



Incident 3 – Maung Nu Village, Buthidaung Township

The Maung Nu incident occurred on August 27, 2017. After the incident in Maung Nu, some villagers left for Bangladesh, while others resettled in the village. Following are excerpts from findings, based on testimonies from 22 Muslims who were eyewitnesses to the Maung Nu incident:

(a) Profile of Maung Nu Village

Maung Nu village in Chin Tha Mar village tract is situated to the north of Buthidaung, on the east bank of the Mayu river. It is a 20-minute walk from the river bank, across paddy fields. From Buthidaung a small motor boat on the Mayu river takes almost an hour to reach Maung Nu. The village can also be reached by car, but since some parts of the road are just dirt roads, there may be delays, particularly during the monsoon season. Maung Nu village is in Chin Tha Mar village tract, which includes four villages: Chin Tha Mar; Hpaung Taw Pyin; Maung Nu; and Pale Taung. Maung Nu and Hpaung Taw Pyin villages are the closest together; it is only a 15 minute walk between the two. The main livelihood for people in this region is cultivation. A few people are involved in the fishing industry, and people also cut and sell firewood and bamboo from the nearby forests and hills. The table below provides demographic data for the four villages in Chin Tha Mar village tract, based on statistics obtained from Buthidaung General Administration Department. All four are Muslim villages.

No.	village	Status of destruction		Houses		Families		Population	
		Completely destroyed	Partially destroyed	Past	Pre-sent	Past	Pre-sent	Past	Pre-sent
1.	Chin Thamar		.	220	134	265	44	2290	242
2.	Hpaung Taw Pyin		.	227	15	270	29	2269	24
3.	Maung Nu		.	284	255	324	44	2250	108

4.	Pale Taung		.	229	128	277	14	2155	128
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(b) Statements of 22Maung Nu Muslim villagers

Statement 1

There was a Border Guard Police station in Hpaung Taw Pyin village. Maung Nu, Hpaung Taw Pyin and Dar Paing¹villages are located in such a way that they form a triangular shape, with Maung Nu and Hpaung Taw Pyin only about a five-minute walk apart.

Rumors of attacks had been floating around since the 2016 attacks. At about 3 a.m. on August 25, 2017, sounds of gunfire and loud explosions could be heard. Later, I got the information that the terrorist group had attacked Hpaung Taw Pyin police station. I heard the news that a border guard lieutenant and a private from the station died. As the sound of loud explosions came from here and there, I wasn't absolutely sure whether it came from Hpaung Taw Pyin [police] station or from Light Infantry Battalion 564 and Light Infantry Battalion 552, which were located two or three miles from our village. Before the incident, there were about 20 police force members in Hpaung Taw Pyin Police Station. After the incident, about 200 soldiers arrived there by car. Hpaung Taw Pyin villagers ran to the surrounding villages in disarray. As we were concerned, we also left Maung Nu village and went round to Dar Paing Sa Yar village at 4 p.m. Dar Paing Sa Yar village and Maung Nu villages are only one mile apart. There were people from Chin Tha Mar and Hpaung Taw Pyin villages who sought refuge in Maung Nu village. Until that time, there had not been any incidents in Maung Nu village.

The incident in Maung Nu village could be said to have started on the morning of the 27th with the clashes between the military and ARSA there. At that time, all the Muslims from Maung Nu village and those from neighboring villages who had sought refuge in Maung Nu village gathered near the residence of a former village administrator of Maung Nu village. They went to that place believing that it would be a safe haven, because the village administrator was close to the government and the military. The military and the Border Guard Police surrounded the house. The [village administrator's] house was built on a hilltop and so could be seen from where I live.

Two days after Pale Taung was burnt down, fires started in Maung Nu village. Later, Chin Tha Mar village was also seen to be burning. Houses that were near the terraced road were set on fire. This was two days after the incident, between 11 a.m. and noon. I did not see how the fires started or who started the fires. I only saw a lot of smoke coming out from the houses. The villagers were not there while

¹ Dar PaingSaYarvillage in Dar Paing Sa Yar village tract.

the villages were burning. Only those who were sick or those who could not leave for various reasons stayed. Three days after the incident, early in the morning - around 4 a.m. - I came back to my house in Maung Nu to get my Household List.² People were saying that a Household List was necessary to flee to Bangladesh so I came back to get it. As my house is in the center of the village, at that time it had not been burnt down and no items in the house were missing. Even my buffalos and cows were still tied up. I took my Household List and left again quickly. I didn't see any corpses on that day. But, the water in a trench in the village was strangely red. On the day that I went to fetch the Household List, there was no-one in the village. That afternoon, I saw from a distance that Maung Nu village was on fire again. Only about 40 houses caught fire; about 300 were left un-burnt. Fires were burning for about two days each in Maung Nu, Chin Tha Mar and Pale Taung villages, and for two or three days in Hpaung Taw Pyin village. Houses that were close to the main road in Chin Tha Mar, Maung Nu and Pale Taung were burnt down. In Hpaung Taw Pyin the whole village (all the houses) were razed. [Houses] were set on fire starting about the 30th and continuing non-stop for a week.

One week after I got my Household List, I went back again to check on my buffalos and cows and see whether my house was burnt or not, and I saw a dead body on the way. The man was related to me. His body was found one furlong away from where the incident occurred. We buried the body on our own. Fifteen days later, the Regiment Commander called the village Administrator and the villagers for a meeting. During the meeting, we mentioned our desire to return to our own village and pursue our livelihoods and afterwards we were allowed to do so. We were able to come back to live in the village a month after [we fled]. Only then did the villagers see dead bodies for the first time. They were in a pit inside the village. We called the Border Guard Police and explained the situation. We followed their instructions to bury the bodies, because they said that if animals pulled the corpses out and dragged them away, they would be scattered about. I saw it with my own eyes. I did not know how many people were buried in the bottom of the pit. Above [the pit] there was a rainproof sheet covered with earth. I only saw the corpses at the top, and they were starting to be disfigured. We were not sure whether there were more corpses below. I estimate there were 15 bodies. We had to dig out the pit and cover it up again with more earth so that no smell came out. We did not hear that women had died. What I heard was that over 100 men were killed. I heard this from the spouse of a man who was killed. When we came back, all the goats and cows were gone. All our valuables were also gone. The only thing left was rice.

Statement 2

On the evening of August 26, 2017 (a Saturday), we could hear sound of gunshots from the area of Dar Paing Sa Yar [Police] Station. On the morning of the next day, Sunday, all our family members fled to Dar Paing Sa Yavillage. The next day, we

² The Household List is an official document which includes details of all those living in a household. It is a key document to prove residence and is required to apply for a citizenship card.

came back to Maung Nu village. At that time, trucks carrying soldiers arrived in Hpaung Taw Pyin village from the south. The soldiers left their vehicles in Hpaung Taw Pyin village and entered Maung Nu village [on foot]. We could see, from a distance, the first five soldiers shooting in the air as they approached the village. Since our house was located on the side of the road, at the edge of the village, we could see everything. I was scared by the sound of the gunshots, so I ran towards the house of Zarhai Tusaung, inside the village. As he had connections with the military in Buthidaung, we were confident that the military would not do anything to hurt him. We thought that we would come back to our home, after taking refuge at his house for a little while. His house was two-storied with a large yard around it. A few moments later, the military surrounded his house. At first, we only saw about five soldiers, but when they surrounded his house, there were over 20 soldiers carrying different weapons. Other villagers were also seeking refuge at Zarhai Tusaung's house. The women and men were kept separate and the doors kept closed. At that time, the soldiers ordered us to open the door, but at first we did not. The soldiers said in Burmese that if the door was not opened, they would shoot the house with a launcher. Zarhai Tusaung himself then went and opened the door. At the entrance, a soldier shot Zarhai Tusaung with a pistol, injuring him. He did not die, but he was bleeding. The soldiers ordered all the men to come outside the house, tied their hands behind their backs, and told them to lie on their stomachs on the ground. Some of the men had their eyes blindfolded with pieces of cloth.

My husband was hesitating whether or not to go outside, but Zarhai Tusaung himself said, come out, nothing's going to happen. Only then, did he stand up to go outside. My children and I also stood up to follow my husband. My son, my husband and I had one phone [each]. The soldiers seized the three phones. I also had a bag, in which I had some clothes. The soldiers asked me what it was. When I replied it was a bag of clothes, they seized it. The soldiers took my husband away. At the end of the house stairway, they tied his hands behind his back and told him to lie on his stomach on the ground. I was grieved watching my husband and kept crying. My husband said, from a distance, don't cry, the military is not going to do anything to me, take the children and go away. Both my husband and I were crying. At that time, I saw many men, lying prone in a row, with their hands tied behind their backs. The soldiers were watching them from the side. While I was sitting by my husband's side, unable to leave him, one soldier gave me a hard kick on my head and told me again to leave. At that time, I had a great urge to retaliate against the soldier. Only because of my children, I had to give up. The soldiers said that they needed to inspect me. All the women, including me, were kept in a different house. That house was owned by Muji Mullah, a younger brother of Zarhai Tusaung. It was close to Zarhai Tusaung's house. Two soldiers put their hands inside each woman's blouse and made their search. I struck the soldier's hand, and in retaliation he forcefully took off my *htamein*.³ I was wearing a pair of long slacks underneath, with

³A traditional skirt worn by women.

my burka on top. He found that I had hidden two lakh Kyats and over 9 ticals⁴ of gold around my waist, and they were taken away. My shawl and burka were all gone, and I was left wearing only my long slacks. Except for using the body searches, the soldiers did not do other things. They did not provide us with food or water. The soldiers said that they are the military from Bamar Pyi. I have never seen that kind of military before. The soldiers were keeping watch outside. We could hear gunfire throughout the day. Our ears were ringing [from the sound of gunshots]. Even now, when I hear a loud noise, I feel as if I'm hearing the gunshots from that day. I think that day was a Sunday. It could have been about 11 a.m.

At about 6 p.m., that day, I saw from the house that a military truck was coming. I saw with my own eyes dead bodies, shrouded in a blue rainproof tarpaulin, being carried away. I could tell that they were dead human bodies, because some of the corpses had their legs exposed. I cannot say how many of them there were. I only saw them on one military vehicle. The car's engine didn't work, right after they had piled the corpses on it. After a while, the engine started. Near our house, there was a pit, in which 10 to 12 dead bodies were buried. I estimate that there were about 200 killed by the military's shooting in Maung Nu village. I didn't see the killings myself. There must have been over 200 people detained at Zarhai Tusaung's house. I didn't see my husband being killed by the military. The military shot and killed those who had run away and those who were just walking on the streets.

A person who was detained at Zarhai Tusaung's house, but was able to escape, told me that my husband was killed and was buried in a ditch near one Mahmud's house, which is close to Zarhai Tusaung's. In order to give my husband a traditional Islamic burial, I came back to Maung Nu village with the man who told me this to dig up my husband's body and carry it back. After arriving in Maung Nu village, and seeing that the road between the main road and Zarhai Tusaung's house was red with blood, the person with me became frightened and left. I went to my house, planning to take some clothes for my children. After taken what was needed I left for Dara Salaam. The next day, I went to Buthidaung and stayed there for 14 days. At that time, the military said that we could come back and stay in our village, so I came back to live again in Maung Nu village. I tried to dig out the ditch where my husband was supposed to be buried myself. While I was digging out tarpaulin pieces, I was told that the military was coming, so I had to give up digging, instead taking some pictures before leaving. The air was full of the stench [from the ditch]. I came to know that later on that the Border Guard Police covered [the ditch] with some more earth. I had taken pictures of the blood spots inside ZarhaiTusaung's house and on the road. I got information that the police would check our phones, and so I had to delete all the pictures. There might be one picture remaining. If I find it, I could give it to you.

⁴Nearly 150 grams.

Statement 3

On the day of the incident, Sunday August 27, 2017, at about 10 a.m., the military besieged our house. We were preparing to have a meal at that time. My husband used to work with the regiments from Buthidaung. He was in the brick-making trade, and he was quite well acquainted with some soldiers in Buthidaung. Our house was two-storied with a large yard. The house where my husband's brothers stayed was inside the same compound. The military that were besieging our house shouted for the house owner to come out. My husband, wondering whether they could be his acquaintances, opened the door. As soon as the door was opened, the military grabbed his hands and tied them with a rope. Four or five soldiers stepped inside the house and, at the same time, they stabbed him with a knife and shot him with a pistol. He did not die, however. My husband can speak in Burmese. He asked why they were doing this to him. At that time, I was at his side. I was horrified and fainted. Before I collapsed, I heard my husband telling me to run away from this place. I do not remember how and in what manner I got outside. When I regained consciousness, I was already outside the house. My husband's hands were tied behind his back and he was lying prone on the ground. One soldier snatched away the veil covering my head and, with that cloth, tied the hands of a man, one of our neighbors, behind his back. The soldiers found out that I had hidden some cash and gold, which we had saved, around my waist under my clothes. I had to give it to them, as they said: "give, give". They also told my two sons, who were in Grade 10, to come outside, tied their hands behind their backs, and punched and kicked them. All the men, including my husband and sons, were tied up and told to lie on their bellies on the ground. When the military entered the village, people from our village and the surrounding areas had come to our house; together with the detainees that the military had brought along, there could have been over 300 people at our house.

Since they had taken my gold and money, they didn't do anything to me. Soon after, my husband died. I went away to stay at my mother-in-law's house. I never saw whether my two sons, were beheaded or shot and killed after being punched and kicked. I haven't seen their dead bodies even now. They shot and killed my husband in front of me, though. I saw it up close. Most of the people who had arrived in the house compound were Maung Nu villagers, but there were also Hpaung Taw Pyin villagers. Our relatives were also there. They all came to our place, thinking that it would be a safe haven, because whenever civilian or military authorities came to Maung Nu village, they used to come to our house to rest, and because my husband was acquainted with the military as he was supplying bricks to the Buthidaung military. I think the military besieged our house because there was a big gathering of people there. I heard that there were battles in the village but do not know where they happened, because I had gone away to Buthidaung two days earlier. I could hear the sound of bomb blasts. But I do not know where or why they happened. After I left for my mother-in-law's place, the remaining women also followed me. I think there were around 20 of them. The military did not do anything to the women. But they searched for gold and money. These soldiers are not from Buthidaung, but

I do not know where they are from. I do not know what the military did to the remaining 300 people after I had left. I could hear the sound of gunshots the whole day, though. I could still hear the shootings past midnight, until about 2 a.m. Sometime after 3 a.m., near dawn, when the sounds had ceased and when there were no movement of people, I came out to look for my husband's body and to search for my sons. At that time, there were no soldiers around. I saw many blood stains, here and there, where my husband was killed and in places where they had kept others in prone positions during the afternoon. I stepped up into the house and saw blood blotches inside the house. I think they had decapitated everyone.

Our house remained as it was for quite a while, after the disturbances. The house was built on a hill in the village. Later a new Border Guard Police station was constructed close to our house and police were stationed there. My relatives told me that it wouldn't be proper to stay in the old place. [They said] it wouldn't be good as it was too close to the police station. I demolished the old house and have rebuilt a house in a new location, as they all told me to do. The police also gave me permission to pull it down. If we had not knocked it down, the police would have set fire to it, for sure, they had already told me so. Only my house was torn down, all of the neighboring houses were set on fire. It would be impossible now to get evidence or clues to what happened during the disturbances.

After the disturbances in Maung Nu village, I went to Buthidaung on Wednesday, August 30, stayed there for 15 days, and then returned to Maung Nu. At that time, the military Regimental Commander called the villagers to a meeting and said that anyone who had gone away could go, and that those who remained should not go anywhere, but stay here peacefully. The day I went to Buthidaung, I saw fires burning in Hpaung Taw Pyin village. Maung Nu village was not yet on fire. When I came back from Buthidaung, I saw they were building a new Border Guard Police station, close to my house. There was no station there before. It was only after I had demolished my house that the police torched the neighboring seven or eight houses. Other houses in Maung Nu were not set on fire.

During the incident, Ba Kyaw, an ethnic Mro, who used to work with my husband in the brick-making trade, also came. Ba Kyaw is able to speak our language.

[When asked why these large-scale disturbances had occurred, whether it was based on resentment from business competitors or due to misinformation acquired by the military, she said it could not be due to business competitors, but that it might be due to misinformation. Asked whether there were any warnings or threats from any armed group, as a result of her husband being close to the military, she said there were none, and that in these sorts of things did not happen in this area.]

Statement 4

There was a battle in Hpaung Taw Pyin on Friday [25 August], and we could hear the sound of gunfire. Hpaung Taw Pyin villagers came running to Maung Nu village.

On Sunday, the military turned up in Maung Nu village and besieged a house in the village. The women were told to gather separately at a [different] house – another house in Zarhai Tusaung’s compound. I was also included. They told the men to get out of the house. The soldiers said they were going to do a search in the presence of everyone, and touched the women everywhere inappropriately. I was also searched everywhere by a soldier. My father-in-law was tied up, taken away, and killed. I didn’t see the killing myself. Four soldiers were carrying a dead body, [covered] with a tarpaulin, but as his head was uncovered I saw that it was my father-in-law. He was about 90 years old. That was at about 3:30 p.m. on Sunday. We could still hear gunshots at that time. There were instances like a father and five sons, six men altogether, from the same household being killed. The father’s name is Ayub, the eldest son, Nuru Salaam, and the next, Forsleik Salaam. All the men at Zarhai Tusaung’s house were brought outside, tied up, and told to lie prone on the ground. I did not see how they killed [the men]. There were Maung Nu villagers in the house as well as people from Hpaung Taw Pyin. There were those from various other places as well. It was said that the total number of deaths was over 200. This happened after the battle in Hpaung Taw Pyin.

Statement 5

I could hear gunshots after 4 a.m. on August 25, 2017. Through the government and police, I came to know that terrorists had come and attacked Hpaung Taw Pyin [Police] Station. People from Hpaung Taw Pyin ran away to Maung Nu village, where I was living. Up to that time, my village did not have any problems. My village and Hpaung Taw Pyin village were only about seven-minute’s walk apart. Although I heard the gunshots, I didn’t see anything with my own eyes since it was night time. On day before the incident in Hpaung Taw Pyin, on August 24, no organization entered Maung Nu village the whole day.

At dawn the next day, August 26, the authorities arrested and took away the son of the Chin Tha Mar village tract Administrator. We are not sure whether he is dead or alive, because we did not get back his body.

Security troops shot and killed one Abu Hussein on the road side, as he was walking from the village center towards the [police] station. His house was not in the village, but at the side of the road. It is said that he was killed when he was returning to his home. I did not see him being shot. I know that the security troops had killed him, because I heard it from an eyewitness.

The majority of the villagers stayed in the village up to August 26, but some had fled to other places. I would estimate only 30 households had left. There were about 300 households in Maung Nu village.

On the evening of August 26, a group of people came to Maung Nu village, where I was staying. First, I thought they came just to avoid the Hpaung Taw Pyin incident. Later, I found out that they were a group who were planning to try to attack the

[police] station. They tried to retaliate out of anger, because they couldn't find the village tract Administrator's son who was detained. They mobilized people to attack Hpaung Taw Pyin [police] station. There were about 20 to 25 of them. Among the group were many people from Hpaung Taw Pyin. These people seemed to have come to Maung Nu village to mobilize more people.

I recognized those people because Maung Nu and Hpaung Taw Pyin villages are close and so the people mix with each other. As they were preparing to attack a [police] station, shots were fired from the small [police] station. The station was supervised by a police lieutenant. Usually, there were 10 to 12 [police officers] stationed there. The Border Guard Police wear camouflage uniforms. Three or four persons from the [attacking] group were killed due to the shootings from the station. The dead persons could be from either Maung Nu or Hpaung Taw Pyin villages. No one went to collect the dead bodies. The three or four persons were from the mobilized group of people. I was not an eye witness, as it was already night time. It was around 8 p.m. Some of the bullets were said to have reached my parents-in-law's house, which was on the hill. The bodies were discovered only when the paddy was being cultivated, but by then there were only skeletons left. The bare bones were found on the northern side of the village, near the school.

On August 27, I sent my pregnant wife to my parents-in-law. People from other villages had come to our village to seek refuge and were gathered in the same place. More security troops arrived. My house and my parents-in-law's house were about five-minute's walk apart. My wife called from my parents-in-law's place to inform me that soldiers and police were entering the village and told me not to come over to her place. The police did not come along the main road, which is frequently used. Instead they came along a rarely-used road. The area is thickly forested, so we did not see the military coming. The majority of villagers live at the side of the mainroad. The soldiers and police did not enter and check the houses. But they were said to have made threats, telling people to leave the house where many people were gathered or they would shoot it with launchers. Zarhai Tusaung, the owner of the house, did not leave. His son was killed by a shot to the head and died with his brains spilling out. He was only four or five years old. I did not personally see the child being shot and killed. I heard it from others. I was told by Zarhai Tusaung's wife, the dead child's mother. Her name is Tufail Ahmed.

Thinking that the military had surrounded the village and that there was no way to escape from the village, I stayed at my place. When the sun went down, I hid in a bush. Since the soldiers and the police came together, I do not know who was threatened people to make them come out [of the houses]. Because they were shooting, people were scared and were becoming hysterical. I did not see them shooting directly at the villagers.

After three or four days, a pit was found. There were many dead human bodies inside the pit. I saw dogs licking the pit. There were plastic coverings above it. I was

scared and dared not open it. Nearby, I saw lots of torn pieces of the longyis⁵ that Muslim men wear. Although I saw the pit, I did not tell others that I had discovered it. I was not the first to see the pit. I saw it because someone told me to come and see it. I went to stay in Ywar Thit village after seeing the pit. After staying four or five days in Ywar Thit, I went on to stayed for another three or four days in Zar Ti Pyin village. After arriving in Zar Ti Pyin Pyin village, I wrote on a piece of paper: We Do Not Need Terrorists – Support the Myanmar's Defence Services the Only Ones we Need. Then I took the placard, erected it on the road, and returned home. I put up the placard on September 7. I put it up mid-way before returning to the village. After erecting the placard, I did not return to Maung Nu, my original village. When I tried to return there, I heard that the whole village had burnt to the ground. The burning was before I put up the placard.

After I had put up the placard, seven persons were called in by the military authorities for discussions. They were given encouragement and told to leave in the past whatever had happened, that we had to establish new lives, and to inform the military if there were terrorist fighters. I was not among the seven. Villagers from Chin Tha Mar, Maung Nu, and Hpaung Taw Pyin were included.

During the incident, I was just trying to save my own life and I did not have the time to enquire where the women were. People from neighboring villages gathered and stayed in Maung Nu village. Only one third of the original population were left behind. Two-thirds had already fled to Bangladesh. Later, people from other villages also left. People started leaving gradually after the police had arrested the village tract Administrator's son. I was among those who left the village. There was nothing to eat outside the village, so I came back to my house to eat. I continued to stay in that manner.

I did not see directly with my own eyes the shootings by the military. I am recounting what my friends or family members saw. I only saw the one pit of dead bodies. I didn't see [the shootings] as I was trying my best to keep away from the sounds of gunfire, which I heard throughout the day and night.

The pit that I saw was only 80 feet away from Zarhai Tusaung's house. That pit is at the foot of the hill. With the rains, it has now been covered by earth and bushes.

I do not want to estimate how many people died in Maung Nu village. It could be wrong, if I tried to estimate. I heard from family members and friends that their relatives had been lost or killed. At present, from what I know and what I heard from my friends, there might be about a hundred who lost their lives. They were detained at Zarhai Tusaung's house and were killed there. He used to collaborate and do business with the military. He died on that day. When people had problems,

⁵ Sarongs worn by men.

they would go to Zarhai Tusaung's house, as it was considered a safe haven, instead of going to some other places, but in the end they faced these terrible events.

Statement 6

The soldiers turned up on Sunday morning. Maung Nu villagers, including my relatives, and many people from other villages came to seek refuge in our house. Our house is a double-storied building with quite a large compound. While we were preparing to have our meals, the soldiers surrounded our house. We were scared and secured all the doors. The soldiers opened up [a hole in] the roof and threw a tear gas grenade inside the house. When my cousin's brother went out, they shot him. I could see blood spilling out. He did not die right away, but later he passed away. The soldiers were shouting for the others to come out of the house. They then arrested ten men who came out, tied them up, kept them lying on their stomachs and beat them up. They did not do anything to the women. A little while later, after taking away all the gold and money from them, they told all the women to go to another place. I went to stay at my mother's, since it was quite near. I heard some gunshots. Some women told me that my husband had been killed. They also said that my son had been killed. At about 5 p.m. on Sunday, I saw dead bodies, covered with a tarpaulin, being carried away. At that time, there were about 200 people inside the house. What happened to those people in that house, I don't know. I only saw what happened to the first ten persons detained. I heard that many people were later killed.

My father was tied up and kept lying on his stomach. He died in that position at about 11 a.m. I saw with my own eyes about ten bodies. I do not know whether some of them were dead or not, because they were lying prone. I learnt that some of the dead were being buried on the same Sunday, but I do not know where they were buried. They were not being beaten up or questioned. Women were not raped, but they were being searched with bare hands. They were searching for gold and money. I heard that there were over 200 and nearly 300 who died in the village. I did not see this myself.

Statement 7

At 10 a.m. on Sunday, August 27, 2017, the military came into Maung Nu village, opening fire. To avoid them, we went to our stepfather's house. His house is a double-storied building with a large compound, located on a hilltop. Besides our relatives, Maung Nu and Hpaung Taw Pyin villagers came to seek refuge at my stepfather's place. I think there must have been around 200 people gathered there. I was already nine months pregnant and was staying in a corner room on the ground floor. My husband had already left for Gazia Hill at that time. I was pregnant, and so I was left behind at my mother's house.

At first, only seven soldiers arrived, but later 15 more came. The military threw a tear gas grenade and it exploded upstairs, so the people who were there couldn't

stay there anymore. All the men were tied up, and left in a prone position in a row on the ground. My stepfather and his two sons were shot and killed. I was in the corner room on the ground floor, and so I couldn't see what was happening upstairs. I saw those who were hiding in the house being beaten up with guns. I could not see [people] being cut. I could just see the blood. I could hear gunshots. I didn't see people being shot to death. They said about 170 people died there. I didn't see it myself. The women were told to go outside. A total of twelve women and some children were sent to a house. All gold and money was taken off the women. My mother's cash was also taken. I did not witness women being raped. There was one thing I heard. I heard that one young, unmarried daughter of a Mawlawi⁶ was raped. They said that she was not able to even pee afterwards. I do not know who was raped when or where. I am recounting what I heard. I do not know whether there were any other rape cases.

At 5 p.m. on that day, a Daingnet ethnic national, by the name of Ba Kyaw, carried away all the dead bodies. He was heard to say that all the houses were going to be set on fire. The next day, Monday, I went to the other side of the stream. I do not know who stole the stuff left at our house. When I came back, everything was gone.

Statement 8

The problems started with the attack on the Hpaung Taw Pyin Border Guard Police station. I heard that two policemen from that guard post were killed. Nothing happened the next day, a Saturday. Two days after the Hpaung Taw Pyin incident, the military came to Maung Nu village and shots were fired. They came in at about 10 a.m. on Sunday. They came to Hpaung Taw Pyin and Maung Nu at the same time.

An increase in military movements could be seen after the Hpaung Taw Pyin incident. I could not tell their strength. At first, they did not do anything. The military opened fire as they came into Maung Nu village. villagers were scared and ran away from their homes. But some did not. We did not run. Instead, we went and stayed at our neighbor's. Some ran and hid on Gazia Hill. It was estimated that around 3,000 fled to the hill. On Monday, we also went to Gazia Hill.

As soon as they entered the village, the military began shooting on sight. An estimated 170 persons died during the incident. Some dead bodies were buried in a ditch (dug by the soldiers themselves) in the village. They came and buried them on the same Sunday night. Some bodies were taken away in three cars during the night. They did not carry all of the 170 [dead bodies] away. Bodies were not covered with plastic. Within half an hour, they finished burying them. Only about 20 soldiers were digging the ditch and burying the dead. The rest were walking outside on the roads as if on watch. There was one group digging the pit, another carrying the corpses. They dug a ditch at the foot of the hill and buried them. I was watching

⁶An Islamic religious leader.

what they were doing from the house on the hill, to which I had moved. It was only about 300 feet away. It was 2 a.m., but I could see in the moonlight. I could see that they had cleared the places where they did the shootings, but do not know when they did it. Since my house was at the side of the main road, I could see the corpses being carried away.

Five days later, Ba Kyaw, a Mro ethnic soldier from Buthidaung Light Infantry Battalion 564, came and set the houses on fire. People were saying that Ba Kyaw was responsible for the fires, although there were no people left in the village during the arson. They had already run away.

Statement 9 (an an educated village elder, who requested that interviewers not record his testimony or photograph him)

Out of the many things that I personally witnessed, regarding the incidents, I would like to testify and point out one error. It is about the casualties. It is true that lives were lost. But the number of those who were killed could not be more than 70. I saw it with my own eyes.

Statement 10

It was heard that the military had detained the son of the Hpaung Taw Pyin Administrator⁷ on August 25 and had shot and killed him. I did not witness it myself. Because the Administrator's son did not return home, a group arrived in Maung Nu village on August 26. They mobilized people to attack the [police] station. A crowd, consisting mostly Hpaung Taw Pyin villagers formed and were shouting that they would attack the Maung Nu village police station. The exact number in the crowd was not known. While the mob was besieging the [police] station, at 8 p.m. on August 27, the [police in the] station opened fire. It was estimated that three or four persons were killed. It was not known where these villagers were from, as no one went and collected the dead bodies. The next day, the police and military came and told [the people] to leave the village. The military were not seen approaching as they came along a rarely used road.

Statement 11

On August 25, two days after two people were killed at Hpaung Taw Pyin police station, the military were seen entering Maung Nu village and Hpaung Taw Pyin village. The military were moving around the village and, on the next day, were shooting and beheading all the men that they encountered. The blouses that women were wearing were torn to find gold or cash. As evidence had been destroyed, there's no proof to show of the gunshot injuries or dead bodies. An estimated 170 dead bodies were carried away from the foot of the hill in three cars at 2 a.m., as I saw from my house on the hill, which is near the present Border Guard Police station. About 20 soldiers had buried the remains, not covered with plastic, in half

⁷The village tract Administrator's son according to other accounts.

an hour. I did not run away to another village. We all gathered at a neighbor's. On Monday, some people, about 3,000 all told, went to hide on Gazia Hill. Five days later, one Ba Kyaw from Light Infantry Battalion 564 went inside a house, where people were gathered, and set fire to the house after beheading the people there. On the pretext that they were searching for things, they took the blouses off about 70 women. Some of them, out of fear, fled to Bangladesh. It was said that persons, presumed to be from the military, came and took away rice, paddy, furniture, and whatever was left behind at night time. By then we were staying in Buthidaung.

Statement 12

The military entered the village on August 27, 2017, and threw tear gas grenades inside the houses. A man who tried to escape was shot and detained. He was told to call another ten men. All ten had their hands tied behind their backs and were made to lie prone on the ground. Women were asked to bring their gold and cash and told to move out and go wherever they wished. I saw about ten corpses. I do not know what happened to the other men, over 200 of them. We heard they were dead.

Statement 13

Two Border Guard Police and two ARSA members were killed during clashes, which took place from 3:30 to 6 a.m. on August 25, 2017, between ARSA and the Border Guard Police. Their remains were taken to Buthidaung hospital. The bodies of the two Muslim were handed over to us again. We arrived at Maung Nu from Hpaung Taw Pyin, and sensing that the situation was not good there, we kept on to Dar Paing Sa Yar village. Those remaining behind in Maung Nu village were shot and beheaded by the military on August 29. Most of the dead bodies had knife wounds on them. Five days later, at about 11 a.m., people presumed to be from the military, came to Hpaung Taw Pyin and set the village on fire. I can say this [that they were military] because there were no Rakhine ethnic national villages nearby.

Statements 14, 15 & 16

Some time after 10 a.m. on August 27, a military column from Battalion 552 came to Maung Nu village and executed everyone, except the elders, women, and children under the age of 13. Over 100 men, gathered in one house, were forced outside, and are believed to have been killed, as sounds of gunfire could be heard. I did not see it myself, though. Some of our possessions were destroyed during the arson and those that were left were stolen by ethnic nationals about three months later. I did not see any beatings or rapes. Some persons, including my two sons, fled and arrived in Bangladesh.

Statement 17 (resident of Hpaung Taw Pyin)

Although there was a military encampment north of the village, the 40 or so soldiers who came to the village approached it from the eastern side. Madara, my elder cousin's brother who was wounded by a gunshot, and Zorasthin, his father, are

known to be living in Thangkhal camp in Bangladesh. During the incident, I was not an eyewitness, as I had fled to Dar Paing Sa Yar village and lived there peacefully. A military official, a Major, guaranteed that there would not be any more incidents in Maung Nu, so I came and settled back there. Many people took refuge at the house of Zarhai Tusaung, a businessman known to be close to the government, where between 100 and 200 persons, including him and his son, were killed by the military.

Statement 18 (29-year old teacher, who makes a living by offering tuition)

At about 3 a.m. on August 25, 2017, I heard gunfire and shooting from two sides at the police station, which has a manpower of 12. The police station is a ten-minute walk from my hostel. The shooting from both sides continued until 6 a.m.. At that point I could see three military trucks approaching. I knew that something serious was going to happen, so I left for the town at 3 p.m. and stayed for a month. I did not witness the military shooting, detaining people, carrying out arson, or committing rape. From others I came to know that the military besieged a house in which people were gathered, opened fire, detained people and tied them up, and that about a hundred were killed. I also heard that people had fled to Bangladesh.

Statement 19 (a health worker employed by the International Organization for Migration)

Because all the villagers had fled from Hpaung Taw Pyin on August 26 and 27, I also went with them to Dar Paing Sa Yar village, and did not know what happened in Maung Nu. But on August 27, smoke could be seen rising from Maung Nu, Hpaung Taw Pyin, and Pale Taung villages, in Chin Tha Mar village tract. Some from Maung Nu village had fled to Bangladesh. My relatives are among those who fled. They left of their own volition. The Border Guard Police station from Hpaung Taw Pyin has now been moved to Maung Nu village. About 37 houses were destroyed by fire, and about 500 houses remain.

Statement 20

While I was working in the fields in Oke Taung village, on August 24 or 25, hearing that the security forces had executed some Muslims and taken others to their encampment, I came rushing back to Hpaung Taw Pyin and found that there was no one left in the village. As my family had already left for Maung Nu village, I followed them. It was nearly dusk, when I saw about 50 soldiers shooting in the air from up by the village mosque. I heard people say that some Rakhine villagers were transporting a dead body, shrouded in plastic, at 8 a.m. on August 26. I also heard that terrorists had executed a youth from Hanzar village on August 28. At about 10 a.m. on August 28 or 29, while I was in Maung Nu village, a group consisting of about 50 to 60 households was rounded up by Battalion 564 and shot to death. They were from Hpaung Taw Pyin and Maung Nu villages. They reportedly included those who had killed the government informers. Although I was not an eyewitness to how they were killed, some of the parts of the dead bodies remained exposed, although they were covered in plastic, so I saw and recognized them. I also heard

that women from the group that was surrounded by the military were being raped. Eleven days after the problems erupted, on September 5, smoke was seen arising from villages in under Chin Tha Mar village tract. Hpaung Taw Pyin was the last to be burnt down.

Statements 21 & 22

We heard people were being killed, but we did not see it ourselves. They robbed us of our gold and money. On the pretext of searching for hidden things, they touched our private parts in a sexual manner. We do not know about rape cases, though.
