

Death sentence in Myanmar sectarian killing

Two Muslim men found guilty of rape and murder of Buddhist woman whose death ignited sectarian attacks in Rakhine state.

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Rohingyas, viewed as illegal migrants, are denied citizenship and ethnic recognition in Myanmar [EPA] A court in Myanmar has sentenced two men to death for the rape and murder of a Buddhist woman whose killing last month helped set off communal violence in which more than 50 people died, state media has said.

The verdict was handed down on Monday in western Rakhine state's western Kyaukphyu district, according to the state-run *Myanma Ahlin* daily.

Three Muslim Rohingyas were detained after the 27-year-old Buddhist woman was killed May 28.

One of the three defendants in the case hung himself while in custody.

The woman's death was followed by the June 3 lynching deaths of 10 Rohingyas, who were dragged off a bus by a Buddhist mob.

The attacks helped set off almost a week of violence between ethnic Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingyas, who are denied citizenship and ethnic recognition in Myanmar and instead are viewed as illegal migrants from Bangladesh.

Thousands of homes were burned and 50 people were killed in the unrest, which has brought to the fore discrimination and hatred against the Rohingya and tested the stability of Myanmar's reform-minded government, which was elected after nearly half a century of army rule.

Some civil society leaders, including the prominent comedian Zarganar, have expressed concern that people are using newfound freedoms to incite racial hatred, particularly online in social media.

Government authorities have vowed to bring those responsible for the violence to justice, and on

Saturday, Border Affairs Minister Lieutenant General Thein Htay declared that "lawlessness is unacceptable".

No executions are known to have been carried out in Myanmar since at least 198