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dead in front of his house by an unidentified gunman. Following disagreements with the leadership of the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM), Mahamudo Amurane had announced his intention to leave the party to form his own party and seek re-election in October 2018 municipal elections.

On 2 December, a gunman threatened to kill Aunício da Silva, an investigative journalist and editor of *Ikwele*, a weekly publication, in Nampula. The gunman accused him of publishing articles that tarnished the image of Carlos Saíde, the MDM mayoral candidate for Nampula.

DISCRIMINATION – PEOPLE WITH ALBINISM

An estimated 30,000 people with albinism experienced discrimination and were ostracized; many lived in fear of their lives. Incidents of persecution increased; at least 13 people with albinism were known to have been killed although figures are likely to have been greater. The killings were fuelled by superstition or myths about the magical powers of people with albinism. Most killings took place in the central and northern provinces, the country's poorest regions.

A seven-year-old boy with albinism was murdered on 31 January by four unidentified men who broke into his house and abducted him while the family slept, in Ngaúma district, Niassa province. On 28 May, a group of unidentified assailants abducted a three-year-old boy from his mother in Angónia district, Tete province. On 13 September, a 17-year-old youth was killed for his body parts and organs in Benga area, Moatize district, in Tete province. The attackers removed his brain, hair, and arm bones. None of those responsible for the killings were arrested or brought to justice by the end of the year.

Despite public outcry, the government did little to address the problem. A strategy was designed to stop the killings; however, this was not implemented, allegedly because of a lack of resources.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

There were high rates of women murdered, often by men intimately known, or related, to them. In several cases, the perpetrators attempted to justify their actions by claiming the victim used witchcraft against them.

On 10 January, a 31-year-old man stabbed his 27-year-old wife to death with a kitchen knife in Inhagoia neighbourhood on the outskirts of Maputo. In February, in Vanduzi district, Manica province, a 27-year-old man decapitated his mother with a machete saying she had refused to serve him food. In May, a man killed his mother in Guru district, Manica province, claiming she had cast a spell of sexual impotence on him. In August, two brothers killed their 70-year-old grandmother in the Messano locality, Bilene district, Gaza province, after accusing her of casting a bad luck spell on them. In September, in the Centro Hípico neighbourhood located on the outskirts of Chimoio, Manica province, a man killed his 80-year-old mother with an iron bar after accusing her of bewitching him.

Although, in all these cases, the suspected perpetrators admitted that they carried out the killings, the authorities failed to develop, resource and implement an effective strategy to combat violence against women.

MYANMAR

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Head of state and government: **Htin Kyaw**

The human rights situation deteriorated dramatically. Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya fled crimes against humanity in Rakhine State to neighbouring Bangladesh; those who remained continued to live under a system amounting to apartheid. The army committed extensive violations of international humanitarian law. Authorities continued to restrict humanitarian access across the country. Restrictions on freedom of expression remained. There was increased religious intolerance and anti-

Muslim sentiment. Impunity persisted for past and ongoing human rights violations.

BACKGROUND

The civilian-led administration, headed de facto by State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, completed its first year in office in March. Economic reforms stagnated, while the peace process – aimed at bringing an end to decades of internal armed conflicts – stalled. The military retained significant political power and remained independent of civilian oversight. On 6 October, Myanmar ratified the ICESCR, due to come into force in the country on 6 January 2018.

CRIMES UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW – CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

Rakhine State was plunged into crisis when security forces unleashed a campaign of violence against the predominantly Muslim Rohingya ethnic minority in the northern part of the state, following co-ordinated attacks in late August by the armed group Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) on approximately 30 security posts. The attacks took place just hours after a commission headed by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan presented its recommendations to “prevent violence, maintain peace and foster reconciliation” in the state.

The military, often working with Border Guard Police and local vigilantes, killed an undetermined number of Rohingya women, men and children; tortured and otherwise ill-treated Rohingya women and girls, including with rape and other forms of sexual violence; laid landmines; and burned hundreds of Rohingya villages in what the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights described as a “textbook example of ethnic cleansing”. The conduct of the security forces amounted to crimes against humanity.¹

More than 655,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh as a result of the violence. Other ethnic minority communities were also affected, with an estimated 30,000 people temporarily displaced to other parts of Rakhine State. There were reports of abuses, including killings of informants and the

enforced disappearance of ethnic Rakhine and Mro villagers by ARSA.

Rohingya who remained in Rakhine State continued to live under a system amounting to apartheid, which severely restricted virtually every aspect of their lives and segregated them from the rest of society.² Their rights to nationality, freedom of movement, the highest attainable standard of health, education, work, food, freedom of religion and belief, and to participate in public life were routinely and systematically violated on a discriminatory basis.

The government dismissed allegations of human rights violations and ignored calls for investigations and accountability. It signed a deal with Bangladesh to repatriate refugees subject to a verification process, and announced that it would work to implement Kofi Annan’s recommendations and bring development to Rakhine State.

INTERNAL ARMED CONFLICT

Fighting between the Myanmar Army and ethnic armed groups intensified in northern Myanmar. The Army committed wide-ranging human rights violations against ethnic minority civilians, including extrajudicial executions and other unlawful killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions, torture and other ill-treatment and forced labour. The Army regularly fired mortar and artillery shells when fighting ethnic armed groups, which often landed in civilian areas. In May, an 81-year-old woman was killed when a mortar exploded near her home in Namhkan township, northern Shan State.³ Several of these violations were likely to amount to war crimes.

Ethnic armed groups committed violations of international humanitarian law, including enforced disappearances, forcible recruitment and extortion. Both the Myanmar Army and ethnic armed groups laid anti-personnel landmines or landmine-like weapons. Many displaced people were afraid to return to their homes as a result.

LACK OF HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

Both the civilian government and the military continued to severely and arbitrarily restrict humanitarian access, placing hundreds of thousands of people at risk.

In Rakhine State, authorities restricted aid access in the wake of the August ARSA attacks, suspending it entirely in the north of the state. The authorities later allowed the Red Cross Movement and the World Food Programme to operate in the area. However, their access was limited and insufficient to meet needs. In other parts of Rakhine State, access was further impaired by local tensions and hostility towards international aid groups.⁴

The authorities further restricted access to displaced populations in northern Myanmar, especially to people living in territory that was not under government control. In February, the Myanmar Army prevented the delivery of 200 UN-stamped “dignity kits” – which included basic sanitary supplies – for women and girls displaced in areas controlled by the Kachin Independence Organization.

REFUGEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE

Civilians were displaced as a result of conflict, violence and natural disasters. More than 106,000 people remained internally displaced by the conflicts in northern Myanmar. Some 120,000 people, mostly Rohingya, continued to live in squalid displacement camps in Rakhine State where they have been confined for five years following violence in 2012.

By the end of the year more than 655,000 Rohingya refugees had fled to Bangladesh following unlawful and disproportionate military operations in northern Rakhine State. In November, Myanmar and Bangladesh signed an agreement to repatriate refugees to Myanmar even as people continued to flee across the border. The entrenched and ongoing regime amounting to apartheid in Rakhine State ensured that any returns would not be safe or dignified.

Some 100,000 additional refugees from Myanmar continued to live in camps in

Thailand, where they faced decreasing humanitarian assistance. Many expressed concerns about returning to Myanmar, citing ongoing instability, militarization in ethnic areas and lack of access to essential services.

PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

Despite prisoner amnesties in April and May, prisoners of conscience remained in detention. The authorities continued to use a range of vaguely worded laws that restricted the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly to arrest and imprison people solely for peacefully exercising their rights.

Prisoner of conscience Lahpai Gam, an ethnic Kachin farmer, remained in prison, suffering from serious health conditions. He was tortured at the time of his arrest in 2012.

The government failed to provide restitution to former prisoners of conscience and their families, such as compensation, assistance in gaining access to education and employment opportunities, and other forms of reparation.

FREEDOMS OF EXPRESSION, ASSOCIATION AND ASSEMBLY

The rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly remained subject to severe restrictions. There was a surge in the number of people charged with “online defamation” under Section 66(d) of the 2013 Telecommunications Act.⁵ Following national and international pressure, Parliament adopted minor amendments to the law. However, “online defamation” remained a criminal offence.

Human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists – in particular those speaking out about the situation of the Rohingya, religious intolerance and violations by the military – faced surveillance, intimidation and attacks. On 29 January, Ko Ni, a lawyer, was shot dead at Yangon International Airport while returning from an interfaith conference in Indonesia. At the end of the year, the trial of four alleged perpetrators was still ongoing; a fifth suspect remained at large. In November, ethnic Kachin pastor Dumdaw Nawng Lat

and his assistant Langjaw Gam were imprisoned for providing assistance to journalists reporting on military air strikes near the town of Monekoe in late 2016. Both men were sentenced to two years' imprisonment under the Unlawful Associations Act. Dumdaw Nawng Lat was sentenced to an additional two years for "defamation".

The operations of independent media outlets were increasingly restricted, and in some cases journalists were subjected to criminal prosecution for carrying out their work. In June, three media workers were arrested and charged with contacting an "unlawful association" after returning from an area controlled by an armed ethnic group operating in northern Myanmar. They were released after charges against them were dropped in August.⁶ In December, two Reuters reporters were detained under the Official Secrets Act in connection with their work reporting on the situation in Rakhine State. Both were held incommunicado for two weeks and remained in detention at the end of the year.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND BELIEF

There was a sharp rise in religious intolerance and anti-Muslim sentiment in the wake of the August attacks in Rakhine State. The government exacerbated the situation by both allowing and directly producing hate speech inciting discrimination and violence in print and online. State media published derogatory anti-Rohingya articles; government officials published inflammatory posts on social media.

Throughout the year religious minorities, in particular Muslims, continued to face discrimination. In April, two madrassas (religious schools) in Yangon were closed by local authorities and police following pressure from a mob of Buddhist hardline nationalists. In September, the Kayin State authorities issued an order requiring all Muslims in the state to report to local authorities before travelling. Although the Kayin State Chief Minister later said that the order was an "administrative error", travel restrictions

reportedly remained in place at the end of the year.

CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY

Thousands of families living near the Letpadaung copper mine in Sagaing region remained at risk of losing their homes and farmland under plans to expand the project.⁷ Villagers living close to the mine continued to protest against the project. In March, at least 10 people were injured after police fired rubber bullets at a group of villagers protesting about the impact of trucks transporting materials to the mine. According to local authorities, six police officers were wounded by protesters using catapults.⁸

In August, the Ministry of Defence rejected a proposal to relocate a factory producing sulphuric acid to supply the mine. Severe risks were posed to the health of the community living nearby. Environmental and human rights concerns related to the project had not been addressed by the end of the year.

DEATH PENALTY

Courts continued to impose death sentences under legal provisions allowing for the imposition of the death penalty. No executions were carried out.

LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY

A persistent culture of impunity remained for human rights violations committed by the security forces. Most perpetrators of past and current human rights violations, including crimes under international law, had not been held accountable for their actions.

The government failed to adequately investigate and hold to account perpetrators of serious human rights violations in Rakhine State, including crimes against humanity. In August, an Investigation Commission established by the President to probe the October 2016 attacks and their aftermath published a summary of its findings in which it acknowledged casualties, destruction of buildings, loss of property and displacement. However, it failed to establish responsibility for these acts, or to state whether any action

had been taken to prosecute perpetrators. The investigation lacked independence.⁹ In November, a military investigation concluded that no human rights violations had been committed in Rakhine State following the 25 August ARSA attacks and subsequent military campaign.

INTERNATIONAL SCRUTINY

In March the UN Human Rights Council established an independent, international Fact-Finding Mission to “establish the facts and circumstances” about human rights violations and abuses, in particular in Rakhine State. The Council requested the Mission to present its findings in September 2018. The move was met with strong opposition by the government, which disassociated itself from the investigation and refused to allow the team into the country.

A significant increase in international attention was focused on Myanmar and the crisis in Rakhine State following the August attacks. On 6 November, the UN Security Council issued a presidential statement calling for an end to the violence and for the restrictions on humanitarian aid to be lifted. Also in November, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on the situation of human rights in Myanmar. In December, the Human Rights Council held a special session on the situation of the Rohingya and other minorities. The EU and the USA suspended invitations to senior military officials.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar faced increasing restrictions on her access, and by the end of the year had been barred from the country for the remainder of her tenure. She had previously raised concerns about the deteriorating situation in the country.

1. “My world is finished”: Rohingya targeted by crimes against humanity in Myanmar ([ASA 16/7288/2017](#))
2. “Caged without a roof”: Apartheid in Myanmar’s Rakhine State ([ASA 16/7484/2017](#))
3. “All the civilians suffer”: Conflict, displacement and abuse in northern Myanmar ([ASA 16/6429/2017](#))
4. Myanmar: Restrictions on international aid putting thousands at risk ([News story](#), 4 September)

5. Myanmar: Repeal Section 66(d) of the 2013 Telecommunications Law ([ASA 16/6617/2017](#))
6. Myanmar: Release journalists immediately ([News story](#), 26 June)
7. Mountain of trouble: Human rights abuses continue at Myanmar’s Letpadaung mine ([ASA 16/5564/2017](#))
8. Myanmar: Investigate police use of force against protesters at troubled mine ([ASA 16/5983/2017](#))
9. Myanmar: National efforts to investigate Rakhine State violence are inadequate ([ASA 16/5758/2017](#))

NAMIBIA

Republic of Namibia

Head of state and government: **Hage Geingob**

The right to adequate housing was restricted and the situation was exacerbated by high levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality. Eight prisoners of conscience in the long-running Caprivi trial were held 14 years after their arrest, on treason and sedition charges.

RIGHT TO HOUSING

Housing remained inadequate; the government failed to ensure accessible, affordable and habitable housing. Over 500,000 people lived in shacks or makeshift settlements in urban areas while only 10% of the population could afford to buy a house which cost on average 800,000 Namibian dollars (USD58,474) per household. Rural to urban migration, high unemployment levels, low salaries, high rents and lack of available and affordable land plots with residential services led to inadequate housing particularly in the capital, Windhoek. On 28 March, 15 families were rendered homeless when Windhoek City Police arbitrarily evicted them, without an eviction notice, from their informal settlements in Agste Laan, Windhoek. Although the residents took their case to the High Court seeking to be allowed to stay in the settlement and have their shacks rebuilt while their case was finalized, the Court ruled against them on grounds that they were not legally resident on the site.

The inadequate housing in informal settlements was highlighted between 25 and