



An Analysis on the Current and Future Political Landscape of Arakan

Institute for Peace and Governance (iPG)

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Background of the Research

This research study is conducted under the title of “An Analysis on the Current and Future Political Landscape of Arakan” and three key fundamental sectors are presented under this title. These sectors consist of 1) changing political situations under the current parallel governance in Arakan, 2) Public opinion on the standpoints of the Arakan political actors amidst the Burma political crisis, and 3) Perspectives on the possible future political changes in both Arakan and the entire country. Six questions for each sector and eighteen questions for the three sectors were conducted in interviews. (There are six questions asked for each sector and a total of 18 questions for all three sectors.)

The research participants include leaders from political parties, political analysts, civil society organization (CSO) and community leaders, journalists as well as youths.¹ The research methods included Key Informant Interviews (KII), Focused Group Discussions (FGD) and a form of online surveys for netizens. A flexible and convenient method for the interviewees was also employed by conducting either in-person or social media platform-based or written or phone-call interviews. There were no apparent external impacts during interviews.

The Institute for Peace and Governance (iPG) took the lead to conduct this research and took two months in total, from May 20 to July 20, 2022. A gentle reminder, therefore, is to note that the perspectives and opinions of the respondents in the study may reflect only certain times and conditions.

The iPG research team would like to show its appreciation to all the interviewees and those who provided support and advice for the completion of this research. In case of any shortcomings, iPG should be regarded as responsible.

With Due Respect!

Kyaw Lynn, Hla Moe Tara Hlaing, Myat Thu Nwe

¹ The research respondents include two political party leaders, five political analysts, fifteen CSO and community leaders, two journalists and around one hundred youths.

Acronym

No	Acronym	Name	Definition
1	AA	Arakan Army	The military and defense organization of the ULA.
2	APG	Arakan People's Government	The administrative and management body of the ULA
3	NUG	National Unity Government	The parallel organization claimed as the government rival to the SAC after the 2021 military coup.
4	SAC	State Administration Council	The organization created by the Myanmar military as the government after the 2021 military coup.
5	ULA	United League of Arakan	The leading political wing of the APG and AA.

Introduction

This research study conducted under the title of “An Analysis on the Current and Future Political Landscape of Arakan” has three main sections. In the first section, the study highlights the power balance between the State Administration Council (SAC) and the Arakan People’s Government (APG) led by the United League of Arakan (ULA) in terms of military capacity, economic resources and other pertinent issues. In addition, when it comes to the balances of political power, the questions touch on the issue of which group enjoys considerable public support, how this differs based on the region and local conditions, which political powers are in whose hands, and the satisfactions of the people over such administrative functions.

The second section presents the perceptions of the research participants in Arakan in relation to the military and political power competition between the SAC and the National Unity Government (NUG) and how it has impacts on the people in Arakan. Then, the opinions of the respondents on the political standpoint of the key leading political actor in Arakan, the ULA, are presented. Finally, their comments on the outbreak of war and potential peace in the present or future were also sought and are described.

The third section of this research concentrates on the political situation in Myanmar. This section includes an analytical description of the election to be held in August 2023 as proclaimed by the SAC, and the stance of Rakhine political parties and armed resistance on the elections. Finally, the opinions were sought of the interviewees from different levels on the “Way of Rakkhita”, “Arakan Dream” and “Confederation” adopted by the United League of Akan/Arakan Army (ULA/AA).

Part (1)

Balance of Power under Parallel Governance

1.1 Military Power Match

In this section, the perspectives of the respondents on the military power competition and comparisons between the two powerful groups in Arakan, the SAC and the APG led by the ULA, are presented. In analyzing their military powers, the research considers military capacities. Key factors include the number of military personnel, possession of military equipment; enthusiasm and determination of the soldiers; leadership skills; military control of strategic locations; the availability of reserved forces; human resources; and economic resources for military budgets.

Although there are hundreds of thousands of military personnel in the SAC throughout the country, the number of the SAC military personnel in Arakan is assumed to be relatively lower than that of the Arakan Army. The point is that, although the number of AA soldiers is estimated between 30,000 to 50,000, the SAC's number of soldiers is assumed to be lower. However in terms of military equipment, the SAC's army, being a state military, is presumed to be greater than the AA. The interlocutors remarked that the AA has the upper hand in terms of the leadership abilities and motivation of the soldiers, while the spirits of SAC's soldiers are said to be deteriorating due to the nationwide military pressure, defiance of almost the entire population and the increasing number of casualties among SAC soldiers after the coup.

However, there were no clear answers to the question of who has a better control of strategic locations. They said that it is difficult to give a certain answer between the SAC, which has control over the towns and major communication and transportation routes, and the AA which has control over territory along the India and Bangladesh borders and Maungdaw to Ann Townships in the centre. According to a political analyst, the AA leadership has more strength in relation to military manoeuvres and strategies, based on previous armed conflicts that have broken out, but it still needs more alternative military strategies for future clashes in urban and plain areas. These are different from the current battles that are mostly taking place in forested and hilly areas. On the other hand, it is also pointed out that the military



Photo- Arakan Princess Media

strategies may be different between the SAC, which possesses land, air and naval forces, and the AA, which only has land forces.

In consideration of the current political situation, the AA may be said to have more reserved forces available than the SAC when intensive clashes break out. Respondents remarked that the SAC especially may experience more hindrance in recruiting troops after the military coup, whereas there are tens of thousands of well-trained reserve soldiers in the AAA (Arakan Army Auxiliary). However, the SAC is said to have more economic resources needed for military purposes than the AA since the SAC has control over economic resources nationwide.

1.2 Political Legitimacy and Administrative Power

In this section, questions discussed include which political actor (government) has public support and to what extent and how; which actor has more administrative functions and measures; what the levels of people's satisfaction to different political actors are; and questions about the SAC's efforts to restore its power and administrative functions in different regions.

All the interviewees responded similarly that the ULA-led Arakan People's Government (APG)² has more public support than the SAC and that such support is more solid in rural than in urban areas. They also responded that townships far in the south of Arakan, Thandwe and Gwa, are not AA strongholds such as the northern areas where political support is based on ethnicity and the region. A writer from Thandwe said that people from Thandwe town had not clearly decided about which political side they should primarily take, and there was limited organizational movement of the ULA/AA. But, according to this observation, support for AA was growing in the township areas.

Among different ethnicities, a Rohingya student mentioned that they supported the ULA more than the SAC, but that they are watching the ULA's policies carefully about them to enable them to take a clear stance, just as the majority Rakhine people do. Other ethnic minority interviewees like Mro, Maramagri and Thet said that they like the invitation of the ULA/AA's leaders to cooperate with them and the way they

² In this report, the name "ULA" is used for political and policy affairs while "APG" is referred to in the administrative and management spheres.

communicate. However, they are still at odds and facing some challenges in communicating with ground-level ULA officers in political and governing affairs.

In day to day terms, the primary measures that the APG government has been taking are the judiciary, tax collection, stability and the rule of law. Additionally, they are said to be assisting small-scale development projects in some areas. But when it comes to education and health, people have to be reliant on the SAC's governance mechanisms, and therefore, in the effort to exert power, there are some instances where the APG has collaborated with the SAC. One instance is during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the ULA tried to exert its domination and influence by issuing COVID-19 related rules for the people to follow and, in some places, taking actions against those who violated the rules. Besides, the ULA urged people to have shots of COVID-19 vaccination, and there were also some vaccination arrangements for its members.

Regarding the judiciary affairs, 80 percent of all cases in Arakan are handled by the courts of APG, and there are also issues of power abuse and corruption, as pointed out by the interviewees. ULA spokesperson Khaing Thu Kha confessed this point in a press conference, and he said that, consequently, this corruption and abuse was reduced. Besides, there were also responses that the people are more reliant on the courts of the APG than those of the SAC, and in some cases, even the SAC authorities urged people to go to APG's courts.³ Although people criticize and point out weak points of the judiciary and administrative services of the APG, people are generally satisfied to a certain level compared to the system of the SAC.

In response to these judiciary and administrative developments, the SAC is said to have gathered village administrators and given warnings to them in order to restore their control. The SAC is said to be detecting and collecting a list of people involved in the APG's administrative services and arresting some of them. It has also tried to threaten and overrun the APG's administrative and judiciary work in southern Arakan and has been increasing its military build-up and troops movements there. For example, in places where there is not much control by the ULA, SAC forces go around asking villagers if there are AA members in the area, and there have been frequent arrests and investigations of those who collect taxes on behalf of the APG.

³ From the interview with a CSO leader.

Part (2)

Dynamic of Burma Politics, and Politics of Arakan

2.1 Impacts of Central Power Struggle on the People of Arakan

This section presents the impacts in relation to the political and military competition between the NUG and SAC governments amidst the upheavals that broke out following the military coup on 1 February 2021; Arakan-related political beliefs in this competition; and positive and negative impacts on the people of Arakan.

It is generally difficult to assume that the competition between the SAC and the NUG, the two major actors in the current political orders in Burma, have nothing to do with Arakan politics. In particular, the current political changes relate to Arakan on the basis of the NUG's effort for transition to a system of federal democracy as well as the loss of socio-economic and civil rights due to the military coup for the Arakan people. For this reason, a few interviewees questioned to what extent the NUG could guarantee the rights of the Arakan people if it should come to power.



Photo- East Asia Forum

At the same time, the ULA/AA prohibited people from joining the Civil Disobedience Movement and protests against the SAC in Arakan. A CSO leader, however, pointed out:

“Amidst the competition between the SAC and NUG, the ULA/AA itself provided assistance to armed resistance groups against the SAC from behind, and the ULA/AA joined frequent meetings and cooperated with both governments.”

The survey thus found that the interviewees have difficulties in providing a clear answer about the positive and negative impacts of the current political turmoil in the country.⁴ A Rakhine local journalist said:

“There are more negative impacts on the economy. After the coup, there are many restrictions on the flow of goods coming into Rakhine State. Despite the fact that there are no armed conflicts in the area, more and more of the people in

⁴ For this question, the respondents mostly replied based on their experiences rather than clearly describing positive and negative impacts.

Rakhine are leaving the state to go abroad due to poverty and the scarcity of jobs”.

In specific terms, the negative impacts include the loss of civil rights; socio-economic problems such as rises in commodity prices and more frequent electricity cuts; difficulties in trade and transportation; the lack of job opportunities; increased hardships in education; lack of access to health; loss of freedom of movement and the right to protest; and more suppression of civil society movements. Positive impacts include a lessening in the likelihood of armed clashes resuming in Arakan due to the military pressures on the SAC in other parts of the country; more opportunity for the ULA to build up military and administrative functions; and increasing sympathy among the Burma public for the people of Arakan, including the Rohingya population.

2.2 The Stance of United League of Arakan: War and Peace

As mentioned by the interviewees above, the current political and military competition between the SAC and NUG has impacted on the people of Arakan in many ways. This section analyses their responses about the political stance of the ULA/AA amidst such crisis. Respondents also expressed their opinions about policy choices by the ULA/AA leadership, especially how the ULA/ AA should stand between the two claimants to government: either to stand with the NUG and roll up their sleeves for armed clashes in Arakan or to stand with the SAC and restore ceasefires and promote development.

Most of the respondents are found to have positive views about the political stance of the ULA. In particular, they assume that the ULA is collaborating and competing with these two governments in turn for the interests of the Arakan people. For instance, the ULA collaborates with the SAC for health-related matters like COVID-19 as well as for issues like education that require a lot of human resources and institutional support. Notably, there is no obvious opposition from the ULA to the education system which, since the coup, is under the SAC. In addition, the respondents mentioned that, unlike other ethnic nationality areas in the country, the ULA can persuade and influence teachers to teach the curriculum written in the Myanmar language with a Rakhine pronunciation, thus creating a Rakhine aura and essence. In this regard the ULA does not have policies to make a drastic change in education at present.

In contrast, the ULA/AA has also provided arms and military training to anti-SAC resistance groups and puts political pressure on the SAC by frequently meeting with the NUG. Looking at the armed groups that the ULA/AA has supported, it is assumed that they supported ethnic Bamar and other nationality groups not just for the goals of democracy and the end of dictatorship but also for their strategic importance. The armed groups which the ULA/AA has supported include the Bamar People's Liberation Army, a Bamar revolutionary group led by the poet Maung Saung Kha, the Students' Armed Force, People's Defense Force (Magway), and other ethnic armed organizations from southern Chin State, such as the Mara Defense Force and the Chin Defense Force (Mindat)⁵ which are strategically important to the ULA/AA.

Respondents also remarked that the ULA wants to establish a friendly relationship with the Chin peoples in order to avoid armed clashes in the region, especially in Paletwa Township where the ULA/AA has had some clashes with Chin political actors in the past. Some of the interviewees also pointed out that it is necessary to address the effectiveness of the ULA's political stance in the long run, particularly the socio-economic situation of the people under the conditions of ceasefire and the ULA's administration, including its judiciary. Many respondents remarked that the current policy of the ULA/AA is based on their strategic and political interests but with flexible characteristics.

Related to this, there was no clear response to the question of whether the ULA/AA should conduct military operations against the SAC on the basis of their current political stance. In particular, although respondents do not support a return to war in Arakan, they also believe that they must go through a military struggle to achieve what people want. For this reason, they generally support putting the SAC under military and political pressure. They also suggested that the ULA/AA should oppose the SAC by collaborating with the NUG, supporting armed resistance groups or by boycotting military enterprises or products under the SAC.

A CSO leader from Kyaukphyu responded:

“No one is satisfied with the current situation. I think we need more effective military and geo-political movements against the SAC. If it gets worse, it will turn

⁵ There may be other groups that have not been described.

into a situation like Karen and Kachin States where the people at first supported the KNU [Karen National Union] and KIA [Kachin Independence Army] and landed a blow against the military. But, years later, the military gradually grew stronger. I don't want such a situation in my state".

On the other hand, some respondents pointed out that the NUG leadership is still not ready to accommodate with the "confederated system" of government demanded by the ULA. On this basis, they feel that the ULA should improve collaboration with the NUG only if they have more political guarantees from the NUG. In addition, the ULA should fight against the SAC only when it is impossible to negotiate and find a solution by political means.⁶

Reflecting the "neither war nor peace" landscape, the majority of the respondents also do not support the initiation of a formal bilateral ceasefire agreement between the ULA/AA and the SAC on the basis of the current "de facto" or "informal" status. This is largely because they do not want to see a situation of political stalemate such as developed in Karen and Kachin States in the past. The key reasons for not accepting such a move include distrust towards the SAC leadership; less possibility of development despite making a formal ceasefire agreement; not wanting to reduce the political ambition of the ULA for the sake of economic development; not wanting political negotiations with a non-democratic government.

⁶ The respondents, however, did not clearly mention the 'Federal Democracy Charter' of the NUG nor discuss how to collaborate with the NUG to fight against the SAC.

Part (3)
Elections and Armed Struggle

3.1 The Possibility of Elections and Rakhine Political Parties

In this section, respondents answered questions with respect to the possibility of elections in August 2023 as proclaimed by the SAC. Key issues include the possibility of elections in Arakan which is relatively stable in comparison to the abundant obstacles nationwide: the dilemma whether local Rakhine political parties should participate or not; and the likely impacts on armed struggle if Arakan-based parties choose to take part in the election.

If the current political stability in Arakan continues until the election period, the majority of respondents said that the possibility of elections is positive at the state level – though not nationwide, however there are exceptions, and the political will of both the SAC and ULA leaderships is necessary. As interviewees pointed out, the SAC may have a political will to hold polling in Arakan, but they are not sure when it comes to the political stand of the ULA regarding the elections. For this reason, the comments of some respondents suggested that they do not want the elections to happen rather than having any particular view about the question of election possibility in Arakan.

In line with this perspective, when asked whether Rakhine political parties should participate if the election takes place in Arakan, the majority said no. At the same time, they said that opinions on this issue will be impacted by the political stand taken by the ULA, which is a powerful influence. In addition, CSO leaders and youth participants said that, ideally, they do not want the election to take place in Arakan. Even if it happened, they did not really want Rakhine political parties to participate in it. This response is different from political analysts and respondents from political parties who think of the election as a political platform for public participation.⁷



Photo- Development Media Group

One youth leader from a Rakhine political party explained the dilemma:

⁷ The survey was not able to receive a response from the Arakan Front Party (AFP).

“Even if Rakhine political parties do not join the election, the military-backed groups like the USDP [Union Solidarity and Development Party] and other small forces will participate in it. If so, it will make more difficulties for the lives of the Arakan people. Thus, Rakhine political parties should participate in it, but we should not disconnect with other Burma and ethnic political forces.”

Supporting this view, respondents said that it is better to fill the seats in the parliament with the representatives of Rakhine political parties who truly represent the wishes of the people rather than the seats being occupied by military-backed and non-representative parties. They added that, if Rakhine political parties do not participate in the election, the legal existence of these parties will be threatened. When asked about the leaders of political parties, they responded that the majority of the population has less interest in electoral politics compared to the path of armed revolution. In addition, respondents said that there have not been any meetings regarding the holding of another election.

Among the political parties, groups like the Arakan League for Democracy (ALD) – which opposed the coup and have cooperated with democratic opposition movements – most clearly said that they are unlikely to participate in the election. Furthermore, the majority of respondents said that the armed struggle of the ULA/AA might not be impacted too much, even if Rakhine political parties choose to participate in an election held in 2023. This is mainly because the people in Arakan are not currently interested in the electoral path; they are more supportive of armed groups than electoral parties, and they think that members of parliament (MPs) are more useful for speaking out about human rights violations against the civilian population during the previous cycle of armed conflicts. It should be noted, then, that youth participants clearly said that the participation of political parties in the coming election would have a negative impact on the armed revolutionary path of the ULA/AA.

3.2 "The Way of Rakhita" and "Confederation"

This section analyses the understandings of interviewees regarding terms like the “Way of Rakhita”, “Arakan Dream” and “Confederation” which have been developed by the ULA leadership; the relationships between electoral and armed revolutionary paths; the “Way of Rakhita” and party politics; and the possible confrontation between the confederated model of the ULA and the federal systems of other national-level forces in the country.

No concrete definition could be found regarding political terms like the “Way of Rakhita”, “Arakan Dream” and “Confederation” among the respondents. Specifically, when it comes to the “Way of Rakhita”, some interviewees see overlap between the ideology and Rakhine ethno-nationalism, while others mentioned conventional political terms such as the “right to self-determination”, “self-autonomy” and “independence”.

Among the participants, a Rohingya youth leader from Sittwe responded that they are not quite sure about the ‘Way of Rakhita’ and would like to know more about how this political doctrine can be analyzed concerning the rights and roles of their ethnic group. He said:



Photo- Narinjara

“The ULA leadership should speak more about how they have regarded the Rohingya community as far as they can. Only after that we will be able to consider more about our possible cooperation.”

Youth participants, in contrast, have a whole new set of ideas regarding the “Way of Rakhita” as they consider it “a collective revolutionary path of all ethnic and religious groups in Arakan”. Then, with respect to the “Arakan Dream”, the respondents usually mentioned “self-determination”, “confederation” and “independence”. Some participants, however, responded that they still do not have a clear understanding of these terms.

There are also various perspectives when answering questions about the relationship between electoral politics and armed struggle beyond these terms. Some participants argued that electoral party politics can be a part of the “Way of Rakhita” philosophy, whereas others believe that electoral political parties need to adapt to this philosophy in order to survive rather than driving towards their own distant paths. Although some respondents from political parties argued that, although electoral politics is different from armed struggle, they can still have the same political destination, others said that the electoral political path under the 2008 constitution is obviously different from “the Way of Rakhita”.⁸

When addressing the confederation model proposed by the ULA, the great majority of respondents are positive. Regarding definitions and characteristics, however, some participants said that confederation means higher political autonomy than federalism, while others defined it as an association of independent nations. According to a Thet community leader:

“I hope the ‘Way of Rakhita’ philosophy will be able to guide us to achieve the rights of the minority groups in Arakan. And, for the confederation model, we need to think whether we can really achieve unity and solidarity among the various ethnic and religious groups in Arakan, compared to the Wa case in which there is only one ethnic group.”

On the other hand, some respondents said that they will only support the ULA’s confederation model if it can guarantee the democratic and human rights of all citizens. Others even called for a fully sovereign and independent state of Arakan rather than a confederation. At the same time, many participants highlighted the risk of military confrontation if neither the SAC nor the NUG agrees to the ULA’s confederation model despite its suitability for Arakan.

⁸ Most respondents showed discontent with Rakhine political parties for having close relations with the SAC.

Part (4)

Conclusion

4.1 Temporary Scenario of Arakan Political Journey

Although the defacto ceasefire agreement between the SAC and ULA/AA lasted more than a year and a half, at the time of the research, there had been no major return to armed clashes (a situation that has since changed) nor any progress to a formal ceasefire agreement. On the other hand, while the ULA/AA is building more military, administrative and judiciary capacity, the SAC is also rebuilding and expanding its military deployments and forces, In addition, the SAC is trying to contain the administrative and judiciary functions of the ULA.

Although the participants in the study are not experts in military affairs, there was no limitation when it came to questions about military issues. The answers, though are realistic with respect to manpower, the morale of public servants, the number of reserved forces and the ULA/AA leadership. A similar realism is evident in remarks about military equipment, resources for military spending, strategic operations using ground, air and naval forces, and control of the towns and communication channels by the SAC.

In terms of popular support and political legitimacy, respondents made clear public sympathies for the ULA among the Rakhine population, a situation that becomes more obvious after the military coup in February 2021. Although political support has been gradually increasing in townships such as Thandwe and Gwa in the south, it is still weaker compared to the northern townships. At the same time, it is hard to conclude that there is popular support for the ULA among non-Rakhine people, especially the Rohingya community. Nevertheless, it can be summarized that they are all generally more positive and hopeful about the ULA leadership than the SAC.

When it comes to administration, the ULA is mostly operating in the judiciary, taxation and rule of law sectors while trying to extend into other functions more gradually. The key constraint for the ULA leadership in administration is the insufficiency of human and material resources, and they therefore face some criticisms and complaints over this.

The majority of the participants in this study consider that the wider political crisis in Burma has various impacts on the people of Arakan. They are positive when it comes to the political stand of the ULA leadership, and they do not support the return of war in

Arakan in the coming months. However, they want more participation from the ULA in the current anti-SAC movement, and they do not accept the introduction of a formal ceasefire agreement with the SAC simply for the sake of socio-economic development.

Despite commenting on the possibility of coming elections, the research participants still question the political stand of the ULA. Even if the elections take place, many interviewees do not recommend the participation of political parties in Arakan. However, only a few people said that participation by political parties will be harmful to the continuation of armed struggle.

Although the majority of the participants are positive when it comes to political terms such as the “Way of Rakhita” and “Arakan Dream”, there is still no common definition among interviewees over these terms. In addition, while supporting “confederation”, they could only describe the political status of Arakan by referring to the Wa model or an association of sovereign nations, such as in the European Union, rather than explaining this goal in a concrete policy framework.

In conclusion, it was broadly found that the respondents in the study regarded the current political situation in Arakan as a temporary step towards a better situation in the future rather than a present state of satisfaction. While all parts of the country are in a state of breakdown, the people in Arakan also find it difficult to accept the current situation in Arakan politics.

Research Questions

No	Key Research Questions	Sub-Questions
1	Who has more power in Arakan between the SAC and the ULA and what kinds of power do they have?	Military Power A) Does the ULA have a higher number of military personnel than the SAC in Rakhine State, and how about their military equipment, morality, and strategic location? B) Between the SAC & ULA, which entity has more reserve forces or the number of people who will join and fight in terms of need? And the economic source that can support the military strength in wartime? Political and Administrative Power C) What kinds of legitimacy does each entity possess in Rakhine State? Which entity is supported more by the people in Rakhine State, and to what degree? D) In terms of administration, which tasks or departments are under the ULA or SAC control in Rakhine State? E) Specifically, what are the tasks that the ULA-led government can perform in the local administration? (For instance: judiciary, taxation, policing, etc) F) How do you think about the level of satisfaction of the people with the services provided by each entity? G) What are the key power centres of the ULA from north to south and from urban to rural? And how has it changed its nature of governance and administration?
2	What do the people in Arakan think about the current NUG-SAC power struggle in central Burmese politics and do they think the present political stand of the ULA leadership is beneficial to them?	Power Struggle A) Do you see the current NUG and PDF-led movement as simply the power struggle between pro-military and anti-military fractions in Burma Proper's politics? B) Do the people in Rakhine State have a more positive or negative impact from it in terms of security, politics, economics, social (education, health) and others?

		C) If more positive or negative, what are these things? Current Political Stand of the ULA D) How do you see the current political stand of the ULA? (For instance, supporting PDFs like Burmese Rebel Forces but holding a de facto ceasefire in Rakhine State, making relations with both sides) E) Do you think the ULA should participate more in anti-military movement or stay aside just like this in the current politics? What is more beneficial for the people of Rakhine? F) Do you think it is better to have a formal ceasefire with the SAC in Rakhine while having more stability and development in the future?
3	How do the local people and actors in Arakan consider about electoral versus armed politics in the future, and will they support if the political parties in Arakan chose to participate in the coming election that is a different path from the “Way of Rakhita”?	Armed Vs Electoral Politics A) The SAC has declared to hold a general election in coming August of 2023. Do you think it is possible in Rakhine State if not nationwide? B) If this happened in a way, do you think the electoral political parties in Rakhine State should participate? From the “Way of Rakhita” C) If they participate, do you think will it be weakening the armed struggle in Rakhine State? D) What is your understanding of the topics of ‘Confederation’ and “Way of Rakhita” laid down by the ULA leadership? E) The ULA leadership has said the “Way of Rakhita” will achieve the “Arakan Dream”. Do you think participation in the election is a different path to that? Do you think it should be tolerated? F) As said by the ULA/AA leadership, the region of Arakan should be given “confederated status”. To what extent do you agree with that?