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NIGHMARES OF ROHINGYAS

Massacres unearthed in Myanmar

Fact Finding Mission Report on Rohingya

Odhikar has been monitoring the situation of the Rohingya people since 2012. Subsequent to the genocidal attacks on the Rohingya community by the Myanmar military and Buddhist extremists on 9 October 2016 and 25 August 2017, Odhikar uncovered the killing fields and mass graves that were created as a result of the genocide.

Cover photo: On 2 September 2017 Myanmar security forces and Buddhist extremists killed 10 Rohingya men and buried them in a shallow grave in Rakhine State of Myanmar. One of the victim's wife showing a photo of those 10 Rohingya men to the human rights defenders. Photo: Odhikar (27/04/2018, Kutub Palong refugee camp, Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh) ©Odhikar.

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Acronyms

ICC	: International Criminal Court
ALRC	: Asian Legal Resource Centre
FF	: Fact-finding
HRW	: Human Rights Watch
AP	: Associated Press
UN	: United Nations
ASEAN	: Association of Southeast Asian Nations
EU	: European Union
ISCG	: Inter Sector Coordination Group

Executive Summary

Odhikar has been monitoring the situation of Rohingyas since 2012. Subsequent to the genocidal attacks on the Rohingya community by the Myanmar military and Buddhist extremists on 9 October 2016 and 25 August 2017, Odhikar took the testimonials of 150 Rohingya victims who took refuge in Bangladesh.¹ Based on these testimonials, Odhikar and the Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC) submitted a report to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for investigation into the alleged inhuman acts brought upon the Rohingyas.² Odhikar then conducted a Fact-Finding Mission from 10 January to 16 January 2018.³ As a part of the mission conducted, Odhikar uncovered that the acts of genocide against the Rohingya community included, but was not restricted to, extrajudicial killings, large scale gang rapes, enforced disappearances and the torching of Rohingya villages.



Rohingyas waiting for relief in Thayingkhali Refugee Camp at Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Photo: Odhikar.

Despite centuries of history and tradition in Myanmar, the Myanmar government refuses to recognize the Rohingya community as its citizens. Not belonging to any nation, Rohingyas are considered 'the most persecuted minority in the world'.⁴

Odhikar conducted a second fact-finding mission by visiting several Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh from 4 to 13 February 2018 in an attempt to uncover the killing fields and mass graves that were created as a result of the genocide.

¹ http://odhikar.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Final_FFR_Rohingya_English-1-150_WCA.pdf

² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/23/myanmar-icc-pushes-to-investigate-rohingya-atrocities-rape-fire>

³ http://odhikar.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/FFM_Rohingya_1_12.06.18.pdf

⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22491&LangID=E>

I – RECOMMENDATIONS

The fact-finding mission puts forth the following recommendations for the Bangladesh government, International Criminal Court and International Communities including United Nations (UN), European Union (EU) and ASEAN.

1. In order to protect the right to life and human dignity of the Rohingya people, peace and human rights must be established immediately in the Rakhine (Arakan) state of Myanmar, with UN initiatives.
2. The UN must take initiatives to ensure the Rohingya people's right to self-determination.
3. The international community must put effective pressure on the Myanmar government and support the establishment of human rights of the Rohingya community in Myanmar.
4. All those responsible, including the Myanmar Army and Buddhist extremists, must be made accountable at the International Criminal Court for committing genocide.
5. The international community must take adequate measures to ensure safe, voluntary and dignified repatriation of Rohingya refugees.
6. The international community must put pressure on the government of Myanmar to give open access to human rights organizations, the UN and media for investigations into the alleged mass graves to ensure the dignity of the deceased.

II – BACKGROUND

Odhikar carried out fact-finding missions in the refugee camps set up in Ukhiya Upazila of Cox's Bazar District and interviewed many Rohingya victims and their families who had lived in different villages in the Rakhine state of Myanmar. These testimonials of victims and witnesses, of the brutality perpetrated by the Myanmar soldiers and Buddhist extremists, provided evidence of genocide against the Rohingya community.



A Rohingya child carrying firewood collected from the nearby hills in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Photo: Odhikar.

Investigations conducted in Myanmar by Reuters and Associated Press (AP) revealed evidence of mass graves in the villages of Rakhine.⁵ Human Rights Watch (HRW) further identified a killing field at Maung Nu Village in Buthidaung Township of North Rakhine, locally known as Monu Para.⁶ As per the statements of 14 survivors and witnesses of the affected areas, several Burmese soldiers entered the compound and surrounded it to murder the Rohingyas.⁷



Rohingyas are living with the risk of landslide in Thayingkhali Camp at Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Photo: Odhikar.

Over one hundred dead Rohingya bodies were subsequently loaded in military trucks and carried away by the Myanmar military.⁸ Reuters further reported on the incident of Rohingya men from the Northern Rakhine village of Inn Din who were buried in a mass grave after being hacked or shot to death by Buddhist extremists and the military.⁹ Two Reuter's journalists who reported on the issue were taken into custody and have been charged for violating the Official Secrets Act of Myanmar.¹⁰

⁵ AP finds evidence for graves, Rohingya massacre in Myanmar, 1 February 2018, <https://apnews.com/ef46719c5d1d4bf98cfefcc4031a5434>

⁶ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/10/03/burma-military-massacres-dozens-rohingya-village>

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-myanmar-rohingya-military/seven-myanmar-soldiers-sentenced-to-10-years-for-rohingya-massacre-idUSKBN1HH2ZS>

¹⁰ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/myanmar-judge-charges-two-reuters-journalists-jailed-since-december-with-violating-colonial-era-secrets-act/2018/07/09/aa23aafa-831f-11e8-9e06-4db52ac42e05_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.2d9681c8a4f0

III – METHODOLOGY

The fact-finding (FF) mission arranged one on one interviews with seven victims and witnesses of the brutality that took place in the Rakhaine state. The team visited the Rohingya refugee camps located in the Cox’s Bazar District of Bangladesh. The following are the camps visited,

- The registered Kutub Palong refugee camps in Ukhiya, Cox’s Bazar.
- Lambasia, Madhuchora, the extensions of Kutub Palong registered camp.
- Thayingkhali refugee camp, Ukhiya, Cox’s Bazar.

The fact finding mission team gathered information with the help of human rights defenders, the media, international NGOs and Rohingya leaders. Despite the short timeframe, low resources and poor logistics, the fact-finding mission tried to conduct the fact-finding mission as credibly as possible.

The refugees interviewed for the purpose of this mission was selected on the basis of their survival from the killing field; their witnessing of the massacre and those who have been wounded. A list of the interviewed Rohingya refugees as follows:

SL No.	Name and Age	Village name in Rakhaine (Arakan province of Myanmar)	Types of violence faced/witnessed
1	Shahidul Amin (28)	Foirakulpara, Net Chaung Village	Wounded and witnessed mass killing
2	Abu Taher (32)	Foirakulpara, Net Chaung Village	Witnessed mass killing
3	Karim Ullah (19)	Joynuddinpara, Net Chaung Village	Wounded and witnessed mass killing
4	Md. Zafar (53)	Net Chaung Village	Witnessed mass killing
5	Nur Alom (27)	Diyal Toli Village	Wounded and witnessed mass killing
6	Jamal (40)	Bolibazar area, Dom Paik Village	Wounded and witnessed mass killing
7	Solimullah (27)	Joynuddinpara, Net Chaung Village	Wounded

IV– FINDINGS

Massacre Fields and Mass Graves

The fact-finding mission spoke to five survivors from the Net Chaung village, two from Diyal Toli and Dom Paik villages and came to know of the ‘killing fields’ in their villages. Survivors of the brutality described his experience of witnessing acquaintances being murdered by the Myanmar military. These are their testimonials:

Sahidul Amin (28), former resident of Foirakulpara of Net Chaung Village saw at least nine persons shot dead and 10-12 persons slaughtered by the military. Sahidul told the team that on 26 August 2017 at around 3:00am, Myanmar military attacked their village and started

torching houses and shooting indiscriminately. At that time, his two sons, Ansar Ullah (3) and Abdur Rahman (1), were shot by bullet which pierced through the bamboo wall of the house. In



Shahidul Amin

order to save the lives of other members of his family, Sahidul left his sons bodies and went to Joynuddinpara which is located at the north-west side of his village. At around 8:00am, he and 50-60 persons of his village decided to return to Foirarkul Para to bring back the bodies of their relatives. As soon as they crossed the canal 'Fonkhalir Chora', soldiers opened fire at them. Sahidul could survive because he was at the tail end of the crowd. Three bodies fell on

him and he lay still under them. He also saw 6-7 dead bodies in front of him and many people were wounded. Some of them were trying to crawl away after being wounded. He played dead. The Myanmar soldiers started slaughtering the Rohingyas who were trying to flee. Sahidul witnessed at least 10-12 persons slaughtered by the soldiers. Sahidul told the team that about 20 persons could flee, even though most of them were wounded.



Nur Alom

Nur Alom told Odhikar that he lived in Diyal Toli Village of Maungdaw. On 27 August 2017 in the early morning (After Fazre prayer) around 60-70 soldiers of the Myanmar Military attacked their village and threw 'Lansa' (incendiary bombs) to burn the houses. The military had rifles and tied a red handkerchief on their arms. At that time Nur was in his house. When he realized that the soldiers were attacking their village, he along with his eight family members ran out of the house and fled towards the hill to save their lives. Around 40 villagers were also with him. The soldiers chased them and started firing indiscriminately from a distance of 30 yards. Nur Alom got shot in the right side of his back on the

road near his house. His brother Shamsul Alom, brother's wife Setara Begum, brother's sons Abu Sayed (3) and Jahangir (2) and some other villagers got shot at as well. After being wounded he lost consciousness. Later, he was rescued by his family members and taken to a nearby forest. His family members informed him that after leaving the Military from the village, they along with some other acquainted Rohingya people went to the village again and found few people alive. They also saw the wounded bodies of his brother, brother's wife and their two sons. Nur Alom was given primary herbal treatment over there and the next day he along with his



Wounded part of his body

family entered Bangladesh. After that he was taken to Cox's Bazar hospital and given treatment for seven days. Then he was transferred to MSF hospital at Ukhiya and given treatment for two months.



Solimullah

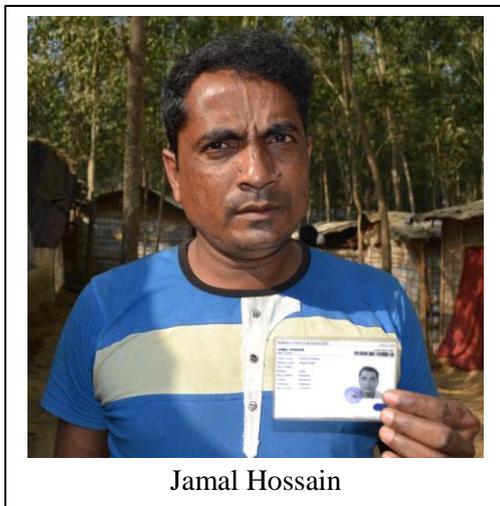
Solimullah told Odhikar that on 25 August 2017 at approximately 3:00am, around 80 Myanmar soldiers and police from Foirabazar and Bolibazar camp entered the village from its southern side in military vehicles. Solimullah used to live in the northern part of the village. At around 6:00am, the soldiers started burning the houses of Rohingyas by throwing 'Lansa'. He along with his family members left their house and fled towards Lobboirkul Para. Solimullah,

his family members and 20-30 villagers were crawling through the paddy field because of the indiscriminate firing at them. At a distance of around 150 yards from his house, he got shot in his right hip but still tried to crawl towards 'Lobboirkul' Para. On the way he saw several dead bodies. The bodies were left half a kilometer away from the village. That night with the help of other Rohingyas, he entered Bangladesh and was admitted in Cox's Bazar hospital where the bullet was removed. After two days, he was discharged from hospital and sent to Kutub Palong camp.



Wounded part of his body

Jamal Hossain told Odhikar that on 25 August 2017 at around 12:00pm around 60 Myanmar Military from Balibazar base along with local Buddhist criminals wearing Military shirts,



Jamal Hossain

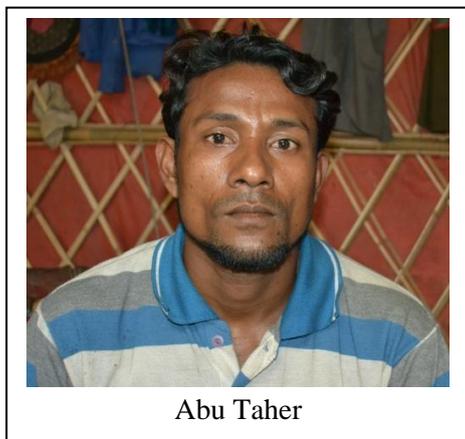
shorts and had red ribbons tied around their heads, attacked their village. All of them were holding different kinds of weapons including guns and sharp knives. First they threw 'Lansa' to burn the houses of Rohingyas at Rida Para in the village. When he got to know that the military attacked their village, he along with his family left and took shelter at Anis Char which is at the western side of the village. The next day, a few of the villagers returned home. At around 9:00am, the military attacked the village again and Jamal saw that around 300 soldiers had taken position at the Dom Paik Primary School field and the road to Anis Char, started running to prevent the villagers

from fleeing. Jamal and others started fleeing through the paddy field, but the soldiers chased them and started firing at them. Jamal, his brother and 20 other villagers got shot. They fell down the ground. Whenever a wounded person tried to flee, the soldiers shot him. When the soldiers left the place, he along with only a few of the wounded persons crawled towards the

'Purma' canal. He saw many wounded people swimming through the canal to reach the other side. When he reached the other side, his brother called him from behind and told him that soldiers had shot him and beat him with rifles and he could no longer stand. Few Rohingya people were standing on the other side of the canal and they rescued the wounded persons. He was taken to Anis Char where his family found him. On that night, his brother died. After that he tried to contact his relatives over his mobile phone. Some of them were still hiding in the forest near the village. They informed him that around 20 villagers were found dead in the paddy fields where he got shot. After a few days, he along with his family members, entered Bangladesh and got treatment from the MSF hospital at Ukhiya.

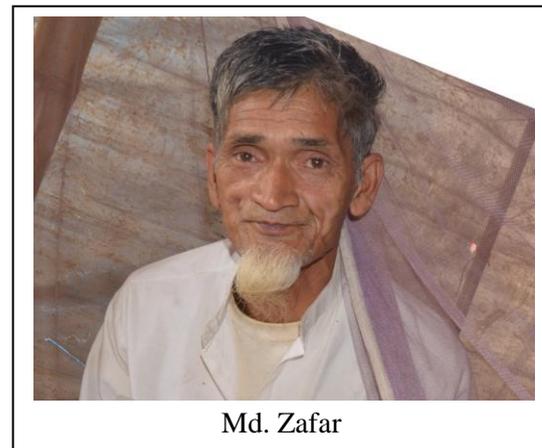
Residents of different Rohingya dominated villages in Rakhine, who fled to Bangladesh, told the fact-finding mission that the military torched Rohingya households and opened fire at Rohingya people who were fleeing. The military detained, surrounded and murdered the men and took the young girls away.

Abu Taher (32), another resident of Foirakulpara of Net Chaung Village said that at least 10-15 persons were shot dead in a paddy field and five were injured by the Myanmar Military. Abu



Taher told the team that on 26 August 2017 at around 3:00am, Myanmar soldiers from the military camp situated at the southern side of the Net Chaung village, came to their village and started torching houses and firing erratically. Abu Taher with his family members and about 100 villagers fled towards the hills located at the north-east side of the village. About 10 minutes later, about 100 soldiers chased them and surrounded them in a paddy field. Abu Taher along with other 30-35 men tried to flee but the soldiers saw them using torch light and opened fire at them, which caused several persons to get shot. Abu Taher and some other villagers could reach the hill although five among them were shot and injured. In the early morning, Abu Taher and some others climbed a tree and saw approximately 30 bodies scattered in the paddy field.

Md. Zafar told Odhikar that on 27 August 2017 at around 8:00 am, around 200-300 Myanmar soldiers from nearby Moghpara military camp, police and local Buddhist extremists attacked



their village. Soldiers threw 'Lansa' and burnt the houses of Rohingyas. On the other side of the village from where Zafar lived, they could hear the screaming of the people. At around 3:00pm, when Zafar got the information that the soldiers were coming to their part of the village, a group of the villagers fled towards the western side and went half a kilometer away from the village, but the soldiers chased them and started firing at them. Around 20 persons of that group were shot and died there. His nephew Ayas (18) were among the dead. After

that he along with others crossed 'Purma' canal. He also saw a helicopter circling several times and firing at the people who were fleeing. Zafar and other people were hiding at 'Kunchirong' Para in 'Lobboirkul' hill. From there, they saw their village was burning. On the next day, they entered Bangladesh through Hoaiikkhom.

The Myanmar Military destroyed the religious education centers called *Moktobs* at the Rohingya dominated villages during their 'clearance' operation. One survivor shared his experience of witnessing such killing. The students were 18-25 years of age. This is his testimony,



Karim Ullah (19), resident of Joynuddinpara of Net Chaung village said that at least five Madrassa students were shot dead beside the Moktob. He stated that on 25 August 2017 at around 8:00am, about 30 students were reading the Holy Quran in a Moktob. Suddenly Myanmar soldiers came and opened fire. To save their lives, all the students started running towards 'Lobboirkul' hill. The soldiers started

firing at them as soon as they left the village and reached the paddy field. At that time, Karim Ullah was hit by a bullet on the left side of his back which exited through the left side of his chest. About 15 students were also shot. Among them, five students died immediately. Among the deceased, Karim could identify his sister's brother-in-law Ayas (20) and neighbor Jahangir (19). After few moments, Karim lost his consciousness. At around 3:00pm, he awoke and found himself on 'Lobboirkul' hill. He got to know from the villagers who rescued him that, after the killing ordeal, the villagers brought the injured students to 'Lobboirkul' hill but left the bodies of the deceased on the field.



Subsequent to the attacks on Myanmar security forces, the government started 'Clearance Operations' to find the 'extremists'. The Myanmar Military exceeded all examples of ruthless brutality. Genocide has been carried out on minority Rohingya Muslims. Buddhist extremists with knives, sticks and guns also went on a mass killing spree. Many of the victims were gunned down, slaughtered and burned to death.

V- CONCLUSION

The Myanmar Army committed grave atrocities on the Rohingya Muslim community of the Rakhine State of Myanmar. More than 700,000 Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh from the northern Rakhine State of Myanmar at the aftermath of the Myanmar Military's 'cleansing operations'. Rohingya victims who fled to Bangladesh informed the team that the repression on them by the Myanmar military, Buddhists extremists and Border Guard Police (BGP) had been a continuous and systematic process. Myanmar's security forces had been deliberately committing mass killings and gang-rapes; destruction of food sources and other human rights violations. Rohingya men, women and children were tortured and many faced enforced disappearances. Furthermore, there are allegations of detaining women and children in the military camps as sex slaves and the burial of bodies to hide traces of genocide.

In order to protect the right to life and human dignity of the Rohingya people, Odhikar demands that peace and human rights be established immediately in the Rakhine (Arakan) state of Myanmar, with UN initiatives. Odhikar also urges that the UN take initiatives to ensure the right to self-determination of the Rohingya people. The international community must put effective pressure on the Myanmar government and support the establishment of the human rights of the Rohingya community in Myanmar. At the same time, all those responsible, including the Myanmar Army and Buddhist extremists must be made accountable at the ICC for committing genocide.