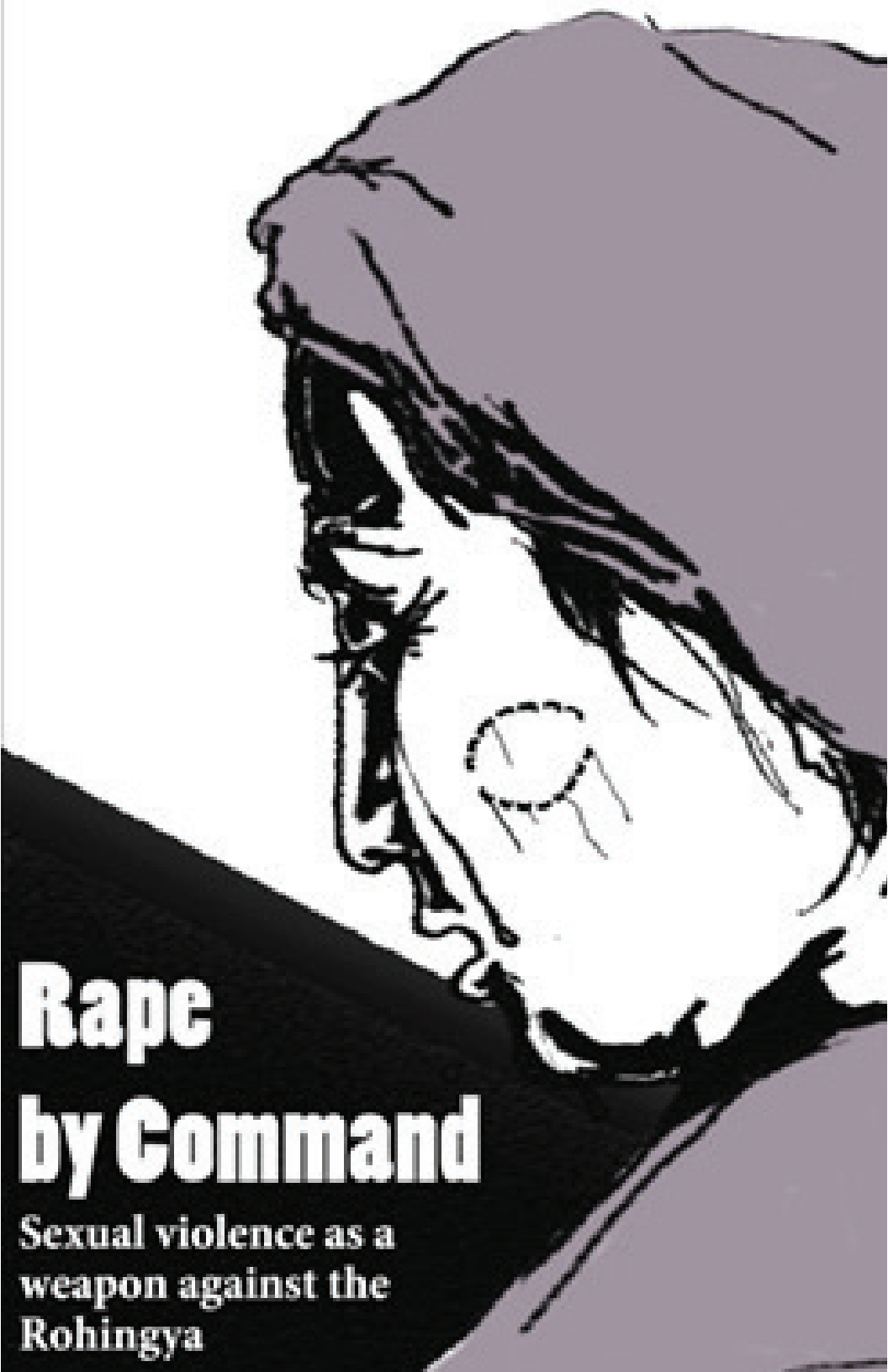




Rape by Command

Sexual violence as a
weapon against the
Rohingya

Rape by Command

**Sexual violence as a weapon
against the Rohingya**



Kaladan Press Network
First Rohingya News Agency (since 2001)

**DEDICATED TO
THE ROHINGYA PEOPLE OF ARAKAN**

First Edition	February 2018
Chief Researcher	Razia Sultana B.A., M.A., LL.B.
Copyright	Kaladan Press Network
Published by	Kaladan Press Network P.O. Box #773 Chittagong 4000, Bangladesh
Website	www.kaladanpress.org www.kaladanpress.com

Support provided by Burma Relief Centre

We would like to thank the Shan Human Rights Foundation for technical assistance in producing the maps for this report.

Contents

Summary.....	8
Introduction and methodology.....	14
Background.....	16

Military impunity sets stage for mass atrocities in 2017

Interview findings.....	18
--------------------------------	-----------

“Anti-terror” restrictions fuel women’s insecurity

Sexual violence at every stage of 2017 “clearance operation”

Rape during troop build-up and “anti-terror” raids

Rape during attacks on Rohingya villages

Rape during military lockdown of Maungdaw town

Rape of women fleeing across the Mayu mountains

Patterns of systematic use of rape

Widespread incidence of rape

Rape in military camps

Gang rape

No fear of witnesses

Flagrant rape of young girls

Frequent torture, mutilation and killing of rape victims

Attack on Tula Toli: Ordering mass rape

Conclusion and recommendations.....	45
--	-----------

Appendices.....	48
------------------------	-----------

Chronological list of incidents of sexual violence

Detailed testimony of a rape survivor from Tula Toli village,
northern Maungdaw

Locations of incidents of sexual violence by Myanmar Army during July-September 2017 documented by Kaladan Press



Summary

This report documents the widespread, systematic use of sexual violence by the Myanmar Army during its brutal “clearance operation” in northern Rakhine State in the second half of 2017. This operation has driven over 680,000 Rohingya villagers into Bangladesh.

Testimonies of 36 refugees, eight of whom are rape survivors, provide evidence that government troops raped well over 300 women and girls in or near at least seventeen villages across Maungdaw and northern Buthidaung townships, as well as in Maungdaw town, during the operation. With over 350 villages attacked and burned at this time, this number is likely only a fraction of the actual total of women raped.

In the weeks before the official launch of the operation on August 25, thousands of Myanmar Army troops were deployed from existing military camps in Rakhine State, and from central Myanmar, to reinforce Border Guard Police posts throughout northern Rakhine State. These troops were the main perpetrators of sexual violence, at every stage of the operation.

Before the start of the operation, the troops committed rape during security patrols and “anti-terror” raids in remote rural areas, where many men had gone into hiding for fear of arrest and torture. In two villages alone in northern Buthidaung, six women and one six-year-old girl were gang-raped by government troops in the weeks before August 25.

However, the majority of rape incidents, involving hundreds of women, took place during the actual attacks starting on August 25, when large numbers of troops entered villages shooting indiscriminately, torturing and killing civilians, and burning houses. Women and girls were caught and raped in their houses, as they were running away, or after being rounded up in large groups in or near the villages; some were horribly mutilated. In the village of Tula Toli (Min Gyi) in northern Maungdaw, survivors estimate that well over one hundred women and girls were raped during the attack; many were also killed.

The sexual violence did not only take place in rural areas. Witnesses described the capture and rape of women in the town of Maungdaw after August 25, when it was in a security lockdown by hundreds of troops.

Women fleeing to the border were also targeted for rape. Scores of women and girls from Buthidaung were raped when security forces caught them trying to cross the Mayu mountain range to reach the Bangladesh border.

Sexual violence involved hundreds of soldiers and occurred across the length of Maungdaw and northern Buthidaung. Such scale and breadth of incidence provides strong evidence that rape was systematically planned and used as a weapon against the Rohingya population.

In five locations—including Maungdaw town itself—women and girls were forcibly detained and raped in military camps, for periods of up to two weeks. This can only have been

authorized by commanding officers of the camps.

Rape was committed flagrantly by groups of soldiers, who jointly beat, held down, or tied up women and young girls, and took turns to rape them. Often this took place in front of other troops, and sometimes in front of civilians, showing clear confidence of impunity, which can only have come from shared knowledge of authorization to rape.

Most of the rape incidents involved other forms of brutal torture, including biting, beating, cutting with knives, and burning. In eleven villages, as well as Maungdaw town, rape victims are known to have been killed or died from their injuries. This indicates that rape was part of an overall strategy to mete out savage punishment to women and girls – apparently for their very identity as Rohingya.

The pattern of mutilation of women's breasts and genitals after rape—already apparent in 2016—suggest a specific directive to instill terror in this way, flaunting the army's ability not just to sexually possess the women of their “enemy,” but also destroy their very means of reproduction.

The well-publicized events in Tula Toli—in which over a hundred women were gang-raped and tortured, with many burned alive—provide compelling evidence of specific orders to commit mass rape. Without such orders, it would be impossible for an estimated 400 troops from different camps, backed up by air support, to so precisely coordinate the massacre of hundreds of civilians in the morning and then methodically gang-rape women over a period of hours in the afternoon.

The systematic use of rape as a weapon is a war crime, a crime against humanity, and a tactic of genocide, for which Myanmar's military leaders must be held responsible.

It is imperative that the Myanmar government stops blindly defending its armed forces. The government must take immediate action to end the military's systematic atrocities, including sexual violence, not least for the danger posed to the entire society. By authorizing and directing their troops to commit rape, military commanders are encouraging them to find sexual gratification from acts of violence that inflict pain and terror, and cause irreparable damage to women's lives. With hundreds of thousands of troops deployed across Myanmar, this has horrifying implications for the safety of women and girls throughout the country.

The Myanmar government must order an immediate stop to its army's atrocities against civilians, including rape, and begin processes to hold the army's entire command structure to account. A first step to this is to allow the UN Fact Finding Mission into the country.



*New refugee arrivals waiting to transfer to
Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh*

Introduction

In February 2017, Kaladan Press published the report *Witness to Horror*, which documented rape and other atrocities against women by the Myanmar Army during its clearance operation in northern Rakhine State from October to November 2016.

After the launch of the new clearance operation on August 25, 2017, Kaladan Press began interviewing new arrivals in Bangladesh, who provided evidence that Myanmar Army troops were committing similar patterns of sexual violence to the previous year—only on a much larger scale.

It was therefore decided to collaborate with Rohingya lawyer Razia Sultana, the chief researcher of the previous report, to document the sexual violence taking place once again in 2017, and draw any relevant parallels with the earlier report.

During September to December 2017, Kaladan Press conducted interviews with new refugees who were survivors and witnesses of sexual violence by Myanmar security forces during the recent clearance operation. All the interviews with women were conducted by Razia Sultana.

Methodology

Altogether 36 Rohingya refugees—12 men and 24 women and girls, including eight rape survivors—were interviewed for this report. All had arrived in Bangladesh after August 25, 2017. They were from sixteen different villages (twelve in Maungdaw township and four in Buthidaung township) and from Maungdaw town.

A full list of the interviewees and summaries of their testimonies are provided in Appendix 1. The age, sex and origin of the interviewees are listed in the report, but not names, to protect their security.

When describing military perpetrators of sexual violence, refugees were asked about their clothing, to determine if they were members of the Myanmar Army (who wear green uniforms), or Border Guard Police (who use blue camouflage uniforms). They were also asked about any identifying marks on the uniforms.

In the report, the term “military” and “soldiers/troops” are used to refer to the Myanmar Army. Border Guard Police troops are described as “BGP.”

The Burmese name of Rohingya villages is given in parentheses the first time villages are mentioned, but thereafter the Rohingya name is used.

BACKGROUND

Ongoing military impunity sets the stage for mass atrocities in 2017

After alleged attacks by Rohingya militants on three border police posts in northern Rakhine State on October 9, 2016, the Myanmar Army launched a large-scale “clearance operation” that targeted Rohingya civilians in northern Maungdaw. Villages were burned down, men, women, and children were slaughtered, and there was widespread rape, causing over 70,000 refugees to flee to Bangladesh.

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a flash report in February 2017, describing “devastating cruelty against Rohingya children, women and men”¹ during the clearance operation, and accused the Myanmar security forces of committing mass gang rape.

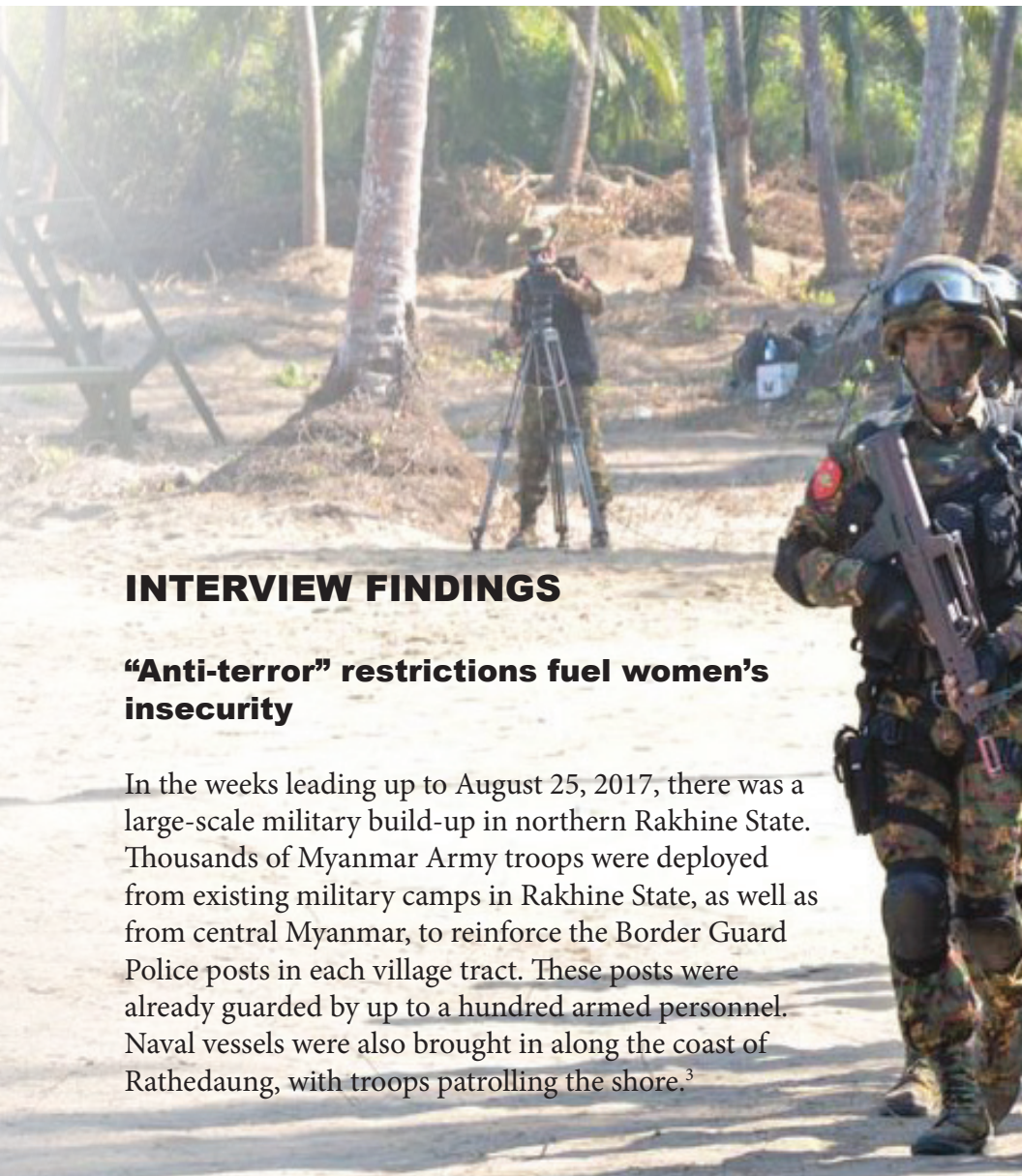
Our own report *Witness to Horror*, based on testimony of twenty-one Rohingya women who had fled to Bangladesh after the clearance operation, provided evidence that at least 70 women and girls, from eight villages in Maungdaw, had been raped by Myanmar security forces. We documented how most sexual violence took place when women were gathered at gunpoint in large groups outside their villages. They were pulled away to be raped in nearby houses, fields or forests, and in military camps. At least six rape victims were killed, several horribly mutilated (one with her breasts cut off and a gun inserted in her vagina). Many women were also sexually groped during security raids, with some forced to strip to their

underwear or completely naked.

Despite the clear evidence of systematic atrocities, including sexual violence, by Myanmar security forces, the Myanmar government and military persistently denied all allegations of abuse. They blocked any independent investigations into these allegations, and declared that visas would be refused to the UN Human Rights Council's Fact-Finding Mission, which was mandated in March 2017 to investigate allegations of violations by the Myanmar Army and security forces, particularly in Rakhine State.

The government's Rakhine Investigative Commission—set up on December 1, 2016, and led by Vice President Myint Swe (a former army general)—claimed they had found no evidence of abuses during the 2016 operation, including rape. The commission's final report, issued on August 6, 2017, completely exonerated the military perpetrators of the previous year's atrocities.²

A green light was effectively given for the army to proceed with mass slaughter and rape of the Rohingya. Three weeks later, on August 25, this is exactly what they did.



INTERVIEW FINDINGS

“Anti-terror” restrictions fuel women’s insecurity

In the weeks leading up to August 25, 2017, there was a large-scale military build-up in northern Rakhine State. Thousands of Myanmar Army troops were deployed from existing military camps in Rakhine State, as well as from central Myanmar, to reinforce the Border Guard Police posts in each village tract. These posts were already guarded by up to a hundred armed personnel. Naval vessels were also brought in along the coast of Rathedaung, with troops patrolling the shore.³



The military conducted increased patrols and spot checks in Rohingya villages, heightening women's fears of a repeat of the sexual violence that had taken place in October and November the previous year.

Since that time, the authorities had imposed tight security restrictions at the village level, alleging a “terrorist” threat. Sharp household utensils had been confiscated, including kitchen knives, to prevent them from being used as weapons. Fences around house compounds were dismantled to enable security personnel to easily monitor local residents, and more quickly conduct raids.

These restrictions had a huge impact on women's daily lives. The simple act of preparing food became extremely difficult without kitchen knives. Some used bamboo shards to cut food. Another said she used a tiny razor blade.



The removal of fences was particularly devastating for women who had formerly enjoyed the privacy of their compounds to carry out chores outdoors without need to wear traditional face coverings. Once the fences were removed, the women's private space shrank to the confines of their houses, causing them to remain almost entirely indoors. If they wanted to wash outside (near an outside well or other water source), they needed to ask other household members to hold up blankets or pieces of cloth around them while they did so, as quickly as possible.

Even more humiliating was that fences around outside latrines were dismantled, so visits to the latrine had to be conducted with others holding up coverings around them.

Fences around household compounds like the ones at left were torn down by Myanmar security forces (below)



Women did not even feel safe inside their houses. Some kept their front doors open, as closed doors would invite suspicion of patrolling troops, and be broken down. This compounded their constant fear of sexual assault by security forces. One said that in the weeks before August 25, she would force herself to stay awake all night, to be alert for any sudden attack.

Several women interviewed said they deliberately tried to make themselves look as unattractive as possible, to avoid being raped. A young woman from Tula Toli (Min Gyi), Maungdaw, said she would rub ash on her face each morning. A young mother from Sin Oo Pyin, Buthidaung, said she used to wear old clothing, mess up her hair, and rub soot or dirt on her arms and face.

A woman in her 50s, from Hazarbil (Ahtet Pyu Ma), Maungdaw, said her family had a secret hiding place under the floor to hide young women and girls when they heard soldiers were coming.

Sexual violence at every stage of 2017 “clearance operation”

1. Rape during troop build-up and “anti-terror” raids prior to August 25

During increased security patrols in Rohingya villages in the weeks before August 25, troops randomly arrested and tortured male villagers, accusing them of being “terrorists.” Men would flee at any sign of approaching troops, and would often sleep outside their villages. Troops took advantage of this to rape women left in their houses.

Interviews for this report revealed that in just two villages in the mountainous area of northern Buthidaung—Gufi (Goke Pi) and Tami (Tin May)—there were six rape incidents.

Men in this area were already terrorized by large scale arrests and torture. About two months before August 25, over 100 troops had rounded up about 150 male villagers from Gufi in front of the local school, demanding they hand over any smart phones and computers. The troops forced them to sit with their hands behind their heads, beat and kicked them, and cut off their beards. Seven were blindfolded, tied up, and taken away.

One month later, after hundreds more troop reinforcements had arrived in the area, more male villagers from Gufi, including a 12-year-old boy, were arrested and kept in the nearby military camp. Troops tortured the men by hanging them upside down and beating them, pouring hot water down their throats, putting hot iron rods in their armpits, and using electric shocks. One woman said her cousin was killed by being dragged behind a motorcycle “until the road was full of blood.” Another man, Mawlana Badullah, was killed by having cloth forced into his mouth until he suffocated. The severed head of another detained villager, Abul Hakim, was returned to his family.

Terrified by these assaults, many men went into hiding, leaving women and girls more vulnerable to rape. About a month before August 25, a six-year-old girl, who had taken her family’s goat to a nearby field, was seen being pulled by a group of government soldiers behind some trees. When

villagers found her later, she was badly injured and bleeding heavily. She died after a few days.

A 28-year-old woman was gang-raped in her house in Gufi by three government soldiers a few days before August 25. Her other family members were hiding in the nearby mountains, but she had stayed behind to look after her baby son. The troops broke down the door and asked where her husband was, then threw her son to the ground, and raped her.

In the nearby village of Tami, a week before August 25, a 23-year-old mother recounted how she was gang-raped by four or five government soldiers in her house, in front of her three children. They beat her, kicked her, and bit her on the cheek and neck. When her village was attacked a week later, her husband was killed by a mortar shell, and her 8-month-old baby burned alive in her house.

Another refugee from Tami described how three women were gang-raped a few days before August 25 in her section of the village. The military had come at about 8 am, searched every house, and raped three young married women in their houses. Most men had already run away to hide outside the village, but one man was at home when his 18-year-old wife was raped. They beat him till blood came from his mouth, and then five soldiers tied up his wife with rope to the house posts, her legs apart, and each raped her. She was so badly injured her husband had to hire some people to carry her across the hills to Bangladesh, where she received medical treatment.

2. Rape during attacks on Rohingya villages on and after August 25

Alleging “terrorist” attacks by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) on over 30 security posts in northern Rakhine State early in the morning of August 25, thousands of Myanmar Army and BGP forces launched coordinated assaults on Rohingya villages throughout the area from August 25 onwards.

Large numbers of troops entered villages shooting indiscriminately, torturing and killing civilians, and burning houses. Villagers fled in terror and, fearful of further torture and killing at the hands of the military like the previous year, most headed straight to the Bangladesh border. Within only two weeks, 270,000 had crossed into Bangladesh.⁴

Widespread sexual violence was committed at this time. Women and girls were caught and raped in houses, as they were running away out of their villages, or after being rounded up in large groups in or near the villages.

The sexual violence began on the very first day of the attacks. A refugee from Done Baik, a village in northern Maungdaw, described how about 200 government troops swept into his village at 10 am. They shot and killed villagers, set fire to houses, and rounded up about 20 women, gang-raped them in separate houses, then burned them alive in one of the houses in the village. He said that four of his close relatives, aged 18, 20, 22 and 25, were among the women raped and burned alive, and that his 53-year-old sister, who had been hiding in the

house set alight, was also burned with the other women. From hiding, he could hear the terrible sound of screaming as the women burned to death.

Five miles south, on the same day, troops attacked the village of Naisapuru (Ngar Sar Kyeu), killing and raping villagers. A 15-year-old girl who fled and hid on the forested slopes behind her house watched with horror as seven young women were gang-raped by government troops at the edge of the village. Over the six days she was hiding, she saw at least 20 women—including her schoolfriends—being raped and killed, several horribly mutilated.

On August 27, a villager from Shilkali (Kyauk Chaung), northern Maungdaw, described how about 200 soldiers arrived from the south, rounded up all the male villagers they could find, and made them lie face down in a field, stamping on them with boots and beating them. About 100 of the soldiers then went back to the village and forced several hundred women, including his wife, out of their houses to the Shilkali middle school (closed since 2016). Scores of younger women—including girls as young as 10 years old—were chosen and kept at the school overnight. He did not know how many were raped, but heard their screams during the night, and when the women were released the next day at 2 pm, he saw three young girls being carried out of the building, too badly injured to walk.

During an attack on Maung Nu, Buthidaung, on the same day, an 18-year-old girl was caught by a group of soldiers and taken with about 20 other women and girls to an empty house,

where they were stripped naked and gang-raped.

On August 30, during the attack on Tula Toli in northern Maungdaw by about 400 government troops, it is estimated that well over 100 women and girls were gang-raped, many of whom were killed (see detailed account in later section).

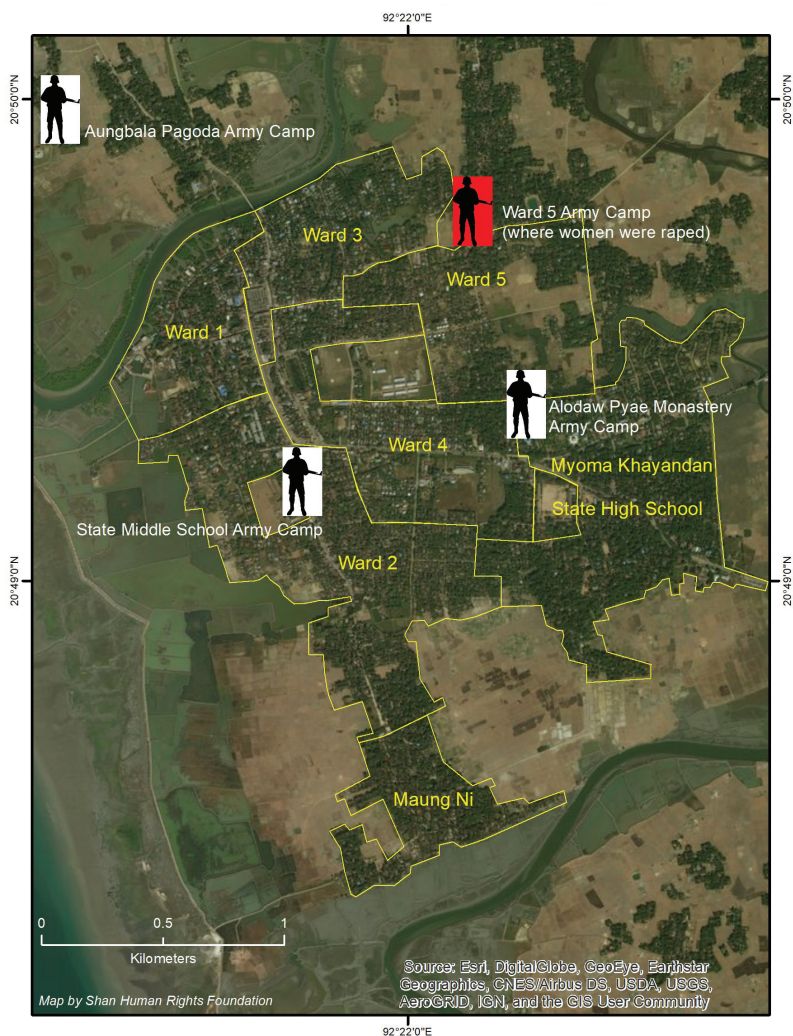
Groped, forced to strip

Similar to during the 2016 clearance operations, Myanmar troops sexually groped women, and forced them to strip naked when they searched and robbed them of valuables.

A 15-year-old girl from Hadirbil (Nyaung Chaung), near Maungdaw town, said that when her village was attacked after August 25, men and women were separated, then the women were searched, and all their money and jewelry were taken from them. At that time, she said the soldiers grabbed and squeezed her breasts and genitals.

On August 27, in Maung Nu, Buthidaung, a religious teacher hiding in a house saw about 50 troops tear the clothes off about 20 women, as they searched for valuables. The women were then forced to stand naked; when they tried to sit down to cover their bodies, they were kicked and forced to stand up again.

Myanmar Army camp in Maungdaw town where witnesses said women were raped in late August 2017



3. Rape during military lockdown of Maungdaw town

“I saw the military go inside her house. I was peeking from inside my house. She was crying, but they caught her. There were so many soldiers. Too many to count. They beat her family members, including her brother. She didn’t come back. I heard she was kept for 3 days.” (from testimony of a 15-year-old girl from Ward 5 who saw two women taken from nearby houses, one a 20-year-old unmarried woman who lived behind her)

Several refugees testified to the capture and rape of women in the town of Maungdaw starting on August 25, when the town was in security lockdown by hundreds of troops. Fourteen women were captured from their homes; twelve were raped in a temporary army camp in Ward 5 of the town. A further four women in the southeastern Sidda Fara (Myoma Khayandan) ward of the town were gang-raped in their houses; two of them were killed.

By August 25, about 500 troops were already stationed in two main locations in the town: in the government Middle School in the west of the town, and in and around the Alodawpyae monastery compound in the east of the town. There was a strict nighttime curfew in place, and from mid-August a drone was seen flying over the town late each night.

In the morning of August 25, military snipers positioned themselves along the main streets, shooting warning shots to keep residents indoors. Troops then began raiding houses, and were seen taking away women.

According to a 19-year-old woman from Ward 5, troops stationed near her house ordered a ward headman, Named Fayez, to provide women for them. They told him: “We are tired, and we need women to serve us.” The headman went into hiding, and troops then seized women from houses and took them to a temporary camp, set up in a disused school (formerly supported by UNHCR) in Ward 5. She knew of 12 women who were taken to the camp, including her 19-year-old unmarried cousin. Her cousin never returned. She herself was beaten and kicked in the stomach by troops raiding her house on September 1. She was 8 months pregnant and lost her baby.

A woman fleeing through the centre of town in late August saw four young women being seized by troops in the street.

In Sidda Fara, in the southeast of Maungdaw town, at least four women were gang-raped by soldiers in their houses in late August. One was then stabbed to death, together with her husband. Another was tortured to death by having a sack forced into her vagina. Her 30-year-old cousin, gang-raped at the same time, described what happened:

“I saw a few soldiers approaching my cousin’s house. She was outside the bathroom, half-dressed, and they forcibly took her inside the house. Suddenly, I saw her husband rush and try to go inside the house but the other soldiers held him back. I didn’t know what to do. I just screamed. Then I saw some soldiers coming towards me. I shut the door, but they broke it down, and two of them held my arms, while the others raped me in front of my (three)

children. After that one of the soldiers tried to stab me. I raised my hand, so I got stabbed in the hand, and needed five stitches. They didn't kill me, maybe because villagers were crowded in front of my cousin's house, so they left. Then I saw the dead bodies of my cousin and her husband, covered in blood. A sack had been inserted in her vagina. Her 6-month-old baby had been stamped to death with boots."

4. Rape of women fleeing across the Mayu mountains

Witnesses recounted that scores of women and girls from Buthidaung were raped when security forces caught them trying to cross the Mayu mountain range to reach the Bangladesh border.

As soon as military attacks in Buthidaung began on August 25, villagers began fleeing westwards en masse. Avoiding main roads for fear of security forces, they chose to climb passes across the Mayu mountains, despite the hardship of carrying the old and young along the steep paths. A refugee from Let Wai Dad Pa Zun Chaung described how a distraught mother found her young baby, tied tightly to her chest in a cloth, had been squeezed to death during the climb.

When thousands of villagers began taking the mountain passes, Myanmar troops attempted to block them. At the end of August, hundreds of troops stopped villagers from crossing the Fatia Pass, one of the six main passes across the Mayu mountains between Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships.



Refugees fleeing to Bangladesh with Mayu mountains in the background

A 60-year-old woman was among them. According to her testimony, the villagers were forced at gunpoint to squat in a field, where some were killed (including her son-in-law, who was slashed to death with a knife). Her 16-year-old-daughter “Hasina” was then pulled away by a group of about five soldiers, and gang-raped in full view of everyone. She said she saw this happening to scores of other women and girls at that time.

After this, Hasina and about ten other women and girls were taken away by the troops to a nearby military camp. Hasina’s mother waited, crying by the side of the path for two days, until Hasina returned and told her she had been gang-raped again at the camp. They then continued over the mountain pass. The soldiers gave up their blockade when the numbers of fleeing villagers grew too large to stop.

At the Brizi mountain pass, about 30 kilometers further south (and just north of the main Maungdaw-Buthidaung highway), two young women were seized by government troops after fleeing from their homes in Tat Myar Hali (Tat Min Chaung), Buthidaung township, in mid-September. The troops killed the two young children of one woman, then took both women to a nearby military base (assumed to be the large Aung Mingala military base, at Kyaut Phyu Taung (Kyaw Pyu Taung) village, which lies closest to the Brizi pass in Buthidaung). They were kept at the base and raped for six days, during which time one of the women was stabbed in the chest. After their release, they managed to walk across the Brizi pass and reach the outskirts of Zula Para village, east of Maungdaw town, but the woman's stab wound was badly infected, and she could no longer walk. Villagers took in both women and tried to treat the stabbed woman's wounds, but she died the following day. This was recounted by an elderly Zula Para villager who had taken care of the women, and who fled a week later when Zula Para was attacked and burned down by government troops; his sister was burned alive in the attack.

Patterns of systematic use of rape

The cases documented by Kaladan Press provide strong evidence that rape was systematically planned and used by the Myanmar Army as a weapon against the Rohingya population during its clearance operation in 2017. Several patterns indicate this.

1. Widespread incidence of rape

Refugees provided evidence that during only two months—from late July to mid-September 2017—hundreds of Myanmar Army troops committed rape in seventeen different locations: eleven villages across Maungdaw and the town of Maungdaw itself, as well as four villages and two mountain passes in northern Buthidaung. These incidents involved over 300 women and girls.

This widespread incidence of rape, involving hundreds of troops in different locations, points to high-level authorization of this crime.

2. Rape in military camps

In at least five different locations, women and girls were forcibly detained in military camps to be gang-raped by troops for periods of up to two weeks. This cannot have taken place without the full authorization of commanding officers of the camps.

Two of the camps were in Maungdaw: one near Shilkali, northern Maungdaw, and one in the town of Maungdaw itself. Three camps were in northern Buthidaung: one in Gufi (set up



Myanmar Army patrolling in Maungdaw

temporarily in a village school), one near Fatia Pass, and one near Brizi Pass (where women caught fleeing across the Mayu mountains were detained, as detailed earlier).

In one incident, soldiers extorted money from a woman's family in exchange for her release from the camp. An 18-year-old woman from Shilkali, in northern Maungdaw, was arrested in early August from her home on suspicion of having contact with ARSA. She was detained and gang-raped for about two weeks in a military camp. Only after her parents paid a large sum of money to the army was she finally released, after which the whole family fled to Bangladesh.

The brazen capture of women for rape in a temporary military camp in Ward 5 of Maungdaw town itself (as detailed earlier), streets away from two large existing military camps, is clear evidence of high-level sanctioning of this crime.

3. Gang rape

Almost all the rape cases documented by Kaladan Press involved groups of soldiers who jointly beat, held down, or tied up women and girls, and took turns to rape them. As most cases took place during attacks on villages, the sexual violence was often also committed in view of other soldiers launching the assault.

The fact that so many soldiers, in different locations, willingly grouped together to commit rape—or stood by as fellow troops committed this crime—indicates a clear confidence of impunity. This can only have come from shared knowledge of authorization to rape.

Soldiers not only collaborated in committing the physical act of rape, but also jointly imposed further humiliation on women and girls by forcing them to walk naked in front of them, and throwing money at them. Two 18-year-old rape survivors from northern Buthidaung recounted being submitted to this humiliation: one in Maung Nu, and another in a military camp near Gufi.

The survivor from Maung Nu described how she was caught by a group of about eight or nine soldiers in her village. She was beaten with a gun, then brought to an empty house, groped and ordered to undress. She was made to walk naked in front of the soldiers while they laughed and threw money at her. She said that two or three were familiar faces from the local battalion (likely Light Infantry Battalion 564) and the others were unknown.

A refugee from Gufi said she was seized in her village and

taken with about twelve other young women to a temporary military camp (in a school in the village). They were gang-raped and forced to walk naked in front of their rapists, who not only threw money at them, but also took pictures of them. She fainted from her injuries after being released, and had to be treated for a month in a hospital in Bangladesh. When interviewed, she said she could not sleep because of nightmares. The knowledge that images of her naked body had been recorded and likely shared is an added trauma she must bear.

4. No fear of witnesses

In several locations, soldiers openly committed rape in front of civilians, including other women caught to be raped, family members, or large groups of villagers (such as near Fatia Pass, when troops gang-raped scores of women in full view of thousands of fleeing villagers forcibly gathered in a field).

This again indicates complete confidence that witnesses of their crimes would never have any chance to testify against them.

5. Flagrant rape of young girls

Several victims of rape were very young girls, who inevitably suffered serious injury. As mentioned earlier, a six-year-old girl from Gufi, Buthidaung, died after being gang-raped by a group of soldiers near her village. In Inn Din, Maungdaw, a 10-year-old was gang-raped by troops in the middle of her village after her father had been killed in front of her. Girls as young as ten years old were among scores of women detained overnight and raped in Shilkali, northern Maungdaw; some were too injured to walk after being raped.

Despite the blatant criminality of rape of minors, soldiers committed these acts flagrantly, showing a total confidence of impunity.

6. Frequent torture, mutilation and killing of rape victims

Most of the rape incidents involved other forms of brutal torture, including biting, beating, cutting with knives, and setting on fire. In eleven villages, as well as Maungdaw town, rape victims are known to have been killed or died from their injuries, some after horrific mutilation. This indicates that rape was part of an overall strategy to mete out savage punishment to women and girls—apparently for their very identity as Rohingya.

The sexual violence committed in Naisapuru (Ngar Sar Kyeu), northern Maungdaw, was particularly brutal, as witnessed by a 15-year-old girl hiding on a nearby hillside, who saw at least 20 women and girls being gang-raped, tortured and killed by groups of 2-6 soldiers. Torture included beating with guns, tying women up to trees with their legs apart, cutting off breasts, and gouging out eyes. Some women were killed by having their throats slit. When the girl fled with her family to the border, after hiding for six days, she passed corpses of five naked women behind the hill where she had been hiding, including one body hanging from a tree with her arms cut off.

During the attack on Tula Toli, women were also mutilated after being raped. A rape survivor described seeing soldiers cutting women's breasts and genitals. As detailed earlier, in Sidda Fara, Maungdaw town, a woman died from soldiers forcing a sack into her vagina after gang-raping her.

These patterns of mutilation—already apparent during the 2016 clearance operation—indicate that this torture was not random. They suggest that soldiers were instructed to commit these acts and leave the mutilated bodies on display to induce terror among the local community. The mutilation of sexual organs appears deliberately aimed to flaunt the army’s ability to not just sexually possess the women of their “enemy,” but also to destroy their very means of reproduction.

Rape victims were burned alive in at least three villages: in Done Paik, Tula Toli, and Zula Fara, where in mid-September a woman saw her sister and three daughters being raped and burned in their house.

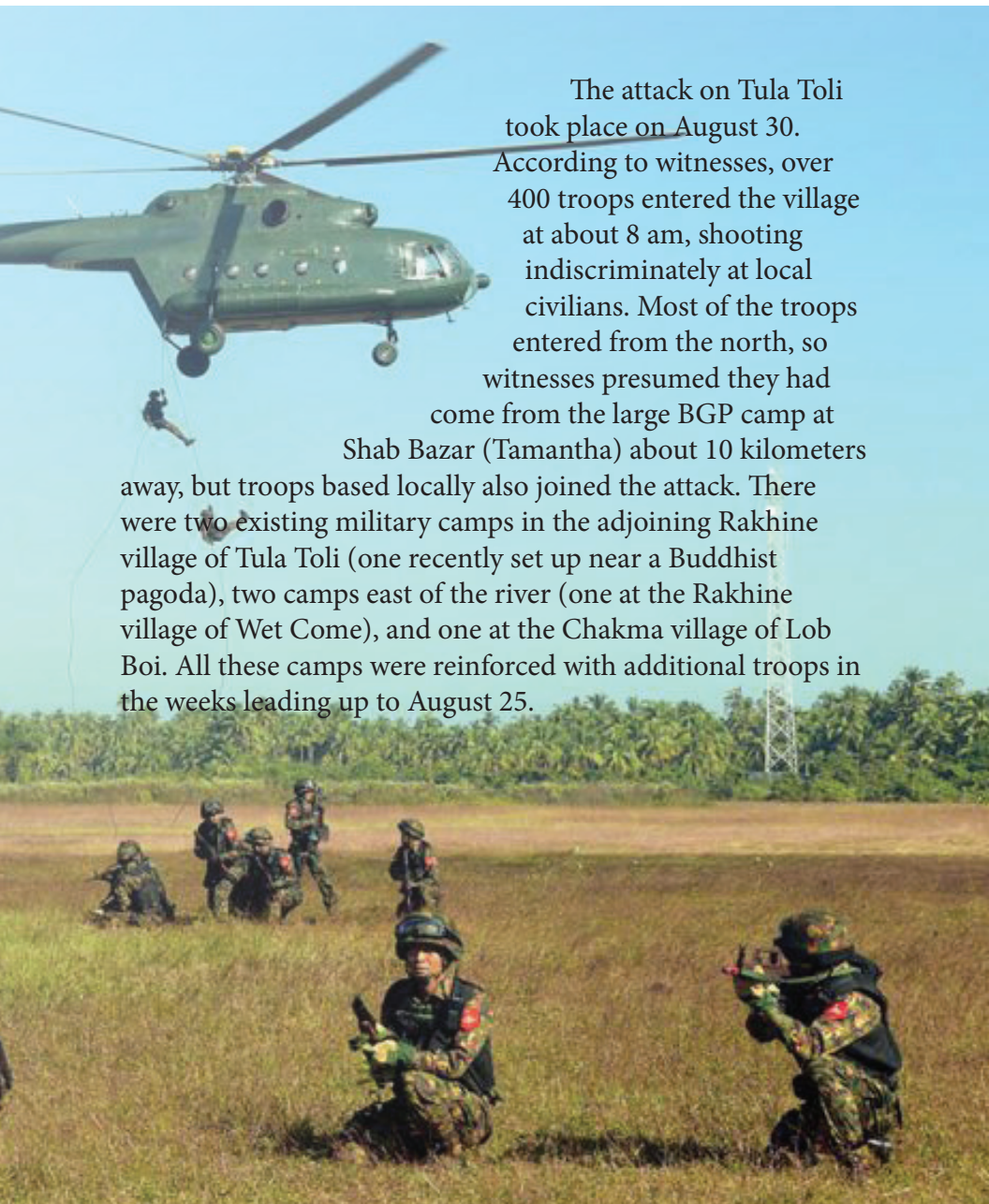
Significantly, the attack on Zula Para, in which hundreds of troops shot and killed about 50 villagers, committed gang rape, and set the village on fire, took place well after September 5—when the military clearance operation officially ended, according to Myanmar’s State Counselor. That soldiers dared commit these atrocities—including gang rape—after the alleged end of the operation, under the glare of worldwide media attention, indicates again a complete confidence of impunity.

Attack on Tula Toli: Ordering mass rape

While the flagrant, widespread incidence of rape provides strong evidence of systematic planning and authorization, the scale and nature of the sexual violence in Tula Toli, in northern Maungdaw, points to the direct *ordering* of mass rape as part of the military operation against the Rohingya.

The atrocities at Tula Toli have been documented in detail by journalists and human rights groups such as Human Rights Watch.⁵ There is no doubt that hundreds of villagers of all ages were slaughtered, and many women were gang-raped. The precise number is unknown, but witnesses interviewed by Kaladan Press estimate well over a hundred.





The attack on Tula Toli took place on August 30. According to witnesses, over 400 troops entered the village at about 8 am, shooting indiscriminately at local civilians. Most of the troops entered from the north, so witnesses presumed they had come from the large BGP camp at

Shab Bazar (Tamantha) about 10 kilometers away, but troops based locally also joined the attack. There were two existing military camps in the adjoining Rakhine village of Tula Toli (one recently set up near a Buddhist pagoda), two camps east of the river (one at the Rakhine village of Wet Come), and one at the Chakma village of Lob Boi. All these camps were reinforced with additional troops in the weeks leading up to August 25.

As villagers fled in terror, hundreds of men, women, and children were shot and knifed to death. Younger able-bodied villagers who managed to swim across the Purma River watched horrified as their relatives were slaughtered, their bodies piled into freshly dug pits and set on fire. A helicopter was seen landing during the assault.

In the afternoon, hundreds of remaining women and children were gathered in a large pond near the Purma riverbank, where they were forced to stand in waist deep water for about four hours, their heads bowed, guarded by hundreds of troops. Some women were shot dead in the pond. Groups of soldiers then took it in turns to pull women away and rape them.

Some women were raped nearby, in view of the group, and were seen being mutilated. Some groups of women, together with children, were taken to nearby houses, where they were gang-raped and tortured—some killed—then shut in houses, which were set on fire.

The terror experienced by the women and girls waiting for hours for their turn to be gang-raped and killed cannot be imagined.

A 20-year-old survivor described how she was taken to be gang-raped, with her in-laws: two sisters, three young brothers, and her mother-in-law after her young baby had just been snatched from her arms and killed:

“They separated the mothers and made them stand in a large pond. A few were taken into a house. I myself moved to the back where all the young girls were standing. At my side we saw groups of 8-10 soldiers raping women, kicking them and killing them. I saw them cut women’s breasts, and cut their vaginas.

A group came and forced us into a house. First they raped my (16-year-old) unmarried sister and mother-in-law in front of us. I saw my sister crying and screaming. Then I didn’t hear any sound. They had killed her. Then they held me and (my sister) “J”, who was 8 months pregnant. They did what they wanted with us. We both were screaming and struggling. They hit us with a steel baton. I fell unconscious.

When I became conscious, the house was burning, and so were the dead bodies of my family members. I tried to find a way out, but couldn’t. Suddenly I saw my sister “J” kick the bamboo wall of the house until it broke. Then she ran without looking back. At that time we were both naked. I was confused, and feeling so much pain in my head, and also my hand, because pieces of burning roof had fallen on it. When I saw that the wall was broken and there was a way out, I ran out. At that time I felt someone try to hold my hand. It was my eight year-old brother, but I couldn’t hold on to him. Maybe if I was wearing clothes, he could have held on to my clothes, but I was naked. I had to run to escape the fire. I couldn’t hold him, so he was burned inside with other family members.” (Her full testimony is provided in the appendix to the report).

The nature of the entire operation in Tula Toli—the large number of troops involved from different camps, and the logistical air support (necessitating coordination with the Air Force)—make it clear that the attack was planned and coordinated at very high levels, with the entire civilian population of the village as the target. In a precise military operation of this kind, large-scale atrocities cannot have been committed randomly. Rather, they must have been systematically planned and sequenced: first mass killing, then mass rape.

The sexual violence in Tula Toli therefore appears to be an integral, strategic component of the operation whereby women and children who survived the initial phase of the attack, were, as the next phase, rounded up for group punishment of the most horrific kind. In other words, the mass rape in Tula Toli was committed according to *specific orders*.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Testimonies documented by Kaladan Press show the widespread incidence of flagrant, brutal sexual violence by Myanmar Army troops during their clearance operation in northern Rakhine State in 2017, a pattern already apparent in the previous year's operation. This provides evidence that army commanders systematically planned and used rape as a weapon against the Rohingya population.

The systematic use of rape as a weapon is a war crime, a crime against humanity, and a tactic of genocide, for which Myanmar's military leaders must be held responsible.

It is imperative that the Myanmar government stops blindly defending its armed forces, and takes immediate action to end the military's systematic atrocities, including sexual violence - not least for the danger posed to the entire society. By authorizing and directing their troops to commit rape, military commanders are encouraging them to find sexual gratification from acts of violence that inflict pain and terror, and cause irreparable damage to women's lives. With hundreds of thousands of troops deployed across Myanmar, this has horrifying implications for the safety of women and girls throughout the country.

We therefore make the following recommendations:

To the Myanmar government:

- To order the Myanmar Army to immediately end the arbitrary arrest, torture, killing, and rape of civilians

- To immediately begin processes to hold the army's entire command structure to account for these atrocities, with a first step being to allow the UN Fact Finding Mission into the country, and to ensure the safety of anyone interviewed during the investigation
- To immediately allow humanitarian agencies to access all areas of Rakhine State and provide humanitarian aid without restriction
- To lift all existing abusive restrictions and grant fundamental rights to Rohingya in accordance with the UN charter, including the right to self-identification
- To allow the Rohingya to return back to their original place of residence, with guarantees of full protection of their rights.

To the international community:

- To use every means to pressure the Myanmar government to end the genocide against the Rohingya
- To send an international peace-keeping force to protect and provide security for civilians, including returning refugees, in Rakhine State
- To stand together with Rohingya in demanding the return of their fundamental rights – and not ask for designation of “new” citizenship for the Rohingya.

To the Bangladesh government:

- To give shelter and protection to all refugees fleeing Myanmar, and to allow humanitarian agencies to provide necessary aid to these refugees without restriction
- To ensure that any refugee repatriation to Myanmar is voluntary, safe and dignified.

Endnotes

¹ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21142>

² The Republic of the Union of Myanmar President Office, press release, “No evidence of crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing,” <http://www.president-office.gov.mm/en/?q=briefing-room/news/2017/08/07/id-7639>

³ Kaladan Press Network, Oct 2017 report, *Refugee testimonies contradict Burmese government version of the August 25 “terrorist attacks,”* <http://www.kaladanpress.org/images/document/2017/Investigative-Analysis.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2017/9/59b24a074/bangladesh-refugee-camp-capacity-exhausted-thousands-makeshift-shelters.html>

⁵ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/12/19/massacre-river/burmese-army-crimes-against-humanity-tula-toli>

Appendix 1: Chronological list of incidents of sexual violence documented by Kaladan Press

Refugees providing evidence of sexual violence			Date of sexual violence*	Summary of sexual violence
	Sex, age	Village,** Township		
1	F, 26	Gufi (Goke Pi), N. Buthidaung	Late July, 2017	Her 6-yr-old cousin was gang-raped near village by about 5 soldiers; badly injured, died a few days later.
2	F, 18	Shilkali (Kyauk Chaung), N. Maungdaw	Early Aug, 2017	Arrested by troops, taken to military camp for 15 days and gang-raped; was released after parents paid a lot of money.
3	M, 35	Gufi (Goke Pi), N. Buthidaung	Mid-Aug, 2017	Saw sexual molestation of young woman in his village by 8 soldiers; they tied up her family and groped, bit, and beat her until she could not walk; extorted money from family, then left.
4	F, 23	Tami (Tin May), N. Buthidaung	Est. Aug 18, 2017	Was raped at home by 4-5 soldiers in front of her 3 children. She was beaten, kicked, and bitten on the cheek and neck.
5	F, 60s	Gufi (Goke Pi), N. Buthidaung	Aug 22, 2017	Her 28-yr-old married daughter was gang-raped at home by 3 soldiers; baby thrown on floor.

* As most of the refugees interviewed use a lunar calendar, some of the dates are estimates

** Some large villages are actually clusters of villages

6	F, 26	Tami (Tin May), N. Buthidaung	Est. Aug 22, 2017	Troops entered village and gang-raped 3 women in their homes, one was tied up and raped in front of her husband, who was beaten.
7	M, 38	Done Paik (Aung Seik Pyin), N. Maungdaw	Aug 25, 2017	About 300 soldiers attacked and burned village; hundreds of villagers forced into field, about 20 young women were taken to be raped in separate houses, then all put in one house and burned to death (including 4 of his relatives, age 18, 20, 22, 25 – and his 53-yr- old sister, who was hiding in the house). Men and boys in field were machine gunned, many killed, their bodies burned.
8	F, 25	Myint Lut, S. Maungdaw	Aug 25, 2017	When troops from nearby base attacked her village, she ran away; her husband's 20-yr-old cousin could not run in time, and was raped by soldiers (seen by youth hiding nearby); her remains were found after village burned down by troops on Aug 28.
9	M, 45	Ale Than Kyaw, S. Maungdaw	Aug 25, 2017	Troops attacked his village, killing his 21-yr-old son and 11 others in his section; his 18-yr-old niece pulled from her house by soldiers, never seen again.

10	F, 32	Shilkali (Kyauk Chaung), N. Maungdaw	Aug, 25, 2017	Troops came into her village at 8 am and slit the throats of two male relatives aged 8 and 12; then took away her 16-year-old sister and sister-in-law; she heard they were raped and killed.
11	F, 15	Naisapuru (Ngar Sar Kyeu), N. Maungdaw	Aug 25- 31, 2017	When village attacked, she hid on mountain, saw over 20 young women gang-raped and killed; some tied to trees, breasts cut off, eyes gouged out.
12	M, 18	Udaung, S. Maungdaw	Aug 25- 27, 2017	He fled when troops began shooting into his village; hid nearby until Aug 27, when he saw bodies of 7 naked women outside Basra village (1 mile away).
13	F, 15	Nayapara, Ward 5, Maungdaw town	Est. Aug 25, 2017	Saw many troops forcibly take two women, from their homes, including 20-yr-old neighbour, who was kept for 3 days.
14	M, 36	Inn Din, S. Maungdaw	Aug 26, 2017	As troops attacked his village, he saw 3 soldiers killing a man and raping his 10-yr-old daughter.
15	F, 25	So Fara (Sin Oo Pyin), N. Buthidaung	Aug 26, 2017	3 women gang-raped by 9 soldiers when they were fleeing from attack by 200 soldiers on village.

16	M, 50	Shilkali (Kyauk Chaung), N. Maungdaw	Aug 27, 2017	About 200 troops forced male villagers into field, then took several hundred female villagers (including his wife) into school building; chose scores of young women and girls, gang-raped them overnight.
17	M, 52	Maung Nu, N. Buthidaung	Aug 27, 2017	From hiding, saw massacre of about 80 people, and saw about 20 women being robbed, and forced to strip naked by soldiers.
18	F, 18	Maung Nu, N. Buthidaung	Est. Aug 27, 2017	Beaten with gun by 8-9 troops, who groped her, brought her to empty house, made her undress and walk naked in front of them; they laughed at her, threw money at her, and gang-raped her, with about 20 other women/girls; she was injured and bled for a month; some of the other women were so badly injured they couldn't walk; some died.
19	F, 15	Shoragozi bil (Da Gyi Zar), N. Maungdaw	Aug 28, 2017	Over 100 troops attacked her village, her 15-year-old friend was grabbed when fleeing and raped by soldiers; she saw her dead body.

20	F, 19	Nayapura, Ward 5, Maungdaw town	Aug 28, 2017	Troops ordered ward leader to provide women for them in temporary camp in school in her ward. 12 women were seized and taken to the school, including her cousin.
21	F, 35	Ward 5, Maungdaw town	Aug 29, 2017	As she was fleeing through the town, she saw troops catching 4 women and taking them away.
22	F, 20	Tula Toli (Min Gyi), N. Maungdaw	Aug 30, 2017	Over 400 troops came running into village, shooting, slashing with knives; her 1-yr-old baby taken from her and killed. She was made to stand with hundreds of women in a pond; some raped in the open field nearby; groups of 8-10 soldiers took women group by group into houses, raped them, beat them and set houses on fire. She was taken with in-laws: mother, 2 sisters and 3 young brothers into a house. Soldiers gang-raped and killed her mother and 1 sister; then gang-raped her and pregnant sister, and beat her on the head. She woke up to find house on fire. Escaped with pregnant sister, but young brothers all died in fire.

23	F, 19	Tula Toli (Min Gyi), N. Maungdaw	Aug 30, 2017	Gang-raped together with sister-in-law (see above). She was 8 months pregnant at the time. She was beaten on the head and suffered burns, but survived. Gave birth to a baby girl in Bangladesh. Her husband was killed.
24	F, 16	Tula Toli (Min Gyi), N. Maungdaw	Aug 30, 2017	Est. 500 Myanmar Army troops attacked village. Ran and hid when attacked; 15 family members killed; saw hundreds of women rounded up in pond and taken to be raped in groups; 2 relatives gang-raped and killed; 2 others gang-raped and injured; saw 8-month pregnant sister-in-law beaten to death.
25	M, 22	Tula Toli (Min Gyi), N. Maungdaw	Aug 30, 2017	Wife gang-raped in house with 10 women, her jaw broken, baby son killed.
26	M, 18	Tula Toli (Min Gyi), N. Maungdaw	Aug 30, 2017	His mother and five brothers and sisters were killed; saw many women being taken into houses to be raped, then houses set on fire. His 23-year-old aunt was gang raped, beaten unconscious, but survived and treated in Bangladesh.

27	M, 25	Tula Toli (Min Gyi), N. Maungdaw	Aug 30, 2017	8 family members killed, including his wife and 3 young children. His 20-year-old sister was gang-raped, cut on the head with a knife, and left in burning house; she survived and received medical treatment in Bangladesh.
28	M, 17	Tula Toli (Min Gyi), N. Maungdaw	Aug 30, 2017	18 family members killed, including parents and 7 siblings; he swam across the river, saw women being taken by groups of soldiers into houses, heard women screaming, then saw soldiers coming out, shutting the door, putting hay on the houses and setting fire to them.
29	F, 18	Gufi (Goke Pi), N. Buthidaung	Late Aug, 2017	Men and women separated in her village; she was taken with about 12 other young women inside a military camp in local school and gang-raped; she was made to walk naked with other women in front of soldiers, who took pictures of them and threw money at them.

(5)	F, 60s	Gufi (Goke Pi), N. Buthidaung	Late Aug, 2017	After her village was attacked, she fled with family to Fatia Pass; thousands of fleeing villagers forced to sit by path by hundreds of troops; her 16-yr-old daughter, with scores of young women/girls, gang-raped 20 yards away, in full view of others. Her daughter then taken with about 10 other girls to nearby military camp and gang-raped for 2 days.
30	F, 30	Sidda Fara (Myoma Khayandan), Maungdaw town	Late Aug, 2017	Saw cousin being grabbed by a group of soldiers and taken to be gang-raped in nearby house; she was then gang-raped herself by five other soldiers in front of her 3 children; she was stabbed in the hand; later saw dead body of cousin and her husband; cousin killed by having a sack forced into her vagina.
31	F, 31	Sidda Fara (Myoma Khayandan), Maungdaw town	Late Aug, 2017	3 soldiers came to her house and raped her in the middle of the day, in front of 2 of her children, who were beaten with rifles.
32	F, 40	Sidda Fara (Myoma Khayandan), Maungdaw town	Late Aug, 2017	Saw soldiers raping a neighbor, knifing her and her husband to death, then burning their bodies.

33	F, 15	Hadirbil (Nyaung Chaung), S. Maungdaw	Late Aug-early Sept, 2017	Parents shot dead when village attacked, army and non-Rohingya villagers separated female villagers and searched and robbed them; her breasts and genitals groped.
34	F, 30	Cheinkali, S. Maungdaw	Sept 1, 2017	Saw 7 women gang-raped by troops when village attacked (including 3 relatives, aged 18, 20 and 20), and villagers forcibly gathered at roadside.
35	F, 30	Zula Fara, east of Maungdaw town	Mid-Sept, 2017	Hundreds of troops came by truck and began shooting villagers, and burning houses. She saw her older sister and 3 nieces, age 22, 17, 13, raped and burned alive. Her son 6-year-old was shot and badly injured in the chest.
36	M, 60	Zula Fara, east of Maungdaw town	Mid-Sept, 2017	In mid-Sept, 2 women who had fled from Tat Myar Hali (Tat Min Chaung) in Buthidaung, came to Zula Fara; before crossing Brizi pass, they had been stopped by soldiers, one woman's 2 children killed, then both gang-raped in a military camp for 6 days; 1 woman had been stabbed, she died of infected wound the day after arriving in Zula Fara.

Appendix 2

Testimony of a 20-year-old rape survivor from Tula Toli village (Chortoli section), northern Maungdaw

It happened on Wednesday, August 30, 2017. In the morning at 8 o'clock, we heard shooting. We all came out to see what was going on. I saw people running from another village named Deol Toli. The Army was running after them. There were so many soldiers. About four or five hundred.

We were scared. I just held my daughter, who was one year and four months old. I ran with my husband's sister "J", who was 8 months pregnant. She had come to my father-in-law's house to visit one of her sisters, who is 16 years old and very beautiful. Together with my three brothers (aged 12, 8, and 6) and my mother-in-law and father-in-law, I ran to the other side of the village, where there is a river. But we couldn't get past the military. They were just shooting. So many people fell down. A few people tried to jump in the river, but they couldn't survive. All died. Those who were at the riverside just lay down on the ground. The army came and chose the men and started stabbing them with big knives, shooting them, and hitting them with steel batons. Beside me were my father-in-law and another man, a respected elder. They were lying down. They were killed by machetes.

The army kept killing men till the afternoon. A helicopter had landed in the Rakhine village (of Tula Toli (Min Gyi)). Some Rakhine boys came with some cylinders and dug three big holes. They put all the bodies in these holes and spread petrol

on the bodies and then set them on fire with the cylinders. We saw some small boys still alive in the hole. They were taken out and slashed with machetes. Afterwards, they spread some leaves and soil on top of the hole.

They separated the women. They found five men alive. They separated them and shot them. They grabbed all the children from their mothers' chests and threw them to the ground to kill them. Before killing them, the babies' mothers were separated. I saw they were coming to me. I knew they would also kill my baby. My breath just stopped. They threw my daughter in front of me (and killed her). She was crying when they took her from my chest.

There were so many children, some just one year old, or even two to three days old - they were also thrown to the ground. I saw some children who were moving being stamped to death by the soldiers with their boots.

Again they separated the mothers and made them stand in a large pond. A few were taken into a house. I myself moved to the back where all the young girls were standing. At my side we saw the army raping women, kicking them and killing them. I saw them cut women's breasts, and cut their vaginas.

When the military were raping and killing, they did this in groups of 8 to 10 soldiers. A group came and forced us into a house. First they raped my unmarried sister and mother-in-law in front of us. I saw my sister crying and screaming. Then I didn't hear any sound. They had killed her. Then they held me and "J", who was 8 months pregnant. They did what they

wanted with us. We both were screaming and struggling. They hit us with a steel baton. I fell unconscious.

When I became conscious, the house was burning, and so were the dead bodies of my family members. I tried to find a way out, but couldn't. Suddenly I saw my sister "J" kick the bamboo wall of the house until it broke. Then she ran without looking back. At that time we were both naked. I was confused, and feeling so much pain in my head, and also my hand, because pieces of burning roof had fallen on it. When I saw that the wall was broken and there was a way out, I ran out. At that time I felt a hand try to hold my hand. It was my eight year old brother, but I couldn't hold on to him. Maybe if I was wearing clothes, he could have held on to my clothes, but I was naked. I had to run to escape the fire. I couldn't hold him, so he was burned inside with other family members.

I ran and jumped over the fence near the house compound. I hid beside the fence. I saw my sister "J" was also hiding there. We stayed till midnight. We saw the soldiers were taking a bath, and washing their weapons. When there was no sound, we moved and followed a path. We reached the river. We saw so many bodies in the water at the side of the river. When we were walking, we stepped on those bodies.

We found a man's sarong in a broken box and divided it in two pieces to cover ourselves. We then reached the next village, Wetcome, where "J"'s husband's house was. No one was there. It was all empty, and the houses were burned. We spent the whole night in a small hut without any food or clothes. We were in too much pain and were bitten by mosquitoes, so

we couldn't sleep. In the morning we heard a mobile phone ringing and a man's voice talking on the mobile phone. We went in front of the house. At that time two dogs barked and surrounded us. The man came outside, and I requested: "Please don't look at us, we are naked. If you have any clothes, please give them to us." His name was "T", the 40-year-old father of two children. He had been hiding in the forest. When he came into the village, he did not see anybody. He gave us food and said: "Just wait here. I want to go outside to find my family." We cried and said, "Please take us with you. If they kill you, we will also die with you."

He told us just to wait for a while, because we were injured, and it would not be possible for him to find his family with us. We waited, and he returned after a few hours. He couldn't find any of his family members. He suggested it would be better to move, so we started our journey with him.

We moved from one village to another for three days. Then we stopped our journey in the third village. When we passed the villages, we didn't see any sign of people. There were only empty, broken and burned houses. We saw many rotten bodies, smelling bad. We followed the side roads of the villages. In the third village, we saw one man and asked for help. He was also taking shelter in this village. He said we could stay with his family. His mother helped us to bathe, and gave us food, but I couldn't chew because my teeth were in such pain. My whole face was injured. "J" was also injured. We had both been hit on the head with a steel rod, so we had lost a lot of blood.

With the help of two other men, we were sent to a Rohingya doctor in the village of Murikkum. He stitched our heads and asked if we had anyone who could take care of us. We said no, they were all dead. He took our picture and posted it on Facebook. One of my uncles commented in the post that he was my uncle and said my husband was alive. When people had jumped into the river, luckily he and about four or five other people were able to hide. He came at midnight and hired several men to carry us. He borrowed 60,000 Kyat for the carriers.

In the morning we finally reached the bank of the (Naf) river, and took a boat to arrive in Bangladesh at around 11 am. People showed us the MSF hospital. We stayed in the hospital seven days. After that, we stayed three days in the house of some local people, then we got shelter in Kutupalong (refugee camp). On the 20th day “J” gave birth to a girl in hospital. “J” lost her husband in the Tula Toli (Min Gyi) massacre. She heard this news when she was in hospital.



Kaladan Press Network

First Rohingya News Agency (since 2001)

www.kaladanpress.org

www.kaladanpress.com