

A look at the crisis



ROHINGYA
GENOCIDE REMEMBRANCE DAY

This month marks the third anniversary of the fleeing of more than 730,000 Rohingyas from Myanmar's Rakhine State to Bangladesh after a military-led crackdown in response to an attack by militants on Myanmar security posts.

Here is a timeline of events in the crisis:

Aug 25, 2017

Insurgents of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) attack 30 police posts and an army base in the north of Rakhine State.

Aug 26, 2017

As fighting spreads between the army and ARSA, thousands of Rohingyas flee to Bangladesh.

Sept 2, 2017

More than 2,600 houses are razed in Rohingya-majority areas in the week following the Aug 25 attack, the government says.

Sept 11, 2017

The UN human rights high commissioner calls the military operation "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing".

Sept 19, 2017

Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi vows to punish the perpetrators of rights violations but does not address UN accusations of ethnic cleansing.

Oct 12, 2017

Rohingya Muslims are not natives of Myanmar, says the army commander-in-chief, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, during a meeting with US ambassador Scot Marciel.

Nov 2, 2017

Suu Kyi urges people "not to quarrel" on her first visit to Rakhine since the crackdown.

Nov 27 to Dec 2, 2017

Pope Francis visits Myanmar and Bangladesh, avoiding the word "Rohingya", which is rejected by Myanmar, until meeting refugees in Bangladesh.

Dec 21, 2017

The United States imposes sanctions on 13 "serious human rights abusers and corrupt actors" including the general who oversaw the crackdown against the Rohingya.

Jan 10, 2018

The military says its soldiers murdered 10 captured Muslims in Inn Din village in Rakhine during insurgent attacks.

Feb 23, 2018

Myanmar has bulldozed at least 55 Rohingya villages that were emptied during the violence, Human Rights Watch says.

March 12, 2018

Myanmar's military is building bases where Rohingya homes and mosques once stood, Amnesty International says.

April 11, 2018

Seven Myanmar soldiers are sentenced to 10 years of hard labour for the Inn Din massacre.

Sept 13, 2018

Suu Kyi says in hindsight her government could have handled the situation in Rakhine better.

Nov 15, 2018

A Rohingya refugee repatriation effort stalls amid protests in camps.

Jan 4, 2019

Rakhine nationalist Arakan Army insurgents kill 13 policemen as Myanmar marks Independence Day, setting off more conflict.

March 18, 2019

Myanmar's army says it has set up a military court to investigate its conduct during the 2017 crackdown.

May 27, 2019

A military spokesman says Myanmar has granted early release to seven soldiers jailed for the Inn Din killings.

June 22, 2019

Authorities order telecoms companies to shut internet services in the conflict-torn west, an operator says, where government troops are fighting Arakan Army rebels.

Aug 20, 2019

The UN refugee agency and Bangladesh authorities launch a new repatriation bid, but it fails after no refugees agree to return.

Nov 11, 2019

Gambia files a genocide case against Myanmar at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Nov 14, 2019

The International Criminal Court approves a prosecution request to investigate crimes against humanity against the Rohingya in a separate case.

Nov 26, 2019

Myanmar begins a military investigation into killings of Rohingya at Gu Dar Pyin village during the 2017 crackdown. The army later announces soldiers have been punished.

Dec 11, 2019

Suu Kyi appears at the ICJ in The Hague and rejects accusations of genocide against the Rohingya as "incomplete and misleading".

Jan 20, 2020

Government-appointed panel investigating allegations of abuse say they had found no evidence of genocide but war crimes were possible.

Jan 23, 2020

The ICJ orders Myanmar to take urgent measures to protect the Rohingya remaining inside Myanmar.

Jan 25, 2020

Two Rohingya women are killed and seven people wounded when shells hit a village. The army rejects accusations it was responsible from a lawmaker, a villager and Arakan Army rebels.

Feb 21, 2020

Myanmar's army says it will court-martial soldiers over abuses against Rohingya in two more villages during the 2017 crackdown.

April 16, 2020

Bangladesh rescues 396 Rohingya from a boat adrift for weeks after failing to land in Malaysia. At least 32 die on board. Several other boats adrift for months before landing in Indonesia and Malaysia.

April 29, 2020

The UN envoy to Myanmar says it is committing war crimes in Rakhine after civilians are hit with air and artillery strikes in the conflict against insurgents. Myanmar says the allegations are "biased".

May 25, 2020

Myanmar files a report on its adherence to measures to protect the Rohingya to the ICJ. Details are not published.

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The Daily Star
TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2020

Home Editorial > 12:00 AM, August 25, 2020 / LAST MODIFIED:
12:08 PM, August 25, 2020

EDITORIAL



Photo: AFP : Rohingya repatriation remains a far cry

Has the world lost interest in the victims of genocide?

Over the last three years, Bangladesh has had to bear the greatest brunt of the worst humanitarian crisis in recent times, resulting from the execution of Myanmar military junta's long-term plans

It is three years today since the beginning of the mass exodus of Rohingya refugees into Bangladesh from their homeland in the state of Rakhine in Myanmar, in order to flee from what has been called the worst genocide of this century. Since August 25, 2017, almost 750,000 Rohingya refugees have taken shelter in Bangladesh to escape persecution in their own country, bringing the refugee population in Cox's Bazar to around 1.1 million. Over the last three years, Bangladesh has had to bear the greatest brunt of the worst humanitarian crisis in recent times, resulting from the execution of Myanmar military junta's long term plans of denuding the area of the Rohingya population.

Myanmar's pogrom of an ethnic minority has been acknowledged as an act of genocide and ethnic cleansing by the UN and most of the countries of the world. However, nothing has been done to rein in the Myanmar military. All efforts to see the safe return of the refugees to their own country have met with utter failure, thanks to Myanmar's subterfuge. Every time when it appeared that some progress in this regard was being made, Myanmar scuttled the prospect by creating more unrest in Rakhine. Regrettably, the role of China and Russia has contributed to a large extent to Myanmar's intransigence, encouraging its military to ride roughshod over international opinion. Every single resolution at the Security Council to take strict action against Myanmar has failed in the face of consistent opposition by these two countries. The Rohingyas have become victims of geopolitics mixed with blatant economic consideration.

As of today, more than a hundred thousand Rohingyas are stuck inside ghettos in Myanmar, living in the most miserable conditions. And the world watches silently while the Myanmar military continues targeting the Rohingya on the flimsy excuse that they are conducting anti-insurgency operations.

And while the Rohingyas in Myanmar are under threat of extinction, those on our side of the border are living an uncertain, indefinite half-life, with no hope of a change in their circumstances anytime soon. Meanwhile the host community has become increasingly frustrated, as the costs of living in the area has soared and neither the economy nor the land can bear the brunt of the pressure. It is thus discouraging to see the matter virtually on the backburner and no longer on the international agenda. While there has been no dearth of assurances from our friends, far and near, of help in the repatriation process, nothing tangible has been done. The international community can ill afford to remain silent any longer.

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