



MYANMAR WITNESS

A project by



CENTRE for
INFORMATION
RESILIENCE

HUMAN REMAINS FOUND IN HTAN SHAUK KHAN VILLAGE

Reported Massacre in Buthidaung

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30 September 2025

WARNING: This report contains graphic information and imagery. While efforts have been made to blur details, the report includes information which some readers may find distressing.

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 4 August 2025, the [Arakan Rohingya National Council](#) (ARNC) published a statement indicating that the Arakan Army (AA) killed more than 600 Rohingya civilians on 2 May 2024 (over a year earlier).

The incident was claimed to have occurred in Htan Shauk Khan (ထန်းရှောက်ခံ) village, Buthidaung township, Rakhine State. In the Rohingya language, it is also called Hoyyar Siri (ဟောယ်ယာစီရီ).

It appears that the [Rohingya National League](#) was the first to raise the allegation on social media on 6 May 2024. The organisation claimed the AA killed 111 individuals from 16 Rohingya families on 2 May 2024.

On 3 August 2025, the media outlet [AAMIJ](#) news reported about the same massacre in Buthidaung township, this time including images depicting several burial sites.

A Rohingya political activist called Ro Nay San Lwin also wrote about the [incident](#) on X on 3 August 2025. This included four images showing a large deposition site of human remains reportedly taken at a different area but within Htan Shauk Khan village.

Myanmar Witness was able to geolocate one of the burial sites with high confidence, and another with medium confidence. A forensic analysis of the available imagery was also conducted and confirmed the presence of human remains, but could not establish the identity of the deceased.

Furthermore, the AA acknowledged clashes with the State Administration Council (SAC) on 4 May 2024, claiming to have killed SAC soldiers as well as captured prisoners of war (POW), but made no public reference to a burial or deposition site.

On 20 August 2025, the AA invited journalists and alleged residents from the village to the burial site for interviews. Some of the interviews included statements denying the mass killings of Rohingya civilians. While the visuals and interviews do match with Myanmar Witness’s geolocation assessment of the burial sites, it has not been possible to independently verify the testimonies.

Some footage from the burial site showed a man, allegedly part of the AA, retrieving what appears to be military equipment and human remains from the

water. This raises the possibility that SAC members may be among the dead, but this cannot be confirmed. Moreover, even though there appears to be some civilian clothing featured in user-generated content (UGC), this is not sufficient to determine whether the victims were civilians.

2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

According to [BBC Burmese](#), by mid-2024, the AA had taken control of Paletwa township in Chin State and eight townships in Rakhine State, including Buthidaung. [Human Rights Watch](#) reported that the AA has been engaged in fighting the SAC for control of Rakhine State since late 2018.

The [AA](#) stated on 4 May 2025 that they captured the 15th Military Operations Command (MOC-15) and Light Infantry Battalion (LIB 551) in Buthidaung township. In the statement, the AA mentioned that they took several SAC individuals as POWs and others were reportedly killed as a result of the clashes.

[Radio Free Asia](#) (RFA) reported that, in 2024, telecommunications were cut for nearly 100 days in 14 AA-controlled townships, including Buthidaung township. Even in SAC-controlled townships like Kyaukphu, Munaung, and Sittwe, connections were also reportedly down. These restrictions on communication may have significantly hindered independent reporting and the flow of reliable information from the area.

The analysed location of the mass burial sites is not listed as a village in the Myanmar Information Management Unit's (MIMU) database. However, [Ro Nay San Lwin](#) posted an image of Htan Shauk Khan village, and on 1 November 2022, the [AA](#) posted a statement that showed Htan Shauk Khan village was 300 metres west of LIB 551. Both statements are aligned with the most likely location of the mass burial site UGC that Myanmar Witness has analysed.

Finally, in MIMU data, the coordinates of Htan Shauk Khan village are located at [20.80900955, 92.58895111], Buthidaung township, Rakhine State, which is close to a paddy field.

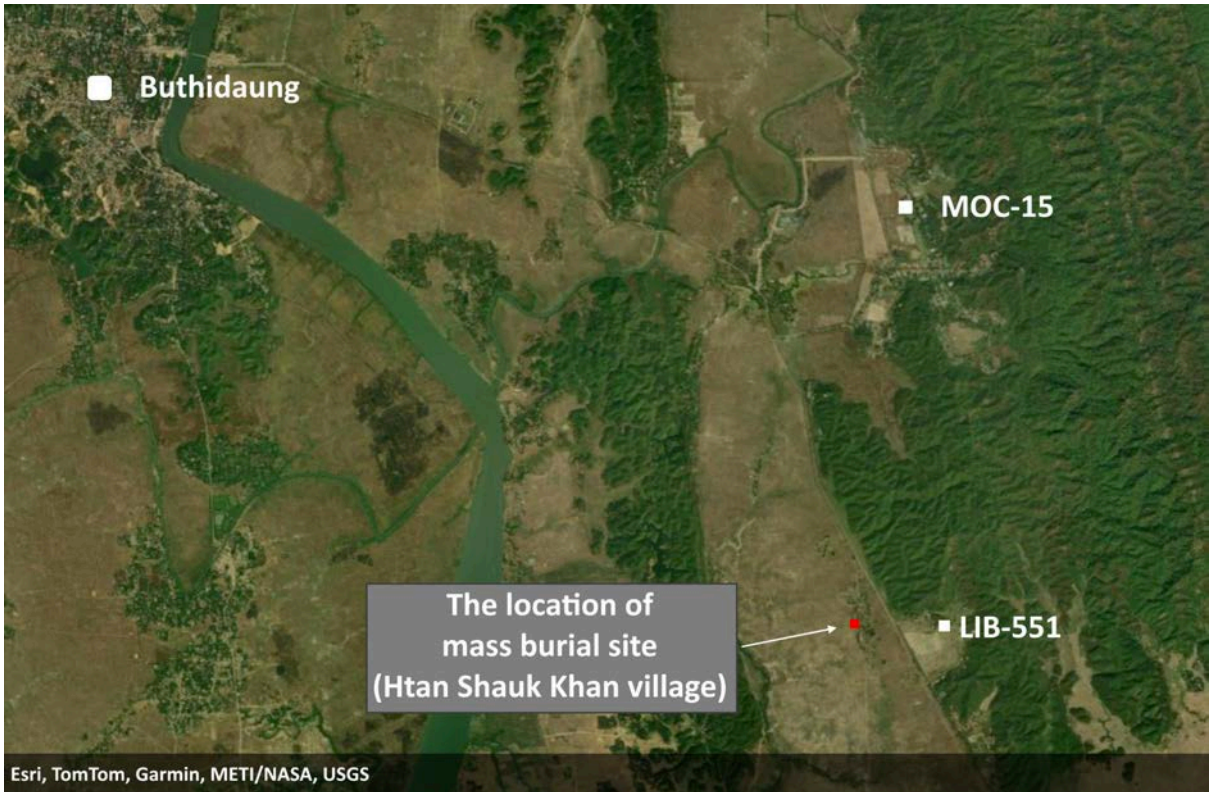


Figure 1: Map depicting Buthidaung, the locations of SAC's 15th Military Operation Commands (MOC-15) and Light Infantry Battalion (LIB 551), as well as the geolocation of the mass burial site (Source: Maxar Technologies via Esri, TomTom, Garmin, METI/NASA, USGS).

3 MASSACRE IN BUTHIDAUNG [WARNING GRAPHIC]

[AAMIJ](#) news reported that more than 600 Rohingya civilians were killed in groups in Htan Shauk Khan Village, Buthidaung Township, Rakhine State, on 2 May 2024. Within the article, AAMIJ also uploaded imagery showing a burial site (figure 2).



Figure 2: Screenshot of the images of the burial sites compiled by AAMIJ, with a graphic title and caption overlaid (Source: [AAMIJ](#)).

Rohingya political activist [Ro Nay San Lwin](#) also posted on X on 3 August 2025 about the incident. In his post, he attached photos showing a large deposition site of human remains reportedly taken at a different area within the village (figure 4).

3.1 GEOLOCATION

Myanmar Witness has analysed the imagery published online depicting the reported mass burial or deposition sites. Among the footage, there are potentially four different scenes showing human remains.

Myanmar Witness has been able to geolocate one scene with high confidence to [20.839208, 92.579840] (figure 3). Myanmar Witness corroborated this analysis by creating and analysing a composite image, stitched together from three photographs, which provided a wider view of the site.

In addition, Myanmar Witness assesses that the image uploaded by Ro Nay San Lwin (figure 4) appears to be from a location nearby [20.839208, 92.579840], based on environmental similarities to figure 3. However, it cannot be independently geolocated.



Figure 3: [Top Left] Composite of three images stitched together to provide a wider view for geolocation of the burial site at Htan Shauk Khan village [Bottom Left] Image showing the same pile of human remains observed at the reported burial site in the top image, (Source: [AAMIJ news](#)) [Top Right] Satellite imagery of the area which Myanmar Witness assessed as the location of the large deposition site of human remains [20.839208, 92.579840] (Source: Maxar Technologies via Esri, TomTom, Garmin, METI/NASA, USGS).



Figure 4: On 3 August 2025, Rohingya political activist Ro Nay San Lwin posted the above image showing a large deposition site of human remains (Source: [Ro Nay San Lwin](#) on X).

Figure 5 [left of image] shows what appears to be a body that is not yet fully skeletonised, as well as skeletonised remains in shallow water. Due to a lack of geospatial factors and distinctive background features, Myanmar Witness could not geolocate the imagery. However, based on the environmental signs and contextual evidence, it is likely, although not certain, that these four scenes are geographically close.

These findings do support the broader assessment of a large-scale burial site in Htan Shauk Shan village, but further evidence is required to confirm the precise locations of each burial area.

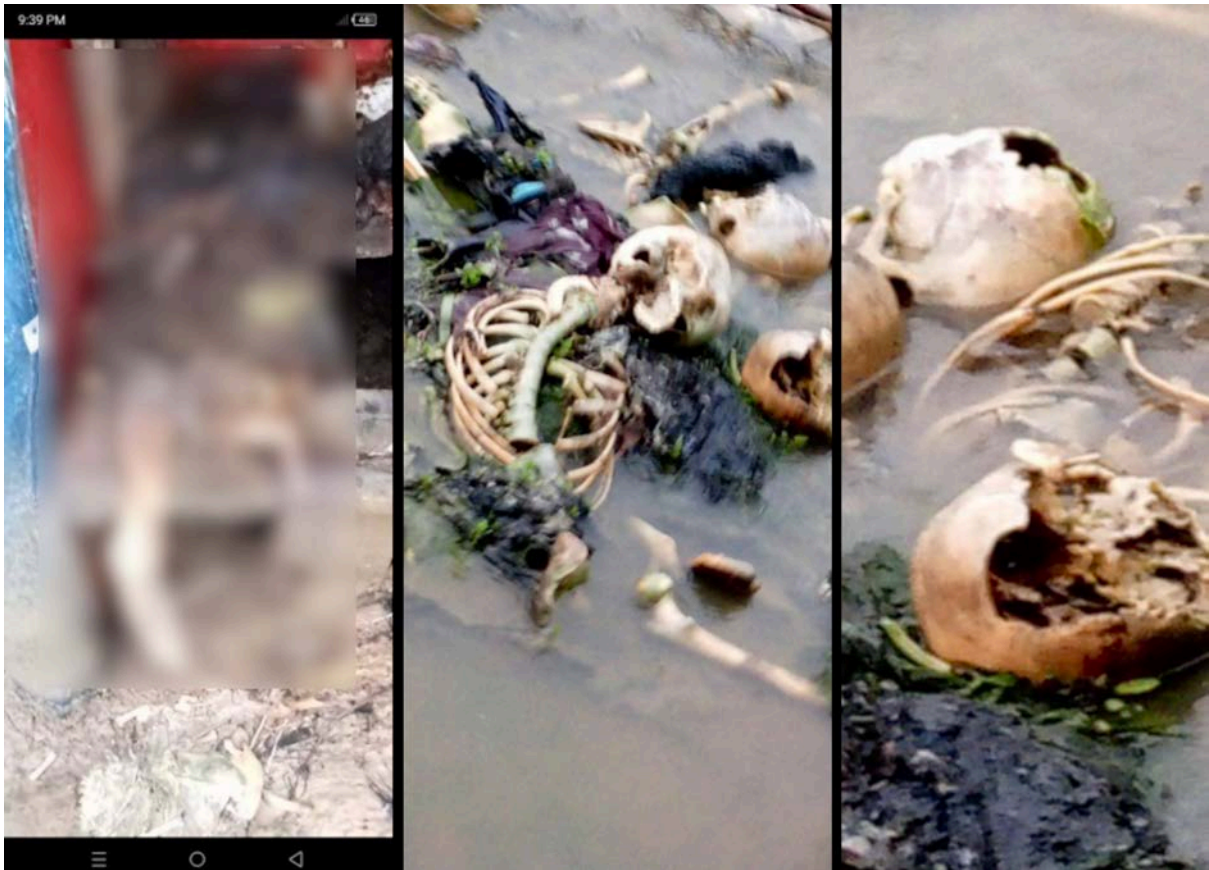


Figure 5: [Left] Likely a single dead body in a small temporary building, [Middle] deposition site of human remains, [Right] three human skulls and some bones observed in shallow water; geolocation of the three images remains undetermined (Source: [AAMIJ news](#)).

3.2 CHRONOLOCATION

From the analysed imagery, two of the photographs were taken with the same phone model, and the timestamps on the photos indicate that they were captured within 10 minutes of each other (figure 6). This supports the suggestion that the burial sites must be located near each other.

While the timestamp on the camera indicates it is highly likely that the photos were captured on 28 March 2025, this cannot be independently verified. However, a reverse image search does suggest that the images did not appear online before 3 August 2025.



Figure 6: Timestamps on the two pieces of UGC taken 10 minutes apart. Based on vegetation and weathering similarities, they appear to be from nearby locations, with the left image geolocated to [20.839208, 92.579840] and the right image still unconfirmed but deemed as most likely a nearby location (Source: [Ro Ngy San Lwin](#) on X).

3.5 ACTORS

Allegations continue to link the AA to the reported mass killing, but there is still insufficient evidence to confirm these claims.

As it has been stated in this investigation, [AAMIJ news](#) directly attributed the responsibility of the mass murders to the AA. In contrast, the [AA](#) published a statement in 2024 acknowledging that clashes did take place in the village, which resulted in the deaths of several SAC soldiers and Rohingya militants, but did not attribute responsibility for the mass killings. Some interviewees (covered in Section 5), who allegedly identified themselves as residents of the village, also support this account.

These contrasting accounts highlight the lack of clarity regarding responsibility for the burial sites. As a result, although responsibility for the deaths has been attributed to the AA by several sources, Myanmar Witness cannot confirm these claims.

3.3 VICTIMS

The identity of the human remains found at the geolocated burial site remains uncertain at the time of publishing, with conflicting accounts from different sources.

Some media reports and eyewitness accounts (source removed due to privacy issues) of individuals who claimed to have fled from the attack state that the remains in the burial sites belong to members of the Rohingya community. According to [AAMIJ](#), the victims included children, adults, elderly people, pregnant women and people with disabilities. Myanmar Witness observed civilian clothing in UGC from the deposition site, though this alone cannot confirm victim identity.

On the other hand, individuals who were interviewed during the AA-organised media visit in late August 2025 denied that civilians were among the dead (see Section 5). The [AA](#) also stated that the clashes in May 2024 resulted in the deaths of SAC soldiers as well as Rohingya militants. In addition, footage from the same media visit depicted an alleged AA member retrieving what appears to be military equipment from shallow water at the site (section 3.4).

The presence of these contrasting narratives, combined with the limitations of available UGC, means that Myanmar Witness is unable to independently confirm the victims' identities.

3.4 MILITARY EQUIPMENT FOUND AT BURIAL SITE

The presence of military equipment at one of the burial sites raises a strong possibility that SAC members were among the deceased; however, this cannot be confirmed.

During a media-facilitated visit, an alleged AA member was filmed retrieving items from the water. This included helmets, weapons and human remains. On 23 August 2025, [One Nation News](#) published footage of this (figure 7) while one Rakhine journalist, [Ni Min Tun](#) (timecode 00:26), uploaded close-up visuals of the apparent military equipment at the same location (figure 8).

While these videos suggest that the individuals killed at the deposition site may have been soldiers, Myanmar Witness cannot independently authenticate the videos or verify whether the equipment was present at the time of the incident, or perhaps placed there afterwards.

3.4.1 GEOLOCATION

Analysis using Peak Visor (a digital tool that identifies mountains and provides 3D maps) further supports Myanmar Witness's geolocation of the mass burial site. The mountain profiles visible in the footage below (figure 6) do align with the topographical features generated by Peak Visor. Myanmar Witness assesses that

the video was filmed at [20.839182, 92.579842]. Thus, this adds another layer of confidence to Myanmar Witness's geolocation assessment.



Figure 7: A screenshot showing an alleged AA member retrieving items from the water at the deposition site, likely military equipment, with Peak Visor overlaid to indicate Myanmar Witness's geolocation assessment. It appears that the camera was filming from [20.839182, 92.579842] (Source: [One Nation News](#)).

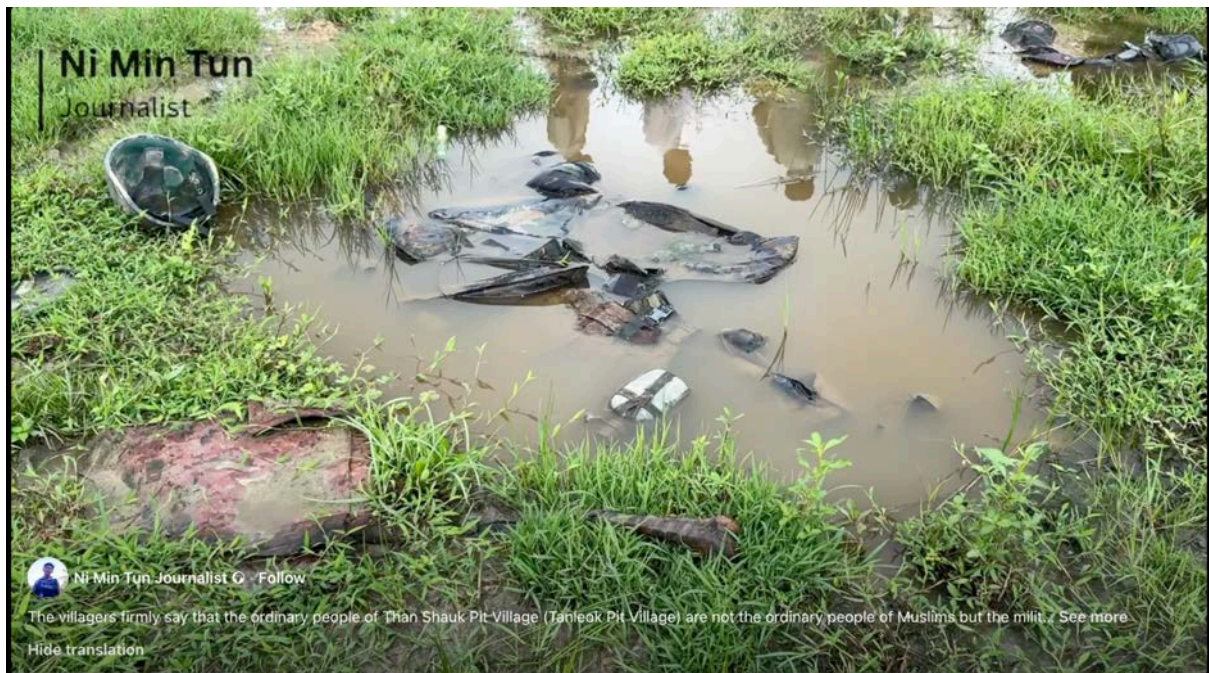


Figure 8: A social media video showing items found in the water at the same reported location as the mass burial site (Source: [Ni Min Tun](#)).

3.5 FORENSIC ANALYSIS OF VICTIMS [WARNING - GRAPHIC CONTENT]

While media reports claim that more than 600 people were killed in the village, Myanmar Witness was not able to independently verify this figure. In addition, based on the available imagery, the condition of the human remains makes it difficult to establish a precise body count. However, Myanmar Witness has made certain observations regarding the site and the state of the remains. It is important to note that decomposition is dependent on factors such as temperature, humidity, the presence of insects, and submergence in a substrate such as water. Fire damage can affect the process as well.

Depending on how exposed a body is to decomposition enhancers - heat, insects, water/humidity - skeletonisation can begin as early as one to three weeks and take even years (cold climate deaths remain for a great deal of time). One week is extreme - but one to two months is more realistic for fast decay.

3.5.1 DEPOSITION/BURIAL SITE 1 (FIGURE 9)

- Likely fire damage signs are present - indicating that these remains were likely subject to attempts at destruction. Cannot determine if it was pre, peri, or post mortem.
- Clothes are seen throughout the site - indicating that the bodies were most likely fully clothed when deposited/buried.
- Several bones and bone fragments can be identified within the one image, with at least two to three skulls visible, indicating that at least two to three bodies were found at this site of deposition.
- A long pole and wood planks/sticks can be seen within the footage - potentially indicating that something was covering the remains.
- All fully skeletonised.



Figure 9: Forensic analysis indicating distinctive skeletal features in one of the mass burial sites [20.839208, 92.579840]. (Source: [AAMIJ news](#), analysis conducted by Myanmar Witness).

3.5.2 DEPOSITION/BURIAL SITE 2 (FIGURE 10)

- **Yellow boxes:** Likely long bones identified - femur, tibia, fibula, humerus, ulna, radius.
- **Red boxes:** Likely skulls - six potential and likely skulls identified.
- This indicates that it is likely that at least six bodies were deposited here.

Various other remains are noted within this site - such as likely sacra, ribs, pelvic bones, scapulas, etc.

Additionally, burn mark signs, clothes, and other objects were also noticed in the imagery. Similar analysis shared in Site 1 is applied here regarding these items/areas. All fully skeletonised.



Figure 10: Yellow boxes indicate likely identification of long bones. Red boxes depict six potential skulls. The presence of these remains suggests that at least six bodies were likely deposited at this site, believed to be close to the geolocated site (Source: [Ro Nay San Lwin on X](#)).

3.5.3 COVERED BODY (FIGURE 10)

From the imagery analysed, Myanmar Witness identified a body covered by some material as not fully skeletonised (figure 11). This is based on the appearance of remaining skin tissue on the likely left foot and leg. The body appears to be lying prone; the following details are of note:

- Decomposition is significantly less than that of the other bodies, likely due to the covering of the body and the shelter. But, it should not be ruled out that this body could be 'newer' than the others and thus potentially not tied to the mass deposition/burial sites.
- Partially covered - cannot determine anything much beyond the knee region.
- The right leg appears to have been affected, likely post mortem. This could be down to animal or human interference and potentially even weather conditions; however, Myanmar Witness cannot determine more from this visual.
- There could be more than one body under the covering, but again, this cannot be determined.

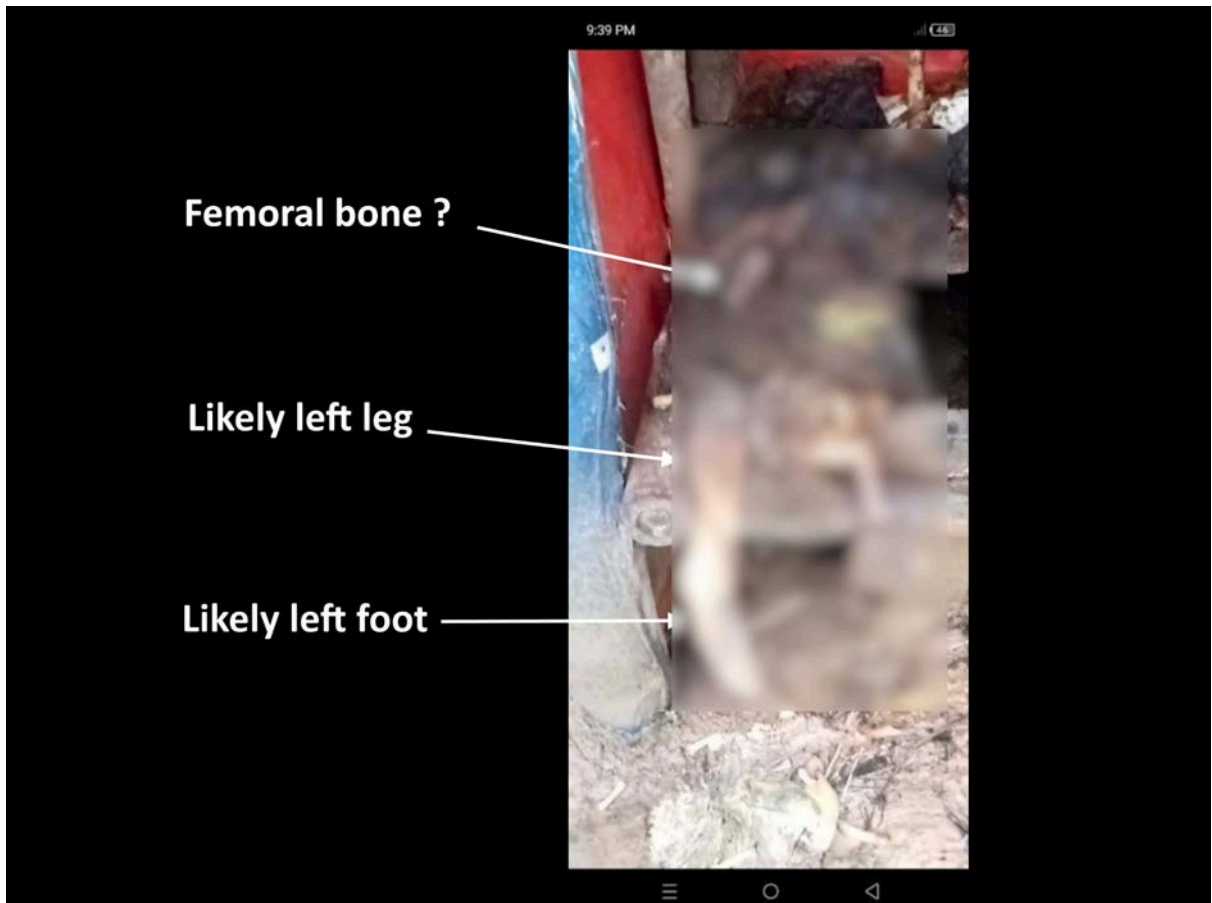


Figure 11: The body is partially covered, thus limiting assessment beyond the knee region. The right leg appears to have been affected post-mortem; however, Myanmar Witness cannot make a conclusive determination based on this visual alone (Source: [AAMIJ news](#), analysis conducted by Myanmar Witness).

3.4.5 REMAINS IN WATER (FIGURE 12)

- Partially submerged in water, however, these levels could change throughout time.
 - Important to note that water speeds up decomposition
- Between three and six skulls are visible.
- There is a hole in the top right skull - cannot determine if this was related to the cause of death or post mortem (animal or weather, etc).
- Appears as if the bodies were deposited here and did not move - full skeletonisation likely happened here due to all ribs and osteological remains being in near anatomical position.
- All fully skeletonised.

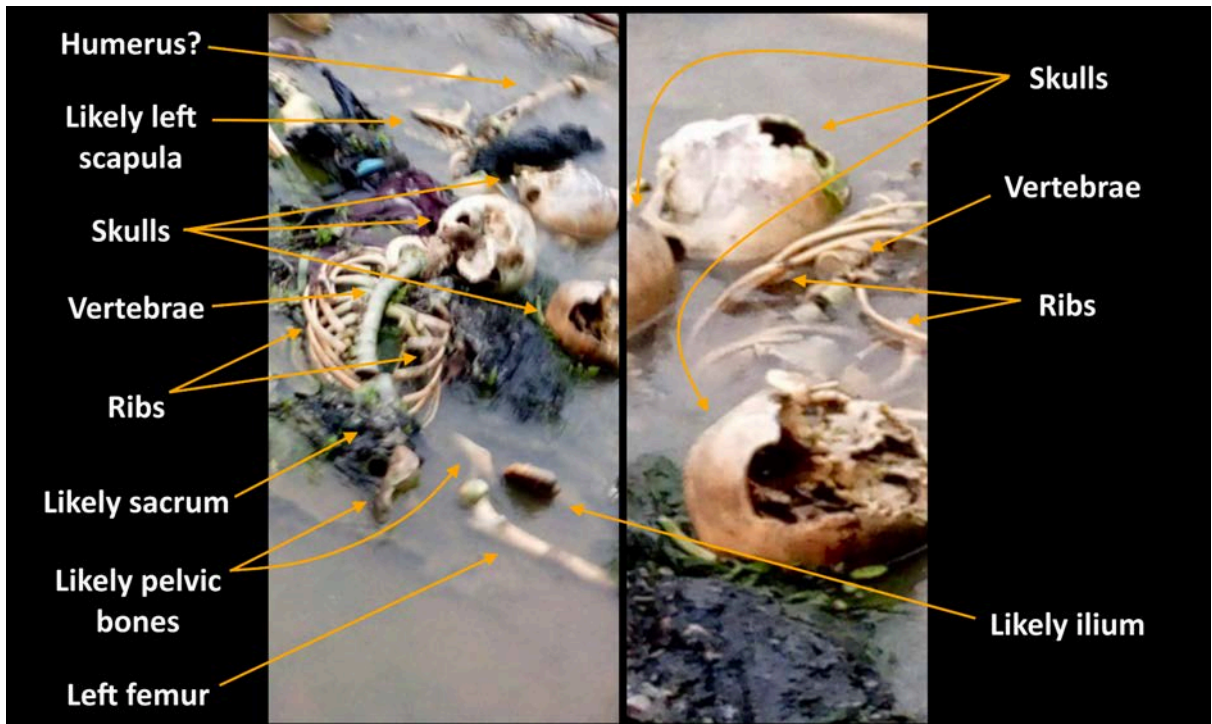


Figure 12: Three to six skulls are visible in the image alongside other bones. This positioning suggests the bodies were deposited at the site and remained largely undisturbed (Source: [AAMIJ news](#), analysis conducted by Myanmar Witness).

4 REPORTED CLASHES BETWEEN THE AA & SAC

4.1 AA STATEMENT

According to the AA's statement, published on 4 May 2024, there was fighting in Htan Shauk Khan village between the AA and SAC forces (allegedly also including several Rohingya individuals). The AA goes on to state that they captured several POWs, and some SAC soldiers were killed during the clashes.

In the statement, the AA mentioned they captured the SAC's 15th Military Operations Command (MOC-15) and Light Infantry Battalion (LIB 551) on 3 May 2024, and effectively took control of the area and surrounding villages. This includes Htan Shauk Khan village, which is located between the two SAC bases (see figure 1). As noted in figure 1, the LIB 551 is located about 300 metres west of Htan Shauk Khan village.

4.2 PRISONERS OF WAR CAPTURED ON VIDEO

The fate of the captured SAC soldiers depicted in video footage in early May 2024 remains unknown.

On 6 May 2024, the AA uploaded a [video](#), reportedly filmed on 4 May 2024, depicting captured SAC soldiers walking in a line from the direction of Htan Shauk Khan village, heading west and continuing north towards MOC-15 (figure 13). Later, those captured soldiers were seen on the video gathered at a place identified as MOC-15, which Myanmar Witness was able to geolocate near one of the burial sites.

While the footage provides visual confirmation of the movement and location of the captured SAC soldiers, it does not provide additional information on their subsequent treatment. Therefore, Myanmar Witness is unable to determine whether they were involved in the events at the burial sites.



Figure 13: Screenshots from the AA's uploaded footage, with a claimed date of 4 May 2024. White arrows indicate the direction of movement of reported POWs away from the village and towards MOC-15; the white pin marks the location where POWs were gathered, and the red pin marks the geolocated large deposition site of human remains (Source: [Arakan Army](#)).

4.3 HTAN SHAUK KHAN VILLAGE DESTROYED

Satellite imagery suggests that Htan Shauk Khan village and its surrounding areas experienced significant physical changes between January 2024 and February 2025. Myanmar Witness analysed satellite imagery, Sentinel-2 false colour imagery and FIRMs data, which suggests there was substantial devastation in and around the area. However, at the time of publishing, Myanmar Witness was not able to find UGC to support these observations.

4.3.1 SATELLITE IMAGERY

Using satellite imagery from Maxar and cross-referencing it with the reported date of the clashes (May 2024), Myanmar Witness analysis highly supports that Htan Shauk Khan village was effectively destroyed, while under the control of the AA (figure 14). However, due to limitations in satellite imagery, a precise timeframe for the destruction could not be determined.



Figure 14: Satellite Imagery comparison taken from 17 January 2024 and 11 February 2025 (Source: Maxar Technologies via Esri, TomTom, Garmin, METI/NASA, USGS).

4.3.2 SENTINEL-2 FALSE COLOUR IMAGERY

Villages near the military bases, including Htan Shauk Khan, also experienced fires in the time range of late April to early May 2024, when the AA was reportedly launching attacks in the area. Sentinel-2 False colour imagery between [27 April](#)

[2024](#) and [7 May 2024](#) demonstrates increased burn marks and dark colour change visible, which suggests the village had suffered fire damage (figure 15). However, in one of the video clips uploaded by [the AA](#), Htan Shauk Khan village is visible in the background, and there are no signs of destruction. This video was uploaded on 6 May 2024 with a claimed date of 4 May 2024. This suggests that the village was potentially burned and destroyed when it came under the control of the AA, and not prior.

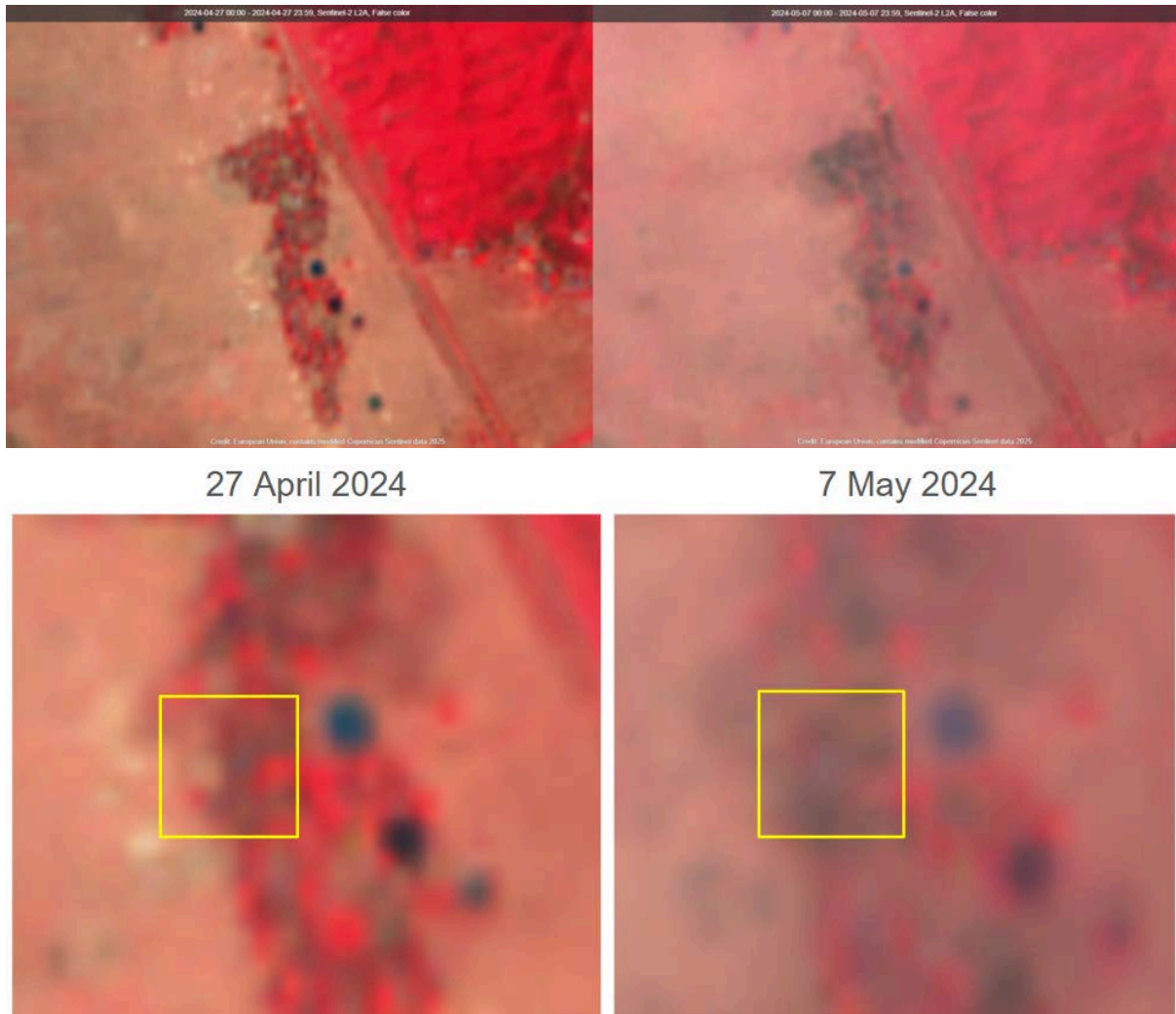


Figure 15: Sentinel-2 False colour imagery between [27 April 2024](#) and [7 May 2024](#) demonstrates increased burn marks and dark colour change is visible, which suggests the village has suffered fire damage (Source: Modified Copernicus Sentinel data 2025/Copernicus Browser).

4.3.2 FIRMS ANALYSIS

Myanmar Witness utilised FIRMS to analyse whether the damage observed in Sentinel-2 imagery was related to arson. While there were no FIRMS heat signatures detected in Htan Shauk Khan village between 27 April and 7 May 2024, there were multiple heat detection spots discovered in villages close to MOC-15

and LIB 551 between 27 April and 3 May 2024 (figure 16). This timeframe aligns with the dates when the AA reportedly occupied MOC-15 and LIB 551 on 2 and 3 May 2024, respectively.

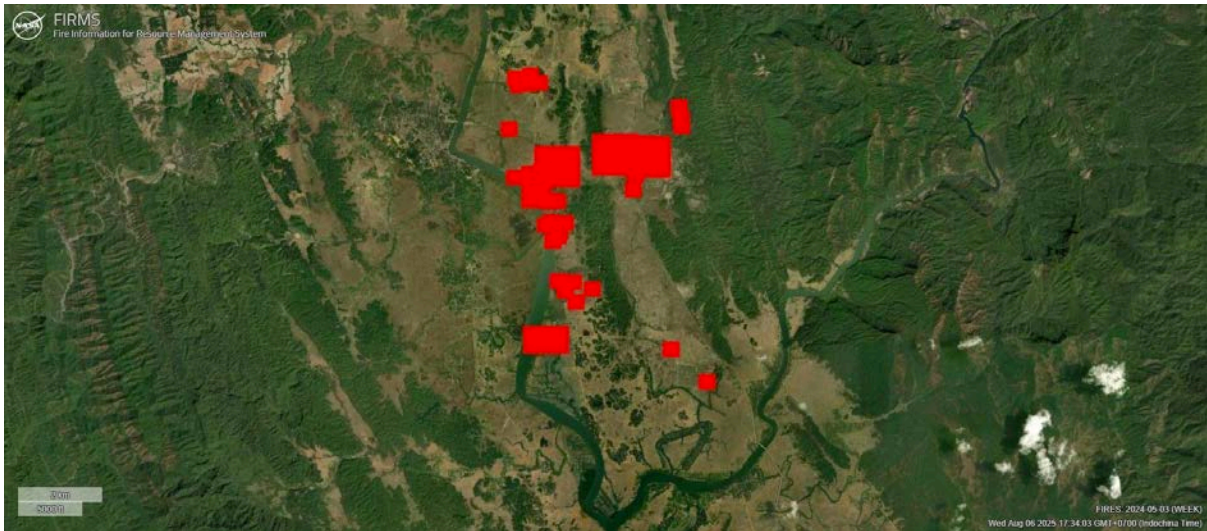


Figure 16: Heat detection through FIRMS on several villages close to MOC-15 and LIB 551 between 27 April 2024 and 3 May 2024 (Source: [FIRMS](#)).

Therefore, destruction in Htan Shauk Khan village could likely be a result of arson, since all the villages surrounding LIB 551 were burned down, as confirmed in FIRMS. Thus, these observations may increase the likelihood that the reported arson attack in Htan Shauk Khan village did occur.

5 MEDIA INVITATION

According to a source (removed for privacy reasons), the AA invited selected media outlets to Htan Shauk Khan village on 20 August 2025, following the widespread claims that hundreds of Rohingya civilians had been killed in the area. The invited organisations included the [Arakan Bay News](#) (ABN), [Development Media Group](#) (DMG), Narinjara, The [Irrawaddy](#) and [One Nation News](#).

Journalists were reportedly escorted to the burial site by the AA, alongside individuals described in media reports as Rohingya residents. Armed troops were also present at the site (figure 16). Visuals uploaded online indicate that at the location, journalists took photographs and filmed footage (figure 17). The reported presence of Rohingya residents is significant, as it raises concerns that members of the community may have been compelled to be present, although this cannot be confirmed.

It is important to mention that Myanmar Witness has not been able to independently verify the identity of the individuals described in media reports as Rohingya residents. In this report, they are being referred to as Rohingya residents because this detail is potentially significant in understanding the dynamics around the media site visit and the reported invitation for residents to return. However, this should be treated with caution.



Figure 17: Journalists were reportedly escorted with alleged residents from the village to the burial site, where armed troops were stationed. [Top] The footage depicts journalists close to the burial site taking pictures and investigating the area. [Bottom] Footage of the reported transport vehicles for the journalists and Rohingya residents (Sources: [Top] [One Nation News](#), [Bottom] [Irrawaddy](#)).

5.1 FOOTAGE ANALYSIS - GEOLOCATION

Footage analysis of journalists being escorted through the burial sites depicts key landmarks and features that correspond with Myanmar Witness's geolocation assessment, thus supporting the identification and verification of the reported burial sites in Htan Shauk Khan village (figures 18 and 19).



Figure 18: Screenshot image from a video depicting Rohingya residents of Htan Shauk Khan village. They are reportedly alongside journalists and AA soldiers and stood in front of the mass burial site location, geolocated by Myanmar Witness [20.839208, 92.579840] (Source: [One Nation News](#)).



Figure 19: Screenshot from a One Nation News video, which was filmed facing a communication tower to the north [20.853758, 92.578416] (Source: [One Nation News](#)).

5.2 MEDIA INTERVIEWS & CONFLICTING ACCOUNTS

Media access was reportedly restricted for international news organisations, and some local outlets were not invited due to the ongoing clashes and potential security concerns, according to the AA (section 5.2.5). This is important to note, as it may help to understand why the accounts collected are either limited or at least selective. This also suggests how the information environment is contested and highlights why independent verification of casualty identities and numbers is not currently possible.

During the AA-facilitated media visit, journalists interviewed several individuals, reportedly residents of Htan Shauk Khan, as well as the local administrator and a captured SAC officer. The narratives gathered during these interviews largely rejected the claims that civilians were among the dead found at the deposition site. However, these interviews also highlight several contradictions around the reported mass killing and what happened:

- The village administrator (5.2.1) stated that the bodies were those of SAC soldiers killed during the fighting with the AA in 2024.
- Some residents (5.2.2) echoed the administrator's account and also stressed that the AA had moved civilians to safety before the fighting took place.
- A surrendered SAC officer (5.2.3) described a scene where more than 500 soldiers and over 500 relatives of the military were present during the clashes. This complicates the narrative and suggests that there were indeed non-combatants present and potentially affected.

- Activists (5.2.4) claim that some residents may have been pressured to deny AA involvement in civilian deaths in the area. This raises further uncertainty about the accuracy and independence of the narratives collected.

5.2.1 VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR

The village administrator, reportedly called U Shor Yaw Nor Bi (ဦးရှော်ယော်ဒ်နော်ဘီ), featured in an interview with [One Nation News](#) (timecode 00:49) (figure 20). During the interview, he explicitly rejected the reports of mass civilian killings and instead stated that the bodies found were those of SAC soldiers killed during the clashes with the AA in 2024.

“The claim that 600 people were killed is false and misleading. I am the village administrator under the military council, and I still serve as the administrator now. The bodies we found were [those of] Myanmar soldiers. During the battle with the Arakan Army, many of them were killed. Their bodies were left here.”



Figure 20: Footage of the village administrator U Shor Yaw Nor Bi, pointing to what appears to be military equipment in the water during a media interview at the reported burial site (Source: [One Nation News](#)).

5.2.2 LOCAL TESTIMONIES

Several residents interviewed during the media visit made statements that are similar to the administrator’s claims that civilians were not among the dead at the mass burial site. The [Development Media Group](#) interviewed a male resident, who recounted discovering the burial site after the AA had taken control, and thus claimed that only soldiers were present. During the interview, he appears to reject

the claims that civilians had been killed and instead accuses outside actors of spreading false reports (at timecode 03:55) (figure 21).

Myanmar Witness has transcribed the following portion of the interview to demonstrate this rejection of civilian death claims:

“The first thing we saw was a big burial site with dead bodies inside. None of the bodies were from our villagers...There were no children or women’s dead bodies at the burial site, only Myanmar soldiers, one or two Muslim fighters. None of the bodies were from our village.

What they are saying is just to stir up conflict between Rakhine and Muslims, to keep us from living peacefully. We villagers reject that. We ask that such false reports be stopped.”

Myanmar Witness understands the interviewee’s reference to “fighters” as allegedly from militia groups.



Figure 21: A male individual, allegedly from the village, was interviewed by Development Media Group, describing how he came across the burial site and rejecting claims that civilians were killed (Source: [Development Media Group](#)).

One woman, who claimed to be from Htan Shauk Kahn village, told [One Nation News](#) that at 20:00 local time (no date was mentioned), a battle broke out and the AA called out on loudspeakers from the direction of U Hla Phae village, saying, ‘Come to this side.’ (timecode 01:57) (figure 22).



Figure 22: A female villager recalls the AA reportedly taking civilians to safety on the morning of the clashes (source: [One Nation News](#)).

Analysis of UCG suggests a significant movement of people from Htan Shauk Khan village, although the exact time of this movement cannot be confirmed. Multiple media organisations, including [One Nation News](#) (timecode 03:10) and [The Irrawaddy](#) (timecode 01:22), published similar footage, depicting hundreds of villagers moving toward U Hla Hpay village, with someone holding a loudspeaker (figures 23 and 24). Myanmar Witness geolocated this scene in the footage [20.827045, 92.56671].

This analysis supports the claims from various interviews of large-scale displacement from Htan Shauk Khan village. However, due to the poor quality of the footage, it was not possible to confirm the timeframe of the movement. This leaves some uncertainty around when these events took place in connection with the reported incident.



Figure 23: Image shows villagers moving toward an individual holding a loudspeaker, heading for U Hla Hpay village (Source: [One Nation News](#), timecode 03:10).



Figure 24: [Top] UGC showing the villagers from Htan Shauk Khan village potentially relocating towards U Hla Phay village on 4 May 2024 (timecode 01:22) (Source: [Irrawaddy Burmese](#)). Loudspeaker location (Blue Pin) - [20.827045, 92.566717].

5.2.3 CAPTURED COMBATANT ACCOUNT: PRISONER OF WAR

An SAC officer, Colonel Kaung Myat from MOC-15, reportedly surrendered to the AA at the time of the clashes in May 2024 and provided another perspective regarding what happened (figure 25). He described how more than 500 soldiers and over 500 accompanying relatives of the military were present during the reported clashes (timecode 02:11). Myanmar Witness has transcribed the following portion of the interview:

“During the day, we even had to call for airstrikes. At night...more than 100 of our officers and Muslim militia were killed. Many of the family members who

were with us were also injured...As we retreated toward Htan Shauk Khan village, we were under heavy attack, and many of our [SAC] side were killed around the village area. I myself was wounded in two places.”

Myanmar Witness understands the interviewee’s reference to “Muslim militia” as allegedly Rohingya militia groups.



Figure 25: A screenshot of Colonel Kaung Myat (MOC-15), who reportedly surrendered to the AA, giving an interview about the events (Source: [Arakan Bay News](#)).

This POW’s account suggests that although many of the victims were combatants, civilians may have been caught up in the fighting. This adds a layer of complexity to the question of casualty identity.

5.2.4 ALLEGATIONS OF COERCION IN MEDIA INTERVIEWS

Reports from activists and media outlets allege that the AA may have pressured some residents to give statements to journalists denying civilian deaths. According to the [Maungdaw Daily News](#) and Rohingya activist [Ro Nay San Lwin](#), Rohingya villagers were told to publicly state that the AA was not responsible for civilian casualties in that area. In addition, it was claimed that some people were threatened if they refused (figure 26).

These allegations do raise questions regarding the independence of the narratives collected during the media site visit facilitated by the AA.



Figure 26: Screenshots of a thread on Ro Nay San Lwin's X page, suggesting that Rohingya survivors were under pressure to state the AA did not commit the massacre (Source: [Ro Nay San Lwin](#)).

5.2.5 AA SPOKESPERSON ON MEDIA ACCESS

The AA limited media access to certain outlets during the visit to Htan Shauk Khan village. According to an interview with the [Irrawaddy Burmese](#), an AA spokesperson explained that international and some local news agencies were not invited due to the ongoing fighting and potential security risk. This includes potential exposure to airstrikes, and therefore, the AA claimed to prioritise the journalists already on the ground.

This statement potentially explains why the narratives collected from invited media may have been selective or at least shaped by the facilitation process.

5.2.6 AL JAZEERA

[Al Jazeera](#) also reported on the events in Htan Shauk Khan. However, they were not part of the media visit, and Myanmar Witness was unable to verify whether their accounts correspond to the specific events that have been investigated in this report.

5.3 ANALYTICAL SUMMARY

The testimonies collected during the media visit present an alternative account of events in comparison to earlier reports. However, they also carry limitations regarding their reliability.

Interviewees appeared to consistently reject the claims of civilian deaths at the burial site and instead suggested that the deaths were those of SAC soldiers. However, the captured SAC Colonel's account further complicates the narrative when he suggests that the soldier's family members were also present and potentially affected. Furthermore, the allegations of coercion raise questions regarding the reliability of the interviews.

In addition, the reason why the AA organised this media visit remains unclear. One possible interpretation is that it reflects the need to control and shape the narrative in response to earlier media reports alleging that the AA had carried out extrajudicial [killings](#) and arson across Rakhine State.

6 CONCLUSION

Multiple agencies, media organisations and activists have reported that the AA was responsible for the killing of more than 600 Rohingya civilians in Htan Shauk Khan village on 2 May 2024. However, Myanmar Witness has not been able to independently verify these casualty figures, the identities of the victims or confirm the perpetrators behind this incident.

Through geolocation, satellite, and forensic imagery analysis, Myanmar Witness has confirmed the existence of at least one burial site, with another area deemed likely and close by. Visuals shared by both Rohingya activists and news outlets, as well as by the AA itself, are consistent with these geolocated sites.

However, several aspects of this investigation still remain pending. For instance, the total number of casualties, the claimed proportion of civilian versus combatant victims and the precise circumstances of their deaths have not yet been established. The claims that some of the deceased were SAC soldiers could be correct, given the presence of military equipment found at the burial site, but this has not been verified. Additionally, while some of the footage shows civilian clothing, this alone cannot confirm the civilian status of these victims.

Furthermore, Myanmar Witness has not been able to verify the testimonies and interviews gathered during the AA-facilitated media site visit at the end of August 2025.

Myanmar Witness will continue to investigate the full scope of this alleged massacre on 2 May 2024, as well as any additional information on the clashes between the AA and the SAC during that time.

7 METHODOLOGY

Myanmar Witness follows a methodology of digital preservation and rigorous, replicable analysis. Digital content is collected and archived in a secure database and hashed to confirm authenticity and prevent tampering.



Myanmar Witness uses a confidence judgment system to describe the extent of independent verification:

- **Very High:** Myanmar Witness is 85-95% sure that the event took place as described in the claims. Digital content is independently geolocated and mostly chronolocated, with strong corroborating evidence on details of the claim.
- **High:** Myanmar Witness is 70-80% sure that the event took place as described in the claims. Digital content is geolocated. Other reliable sources confirm the time and date, but it cannot be independently chronolocated. Other details of the claim have not been proven beyond a reasonable doubt.
- **Medium:** Myanmar Witness is 50-60% sure that the event took place. The event is somewhat verified, but significant gaps remain.
- **Low:** The geolocation and chronolocation process has shown the location or timing of the digital content to be inaccurate.
- **Unknown:** There is insufficient evidence for the investigator to make a judgment.

For the avoidance of doubt, this verification system only refers to Myanmar Witness' ability to independently geolocate or chronolocate footage. Incidents marked as unverified may still be substantiated by multiple eyewitness reports. Myanmar Witness also collates and assesses unverified information, including claims on social media. This information is presented as claims, rather than verified facts.

This report contains figures showing how footage has been geolocated. In these images, coloured lines are used to represent the left and right arcs of vision. Coloured boxes show corresponding landmarks or distinguishing details in each piece of footage or data. Geolocation is conducted using an array of open-source tools, such as Google Earth, to match satellite imagery with visual features identified in the footage or images. In this investigation, the location of the burial sites was verified by cross-checking user-generated content (UGC) submitted by ARNC and AAMIJ news with Google Earth imagery and PeakVisor imagery. Regarding the reported burning and destruction of Htan Shauk Khan Village, verification was conducted using satellite imagery provided by Esri, TomTom, Garmin, METI/NASA, and USGS, dated 17 January 2024 and 11 February 2025. Geolocations are then peer-reviewed.

Chronolocation is conducted using metadata, contextual analysis, weather patterns, and shadow analysis. Through this, possible time frames are deduced. For example, by orienting geolocated content and identifying the sun's position, time can be determined. To confirm the timing and location of fires that occurred in the villages across the region, data from the Fire Information for Resource Management System (FIRMS) was analysed and used for verification. Since there were claims that the incident took place in May 2024, relevant social media content was examined to corroborate the timeline. Additionally, using WhoPostedWhat.com, Facebook posts and other social media materials from that period were systematically reviewed, day by day and month by month, within the reported timeframe.

Myanmar Witness follows rigorous ethical standards: obscuring identifying information about individuals involved; censoring private information and images where appropriate; blurring graphic imagery; removing links to private individual accounts; and archiving digital content securely.

7.1 FORENSIC ANALYSIS

Human remains were counted using only the available skull count through UGC. This was conducted to prevent overcounting of individuals due to the large amount of osteological remains that were identified. Only one corpse appeared only partially decomposed (not fully skeletonised), and was stated as so in the analysis. Other osteological remains were identified by an expert when noticed.

7.2 GENDER ANALYSIS

Myanmar Witness did not independently verify the presence of female victims in this case; however, social media claims report that women and children were among the dead.

Although Rohingya organisations claimed that women and children were killed in this incident, the images that Myanmar Witness have verified only visible a few items that appear to be women's clothing, and no other verifiable evidence was found to support those claims. Because there are only a few burial site images, it limits to verify the exact number of women and children who were among the victims.

7.3 LIMITATIONS

Myanmar Witness obtains information from an area of ongoing conflict. Resultantly, selection bias may occur due to internet outages, lack of connectivity, fear of reprisal, or restrictions on media. Myanmar Witness strives to eliminate bias by collecting digital content from multiple sources, including pro and anti-regime news and social media.

Since the reported clashes occurred at the beginning of the monsoon season in Myanmar, it was observed that the area was often covered with dense clouds. As a result, there were limitations in verifying the exact dates of the fires/reported arson during that time.

In addition, due to internet outages in about ten townships across Rakhine State, there were fewer images and videos related to the burial sites shared on social media. This created further limitations in fully verifying the timeline of events.

Myanmar Witness will continue to monitor the situation in order to gain more information on these events.

8 ABBREVIATIONS

Arakan Army	AA
Arakan Rohingya National Council	ARNC
Light Infantry Battalion	LIB
Military Operations Command	MOC
Myanmar Information Management Unit	MIMU
Prisoner of War	POW
Radio Free Asia	RFA
State Administration Council	SAC

User Generated Content

UGC

