

### **Attempted sexual assault in Kanbalu Township stirs violence**

Nay Pyi Taw, 25 Aug—Stalls, houses and poultry farm were set fire on 24 August as the crowd had been informed that a woman in Kanbalu Township, Sagaing Region was sexually assaulted by a man. The authorities concerned are trying to rein in the situation in order to avoid the reoccurrence of violence and made arrangements to take actions against those who got involved in the incident.

The incident is that a woman of Zipintha Village, Htankon Village-tract, Kanbalu Township who was on her way home from the sales/purchase of hairs at about 6.30 pm on 24 August was physically harassed by Hsan Min Oo, son of U Hsan Win, of Htantaw Village who attempted to rape her. Hsan Min Oo, seeing a man coming to them, fled the scene but was later arrested. Hsan Min Oo was transferred to Kanbalu Myoma Police Station from Htankon Police Station for detention, and thence sent to Shwebo Prison in the late evening to avoid the occurrence of undesirable problems.

At 7.30 pm, about 150 villagers from Htankon and Zipintha Villages arrived at Htankon Police Station and demanded that Hsan Min Oo be handed over to them.

They then set fire to shops and some houses beside rail tracks. The chairman of the Township Management Committee, the Township Police Commander and officials arrived at the scene at about 8 pm and tried to control the situation. But the mob continued setting fire to one poultry farm, two shops, one rice brokerage and a house at about 9 pm.

At about 10.30 pm, as the mob set fire to tea shop and rice brokerage and betel shop in Ward 1, the Region Security and Border Affairs Minister and the District Police Commander rushed to the scene and contained the violence.

As the mob at about 1 am together with 1000 people from nearby villages arrived in Ward 3 and attempted to continue setting fire to houses, the Region Security and Border Affairs Minister and security members rushed there. When the Shwebo District Police Commander dispersed the mob he was catapulted, and at about 1.15 am a shot was fired to disperse the crowd.

The mob resorted to a variety of ways to deter fire engines from putting out the fire. As a result, a second warning shot was fired to enable the fire engines to put out the fire.

The Police Battalion members arrived in at Htangan Village at 3 am and helped put out the fire together with 70 firefighters from ten fire engines and the fire was put under control at about 3.30 am. Altogether 44 houses, nine stalls and four shops were destroyed in the incident along with one firefighter and one people got injured.

Soon after the incident, the Region Chief Minister dispatched the Region Development Affairs Minister to Kanbalu and the Region Agriculture and Livestock Breeding Minister to Ye U to control the situation. The Region Chief Minister together with the Region Finance Minister, the Region Chief Justice, the Region Law Officer, the Region Religious Affairs Head at about 11.50 pm arrived at Shwebo for necessary arrangements, and at 6.30 am proceeded to Htangan Village via Kanbalu.

The Chief Minister together with officials and local authorities formed sub-committees and met with local people and religious associations in order to deter the violence from happening again. He then made arrangements for opening of relief camps for fire victims.

Beginning this morning, the situation returned to normal and the Region Chief Minister and party planned to provide eight kinds of relief items for 50 households in Htangan Village and continued efforts are being made for relief and rehabilitation.

One offender and eleven people suspected to get involved in the incident were arrested and are being interrogated and action will be taken against the law breakers under the law.

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