



1. Incident 1 – Min Gyi (Tula Toli) village, Maungdaw Township

Regarding the incident in Min Gyi (Tula Toli) village, Maungdaw Township, there are four interviewees, who in addition to being witnesses, were closely involved in the incident. These include two interviewees from Min Gyi (Rakhine) village, one local Daingnet individual, and one Tula Toli Muslim villager, now in a refugee camp in Bangladesh, who answered questions over the phone. Following are the findings based on their statements:

(a) Profile of Min Gyi Rakhine village and Tula Toli Muslim village

Min Gyi village is located to the north of Maungdaw Town, on the west bank of the Pyuma Stream. Min Gyi village has two parts – one where Muslims live and the other where Rakhine ethnic nationals live. Min Gyi's Muslim village is also called Tula Toli in their language.¹ Since the two villages are separated only by a small field, it could be said that there is no partition at all. Both are officially designated as part of Min Gyi village. There are hills in the village's environs, and on the eastern side the village Pyuma Stream flows from north to south. There are fields along the bank of the Pyuma Stream. A short distance to the north, divided from Min Gyi village by low hills, is Myawaddy (Na Ta La) village. To the east of Min Gyi Tula Toli, on the other side of the Pyuma Stream, are Wet Kyein Muslim village and Wet Kyein Mro village. There are Border Guard Police outposts in Min Gyi, Myawaddy, and Wet Kyein villages. There is a monastery at the top of a hill close to Min Gyi Rakhine village. Min Gyi's Rakhine village has 76 households and Tula Toli – the Muslim village – has about 268 households. Myawaddy (Na Ta La) ethnic village has about 42 households. Wet Kyein (Muslim) village has 296 households and Wet Kyein (Mro) village has 38 households. In the past, ethnic nationals and Muslims lived peacefully and amicably in this region.

¹ The Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU) lists the two villages as Min Gyi (Tu Lar Tu Li) and Min Gyi (Ku Lar).

(b) Statements by three ethnic nationalsStatement 1 (A Rakhine villager from Min Gyi)

After the 2016 incidents, there was a gradual deterioration in relations between ethnic nationals and Muslims in this region. This change started with the Muslim side who began to cut-off contact. Nevertheless, there was not much change in the relations between the ethnic nationals and Muslims in Min Gyi village; there continued to be regular interactions between the two groups. As the situation was becoming tense in many parts of Maungdaw Township, Muslim friends began to warn us to be careful in our movements. The community leaders from Min Gyi village therefore held a coordination meeting to discuss the situation in the area, probably on the morning of August 22, 2017.² During the meeting both sides agreed that they should refrain from attacking each other and seek an agreement in order to achieve peace, since Muslims and ethnic nationals had been living together amicably in Min Gyi village for many years. To reinforce this verbal agreement, they agreed that the leaders of both groups should sign an agreement on August 24, 2017. News of this commitment to peace reached Muslims from Wet Kyein, a neighboring village, and some of the Muslim residents of that village came to seek refuge in Min Gyi Tula Toli village. While they were arranging to sign the agreement, over 300 terrorists showed up at Min Gyi Tula Toli village- this was on the morning of August 24, 2017. Villagers were prohibited from leaving the village, and so the Muslim community leaders were not able to come to sign the agreement, according to a Muslim elder from Tula Toli, who notified us by phone. The terrorists gathered the villagers at the mosque and preached a heated sermon that called for a revolutionary attack against the government, and instructed listeners to attack and seize Min Gyi police station on a particular time and date. Muslims from Tula Toli called their friends and warned them that policemen from the station and Rakhine should leave before the attack. When the news reached them, Min Gyi Rakhine villagers, out of fear went and stayed in the monastery on the top of the hill near the village. The Border Guard Policemen also came and joined them at the monastery. There were only six Border Guard Police. Later, the strength of the police force increased to 19, as the policemen from Myawaddy police outpost came and joined them. The Rakhine villagers had about 80 guns. Meanwhile, a crowd of about 3,000 Muslims, led by ARSA terrorists, besieged Min Gyi Rakhine village. The terrorists burnt down Min Gyi village police station, where no one was left. The ethnic national villagers asked for help from the administrative authorities.

Meanwhile, Rakhine ethnic nationals were watching from the hill near Min Gyi village as the terrorists, who were in Tula Toli crossed the Pyuma Stream and attacked the Wet Kyein village police station on the evening of August 25, 2017, around 5 p.m. The Wet Kyein police outpost is only about 200 yards from the hill from which the Rakhine were watching. These developments were reported by phone to the

² The interviewee did not remember the exact date, but thought this was the day.

relevant administrative authorities, and frequent requests were made that they send reinforcements. The authorities replied that the Myanmar's Defence Services reinforcements had already been sent and were on the way. After three or four days, when there was no sign of the troops, the ethnic nationals became dejected, with no-one to protect them. ARSA members, meanwhile, called on a daily basis, making various threats. They said that all Rakhine would be beheaded, such and such would be done to Rakhine women, and their houses would be torched. Because of the requests by the villagers, two Myanmar's Defence Services convoys eventually approached the area. One column was coming from the south, from Kyein Chaung towards Wet Kyein, whereas the other from the north through Myawaddy, heading for Tula Toli village.

In order to impede the speedy arrival of the Myanmar's Defence Services reinforcement columns, terrorists had planted IEDs around Min Gyi village and on every single path leading into Min Gyivillage. After laying the IEDs, ARSA terrorists went and attacked Myawaddy (NaTaLa) village, near Min Gyi village, and its police station, early on August 29, 2017. While they were attacking, a Myanmar's Defence Services column (part of Battalion 99) arrived in Myawaddy, and soon there were clashes between the two sides. Terrorists retreated back towards Tula Toli. The Myanmar's Defence Services was able to defend and save Myawaddy. The government troops sent the villagers from Myawaddy to the monastery on Min Gyi village hill. Then, they went after the retreating terrorist fighters. When the government troops entered Tula Toli village, ARSA terrorists, who were already in Tula Toli village, pointed guns and shot at the Myanmar's Defence Services column commander, but missed him. The column commander then gave the orders to shoot back. Myanmar's Defence Services retaliated, and a fierce battle erupted in the village, lasting from about 8 a.m. to about 3 p.m.

Beginning from the next day, August 30, 2017, the Myanmar's Defence Services troops and the Border Guard Police restricted movement and banned everyone from going to Tula Toli village. Even Min Gyi Rakhine villagers, who were temporarily seeking refuge in the hilltop monastery, had to get permission from the security forces if they wished to descend to their village at the foot of the hill. The Myanmar's Defence Services troops and the Border Guard Police were inside Min Gyi Rakhine village and Tula Toli village. Because of the battle, Tula Toli village was full of dead bodies terrorists fighters, of men and women of all ages, including elderly people and children. Although an exact number of casualties is not available, it is estimated that around 500 to 600 persons died. I was able to estimate the number of the dead, because I was personally involved in the burial of the dead bodies. Muslim houses in this region (as well as some Rakhine houses) tend to have water storage ponds dug in their yards, usually roughly 10-foot square, although the size varies depending on the size of the yard. Eight to 10 dead bodies were buried in each pond (depending on the size of the pond). In some big houses, four or five corpses were burnt together with the house. On average, about 40 dead bodies were buried per day, and it took about 12 or 13 days to clear up all the corpses. Terrorists were among those that were killed. Besides Tula Toli villagers, there were

also Muslims from Wet Kyein village among those killed, as many Muslim villagers from Wet Kyein village (which is on the other bank of the Pyuma Stream) had come to seek refuge in Tula Toli village, after hearing about the peace pact between Min Gyi Rakhine villagers and Tula Toli Muslims since they did not want to be involved in problems. In fact, the villagers desire peace. Those who initiated the shooting and attacked the Myanmar's Defence Services troops were the terrorists and not originally from the village. Many ordinary villagers, who wished to live in peace, had been killed amidst the fighting between the two sides.

Statement 2

Out of concern that the news would leak out, for the next few days, the Myanmar's Defence Services troops prohibited villagers from entering Tula Toli. Even Min Gyi Rakhine villagers had to be escorted by the police if they wished to go to their houses and were sent back [to the monastery on the hilltop] as soon as they had settled their affairs. It was only Tula Toli village and Min Gyi village where access was restricted, anyone was free to go to Wet Kyein or Kyein Chaung. No corpses were thrown into the Pyuma Stream. Those on the hill personally witnessed terrorists retreating and using villagers as human shields. While the battle was ongoing in Tula Toli village, many villagers were terrified and started running away, crossing the Pyuma Stream without any assistance. As the currents were strong at that time, watchers on the hill saw many women and children drowning and being swept away. It was a time of heavy rain, and the water level in the creek was unusually high, which increased the number of deaths from drowning. Pyuma Stream flows from north to south.

Other cases in which people drowned could be seen daily from the hill. Besides Muslims from Thet Kaing Hnyar region³ in northern Maungdaw, those from Buthidaung Township crossed over, in their tens of thousands, on their way to Bangladesh. It was a daily occurrence to see people drowning and being killed after trying to keep afloat on rickety rafts – these rafts were made of whatever plied bamboo strips were available with empty water drums hung on them. Many of these rafts collapsed when used to cross the Pyuma Stream. Most of the casualties were women and children. Although there was a bridge across the Pyuma Stream, terrorist fighters had forbidden anyone from crossing it. A Muslim friend called to inform us that IEDs had been laid at both ends of the bridge. Therefore, Muslim civilians tried to cross the Pyuma Stream at places they thought would be safe in rafts made of whatever material was available. We did not see soldiers throwing dead bodies into the water. The terrorists initiated the attack against the Myanmar's Defence Services troops, and used villagers as human shields. When the government troops retaliated, many villagers were killed during the clashes. If the government troops had not retaliated in this way, ARSA would have defeated the government troops.

³ An area to the northeast of Min Gyi (Tula Toli) village, near Mingalar Gyi Mountain in Maungdaw Township.

Later, we heard that Light Infantry Battalion 535 from the Buthidaung area, which came from the south, triggered some of the IEDs on their approach to the Pyuma Stream bridge. The column commander was injured by shrapnel, which caused the delay in the column reaching Min Gyi village.

At present, Min Gyi Rakhine village has been relocated to the other side of Pyuma Stream. Residing in the old village is banned, and traveling to it is also restricted. Anyone who wishes to go there, must first get permission from the police station in Wet Kyein, and then the police will escort the person throughout the trip.

Statement 3 (a Daingnet ethnic man)

I and four other Daingnet nationals from the same village (five people in total) had gone to Myawaddy village to work as hired cultivation workers. I was an eyewitness to the incidents, while I was in Myawaddy. As there were problems in different places on August 25, 2017, we planned to return to our native village, Yae Nauk Ngar Thar. However, knowing that the situation was not good, we did not go back, and waited for three or four more days to observe the situation. During that time, a Myanmar's Defence Services column from Battalion 99 arrived in Myawaddy. The Myanmar's Defence Services troops made us stay and accompany them. When they reached Tula Toli village, the military began shooting on sight. Many Muslim children and adults were killed.

(c)Statement of a Tula Toli Muslim villager, currently in Bangladesh

Statement 4

The problems started on August 25, 2017, in Min Gyi Tula Toli. The next day, August 26, the Muslims from Tula Toli burnt down the police station near Min Gyi village school. The Muslims told the Min Gyi village authorities that they would rebuild the fire-ravaged police outpost. The next day, a meeting was held between the Min Gyi village Administrator, U Aung Kyaw Sein, the police, and some Muslim elders from Tula Toli, as there had been no problems until this time. After three or four days, a Myanmar's Defence Services column came marching towards Min Gyi. The Muslim elders asked administrator U Aung Kyaw Sein, "What do we do now?", to which U Aung Kyaw Sein responded, "The Myanmar's Defence Services troops are not going to do anything to you. You just keep staying in the village. The government troops will proceed along the village road and then leave." The Muslim villagers remained in Tula Toli village, as the village administrator advised. On the fourth day after the problem started, at about 9AM, the government troops entered Tula Toli village and began to shoot the villagers and set fire to the houses. At that time, some Muslim villagers, including myself fled to and hid in the hilly jungle at the edge of the sand bank to the west, about 1,200 feet from the village. From there, we watched the government troops' activities. The Myanmar's Defence Services troops had dug three pits on the sand bank, the Muslim villagers were divided into three groups: the children, the elderly, and the women. The creek was overflowing due to heavy rains during that period. The group of children were thrown into the

creek, the elderly were put into a pit, dowsed with gasoline, and set on fire. The women were divided into smaller groups of seven or eight, each group was put into a house at the back of the village, and burnt together with the houses. Gasoline was poured on the houses and they were set on fire. Five women who escaped were raped by the soldiers. These women suffered burns and are now in Balukhali refugee camp number 2. A total of 480 villagers from Tula Toli were killed, including 53 of my relatives, amongst whom were four of my brothers. Villagers from Ba Da Kar new village and Pan Zi village in Buthidaung Township, who were at that time in Tula Toli village, were also killed. The total number of Muslims killed during the whole Tula Toli turmoil amounted to about 1,200. Mro ethnic nationals from Myawaddy (NaTaLa) village were also involved in setting fires in Tula Toli. All villagers from Tula Toli fled to Bangladesh and no-one remained in Maungdaw area, but the soldiers took seven good-looking Muslim girls with them. The Min Gyi Rakhine Administrator U Aung Kyaw Sein was to blame for the large number of deaths among the Muslims, as many were killed because they trusted U Aung Kyaw Sein when he said that nothing would happen and that they should stay together. If he had not uttered those words, there would not have been so many casualties.
