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This combo photo comprises portraits of some of the Rohingya Muslim women interviewed in November 2017 in Kutupalong and Gundum refugee camp in Bangladesh. They said they were raped by members of Myanmar's armed forces.

Rohingya Exodus

KRISTEN GELINEAU and TODD PITMAN
Associated Press

1. AP: ROHINGYA METHODICALLY RAPED BY MYANMAR'S ARMED FORCES

Dec. 11, 2017: The Associated Press has found that the rape of Rohingya women by Myanmar's security forces has been sweeping and methodical.

2. VIDEO: ROHINGYA WOMEN DETAIL RAPE BY MYANMAR FORCES

Dec. 10, 2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sEhoAHI-zGM>

3. ROHINGYA SURVIVORS: MYANMAR'S ARMY SLAUGHTERED MEN, CHILDREN

Dec. 21, 2017: Myanmar's Rohingya describe ruthless army massacre that offers evidence Myanmar forces have systematically killed civilians.

Dec. 11, 2017



F, 22, says she was raped by members of Myanmar's armed forces in June and again in September.

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AP: Rohingya methodically raped by Myanmar's armed forces

By KRISTEN GELINEAU

Associated Press

UKHIA, Bangladesh (AP) — The soldiers arrived, as they often did, long after sunset.

It was June, and the newlyweds were asleep in their home, surrounded by the fields of wheat they farmed in western Myanmar. Without warning, seven soldiers burst into the house and charged into their bedroom.

The woman, a Rohingya Muslim who agreed to be identified by her first initial, F, knew enough to be terrified. She knew the military had been attacking

<https://apnews.com/5e4a1351468f4755a6f861e39ec782c9/AP:-Rohingya-methodically-raped-by-Myanmar's-armed-forces>

Rohingya villages, as part of what the United Nations has called ethnic cleansing in the mostly Buddhist nation. She heard just days before that soldiers had killed her parents, and that her brother was missing.

This time, F says, the soldiers had come for her.

The men bound her husband with rope. They ripped the scarf from her head and tied it around his mouth.


They yanked off her jewelry and tore off her clothes. They threw her to the floor. And then the first soldier began to rape her.

She struggled against him, but four men held her down and beat her with sticks. She stared in panic at her husband, who stared back helplessly. He finally wriggled the gag out of his mouth and screamed.

And then she watched as a soldier fired a bullet into the chest of the man she had married only one month before. Another soldier slit his throat.

Her mind grew fuzzy. When the soldiers were finished, they dragged her naked body outside and set her bamboo house ablaze.

It would be two months before she realized her misery was far from over:

The Associated Press reported this story with a grant from the Pulitzer
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Rohingya children stand in the shade of a tent in Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh. The Associated Press has found that the rape of Rohingya women by Myanmar's security forces has been sweeping and methodical.

She was pregnant.

THE RAPE OF ROHINGYA WOMEN by Myanmar's security forces has been sweeping and methodical, the Associated Press found in interviews with 29 women and girls who fled to neighboring Bangladesh. These sexual assault survivors from several refugee camps were interviewed separately and extensively. They ranged in age from 13 to 35, came from a wide swath of villages in Myanmar's Rakhine state and described assaults between October 2016 and mid-September.

Foreign journalists are banned from the Rohingya region of Rakhine, making it nearly impossible to independently verify each woman's report. Yet there was a sickening sameness to their stories, with distinct patterns in their accounts, their assailants' uniforms and the details of the rapes themselves.

The testimonies bolster the U.N.'s contention that Myanmar's armed forces are systematically employing rape as a "calculated tool of terror" aimed at exterminating the Rohingya people. The Myanmar armed forces did not respond to multiple requests from the AP for comment, but an internal military investigation last month concluded that none of the assaults ever took place. And when journalists asked about rape allegations during a government-organized trip to Rakhine in September, Rakhine's minister for border affairs, Phone Tint, replied: "These women were claiming they were raped, but look at their appearances — do you think they are that attractive to be raped?"

Doctors and aid workers, however, say that they are stunned at the sheer volume of rapes, and suspect only a fraction of women have come forward. Medecins Sans Frontieres doctors have treated 113 sexual violence survivors since August, a third of them under 18. The youngest was 9.

THE U.N. HAS CALLED THE Rohingya the most persecuted minority on earth, with Myanmar denying them citizenship and basic rights. Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees now live in sweltering tents in Bangladesh, where the stifling air smells of excrement from a lack of latrines and of smoke from wood fires to cook what little food there is. The women and girls in this story gave the AP their names but agreed to be publicly identified only by their first initial, citing fears they or their families would be killed by Myanmar's military.

Each described attacks that involved groups of men from Myanmar's security



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K, 30, is photographed carrying her baby, born two months premature, and her son beside her as she points to pictures of symbols that designate various units of Myanmar's armed forces.

forces, often coupled with other forms of extreme violence. Every woman except one said the assailants wore military-style uniforms, generally dark green or camouflage. The lone woman who described her attackers as wearing plain clothes said her neighbors recognized them from the local military outpost.

Many women said the uniforms bore various patches featuring stars or, in a couple cases, arrows. Such patches represent the different units of Myanmar's army.

The most common attack described went much like F's. In several other cases, women said, security forces surrounded a village, separated men from women, then took the women to a second location to gang rape them.

The women spoke of seeing their children slaughtered in front of them, their husbands beaten and shot. They spoke of burying their loved ones in the darkness and leaving the bodies of their babies behind. They spoke of the searing pain of rapes that felt as if they would never end, and of dayslong journeys on foot to Bangladesh while still bleeding and hobbled.

They spoke and they spoke, the words erupting from many of them in frantic, tortured bursts.

N, who says she survived a rape but lost her husband, her country and her

peace, speaks because there is little else she can do — and because she hopes that somebody will listen.

“I have nothing left,” she says. “All I have left are my words.”

TWO MONTHS AFTER THE MEN came quietly in the night for F, they came boldly in the daytime for K.

It was late August, she says, just days after Rohingya insurgents had attacked several Myanmar police posts in northern Rakhine. Security forces responded with swift ferocity that human rights groups say left hundreds dead and scores of Rohingya villages burned to the ground.

Inside their house, K and her family were settling down to breakfast. They had only just swallowed their first mouthfuls of rice when the screams of other villagers rang out: The military was coming.

Her husband and three oldest children bolted out the door, fleeing for the nearby hills.

But K was nearly 9 months pregnant, with swollen feet and two terrified toddlers whose tiny legs could never outpace the soldiers’ strides. She had no place to hide, no time to think.

The door banged open. And the men charged in.

There were four of them, she thinks, maybe five, all in camouflage uniforms. Her young son and daughter began to wail and then, mercifully, scampered out the front door.

There was no mercy for her. The men grabbed her and threw her on the bed. They yanked off her earrings, nose ring and necklace. They found the money she had hidden in her blouse from the recent sale of her family’s cow. They ripped off her clothes, and tied down her hands and legs with rope. When she resisted, they choked her.

And then, she says, they began to rape her.

She was too terrified to move. One man held a knife to her eyeball, one more a gun to her chest. Another forced himself inside her.

When the first man finished, they switched places and the torture began again. And when the second man finished, a third man raped her.

In the midst of her agony, she thought of nothing but the baby inside her womb, just weeks away from emerging into a world that would not want him, because he was a Rohingya.

She began to bleed.

She blacked out.

As she awoke, her great aunt was there, tearfully untying her. The elder woman bathed her, clothed her and gave her a hot compress for her aching thighs.

When K's husband returned home, he was furious: not just at the men who had raped her, but at her. Why, he demanded, had she not run away?

She was pregnant and in no condition to run, she shot back. Still, he blamed her for the assault and threatened to abandon her, because, he told her, a "non-Muslim" had raped her.

Fearful the men would return, she and her family fled to her father's house in the hills above the village. When they saw soldiers setting fire to the houses below, they knew they had to leave for Bangladesh.

K was too crippled by pain to walk. Her husband and brother placed her inside a sling they fashioned out of a blanket and a stick, and carried her for days.

Inside her cocoon, she wept for the baby she feared was dead.

A FEW DAYS AFTER THE MEN BURST into K's house, 10 soldiers arrived at R's.

She was just 13 years old, but R had already learned to fear the military men.

Her parents had warned her to steer clear of them, yet it was her father who first fell prey to their wrath. One day last year, R says, soldiers stabbed him in



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R, 13, shows the scars on her knees and right shin from injuries obtained when members of Myanmar's armed forces dragged her out of her house before gang raping her.

the head with a knife, killing him.

Yet R's family had nowhere else to go. And so they stayed in the village. R busied herself by learning Arabic, doting on her chicken and its hatchlings and caring for her two younger brothers.

And then one day in late August, R says, the soldiers barged into her house. They snatched up her little brothers, tied them to a tree outside and began to beat them. R tried to run out the front door, but the men caught her.

Her body is barely pubescent, her limbs still gangly like a child's. But her youth could not protect her.

R fought back against the men, but they dragged her out of the house. The skin tore away from her knees as her legs scraped along the ground.

*The men tethered her arms to two trees.
They ripped off her earrings and bracelets,
stripped off her clothes.*

The men tethered her arms to two trees. They ripped off her earrings and bracelets, stripped off her clothes.

R screamed at them to stop. They spit at her.

And then the first man began to rape her.

She froze. She was a virgin. The pain was excruciating.

The attack lasted for hours. She remembers all ten men forcing themselves on her before she passed out.

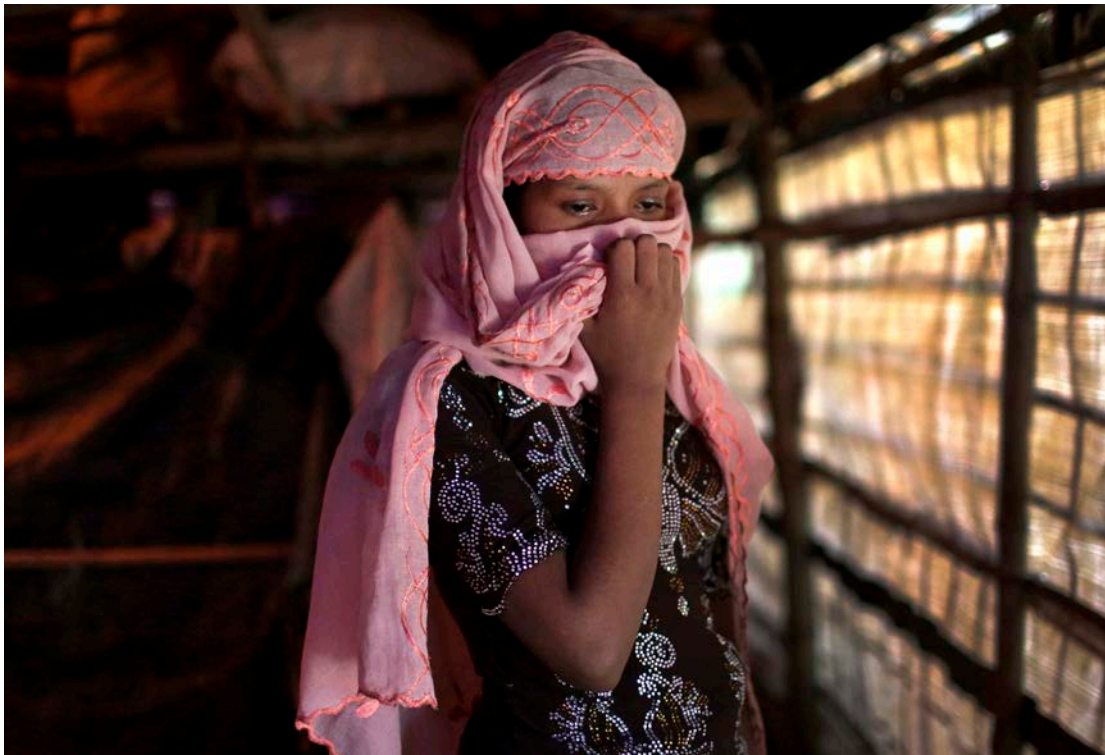
One of her older brothers later found her on the ground, bleeding.

R's two little brothers were missing, but their mother had no time to search for them. She knew she had to get her daughter over the border and to a doctor quickly to get medicine in time to prevent a pregnancy.

R was barely conscious. So her two older brothers carried her across the hills and fields toward Bangladesh. R's mother hurried alongside them, terrified for her daughter, terrified that time was running out.

THAT R'S FAMILY SOUGHT TREATMENT for her at all is an anomaly. Despite still suffering pain, bleeding and infections months after the attacks, only a handful of the women interviewed by the AP had seen a doctor. The others had no idea free services were available, or were too ashamed to tell a doctor they were raped.

In a health center overflowing with women and wailing babies, Dr. Misbah



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R, 13, covers her face with her headscarf in her tent in Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh.

Uddin Ahmed, a government health officer, sits at his desk looking weary. He pulls out a stack of patient histories for those treated at his clinics and begins to flick through them, reading the case summaries out loud:

Sept. 5, a patient 7 months pregnant says three soldiers burst into her home 11 days ago and raped her. Also Sept. 5, a patient says she was asleep at home when the military broke in 20 days ago and three soldiers raped her. Sept. 10, a patient says the military came to her house one month ago and beat her husband before two soldiers raped her.

Ahmed says the women who manage to overcome their fear and make it to his clinics are usually the ones in the deepest trouble. So many others, he adds, are suffering in silence.

Though the scale of these attacks is new, the use of sexual violence by Myanmar's security forces is not. Before she became Myanmar's civilian leader, Aung San Suu Kyi herself condemned the military's abuses. "Rape is rife. It is used as a weapon by armed forces to intimidate the ethnic nationalities and to divide our country," she said in a 2011 videotaped statement to the Nobel Women's Initiative.

And yet Suu Kyi's government has not only failed to condemn the recent accounts of rape, it has dismissed the accounts as lies. In Dec. 2016, the

government issued a press release disputing Rohingya women's reports of sexual assaults, accompanied by an image that said "Fake Rape."

Ahmed seems bewildered that anyone would ever doubt these women. Look at what I have just shown you, he says, gesturing toward his stack of files chronicling one atrocity after another.

Gynecologist Arjina Akhter has witnessed the results of those atrocities. Since August, so many women began showing up at her two clinics, she stopped asking them to fill out patient history forms so she could treat them faster. Among other women, she estimates between 20 to 30 rape survivors visited her clinics in September and October.

She ticks off the injuries: Two women with lacerations to their cervixes they said were caused by guns shoved inside their bodies. One woman with horrific

There were five of them this time, she remembers. They quickly grabbed the boy and slashed his throat, and killed the man.

tearing she said was caused by a nail driven into her vagina. Several women with severe vaginal bleeding.

More recently, she says, women who were raped months ago have been coming to her in a panic, asking for abortions. She has to explain to them that they are too far along, but reassures them that officials will take the babies if they cannot care for them.

Still, for some Rohingya women, giving up the babies they never asked for was not an option.

Which is how it was for F.

MORE THAN THREE MONTHS had passed since the men burst into F's home, and her despair had only deepened.

Neighbors had taken her in and cared for her. But her house was gone, her husband was dead. And the timing of the attack left little doubt that the baby growing inside her belonged to one of the men who had caused all her grief.

She could only pray that things would not get worse. And then, one night in mid-September, they did.

F was asleep along with the neighbors — a couple and their 5-year-old son — when the men broke down the door, jolting everyone awake.

There were five of them this time, she remembers. They quickly grabbed the boy and slashed his throat, and killed the man.

Then they turned to the man's wife, and to F. And her nightmare began again.

They stripped off the women's clothes. Two of the men noticed the swell of F's stomach and grabbed it, squeezing hard.

They threw the women to the floor. F's friend fought back, and the men beat her with their guns so viciously the skin on her thighs began to peel away.

But the fight had gone out of F. She felt her body go soft, felt the blood run between her legs as the first man forced himself on her, and then the second. Next to her, three men were savaging her friend.

When it was finally over and the men had gone, the two women lay immobile on the floor.

They lay there for days, so crippled by pain and catatonic from the trauma that they could not even lift themselves to use the toilet. F could smell the blood around them. As the house baked under the punishing sun, the stench from the decaying bodies of her friend's husband and son finally overwhelmed her.

She would not die here. And neither would her baby.

She reached out for her friend's hand and clasped it. Then F hauled herself to her feet, pulling her friend up with her. Hand in hand, the women stumbled



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F, 22, who says she was raped by members of Myanmar's armed forces in June and again in September.

to the next village. They spent five days recovering there and then, alongside a group of other villagers, began the 10-day journey to Bangladesh.

The monsoon season had begun, but there was nowhere to shelter. So F kept walking through the downpours. She was starving, and her battered body ached with each step. Generous strangers offered her sips of their water, and one man gave her a few sweet rolls.

One day, she came across a 9-year-old boy lying along the side of a road, wounded and alone. He had lost his parents, he told her, and the soldiers had tortured him. She took him with her.

*They lay there for days, so crippled by pain
and catatonic from the trauma that they could
not even lift themselves to use the toilet.*

Together, the two made it to the shores of the Naf River and boarded a boat to Bangladesh.

Which is where they live now, in a tiny bamboo shelter between two filthy latrines. And it is here that F prays her baby will be a boy — because this world is no place for a girl.

FOR NOW, THE WOMEN ARE LEFT to wonder how long they will live in the bleak limbo of Bangladesh, and if they will ever return to their homeland.

R, the teen, is not pregnant. Her mother sold all her jewelry and got her to the hospital in time. But R can't stop thinking about her little brothers, and her sleep is plagued by nightmares.

Since the rape, she has struggled to eat, and her once-curve frame has shrunk. Before the rape, she says softly, she was pretty.

K, who feared the baby inside her had died, gave birth to a boy on the floor of her tent in a dizzying rush of relief. She had kept her son alive through it all.

But her trauma persists. The thrum of a helicopter hovering over the camp sends her into a panic and she recites the Muslim prayer for the moments before death. She is convinced the aircraft is Myanmar's military, coming to kill them all.

When told she is strong, she looks up with tears in her eyes.

"How can you say that?" she asks. "My husband says he is ashamed of me. How am I strong?"



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K, 25, right, prepares lunch while her children wait beside her in their tent in Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh.

F, whose body is starting to ache under the strain of her pregnancy, finds her mind often drifts toward how she will care for the child in the future. She believes God has kept them both alive for a reason.

Her parents, her brother, her husband are gone now. This baby will be the only family she has left. For her, the most haunting reminder of the agony she endured also, somehow, represents her last chance at happiness.

“Everybody has died,” she says. “I don’t have anyone to care for me. If I give this baby away, what will I have left? There will be nothing to live for.”

The Associated Press reported this story with a grant from the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting.

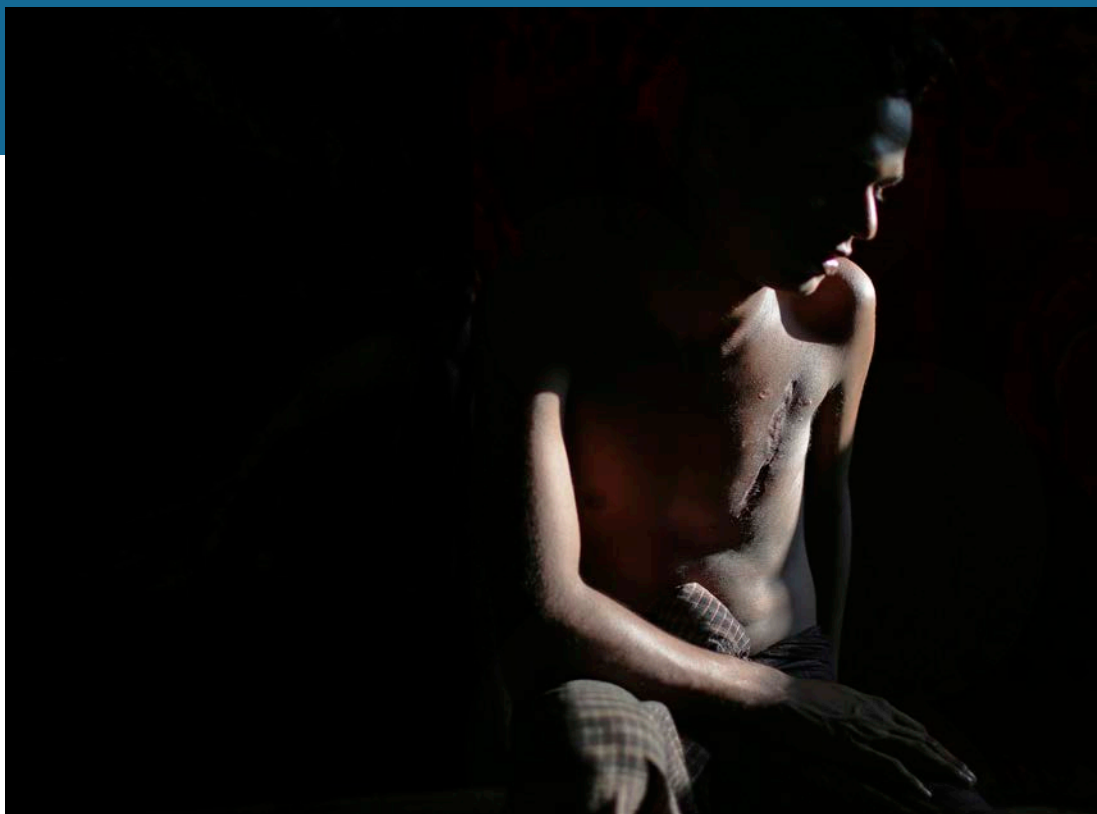
Dec. 11, 2017



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sEhoAHI-zGM>

VIDEO: Rohingya Women Detail Rape by Myanmar Forces

Dec. 21, 2017



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Mohammadul Hassan, 18, is photographed in his family's tent in Jamtoli refugee camp in Bangladesh. Hassan still bears the scars on his chest and back from being shot by soldiers who attempted to kill him.

Rohingya survivors: Myanmar's army slaughtered men, children

By **TODD PITMAN**

Associated Press

UKHIA, Bangladesh (AP) — For six hours he hid in an upstairs room, listening to the crackle of gunfire and the screams of people being slaughtered outside his Myanmar home.

With every footstep that drew near, every cry that pierced the air, 52-year-old Bodru Duza braced for the soldiers to find him, to kill him like all the others who had fled to his compound that morning seeking a safe place to shelter.

<https://apnews.com/484246542340481598a8bba5a548d6a7/Shattered-skulls-and-blood-Rohingya-report-Myanmar-massacre>

They were being blindfolded and bound, marched away in small groups, then butchered and shot as they begged for their lives.

What had started out as a quiet Sunday in northwestern Myanmar had spiraled into an incomprehensible hell — one of the bloodiest massacres reported in the Southeast Asian nation since government forces launched a vicious campaign to drive out the country's Rohingya minority in late August.

By the time it was over, there was so much blood on the ground, it had pooled into long rivulets across the uneven earth, among bits of human flesh and the fragments of shattered skulls.

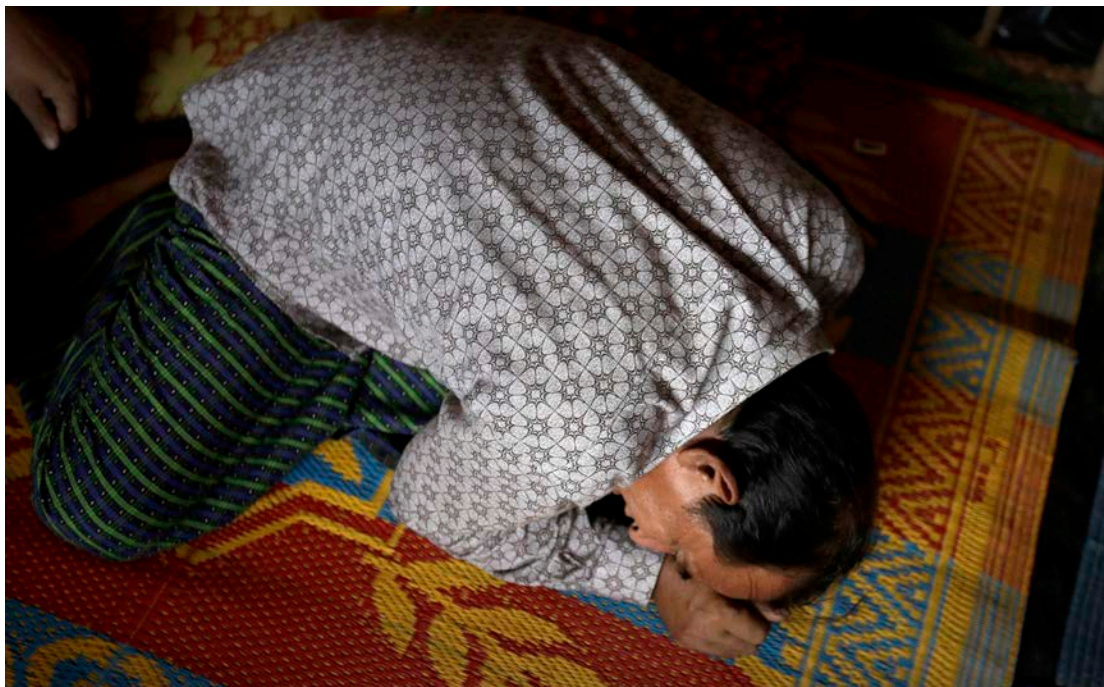
When Duza finally dared to emerge from his hiding place, he wondered how anyone could have survived.

The compound he grew up in was now consumed by an ethereal silence. His wife, daughter, and five young sons were nowhere to be seen. And as he crept toward a backdoor to escape, he stumbled upon the corpse of an unknown boy sprawled on the floor.

"Oh Allah!" he thought. "What have they done to us? What have they done to my family?"

The Associated Press reported this story with a grant from the Pulitzer

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Bodru Duza, 52, demonstrates how he hid in his house when members of Myanmar's military forces stormed his village Maung Nu, in Myanmar's Rakhine State.

DUZA'S FAMILY BELONGED to the ethnic Rohingya Muslim community, which has long been persecuted and denied basic rights in predominantly Buddhist Myanmar. They lived in the village of Maung Nu, where at least 82 Rohingya are believed to have been murdered on Aug. 27.

The massacre was part of a streak of violence that started before dawn two days earlier, when Rohingya insurgents staged an unprecedented wave of 30 attacks on security posts across Rakhine state. At least 14 people were killed.

The assaults triggered one of the greatest catastrophes the Rohingya have ever known: an army counter-offensive that has left hundreds of villages burned and driven 650,000 refugees into Bangladesh. The aid group Doctors Without Borders estimates 6,700 Rohingya civilians were killed in the first month of

*The army has insisted
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has been slain.*

reprisals alone, and human rights groups have documented three large-scale massacres.

The Associated Press has reconstructed the massacre at Maung Nu as told by 37 survivors now scattered across refugee camps in Bangladesh. Their testimony and exclusive video footage from the massacre site obtained by AP offer evidence, also documented by the United Nations and others, that Myanmar armed forces have systematically killed civilians.

Myanmar's military did not respond to repeated requests for comment on this story, and the government — which prohibits journalists from independent travel to northern Rakhine State — did not reply to an AP request for a visit. The army has insisted in the past that not a single innocent has been slain.

For as long as anyone could remember, there was only one place in Maung Nu that was truly considered safe. It was a large two-story residence shared by two of the village's most prominent businessmen — Duza and his brother Zahid Hossain.

Built on a hillside more than half a century ago, the vast home was known for its three-foot-thick walls of hardened mud, which many believed to be bullet-proof and virtually impossible to burn. That mattered in Rakhine state, where the Rohingya population lived in fear of both the military and the area's ethnic Rakhine Buddhists. Although the Rohingya have lived in Myanmar for



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Jamila Begum, 35, cries when talking about how members of Myanmar's armed forces accused of massacring civilians in her village Maung Nu, in Myanmar's Rakhine State, killed her son and husband.

decades, they are still seen as foreign invaders from Bangladesh who are intent on stealing land.

Despite the tensions, Hossain worked extensively with local army commanders, trading cows and rice and jointly operating a brick-making factory. Both brothers were charismatic, educated and popular. Duza, an affable man who was well-known throughout the area, had previously served as village administrator for 12 years. Many people assumed that neither he nor his compound would be harmed.

After insurgents launched their first attacks a year ago, the government had imposed strict new measures aimed at curbing militant activity. Islamic schools were closed, a curfew was put in place, and authorities ordered the removal of fences and even shrubbery so security forces could see inside private compounds.

But Maung Nu, a village of about 2,000 people also known as Monu Para, remained peaceful. Duza and his brother counted their blessings. They were among the village's wealthiest men. They owned scores of cows and buffalo, and vast acres of rice.

Soon, it would all be gone.

A few hours after midnight on Aug. 25, fierce volleys of gunfire woke the

residents of Maung Nu. Rohingya militants had launched a surprise assault on a Border Guard Police post in Hpaung Taw Pyin, less than a kilometer (a mile) to the north.

The fighting lasted until dawn. According to the government, two officers and at least six of the assailants died.

That morning a commander from the army's Light Infantry Battalion 564, based just south of Maung Nu, called the local district administrator, Mohamed Arof, furious.

"Why didn't you tell us about these attacks?" the commander demanded.

"I didn't know anything about it," replied Arof, a Rohingya. "I only heard the shooting, like you."

The same day, police snatched Arof's 15-year-old son from a rice paddy and

Hundreds of people were already on the move, seeking the closest refuge – the hillside compound of Duza and Hossain.

took him to their camp, where he was hung with a rope along with three other teenagers, according to Arof and several witnesses. It's unclear why the teens were killed, but word of their deaths spread quickly.

Fearing more reprisals from security forces, most of Hpaung Taw Pyin's residents fled. Hundreds of them walked to the homes of friends and relatives in Maung Nu, in the hope they would be safe there.

And for a day, they were.

On Aug. 27, bursts of gunfire echoed across Maung Nu again. This time only the army was shooting.

Several military trucks parked on the village's main road around 9 a.m. and began disgorging troops who fanned out on foot, firing into the air. Peering out a window of her home, 35-year-old Jamila Begum spotted several armed soldiers crossing her yard carrying coils of nylon rope.

Hundreds of people were already on the move, seeking the closest refuge – the hillside compound of Duza and Hossain, which included half a dozen other homes belonging to their relatives and a large rectangular pond. Jamila's family joined them.

Other residents were being rounded up by force and ordered to head to the compound. Some cowered inside their homes, wondering what to do. One of

them, 18-year-old Mohammadul Hassan, put a woman's veil over his face when troops burst through the front door of his home, guns drawn.

Hassan immediately recognized one of the soldiers — a skinny army staff sergeant named Bajju who was well-known in the village. A member of the 564th Battalion, Bajju had lived in the area for 15 years and spoke the Rohingya dialect, according to numerous villagers. Duza said Bajju was also a frequent visitor to his home.

When the soldiers discovered Hassan hiding among several female relatives, they became enraged. He was dragged outside along with two of his brothers, shoved to the ground and kicked until blood poured from his left eye.

As troops ripped clothes off the women and seized their valuables, the three brothers were stripped and tied up. The soldiers marched them to Duza's compound naked, at gunpoint, the sunbaked dirt road burning their bare feet.

DUZA HAD NEVER SEEN people so scared.

As the number of Rohingya hiding on his property rose into the hundreds, his wife, a warm woman with an easy smile named Habiba, turned to him and asked, "What's happening? What's going on?"

The answer came when dozens of helmeted soldiers in olive green uniforms



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Shafir Rahman, 50, describes how he watched a soldier hammering a four-inch nail into the side of a man's head with a rifle butt.

arrived around 11 a.m., accompanied by several border guard police.

Their entrance set off a new panic. A few men in Duza's house locked the main wooden doors and climbed the stairs to a balcony, where most of the males already had gathered.

Before joining them, Duza pulled Habiba aside.

"Please take care of our daughter and our sons."

So many people were crammed into their house by then, though, that Habiba soon lost track of all but one child.

Outside, a soldier's voice rose above the others. It was Bajju, and he was calling on everyone to come out, assuring them they would not be harmed. As the minutes passed and nobody emerged, the calls turned menacing, and the sergeant threatened to burn the compound to the ground.

Troops started to walk across the sea of people, grinding boots into their heads and beating them with rifle butts.

Several bursts of gunfire rang out and a young boy was struck in the forehead. The women recoiled in horror as he lay motionless before them, the back of his skull blown apart.

Seconds later, soldiers broke down the doors and began dragging people out, separating the men from the women.

Mothers and elderly women were ordered onto their knees. Some tried to push back when troops ripped off their headscarves and tore at their clothes. The soldiers first demanded their cell phones, then grabbed at exposed breasts as they snatched gold earrings, necklaces and wads of cash.

About 20 or 25 of the women — mostly attractive and young — were taken away. They were never seen again. The rest eventually were driven, along with their children, into a pair of houses on the property.

The soldiers bound the men's hands behind their backs and ordered them into the dirt courtyard in front of the house, where they were forced face down onto the stifling ground. Most were blindfolded with masking tape or veils taken from the women. A handful who tried to resist were thrown off the balcony head-first.

Troops started to walk across the sea of people, grinding boots into their heads and beating them with rifle butts. Some of the soldiers cursed their



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Mohamed Yaha, 18, demonstrates what he saw when soldiers bound the hands of dozens of men behind their backs with nylon rope and blindfolded them with scarves taken from the women when they massacred villagers in Maung Nu, in Myanmar's Rakhine State.

prisoners, calling them dirty “kalar,” a derogatory word for Muslims that is frequently used in Myanmar.

Duza’s brother, Hossain, begged for the violence to stop.

“Why are you doing this?” he cried. “Why are you tying us up?”

There was no answer.

Around noon, a senior officer called a commander on his phone. The officer said they had rounded up 87 men.

“What should we do with them?”

The call ended shortly afterward, and the officer barked an order to his troops.

“Let us begin.”

DUZA WATCHED THROUGH a slit in a closed window as a soldier plunged a long knife into his brother’s neck in front of their house. When two of Hossain’s sons got up and tried to run, soldiers opened fire.

Duza stepped back in shock. He scrambled to an upstairs room and crawled into the only place he could think of to hide: a foot-high space under a large wooden container normally used to store rice. He covered his legs with rice

sacks and curled into a ball, trying to disappear.

Outside, screams like he'd never heard before reverberated across the courtyard.

Several soldiers hammered four-inch nails into the temples of three men on the ground with the butts of their rifles. Four other men were decapitated, including a prominent gray-bearded mullah.

Then a pair of soldiers — one was Bajju — descended on Jamila's husband. With two-foot-long machetes, they hacked into his neck from both sides. He crumpled in the dirt, gagging on blood.

Gasping for breath, Jamila stumbled toward the door. She wanted to rush to his side, to help him, to be with him — to die.

But the women in the house pulled her back.

Men and teenage boys were taken away in small groups and killed by firing squads near a forested area.

"You can't go," one said, as Jamila collapsed, weeping. "If you go out there, they'll kill all of us."

While women rocked back and forth, several children began praying. In the courtyard, they could hear people begging for their lives.

"Please Allah!" Please help us!"

"We're dying!"

When Jamila rose to look out the window again, she saw her 16-year-old son dragged away by the collar of his shirt and tied to a tree, screaming, "I didn't do anything!"

The gunshots rang out. Jamila could not bear to look.

AS THE AFTERNOON WORE ON, the carnage became more methodical.

Men and teenage boys were taken away in small groups and killed by firing squads near a forested area on the edge of the property. In some cases, a soldier blew a whistle beforehand, signaling for them to begin.

Other troops wrapped corpses in orange and green tarps and transported them downhill in three-wheeled push-carts to a pair of army trucks parked on the road. Several witnesses reported seeing soldiers digging pits and dumping bodies into them.

When Mohammad Nasir was marched to the killing ground with six others, he saw more than a dozen cadavers crumpled there under the trees. As those beside him braced for death and called out Islamic creeds — “There is no god but Allah! Mohamed is his prophet!” — Nasir wriggled loose and ran.

He made it to the far side of a small ravine before the first burst of gunfire rang out. Half an hour later, when he had run out of breath, he realized he had been shot in the elbow.

Mohammadul Hassan was taken to a pond just east of the main house. Soldiers ordered him to kneel with his two brothers, then shot them all from behind and rolled them over to make sure they were dead. When Hassan unexpectedly opened his eyes, an officer sitting on the bank walked casually forward and fired a single rifle shot into his chest. Hassan later regained consciousness, stumbled away, and survived.

That afternoon, soldiers began searching the compound for men. At one point, Bajú grabbed Duza’s 9-year-old son Mohamed Ahasun, and demanded to know where his father was.

The boy said Duza had left four days earlier for another village. Bajú slapped him, but let him go.

In the tiny, darkened crawl space upstairs, Duza’s mind had gone numb. He



Wong Maye-E • AP

Bodru Duza, 52, third from right, kisses his sons as he sits for a portrait with members of his family in a tent in Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh.

kept telling himself: “It has to stop ... This has to end somehow.” Praying for survival, he waited for the soldiers to discover him, to drag him out by the feet.

But they never did. And when the guns finally fell silent, he crept slowly downstairs, and slipped away.

For the next two weeks, he traveled alone, joining the hordes of Rohingya bound for Bangladesh. They crossed streams and forests and mountains, and finally the Naf River, which separates the two countries.

When Duza got out of a boat and stepped onto Bangladeshi soil, he looked back toward Myanmar and saw half a dozen columns of smoke curling skyward from burning Rohingya homes. His family, he thought, was surely dead.

THERE IS NO WAY TO independently confirm the death toll in Maung Nu. But one handwritten tally seen by The AP details the names, ages and professions of 82 people, most of them men and boys from Maung Nu and Hpaung Taw Pyin, whose family members say were killed.

They are farmers and students, carpenters, businessmen and teachers. The

The survivors struggle to understand why so many of their neighbors were slaughtered.

youngest is seven years old; the oldest, 95.

According to Arof, the village administrator, at least 200 more remain missing and are feared dead.

Most of the survivors struggle to understand why so many of their neighbors were slaughtered. Arof said the army falsely believed they were supporting the insurgency, but something much deeper had driven the killing. The massacres reported since August have stood out for their high casualty toll, their ferocity, and the methodical way in which they were carried out.

“You have to understand ... they hate us,” Arof said. “This didn’t only happen in our village, it happened everywhere.”

In the end, Duza was one of the luckiest survivors.

After weeks spent imagining another life without a family, he found a newly-arrived refugee with a Myanmar phone and asked to use it.

He dialed his wife Habiba’s number. A young girl answered.

He could barely believe it. It was his 14-year-old daughter, Taslima.

As tears welled in his eyes, Duza asked about the rest of his family. “Are they with you? Are they alive?”

“Yes papa! Yes!” Taslima replied. “We’re here! Everybody is fine.”

Duza’s family had been elsewhere in the compound when he fled. It would take them six more weeks to make the journey to Bangladesh.

When the family reunited in a refugee camp, Duza broke down as he hugged his wife and squeezed the children he never thought he’d see again. They had lost so much — their friends and relatives, their home, their savings, their future — but they had somehow found each other.

“It felt like living in another world,” Duza said. “It felt like a new life.”

MEET THE TEAM



TODD PITMAN is a Bangkok-based reporter for The Associated Press who has worked as a foreign correspondent in Africa, Asia and the Middle East for more than two decades. He began his career in the late 1990s covering the civil war in Burundi, and since joining AP in 2001, he has served as bureau chief in West Africa and Southeast Asia. He won the Associated Press Managing Editors Award for feature writing in 2008, was named journalist of the year by the Society of Professional Publishers in Asia in 2014, and spent a year at Harvard University in 2015-2016 as a fellow of the Nieman Foundation for Journalism.



KRISTEN GELINEAU joined The Associated Press in Washington state in 2002. For the next six years, she worked in AP bureaus in Seattle, Olympia, Wash., Cleveland and Richmond, Va., covering politics, crime, courts, Virginia's death row and disasters including Hurricane Katrina. In 2008, she transferred to AP's bureau in Sydney, Australia, where she has written about everything from Aboriginal rights to crime to the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370. She has covered disasters across the Asia-Pacific region, including the 2010 tsunami in Sumatra, Indonesia, the 2011 Christchurch, New Zealand, earthquake, and Japan's tsunami and nuclear crisis. In 2012, she was promoted from correspondent to Chief of Bureau for Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific. Gelineau holds a degree in journalism from Boston University.



WONG MAYE-E is a Singapore-based photographer for The Associated Press where she covers sports, entertainment, politics and regional news stories, and has documented the Thailand and Hong Kong political protests, the devastation of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines and the garment factory collapse in Dhaka. She also covered the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi and the 2014 World Cup, and will be part of the AP team covering the upcoming 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea, and the 2018 Russia World Cup. Wong is also AP's lead photographer for North Korea where she covers news and everyday life in the reclusive country. She has been a photographer with AP since 2003.



RISHABH RAJ JAIN is a New-Delhi based video journalist who joined the AP in early 2016 and spent more than two months covering the Rohingya refugee crisis, working out of refugee camps in Bangladesh to produce daily spot and feature stories about death, despair and bravery. He started with the AP as a cross-platform intern in 2015, covering daily business, lifestyle, entertainment and human-interest stories in India's capital. He holds a bachelor's degree in economics and journalism and mass Communication from the University of Iowa.