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## CONFIDENTIAL INCIDENT REPORT

## 20 JANUARY 2014

Two incidents appear to have transpired in Dar Chee Var Tan Village Tract in January 2014. The first, the taking and killing of eight Rohingya men on or about 9 January, appears to have led to or become entwined with an ongoing security operation in the village that began on 13 January. The follow synopsis is based primarily on eyewitness testimony compiled by the UN staff in Rakhine State between 14 and 20 January. Further information is still being confirmed.

## Alleged abduction and killing of eight Rohingyas

On or around 3 January 2014, 44 Rohingya men from various villages across Kyautaw Township paid MMK 40,000 (approx. \$US45) each to a guide to transport them from Kyauktaw to Muangdaw Township. Some Rohingya were aiming to make their way to Bangladesh while others were planning to stay in Maungdaw. A man in his twenties from Kyautaw, also a member of the group of 44, told the UN that the primary reason for their departure was their inability to work and feed their families due to restrictions on their freedom of movement.

On or about 9 January, after five days of walking through the mountains from Kyauktaw, the 44 men plus their guide came upon a group of armed Rakhine men in the hillside of Dar Chee Var Tan Village Tract in Maungdaw Township at around 5:00 pm. An eyewitness was unable to tell if the Rakhine men were police or armed villagers. The Rakhine group began shouting (in the Rakhine language) and then fired on the Rohingya men. Chaos ensued and the Rohingya scattered. The Rakhine men allegedly captured between six and eight men while five others and their guide made it to safety. The whereabouts of the remaining 31 Rohingya men are unknown.

The same day the captured Rohingya men were taken to Kan Chang, a Rakhine hamlet in the east of Dar Ghee Var Tan village tract. That evening villagers from the neighboring Rohingya hamlet of Maraung Nil reported hearing screams of pain in the Rohingya language coming from direction of Kan Chaung. Confirmed reports indicated the eight men were held captive in the home of Aung San Pyu, the Village Administrator, and denied food and water and severely beaten for at least 36 hours.

News of the capture of these men reached Rohingya villagers in the neighboring Marring Mil hamlet. At roughly 2:00 p.m. two men from the hamlet went to Kan Chang to discreetly verify the reports but did not see the Rohingya captives when they passed by the Village Administrator's home.

Around 10:00 a.m. on 12 January, a 50 year-old male Rohingya resident of Maraung Dil hamlet, familiar with the report of the captives, was in a nearby field with his cattle when he spotted a group of men from Kan Chaung heading west to the mountains carrying oddly shaped loads tied to bamboo rods that he suspected to be the bodies of the Rohingya captives. He reported this to his fellow villagers, who sent out an informal group to investigate.

It should be noted that at no time did the Rohingya villagers of Maraung Dil notify the police. Informants said they did not have personal connections with the police or their phone number. Nor were they able to travel to the police station given restrictions on their movement. The larger reason given, however, was that they do not trust the police and feared they would side with the Rakhine villagers. They also feared retaliation from their Rakhine neighbors.

On 12 January at around 12:00 p.m. 32 to 35 Rohingya men from Maraung Dil hamlet went into the nearby western hillside to search for the bodies of Rohingya captives. The group however was turned back by an equally large group of neighboring Rakhine people. It should be noted that up until this point information received indicated that relations between Rakhine and Rohingya in Dar Chee Yar Tan Village Tract were relatively cordial with Rohingyas even working in Rakhine villages and hamlets. However, this show of force by their Rakhine neighbors set off alarm bells.

The Maraung Dil Rohingya informants report that on the morning of 11 January (time unknown) two men were again sent to the hillside to investigate. Information received indicated that the two men came upon a large freshly dug and freshly covered pit close to a Buddhist cemetery. The pit was covered by coconut palm fronds but two men reported seeing a human leg partially protruding through the soil. Shortly after discovering it, however, they heard people approaching so cut their investigation short and returned to the village.

Coincidentally, on the same day, at around 2:00 p.m., a Rohingya man was routinely collecting firewood with several other villagers from Maraung Dil. The group also came upon the grave. The man said he saw the legs of a human body from the knees to its feet protruding through the dirt. Upon investigation, the man said the grave had been recently dug. He also said the legs were not yet swollen, which would indicate the person had recently died. The man also said his group tried to dig out the body but was chased away by a group of Rakhine men, some with knives.

On 13 January at 2:00 p.m. five villagers from Maraung Dil hamlet returned to the gravesite. However, when they got there they saw roughly 12 Rakhine men standing near the pit, some re-covering it. These villagers were able to identify eight of the men by name; one of them was the Village Administrator, Aung San Pyu. They said eight of them were from Kan Chaung hamlet. They did not recognize the other four, but suspect that they were from a nearby Natala village.

30 minutes later the Rakhine group left. At this point, the three Maraung Dil villagers began unearthing the grave, while the two other stood watch. A witness told the UN that the group stopped digging after a few moments after he unearthed the body of a Rohingya man. The body was covered partially by old palm fronds, a black jacket missing one arm and brown plaid lungi, the latter two items were both heavily stained with blood. The villagers restarted digging but stopped when the 12 Rakhine returning to the grave discovered the Rohingyas. The Rakhine gave chase but the five Rohingya managed to outrun them.

On 13 January at around 3:00 p.m., several Rohingyas from Maraung Dit hamlet reported that three children between the ages of six and ten told their parents that they overheard a group of Rakhine men from Kan Chaung arguing in a nearby field over whether or not they should kill the Maraung Dil Muslims who uncovered the grave. The UN is still confirming this piece of information.

## The security operation

At about 9:30 p.m. on 13 January the Dar Ghee Var Tan Village Administrator along with a group of Security Police (Lon Thein) and plain clothed Rakhine men reportedly entered the Muslim eastern part of the hamlet. They encountered a group of roughly five young men with cell phones gathered at cigarette/betel nut stall. Eyewitnesses report seeing the police trying to confiscated the cell phones. The men yelled for help, drawing a large crowd in the Rohingya village, which subsequently forced the village administrator, the police and plain clothes Rakhine men out of the hamlet.

At no point, however, did the Village Administrator or the police inquire about the Muslim men who uncovered the grave. Both Muslim and government sources indicate the police attempted to confiscate the cell phones of the young men that evening, which is in keeping with police practice of clamping down and/or exhorting Muslim villagers for illegal mobile usage. This would in some way corroborate the official version of events suggesting a routine patrol spun out of control. In fact, according to information received these types of patrols occur three to four times a month. This would have been the fourth patrol this month.

At about 10:30 p.m. a small number of Security Police returned, this time with a group of 30 Rakhine men armed with long swords and surrounded another group of Rohingya men who were also gathered at the cigarette/betel nut stall. A Rohingya eyewitness who uncovered the grave the day before said at least four Rakhine men who were at the grave were also present and carrying long swords. Again, the Rohingya men yelled for help. A large crowd formed but this time many of them were armed with knives. The Rakhine men fled.

Reports indicate a small fight ensued and the Rohingya villagers capture a police sergeant and his weapon. The sergeant was allegedly killed several hours later. His body and weapon were reportedly transported to Bangladesh. This has to be confirmed.

Around midnight on the same night (14 January), a larger police force, comprising Security Police and forces from the nearby Police Battalion no. 4 returned, entering the village from the west. According to the official version of events, this operation was an attempt to recover the missing sergeant and his weapon. Informants report being unable to say how many security personnel entered the village but recount seeing between 30-35 police and civilian trucks on the main road, each which would carry 10-20 persons.

About an hour later informants say gunshots were fired. Government authorities say the Rohingya villagers opened fire on the Security Police and they returned fire in self-defense. Rohingya informants deny possessing weapons except knives. However, there is the possibility that a Rohingya could have been using the captured sergeant's firearm.

Moments after the first gunshots, ten Rohingya eyewitnesses from the eastern part of the hamlet report that a large group of Rakhine villagers carrying swords and knives entered from the east, from the direction of Kan Chaung hamlet. The Muslim population was overrun. With the police entering from the main Maungdaw road in the west and the Rakhine entering from east, the Muslim population was squeezed south in retreat towards the Gaw Du Thar Ya, the village tract directly south of Du Chee Yar Tan. Some reports indicated Rakhine from other village tracts entered via the mountain road.

It was mostly Muslim males who fled to other village tracts, leaving women children and the elderly behind. Numerous Muslim sources, from various village tracts in Maungdaw Township indicate that this has been a common survival tactic and a way to protect their property since the June 2012 violence. The Muslim population saw that Muslim men arrested after that episode were severely beaten, tortured or killed in custody (as documented by the UN).

One eyewitness saw the police shoot an 18 year-old male in the arm during the operation. Another eyewitness, saw a man in plain clothes carrying a knife, dragging what appeared to him to be the body of a dead Muslim woman across the road in front of him. Several eyewitnesses also reported seeing police and Rakhine in street clothes looting Muslim property. Based on the eyewitness testimony below, the violence and looting appears to have continued until dawn.

After the operation, the Maungdaw Deputy Commissioner told UN staff said there were only 84 persons remaining in the village - ten men and 74 women and children; they were all brought in for questioning to the Maungdaw Police Station early in the morning of 14 January but the women and children were released on the same day, around 5:00 p.m. The ten men remain in custody. Eyewitnesses told the UN that the police severely beat at least seven of the Muslim men at the station that morning, including one 93-year old man.

The Deputy Commissioner indicated to the UN that Muslims villagers in Du Chee Yar Tan have free access to return to their village. However, according to testimony received, government authorities, including police personnel and personnel from the Township and District administration, made the detainees sign statements saying they will not return to Du Chee Yar Tan until the missing sergeant is found. Moreover, government authorities
reportedly issued a standing ordering for all Village Administrators (VA) and Responsible Persons for the Village Tract (RPVT) to immediately turn over any males from age ten onwards that may be hiding in their areas of jurisdiction to the authorities. However, on 20 January at meeting in Maungdaw town, the Deputy Commissioner reportedly warned all township VA and PRVTs against sheltering any Muslim resident from Du Chee Yar Tan. This has effectively made criminal suspects of all Muslim villagers, including children. Almost of all them are now on the run, moving from village tract to village tract each night.

## Eyewitness accounts

Dar Chee Yar Tun continues to be cordoned off by the security forces and access severely restricted. Unconfirmed reports indicate that security personnel have been deployed inside the village in at least two hamlets. Uncomforted reports also suggest the east hamlet has been mostly depopulated of Muslims. However, a number of Muslims have either snuck back into their village to salvage what valuables they can, including food. The UN has interviewed tens of Muslims who snuck into the village. Much of what follows is verified.

On the morning of 14 January an eyewitness told the UN that he saw three dead bodies in one house (two women and one child) and another dead body of a woman in a different house. The eyewitness knew the victims personally. All of the bodies showed signs of deep lacerations and bullet wounds. On the same morning the eyewitness saw approximately 20 dead bodies being carried off by security force personnel to the surrounding hills; the eyewitness corroborated this information with data he obtained from people from Du Chee Yar Tan on 16 January, who told him that of the many people who had died during the night of 13 January/morning of 14 January. The eyewitness also observed Rakhine civilians looting property in the eastern hamlet.

On 14 January at 4:00 p.m., two female villagers attempted to return to their homes to retrieve their valuables. By that time, the situation had clamed down, and both women thought they could take advantage of the calm to slip unnoticed into their hamlet unnoticed. The women entered the hamlet from the south where they came upon the body of a young man with a nearly severed arm, a deep cut to his chest and both eyes cut out. The women were able to identify the body by name. Moments later the women were spotted by a plainclothes Rakhine man they recognized as being from Kan Chaung and fled.

On 14 January at 11:30 p.m., a group of five men snuck into Dar Chee Yar Tun from a neighboring village tract. They were there to assess the damage and to recover valuables. At about midnight they entered the home of one of men's relatives but it was completely looted. They exited through the back of the house where they report seeing a $4 \mathrm{ft} . \mathrm{x} 4 \mathrm{ft}$. water tank containing ten to 12 severed human heads. One man said it was dark and thought his eyes were playing tricks on him and so put his hands in the water tank, confirming they were indeed human heads. Another man did the same. One man said one head looked familiar but could not confirm the identity. However, another man said he clearly saw the heads of women and children. This information is verified.

At this point, one the men entered a friend's home to search for blankets and other useful items to take back to a hiding spot. Upon entering the main room he saw the bodies of an elderly woman and her granddaughter. He could identify the bodies by name He then went to check on his own house, which he said was looted.

The man then exited through the back of his home and cut through his neighbor's backyard where he joined up with one of his companions. Both men saw the body of a young naked woman, though they could not identify her. As both men were exiting the village they saw another body, this time of a small boy, approximately age 8 , which they indicated had deep cuts in his arms and legs. ${ }^{1}$

At 11:00 p.m. on 18 January, a young man and his two young cousins, attempted to sneak back in Dar Chee Yar Tan to salvage food from a relative's home. While watching the village from a nearby paddy field they heard and saw a plain clothed Rakhine man drag a partially unconscious Muslim woman in the field near him, out on the ground and stab her repeatedly with knife. It was dark so he could not identify the people but light emanating from surrounding areas, as well as the woman's grunts, from the village made clear what was happening.

In addition to these deaths, the UN can confirm that at least 16 Rohingya from Dar Chee Yat Tan suffered serious injuries in the violence on 14 January, including gunshot and knife/ sword wounds.

These eyewitness testimonies suggest that the security operation to recover the sergeant and his weapon at some point on 14 January facilitated severe anti-Muslim attacks and killings.

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