



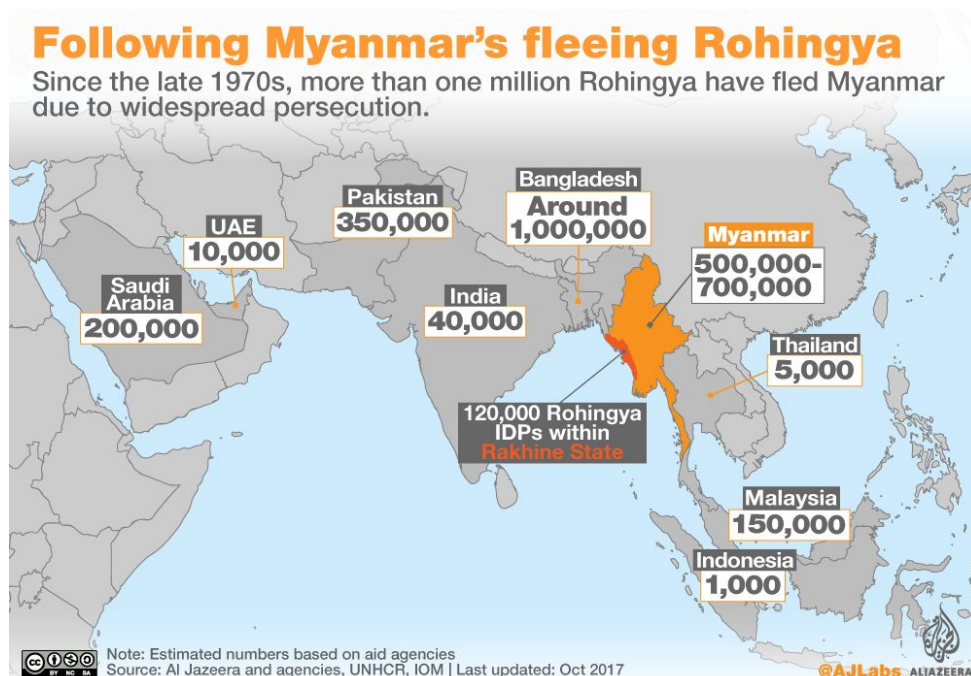
Committee: GA2 (Human Rights Committee)

Issue: Addressing human rights violations in Myanmar

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Introduction to the Issue

The problem of violations of human rights in Myanmar is mostly aimed towards the Rohingya people living in the Rakhine State of Myanmar. They are on the minority side of the religion quantile in Myanmar. Myanmar is a largely Buddhist country. The Rohingya Muslims were oppressed for ages and they were abused by others for many years. In 2016, a new organization emerged and began killing police officers. The message was meant to tell the government and the abusers to stop what they were doing and stop killing, torturing and using power over their community. If not, they would fight back for their rights. Later on, security forces began to engage in combat with the insurgent groups of Rohingya. The brutal fight in between the two sides resulting in death every day and the hatred against the Rohingya escalated. The government refuses to give citizenships to the Rohingya people. A high amount of the Rohingya people fled to find refuge in other countries and this led to another huge refugee crisis. The violations are deemed to be an indicator of ethnic cleansing.





Detailed Analysis of the Issue

Myanmar, also known as Myanmar, is a crossroad country between China and India. It is also a neighboring nation to countries Thailand, Bangladesh and Laos. Myanmar was conquered by Britain in 1824 and the British rule lasted 62 years. In January 1886 Myanmar was transformed into a British colony. From 1919 to 1937, Myanmar was ruled by Britain under the Indian Empire and in 1937 it separated itself from India and became a self-governed country. It remained in the British Commonwealth until 1948, and in 1948 Myanmar declared its independence from the British Commonwealth. After the first three leaders, Myanmar was under the control of a dictator and a military commander. It went through an economical downfall until the 8888 Uprising broke out. After the strive of the revolution, military forces of Myanmar reacquired power with a coup. Thousands of people were killed, tortured and jailed. The military was once again in control.



(Military coup in 19.09.1988)

After the coup, on September 27, Aung San Suu Kyi found The National League for Democracy. When the legislative 1990 elections took place, The National League for Democracy and its leader Aung San Suu Kyi won. Instead of handing over the authority, the government imprisoned the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize recipient Aung San Suu Kyi. She remained in prison until 2010 when the first-ever referendum to take place after the 1990's elections. The national legislature gathered in January 2011 and selected former Prime Minister Thein Sein as the president. His regime lasted until the legislative elections in November 2015. NLD (The National League for Democracy) won the elections with an evident majority. NLD elected Htin Kyaw as the president who was a companion of Aung San Suu Kyi and a long-time supporter of NLD.



(Location of the Rakhine State)



Rohingya People

Rakhine State is a state of Myanmar located on the western coast of Myanmar and below Bangladesh. Rohingya Muslims who mostly live in the Rakhine State live in severe conditions and many of the people face persecution. A group of people called the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) is fighting on behalf of the Muslim Rohingya population who have been isolated from society and disenfranchised from their basic rights. The government denies to see them as citizens of Myanmar and instead they are considered as illegal immigrants coming from Bangladesh. The first move of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army transpired when they attacked 3 security outposts killing 9 police officers. Despite years of torment and exclusion the Rohingya avoided using force and violence but they have stated that if the persecution against the Rohingya did not stop they have to defend themselves. On August 25, 2017, the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army attacked more than 30 police outposts and killed a total amount of 12 police officers. They used light weaponry, mostly knives, and the strike was to send a message to the public and the government. After the attack, the security forces intensified their enforcement and began using brutal force. The government told the public that they were fighting off the insurgents and attackers but the survivors and the people who fled from the area said that the security forces of Myanmar and the Buddhists living in the Rakhine State are following a violent campaign against the whole Rohingya community. Their villages have been burnt down and cruel acts against men, women and children increased. The violence and the conflict against the insurgent groups of ARSA are coming from the security forces of Myanmar and local Buddhist mobs and vigilantes. The government of Myanmar considers ARSA as a terrorist organization. They believe the leaders of the ARSA have trained abroad. A report by the ICG (International Crisis Group) carried in 2016 validated the government's point and stated that the leaders were Rohingya people living in Saudi Arabia. The head of the ARSA was born in Pakistan and now lives in Saudi Arabia. Anagha Neelakantan, the Asia Programme Director at the International Crisis Group, told Al Jazeera that there was no clear ideology underpinning the group's actions. "From what we understand the group is fighting to protect the Rohingya and not anything else," Anagha Neelakantan said.



Refugee Problem

The major conflict in the Rakhine State had major consequences. As a result of the conflict, Rohingya people fled from Myanmar and found shelter in countries that are nearby. Due to its proximity Rohingya people running away to Bangladesh. More than 700,000 people found shelter in Bangladesh. This refugee outflow followed a smaller scale displacement of Rohingya to Bangladesh after similar military and ARSA attacks. The UN has called for Myanmar to allow access to a Fact-Finding Mission to investigate reports of human rights violations and abuses and to work with Bangladesh to facilitate repatriation of Rohingya refugees. Myanmar rejected charges of ethnic cleansing and has chosen not to work with the UN Fact-Finding Mission. The Fact-Finding Mission was requested so the human right violations against the Rohingya people could reach to an end. The rejection from Myanmar raised more concerns on the topic and now the humanitarian crisis caused by escalating violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State is causing suffering on a catastrophic scale.



(Refugee crossing through the Naf River
- Bernat Armangue—AP/Shutterstock)

The “Ethnic Cleansing” of Rohingya People

The UN defines ethnic cleansing as “a purposeful policy designed by one ethnic or religious group to remove by violent and terror-inspiring means the civilian population of another ethnic or religious group from certain geographic areas” and the violations against the Rohingya people makes Myanmar a perfect example. What makes Myanmar a great example is that the military has been launching attacks on the Rohingya without considering their intent or whether or not they are a member of an insurgent group. The UN requested an investigation for the problem of human rights violations in Myanmar against the Rohingyas.



The Freedom of Press

After the election of Aung San Suu Kyi the public was expecting for the pressure on the press to ease but it did not. Press members are getting imprisoned by the charges of defamation or insulting the government. Criticizing the government and its acts are not tolerated by the government of Myanmar. Besides jailing the news reporters on government stories, the Myanmar government doesn't allow the press to investigate the Rakhine State. The reporters who seek information and understanding of what is going on in the Rakhine State end up in jail.

Involved Countries & Organizations

Myanmar: Formerly named Burma, Myanmar is a country which was led by military leaders. Now a new issue has commenced. The Rohingya Muslims living in the Rakhine State of Myanmar are being tortured, murdered, tyrannized and oppressed. The war between ARSA and the military has led to many deaths. The actions against the Rohingya Muslims indicates that the situation is now turning into the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya. The government of Myanmar denies claims of genocide and refuses the requests of a Fact-Finding Mission from the UN.

Bangladesh: Due to the violence, cruelty and mistreatment against Rohingya Muslims, Rohingya Muslims flee to Myanmar seeking for shelter. Bangladesh is the nearest country to where the Rohingya Muslims live. Therefore, since the beginning, approximately 710 thousand of Rohingya Muslims found refuge in Bangladesh. On March 1st, Bangladesh has



stated to the UN Security Council that they will no longer accept Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar. The Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh also accused Myanmar of empty promises due to previous negotiations and deals that have not been effective in easing Bangladesh's responsibility.



Thailand: Another country that Rohingya people choose to flee is Thailand. Since 1800s, Thailand has had many refugee camp sites along their Western border to shelter people who fled Myanmar due to the governments brutal counter-insurgency operations against ethnic armed groups.

Thailand is a centre of human trafficking networks in the area. Unfortunately, human trafficking networks have been transporting Rohingya refugees to countries such as Malaysia. Due to some circumstances, refugees were abandoned on refugee boats without any kind of water and food supply, or fuel. The Thai government has taken measures on smuggling rings.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): UNHCR has set up camp sites in cooperation with the government of Bangladesh in certain areas, and also constructed roads to ease the access to these sites and built wells to provide safer water and latrines that have improved sanitation facilities. During the beginning of the crisis, they provided more than 1,500 metric tons of emergency life-saving aid to Bangladesh by airlifting.

List of Important Events

1824	The First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-1826) was the first war between the British and Burmese empires. This conflict ended with the defeat of the British which gave total control to Britain of most regions of Burma. Burma was under British rule for 62 years until their transformation to a British colony in 1886.
4 January 1948	Burma declared their independence from Great Britain, named the Union of Burma.



2 March 1962	The 1962 Burmese coup d'état: The military took over the government, determining the political dominance of the military for 26 years.
08 August 1988	8888 Uprising took place in Myanmar against the dictatorship of Ne Win and demanded democracy.
19 September 1988	After the 8888 Uprising, military forces regained power and took control of the Burmese government using violence over the protesters.
9 October 2016	ARSA's first attack to 3 different outposts killing 9 security officers. The day ARSA gained recognition.
25 August 2017	ARSA launched its turning point attack. It attacked more than 30 outposts killing several security officers. After the attack the military followed a more cruel path against the Rohingya.
12 September 2018	The day report of the independent international fact-finding mission on Myanmar was filed.
1 March 2019	Bangladesh stated that they will no longer allow Rohingya people from Myanmar to seek asylum in Bangladesh.

Past Resolutions and Important Documents

[Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), Paris, 10 December 1948

[UN General Assembly Third Committee Resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar](#), 31 October 2018 - [Voting Sheet](#)

[Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar](#), 8 September 2017

[Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council](#) on 24 March 2017 Thirty-fourth session, Agenda Item



[Situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar](#), 29 June 2016

[Situation of human rights in Myanmar, Report of the Secretary-General](#), 5 August 2011

[International Crisis Group Report Number 283: Myanmar: A New Muslim Insurgency in Rakhine State](#), 15 December 2016

Past Attempts to Solve the Issue

The United Nations (UN) have requested a Fact-Finding Mission on the problem of human rights violations of Rohingya people. The UN asked for the mission in order to address the violations and the crimes committed by the responsables of killings of Rohingya people. The term “ethnic cleansing” was used in the UN and Zeid Ra’ad al-Hussein, who served as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights from 2014 to 2018, told the council that Myanmar was a textbook example of ethnic cleansing.

ARSA tried to send a message in order for the persecution against the Rohingya people to stop. The actions taken by ARSA led to more brute force. The attacks against the security forces gained more attention from the local Buddhist mobsters and opposers. The message was for other forces to leave Rohingya people alone and grant them with the basic humanitarian rights they deserve. Even though ARSA attacks were a show of defense the security forces intensified their actions towards them and all of the Rohingya community.

Possible Solutions

As it seems the only solution for the violations to come to an end is for Myanmar to allow the UN to execute its Fact-Finding Mission. The international community or the UN Agencies cannot legally accuse Myanmar if the Fact-Finding Mission is not done. For the conflict between ARSA and the opposing forces to end, Myanmar has to accept the mission or end the fight itself. Howeve



Useful Documents and Links

[Joint Response Plan for Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis](#)

[Myanmar Country Profile](#)

[OHCHR Report of the independent international fact-finding mission on Myanmar](#)

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