



Incident 5 – Alai Than Kyaw village tract, Maungdaw Township

The following are statements of ethnic nationals and Muslim witnesses describing the events leading to, during and after the attack on the police station compound¹ at Alai Than Kyaw village tract on August 25, 2017.

(a) Profile of Alai Than Kyaw village tract

Alai Than Kyaw village tract is situated approximately 12 miles south of Maungdaw Town on the old Maungdaw-Ahngumaw traffic road. It used to be a large village tract with over 1300 households and a population of around 11,500. The Alai Than Kyaw village tract consists of six villages. This sizeable village tract used to be bustling with agriculture, livestock, and inshore and offshore fishing industries. There was one government high school in the village tract. It is a main and principal village in the southern part of Maungdaw Township. This village is known to have produced the second largest number of Muslim politicians and businessmen in Maungdaw region, after Maungdaw Town. Time-honored political activism is associated with this village tract. Following the 2017 incident, a majority of Muslims left for Bangladesh, and currently, there are only ethnic nationals and only a small number of Muslims remaining. Facts and figures of Alai Than Kyaw village tract are tabulated below, according to the latest records from the Maungdaw Township general administration department:

No.	Village	Status of destruction		Households		Families		Population		Remarks
		Completely destroyed	Partially destroyed	Past	Present	Past	Present	Past	Present	
1	Kanpaing Gyi (upper)	•		133	0	108	0	1138	0	Muslims

¹ Alai Than Kyaw police station is located between Zaygone Dan and Kanpaing Gyi (upper) villages.

2	Mawtular		•	33 9	10	344	11	302 3	47	Muslims
3	Zaygone Dan		•	36 6	30	365	30	305 4	129	Mixed (only Rakhine s remaini ng)
4	Kanpaing Gyi (lower)	•		76	0	66	0	719	0	Muslims
5	Kan Phu	•		10 4	0	97	0	971	0	Muslims
6	Layyin Gwin	•		28 6	0	211	0	255 8	0	Muslims

(b) Statements of ethnic national witnesses

Statement of Witness 1 (The Alai Than Kyaw village tract administrator who had fled inside the police station):

I assume it would be necessary to explain a bit about the prevailing conditions prior to the August 25, 2017 disturbances. This turmoil did not emerge out of nowhere, but instead materialized through a pre-conceived, time-consuming strategy by ARSA terrorists, as it systematically made advanced preparations, by recruiting people -- after mobilizing them from each and every village -- and providing training and mock drills to those who were recruited. A simultaneous attack by terrorists, against 30 police stations, clearly manifests its systematic preparations. At that time, it seemed as if local ethnic nationals were doomed and frantically awaiting the looming attacks and killings by ARSA terrorists, ready to be subjected to suffering without any defense. If ever the ARSA were sufficiently armed during the attacks, this would have led to a large number of police stations being obliterated, and no ethnic nationals would have remained alive by now. The crisis that occurred in Rakhine region emerged from diverse factors. The discontentment between the two communities in Rakhine State had been growing since many years ago. An attack by Muslims against the Rakhines in 1942, that resulted in massive number of casualties, has been marked as wounds that could never be healed or forgotten in the hearts of Rakhines. Occasional conflicts between the two communities followed. But under the rule of military governments, both Rakhines and Muslims came to accept the situation and had been coexisting together. The reason was both sides had to depend on each other for their livelihood. For a long time, both Rakhines and Muslims amicably

interacted in their business matters, but never had their blood mixed by marriage. This mutual trust eroded after the 2012 conflict. As we, the ethnic nationals, were a minority especially in the Maungdaw and Buthidaung areas, we did not have any other option but to deal with the Muslims. But the ethnic nationals did not have the kind of trust in the Muslims as before. We always had to be cautious with them. Following the attacks on border guard police regimental headquarters in Kyeekan Pyin, Maungdaw Township, by terrorists on October 9, 2016, we noticed that the Muslims had begun to change their attitude towards the ethnic nationals. We started to hear the term 'ARSA terrorist group' only after then. From that time onwards, ARSA began to warn or threaten those who were close to the military, police or the government including other Muslim villagers. Every Muslim was instructed to attend the mosque regularly. All these activities were mainly led by Mawlawi teachers from each village. Even those who used to be drunkards and hooligans were told to attend the mosque, and they were seen obliging. Close Muslim acquaintances would always report about these conditions. Those who did not follow their instructions would be severely punished. Sometimes, the punishment included executions. Later, the influence of terrorists and Mawlawi teachers in the village grew to a large extent. All urgent directives were said to be announced during the worship service at the village mosques. First, Muslims were asked to sever relations they already had with Rakhine nationals, and second many Muslim workers were also banned from working at Rakhine-owned industries. I heard that as a means to compensate lost wages they received from the Rakhines, affected Muslims were allocated some kind of allowance from a fund collected from Islamic people around the world. They did not tell me how much they received. As a third step, measures were taken to restrict Muslim village administrators and Village In-Charges², who made up the main basic levels of the government's administration, to disregard whatever the government told them to do and to sever relations. This last step manifested itself more obviously two or three months prior to the 2017 incident. The Muslim village administrators and the hundred household heads, who were my former assistants, would stop coming to meetings when I called them. They said they couldn't come anymore, as they were being threatened with execution, if they did. They also firmly rejected following directives from higher authorities. This way, Muslim villages seemed to be defying the government's administrative control. I even thought that the outside world was in the dark, regarding what ARSA was doing here. Or maybe, they already knew about it, but had turned a blind eye to it. Later, Mawlawis and terrorists from the village were said to be lording over the Muslim villagers. I always reported all these situations to the township general administrator. I had one Muslim subordinate. When necessary, he would drive my car. He used to have a close working relationship with government departmental officials and police officers. terrorist son the pretext of going out together for fishing, accused him of being a police informer and

² Village In-Charges are government-appointed positions to administer 10-100 households.

murdered him. Those who killed him were terrorists from the same village. There are many similar cases where Muslim civilians were being killed by ARSA terrorists. These reports were often covered in the government and online media. I think, there must be around 100 Muslim civilians murdered by terrorists after accusing them of being government in formers. Relevant authorities will have the exact records. But it is sad that international organizations, including the United Nations, have shown no interest in these reports. To be frank, I even sometimes think whether these organizations are encouraging and supporting the armed group. This is not only my opinion. Many ordinary ethnic national villagers also have the same view. To tell the truth, not all Muslims like or support the ARSA terrorist group. There were many who were pretending to follow them, just because they were concerned about losing their lives. Elderly people and those who were well-experienced, especially, did not want to associate with them. They dared not speak back. The majority of those who supported them were said to be youngsters. Whatever information they had, my Muslim friends had regularly and secretly shared with me.

We got the first bit of information that our Alai Than Kyaw police station³ would be attacked on the day of Qurbani, August 28, 2017. A Muslim friend had given me the information. He said ARSA had gathered all villagers in the mosque and had told them about it. That day is a significant religious day for the Muslims. I stayed calm, thinking that there were still some more days left. At pre-dusk on August 24, the elder son of a Muslim friend called me. Without a pause, he said, 'Uncle [honorific term for respectable elderly men], the situation's not good tonight. They are preparing to attack the police station. They would come tonight. Be careful, Uncle and others,' and hung up. I reported this to the township general administrator and through him to U Ye Htut, the district general administrator. To this, U Ye Htut responded by saying, 'This is baseless, don't give me this kind of news that makes my employees scared.' The special branch in-charge also rejected this information as just rumors. I told them to call my Muslim friend from Alai Than Kyaw, who had given me the information. At that time, my friend had his phone switched off, and the report could not be confirmed. U Ye Htut called one Ebrahim, the Kanyin Dan administrator, and he was told that this information is wrong and that all is well. U Ye Htut turned towards me and scolded, 'Next time, I am going to take action against you.' At that time, I heard that terrorists were confiscating phones from villagers whom they suspected of being informers. My friend also had to switch off his phone after calls, out of concern that terrorists would suspect him. Although my friend did not go to the mosque, his own relatives attend mosque and would report back to him and warn him to be cautious.

At about 10 p.m. on August 24, there was another call from my friend's son, who told us to flee since they were already coming. Ethnic nationals, immigration employees, police officers, teachers, and hospital staff from Alai Than Kyaw ran to seek refuge at the border guard police station compound. There were empty barracks at the police station, and women, civilians, immigration employees and police information team were given separate places to stay. Each barrack was not far from each other, only about 150 feet distant. At 11 p.m., there was an explosion. Some were saying that it was an oil tank exploding. I thought it was from Padin village area. While we were speaking, there was another explosion. I thought it was from Myin Lut area. I called and reported it to the township administrative officer. Knowing that there were only 17 police force members, with only a few bullets, in Alai Than Kyaw police station at that time, I demanded the township administrative officer to quickly send military support. At the same time, explosions could be heard from various places. After the explosions, a Muslim mob approached the police station shouting rallying cries. My house was in front of the police station. I turned on the generator at my place to make it sound like there were people inside and to hinder those who came near, lighting the house environs as usual. The police station also had their generator turned on. Therefore, those who wanted to commit violence dare not approach from the main road. The whole place was brightly lit. It was already about 3:30 a.m. when the sound of gunfire erupted. Terrorists started the shooting. It seemed they had guns with them. But it could be only two or three. There was a large number of people who started to attack violently. They came from all four sides, carrying batons, spears, and swords. There were also children among the crowd. Only later it was known that the barracks at the end, assigned for immigration employees, was already secretly occupied by terrorists, entering at what time no one knows. The back of the barracks was dark and surrounded by tall grass and bushes. It is possible they approached and entered the place after breaching the fence and taking advantage of the darkness and shrubs. Only after the attack did we see the broken fence at the back of the station. An immigration employee, who was sick and lying on a bed inside the barracks was stabbed and cut into pieces. We were grieved to hear his cries but were not able to help out as there were not enough armed personnel. There was another immigration officer, together with the person who was killed, at the barracks, whose information we didn't get. We tried to call him, but as his phone was switched off, we assumed that he had been killed. Later, I heard that the immigration employee was in the other room when terrorists came in silently from the back of the barracks taking advantage of the darkness, and killing the sick employee. Because of the dark, the fighters couldn't see him. Because he could not escape, he was said to have climbed up a hole in the ceiling and sat on a post under the roof, hiding the whole night. He had switched off his phone also. In the morning, after terrorists had gone, he climbed down from the ceiling. At that time, there was a military regiment in Mawrawady, near Alai Than Kyaw, and there were also troops under Battalion 99 at the police regimental headquarters, near Mawrawady. Since they

were conducting area clearance operations in response to the explosions, they could not immediately come and support Alai Than Kyaw. In ordinary times, traveling by car from Mawrawady to Alai Than Kyaw takes only about 10 to 15 minutes, but the military support took two hours to reach Alai Than Kyaw, only arriving at about 5:30 a.m. I heard the delay was due to the military having to clear IEDs laid by ARSA along the way. The terrorists continued attacking Alai Than Kyaw police station even when the military arrived. They were keeping at it at 7 a.m., when morning had already broken. They had surrounded the small security and guard posts at Alai Than Kyaw police station. Although they were attacking with handmade and handheld bombs, most of them did not explode. When the battle ended and everything was cleared up, it was already about 8:30 or 9 a.m. There were no casualties from the police side. I saw 22 dead bodies of terrorists who died inside the station compound after attacking the station. Among the dead were faces that I recognized as our villagers. The dead had black uniforms on them. The uniforms were not exactly the same. They were black athletic T-shirts and black slacks. The designs were not the same. The only similarity was that they were all black. I heard that they had already ordered the black uniforms in advance from Yangon. About ten days before the attacks, when I got the information that black shirts and slacks had already arrived at a clothes shop in Mawtular, I went along with the police to seize them. Mawtular is the largest and the most populous village in Alai Than Kyaw village tract. It is famous because of its many politicians, and it is also a native village of Aung Naing, proprietor of Naing Group Construction Co., Ltd. in Yangon. Many villagers from Mawtular were involved in activities leading to the attack. Some Muslims were in fact simply not aware of these plans. Some did not even know when or where they had to go and attack. There was no battle in Mawtular village. Except for Alai Than Kyaw police station, there were no clashes seen around Alai Than Kyaw. It was said that many Mawtular villagers were included among those attacking the police station. Many were said to have succumbed to their injuries while being taken back in the aftermath of the station attack. I did not see their dead bodies. I know it only from what my Muslim friends told me. I could not estimate the number of people in the mob that attacked the station. They were all shouting from around the station, in the dark. They were shouting something like when cheering at a football match. They could be in thousands. The Mawlawi teachers were said to have ordered one from every house to come out.

Muslims who escaped to Bangladesh would try to call me using Myanmar phone [SIM card]. They often say that they want to come back. They open up to me saying that they have to obey whatever ARSA tells them in the camps, that they were beaten and persecuted without any reason, that there were even killings, that there were cases of robberies, and that young girls were taken away and raped. Right from the start, responsible officials and I had often advised them not to leave. But they said ARSA had told them that soon the military would drop bombs on them, using fighter aircrafts and helicopters, and that they would only

escape if they flee. Most of the Muslims from this side are illiterate and they are weak in analyzing matters. They seem to just follow whatever their Mawlawi teacher tells them. I went to persuade the Muslims from Alai Than Kyaw who were preparing to run away to stay. The majority did not listen to me. School teacher Daw Khin Aye and her husband U Ba Cho, whom ARSA accused of being government informers and put on a hit list, told me that they wanted to move over to where the Rakhines were staying. I told them that this was not the right time to come over, when temperaments were high, and that they should stay where they were, without making a run for it, and that I would guarantee their safety, that they would only perish if I do, and that if I am alive, they would also be. So, they were among those who didn't run away. They are free from danger up to now. The military did not do anything to those who did not take to their heels. The majority of the Muslims believed the instigation by ARSA and had taken their flight. Families that were involved in the violent attacks, though, did not have clear conscience, and would not listen to whatever was being said, but would just adamantly leave for the other side. They were not leaving only one or two days after the incident. They kept doing it even until over a year. Muslims, running away from regions where no incidents ever occurred, could be seen on a daily basis. No one had driven them out.

Immediately, after the disturbances, most of the Muslim villagers did not run away to Bangladesh. They were hiding in the forests surrounding the village. A Rakhine goldsmith alerted me at 5:30 a.m. on the next day of the incident that a Kalar [a racial slur used in hate speech context for Muslims] was committing arson. We all saw that. The goldsmith lives in Maungdaw. Soon, we saw smoke rising and then the flames. I did not see the fire myself in other places, but only when I saw the smoke would I know that there was a fire. Ethnic nationals were not involved in the burning. At that time, we were scared of the Muslims and we did not go out of the house. I did not hear about any rape cases. As they had already taken off, I don't see how it would happen. I did not see soldiers and villagers looting Muslim properties.

Witness 2 stated:

I am a native of Sittwe and a Rakhine. At present, I lived with my family in Alai Than Kyaw Zaygone Dan. My wife is a health department employee. In reality, Muslims from this region did not identify themselves as Rohingyas before 2012. Except for one or two cases, this is the truth. Following the 2012 crisis, the majority of the Muslims identified themselves as Rohingyas and plainly carried out activities demanding official recognition for Rohingya as an indigenous ethnic nationality. When the Duchi Yardan incident erupted in early 2014, a worrisome situation had emerged in Maungdaw region. At that time, I was already employed at a Maungdaw-based NGO. I used to go every morning on my motorbike from Alai Than Kyaw and come back in the evening. I had to pass through many

Muslim villages along the old car road. During that time, some Muslim youths would have an attitude when I pass by, and had to bear up with their semi-audible insults, branding their swords or raising their [front part of] longyis [men sarongs, showing their private parts]. Muslim girls would shout Rohingya, as I pass by. I understood that this was done on purpose to definitely cause friction between the Muslims and the ethnic nationals. Unlike in the past, many Muslims within the Muslim society would show hostility towards the Rakhines.

There was a local young Muslim guy, employed to run the generator, at the Alai Than Kyaw police station. He said that the other day when he came back home at night time, after he had run the generator, and while he was crossing the fields, he met with a group of men, wearing black. Among them, one thin, tall, long-bearded person, thought to be the leader, called him and asked him from where he was, and to where he was going, and then slapped him on his face. He recounted that the dialect they were using was not the same as the Muslim language used in Maungdaw region, and that they could not be reputable persons. I took lightly of what he said. Soon after this, there was an incident where four police guard outposts, including Kyeegan Pyin police headquarters, were simultaneously attacked.

Beginning from early 2016, I noticed that the Muslims were cultivating less and less paddy than usual. This was not due to the weather condition. During the cultivation season in 2017, the Muslims' paddy cultivation had significantly decreased. Only the ethnic nationals and those close to them had cultivated their full quota, but many [of the Muslims] had only planted a little. Some Muslim friends that I am acquainted with told me that there might not be Qurbani Eid festivities that year, since there could be a big crisis before that date. I knew that the Qurbani Eid fell on August 28 in 2017. There used to be always a grand cattle trade fair before the Qurbani Eid, but there was none in 2017. Muslim men and women would buy new clothing before the celebration, with Maungdaw market being crowded with people jostling with each other, but that year it was empty. This meant that Qurbani Eid would not be celebrated. This was a sign that many Muslims knew in advance that there would be a turmoil. Because of these conditions, Rakhine nationals had to be always cautious, having learnt their lessons from what had happened in the past. Most fields in Alai Than Kyaw village tract were Muslim owned, and there were only a few ethnic national owners.

We also had to be always wary because of the high population gap between the ethnic nationals and the Muslims in the region. Analyzing the present attitude changes and the general conditions, we concluded it as an indication that, sooner or later, there would erupt a worrisome consequence. I made my family collect all important documents and materials and to keep them ready and convenient to carry. Especially on Fridays, we would take extra care in our goings and comings. If possible, I wouldn't send them far. During the time between 2016 and pre-

incident time in 2017, ARSA murdered a large number of Muslims who they accused of being close to the government. There was also loss of some police lives in frequent surprise attacks at police security guard outposts in some locations. While worried and terrified at glaring changes in attitudes of the Muslims, on August 3, 2017, ARSA barbarically killed six Mro ethnic nationals, working together as laborers in a paddy field farm in Kaing Gyi (Mro) village. From that time onwards, knowing definitely that a massive crisis was about to be generated, ethnic nationals started to move out their families to safe and secure places. But no one could guess when [this crisis] would be happening. This is because ethnic nationals could not do anything but only wait for the arrival and attacks of the Muslims, as those who were formulating the attack strategy were the Muslims. They [ethnic nationals] could only guess, study or observe hints from the activities by the Muslims, and had to pass their daily lives in worry and fright. The ethnic nationals had to be mainly dependent on the security forces, and they did not even keep an effective long dagger in hand to fight back.

I'd like to say a bit about the changes in social interaction. Rakhines and Muslims had coexisted together for many years, and there were those who were mutually friendly. When incidents occurred in the past, links would be cut off only during the happenings, and then there would be harmony again. Before, some friendly Muslims would hand over to me, on a temporary basis, their valuable materials for safekeeping before their departure. When they return, whatever they had handed over would be given back. This time, however, it was remarkable that no materials were handed over for safeguarding. I presume the reason was to keep the Rakhines in the dark of whatever they were planning to carry out, by not handing over their things. Even Muslim friends who used to do business together did not let out any hint to us, even up to one day before the incident. No wares sold by ethnic nationals in Alai Than Kyaw market were bought by Muslims anymore. Even if they do, they would ruthlessly reduce the price. Also, they would not sell their wares to the ethnic nationals. Even if they do, they would charge exorbitant prices. In a region where sales relied on the Muslim consumer, not buying like this from ethnic national salespersons is destroying these businesses. Rakhines did not have the guts anymore to go to the sea and run the fishing industry after the 2012 incident up to now. To tell it all, it has been a long time now that Rakhines had gone on a search for frogs and fish in the nooks and crannies at the village edges. I wish all relevant persons would come to know that the ethnic nationals, with a small population in the region, have had their livelihoods repressed from all sides. I see these bullying tactics as driving out the ethnic nationals from this region by making it hard to earn a living. From the time the conditions became tense, ethnic national dared not even wander around near the village in search of fruits and vegetables. This was because the whole environment was surrounded by only the Muslims. Every strategic place was already taken over by them. I see these facts as a long-term strategy by the

Muslims to drive out the remaining ethnic nationals in the region, so that the Muslims would be the only remaining people there.

From the time the 2012 conflict started, night time curfew orders were issued in Maungdaw region. Until now, they had not been revoked. But the Muslims do not care about the order. They actively implement their clandestine plans during the night time. Ethnic nationals, on the other hand, abide by that order. This is to say that only the Muslims had been violating the rule of law and order.

On the day the incident was to happen in 2017, I had to go to Maungdaw for business on a motor bike, and returned to Alai Than Kyaw at about 7 p.m. On the road entering the village, a friendly young Muslim lad said, Uncle [honorific term for respectable elderly men], go back home quick, the situation is not good. After arriving home, I took my bath and had my dinner. It was about 8:30 p.m. The township medical officer from Maungdaw called my wife and told her that as the Muslims were about to attack Alai Than Kyaw, all the staff were to speedily take off for the police station compound. The village administrator had also received the information and was already arranging for ethnic nationals and employees from Alai Than Kyaw to move to the police station. A police border guard official had come to the hospital compound and, because the situation was not good, he had come to take [them] to the police station compound. Our hospital staff and all ethnic nationals hurriedly set off for the police station. The police at the station were also getting necessary things ready. Up to the time all of us arrived at the police station, there was nothing significant and no sound could be heard in the village. The only thing remarkable was that it was more silent than usual. Not a dog barked and not a cock crowed, and it was unusually quiet. When we left our houses, we left the lights on. Similarly, the police station and the environs of the administrator's house in front were all brightly lit, with generators on as usual. People were calling each other and enquiring about things. There was information that bombs had exploded and shootings could be heard between 10 p.m. and around 11 p.m. Until that time, nothing had happened in Alai Than Kyaw. Some ethnic nationals also came out of the police station and were observing the situation from the road in front of the station. I became sleepy, so I went inside the barracks and laid down for a while, although I could not sleep. It was about 4 a.m. The sound of explosions and incessant gunfire could be then heard from the seacoast area. What we did not know was that terrorists, under cover of darkness, had slipped through the bushes and rushed in through the destroyed fencing at the back side of the police station, and had stationed themselves at the barracks, situated at the extreme end of the police station yard. The police station compound was also very large, compared to the police force there. Only when gunshots were heard from them did we know that the terrorists were already there. There were four barracks and the barracks building where they were now stationed was the farthest at the extreme end. There was no police guard there, because of insufficient police force. There was also no electricity [connected]

there. Amidst explosions and sounds of gunfire, we could see under the lighting that terrorists were running across to and from the fourth barracks and the second and third barracks. How many of them, I do not know, although the reappeared to be many of them. They were in the dark and we were in the light, and so they could see us, but we couldn't see them. Though nine immigration employees were stationed at the barrack sat the extreme end, when sounds of explosions and gunfire erupted, they came running to our barracks. The deputy in charge of immigration was sick and left behind, resulting in his being stabbed to death by terrorists. Although we could hear his pitiful and painful cries, before he died, we were not able to rescue him. The police were shooting from the bunker where they were stationed, but it was not effective, thanks to the barracks walls. We could see the crowd coming from the front and back sides of the police station and joining forces, while destroying the fencing with swords. The border guard police at the station was also shooting back in defense. Since the police force members did not have the fighting experience like the soldiers and because they had to be economizing the few bullets they had, I saw that it was not as effective as it should have been. Both sides kept shooting until it was almost dawn at 5:30 a.m. At that time, a supporting military column, led by the tactical operations commander, himself, arrived. Daylight was breaking. Until that time, the Muslim crowd was fully packed inside the police station compound. Our barracks building was nearest to the road and only about 150 to 200 feet distant from the barracks where the terrorists were stationed. The tactical operations commander looked at the crowd and was surprised. At that time, a soldier carrying a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) asked for orders from the tactical operations commander to shoot at the barracks that the terrorists had sieged with his RPG. The commander did not permit him to do so. He only ordered them to use small arms, and the soldiers started to open fire. But most of the shots were only hitting the barracks walls. When the tactical operations commander saw that the terrorists had encircled the police station compound from all sides, he divided the troops into groups, ordering one group to go around and attack from the back of the station compound. The soldiers surrounded [the station yard] in groups. The compound itself was thick with bushes, shrubs and vines, and although their shouting could be heard, they could not be seen in the dark. The soldiers were not shooting people they could see, but seemed to be shooting just to threaten them with the sound of the gunfire. Once they came to know that the military had encircled them, the terrorists started to retreat and take to their heels. It was already broad daylight. Up to that time, thinking that there were only police, the terrorists kept attacking, and once they knew that the military was already there, they retreated. It was already about 9 a.m. when all area clearance operations were completed inside the station compound. The border guard police at the police station already had run out of ammunition, and if the military had not arrived in time, all the border guard police would have fallen and all the civilians would have been executed. During this incident, there was no casualties or wounded from the side of the military, police and civilians. I saw with my own

eyes the bodies of about 19 dead terrorists. They were all killed inside the station compound, and soldiers were collecting and carrying them. Those dead could be seen in black T-shirts and black slacks. While the soldiers were clearing inside the station yard, they got hold of two long Hnget Gyi Taung daggers, and they left them with me. It was unusual to see a hole each on the dagger tip. The next day, the tactical operations commander ordered small and scattered border guard outposts to be withdrawn and to be collectively stationed at Alai Than Kyaw police station. It was thought to be done to supplement the force strength. At about 4 p.m. that day, terrorists again approached the station from the front side. They shot the station with guns from a distance. Again, at about 4:15 a.m. on the 26th, they opened fire from the back of the station. For three days, up to the 27th, they shot at the station from a distance. At about 4 p.m. on the 26th, an additional military column arrived, surrounded the village, and told everyone, including the monks, to move over to the police station. Only then did we feel safer. The terrorists did not appear again after that military column arrived and conducted area clearance operations. Days later, when I saw Muslims animated in the afternoons, I reported it to a military official, who told me not to do anything unless they hurt you, and to just stay like that. We pooled whatever we had and cooked and ate together during those days. Because we were not able to go outside, food became scarce. There were plans to take villagers over to a safer location on the 27th, but the arrangement fell through when a police van, that would have transported us, hit a mine at the edge of Chein Kharli village.

Beginning the 27th, the Muslims were seen planning to leave for the other country, and began crossing over to the other side on the 28th. I heard that the ARSA had already drawn a plan to completely attack and wipe out their foes by the 25th, and if their plan does not materialize, everyone should set off to the other country. Muslims who were close to me told me that plans were already set up to escape instead of being sent to prison. At the time the terrorists and the Muslims fled, we could see from a distance smoke rising out of Thandar and Wah Cha villages. Until that time, the military was stationed in Alai Than Kyaw and never left their camp. It is improbable that the military had caused the arson, although I didn't witness who did it. On the evening of the 28th, all villagers from Alai Than Kyaw, accompanied by the tactical operations commander, were sent off on foot to the police regiment backline headquarters near Mawrawady village. Although it was not far, the military had to clear IEDs along the way. The military was heard to have given similar support also in Chein Kharli village. The next day, on the 29th, our family continued to Buthidaung, and arrived Sittwe on the 30th. After staying in Sittwe for about two weeks, we returned to Alai Than Kyaw end of the second week in September. At that time, there were no Muslim villagers remaining, and their houses were also seen to be burnt down. I did not see who torched them. About two months after the turmoil, I saw some villagers removing and carrying away short planks from Muslim houses where no one stayed anymore. I didn't see them carry valuable materials away.

Witness 3 stated:

I lived with four of my family members in Alai Than Kyaw Zaygone Dan village. We operated a food shop. My husband sometimes worked as a driver. Before the turmoil, business was good, but now, the shop is closed because there are no customers.

I was at the Alai Than Kyaw Zaygone Dan shop when the disturbances occurred. If this incident is to be recounted, we have to start from the past incidents. After the 2012 disturbances, for about one year, the relations between the Rakhines and Muslims returned almost back to normalcy. Again, when terrorists attacked the border guard police headquarters in Kyeegan Pyin on October 9, 2016, and took away arms from there, relations started to change. I noticed that they were not interacting as before and kept their facial expressions stern. As I had a food shop opened, I could sense more of these changes. Muslim customers, who used to come in the past, stopped visiting our shop. They started supporting the shops run by people of their same race and religion. They would even comment loud enough for us to hear saying, why go and buy at Mawgy shops instead of buying at shops of our own race. In Muslim dialect, 'Mawgy' means 'Rakhines.' Another change was that every Muslim was told to attend the mosque regularly. In the past, there used to be many Muslims who would not go to mosque. But beginning from about September 2016, there were calls to attend the mosque regularly. Later, Muslim village administrators and Village In-Charges, appointed by the government, and Muslims close to the government were threatened, detained and killed. An order was also said to have been issued, whereas collaboration with the government was banned, and complaints on issues were only to be put up to the Mawlawis. It was said that those who did not obey those orders were severely punished. Later, even Muslims who transported water at the government departments were killed. Some of our Muslim patrons would only stealthily buy from Rakhine shops, including ours. Teachers were scared to come over to schools as they were anonymously threatened with complaints or threats of death through someone, resulting in students not obtaining quality education. In the whole region, the Muslim population was many times more than that of the ethnic nationals. In 2017, the interaction by the Muslims with the ethnic nationals turned worse. Even in daily markets, an amount of meat would be sold among their own Muslims for Kyats 4000, but if ethnic nationals buy it, they raise the price to Kyats 5000. Two or three weeks prior to the 2017 incident, threats emerged to the effect that this police station or that police station would be attacked. Some Muslim friends would warn that it would be better to not remain here, that the situation among the Muslims was not good, that we would have our throats slashed and killed, and that they would not be able to save us against many people. A few days before the incident, a young Muslim friend informed me that the attack would be made on Friday. During that period, Muslim adults and

youths were more animated than before. In the past, they used to attend the mosque for about two times a day, but then during those days the whole village, young and old, went about five times a day. Enquiring the Muslim friends who gave me the warnings, they just said, don't bother to know, just leave from this place quick. Up to the last moment, no Muslim would openly say about the coming attack. Our food shop is in the market. The house is in front of the police station and a bit away from the market. There are only about four Rakhine shops in the market stalls, and the rest are owned by the Muslims. Opposite to our shop was the village administrator's office. The immigration, Sa Ya Pha [military security affairs], and the SB [special branch] forces also had their offices opened in the market. We spend most of the time at our market stall, and have rented our house. At about 9:30 p.m. on Thursday, August 24, 2017, my husband, one of my sons and I were closing the shop for the day. At that time, Muslims from our village were agitated and were noisily shouting. Then a call came from our village administrator. He said that one of his young Muslim friends called him just then and gave him the information that the police station and the Rakhine nationals would be annihilated, beginning from 10 p.m., and that all Rakhines should immediately gather inside the police station, and that he was even making this call secretly. The administrator then told all ethnic nationals and employees from Zaygone Dan to move over to the police station. Whether the attack was genuine or not, the strength of the nationals was inferior, and so thinking that staying together would be better, everyone hurried to the police station. At the police station, it was seen that all employees and all ethnic national villagers from Alai Than Kyaw had gathered there. Our women folk were placed together at a barracks nearest to the police station. It was past 10 p.m., but nothing had happened yet. The men were observing the situation from outside. The immigration staff were placed in a barracks, a little further away from ours. Next to the immigration staff barracks was a dilapidated building, right at the end, and no one stayed there. During the early night, some saw that that barracks door was shaking, but they thought lightly that it must have been because of the wind. In reality, we came to know only later that terrorists were already in there, at what time no one knows. Just before that, both Muslim and ethnic national youths had played football, wearing the same sports uniforms, and it was a surprise to see from afar, inside that hostel, Muslim youths from the village wearing that uniform. They seemed to have not started their plan, because the time of the attack was not announced yet. When it was past 10:00 p.m., we thought the attack would not materialize, and we felt like a bit relaxed. The Muslim youth, who earlier had called and given the information to the village administrator, was said to have called again in secret from inside a toilet, saying that the attack would not be at 10 p.m., but that it had been postponed to after midnight at about 2 a.m. Because of this Muslim youth, staff and ethnic nationals from Alai Than Kyaw had escaped with their lives intact. That Muslim kid, taught by Rakhine teachers, had passed the matriculation with two distinctions from Alai Than Kyaw affiliated high school. He closely associates with Rakhines and has

almost become like a Rakhine. After about 11 p.m., an explosion could be first heard from Myin Lut area, not far from the southern side, followed by a successive sound of explosions from here and there. Sound of gunfire could also be heard from Myin Lut area. Then a large amount of blasts could be heard. There is a police station in Myin Lut, headed by a police major. Only later on, we came to know that terrorists and the crowd had attacked with bombs and opened gunfire, and forced themselves inside with swords, killing the police major and the police sergeant and burning down the police station. Some villagers were said to have seen some Muslims, wearing black slacks, black T-shirts, and jungle boots, crossing through fields from Alai Than Kyaw to Myin Lut area on Thursday evening. It was known that some Muslim villagers had to join, not out of their own will but rather due to fear of losing their lives, in the attack. The Mawlawis had ordered that one from every house should come out, and that if they didn't, they would be killed, as demonstrated in previous instances, and so they had to join without their own will. If some adults could not join, it was known that they even had to send in their young kids. After the sound of bomb blasts, loud and noisy shouts of cries erupted from the crowd at the Alai Than Kyaw Muslim village area. Myin Lut and Alai Than Kyaw are not that far. The sound of explosions came nearer. Between Myin Lut and Alai Than Kyaw is a small police guard outpost branch of the Alai Than Kyaw police station, and sounds of attacking that place were heard. Following an explosion, bomb blasts and gunfire could be incessantly heard. At about 2 a.m., the terrorists who were already in the dilapidated barrack at the Alai Than Kyaw police station compound started to shout, 'Maro, Maro, Mawgy, Maro.' In Muslim language, 'Maro' is 'kill' and 'Mawgy' is 'Rakhines'. Outside the police station were also cries of 'Maro' and they were coming up from the fields surrounding the station to attack the station. Their number could be over thousands and up to tens of thousands. Police first fired warning shots in the air. This seemed to have incited the Muslims who were seen throwing inside handmade bombs from the police station gate, while forcing themselves in and holding long daggers in their hands. The police official ordered the police to lie low and shoot again in the air. Only about three or four police, immigration and SB officers could be placed in one location. Only the police had guns, with only about two guns in one place. When they saw that, the ethnic nationals had to take out whatever swords they had to defend themselves. Two police who were assigned to guard at the end of the compound were not able to resist the mob attack and fled back in retreat. The Muslim mob followed them, trying to stab them with their swords. They survived only through sheer luck. The police official shot at the crowd following them with his pistol to discourage them from following. Also, the terrorists emerged from the barracks assigned to the immigration staff, and six out of eight staff ran out of the building. One was sick and could not run, and he was killed by the Muslims. Later, one hid in the ceiling and escaped. The women folk kept crying only. They were all scared to think that they were all going to die. The police officer in charge encouraged us by saying, 'Don't be afraid, you will die only if I die, nothing will happen until I die. The

military reinforcement is also on its way.’ He was also instructing his police to shoot only one bullet at a time. Although the police were shooting, no terrorists was seen falling. The Muslim mob was slowly coming near. While the clashes were going on, a military column from Mawrawady arrived. We were overjoyed. The military immediately divided the troops and started firing. It was about 5 a.m. Sounds of explosions and gunfire could be heard from Maungdaw and Myin Lut areas and from sporadic places. The military was also sending reinforcement to Myin Lut area. As it was already dawn, the terrorists began to retreat due to the military gunfire. We could see plainly in the fields around the police station, where the paddy plants were up to knee high, terrorists in black uniforms, some lying low and some their heads jutting out. The military was clearing up, and all came to an end only after 9 a.m. on August 25. The military also sent reinforcement to Chein Kharli just as in Myin Lut. I heard one police officer in Chein Kharli had his eyes shot with jingli [arrow shot by slingshot] by terrorists and got wounded in his eye. Once the troops arrived in Alai Than Kyaw station, the situation immediately changed. From the terrorists’ side, there were those who were killed or wounded, and so they were pulling their own people and retreated. Once the battle ended, bodies of dead terrorists remained. I was scared and did not look at them. I did not see the dead bodies myself. The terrorists were not from other places. They were villagers from here, and when they retreated, they just went back to their houses. Therefore, during the next few days, the military did area clearance operations, going in and out of every house. Prior to that the military announced that good people need not flee, and that they should just stay at their houses without running away. Many Muslims were involved in the attack, and so when they heard that the military was coming to check, they did not dare face them as they did not have a clear conscience. They knew for certain that the military would come, and so they took to their heels before the soldiers came. They took along with them people close to the government and the Rakhines, and they were known to have been killed. Included among them were the Alai Than Kyaw village tract office clerk and her husband who were known to be killed outside the village. Some of those who fled burnt down their own houses. They first took out all the valuables, such as gold, cash and portable things, and then burnt the house. The houses were thatch roofed, with bamboo posts dug in the ground, and they are quite flammable. Some of the fire that did not die out completely, again turned to flames because of the winds, and ignited the other houses. The fires started before the military arrived at the villages, and when Rakhines were too scared to go out of the village. Our food shop at Alai Than Kyaw Zaygone Dan is a two-storied building, and fire spread out to our shops, when the Muslims torched their own. I haven’t heard of any rape cases. There were also none during the past 2012 and 2016 incidents. Every incident began with attacks from only the Muslims. I haven’t seen or heard Muslims being driven out by the Myanmar Defence Services, police or by anyone else. Not only they were not being driven out, they were leaving despite absolute prevention and

persuasion by the authorities not to do so. Mass killing occurred only when Muslims killed the ethnic nationals.

The next day, all the ethnic nationals in Alai Than Kyaw were moved over to police regimental headquarters in Mawrawady village. Along the road, terrorists had laid IEDs, and so they had to be cleared while traveling along the way. The car that was transporting the dead body of the immigration official at the Alai Than Kyaw station to Maungdaw hit the mine set up by the Muslims.

Some houses owned by ethnic nationals were burnt down in the fire torched by Muslims during the turmoil. They are now finding it hard for their shelter needs. Some have moved out to their relatives' places. When our food shop was burnt down, things needed in our business and groceries that we had recently bought for their Eid celebration were all lost. The Muslims want this land, and we are not going to give in our ancestral land to them easily. Whether we are fine or not staying here, is not important. We are here to perseveringly maintain this land. We, ethnic nationals, regard the military as our savior during this turmoil, and we would never forget our gratitude. If the military were late by only five minutes, all of us would have been surely killed by the Muslims. Even if we women folk are not killed, we will be converted by force to become Muslims.

I would want to tell the truth and which I had witnessed myself regarding the accusations that the property owned by Muslims were looted by the soldiers and ethnic nationals. The military did not take anything. When carrying out area clearance operations, the military had ordered and prevented the ethnic nationals from following them, saying that they were not even going to spare the ethnic nationals and shoot them if they do not follow the orders. But because of the scarcity of food and hunger, people have different mentalities, and as there are bad Muslims, there are also bad Rakhines. It is known that some of these bad people had taken away the things. I do not want to mention who did that. To tell the truth, Muslims already knew in advance what was going to happen and had already made preparations. It is obvious that they had pre-planned and systematically arranged regarding their immovable things by burying them carefully in the ground. Ethnic nationals did not loot the things. When Muslims were around, the ethnic nationals would be scared and would be in hiding. Only after the Muslims had left, and when they were certain that the Muslims were not going to return, after about two months later, while looking for frogs and fishes, they went inside the Muslim villages and brought back what they had left behind. There were no valuables. Only pots, pans, plates, buckets, plastic mats, and the like. All valuable things would have been taken away with them. Muslims had known that this situation would turn out like this. Only poor ethnic nationals took those things, and respectable persons would not even wish to accept them, even if given free. This is because they designate these things as unclean and not to be taken or touched.

Witness 4 stated:

I am a native of Sittwe and a Rakhine national. I moved to Alai Than Kyaw village tract with my parents when I was about six years old, and have settled there since then. I am now 48 years old. To give an account of whatever I know about, during our over 40-year stay in Alai Than Kyaw, there were five incidents in Maungdaw, where the Muslims had attacked the ethnic nationals. They occurred in 1988, 1993, 2012, 2016, and the latest in 2017. Out of the five times, the 2017 incident was the most terrible and horrifying. In the past, the relationship [between the two communities] would be somewhat strained, but sooner or later, it would be back to normal. There were reciprocal dealings in trade matters. There were a large number of Muslim men and women, employed by the Rakhines in various jobs. Most of the Muslims would be hired as house helpers or blue collar workers at Rakhine houses and shops. It was a symbiotic relationship. Muslims' interaction [with Rakhines] changed in the aftermath of the 2016 incident. About two months before the 2017 turmoil, Muslim workers, who used to come and work regularly at the shop, did not show up. When I went over to their places to call them, they told me that they could not come anymore, as the village had banned them from working for the Rakhines. There used to be one Muslim kid, who was at our home since the time he was very young. He came secretly and whispered to me, 'Ama [big sister] (as he addressed me in his usual way), all of you, please don't stay here anymore. Go away somewhere. There would be a big crisis after the day of Eid. Adults are talking about eliminating and beating to pieces all the Rakhines and the police. Please don't mention that I told you about this. If they come to know about it, they will surely kill me.' At that time, they were already slaughtering the Muslims, who were close to government organizations and Rakhines. I have never seen the young Muslim kid, who came to give me the information, go to the mosque. As that Muslim child stayed close to the Rakhines, he was bonded with them. From about that time [after the Muslim kid gave them the information], Muslims did not come to or buy from our shop anymore. It can be assumed that, since that time, Muslims had been preparing and organizing in advance plans to attack us. Another remarkable point was that, during peaceful times, there would be an uninterrupted flow of Muslims on Alai Than Kyaw village center's main streets up to even midnight. From that period onwards, there were not even one Muslim who would go outside their house at about 6 p.m., once it got dark. These notable developments of the Muslims were definitely included in talks among our Rakhines. On one side, there were also preconceived concerns on whether some kind of a doom was indeed lurking around and how it was going to manifest itself. There had never been or one had never experienced this kind of attitude of the Muslims. I had been thinking about going away somewhere, once their Eid day has come and gone. I did not think about leaving immediately, because I still had some hope for grand sales before the day of Eid, as in former years, when Muslims would spend

extravagantly on their purchases for Eid, and also because I had bought materials wholesale for Eid, underestimating the probable crisis. In previous years, there would be a minimum sale of about Kyats 50,000 or 60,000 per day, during this time of the year, but then that year, I did not get even one kyat from my sales. I never thought that this would turn out into such a terrible thing. Now that I had personally witnessed the disturbances, I was greatly terrified. After the incident, I made off to my daughter who was working in Yangon, and stayed there for more than two months. They were also calling me back from here. I came back here, because when I asked them whether there were still Muslims remaining, they replied in the negative, saying everyone had left. When I arrived back in Alai Than Kyaw, I saw some Muslims remaining. They were good people. But [the experience] had left me with such fright, that I dare not interact with them anymore. If I had known that these Muslims were still here, I would not have come back to Alai Than Kyaw. I arrived back because I was not informed and I did not know about them. I had suffered so much anguish that I don't even want to hear the name [of Muslims].

To give an account of what I experienced through during the Alai Than Kyaw disturbances, I did not know about anything until the night time on August 24, 2017. As usual, I opened the shop, sold my wares, and then closed it. That night at 9 p.m., the eldest son of a friend called me. They are Muslims. He said, 'Where are you Ama and all? What are you doing? Here, Muslims are gathering. Soon they would come over to Ama's [village] for the attack. Go urgently to the police station. I myself have to be secretly calling you from the toilet. I have already informed the administrator.' Next to my place is the special branch office, and I went over there to ask them about the report. They told me that they also had received the news and told me to go to the police station, adding that they themselves would be observing the situation for a while and then come. After making hasty preparations, I went with my children to the police station. Zaygone Dan and the police station were a bit distant. There was not a soul in sight on the road. It was eerily silent. When we arrived at the police station, almost all the ethnic nationals were already there. It was already about 9:30 p.m. Civilian families, including me, were placed at a barracks. I could not sleep the whole night. I heard an explosion, I think it was from Alai Than Kyaw Mawtular area at about 4 a.m. on the 25th. Immediately after the explosion, cries of 'Maro, Maro' by the Muslim mob roared out loud. The meaning is, 'kill, kill.' With those shouts, they were approaching the police station. They had the police station surrounded from all four sides. Then the police, as a warning, shot in the air. Besides being unafraid, the Muslims were breaking the police station fencing with their swords and coming in. At that time, the fencing was made of weaved bamboo mats. At the extreme end from our barracks, there was another building, where the immigration staff were placed. It was only about 100 to 150 feet distant. The terrorists were already inside that building, and they were shouting from inside in one voice with the Muslim crowd outside. There could even be about a thousand

Muslims inside the building alone. Women folk and kids were horrified and crying after hearing the loud cries of the Muslim mob. The police were known to have not that many bullets left. Their officer was telling them to shoot one bullet at a time. About 5 a.m., soldiers arrived to reinforce the police station. Only when the soldiers divided into groups and started opening gunfire did the terrorists retreat. It was already daylight. We could see the terrorists running in retreat. If the military had come just 15 minutes later, we all would have been executed. The police strength was not large. There were only about 20 of them. I heard their bullets had almost run out and that there were only a few left. Only because the military arrived at that time, our lives were being saved. The Muslims had known about the shortage of the police force and the small quantity of bullets at the police station, waiting for time when all the bullets would be exhausted, so that they could come in and massacre everyone. Only because the military arrived, their plans fell apart. There were no casualties from the side of the police, military and the ethnic nationals. I heard there was loss of life from the Muslim side. I went to see the body of the slaughtered immigration [official]. Filled with bitterness, I did not even want to see the Muslim dead bodies. Their corpses were said to be scattered here and there inside the station yard. My son who was attending Grade 9 went to see and saw that some of his classmates were included among the dead Muslims.

Muslims had already prepared for this attack way in advance. In every Muslim house, food supplies and immovable properties were hidden in dugout pits in ground under their house or somewhere in the yard. At the bottom of the pits is a stretch of tarpaulin, upon which items are laid up, which are again covered on top with tarpaulin, hiding the whole structure under a cover of sand, according to some villagers who found them some time after they [Muslims] had left. They would not have had the time to systematically cover up things only after the incident happened. It is obvious that systematic and well-planned preparations had been made by every individual and household.

For two days, after we went inside the police station, we didn't have our regular meals. Although people could go out from the police station after the clashes, no one dared to go outside. Food had also run out. In fact, out of extreme fright, no one was hungry or remembered to eat. Our family left Alai Than Kyaw on August 29 and went and stayed in Yangon. Only after about two and a half months, we returned back to Alai Than Kyaw. Until that time, some houses in Muslim villages were burnt, whereas some remained intact as before. I was not there during the fire. While we were waiting for cars to carry us over from Alai Than Kyaw to the police regiment headquarters in Mawrawady, we could see smoke rising from the Muslim village area. During that time, the military, police and ethnic nationals were all still inside the police station compound. No one had gone out. Some Muslims were known to have torched their own homes, just before they left. Most

of their houses have thatched roofs, plied bamboo mat or mud-covered straw walls, with bamboo posts grounded. I did not see the arson myself.

After we arrived back in Alai Than Kyaw, some Rakhines, facing hardships for their sustenance, went to Muslim houses in search of rice and other food that they had left behind. Most of them were said to be buried under the ground. Not every person went to take them. Most of them were poverty-stricken and they brought back along what they had found. They were seen to have plucked fruits and vegetables also.

Up to now, every time I think about the turmoil, it still gives me the shivers. We compared our mentality with those of the Muslims, and never thought that they would do this terrible thing against us. This would never be forgotten during my lifetime. I consider myself as being alive again after a trip to the village of death. If Muslims come back, it would be impossible to coexist with them. The acts of the Muslims are gradually turning from bad to worse, and if they come back, they are bound to repeat, at one time or another, more terrible acts than now.

Witness 5 recounted:

We lived inside the police station and monitored the situation for two more days. Then, we joined a joint team of security forces and police officers to conduct area clearance operations. By area clearance operations, I mean, we just went to different houses to see if there were any person hiding in the premises. Only after the operations, the village was set on fire and I do not know who carried out the arson. Even my shop was destroyed in the fire. At that time, Muslim villagers were no longer present in the village. They had already left the village. While conducting area clearance operations, I went along with the village administrator. No other civilians were asked to join the area clearance operations. The soldiers and police officers led the team. The administrator and I followed them. As we entered the village, the soldiers and police officers were positioned around each house at a time. Then, some entered the house and checked if there were anyone hiding. That was how we carried out the operations. There was no burning of houses. Within three days, we were done with the area clearance operations in the village tract. We did not see any Muslims in hiding. There were no one in the houses. Later, I learned that the Muslims went to the coastal area and gathered there, later to be picked up on boats by Bengali groups.

One of the current administrators were among the Muslim families left in this village. He had to inform the Rakhine administrator and the area clearance operations teams to let them know that he still remained in the village. That person was also robbed one or two months after the incident. His neck was tied with a rope and the hands of the female family members were stabbed with

pickaxes and swords. His family moved over near to Ahtet (upper) Kanpaing Gyi. One dacoit was even said to be holding a gun.

What I heard was that the Muslims went to the coastal area and stayed there for about four to six days, before they were picked up to the other side of the coast. At that time, we were not allowed to go to their area of the village. We did not dare to go there either. They might have come back and taken their belongings themselves. There could have been grievances by the Muslims. They were not happy that they had to give up some of their lands to establish Na Ta La villages. They wanted to scare the ethnic nationals off from residing in this area. This time, they targeted the military and government departments, killing two birds with one stone, as civilians from 30 households did not dare to continue living in the village either. Some of the families fled to Mawrawady Na Ta La village, where the border guard police regimental headquarters was, thought to be safer for them. While we were in the Mawrawady military base, there was a fire set ablaze. I did not know who did that. My house was set ablaze during the fire as well. Only half of the houses in Mawtular remained intact after the fire. There were no fires in Kanyin Dan village. Half of the village administration office was also damaged in fire.

Witness 6 recounted:

The villagers were in a state of alarm and were trying to save themselves, let alone taking other people's belongings. There were no belongings left in my house. The Muslims might have taken them. However, I did not see them taking those things.

Witness 7 stated,

I sell food to earn a living. I used to sell food items to nearby Muslim villages. There are one primary school and one high school in the village. There were only around 20 ethnic national houses in Alai Than Kyaw with about 50 people, but there were over a hundred thousand in nearby Muslim villages.

One month before, there was an incident involving Muslim people killing each other, and around 20 or 30 Muslim people died during the incident. They bought more rice bags than usual. I heard rumors that Rakhine people were likely to be killed. I heard from some Muslim friends that Alai Than Kyaw police station would be sieged on August 25. At 4 a.m., I heard an explosion. We hid in Alai Than Kyaw police station. The police station was surrounded by around 1000 terrorists, shouting 'Maro Maro'. Then they left for the immigration office and destroyed the office fence. On that day at 5:30 a.m., 10 soldiers arrived at the village. Then the terrorists fled to Thandar village. Alai Than Kyaw and Thandar villages are not that far away, but we needed to go across the hills. We stayed at the police

station for three days. Then we left for Sittwe Town with the help of the security forces. We saw smoke rising out from nearby Muslim villages two or three days after the incident (August 27-28). According to the government reports, Muslims burnt down their own houses.

Witness 8 recounted:

I had noticed some changes in the relationship between Rakhines and Muslims around two months before the attack. On August 24, I saw 10 or 15 Muslims gathered near my house. On that night, I had heard rumors about a possible attack. So, we left for the border guard police outpost at around 8 p.m., as we thought we might be safer there.

At 4 a.m on August 25, I heard an explosion. Then I heard the leader of the mob shouting, 'Allah Arsay,' to which the mob responded by shouting, 'Marli Boh'. At that time, around 3000 people surrounded the police station. The police opened fire into the air to frighten the mob. 15 minutes later, a regiment with around 30 soldiers arrived at the village. At 5 a.m., terrorists retreated from the village. We went back home at 8 a.m. We stayed at the police station for four days and then we left for Mawrawady.

Most of the Muslims from Alai Than Kyaw village tract have left for the other country. Ethnic nationals have to pass through these villages when finding fish and food. In their villages, some houses were left un burnt and some became damaged, because no one was living there anymore. There were around 25 to 30 houses left unburnt.

Witness 9 stated:

I was residing and doing business in Alai Than Kyaw for over 20 years. There were just over 20 Rakhine households there. Since my tea shop business was located in a village where Rakhine population is in the minority, I had to rely on Muslim customers. I hired two Muslim workers in my shop and two months prior to the incident, they stopped coming to work in my shop. They did not give me any reasons for doing so. A few days prior to the incident, I also noticed there were less Muslim customers who came to my shop. I heard that one Muslim man who used to come to my shop on a regular basis and also was very friendly with the government officials was killed 15 to 20 days before the incident. Since we heard that something was about to take place, we, Rakhine households went to the border guard police station after 9 p.m. There were about 20 border guard police members in the station. On August 25, Friday, around 4:20 a.m., we heard the sounds of blasts and screaming shouts. We were in a room but from what we heard, we guessed that the sounds came from the same compound, not far from where we were, from all four sides of the compound. The station had been fenced at its front part but not at the back side. Around 6 a.m., more than 20

soldiers from Battalion 99 came to support the border guard police members, and this caused the Muslims to retreat.

Witness 10 recounted:

Around 7 or 8 a.m., we came out of the room for a while and heard some gunshots. At that time, some men and border guard police conducted a search for missing immigration officers in the compound. An immigration officer was found dead with injuries on his limbs and torso. I was not able to distinguish if the wounds were caused by gunshots or swords. Another officer hid in the ceiling and he got away alive. When some were trying to take the dead body to Maungdaw hospital, one of the two vehicles that transported us triggered a mine. We were in the vehicle following the one that was attacked. I saw that once the vehicle was hit with a mine, more than 300 Muslims rushed to where the vehicle was. Some were wearing black clothes and holding swords and batons while others just wore normal plain clothes. Seven border guard police members marched towards them, causing them to retreat. There were no casualties at that time. I saw three or four dead bodies of Muslims in the station compound. Only with additional security, we then were able to send the dead body of the immigration officer to Maungdaw Town.

Those soldiers who came to support the border guard police stayed in the station compound. Rakhine ethnic people and the soldiers stayed in the Rakhine houses near the station and at the police station itself, and did not go inside Alai Than Kyaw village. There were times when soldiers patrolled around the area. Each patrol took around two hours. We did not hear any gunshots or bomb blasts while they were patrolling.

On August 28, from the police station, I could see that part of Alai Than Kyaw was on fire. When I went to see the fire along with three or four other Rakhine villagers, I saw that my house was on fire as well. My house and three other Rakhine houses were located closely to Muslim area in Alai Than Kyaw. It was very windy at that time. I saw that the Muslim houses close to mine were on fire. I saw one or two groups of people coming out of the part of the village where Muslims lived. Each group consisted of about 10 to 15 people. I saw only men and no women. Since the Rakhine and Muslim houses were close enough, with no fences in between, the fire was bound to spread irrespective of which side of the village the fire started to rage.

Two to three days after the fire, border guard police and soldiers sent Rakhine villagers to Mawrawady battalion compound. Women and children were transported there by car, while the security personnel and the men walked the three-mile journey, conducting demining activities along the way, thus taking them five hours to get to Mawrawady. Some members of the security team remained at the station in Alai Than Kyaw.

After spending two nights in Mawrawady, I went to Maungdaw Town with my family. Later, I came back to Mawrawady and two days after that, I came back to Alai Than Kyaw by myself. I lived in a vacant house left by those Rakhine households, who did not dare to return and stay in Alai Than Kyaw. The house was located right in front of the police station. Since I am also a staff working for Myanma Posts and Telecommunications, I had to come back to my duty station of Alai Than Kyaw. After the 5th or the 6th, I saw smoke from fire in other villages. On the following days, the soldiers patrolled around the area on grounds of security. Each patrol took around two hours, generally. Soldiers were stationed only at the sub-township hospital. Except for patrols, they did not go to the village area.

(c) Statements of Muslim witnesses from Alai Than Kyaw village tract

Witness 11, recounted:

I am a native of Alai Than Kyaw Kanyin Dan village. Alai Than Kyaw and our village Kanyin Dan are one mile distant. Both villages are nearby. I used to own 25 acres of fields, nine acres of prawn ponds, and four fishing trawlers. We were quite affluent. Because of the 2017 incident, almost all of the laborers had fled to Bangladesh, and we were experiencing a labor shortage. Also, because dams were not maintained and repaired in time, salt water infiltrated into the fields and prawn ponds, resulting in all of them being destroyed. Maintenance could not be done because workers could not be hired anymore. Although we still have the fishing trawlers, there are no skilled fishing industry workers who would go into the sea. At present, all my businesses have come to a standstill. There was another unfortunate incident. At 11 p.m. on January 12, 2019, a group of Alai Than Kyaw villagers who had fled to Bangladesh crossed over again on a motor boat and plundered my home. The dacoits slashed my wife with a sword and her hand was almost cut off. They also kept my hands tied to the back, and asked for Kyats 100 million. Family members gathered whatever gold and money they had, and paid ransom to get me back. They took away cash worth Kyats 23.8 million and 35 ticals [574 grams] of gold. These marauders were Kanyin Dan villagers. Some were from Alai Than Kyaw. They are all known to us. We are one of the few families in the village who could somewhat afford to live and eat well. They came back to kill me because I refused to accompany them in taking flight to the other country. Three families of my relatives and I remained in the village without escaping. Also, we never got involved in their activities since from the beginning. Because I didn't become their follower, they used to often call and threaten me from the other country.

I was born and grown up in this land, drank the same water and lived here. This country is my country. I cannot be a traitor to this country and to this government now and in future. This is my principle. Even then, I am grieved,

because I feel that this country has been ignoring us and has not given us adequate protection. My elder son passed Grade 10 with two distinctions (physics and chemistry) from Alai Than Kyaw high school in 2012, but up to now, he hasn't got the permission to continue his university education. I have been guarding against destruction, on my own, of houses that were left behind by people from our village tract, fleeing to the other country for various reasons.

My family and I have now moved to Alai Than Kyaw's Kanpaing Gyi (upper) village, close to Kanyin Dan border guard police regimental headquarters. I am a businessman. Right from the start, I had a friendly relationship with ethnic nationals. I do not like discrimination based on religion or race. I always uphold the principle of harmoniously living with one and all.

To give an account of what I know and witnessed about the August 25, 2017, disturbances, even about three or four months prior to the incident, ARSA armed group had tried to organize Mawlawi teachers, village administrative in-charges, respectable elders, and those who were wealthy from the villages. They said to us consecutive Myanmar governments did not open up the education and health avenues for the Muslims. The three-fold cards, which we held since generations past, were first asked to be exchanged with White cards. Then they made us give back [the White cards], and then, yet again, implemented another system. This way, the Muslim people would never have progress in their life. They preached and organized in every village that we need to choose our own path, and that the only option left is to fight for it. [They] also came and called me. I replied that this matter should be carefully thought about, that we, Muslims, had never become citizens until now, that, as everyone knows, even some indigenous ethnic nationals have been demanding their rights through armed struggle for over 60 years, since the time of independence up to now, and have not succeeded in their fight, that they already have their own weapons manufacturing plants, that it needs to be noted that it is totally impossible to fight then and there with any sticks or swords available, that political matters should only be negotiated on the table to obtain solutions, and that it would be a grave mistake if there were an armed insurrection. To my discussion, they angrily retorted, accusing me as someone who had Rakhine influence in me, that I should be the first person to be killed. I replied saying whether [people] should be following the leadership of some worthless people, that my family and I were not going to follow them, that we had to carefully ponder about it, that, although in the past, there were no educated persons among the Muslims to make demands for our affairs, there were now a large number of Muslim educated people traveling around the world, and that their desires would be [more successfully fulfilled] if demanded through discussions. They already knew that I was close to government authorities, and so warned me that if I report what they had said and their activities, I would be slain. I said I wouldn't report it to anyone, but that my family and I were not going to be their followers. They demanded that I hold the Koran and pledge that

I would not report it to the authorities, and so I did what they had asked. Then they asked me to delete all my contact phone numbers of the authorities that were in my hand phone, and so I did it in front of them.

At 8 p.m. on August 24, 2017, my younger cousin came to my place and warned me, 'Big brother, as you are not in their group, I think they are going to give you trouble. Please make arrangements to defend yourself by collecting sticks and swords. The situation is not good.' During that time, the Alai Than Kyaw village tract administrator was U Zaw Htoo, a Rakhine. He is still the administrator. I used to be his classmate, and up to now, our two families are friendly and close. He was the first person to come and rescue me, risking himself amidst all kinds of dangers, when I was being mugged. I called my elder son and asked him to call U Zaw Htoo and tell him to be extremely cautious because Muslims were planning to attack the Rakhines and the [police] station that night. At 3 a.m., explosions and gunfire erupted. terrorists had attacked the border guard police station in Alai Than Kyaw. I was watching from the verandah upstairs. One Muslim from our village came running back from the police station area. When I asked him from a distance, he said that those who were leaders had asked them to stay in the frontline and carry out the attacks, that he did not know the whereabouts of the so-called leaders when the police station retaliated with gunshots, and that he ran away because of the [worsening] situation. He said that it was a daredevil act to attack against those carrying guns with just sticks. Also, during the 2012 incident, Muslims came to burn down the houses of the ethnic nationals, to which I prevented them from doing so. Because of it, they tried to kill me. After that incident, the police went after those who were involved in the crime, and since I stood together with those who did not torch the houses, they thanked me for it, which I will not ever forget. Now, with goodwill, I tried to tell them what I had foreseen, but they wouldn't accept it. They are even trying to harm me. Just after dawn on that day, villagers gathered along the edge of the bank of Hnakhaung Toe village, close to the Alai Than Kyaw beach. They were planning to run away to the other country. On about the seventh or eighth day after the turmoil, I went together with Thuya San Lwin, police major general from the border guard police headquarters, column commander from Battalion 99, and departmental officials from Maungdaw, to Alai Than Kyaw's Hnakhaung Toe village at the edge of the beach to meet with the crowd planning to leave, and advised them not to do so and return peacefully to their own villages, and that if they leave for the other side, the conditions could be worse for them. I think there were hundreds of thousands of people there. Some Muslims not only refused [to accept our advice], but even surrounded us, asking whether we still were not satisfied of persecuting them, and whether they should first kill us. And so, we had to come back. They couldn't cross to the other bank as motor boats hadn't arrived from Bangladesh yet. From the time that authorities designated that only those [owners of] motor boats from this side, who hold the national verification cards (NVC), would be permitted to go into the sea, they had removed the motorboat engines, and so

they did not have any motor boats ready there and then. The Bangladesh government had not given the permission yet to send motorboats, also. Without the motorboats, they could not proceed their journey. Some Bangladeshi boatmen asked Kyats 0.3 million per head or a tical [16.4 grams] of gold for three persons as the boat fare. For one cow, they take two persons. In fact, the Bangladeshis took away all the properties from our people. It was also heard that some wealthy people were robbed in mid-sea. It is said that Bangladeshis became wealthier because of the people from this side. Their 10 to 15 motorboats were plying to and fro throughout the day. One trip takes only one hour of driving. By taking to their heels, they had to expend all that they brought along on the boat fare and lost everything that they left back in the village. I see this as creating their own downfall.

Early in the morning on August 25, clashes erupted in Alai Than Kyaw. Muslims, led by terrorists, went and attacked the police station, and the station retaliated by shooting. Muslim bodies were said to have been left inside the police station compound. I was told that there might be around 50 corpses. I did not see the dead bodies myself. I heard it from others. They say that [the bodies] were picked up by the police from the station and buried. I also heard that their documents, including photos, were being sent. At that time, there was no Muslim villagers left in the village. All had made a run for it. Before dawn, help from the military arrived. They were already stationed in Mawrawady and Way Thali villages. These villages were not far from Alai Than Kyaw. The military started their area clearance operations only after eight or nine days after the disturbances. There were no villagers in the villages anymore. They had already made a run for the nearby fields. Only our three families did not run off. We were not afraid because we were guiltless. When the military entered, I put my hands on my head and went to meet the column commanders. The military did not shoot the villagers who did not run. The military told me, 'In this village, there is ARSA. Find them out for us. We heard they had arms. Find them out for us.' I said, 'I am an ordinary villager. I don't know the ARSA. I do not also know whether they have the arms or not. I was not in the crowd attacking the police station. I came here, because you called me to come and meet with you.' When they were at our Alai Than Kyaw village tract, the soldiers did not do any shooting or carry out arson. No rape was committed. When military comes in, they always announce in advance that if people had not done anything they should stay in their own places peacefully, and not try to run, that no one should run in front of them, and that they would detain whoever does. They also detained those they see running away. I saw seven of them being apprehended. Two of them were from Doe Tan village from our village tract. It is known that whoever were detained would be prosecuted, but I haven't received any further information.

Regarding burning of villages, I could see from my house smoke rising from villages where the military columns had entered. I only saw the smoke. I do not

know who ignited them or how. I saw some Rakhines together with the military column. The whole Alai Than Kyaw Kanyin Dan village tract was not on fire. After I was robbed, I moved to Alai Than Kyaw Kanpaing Gyi (upper). When I came back once, the houses had disappeared. They were said to be being broken into bits and pieces, and taken away. In Alai Than Kyaw village tract, except for minor fires in Mawtular and Zaygone Dan villages, the other villages were not on fire.

About five days after the disturbances, one of my middle sons was taken hostage by a group of terrorists. Before that incident, I went and prevented Muslims from Buthidaung area, crossing over Mayu mountain to Alai Than Kyaw Kanyin Dan cluster, and stealing away household materials from houses where no one lived anymore. After one or two days, while my middle and younger sons were playing in our house yard, a group of people came and asked, 'What is your father's name?' When my middle son told them my name, the group then asked him to come for a while with them, and my younger son saw that they took my middle son away to a vacant house at the end of the village. He then ran back to tell me that Ko Lay Ko's group had abducted him away. Immediately, I gathered some people with sticks and swords, and followed to the house where my younger son directed. We met the group face to face, as they came down from the upper floor of the house, with my middle son blindfolded. We surrounded them. There were 12 of them. I tried the gentle approach and said we can talk about it at our home. When they arrived at my place, sensing that the situation was not good, six of them ran away, while the other six were being arrested. They confessed to the police that they were Zedi Pyin villagers from Rathedaung Township, and that they were terrorists and among those who attacked the Zedi Pyin police station. My middle son recounted that after they blindfolded him, they called someone and said that they had already abducted my son, and the other side told them to bring him over to another place, and we met them while they were taking him away. Later, I came to know that if they did not succeed in killing me, ARSA had ordered his followers to take as hostage one of my family members and ask for ransom.

Witness 12, who is a former police sergeant, stated:

I am a native of Kyein Chaung. I entered the Myanmar Police Force in 1970, and after 17 years of service, I retired as a police sergeant in 1987. After retirement, I settled in Kan Phu Myauk [north] village, Kan Phu village tract, Maungdaw Township. I moved over to Alai Than Kyaw after the 2017 disturbances, and have been staying here up to the present.

Before the incident, there were about 450 households in Kan Phu village. Currently, in Alai Than Kyaw, it could be estimated that there are about 130 Muslim households. I do not know for sure. They are people like me, who have moved over from Kan Phu, Myin Lut and Wah Cha. While I was in service in the

police force, I was assigned in the eastern regions of Thanlwin [River], namely, Kyaing Tong, Mong Sat, Mong Phyat, Tachilek, Mong Yawng, Mong Khat and Mong Yang areas.

I can tell some things about the 2017 turmoil. Beginning in late 2016, instigations, recruitment and military training activities were carried out in Muslim villages in this region, with an aim for armed insurrection, led by the ARSA armed group. Similar activities took place in Kan Phu village. On a date I don't remember well, I saw a house with a high fencing around it in our Kan Phu village, securely closed with tarpaulin sheeting. As it was unusual from other houses, I was curious and wanted to know what was going on. The house had a wide yard and on the vacant plot in front of the house I unexpectedly saw, with my own eyes, a military training being carried out, using sticks and long daggers. They also saw me. When one person, presumed to be the leader, shouted, 'What is this guy doing here? Catch him,' a villager named Orkyu Lar from our same village ran towards me with a dagger swinging. Because I was swift enough to avoid it, it only bruised my shoulder, which made me wrestle out and run for my life, wherever my feet would carry me. There was a lake on the upper side of Kan Phu, and I had to hide near that lake. I did not have my meals. I was just living on betel leaves and water. I did not leave for anywhere, knowing that I would be definitely executed if I did so. After five or six days, I could hear a lot of gunfire. I did not know what was happening where. I was witnessing villagers running away.

At present, I have a second marriage with a Muslim woman who is 68 years old now. We have been married for 23 years and do not have any children. Only both of us are living together. The armed group, with long daggers, had encircled our house to apprehend me and had asked my whereabouts to my wife. My wife told them that I had not returned yet after leaving the house and that she did not know where I had gone. They did not do anything to my wife.

ARSA is not any other people. They are our own villagers. They are giving trouble to their own villagers. Orkyu Lar, who tried to slash me with a dagger, was reported to have been killed by his own people, while he was trying to keep giving trouble to others at a refugee camp in Bangladesh.

As I did not notice any movement of villagers in and around my village, I came closer, step by step, towards the village on the 28th. No villagers could be seen in the village. When I went inside the house, my wife was crying. On that day, my wife and I moved to a friend's place in Alai Than Kyaw Kanyin Dan, where we have been staying ever since. In reality, I came to know, later on, that ARSA were trying to track me, when they all had to take to their heels as the military came in.

The military training at Kan Phu village began around October 17, 2016, and the training instructor was from the Arabic school Gorhali in Myin Lut. They were giving training in the house compound of Kan Phu villager Phway Yarzu (father, Marmud). It was a large compound. Trainees wore black uniforms and were holding long daggers. While the training was ongoing, they had guards posted at the edge of the field at the village entrance. There is a canal at the side of the field. If one follows that canal, they would reach a side of his compound. I was following along that canal, when I was caught and slashed with a dagger at the side of the fencing. Fortunately, I was only wounded and escaped. The training was said to be attended in batches. When I saw them, there could be an estimated 50 attending the training. I have written a daily diary recording the details of the happenings.

At the beginning of the attack, I was still hiding in the forest at the side of the lake. At dawn, I could see, from a distance, terrorists roaming about in the village with long daggers in their hands. Villagers and women were running frantically, some fleeing and some returning. Village elders were said to have advised villagers, planning to leave, not to do so. No one [from outside] came and did anything to Kan Phu village. Our Kan Phu villagers were involved in the attack of the Alai Than Kyaw police station. I have prepared a list of their names. There are exactly 21 of them, headed by Abdullah (father, Dorr Lon). Abdullah has two pistols in his hands. He is a villager from Kan Phu Pabai (Taung) village. He is said to be given the chief leader position. The trainer was Phway Yarzu (father, Marmud), and the training was given at his house. I haven't passed on my prepared name list to anyone yet.

When the battle was ongoing, I was still at the side of Kan Phu lake. I did not see anything myself. But I would want to tell about the arson. Beginning from August 25, villagers were running away in groups. Some continued to go to Bangladesh. When they were making a quick exit, most of the people were not able to carry their belongings. Over 20 people from ARSA crossed over again from Bangladesh and were stealing the buffalos and cows that villagers had left behind. At night time, they gathered together in huts near the coast. They were carrying over [their loot] to Bangladesh from Panyaung Pingyi. This happened one or two times. They made many trips, stealing livestock and properties, and selling them back in Bangladesh. Besides looting, these Muslims are the ones who had torched the houses, which they could not carry away for themselves. I also saw it. I would never be disloyal to Myanmar. I am already old, and I could die any time. I do not desire to speak falsehood, and I do not have a craving for anything. My health is also deteriorating. I have difficulty when trying to use the toilet.

Regarding the matter that the military had ordered the people to leave, I would totally refute it. The Muslims have been taking off even before the military had arrived. Rakhines and police officers prevented them from doing so, but they did

not listen. They were just headed to the other side. No soldiers had ever come to Kan Phu village up to now. Committing rape would be impossible. I also did not hear anything about it. You would have already noticed that our Muslims have the habit of making a mountain out of a molehill. For me, I would only say it exists, only if it does, or I heard it, only if I did. I did not hear about it only because it didn't exist. I do not believe that rape had been committed.

I would finally wish to say that I, myself, am a local Muslim. But, if they [those who had fled] are accepted after their demands are met and recognized as Rohingya race, maybe by the UN, it is bound to create an issue. Our Muslims are not good. They are the ones who are always creating problems. They should be only recognized as Rakhine Muslims or Myanmar Muslims.

Witness 13 recounted:

After the incident on August 25 [2017], there was no one left in my village. They fled their homes due to fear. Only my household, consisting of seven women, remained in the village. My brother who lived in the same house as me took his wife and children and left for Bangladesh on August 26. Seven days after the incident on August 25, Zaygone Dan was set on fire. That was Thursday. Around 3 p.m., I saw three people wearing motorbike helmets. One of them carried a bottle on his shoulder and splashed the liquid inside onto the houses. The other one lit up a gas lighter and threw it towards the houses. Another one was sitting on a motorbike. My sister and I were peeking at them, and at around 4:30 p.m., we had to flee our home along with other family members. A Muslim, who was the only one left in Mawtular at that time, came to pick us up. Around 6 p.m., those who set the village ablaze left.

After we arrived there, we saw a Rakhine driving a car, carrying four Hindus, and they together looted the villagers' belongings in Mawtular at 10AM and again at 5 PM the next day. They were from Maungdaw town. They saw us but did not do anything to harm us. There was no fire in Mawtular.

A Rakhine administrator, four border guard police members and the regiment commander from Alai Than Kyaw came to Zaygone Dan, while we were the only household left residing there. They told us that we can contact them for any emergencies (illnesses or food).

After a year since we resided in Mawtular, those who fled to other areas, such as Kanyin Dan, came to settle in Mawtular. They informed the village administrator and came to settle in Mawtular. There are currently 30 households, including three households which were originally from Zaygone Dan and Muslim households from Oo Daung village. We are living in those houses abandoned during the

incident. My village is just a five minute walking distance away from the border guard police station. There is also a clinic in the border guard police compound.

Witness 14 recounted,

My husband was the Village In-Charge. During the 2017 events, on a Friday, the date that I do not remember, terrorists surrounded my house. Approximately more than a hundred of them sieged my house. They told us not to run away nor inform the government authorities. At that time, my husband, I and other family members locked our doors and stayed inside. I saw that they were holding swords and slingshots. Among them were included many villagers from my village. Although we were told not to inform the authorities, my husband put his phone under his clothes to alleviate his voice and quietly informed the tactical operations commander.

On that day, at 4 p.m., Muslim mobs were shouting rallying cries to attack the police stations in Alai Than Kyaw village tract. I was in my house, so I did not know how many people actually went there to attack the outposts. After a while, I heard gunshots that came from the direction of Chein Kharli police station. Seven terrorists were killed inside the station compound. As soon as those people who surrounded my house heard the gunshots from the attacks, they fled.

The next day at 7 p.m., the military called away the police officers from Alai Than Kyaw station, so there were no police officers left. Only at that time, family members of the deceased terrorists went inside the station and took back the dead bodies. Among seven terrorists who were dead, five were villagers from Mawtular.

I was already suspicious that some of the villagers were terrorists. My husband, especially, knew which villagers were associated with the ARSA armed group, even before the incident. However, since he did not wish to endanger his life by informing others about it, he stayed silent. Also, he knew by experience that even if reports were submitted, there would be no action forthcoming, hence, he stayed quiet. terrorists, who were active in Alai Than Kyaw, were on the run after the police station attack. Their family members fled their homes as well. There was only my household which remained in the village. At that time, the village administrator of Alai Than Kyaw assured me that he guaranteed our safety and told us not to flee, saying that it would put our lives at risk. During that period, some terrorists called my husband and threatened to kill him. After 10 to 15 days, the military intelligence, security forces and police officers came to pick us up and sent us to the house of the village administrator, which they thought would be a safer zone for us. I have an adolescent daughter and I believed that it was not proper for her to stay at that house. Therefore, I stayed there for only one or two

nights and came back to stay at my house. Since I was worried that my husband's life would be at risk, I let him stay at that house for about a month.

After 15 days or so, many houses in Alai Than Kyaw were set ablaze. All houses in the left and right sides of the school were on fire. I did not witness who set the houses on fire.

Witness 15 who was a former Village In-Charge stated:

I was a Village In-Charge in Alai Than Kyaw in 2016. In August 2017, about one to two months before the 2017 attacks, I knew that a group of terrorists gathered in Alai Than Kyaw and held meetings. Since I was afraid that I would be asked to join the meetings, I avoided them. They usually organized meetings at places which were far from the [police] stations or outposts. During the meetings, they discussed about their plans to attack the stations. I did not personally attend the meetings; however, I heard about what they discussed in the meetings from those who attended the meetings and were informers. I presume they would have also informed the government authorities about what was going on here. However, surprisingly, there were no heightened security in Alai Than Kyaw area.

Around 2 to 3 p.m. on August 25, 2017, from my home, I saw a big crowd of people, shouting rallying cries and marching towards the police station to attack it. Although it was a bit distant, my house was also located on the same road where the mob was. Approximately, there were about 2000 to 3000 people. Some were clothed in black, while the others wore ordinary clothing. They were holding swords and batons.

After 4 p.m., as soon as they heard the sound of a gunshot, they were all seen running in different directions. Some went back to their homes, and taking their family members fled to other places. That evening, I did not go anywhere but stayed inside my house.

Three days after the incident, someone in the village threatened to kill me. Since we were the only household left in Zaygone Dan village at that time, we were intimidated to leave our house in Zaygone Dan.

I stayed at my house for 14 days after the incident. Then, I went to Kanyin Dan to temporarily reside there.

About twenty days after the attack, there was a fire in Alai Than Kyaw. Since I was not present there, I did not know who set the village on fire.

Two months after the incident, I came back to stay in Alai Than Kyaw. I saw that my house was still in good condition. I witnessed that a Rakhine man and two

Hindus were stealing things from inside my car which was parked in front of my house. I found that some of my belongings inside the house were also stolen, but I did not see who stole them.

Witness 16 recounted:

I am a native of Alai Than Kyaw Kanyin Dan village, where my parents lived. My wife and I lived in Alai Than Kyaw. I came to know about an armed group, called ARSA, following the attack on No 1 border guard police headquarters at Kyeekan Pyin on October 9 and 10, 2016. Later, there would often be rumors going around. I never had heard about ARSA before. Initially, they would be secretive about their activities. Then they began their membership drives in every village. At that time, I was the village administrator, and they would avoid me when carrying out their activities. I wasn't chosen again when they held new elections for village administrators in 2016, according to a directive from the township general administration department. Another person was selected. Relieved from my duties, I went around wherever I wanted. Since my parents' village and Alai Than Kyaw, where I stayed, were not that far, I would visit my parents' place almost every day. Sometimes I would even return from my parents' home after midnight. Gradually, ARSA's activities became a trend among our Muslim community. They began to start flaunting whatever they were doing in the villages. Although I was not shouldering the responsibilities anymore, as a former village administrator, I had to take special care in what I do or what I say. There were also rumors circling among the mass that ARSA members were planning to attack this or that place.

As always, on August 24, 2017, I was at my parents' the whole day, and while I was preparing to leave for my home at about 7 p.m., the administrator told me that the situation was not good and prevented me from going back that night but to stay put there. I didn't go back and stayed at my parents' home. At that time, I saw agitated groups of Muslims and noticed that the situation was unusual. Noisy cries were also coming out loud from our Muslim crowd. I think it was around midnight. I could hear the sound of explosions from here and there. It had already passed on to another day. Beginning from about 1 a.m. on August 25, I could hear gunshots. I enquired and came to know that the ARSA group was attacking the Alai Than Kyaw police station. I kept hearing gunfire from both sides. How they were attacking, I didn't see. I was just continuously hearing the barrage of shootings. Beginning from around 3:30 or 4 a.m., hordes and hordes of people were entering our Kanyin Dan village. People from villages such as Alai Than Kyaw, Ohndaw, Thandar came in first. Some were just sitting down on the bare village main roads, and I tried to help them out as much as I could by arranging places to stay for them at the houses in the village. More and more people were gradually coming in. Muslims from Myin Lut and Kyauk Pandu areas were also arriving. As Kanyin Dan, Doe Tan, Hnakhaung Toe villages under

Kanyin Dan cluster were close to the seacoast, they were heading towards our villages to cross over to the Bangladesh side. Three days after Alai Than Kyaw [police] station was attacked, the military entered our village to conduct area clearance operation troops. All the villagers escaped to the outskirts of the village. First, I was also among the group that bolted. Among the crowd escaping was also the current administrator. I urged him that he report to the township administrator. Our former administrator also accompanied the area clearance operation troops. He tried to contact me. He said he wished I came back to the village. I tried to also urge the current administrator, and came back together with him to the village, after which we met and talked with the military column commander at the village school.

At that time, Hnakhaung Toe village, located at the edge of the seacoast, was filled with people trying to take flight. There could be an estimated 400,000. Together with the regimental commander from area clearance operation Battalion 99, a group consisting of border guard police and departmental officials from Maungdaw went to Hnakhaung Toe village, and they made me accompany them. Because the crowd was enormous, I asked the authorities to wait at the village, while I picked up some literate and educated representatives from the crowd to meet with the officials. The authorities, while trying to persuade them not to leave, asked them to return back to their original villages and guaranteed their safety, but the crowd did not listen. They all crossed over to Bangladesh. Among those who escaped was the Kanyin Dan [village] administrator (contemporary during the turmoil period). His name is Ebrahim. As he had a guilty conscience, Ebrahim took off.

I personally did not see or know about the military torching other villages or murdering people. In our Kanyin Dan village, the military did not do anything. The area clearance operation troops came to our village twice. Kanyin Dan village tract is near the sea and quite distant from other villages. Only when smokes rose from other villages, we could see fire burning from a distance. We could not see who torched them. When the military came to Kanyin Dan village, our village authorities went and met nicely with them. We also openly answered whatever information they wanted to know. Similarly, the Kan Phu village administrator did not flee, but met with military soldiers when they came. The military did not do anything because he explained well to whatever they had asked. It could be seen that the military had not done anything to villagers, where the village authority is competent. The military had already announced in advance that if one has not committed any crime, they need not run away.

I use the internet. I read postings online, such as the military had burnt down the villages, committed rape or looted properties. As much as I could discern, I did not hear such things on the ground. What I can say for sure, from what I know and from what I saw, is that the military did not do anything of these in the three

villages of Kanyin Dan, Doe Tan, and Hnakhaung Toe, under the Kanyin Dan cluster.

When conditions started to deteriorate in our region, I took caution in how I stayed and moved about. Most of the nights I did not sleep at the house in Alai Than Kyaw, where my wife and I stay together. I was alert and would go to the houses of my parents and relatives, or go and sleep at the prawn ponds. I did not get myself involved in their activities. I dutifully shouldered my responsibilities when I was the Kanyin Dan village administrator. After I was relieved of my duties, although I stayed as a common villager, I was designated by them as the government man [informer].

When I was the administrator, I arranged a separate house for village tract administration office clerk Daw Ma Phyu and her husband to stay. During the incident, Ebrahim, the [current] administrator, called and kept her at his house. The husband and wife own a prawn pond. There was also one incident, around 2015 (I do not remember the exact date), when Ma Phyu was abducted by a group of Muslims and came back with wounds on her body. When the majority of villagers fled from the village, administrator Ebrahim was said to have taken the couple together with him to the seacoast area. Later, I was grieved to come to know that the ARSA had murdered both of them near their prawn pond. They seemed to have designated both the husband and wife as government people [informers]. Despite my family members leaving, I did not dare follow with them to Bangladesh. If I had gone, I am sure ARSA would have killed me. Even now, although I am living in Maungdaw town, I dare not go here and there. I cannot trust anyone. I haven't even been to my Kanyin Dan village. As it is near the sea, there are often looting [from people,] covertly crossing over from the other side of the bank. The present Kanyin Dan administrator was even mugged by terrorists who crossed over from the other bank. His wife and daughter were wounded. Gold and money were taken away from them. After that incident, he moved over to near Alai Than Kyaw police station in Alai Than Kyaw Kanpaing Gyi.

Witness 17 who was a Mawtula Village In-Charge recounted:

I am a responsible person in Alai Than Kyaw (Mawtular) village. I used to have a small shop and earn money from it. I have eight family members and have attended the high school Grade 10. Alai Than Kyaw village is made up of Mawtular (Muslim), Zaygone Dan (Muslim and Rakhine), Kanpaing Gyi (upper), Kanpaing Gyi (lower), Kan Phu, Layyin Gwin and Byuhar Gone (Muslim) villages. A total of 11,186 people (male 5,196 and female 5,990) resided in the village before the violence broke out in August 2017. After the violence, only my household was left in the village. Later on, families from other villages moved over to my village, and now there are 33 households living in Mawtular village. The 133 newcomers are from Mawtular, Zedi Pyin (Rathedaung Township), Chin, Thawin Chaung,

Myin Lut, Kyauk Taung, Oo Daung, Kan Phu, Chein Kharli villages. Zaygone Dan (Rakhine) village has 31 households, with 129 people (male 64 and female 65). The border guard police outpost is also located there.

Just before the violence broke out, on August 24, 2017, I got the information related to ARSA. terrorists had gathered in our village on that day in order to plan the attack. There were already some terrorists in our village. So, I informed the local authorities the presence of these fighters and that our village was at risk. I also invited villagers and warned them they could not defeat the government. The terrorists accused me that I was an informer of the government and that I had turned into a Buddhist, and so, they began to hate me. At midnight on August 24, about 200 terrorists besieged my house. I had to hide in my compound. I had always been in contact with the local authorities, but none of them were able to save me at that time. At 4 a.m. on August 25, the clashes began. Some terrorists were killed, while some retained serious injuries. I learnt that there were seven or eight bodies at Chein Kharli police station.

ARSA members threw stones at one of the police, hitting his eyes and leaving him blinded. Some of the villagers were wounded, and some were even killed. There were also those who lost their limbs. Villagers fled amid the shootings and some of them destroyed my fences.

At 7 p.m. on August 14, 2015, [unspecified persons] came to my house, greeting me and then all of a sudden, [they] shot me three times. The first shot hit my chin, breaking my teeth and tongue. The second hit my chest, and so, I quickly laid down on the floor. As I did so, the bullet from my mouth fell out. The last bullet hit my arm, as I was trying to escape. They used a pistol to shoot me. I was admitted at the Maungdaw hospital. Later, I had to go to Yangon General Hospital to treat my injuries. One of the attackers was a former prisoner. ARSA had mobilized him. Just before the violence broke out, I had learnt that they gathered in the village for prayers and that they said their prayers aloud. They also invited women to pray for the men who were going to launch an attack. Also, they destroyed the road which the military convoy planned to use by smashing it with axes. ARSA was said to have divided itself into smaller groups, to attack, to detonate, to execute ('Tiger'), to mobilize, and to support. One member of the group, 'Tiger,' was to kill government informers, people who were friends with Rakhines and had business interaction with them. One day when I went back home from a meeting, two terrorists from that group, wearing black clothes interrupted me. As I always brought along a sword with me wherever I went to protect myself, I tried to defend them during that encounter. However, about eight additional terrorists who were hiding in the trees suddenly appeared in front me and I was surrounded by them. It seemed they had a plan to assassinate me. So, I shouted loudly for help and some villagers came out and shot at them. By that time, they had fled the scene. This happened on August 15, 2017. In 2013, my house was burnt down. Another attempt of ARSA to kill me was in July, 2017.

This time, they sent me a dish of mutton and chapattis. When my younger son was about to eat, he found needles inside the meat. So, I called the person who sent me the meat, and warned him in the presence of the villager elders.

I also learned that only people at the senior level of ARSA hold guns. A Mawlawi from Ohndaw Shay Chein Kharli village had both long and short guns. He is a leader of 'Tiger.' There was also a murder case committed by the ARSA members on July 15, 2017. One Mahmud Shar, who is also a villager of Alai Than Kyaw, was a fisherman and owned some fishing boats. ARSA tricked him by calling him to come and see the fish they had caught. As Mahmud went there, the 'Tiger' group killed him by cutting him to pieces. They killed him, accusing him of being a government informer. At 2 p.m. on August 25, 2017, my elder son, age 16, was detained by Mawlawi ARSA group members. This happened when the violence was beginning. If my son was taken to Thayaygone Dan, the situation would have been much worse. It was Maung Myint (a) Bai Lar who saved my son, by telling the ARSA that he was the son of a village head and that they should not harm him. My son was severely tortured that he could not even speak. They also took away some of his belongings, such as his watch, mobile phone and some money from him. By the time my son had got back to the village from Kanyin Dan, it was quite late at night.

I witnessed the Mawlawis torching the houses, not the military. Swe Tar Laung is a Mawlawi from our village and he is a leader of ARSA. Other Mawlawis, Abdul Raman and Targad from Byuhar Gone village, are also leaders of ARSA since they are taking the lead in its activities. When setting fire to the houses, Mawlawi Swe Tar Laung set fire to his house as an example. I witnessed Mawlawis Swe Tar Laung, Nuhru Moster, Targad and Abdul Raman, along with a large number of followers, torch the houses by using bamboo tips covered with gasoline-soaked cloth to ignite fire to the houses. As the wind blew, many houses were burnt. The ARSA also threatened us that they would burn my house and kill all of my family members. Only because help was requested from the government, the whole village of Mawtular did not burn down to ashes. The Mawlawis forced people to join them by threatening them that they would be killed and torturing them. Some people were executed. So, many people who could not go against ARSA, joined ARSA and they became involved in the attacks without their own volition but out of fear. Since we did not have concrete evidence to prove, the authorities could not arrest them. These Mawlawis did not flee, when others did. They all gathered together and stayed in Thayaygone Dan village, sort of a ARSA stronghold. Military trainings were said to have been provided there.

Mawlawi Swe Tar Laung's younger brother was shot dead during the attack of Alai Than Kyaw police station. Nuhru Moster, a Mawlawi from Mawtular, is a leader of explosions and he made IEDs out of black fertilizer. Three months before the incident, a dacoit group led by Abdullah King, a villager from Thawin

Chaung, kidnapped my nephew, who escaped five days later without having to pay any ransom.

We could hear the attacks against Alai Than Kyaw police station. The next day when I went there, I was told that an immigration staff employee was killed in one of the barracks at the police station. There were some villagers from Ohndaw Shay and Mawtular villages whose bodies were found inside the police post. The bodies were estimated to be 13 in total. After crossing Mayu mountain ranges, when the military arrived in the afternoon of August 25, terrorists began to flee, otherwise they would have continued killing some of the villagers. They knew that they would be arrested by security forces sooner or later, therefore, they set fire to their houses and ran away with the intention to put the blame on the government. By doing so, they can tell the international community that the security forces had burnt their houses.

During the attack, they first approached the Alai Than Kyaw police station, followed by shootings at dawn that continued till 9 in the morning. After that, they torched the houses, both theirs and of others, including those of people whom they could not persuade to join as well as whom they did not like. ARSA killed some other villagers also before they ran away. The fighters abducted the clerk of the Alai Than Kyaw Kanyin Dan village tract administration office and her husband and killed them near their prawn pond. She is known to be educated and quite liberal she does not wear the hijab, and behaved like a Bamar or Rakhine. Her husband was also killed because he did not say anything about his wife's behavior.

The military carried out area clearance operations the next day. They also came to our village. There were no villagers left when they arrived, as they had all run away. I came along with the security forces when they conducted the area clearance operations in Mawtular, during which we found some swords, daggers and numerous handmade IEDs, made of fertilizer, in some house compounds.

I heard that people had to pay two or three million kyats per person in order to get to Bangladesh. Some would exchange the trip for one or two cows. For those possessing nothing, solar panels could be paid as travel fare.

There was such a big crowd waiting on the seacoast to cross over to the other side. There were people who were taking away things from villages nearby, but they were all Muslims and none of them were ethnic nationals as far as I could see. Later, the terrorists, who had gone to Bangladesh, came back several times to their villages by fishing boats, pretending they were on a fishing trip, and took some cows back to Bangladesh during the nights.

Security forces had been in the village for about 12 days, with Battalion 99, based in Alai Than Kyaw Zaygone Dan village and some were guarding the surroundings. There were no security forces along the beach. I always informed

the authorities whenever I noticed strangers entering our village. The military had prohibited strangers from entering the village and told them not to take the Muslims' properties. The soldiers had told us that if the Muslims came back to take back their things we should not do or say anything. But if they are ARSA members, we should inform them.

ARSA members had been in the village for about four days after the station attack. They later fled to Bangladesh out of guilt. During the four days, they burnt the houses, and killed people. They based their crimes in Thayaygone Dan village, mobilizing people who were planning to flee. At night, men and women were kept separated, and women were said to be raped by terrorists. I also heard from those in Bangladesh that they took women close to men that were to be executed, and forced the men to pay a ransom for them. If they could not afford it, they were killed. On the pretext of checking out on escapees, they raped women at night. Those from Bangladesh reported similar cases too. One of my brothers, now in Bangladesh, was caught by terrorists when he was trying to escape to come back here. He is disabled, with an operated leg and could not run. When they came to know that he was my brother, the fighters beat him and asked him to give three million kyats. They tried to kill him at first, but my sister begged the ARSA fighters not to kill him, and so, the both of them were released, after being tortured. Both my sister and brother want to return back.

ARSA leadership and its members also had their own ways of earning money. They also use money to kill people. I adopted a boy, named Hashin, who stayed three houses away from mine. They paid him money to kill me. I escaped their assassination plan, thanks to an informer.

Mawlawi Musatar, rector from the Arabi University in Myin Lut, six miles distant from Alai Than Kyaw, is the highest ARSA leader in the whole of Maungdaw region. He is so influential that only through his recommendation one can become a Mawlawi. He controlled all ARSA's activities in Myin Lut. Execution is carried out by his orders. Those wishing to become Mawlawis or wishing to meet with him had to offer him cash and kind. Mawlawis wishing to get involved in ARSA's activities had to make a request to him, and pledge themselves by holding the Koran. Those in the execution list had to ask for appeal by giving him gifts and money.

Witness 18 witness recounted:

My original village is Zaygone Dan village in Maungdaw Township. I fled from my village and started to live in Alai Than Kyaw Kanyin Dan village after the violence broke out in August 2017. Since I was pregnant at that time, I stayed there for about nine months and returned to Alai Than Kyaw. On the first day of violence, I heard the sound of gunfire. So, I fled to Kanyin Dan village with my children at around 7 a.m. on Friday August 25, 2017. I did not see fire burning on my way to Kanyin Dan; however, after two days, I could see the smoke rising from a place

which is about two miles away from Kanyin Dan village. I have no idea of who started the fire. Kanyin Dan village was not burnt down. At that time, villagers from here also fled to Kanyin Dan, but now there is only one former household residing there.

When I was in Kanyin Dan, a military convoy arrived there. They gave medical treatment to the children. However, as the roads were blocked, I could not reach the hospital and had to give birth at my home. That was after six months when I arrived at Kanyin Dan village. I went back to my village 23 days after my baby was born. So, I did not encounter most of the events happening at that time.

There were no torture and shootings by the military, but they questioned some people, and took photos. There were also police, not sure whether it was the border guard police or not, in the village. There were approximately 30 households living in the village. I do not know much about other villages. I would guess that Alai Than Kyaw had a total of about 200 households, but most of them have fled. So, I am living in an empty house which belongs to the people who have fled. There are some belongings left by the fleeing people, but no one has taken them. Some of them were taken away by their owners as they fled. However, some properties, such as solar panels and pots were stolen by the Muslims from Buthidaung, who were heading to Bangladesh. No cows or buffalos were taken. I have not seen Rakhine or soldiers taking the Muslims' properties.

While we were living in Alai Than Kyaw, no one including police and soldiers forced us to leave. My house in Zaygone Danvillage was burnt down, and I do not know who torched it. Initially, I had an idea of going to Bangladesh, however, as I was afraid of water, I spent about two days on the beach and finally decided to go to Kanyin Dan. I have not heard anything about rape cases here but I heard that some women from Buthidaung were raped, though I have not witnessed this. I had seen some injured people among those going to Bangladesh and they were carried by others. Those injured people did not fight with security forces – some were shot dead as they fled from their villages. At that time, people from lower village started to flee, and they were shot by unknown actors, leaving about five people dead and injured. I saw that from Thayaygone Dan village before I went to Kanyin Dan village. Some ethnic nationals from nearby villages might have taken the properties from empty houses, but the owners might have taken away some valuable things with them, but I have not witnessed this.

Witness 19 stated:

I heard rumors on the night of August 24, 2017, without knowing who would initiate the attack. At 3 a.m. the next day, I began to hear the sound of gunfire. I saw villagers carrying their bags and fleeing from the village as the sounds of shooting began to cease. All the people in my village had fled and I did not dare live alone in the village, especially during the nights. So, I left my belongings in my house and sent my children to 6 Mile village (Panyaung Pingyi). When I

returned to my village from 6 Mile, I was not able to enter into the village. There were shootings at that time, but nobody was targeted. They [the security forces] were shooting into the air. They announced before entering the village, and so, all villagers left. Then, they looked for the terrorists in the village and left when they did not see any of them. That was how the military got into our village, but they did not shoot at any villagers. I was there at that time and I had seen the arson. I am not the only one who witnessed the Hindus, who were asked to wear Muslims' dresses, torching the houses in Ward No. 5. Other four or five people had also witnessed the arson. I saw that on my way to my daughter's house in Maungdaw, since I could not go back to my village.

A Hindu woman was sentenced to one-year imprisonment for telling the truth about the arson, but I do not know who opened the case. My children and I were separated. I informed Zaw Htoo, the village administrator, and he could not help me at that time. My sons had fled to Bangladesh and went to the refugee camp there. After that, I returned to my village with the recommendation letter from the township administrator. Still, I was not able to enter the village. I begged the regimental commander of the border guard police for mercy, together with the National League for Democracy township chair, that I needed to go into the village to bring some important documents. I also showed him the recommendation letter of the township administrator, but he still refused to allow me to enter the village. They did not let me in because they had already taken all properties in the village. Since I am close to the party and the government, they might have been worried. The next time I tried to enter the village, I was still refused.

I did not see who took the properties in the village, but most of the time, Harshin Bailer, who is also a villager from Mawtular, in collaboration with Rakhines, exported all materials and cows and buffalos to Bangladesh. Maung Myint, who is also a Muslim, and some Rakhines from Alai Than Kyaw village are also involved in exporting things. No one here is exempt, when it comes to export [whispering]. Muslims from this village as well as Rakhines from Alai Than Kyaw village are also involved in destroying houses and exporting properties. I did witness it. They sold at prices ranging from Kyats 600,000 for a house and two million kyats for a car. Those from Maungdaw, including the Rakhines, came here to buy them. My shop was also taken by them. The owner of this house is also involved in that business.

I was not allowed to enter this village at first. Also, they did not let me meet with officials who were visiting us. They drove me away out of fear of leaking information. I was only allowed when I informed the township administrator and after he had called Zaw Htoo. The village administrator might have been involved because the thief cannot enter into the house without the knowledge of its owner. Villagers including Hindus from surrounding villages of Mawrawady, Oo Daung, Kaing Gyi, Thayay Konbaung, Alai Than Kyaw and Ahngumaw also entered this village. Some from Kaing Gyi, particularly Khin Soe Mya, who is a Rakhine, paid Kyats 10,000 per day to Thet ethnic nationals to carry the

properties. There are also the Rakhines, Nay Soe Oo and his wife, and another two people whom I cannot recall their names, also took away properties, destroyed and sold them.

They did such kind of activities in collaboration with officials from here, who were also involved. Soldiers asked the police not to do so and told them that they were assigned here for combating the terrorists, and not to guard those who were taking other people's belongings, and that they were supposed to return once the mission was completed. In most situations, it is the Rakhine people who took the properties, for the majority of the population here are Rakhines. In some cases, military officers knew what was happening but for some others, they did not. There are many houses left unburnt, but they destroyed and took them. They only burnt remaining and unwanted pieces of houses, just for show. Regarding some one-story buildings, they broke them apart with hammers and sold the unbroken pieces.

I heard that about nine people who attacked the [border guard police] station were shot dead by the military, but not in the village. Fire broke out in our village after one and a half months and after all the properties were taken away. We were at the fields and then at the lower part of the village for we could not go into the village. We saw the fire but we did not know who started it. The remaining properties were not taken by the military, instead, they were taken by the ethnic nationals, Hindus and Muslims. The properties included motorbikes and cars, and they were taken away and sold in Maungdaw, Sittwe and Buthidaung. Some people from Ahngumaw came by cars to get those properties, just after one and a half months.

They took these properties not because they had nothing to eat, but did it with an intention. They did similar behavior in the previous disturbances in northern Maungdaw. There are those who create problems to take advantage. Now, there are armed clashes with the AA and people took their own belongings with them, without any problem. But here it was different, all of the properties were looted. The Rakhines have been doing whatever they wanted with the looted properties, since no one prohibited them from taking other people's properties. I have seen them selling the motorbikes at different prices ranging from Kyats 50,000 to 150,000, but they never sell the good ones.

Buffalos and cows were exported to Bangladesh and officials were involved in the business. My two sons who are in Bangladesh can speak Muslim language, as their father is a Muslim as well as military personnel. They want to return to Myanmar. There are those who went to Bangladesh from here. While almost all of the people staying in Bangladesh want to come back to Myanmar, they dare not do so out of fear of ARSA. There was no chance to take photos at that time. The Rakhines and the border guard police checked the phones from everyone, deleted pictures and kept them once we left the village. The head of police post here is

also involved in the above-mentioned business. Each household had to pay him Kyats 100,000 in order to get a permission for a car to leave for somewhere. He was there when the violence broke out.

Reports that the military forced people to leave for Bangladesh are totally wrong. They even told people not to go there. They said they would contribute food if people did not have anything to eat. Some Rakhines holding swords and sticks appeared when the military left the village. Two Muslims were stabbed with swords to death as they ran to Thayay Konbaung out of fear of the Rakhines. I saw their dead bodies. There was a threat from ARSA that anyone not going to [Bangladesh] would be killed, and they followed it with action. There are those killed due to the threat from ARSA. In some cases, houses were burnt due to the military firing their weapons. Mostly, the Rakhines torched the houses by using bottles of fuel. Now, the owner of this house, Mawtular in charge, helped drive out Rakhine people who threw fuel bottles into the village. I was told about it and I was not a witness.

I witnessed the destroying and selling of houses only a year after I have settled here. I did not see the Muslims torching their own houses. They ran just after the shootings began at night. I did not hear or witness any rape cases. For there was no one in the village at that time, and no torture occurred. I have no idea about the detention, but I heard that some were shot. No one was intentionally shot, because soldiers from the military first opened fire into the air when entering a village as a signal that they were coming. The military did not take anything. Only the Rakhines, Muslims, Hindus and the police took the villagers' properties.

The Hindu woman who was sent to prison in Buthidaung for one year is from Ward No. 5. I was told that a male immigration staff was killed at the Alai Than Kyaw station. I did not see who torched our village, but I saw my properties being looted. I attempted three times to go back to my home but was not successful as the regimental commander blocked me. The houses were still there for a year when I was in Alai Than Kyaw. They were only destroyed and sold when I got here. They sold all of the properties including motorbikes and cars, and there are still some cars in Maungdaw. I heard that a Rakhine man from Maungdaw has been driving the car that belongs to Harshi.

They communicate with each other through phones. There are about five boats per night to carry the commodities. The Rakhine people bring them the buffalos and cows, which they then exported to the other side. My two sons in Bangladesh use their Muslim names when staying there. There are also people from Thayay Konbaung, Khayay Myaing, Wai Thar Li, Shwe Baho and Ahngumaw who came here to take the properties. Both the Rakhines and Muslims from Maungdaw bought the properties from here. The prices of houses were fixed at one million kyats, whereas those of the cars were 2.2 million kyats. [The interviewee requested not to mention the party's name.] My sons in Bangladesh want to

return, however, the ARSA kills those who said they were returning. I think the Bangladesh government is unable to handle the problem effectively.

Witness 20 stated:

I heard the gunshots at 3 a.m. on August 25, 2017. When I heard gun shots in Mawtular (lower) village, I fled to Nakhaung Deyar village. I did not have any money to flee to Bangladesh. I stayed at Alai Than Kyaw (Kanyin Dan) for about nine months. I did not have any idea who were involved in the shooting as I only heard the sound. I also heard gunshots in Alai Than Kyaw (Kanyin Dan). I fled to Nakhaung Deyar village since the day the conflict happened. I stayed there about one week. There were no houses burnt in that village.

There were no security forces in Kanyin Danvillage when we arrived. The military entered the village two times, but I don't remember the dates. They gave medical aid in the village. There were some investigations. They did not threaten us. They said, "Stay here, we are not going to beat you and kill you, come and take medicine if you need." Women were not investigated. I heard that six people died in Mawtular village although I did not witness it. The military came twice to the village to provide medicine, clothes, food, rice, oil and canned fish.

On the third day after I left Mawtular village, I saw fire in my village. I did not see any properties taken. We did not go out from our houses. There were neither torture nor rape cases. I did not see or hear any of these cases. I did not witness the death of people shot by the military as I did not go out from my house. There were no threats or forced migration. All of my relatives had fled to Bangladesh. If I have money, I will go there too. It costs around Taka 10,000, or 5,000. The [broker] asked me only Taka 2,000, but I could not even afford that amount. Our grandparents' three-fold cards and our census documents were lost when the houses were burnt down.
