

10 Jul 2019

MHA Statement on Security Action Taken Against Myanmar Nationals Working in Singapore, for Organising Support for Armed Violence

1. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is taking action against several Myanmar nationals for using Singapore as a platform to organise and garner support for armed violence against the Myanmar government. This is inimical to Singapore's security.
2. Investigations reveal that a group of Myanmar nationals in Singapore have organised and mobilized some members of the local Myanmar community to support the Arakan Army (AA) and its political wing, the United League of Arakan (ULA).
3. The AA is an armed group that has conducted violent attacks in Myanmar. This includes two attacks on police posts in January and March 2019, where the AA admitted to seizing large caches of weapons and ammunition from the police stations. According to reports, the AA killed over 20 police officers in the two attacks. Family members of police officers, including women and children, were reportedly abducted by the AA in these attacks.
4. The AA has been designated a terrorist group by the Myanmar government.
5. The Myanmar nationals investigated were found to be supporters of the AA.
 - One of the individuals investigated has a direct relationship with a key AA leader. At the behest of AA's leadership, he actively mobilised support among the local Arakan community, and coordinated AA's fund-raising efforts here. He urged the community to contribute to a "National Fund", as they needed a credible army to fight for them. Socio-cultural events of the local community were used to propagate the AA's cause and to rally support for the Rakhine 'fatherland'.
 - The subjects investigated provided financial support to the AA. One individual gave regular monthly contributions to the AA.

- All the individuals investigated were further involved in a recent celebration of the 10th anniversary of the founding of the AA and ULA in Singapore. The attendees wore clothing bearing the official AA logo. The event included participants depicting the AA's armed offensive against the Myanmar Armed Forces' actions in Rakhine State. Actors were dressed in military uniforms with replica firearms. There was also a live streaming video in which the leader of the AA urged the Rakhine people to unite, and fight for Rakhine independence through the AA's armed conflict against the authorities.

6. The immigration facilities of those found to be involved in activities of security concern will be cancelled, and they will be deported from Singapore.

7. MHA takes a very serious view of anyone who supports, promotes, undertakes or makes preparations to undertake armed violence, regardless how they rationalise such violence ideologically, or where the violence takes place. They should not import their domestic political issues from their countries into Singapore.

8. Any person, local or foreign, who engages in such activity, which is inimical to Singapore's national security, will be dealt with firmly. Foreigners visiting, working or living in Singapore have to abide by our laws.

9. MHA recognises that the very large majority of the Myanmar nationals in Singapore are law abiding and have made contributions to our country. We must be careful not to let the actions of a few individuals taint the positive contributions of the rest of the community, who live harmoniously amongst us.
