected, the government should employ them, with greater incentives for responsible and law-abiding behaviour.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Home Affairs
Rule of Law	The government should work with community leaders to enforce rule of law and order in Muslim and Buddhist areas throughout Rakhine State. Residents and community leaders should be given incentives to be law-abiding and those who break the law should be dealt with in a just and transparent manner.	Union and State Government Police
Rule of Law	Women in particular should be given information on the laws that protect them and their rights.	Union and State Government

Other Type of Engagement Beyond Security	Many Rakhine expressed that the Muslim community is closed to them, and that there is little knowledge of what is going on at the Mosque or in the Madrasas, providing room for conspiracy theories and feeding the rumour mill. To address this issue, initiatives that are promoting transparency, and are responding to rumours should be fostered.	Union and State Governments CSOs and Local Communities
Other Type of Engagement Beyond Security	Muslim IDPs expressed fears about their own community. For example, the camp committee is often the source of various worries and accusations of abuse of power. Effective reporting, communication, and accountability channels as well as complaint mechanisms should be put in place by the government in camps so that IDPs feel better protected. Moreover, the legitimacy of Camp Management Committees (CMC) must be reinforced, as well as made more accountable and democratic.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Home Affairs
Other Type of Engagement Beyond Security	The Union and State Governments as well as the international community should foster a more transparent engagement with local communities (to tell them what they are doing, what they have planned, etc.).	Union and State Governments Local Communities International Community
Other Type of Engagement Beyond Security	More sustained efforts should focus on monitoring people or organisations which promote extremism or violence of any kind. An effective way to do so is to support the development of early warning systems that obtain accurate information on the ground, conduct stakeholder analyses, examine possible hot spots, inform relevant authorities (rumours), and promote precautionary measures, like the one recently put in place by CDNH.	Union and State Governments National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations CSOs Local Communities
Other Type of Engagement Beyond Security	Beyond monitoring, the government should also engage with religious schools to bring in trusted partners which promote tolerance, peace and foster a change of mindset in these institutions.	Union and State Governments
Other Type of Engagement Beyond Security	To counter extremism and violence, the voices of moderate religious and community leaders should be elevated: - For Muslims, for instance, moderate Muslim leaders from Yangon should be encouraged to lead the reform efforts in the Islamic religious schools in Rakhine State, especially in places where extremist elements are identified. - For Rakhine, moderate voices and interpretations of Buddhism should be protected and empowered. One solution could be to involve them into tolerance campaigns and local conflict resolution activities in areas where there is already a window of opportunity. Additionally, Rakhine leaders could be sent on study tours focusing on promoting social harmony in diverse societies. - At the same time, promoting a greater understanding of the cost of violence among communities could be a useful step.	Union and State Governments National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations CSOs Local Communities
Other Type of Engagement Beyond Security	Interfaith dialogue meetings should be organized in villages across the Rakhine State with an aim of preventing the eruption of additional violence at the local level.	Union and State Governments CSOs Local Communities, including Religious Leaders
Other Type of Engagement Beyond Security	The capacity of local organisations and individuals should be built to enable them to work in their own communities. They should also be encouraged to develop initiatives that address the issues of intercommunal violence. - In particular, positive narratives should be highlighted in order to support organisations and individuals in areas where violence is not breaking out. - Communities should also be empowered to implement positive initiatives promoting tolerance and diversity. NB: Activities that counter misinformation and promote tolerance need to recognize the means by which most people receive and consume information in order to ensure maximum reach of the target.	Union and State Governments National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations CSOs Local Communities
Other Type of Engagement Beyond Security	Joint Conflict Prevention Committees should be set up at the township-level or village-level. The Committee's priorities would be to find ways to prevent future conflict, curb the impact of rumours at the local level, and plan joint activities (small project development, capacity building, etc.), as is already the case in Maungdaw. These Committees could also work as dispute settlement mechanisms.	Union and State Governments

Other Type of Engagement Beyond Security	Efforts on journalist trainings (especially conflict sensitive trainings) should be sustained, especially in light of the upcoming elections in November 2015.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Information National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
Other Type of Engagement Beyond Security	Local communities and CSOs should be empowered to implement social media monitoring.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Information National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
Other Type of Engagement Beyond Security	The State Government must ensure that it engages in effective rumour management, working with community leaders to provide clear and understandable information and verifying rumours. Without making concerted efforts to do so, the government risks stoking tensions, as happened during the recent cancellation of white cards, for which the government provided an explanation only in Burmese, leading to the spread of a number of rumours as key messages became lost in translation.	State Government
Other Type of Engagement Beyond Security	Information literacy trainings on how to verify information should be provided throughout Rakhine State for all communities.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Information National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
	Reconciliation	
Fostering Tolerant Mindsets	Education and awareness-raising efforts should be undertaken to dispel misinformation about religions, especially Islam.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Information National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
Fostering Tolerant Mindsets	A national tolerance campaign should be initiated throughout the country to educate people to diversity and national harmony. In that respect, TV and radio programmes promoting tolerance should be encouraged.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Information Ministry of Home Affairs National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
Fostering Tolerant Mindsets	Efforts that promote tolerance through mass media should be undertaken. There are numerous opportunities to subtly encourage understanding of others without provoking a response from hardline elements of either Rakhine or Muslims. Possible activities include: children's books or comic books; songs and music videos; and dramas or comedies that air on buses or ferries.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Information Ministry of Home Affairs National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
Fostering Tolerant Mindsets	Civic education and themes of tolerance should be incorporated at all levels of schooling. A training of trainers methodology should then be employed to ensure the changes reach a wide audience as well as to create a support network for teachers for lessons learned and best practice for covering this subject matter.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Education National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations

Fostering Tolerant Mindsets	Support to Muslim communities to learn Myanmar should be fostered.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Education National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
Encourage Informal Engagement	Areas where return and relocation has been completed, is planned or in the process should be assessed. Such assessments should focus on the infrastructure needed for these communities to succeed (schools, clinics, markets, irrigation, drinking water, etc.) with an eye toward demonstrating that there are benefits to living with other groups as neighbors. Such infrastructure projects would have the further benefit of encouraging informal engagement between the two communities. In particular, the focus should be put on links that were existing before 2012, which could be re-established.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Border Affairs National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
Encourage Informal Engagement	Opportunities to construct small- or medium-scale infrastructure projects that contribute to socioeconomic development as well as reconciliation should be encouraged. While economic cooperation and interdependence alone will not foster reconciliation between Rakhine and Muslims, it is a step in the right direction. Moreover, restoring links between communities that existed prior to 2012 may be used as a point of entry for some reconciliation initiatives.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Border Affairs National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
Encourage Informal Engagement	Joint Rakhine-Muslim participation in festivals and celebrations should be encouraged as a means to rebuild ties between the two communities and improve mutual understanding and trust. While such engagement may not be possible where levels of distrust remain high, in other places communities only need a nudge from third parties to begin the reconciliation process.	State Government Local Community Leaders and CSOs
Encourage Informal Engagement	To complement general education and awareness-raising activities on religion and tolerance, greater efforts must be made to counter negative socialization among children. - At present, public schools include both Rakhine and Muslims only in Buthidaung, Maungdaw, and Thandwe Townships. Moreover, only in these townships and a few others (Myebon and Sittwe) are there Muslim teachers. Areas in which Muslims and Rakhine go to school together and in which Muslim teachers educate both Rakhine and Muslims in public schools should be gradually expanded. - Joint vocational training sessions should be provided for vulnerable or unemployed youth from all communities. Such sessions could be paired with training on other topics (such as civic education or tolerance). - Youth camps should be organized during the summer to bring both communities together.	Union and State Governments Ministry of Education Local Community Leaders and CSOs National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
Broaden and Deepen Dialogue	Nascent and small-scale efforts at dialogue, such as those facilitated by CDNH, should be expanded and, where possible, transferred to the local level. Moreover, to make such efforts sustainable, efforts should be undertaken to build the capacity of Rakhine and Muslim mediators so that they understand basic negotiation and mediation skills and are exposed to lessons and best practices from those that have faced similar circumstances elsewhere.	Union and State Governments National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations
Broaden and Deepen Dialogue	To date, dialogue processes have been overwhelmingly focused on older male political leaders. Intermediaries should establish parallel tracks of dialogue with women and youth with the eventual aim of incorporating their views into one holistic conversation about the future of peace and development in Rakhine State. Because of the sensitivities of undertaking such dialogue, discussions may need to be held in Yangon initially.	Union and State Governments National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations Local Community Leaders and CSOs
Broaden and Deepen Dialogue	Ways must be found to constructively engage and elevate the voices of moderate religious leaders (see *Conflict Prevention*). Part of the answer lies in the aforementioned education and awareness-raising activities which, if successful, will blunt the influence of hardline leaders.	Union and State Governments National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations Local Community Leaders and CSOs

Additional Recommendations		
Transparency and Accountability	The Union and State Governments should be more proactive in explaining their policies and actions to local communities; doing so would allow the government to get ahead of any possible misunderstandings and to build trust among all residents in Rakhine State, including minorities who have expressed concerns of distrust towards both Rakhine and Muslim communities.	Union and State Governments
Transparency and Accountability	The State Government should revise its contracting procedures and communication efforts around them, particularly for infrastructure projects, so that they are more transparent allowing local residents to better hold officials accountable for expenditures and the quality of project implementation.	Union and State Governments
Transparency and Accountability	In order to build the trust of the Rakhine, international actors must make greater efforts to understand the perspectives of all communities living in Rakhine State and humanitarian organisations operating on the ground must go to greater lengths to explain their intentions and activities. Such efforts should help to expand the humanitarian space in Rakhine and will likely contribute to conflict prevention and reconciliation efforts.	National and International Development and Humanitarian Organisations

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

Border Guard Police (BGP)

Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP)

Camp Management Committee (CMC)

Center for Diversity and National Harmony (CDNH)

Ceramic Water Filter (CWF)

Citizenship Scrutiny Card (CSC)

Country-based Organisation (CBO)

Civil Society Organisation (CSO)

Department of Health (DOH)

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

Electrocardiogram (ECG)

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Gender-based Violence (GBV)

Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM)

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO)

Internally Displaced Person (IDP)

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)

Ministry oh Health (MOH)

National Registration Card (NRC)

Rakhine National Development Party (RNDP)

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)

Temporary Learning Facilities (TLF)

Temporary Registration Card (TRC)

Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA)

Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP)

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

United Nations (UN)

World Food Programme (WFP)

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)