

*Information released by the Tatmadaw True News Information Team on the findings of the Investigation Team in connection with the performances of the security troops during the terrorist attacks in Maungtaw region, Rakhine State:*

1. An Investigation Team with Inspector-General of the Defence Services Lt-Gen Aye Win as the Chairman has already been formed and the team has been assigned with the task of conducting ground inspection to know the true situation in connection with terrorist attacks of the ARSA Bengali terrorists on 30 police outposts and an army battalion headquarters in Buthidaung, Maungtaw and Yathedaung townships in Rakhine State on 25 August 2017 and to ascertain whether security troops conducted the military operations in accord with their duty assignments during the time the Tatmadaw was trying to restore regional peace and stability.

2. The Investigation Team led by Lt-Gen Aye Win toured Maungtaw, Buthidaung and Yathedaung townships for 26 days from 13 October to 7 November 2017, and interviewed 195 ethnic people of two ethnic villages, 205 Hindus of two Hindu villages, and 2,817 Bengalis of 54 Bengali villages totalling 3,217 villagers. The team also collected the accounts of 804 witnesses.

3. The findings of the investigation have proved that all security members up from the leaders to the privates were aware of and strictly abided by the orders and directives of superior bodies, especially the rules of engagement-ROE in connection with the rights of self-defence and in discharging duties during the armed conflicts and anti-terrorist operations.

4. It is found that during the terrorist attack ARSA Bengali terrorists in the form of combined village-wise gangs attacked police outposts, an army battalion HQ and Tatmadaw columns conducting area combing operations with the use of small/heavy weapons, remote controlled home-made mines, sticks, knives, jingalees and directional mines as from 1 am on 25 August using superior manpower. In accord with the rights of self-defence and ROE, the security troops including Tatmadaw columns which were accompanied by members of Border Guard Police Force first gave warning shouts to the mob to halt the advance, if the mob did not stop they fired warning shots and only when the mob reached the striking distance, the security troops started firing single shots in intervals aiming only at the legs between the foot and knee of the leader. Because of the use of such tactics, the security troops could disperse the terrorist mobs and there was no death of innocent people. Although the Bengali villages where the engagements took place were burning and women and children were fleeing their homes, not a single shot was fired on them. The security forces were only fighting against the ARSA Bengali terrorists. They never shot at the innocent Bengalis.

5. Strengths of Bengali terrorists originally estimated as about 4,000 Bengali terrorists who committed attacks on the morning of 25 August 2017 were 6,200 in minimum and more than 10,000 in maximum in total according to the scrutiny. As the strengths of Bengali terrorists who attacked security columns, police outposts, local Rakhine ethnic villages and Hindu villages were about 500 in each place, it is found that their strengths were larger than those from security forces. Moreover, Bengali terrorists used home-made bombs, local-made mines exploded by remote controls, and local-made vehicle attacked mines in attacks, but the security forces opened fire with the use of small arms only without totally using heavy weapons, launchers and grenades. As such, the security forces abided by laws related to the wars in conducting area

clearance operations. So, it is found that those security forces did not perform the use of excessive force.

6. In discharging duty of peace and stability of the regions, the security forces exposed and arrested ARSA Bengali terrorists and their supporters. A total of 114 Bengalis are still arrested now. Among them, five Bengalis participated in attacking Chutpyin police outpost in person. While fleeing there, they set fire to the village. The remaining arrestees were related to the terrorists. In arresting, only members of Border Guard Police Force who were attached to the Tatmadaw columns arrested those Bengalis, and Tatmadawmen took security measures. After arresting, those Bengalis were systematically handed over in good situations to the local police stations. Members of security forces did not commit persecution against those persons in arresting. It was found that those Bengalis were exposed and arrested under provisions of the Geneva Convention and the law of wars.

7. In the terror incident, ARSA Bengali terrorists holding arms committed besieging and threatening villagers from ethnic villages, members of Myanmar Police Force, departmental personnel and members of the Sangha by chanting and raided the villages and police outposts where least police members were assigned one after another by fleshing torches at night. In fact, it was found that security forces carried out security duty in time and transported local ethnic people, departmental personnel, members of the Sangha and innocent Bengali villagers, totalling 27,235 to the safer places for saving their lives from dangers.

8. Engagements and fights happened in the incidents of Rakhine State during 12 days only from 25 August 2017 to 5 September. During the period, there were 94 engagements, 27 times of arresting Bengali terrorists and 11 times of seizures, totalling 132 events. In the incidents, a total of 376 bodies of ARSA Bengali terrorists, 15 assorted arms, 97 rounds of ammunition, 30 packages of gunpowder and 67 home-made mines were seized and 78 ARSA Bengali terrorists arrested. A total of 13 members of security forces were posthumous and 15 members injured and one missing. The security forces lost 11 assorted small arms, 1,676 rounds of ammunition, four magazines and one walkie-talkie.

9. According to the answers of 2,817 villagers from 54 Bengali villages in interviews and confessions of 362 villagers from 105 Bengali villages, security forces did not commit shooting at innocent villagers and sexual violence and rape cases against women. They did not arrest, beat and kill the villagers. They did not totally destroy, rob and take property, gold and silver wares, vehicles and animals of villagers from the villages and displaced villages. They did not set fire to the mosques in Bengali villages. They allow the Bengali villagers to perform their faiths in freedom without banning them to attend the mosques and join prayers. They did not threaten, bully and drive out the villagers not to be able to live in the villages and they did not set fire to the houses. They are joining hands with relevant administrative bodies in systematically supervising the tasks to protect the remaining houses in villages against destruction and stealing of unscrupulous persons. It is found that mobile medical teams gave health care services to the locals in villages for 291 times, and rice, edible oil, salt and foodstuffs weighing 234 tons were provided to the locals for 273 times.

10. According to accounts of witnesses, terrorist leaders at different levels instructed to launch synchronized terrorist attacks, and core ARSA Bengali terrorists and many villagers and children joined the attacks. As the attacks failed, ARSA Bengali terrorists torched houses and fled to Bangladesh, and were reported to have threatened villagers, saying: “Run away or be attacked by the government troops with launchers, the village will be torched, they will be shot with machine guns and will be dropped bombs by helicopters”, “Come out or we’ll label you as traitors of Islam and slit your throat”, “We’ll kill you for the cooperation with the government”, and were also reported to have persuaded villagers through various ways saying: “You’ll be able to lead a life of ease with international aid when you get into Bangladesh”, “You’ll be able to go to a third country, and get good jobs, better incomes and get rich”, “Every villager come out, and leave your belongings behind because when you get into Bangladesh, we, who have phoned you, will give the money equivalent to your belongings if only five of your peer villagers who are the members of terrorist organization back you up.” Again, terrorists propagated at refugee camps in Bangladesh, saying “We’ll label Bengali villagers who chose not to flee as traitors having converted to Buddhism, and cooperating with the government.” So Bengalis fled for fear that they would be killed when terrorist came into their villages again. Meanwhile, some are the relatives of those who had participated in terrorist attacks, and fled for fear that they would be punished under the law for hiding the secret. Some lost their houses and had no place to live because of some terrorists who came back from refugee camps in Bangladesh and set fire to Bengali villages under instructions. Some villagers fled out of pure fear. The flocks of Bengalis fled into Bangladesh for above-mentioned reasons. Not only administrative authorities but also international diplomats to Myanmar met them and discouraged them from leaving. But they refused and fled to Bangladesh whose people belong to the same race and religion as them.

11. According to accounts of witnesses, terrorists abducted 52 people from Ye Baw Kya Village where Hindus lived and 53 from Kha Maung Seik (South) Village on 25 August morning, 2017. They took gold and silver wares and destroyed altars, Buddha images, and set fire to citizenship scrutiny cards from houses of Hindus. They inhumanely tortured 45 Hindu villagers of Ye Baw Kya in front of a Hindu female villager of Ye Baw Kya and eight Hindu female villagers of Kha Maung Seik (South) Village. They made the villagers lie on their back beside the pit already dug by them, and then slit their throats. Of 105 Hindu abductees, 60 remain missing till today. They persuaded the remaining Hindu women to marry them, and forced them to wear Islam women’s garment Burqa, and convert to Islam by making them repeat Koran verses. The women were then taken to Bangladesh. Myanmar security forces contacted Hindu faith leaders, and brought back eight female Hindu abductees on 27 September, 2017. Moreover, terrorists forcibly set fire to seven ethnic Mro villagers of Khong Taing Village, Badaga Village-tract in Maungtaw Township on August 29 morning. ARSA Bengali terrorists killed a total of 131 ethnic/Hindu/Bengali people in order to assert authority through fear.

12. Since the 9 October attacks, ARSA Bengali terrorists had been brutally killing non-supporters, departmental personnel, those dealing well with security forces, Bengalis unwilling to attend terrorism courses and local ethnics. Moreover, they radicalized others with the spirit of crushing people of different races or faiths. Although they carried out killings and committed atrocities against minorities, they, while staying in a refugee camp of the other country, made up news about Myanmar’s Tatmadaw committing genocide and ethnic cleansing when international diplomats and media arrived there.

13. According to accounts of witnesses, after the 9 October incidents, ARSA Bengali terrorist leader Artar Ula appointed terrorist leaders in respective village-tracts and villages. Rector of Arabi University in Myinlut Mawlawi Musetar Armad was appointed as in-charge of southern part of Maungtaw Township, Mawlawi Adu Rahman as in-charge of Ngakhuya in northern part of Maungtaw, Mawlawi Jama and Mawlawi Mawshita Mauk from Nanthataung Village as in-charges of Taungpyoletwe region and Mawlawi Kumoro from Michaungzay Village as in-charge of Buthidaung Township. With the help of those leaders, the terrorist group was extended based on Mawlawis and village administrators. They killed those close to government, non-supporters and those unwilling to do terrorism courses by slashing their throats. Bengali villagers were forced to take oaths holding the Koran and made terrorists. Villagers from the most of the Bengali villages were persuaded to become terrorists. Despite the extended terrorist group, the issue including atrocities committed by the terrorists could not be exposed as officials in the concerned region were weak in acquiring information. Consequently, the ARSA Bengali terrorist group was able to carry out extensive attacks on 25 August.

14. As such weaknesses in doing management and acquiring security information were found, action will be taken against those responsible and arrests of the remaining ARSA Bengali terrorists will continue.

Tatmadaw True News Information Team

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