

The recently approved 2017-2018 budget marks a small decrease in cash to the military. While maintaining the military share of the budget at 14%, the overall reduction of the national budget means that the Tatmadaw will receive 12% less money than last year.^v

	Overall Budget (Kyat, Trillion)	Military Budget (Kyat, Trillion)	% Year to Year Difference	Military % of Overall Budget
2011-2012	K 7.6	K 1.2		15.79%
2012-2013	K 13.0	K 1.9	+ 58.33%	14.62%
2013-2014	K 16.7	K 2.2	+ 15.79%	13.17%
2014-2015	K 19.5	K 2.3	+ 4.55%	11.79%
2015-2016	K 20.8	K 2.7	+ 17.39%	12.98%
2016-2017	K 23.6	K 3.3	+ 22.22%	13.98%
2017-2018	K 20.6	K 2.9	- 12.12%	14.08%

CLASHES^{vi}

Military clashes with ethnic armed groups, including with signatories of the ‘Nationwide’ Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), have increased in the last year, further escalating in conflict areas and resuming in several post-conflict zones. On 6 January, Sr Gen Min Aung Hlaing stated the army must continue to engage in military action because of “narrow-minded” ethnic leaders.^{vii}

Clashes reported during the period include the following:

- ✚** Apr 2016: Violence between the Tatmadaw and Arakan Army in Buthidaung, Arakan State.
- ✚** May 2016: Hostilities resumed in Shan State with reports of the Tatmadaw using civilians as human shields and committing other war crimes against Ta’ang ethnic minority community.
- ✚** Aug-Oct 2016: Tatmadaw ramped up attacks in Karen State.
- ✚** Aug-Nov 2016: Tatmadaw attacks against KIA in Laiza and Myitkyina, Kachin State.
- ✚** Oct 2016: Tatmadaw attacked NCA signatory SSA-S in Mong Kung, Shan State.
- ✚** Oct 2016: Tatmadaw attacks against civilian population: Artillery fired upon Puwang village, Muse Township, northern Shan State.
- ✚** Nov-Dec 2016: Increased fighting between the Tatmadaw and the Northern Alliance
- ✚** Dec 2016: Bouts of increased fighting in Kachin State.
- ✚** Dec 2016: Clashes in Namtu Township, northern Shan State.
- ✚** Since Dec 2016: Tatmadaw intensified military offensive against KIA in Waingmaw and Mansi townships, Kachin State.
- ✚** Jan 2017: Clashes between Tatmadaw and TNLA in Namhsan, northern Shan State.
- ✚** Since Feb 2017: Increased clashes between Tatmadaw and MNDAA in Kokang self-administered zone.

On 30 March, Aung San Suu Kyi acknowledged that reforms and peace have been slower than expected. “On the road to peace, sometimes we move forward or stop for a while, or we may even step back a little ... But we clearly know our goal, and we will move forward to achieve it.”^{viii}

FORCED DISPLACEMENT OF CIVILIANS^{ix}

As a consequence of the above-mentioned clashes, over 152,000 civilians fled their homes to face aid shortages, further victimization, and increased violence. This figure includes both refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), together with civilians already displaced by the long-running conflict being forced to flee once again:

F Apr 2016: Displacement of over 11,000 people due to violence between the Tatmadaw and Arakan Army in Buthidaung, Rathedaung and Kyaktaw townships, Arakan State.

F Aug 2016: Displacement of 5,000 villagers from Karen State.

F Oct 2016: Displacement of 2,000 villagers from Shan State due to Tatmadaw attacks.

F Since Oct 2016: 69,000 Rohingya Muslims fled to Bangladesh due to Tatmadaw clearance operation in Arakan State and an estimated other 22,000 were internally displaced.

F Since Oct 2016: Restricted humanitarian access to northern Arakan State.

F Nov-Dec 2016: Displacement of thousands of people due to intensified fighting between the Tatmadaw and Northern Alliance (5,000 in Mongko, northern Shan State - 200 in Paletwa Township, Chin State - 3,000 in Namtu Township, Shan State - 2,600 IDPs in Waingmaw Township, Kachin State). Up to 15,000 people fled to China.

F Jan 2017: Tatmadaw attacks against KIA bases forced 4,000 people from Waingmaw Township to flee to China and 200 people from Mansi Township to flee to nearby villages.

F Jan 2017: Clashes between Tatmadaw and TNLA forced 100 more people to flee from Namhsan, northern Shan State.

F Mar 2017: Displacement of 30,000 persons due to fighting between the Tatmadaw and Kokang ethnic armed groups

LONG-TERM DISPLACED	
9 Thai refugee camps *	100,000
24 IDP camps in SE Burma *	110,000
Bangladesh	33,000
Kachin & Shan states	83,000
Arakan State	86,000
Sub-total	412,000
NEWLY DISPLACED	
Bangladesh	69,000
Kachin & Shan states	15,000
Karen state	5,000
Arakan	33,000
Other (Chin, Kokang)	30,000
Sub-total	152,000
TOTAL DISPLACED ++	564,000

++ The figures in the table include the number of displaced receiving attention from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)^x. They also include the number of displaced receiving assistance from The Border Consortium (*).^{xi} These figures exclude undocumented asylum-seekers as well as asylum-seekers in other parts of the region. For example, Amnesty International reported that an estimated 300,000-500,000 undocumented Rohingya were also living in Bangladesh, spread out in the two makeshift camps close to Kutupalong and Leda, as well as villages across the country.^{xii}

VIOLENCE AGAINST CIVILIANS

Atrocity crimes persisted in border areas, and particularly in Kachin, Karen and Shan states, where security forces have targeted civilians with extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, arbitrary detention and forced displacement. Reported war crimes against ethnic minorities include the following:

- ✚ May 2016, war crimes against ethnic Ta'ang people in northern Shan State: Tatmadaw reported to be using civilians as human shields, extrajudicial killings, torture.^{xiii}
- ✚ Jun 2016, war crimes: Arbitrary arrest, torture and extrajudicial killing of 5 villagers in Lashio, northern Shan State.^{xiv}
- ✚ Sep 2016, war crimes: Arbitrary arrest, destruction of property and forced conscription of civilians in Karen State.^{xv}
- ✚ Oct 2016, war crimes: Attack intentionally directed against the civilian population in Puwang village, Muse Township, northern Shan State – murder and serious injury.^{xvi}
- ✚ Since Oct 2016, war crimes: Repeated use of air strikes and artillery shells nearby IDP camps and civilian populated areas of Shan and Kachin states, causing civilian casualties.^{xvii}

ATROCITY CRIMES AGAINST ROHINGYA^{xviii}

Independent reports, including a flash report issued by the Office of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights on 3 February 2017, show that since 9 October 2016, the Tatmadaw has targeted Rohingya Muslims with unprecedented violence, committing serious violations of human rights against the civilian minority living in Arakan/Rakhine State.

This latest wave of military-led violence has been described by the international community as crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and even genocide, as it seriously threatens the existence of the Rohingya who have already been subjected to intense systematic discrimination, previous outbreaks of violence, and segregation. The reports have documented numerous instances of the following serious crimes:

- ✚ Murder, including killings of children and babies, and burning of homes with their occupants.
- ✚ Forcible transfer of population.
- ✚ Arbitrary arrest – unlawful detention.
- ✚ Torture.
- ✚ Rape, sexual slavery and other sexual violence.
- ✚ Persecution on ethnic, cultural and religious grounds.
- ✚ Enforced disappearance of persons.
- ✚ Destruction of property and means of livelihood, as well as blocking of aid.

Punished For Telling The Truth

A young Rohingya woman who testified about sexual violence by the military was subjected to more threat and humiliation. On 11 December, 25-year old Jamalida Begum, whose husband was shot dead, testified to government officials about the sexual assault she and other young women were subjected to by soldiers after being assured it was safe to do so. She was instead further victimized for telling the truth, harassed by translators and publicly humiliated by state media as a liar. Jamalida said that a governmental translator threatened to beat her, and that Tatmadaw soldiers came looking for her after her testimony to government officials and journalists. She realized it was not safe in Arakan State, and fled into Bangladesh across the Naf River.

BBC (11 Mar 17) Hounded and ridiculed for complaining of rape

These serious crimes have been committed by the Tatmadaw and other security forces in an environment where the Rohingya have been denied access to basic protections, denied fair trial and judicial guarantees. The discriminatory laws, policies and practices imposed on the Rohingya have stripped them of citizenship, subjected them to targeted birth control and marriage restrictions, segregation, and denial of basic health and education, and made them targets of property destruction and pillaging.

IMPUNITY, ARBITRARY PROSECUTION AND HARASSMENT

Authorities have generally denied any unlawful conduct, particularly for crimes committed by the Tatmadaw. Few exceptions did not alter this pattern. The ongoing policy and practice of impunity will continue to erode public trust, undermining efforts towards democracy, peace and justice.

Fatally flawed investigation initiatives in Arakan State:^{xix}

Six investigatory commissions have been held since 2012 but all have resulted in the perpetuation of discrimination and impunity [see www.altsean.org BN 2017/2014: Flawed Domestic Investigations Necessitate UN Commission of Inquiry on Serious Crimes]:

- ✦ Oct 2016: State-level commission on Maungdaw Violence. Chair Aung Win: it is impossible that soldiers raped Rohingya women because ““they are very dirty... have a very low standard of living and poor hygiene. They are not attractive.”^{xx}
- ✦ Dec 2016: National investigation commission on Maungdaw violence. Human rights abuses downplayed as “fabricated rumors and news”; altered witnesses’ interviews by commission members.
- ✦ Feb 2017: Military inquiry board. Gen Mya Tun Oo declared soldiers acted lawfully and said “I am very sad because of this kind of reckless accusations and neglect of the good things that the government and the military have done for them (Rohingya residents).”^{xxi}
- ✦ Feb 2017: Police departmental inquiry. Rare instances of prosecution, but inadequate sentences.

Rare instances of prosecution:^{xxii}

- ✦ Sep 2016: Seven military members found guilty of murdering villagers in Lashio, northern Shan State and sentenced to 5 years’ imprisonment. No compensation for the families.
- ✦ Jan 2017: One army soldier sentenced to two years’ imprisonment over student’s death.
- ✦ Feb 2017: Five policemen sentenced to two months’ imprisonment for beating and physically assaulting defenseless Rohingya villagers.
- ✦ Feb 2017: Three Border Guard officials sentenced to one to three years’ imprisonment for negligence in regard to the 9 October attacks in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State.

Killings^{xxiii}

- ✦ 20 Jun 16: Student shot dead after an altercation with the Tatmadaw (Kachin State).
- ✦ 23 Dec 16: Muslim man beheaded after telling reporters of Tatmadaw abuses (Arakan State).
- ✦ 29 Jan 17: Prominent NLD legal advisor Ko Ni assassinated. Three out of four indicted suspects were former army officials (Rangoon).

Arbitrary arrests and judicial harassments^{xxiv}

- ✦ Since 2015: Journalists Oo Oo Nyein and Ko Zaw Min Lay received death threats and judicially harassed by the Tatmadaw for reporting on illegal logging and cattle rustling activities
- ✦ 22 May 16: Activist Yar Pyae arrested for criticizing Sr Gen Min Aung Hlaing and monk Wirathu.
- ✦ 25 Jun 16: Ban imposed on the release of report on war crimes committed by the Tatmadaw against Ta’ang ethnic minority people.
- ✦ 11 Oct 16: Tatmadaw soldiers arrested 49 Kachin youth for attending an agricultural training at a border town.
- ✦ 3 Nov 16: NLD senior official Myo Yan Naung Thein jailed for criticizing Sr Gen Min Aung Hlaing.

F 22 Dec 16: 72 farmers jailed for tilling land that had been confiscated by the military.

F 24 Dec 16: Tatmadaw secretly arrested Kachin Baptist pastors Dom Dawng Nawng Latt and La Jaw Gam Hseng for showing church properties destroyed by military attacks to journalists.

F 9 Jan 17: 9 high school students sued by the Tatmadaw for staging a play with an anti-war message.

On 20 January 2017, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar Yanghee Lee declared “[t]here is one word that has hung heavily on my mind during this visit – reprisals... there is still a long way to go to achieve a society where individuals are free to share what has happened to them, to speak their mind, and to live peacefully without fear.”^{xxv}

ⁱ The Irrawaddy (27 Mar 17) Army Chief: Tatmadaw Will Prevent Political Intervention on Rohingyas’ Behalf; RFA (27 Mar 17) Myanmar Military Chief Defends Crackdown Against Rohingya in Rakhine State

ⁱⁱ OHCHR (20 Jan 17) End of mission statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar

ⁱⁱⁱ Selth, Andrew, *Burma’s Armed Forces: Power without Glory*, Norwalk CT: Eastbridge 2002: 135

^{iv} Burma Centre Delhi (04 Aug 12) Roundtable on Evolving Situation in Burma: International Responses; Xinhua (21 Mar 13) Myanmar parliament approves 2013-14 re-drawn state budget; Irrawaddy (15 Jan 14) Burma Defense Ministry Puts Forward Budget Request; Eleven Myanmar (04 May 15) Union parliament cuts Ks 214 bn from gov’t budget request; Myanmar Times (02 Apr 15) U Thein Sein gov’t last budget approved; The Irrawaddy (14 Dec 16) Defense Ministry Gets Lion’s Share of Supplementary Budget; The Irrawaddy (17 Mar 17) Parliament approves reduced budget for 2017-2018

^v The Irrawaddy (17 Mar 17) Parliament Approves Reduced Budget for 2017-2018

^{vi} Myanmar Times (06 May 16) Fighting flares in Shan State ahead of peace talks with NLD leader; DVB (09 Jun 16) Kachin conflict reaches five-year mark with calls for govt action; Irrawaddy (15 Sept 16) Thousands flee, casualties reported in Karen State; RFA (04 Oct 16) Thousands Flee as Fighting Erupts in Myanmar’s Shan State; Irrawaddy (25 October 16) Residents Flee as Military Tensions Flare in Eastern Shan State; Myanmar Times (06 Dec 16) Mong Koe back in Tatmadaw control after air strikes; RFA (16 Dec 16) Skirmishes Continue Between Myanmar Army and Ethnic Militias in Shan State; OHCHR (20 Jan 17) End of mission statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar; RFA (13 Mar 17) More Myanmar Refugees Seek Safety in China From Kokang Conflict

^{vii} The Irrawaddy (06 Jan 17) Burma army chief: Some ethnic leaders are “narrow-minded”

^{viii} RFA (31 Mar 17) Myanmar’s Aung San Suu Kyi Thanks People, Deflects Criticism of Her Year-Old Government

^{ix} OHCHR (20 Jan 17) End of mission statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar; OHCHR (03 Feb 17) Flash Report: Interviews with Rohingyas fleeing from Myanmar since 9 October 2016; Irrawaddy (15 Sept 16) Thousands flee, casualties reported in Karen State; RFA (04 Oct 16) Thousands Flee as Fighting Erupts in Myanmar’s Shan State ; Irrawaddy (25 October 16) Residents Flee as Military Tensions Flare in Eastern Shan State; Myanmar Times (06 Dec 16) Mong Koe back in Tatmadaw control after air strikes; Reuters (20 Dec 16) U.N. says 15,000 flee into China as Myanmar’s army battles ethnic rebels

RFA (13 Mar 17) More Myanmar Refugees Seek Safety in China From Kokang Conflict

^x OCHA (Oct 16) Humanitarian Bulletin 2016

^{xi} The Border Consortium (31 Dec 16)) Annual Report 2016

^{xii} Amnesty International (26 Nov 2016) Bangladesh pushes back Rohingya refugees amid collective punishment in Myanmar

^{xiii} Shan Human Rights Foundation (01 June 16) Torture, extrajudicial killing, and use of civilians as human shields by Burma Army during new offensive; DVB (28 Jun 16) Torture report ban shows limits of rights under NLD: CSOs

^{xiv} S.H.A.N. (30 Jun 16) Five Lashio villagers found dead near Burma Army camp; Reuters (20 July 16) In rare move, Myanmar military admits soldiers killed five villagers

^{xv} Irrawaddy (22 Sept 16) Civilians Bear the Brunt of Ongoing Karen State

^{xvi} RFA (04 Oct 16) Thousands Flee as Fighting Erupts in Myanmar’s Shan State

^{xvii} Myanmar Times (06 Dec 16) Mong Koe back in Tatmadaw control after air strikes; OHCHR (20 Jan 17) End of mission statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar

^{xviii} AP (13 Apr 16) US Cites Global Governance Crisis for Declining Human Rights; UN Human Rights Council (20 Jun 16) Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: Situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar; Reuters (28 Oct 16) Exclusive: Rohingya women say Myanmar soldiers raped them amid crackdown on militants; HRW (13 Dec 16) Burma: Military Burned Villages in Rakhine State; The Guardian (02 Jan 17) Rohingya police beating footage: Myanmar government to investigate; OHCHR (20 Jan 17) End of mission statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar; RFA (23 Jan 17) Rohingya children give eyewitness accounts of atrocities in Myanmar; OHCHR (03 Feb 17) Flash Report: Interviews with Rohingyas fleeing from Myanmar since 9 October 2016; OHCHR (24 Feb 17) End of mission statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar

^{xix} Time (12 Dec 16) Reprisals, rape and children burned alive: Burma’s Rohingya speak of genocidal terror; Asian Correspondent (29 Jan 17) Burma: Is the Burmese state media altering witness accounts of Rohingya rape?; RFA (03 Jan 17) Myanmar blames fake news reports about Muslims for damaging its international image; DVB (05 Jan 17) Interim report of Arakan fails to impress; RFA (09 Feb 17) Myanmar government to conduct investigation of violence against Rohingya in northern Rakhine; Reuters (13 Feb 17) Myanmar to probe police over allegations of crimes against Rohingya

^{xx} Time (12 Dec 16) Reprisals, rape and children burned alive: Burma’s Rohingya speak of genocidal terror

^{xxi} Reuters (28 Feb 17) Myanmar army defends operation against Rohingya, denies reports of abuses

^{xxii} Reuters (20 July 16) In rare move, Myanmar military admits soldiers killed five villagers; DVB (16 Sept 16) Soldiers get five years with hard labor for Mong Yaw murders; Reuters (13 Feb 17) Myanmar to probe police over allegations of crimes against Rohingya; Reuters (24 Feb 17) Senior Myanmar police jailed for negligence over Rohingya attacks; The Irrawaddy (24 Feb 17) Govt jails Maungdaw border guard police for negligence

^{xxiii} DVB (21 Jun 16) Myitkyina student shot dead after argument at army checkpoint; Reuters (20 July 16) In rare move, Myanmar military admits soldiers killed five villagers; Karen News (28 Nov 16) Community groups demand justice for murdered Karen woman activist – and her killer caught; Reuters (13 Dec 16) Myanmar reporter who covered logging industry found beaten to death; RFA (23 Dec 16) Headless Body of Muslim Who Spoke to Journalists Found in Myanmar’s Maungdaw; BBC News (30 Jan 17) Myanmar: leading lawyer Ko Ni assassinated at Yangon airport

^{xxiv} Myanmar Times (18 May 16) Police arrest Sagaing protest marchers; DVB (28 Jun 16) Torture report ban shows limits of rights under NLD: CSOs; DVB (06 Jun 16) BBC Burmese reporter jailed for freeing policeman; Myanmar Times (21 Oct 16) 49 Kachin youths detained after attending agricultural training; The Irrawaddy (08 Nov 16) Freedom of speech remains illusory in the new Burma; Eleven (18 Nov 16) Hoax FB gets six-month sentence; Myanmar Times (18 Nov 16) NLD researcher formally charged with defamation over Facebook critique; Irrawaddy (23 Dec 16) Imprisoned Shan Farmers Will Appeal their Trespassing Convictions; Myanmar Times (17 Jan 17) Amnesty International starts petition over missing church leaders; DVB (24 Jan 17) Kachin pastors transferred to police, charged with unlawful association; DVB (25 Jan 17) Military to sue 9 schoolchildren for defamation; OHCHR (20 Jan 17) End of mission statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar

^{xxv} OHCHR (20 Jan 17) End of mission statement by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar