

ROHINGYA GENOCIDE IN CHRONOLOGY

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Arakan has been inhabited by two major communities – the Rohingya who are predominantly Muslims and the Rakhine who are largely Buddhist. In the ancient time, Arakan was known by different names. Particularly the Rohingya called it Rohang while Rakhine named it Rakkahpura. The name Rohingya derives from the word Rohang, one of the old names of Arakan.

Arakan found itself at the crossroad of two worlds: South Asia and Southeast Asia, between Muslim Hindu-Asia and Buddhist Asia, and amidst Indo-Aryan and Mongoloid races. It had a diverse population of Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus and Christians living together peacefully. During its days as an independent kingdom until 1784, Arakan encompassed at times the Chittagong region in the southern part of today's Bangladesh. Arakan kingdom had significant Muslim influence from early 14th century and played the phenomenal role of kingmakers.

Since Burma's independence the Rohingya have been discriminated against. Particularly from 1962 military takeover, they have been persistently subjected to institutionalized persecution, crimes against humanity culminating in genocide. The UN has declared them as one of the most persecuted ethnic groups in the world.

1785: Last Arakan Kingdom was invaded and annexed to Burma by Burmese King Bodawpaya.

1824-26: Arakan was colonized by the British and annexed it to British India during First Anglo-Burma war.

1942-43: Communal conflict took place in Arakan between Rohingya Muslims and Rakhine Buddhists resulting in the massacre of about 100,000 Muslims and some few Buddhist Rakhine (about 2,000 Rakhine). Muslims fled to the north while Rakhine moved to the south, contributing to segregation-like situation.

1947: The Rohingya took part in the elections for the Constituent Assembly election held on 9 April 1947 by U Aung San's interim government. The Aung San's AFPFL Party won a landslide victory, taking 248 of 255 seats. On 19 July U Aung San and his cabinet members were assassinated.

1948: Burma gained her independence from Great Britain and U Nu became the first Prime Minister of the Union of Burma.

1951: Burma introduced National Registration Cards (NRCs) and they were first issued in Maungdaw township to the Rohingya people as citizens of the country.

1959: Burma first President Sao Shwe Thaik stated that the Muslims of Arakan certainly belonged to one of the indigenous races of Burma. 1952, 1956 & 1961: General elections were held in Burma and Rohingya exercised the right to vote and to be elected. They had elected 5 Rohingya Members of the Parliament.

1961: Mr. Sultan Mahmud, a Rohingya member of parliament, became Health Minister in U Nu's last cabinet.

1962: Ne Win staged military coup that led to increasing discrimination of ethnic minorities, and the Rohingya had been made target of institutionalized persecution.

1974: Ne Win ratified a new constitution glorifying his "Burmese Way to Socialism".

1975: Ne Win granted statehood of Arakan in the name of “Rakhine State” attributing it to the Buddhist Rakhine only.

1977-78: An armed operation under the code name ‘Naga Min’ was launched against Rohingyas in Rakhine State under the pretext of ‘Crackdown on illegal immigration’ resulting in an exodus of 300,000 Rohingya refugees into neighbouring Bangladesh. In 1978, with UN intervention, most of the refugees were repatriated to Arakan as Burmese Residents, under a bilateral agreement signed between the governments of Burma and Bangladesh but without the deliverance of the refugees.

1982: Ne Win promulgated a new ‘Citizenship Law of 1982’ that stripped the Rohingya of their ethnic status and citizenship rights while effectively making them stateless in their own homeland.

1988: Nationwide students led uprising against Ne Win’s authoritarian regime started. Thousands of students were gunned down; and the military seized power again.

1989: The Military regime introduced a new citizenship card called National Scrutiny Cards. All Rohingyas of 18 years old or over had applied for it. But the government never issued that cards to any Rohingya despite promise made to them.

1990: The Military government held multi-party democracy elections and Aung San Suu Kyi led National League for Democracy (NLD) won a landslide victory. As usual the Rohingyas exercised their right of franchise and voted for 5 Rohingya representatives to the new parliament. But the military dishonored the election results and never hand over power to the elected representatives.

1991-92: A military operation under the code name ‘PyiThaya’ was carried out against Rohingya in northern Rakhine State, using excessive force, rape, murder and arrest indiscriminately. As a result, some 250,000 Rohingya had to flee to Bangladesh.

1992: NaSaKa, a border task force consisting of police, military intelligence, and internal security or riot police, customs officials, the immigration and manpower department was established in Rakhine State under direct command of the military State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) with its headquarters at Maungdaw.

1993-95: Rohingya who fled to Bangladesh during operation PyiThaya had been repatriated under UNHCR watch. About 30,000 refugees are still remaining in Bangladesh refugee camps.

1993: NaSaKa imposed restrictions on the basic freedoms of Rohingya, including freedom of movement, education, health, religion, marriages and reproduction of Rohingya in Maungdaw district.

1994: Myanmar stopped issuing birth certificates to Rohingya newborns.

1997: The Rakhine State Immigration office had restricted Rohingyas travelling outside their home town.

2001: Twenty-eight mosques and Islamic schools were demolished in Maungdaw Township.

2002: Myanmar government issued Temporary Resident Cards (also known as White Cards) to the Rohingyas by confiscating their old National Registration Cards with a promise to issue them Pink Cards or National Scrutiny Cards.

2005: Regional authorities started strictly implementing Rohingya marriage ban and birth-rate control with hefty fine and jail term.

2008: Rohingyas were persuaded to vote in favour of widely discredited Myanmar constitutional referendum with false hopes and hollow promises.

2010: Rohingya participated in General Elections and elected 5 Rohingya representatives to the National parliament and Rakhine state parliament.

2012: Myanmar armed forces and Rakhine extremists carried out deadly violence on Rohingya. As a result, thousands of Rohingya were killed, thousands of their homes burnt down to ashes, and herded about 150,000 survivors into IDP camps, which are apartheid-like concentration camps outside of Sittwe city away from their homes.

2014 March: Rakhine nationalists led by Buddhist monks violently attacked INGO offices and staff who were helping live-saving assistance to Rohingya IDPs in Sittwe.

2014 April: The Rohingya were excluded from the UN sponsored nationwide census.

2014 October-November: Being in precarious situation the Rohingyas living in Sittwe IDP camps started fleeing by rickety boats towards Thailand and Malaysia.

2015 February: Myanmar parliament granted Temporary Resident Cards (White Cards) holders (mostly Rohingyas) the right to vote in planned constitutional amendment. Days later President Thein Sein reversed the decision invalidating white cards and thus banning voting rights.

2015 May: Plight of fleeing Rohingya boat people found in Andaman sea had been reported in the international press.

2015 June: UNHCR estimated that over 150,000 Rohingya had fled from Myanmar since January 2012, hundreds of them died in the Bay of Bengal, Strait of Malacca and the Andaman sea while many hundreds of them had ended up in the hands of human traffickers and greedy smugglers in Thailand and Malaysia.

2015 November: Myanmar held general elections and Rohingya were barred from it. Thus, for the first time in their ancestral homeland of Myanmar, the Rohingya lost their time-honoured right to vote and to be elected.

2015: Aung San Suu Kyi led NLD party won the general elections by a landslide.

2016: NLD formed new government and Aung San Suu Kyi became Foreign Minister. She also became State Councilor, a post created on 6 April 2016 to allow for a greater role for her within the government.

2016: Aung San Suu Kyi formed Rakhine Advisory Committee led by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to find a durable solution on Rakhine crisis, but the Myanmar military and Rakhine politicians fiercely opposed it in the parliament and on the street.

Brief account of the effects of genocidal attacks on Rohingya by the Myanmar security forces and extremist Rakhine gangs since 2016

	Maungdaw	Buthidaung	Rathedaung	Total
Houses burnt	56,512	703	9,051	72,594
Houses looted	52,652	14,370	8,062	75584
Rape/gang rape on women and girls	1,526	167	141	1,834
Killed	6,207	1,557	1,444	9,208
Extra-judicially killed	772	96	490	1,358
Arrest	1,361	264	532	2,157
Mass graves uncovered	63	11	14	88
People injured	766	178	16	960
Mosques burnt	696	128	82	906
Religious schools Burnt	735	135	81	951
Bazars burnt	1,679	166	332	2,177
Bazars looted	1,795	556	333	2,684
Monetary losses in USD	41,016,022	4,802,475	409,818	46,228,315

2016 October 9: Under the pretext of Bengali extremist militancy, the Myanmar military (Air Force, Navy and Army) with the collaboration of the organized Rakhine armed gangs attacked on Rohingya population. Many hundreds of innocent civilians were killed, more than 1000 arrested, a number of villages were burned down, and forced more than 100,000 Rohingya to flee to Bangladesh.

2017 March: The interim report of the Kofi Annan Commission was presented at a press conference. Being dissatisfied with the report, the military and local Rakhine extremists were preparing for another all-out attack on Rohingya.

2017 August 24: the final report of the Kofi Annan Commission with 88 recommendations was submitted to the President and State Councilor was generally welcomed by the Rohingya people, while voicing reservations about the recommendation for national verification as a pathway to citizenship.

2017 August 25: Myanmar armed forces and Rakhine extremists launched pre-planned early morning attacks on the Rohingya villages under the pretext that so-called Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) had attacked 30 government security posts. As a result, 10566 Rohingya were killed, 960 Rohingya civilians injured, 1,834 Rohingya women raped, 350 villages burned down and 3,500 Rohingya were arbitrarily sentenced to long-term imprisonment. Besides, more than 700,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh.

2017 September 19: In a diplomatic briefing in Yangon, Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi stated that there was no issue of human rights violations in Myanmar and that she could not understand why Rohingyas were fleeing.

2017 September: UN Human Rights Council formed an Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar with three distinguished members headed by former attorney general of Indonesia Mr. Marzuki Darusman.

2018 September: The UN mandated Independent Fact-Finding Mission submitted its final report to the UN Human Rights Council detailing in 144 pages, citing clear evidence of Genocidal intent on Rohingya by Myanmar armed forces.

2018 December: The UN General Assembly Third Committee formed again 60 members International Independent Investigation Mechanism (IIIM) to collect and preserve the documents for further prosecution.

2017-2018: During the year UN Security Council had several deliberations on Rohingya issue facing China's objection every time.

Refugees in Bangladesh

UNHCR Report (31 December 2018)

Total Refugees	906,572
Families	209,078
Registered Refugees	4,172 (4%)
Families	6,321
Counted Refugees	872,400 (96%)
Families	202,757
Man	48%
Woman	52%
Children	55%
Adult	42%
Elderly	3%
Single Mother	16%

There are other substantial number of Rohingya refugees who came earlier from time to time)

Family Size

1 to 3 persons	37%
4 to 5 persons	39%
6 to 8 persons	21%
Above 8	3%

Place of Origin

Maungdaw	67%
Buthidaung	26%
Rathedaung	5%
Others	2%

Period of Arrival

Before 9 October 2016	73,915	8%
9 October 2016 to 24 August 2017	94,461	11%
25 August 2017 to 31 December 2018	721,944	80%
January to December 2018	16,252	1%

An estimate of Rohingya diasporas living in other countries

Saud Arabia	500,000 (approx.)
Pakistan	350,000
Malaysia	150,000
Thailand	20,000
Indonesia	(20000-30000)
India	30,000
Australia	(15,000-20000)
UAE	30,000
Canada	6,000
Europe	5,000
Norway	300
New Zealand	500
Japan	300

Burma/Myanmar is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. Its civilian government lasted from independence in 1948 until the military coup of March 2, 1962 staged by late Gen. Ne Win with the claim of saving the country from disintegration through minority secession, incompetent and corrupt civilian rule; strengthen the socialist base of the economy free from the foreign dominance. But during the long military rule none of this objective could be achieved in any credible sense. Instead ethnic tensions increased and rebellions mushroomed, socialism as administered in Burma was eventually an admitted failure. There was a third supportive 'coup' in September 18, 1988 to keep the military in power.

The Burmese military has established large armies. They still consider themselves custodians of national unity, denying any other institution or group, promoting instability and unstable political systems for the growth of militarism and perpetuation of power. They have suppressed the people's voice, continued civil war, produced IDPs, and caused forced migration and humanitarian disaster. The Rohingya of North Arakan (Rakhine State) are the worst victims of human rights violations facing mass atrocity crimes, including genocide, ethnic cleansing and ethnocide for their ethnicity and religion, and also for their skin and South-Asian appearance. United Nations has described them as "the world's most persecuted minority." "Rohingya are listed as one of the ten worlds' populations in most danger of extinction."

Forced migration is where people are forced to move from where they live due to circumstances out of their control. The followings are some of the significant effects of militarism or the causes of Rohingya migration into Bangladesh and other countries:

1. Existence denied:

The Rohingya are often described as "illegal immigrants from Bangladesh" in utter disregard of their long glorious history in Arakan. The military has declared them non-nationals rendering them stateless in their own homeland through promulgation of oppressive Burma Citizenship Law of 1982.

2. Xenophobia against Rohingya:

Under the aegis of the still powerful military the popular slogan in the country is "to be Burmese is to be Buddhist". Islam is insulted comparing it with animal doctrine. Rohingya are called influx viruses, ugly ogres and dogs by Rakhine academics, in diplomatic correspondence and by Buddhist monks and extremists.

3. Grave human rights violations

From 1962 military rule, the Rohingya have been subjected institutionalized persecution, draconian restrictions on their basic freedom – freedom of worship, movement, marriage, education, health care – summary execution and mass murder, rape, destruction of houses and villages, ghettoization, confiscation and looting of moveable and immovable properties, food insecurity, denial and blockade of humanitarian aids, torture, forced labour, forced relocation and forced eviction, involuntary disappearance, arbitrary detention, extortion and relentless taxation etc.

4. Demographic changes:

Buddhist settler villages have been established throughout North Arakan by confiscating Rohingyas land. Rohingya are depopulated to be populated by Buddhist communities under state programs. Thus, the Rohingya have become increasingly landless, jobless and homeless.

5. Mass atrocity crimes against Rohingya:

Unprecedented organized deadly violence occurred and reoccurred in Arakan and other parts of Burma in June-October 2012 and 2016, where the government had been implicit. An estimated 5000 Rohingya Muslims were killed, drowned and missing. Blaming the Rohingya, “then President Thein Sein stated on 12 July 2012 meeting with then UNHCR Head Mr. Gutterus (now Secretary General of the United Nations) that the only solution to the violence would be to send the Rohingya to other countries or refugee camps” thus officially sponsoring “Rohingya ethnic cleansing”. The government is manifestly practicing apartheid policy putting more than 150,000 Rohingyas in apartheid-like concentration camps for nearly a decade. While the experts in international law have described it crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and genocide Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has refused that no human rights violations against Rohingya have been happened and rejected to accept an independent UN commission of inquiry into human rights violations.

6. Highly visible refugee movements:

There were two Rohingya mass exoduses into Bangladesh one in 1978 and another in 1991-92 each with more than 250,000 refugees. Due to international pressures most refugees were repatriated without their deliverance. There has been no durable solution and the influx of Rohingyas into Bangladesh and other countries is continuing. From October 2016, under the new civilian government of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, more than 10000 Rohingyas were killed and burned down, most of them women and children. About one million took refuge in neighbouring Bangladesh. Myanmar military burned down several Rohingya villages under the pretext of area clearance to make thousands of Rohingya internally displaced.

7. Massive irregular migrations and boat people

Particularly due to military’s policies of exclusion, discrimination and extermination against them, more than 2 million Rohingya out of their population of more than 3 million have either been expelled or have had to flee persecution to Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Thailand, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Australia, Japan, Europe, Canada and United States. Rejected in Burma and unwanted in Bangladesh the Rohingyas in Arakan and Bangladesh have become more desperate to take dangerous voyages by boat across the sea to Malaysia and Southeast Asian countries.

Conclusion

The Rohingyas have become stateless within Burma and refugees or migrants beyond its border. Thus, it becomes a regional problem with international dimension. It is important that the Rohingya problem must be resolved first and foremost within Burma. While still powerful military is an obstacle for solution, Aung San Suu Kyi’s NLD government must change its policy on Rohingyas, and it must respect and promote the human rights of Rohingya and treat them justly. For longer term solution, the Burmese government must repeal or amend the 1982 Citizenship Law to conform it to international standards. The political and democratic process in Burma must be all-inclusive and Rohingya should be a part of it. Last but not the least, their rights and freedom must be ensured on par with other ethnic nationalities of the country without delay.

Due to the militarism in Myanmar for almost seven decades, tens of thousands of other ethnic minority people such as Kachin, Chin, Mon, Karen, Shan, etc., became refugees in the neighbouring countries and internally displaced in Myanmar. The country has become one of the poorest in Asia.

Source: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1z0qEY9KegIFgkFa1g8wsMOS14TYOf4Km>