



## State Counsellor Office Information Committee

Muslim villagers refuted claims of rape and murder by British newspaper

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13th December, 2016

Residents of Kyetyoepyin village in Maungtaw, the site of alleged rapes and killings of Muslim children as reported by the British newspaper “the Guardian”, said yesterday, under questioning from the Rakhine State’s Investigation Commission, that the claimed atrocities did not happen.

The commission, led by its Chairman, Vice President U Myint swe, said that the denial by villagers of the human rights abuses were discovered during their continuing tour of villages in the Maungtaw area, Rakhine State yesterday, in order to conduct transparent investigations into the 9th October and 12-13 November attacks on the border police outposts.

“Commission members conducted the field trips yesterday to meet the elders of the village, women, Muslim youth and children. All were questioned in detail on whether the reports of alleged rapes and the killing of Muslim children in the village of Kyetyoepyin, Maungtaw that had been reported in the UK newspaper “the Guardian” were true or not. All, who were questioned and told of the allegations in the Guardian newspaper, said that the report was not valid and the alleged cases had not taken place in their village”, the commission said in a statement obtained by the Myanmar News Agency.

The names of the villagers were not released by the commission. The denials by villagers regarding to the alleged rapes and killings of Muslim children came about during questioning by the teams of commission members led by members U Aung Kyi and Dr Daw Thet Thet Zin concerning with the 12th October incident in which assailants attacked the government troops outside their village. The incident had resulted in the death of 10 attackers, an outbreak of fire in the village and the seizure of a single-barreled gun.

The teams of commission members spoke to Muslim villagers, women and children to ask if there had taken place any cases of rape or prosecution of children. The locals replied that they only heard of such cases in the form of rumours. They said that they did not know or see anything of the events described, according to the commission.

In Saturday’s online and printed editions of the Guardian, a Muslim woman named Noor Ayesha is profiled and quoted as saying mass atrocities occurred in mid-October in her village. She claimed that a group of 20 soldiers came to her home in Kyetyoepyin in mid October, and they killed her husband and seven of her children, raped her and burned her home down. She also told the Guardian that two of her

daughters were raped by soldiers before they were killed. She is now in Bangladesh, The Guardian reports.

The Myanmar government has consistently denied the allegations. A commission member said yesterday that media access to the northern Rakhine has been restricted for the security reasons, but will be lifted in the future.

“Right now, only official statements can be released due to the current situation. After that, other media including international media will be allowed”, said Dr Aung Tun Thet. He also said that, in the meantime, the public should be wary of social and online media. “We can easily see how rumours can be spread and how biased information can be disseminated on social and on-line media”, he said.

The Vice-President and the rest of the commission also visited the Muslim-majority village of Gwazon, where they conducted interrogations concerning the 12th November afternoon event during which a commanding officer was killed as his Tatmadaw column was attacked by about 500 assailants using small arms, swords, spears and harpoons.

Later, the commission visited the villages of Dargyizar, Pwintbyuchaung and Nganchaung. Yesterday evening, the commission briefed on the measures taken by the cabinet of the Rakhine State, and the Vice-President discussed in detail matters relating to the rule of law and effective delivery and distribution of humanitarian aid.

(State Counsellor Office Information Committee)

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