On behalf of the Rohingya Muslim community, ARNO expresses shock, sorrow and condemns in the strongest possible terms the rape of at least 32 Rohingya women by the Myanmar military and Border Guard Police in Kyan Taung, Buthidaung Township, Rakhine/Arakan state.

Once again we are forced to watch helplessly the gruesome acts of sexual violence perpetuated by the government forces against our women and girls, in the name of fighting terrorists. Our deepest sympathies are with these brave women, and their families, whose only crime is they were born a Muslim in this country.

The regime has made little secret of their intentions, as they announced the commencement of clearance operations in Kyan Taung with much fanfare on May 8 citing a dubious case that two Rohingyas were killed while making landmines. Since then, revenge for supposedly making landmines have translated into the rape of least 32 women and other forms of sexual violence against many more in Kyan Taung.

In spite of the series of international condemnations, and the initiative taken by the United Nations Human Rights Council to probe killings and rapes of Rohingya in Northern Maungdaw, the security forces have indulged in what can only be described as a mass rape orgy in Kyan Taung. Furthermore, the military has flatly rejected the UN probe in Northern Maungdaw, with Senior General Min Aung Hlaing saying the ‘Tatmadaw spirit’ compelled them to prevent such an international investigation.

In light of such circumstances, we request the international community to come with more stringent measures to prevent the murder and rape of Rohingya women and children.

The use of rape as a weapon of war by the Myanmar armed forces is nothing new, it has been committed against many other ethnic communities to demoralise and dehumanise them before taking over their land. It is not the act of rogue soldiers, but a systematic policy adopted by top level commanders designed to break the fabric of society. It has been committed against the Kachins, Karens, the list goes on and on. But even by the standards of Tatmadaw terror, the brutality perpetuated against the Rohingyas has reached new heights. Responsible actors and genuine sympathisers from the international community must act now or give us realistic recommendations on how to strive against the genocide unfolding against our people.

ARNO reaffirms as we did during the operations in northern Maungdaw, that acts of sexual violence against our mothers and sisters is one of the most horrendous kinds of oppression that government forces have meted out to us in the name of clearance operations.

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