



Incident 6 – Myin Hlut Village, Maungdaw Township

The Myin Hlut incident started on the evening of August 24, 2017 and continued through August 25, 2017. The majority of Myin Hlut villagers departed for Bangladesh following the incident. Although some remained in Myanmar, it is hard to determine their present whereabouts. Following are excerpts from findings, based on a total of four statements, two by Hindus and two by Muslims, who witnessed the events in Myin Hlut.

(a) Profile of Myin Hlut Village

Myin Hlut is the largest village in southern Maungdaw. It is situated on the Maungdaw-Ah NguMaw road about 21 miles from Maungdaw Town. The General Administration Department of the Ministry of Home Affairs, upgraded Myin Hlut village to a town in 2014. Myin Hlut Town is composed of eight wards: the western ward, the middle ward, the eastern ward, Ywathit Ward, Shida Ward, Phway Yar Ward, Myaw Chaung Ward, and Pyindaw Ward. According to the government's official data, there were 1,833 households and a total population of 16,837 persons in Myin Hlut. Before August 2017, the majority were Muslims. There were also a few government staff and a Border Guard Police Station.

(b) Statements of two Hindus

Statement 1 (Hindu woman)

The disturbances in Myin Hlut village started on a Thursday, I do not remember the date, at midnight. Terrorists and Muslim villagers conspired in attacking the Myin Hlut Police Station. I heard that two Border Guard Police corporals were killed in the attack. Since my family were still in bed at our home, we did not witness the killings. The next day, the Friday, at around 6 a.m, we fled from Myin Hlut and stayed for a while in ZayHaung village. At 10 a.m., ARSA terrorists caught up with us, aiming to execute us. When they tried to enter the house where we were staying, my husband tried to keep the door closed by pushing, but the ARSA members pushed back hard, forcing the door open, and stabbed my husband in the chest. I saw that there was a strong group of terrorists— more than a hundred. They were wearing black shirts and camouflage pants. Then, a Muslim, who seemed to be a leader among them, said, "They have been living in this area for a long time. Do not harm them." After he said that, they stopped trying to kill us, and left. Before leaving, they took my gold and jewelry despite my pleas. They also took a

motorbike. They gave us an ultimatum, saying that they would come and kill us after completing their worship at the mosque at the appointed time. A little while after they left, a police car arrived. My family and I went to the nearby police regimental base to seek refuge. The soldiers who were there gave us protection. After a short while, the soldiers left for a place called Kyauk Pandu, saying that there was a problem there. Before leaving, the soldiers handed our family over to the Border Guard Police for protection. When the Border Guard Police also had to leave, they did not take us with them. Without the police, we dared not stay in the station anymore so we ran after their car. The police regiment arrived at Goryakharli (Kyaung Taung) village and were sitting by the creek. There was a police outpost near the bridge. The police restricted our movements, so we just sat by the side of the bridge. Some time after 6 p.m., a car with a high ranking police officer inside arrived. At that time, we saw that there was a fire in U Daung village. Some police officers took us to Myin Hlut village, where we discovered that no-one was left in the village. We saw shattered glass and damaged buildings. We went to the military regiment compound in Myin Hlut. Since the Border Guard Police there told us not to go outside, we just stayed inside. On the next day, we were given some rice and food. While cooking, I saw dead bodies near the kitchen. Around 20 or 30 of them were ARSA members and two were Border Guard Police. The dead terrorists were wearing black shirts and slacks. When the officers told us that they would no longer be staying in the military regiment compound, we asked them to take us with them wherever they were going, since we were scared to be left behind by ourselves. We were then sent to Maungdaw in the same vehicle as some of the dead bodies. We arrived at Maungdaw hospital at about 7 p.m. Then, we were sent to Ward 3 in Maungdaw Town. My husband died from his stab wounds 15 days later. At present, I am living with a relative in Ward 4 in Maungdaw Town. I am having difficulties meeting my needs.

Statement 2 (Hindu woman)

I am originally from Ward 4 in Maungdaw Town. During the 2017 attacks, I was temporarily residing in Myin Hlut, running a clothes retailing business. I had 18 family members who lived with me in Myin Hlut village. On a Thursday night, I started hearing the sound of gunshots, which continued the whole of the next day. Although I heard the sound of conflict and gunshots between ARSA and the military, I did not see it. Border Guard Police, wearing camouflage uniforms, came into the village around 2 p.m. on Friday. From where I lived, I saw a lot of people fleeing their homes, even before the military entered the village.

On that morning (August 25), a group of Muslims, including an overweight man wearing a mask, besieged my house. There were about 20 or 30 of them. It was around at noon. They took away the clothes, which I was selling, as well as phones and other belongings. They stayed near my house for about two hours and left only when they heard a car coming. Border Guard Police, wearing camouflage uniforms, came with that car. I asked them for help. When we left the house we did not see anyone except the police. We saw that a part of Myin Hlut village was on fire. The uniformed police told us to get in

the car and sent us to U Daung village. Before we reached U Daung village, the Border Guard Police stopped by Myin Hlut Police Station. The car was parked on the street and we went inside the station with them. We saw a group of about 15 Muslims setting the car on fire. They ran away when the soldiers approached them. The military did not shoot or arrest them. We stayed in U Daung village Police Station for a while and then went to Maungdaw hospital the next day. I saw many places burning along the way.

(c) Statements of two Muslims

Statement 3

There used to be 33 households with around 130 people in Ward 1 of Myin Hlut village. We fled to Alai Than Kyaw village due to the incident in August 2017. At 4 a.m. on August 25, we heard the sound of gunshots and the shouting of villagers. So, my family fled to a village close to the foot of the hill, which was quite a distance from my village. It was around noon when we reached the foot of the hill. That was when we saw smoke coming from Myin Hlut village. Later, we arrived at Alai Than Kyaw, from where we could cross the border to Bangladesh. We stayed there for about three or four days. The Battalion Commander of the 99th Division, some officials from the Border Guard Police, and some Muslim community leaders from Maungdaw came to where we were. Through 20 Muslims from the area who could speak Burmese, they told us not to run away to Bangladesh, as houses were not on fire and there were no more gunshots. They said that they would guarantee our health and livelihoods if we remained. We asked them whether we could settle in nearby villages, to which they replied that we could. My family then moved to Alai Than Kyaw, which was one of the places we were allowed to settle. There were hundreds of thousands of people from villages in Maungdaw and Buthidaung, in the coastal area. A majority of the Muslims did not listen to what the authorities said and fled to Bangladesh. Only my family moved from the coast to Alai Than Kyaw. villagers who fled from Zay Di Pyin, Thawin Chaung, Myin Hlut, and U Daung villages are currently living in Alai Than Kyaw village.

Statement 4

I used to live in Myin Hlut, but now I'm staying in Ward 2 of Maungdaw Town. I have a family of 20. I have passed the tenth grade in high-school. I used to work on the farms when I was in Myin Hlut, but now I am working as a tuition teacher in Ward 2.

At 8 p.m. on August 24, I heard the sound of a bomb explosion and saw villagers running along the main road. The shooting came from the Myin Hlut Border Guard Police Station by the side of the road. The Border Guard Police Station had a strength of about 15 at the time. We were unable to see who was involved in the shooting, as it was late at night. The shooting went on till 6 a.m. the next day. All the villagers fled from their homes and went to stay in another village.

Beginning from August 27 and 28, people from our village fled towards SeikKan village. Due to the night time shootings, some people, out of fear, fled to the mountains, while some went to Kan Paing and Chaung Taung villages. Some of our villagers were shot dead. One of my friends was among those who died. I heard there were about 28 deaths during the incident. Some people were unaccounted for, because of the early morning shootings. While families were searching for their missing family members, we found some of their dead bodies in the paddy fields. Some people, including my friend who is currently in Bangladesh, took photos of those found near the prawn pond. All the deceased had suffered gunshot wounds.

The fire started in my village at about midnight on August 27. All the villagers fled because of the fire. When the fire started, we were already on the farms. We could not do anything but sit and watch our village burn. I spent a night in Chaung Taung (Gawrakari) village (August 27) and arrived in SeikKan on August 28. Some people went to Bangladesh via Chaung Taung. I also saw that approximately 150 people from the Border Guard Police and military entered into our village at 10 p.m. on August 27. We saw the military torch our houses – some throwing fuel onto houses while others shot at houses to set them on fire.

There were about 150 households in our village and approximately 95 percent of them fled to Bangladesh. The rest, those who did not flee, are mostly living in northern Maungdaw. Those who ran away were scared of the fires and fled because they did not have any dwellings left to stay in. Many motorboats from the Bangladeshi side came to pick them up. Some also rented boats from this side. They had to pay 50,000 per person for carriage to the other side. Those who could not afford the charges had difficulties and were fetched last. Some used motorboats from this side and were not charged anything. All of my family members had gone to Bangladesh; I am the only one left here. I did not want to go there, so I came back to Maungdaw with three of my friends. First, we went to Alai Than Kyaw, then to Du Nyaungbin Gyi village, before reaching Maungdaw.

Myin Hlut and Alai Than Kyaw are only nine miles apart. My 19 family members could not afford the motorboat charges to Bangladesh, and so they had to pay in gold to cross. They are now living at the Tinkhali refugee camp in Bangladesh. We often talk on the phone. They told me that they are encountering a lot of difficulties in the camp. Food is not a problem, but the living conditions are poor. Despite their willingness to return, they said that without citizen rights being guaranteed they would not come back. There were no threats against them for wishing to return to Myanmar.

The Border Guard Police took buffaloes, cows, and sheep, together with some other property left behind, such as motorcycles and cars. As we left our village at night, we did not have a chance to bring our livestock with us. The security forces took away most of the goods, but some were taken by ethnic nationals. The Border Guard Police and the battalion from Kyauk Pandu Regiment were

involved. I saw them taking our cattle while I was staying in Chaung Taung village, which is only about one and a half miles from Myin Hlut. I saw some of them loading buffaloes, cows, and motorbikes taken from our village into their cars and heading towards the regimental headquarters. I also saw ethnic nationals taking our belongings – buffaloes, cows, and old motorcycles that were not taken by the police. The villagers were from two Rakhine villages close to ours: U Daung (Rakhine) and KyaukPandu. They may have sold some of the plundered properties. These days I also see some of our passenger cars in their hands.

There was no rape in our village. Since the villagers fled at night time, there were also no detentions or torture. There were shootings. I personally witnessed looting, shootings, and arson. The 28 killed were discovered only when some of our villagers went out to look for them. I learnt who had been killed in the incident when the group came back and told us.
