

Q&A WITH AUTHORS OF THE LAND REPORT

WHAT ARE THE MAIN FINDINGS?

The Destruction and Dispossession of Rohingya Land and Property during the 2017 Clearance Operations – Public Summary is based on a confidential report prepared for judicial and prosecutorial authorities. It details the destruction and seizure of Rohingya homes, farms, mosques and other property in seven village tracts in northern Rakhine State in 2017, and identifies Myanmar security forces units, corporations, local companies, and others involved in repurposing the land, which erased all traces of the Rohingya's long presence there.

In all the village tracts that were analysed, Rohingya homes and properties were destroyed by the Myanmar military after residents fled the 2017 violence. Border Guard Police (BGP) bases were then constructed on the razed land. For example, the Mechanism's investigations found that in Myo Thu Gyi village tract, where Rohingya families had lived for generations, more than 800 homes, shops, markets and mosques existed before 2017. By 2018, over 411 acres of land had been burned and flattened, and a large BGP base was built on the site.

WHY ARE THESE FINDINGS IMPORTANT?

While pursuing accountability for killings and sexual violence committed against the Rohingya during the 2017 clearance operations in northern Rakhine State is a priority, there must also be accountability for the deliberate targeting of Rohingya land and property aimed at ensuring they had nowhere to return. Reparations for land and property are a crucial component of justice for the Rohingya, and are essential to restoring rights, rebuilding lives and enabling a dignified return to Myanmar.

This report shows that the destruction of Rohingya property and land can be economically assessed, and it identifies the entities that profited from this destruction. Our hope is that this can open legal avenues and inform reparations efforts alongside existing and future legal cases.

WHAT METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES DID YOU FACE?

Rohingya victims face systemic discrimination, displacement and limited access to property records. The report draws extensively on first-hand accounts, geospatial imagery, video footage and official records to help address these gaps.

The deliberate destruction of villages and the subsequent construction of BGP bases resulted in the burning of structures, property records and other evidence. This makes any future onsite investigations much more difficult. For this reason, the Mechanism is collecting other forms of indispensable evidence – such as aerial imagery, crime scene photographs, environmental spatial evidence and open-source material.

HOW WERE TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS USED IN THIS INVESTIGATION?

Bespoke digital tools and workflows enabled the Mechanism to securely collect and manage vast amounts of evidence, analyze data in real time and collaborate across teams. This improved speed, accuracy and coordination, setting a new benchmark for complex and voluminous analytical work.

HOW WILL THIS REPORT BE USED?

While the full confidential report will be shared with judicial authorities, the Mechanism published the public summary to serve the public interest while maintaining the confidentiality needed to protect witnesses and preserve the integrity of evidence and ongoing investigations. Our hope is that this analysis can be used by others to ensure accountability and reparations for the most serious international crimes committed in Myanmar.