

# Ex-major blamed for killing of 20

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Rangoon (AP) — A former army major, who offered a cash bounty for the heads of students and Buddhist monks, was behind a recent incident which resulted in the killing of at least 20 people at a biscuit factory, the government newspaper the *Working People's Daily* said yesterday.

Ex-major Zau Htaung and 40 others fled after being attacked by an enraged mob, but 38 of his group were captured and entered the Buddhist monkhood on a temporary basis on Tuesday, the newspaper said.

Zau Htaung got residents near the biscuit factory in the Rangoon suburb of south Okkalapa to lure the local "vigilance committee" to the factory, according to the published confessions of those captured.

Zau Htaung allegedly promised 5,000 kyats (\$839) for the head of each student or monk in the committee, one of a number of organisations in town formed by anti-government demonstrators to maintain law and

order. The newspaper said most of the 38 had not been directly involved in the killings.

was acting on his own initiative or why he had organized the killings.

A number of Western diplomats and Burmese opponents to the Government believe authorities are purposely trying to investigate lootings, violence and other problems in order to justify a reassertion of power.

In recent weeks, authorities have neither interfered with continuing anti-government demonstrations nor, until yesterday, the growing lawlessness. The state radio announced that military and police would open fire on looters.

According to local residents at least 20 people, including eight committee members, were killed last Sunday and Monday when Zau Htaung's group began to loot the factory and were confronted by members of the vigilance committee.

The abbot of a nearby monastery took custody of the 38 persons captured and ordained them into the monkhood.

The newspaper said most of the 38 had not been directly involved in the killings.

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