

AN INSIGHT INTO ROHINGYA THE UNWANTED PEOPLE

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Abstract

Rohingya conflict, a term widely in use since 1950s, is a multidimensional crisis generally interpreted as a religious clash between the Buddhists and Muslims of Myanmar's western Rakhine state. The world, and especially the Muslim nation, is incensed at what is portrayed as genocide against Muslims in Myanmar. Nevertheless, the ground realities leading to this identity-centric hybrid war are a lot more complex. The issue has many aspects, including far deeper internal factors. Myanmar has undergone significant changes since the new state and region structures were created under the 2008 Constitution. The country is still going through further reforms to align its new political structures with broader governance, peace and decentralization processes. Rohingya crisis is one such national reform that Myanmar government sees critically to the future endeavours. This paper gives an insight into the real status of Rohingya crisis.

Keywords: Rohingya, Crisis, Constitution, Reforms, Ethno-Religious.

Introduction

Burma renamed as Myanmar, in 1989, by military Junta, is the largest country in mainland Southeast Asia. Situated at the cross-roads between India and China, Myanmar was once a province of India, divided into Lower Burma and Upper Burma, each with further divisions and districts.¹ The then province detached from India as a separate crown colony in 1937 (April, 1st). However, during WWII it went under Japan occupation (1942-1945) and it was then that the Rohingya and Burmese Muslims were recruited to force back the Japanese invasion.² The country eventually came under British colonial rule.

Myanmar gained independence in 1948 (January, 4th) as a democratic nation. Since the day, there had been a constant unrest between the country's ethnic minorities and the central authority, which kept the region into a state of emergency. The country was divided into 7 divisions to bring stability, which eventually led to the implementation of martial law in 1962 that lasted till 2010.

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Under the constitution of 2008, the divisions were converted into seven regions and semi-autonomous states, each allocated to a particular ethnic group.³ Constitutionally equivalent, regions are the areas largely inhabited by the Burmans (or Bamar) who form about 2/3 of the total population. Burman is the major ethnic group of Myanmar, who have the control over the military and the government. States, on other hand, include the areas inhabited by ethnic minorities, that make the remaining 1/3 of the total population located along resource-rich border areas and hills of Myanmar.

Despite the changes and amendments in administrative divisions over time, Myanmar has suffered from the decades of mismanagement, which has led to political isolation and economic sanctions in the country. Myanmar is ranked as one of the poorest and least developed country by the UN.⁴ GDP growth rate has slowed down to 6.4% in 2016 compared to 7.3% in the 2015. Inflation eased, but the current account deficit has worsened.⁵ Ministry of Commerce data shows Myanmar's trade deficit in 2016-17 "at around US \$ 5.5 billion, with exports lagging behind imports at US \$ 11.6 billion and US \$ 17.2 billion, respectively".⁶ "Poorly enforced employment standards, rampant child labor, land-grabbing concerns, and an economy dominated by cronies of the former military regime and companies under the control of the Ministry of Defence" are few further barriers to development and foreign investment in the country, says Wong Kyin Pyu in his interview with The Myanmar Times.⁷ Adding to it, there is Myanmar's narcotic trade that makes a significant place on the list of major concerns, with serious implications for the economy and public health.⁸ This together deepens the tension in people that has often erupted into communal conflicts.

In the predicament, Myanmar has become the second largest and fastest growing aid recipient (after Philippines) in Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, with her low population densities in the region (about 52 million), a prime strategic location at the crossroads of Asia, abundant natural resources, fertile land with significant agricultural potential,⁹ and a long coastline, Myanmar has favourable circumstances to lure foreign investors with her wide-ranging investment opportunities.¹⁰ If availed, the country has the potential to re-establish her economy in the region. Although Myanmar is situated at a strategic location with effective regulatory and adequate infrastructure,¹¹ Rohingya crisis remains a crucial challenge to her success. Hence, Myanmar is going through reforms to align its new policies with broader governance, peace and decentralization processes. If managed well, the estimation of Asian Development Bank says "it could quadruple the size of its economy, to more than \$200 billion in 2030".¹² Rohingya crisis is one such national reform that Myanmar government sees critical to the future of Myanmar. Let us have a deeper look into Rakhine State and its inhabitants, Rohingya.

Rakhine State

The Rakhine state (formerly Arakan) is situated in the West coastal region, surrounded by the mountain range in her east, and in the Bay of Bengal in the southwest. The state shares her border with Bangladesh from the northwest. It has 5 districts and 17 townships,¹³ with similar administrative structures in townships.

However, the main troublesome areas are chiefly in northern Rakhine townships namely Maungdaw, Buthidaung, and Rathedaung- which have more restrictive administrative procedures.¹⁴

Despite being rich in natural resources, “Rakhine State is Myanmar’s least developed state with the poverty rate of 78% against the national average of 37.5%”, as estimated by the World Bank.¹⁵ According to the last data released in 2014 by the Department of Population, the estimated population of Myanmar was 3,188,963,¹⁶ characterized by widespread poverty, absence of an infrastructure including lack of education and employment opportunities, and its impact on income generation. One in three women are victim of domestic violence, while, one in five women are susceptible victims of rape or attempted rape over the course of lifetime.¹⁷ Besides, the weakest infrastructure, Rakhine State is vulnerable to natural disasters.¹⁸ Additionally, it faces prolonged internal displacement mainly because of the communal violence there, which is a huge barrier to investment too.

Communal Violence

Many diverse ethnic groups live in Rakhine State, with Buddhist being recognized as the most dominant ethnic group. After Buddhist, Rohingyas form the second largest ethnic community of Rakhine State. Rohingya people, historically also termed as Arakanese Indians,¹⁹ are Muslims in majority, while the minority include Animist and Hindu as well.²⁰ There were an estimated 1.1 to 1.3 million (85–90% of total population) Rohingya who lived in Myanmar before the 2016-17 crisis,²¹ chiefly in the northern Rakhine townships; a troublesome areas.²² However, under citizenship law of 1982, the Rohingyas are denied country’s citizenship,²³ and under 1985 law they are not recognised as one of the country’s 135 ethnic groups (national races).²⁴ The issue is not limited to the discrimination but worst, government of Myanmar even refuses to acknowledge their existence by name.²⁵ In 2014 census they were forced to identify themselves as “Bangali”.²⁶ Despite the clear traces of Rohingya history to the 8th century,²⁷ Myanmar Buddhists claim the inherited legacy of the long-standing Kingdom of Mrauk U, and view Rohingyas as colonial settlers. According to the UN special investigator on Myanmar Yanghee Lee, Rohingya identity crisis as a deliberate action: “the country wants to expel its entire Rohingya population”.²⁸

This denial of identity actually means the denial of basic rights; from education to civil service jobs Rohingyas are deprived of their basic civil rights.²⁹ The unemployment rate of the state is 10.4% excluding the Muslim population, which according to the IOM Report is more than three times the national average.³⁰ Unemployment crisis has forced IDPs and other vulnerable people to migrate to the neighbouring states and regions for work as day labourers, or to flee to neighbouring countries. Seasonal migration to other villages or towns is also common.³¹ Although it is not just Rohingya Muslims, Rakhine people in general is afflicted by the low socioeconomic circumstances which force them to struggle for very basic services. However, Rohingyas are at its verge.³² Subsequent Myanmar governments have exercised discriminatory practices against the Rohingya. This culture of poor

infrastructure, widespread poverty, and a lack of employment opportunities are worth noticing factors that intensify the tension between Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims of Rakhine State, leading to conflicts over decades.

The conflicts hit its first peak in 2012 that forced thousands of Muslim families to either seek asylum in the refugee camps on Myanmar's territory, or flee to Bangladesh.³³ The state went under a state of emergency back then for four years. Scores of people were reported to have been killed and tens of thousands displaced, mostly Rohingya.³⁴ Yet another series of riots ebbed in 2016 on military response of the country's authorities in Rakhine resulting into between 2,000 and 3,000 deaths, Denmark-based European Rohingya Council (ERC) reported.³⁵

Since late August, "nearly 40 percent of Rohingya villages had been targeted by the army in so-called *clearance operations*, with 176 out of 471 villages emptied of people, and an additional 34 villages partially abandoned," government spokesperson Zaw Htay stated.³⁶ According to International Organization for Migration (IOM) report, about 515,000 Rohingyas have fled to Bangladesh, and UNHCR estimated them over 900,000 in total who have fled en mass to neighbouring countries.³⁷

The majority of migrants from Rakhine State travel rather illegally. In 2007, Rakhine had a low rate of out-migration (31 per 1,000) and the lowest gross migration rate (36 per 1,000), mostly to other countries such as Thailand, Malaysia and China. Following the Cyclone Giri³⁸ in 2010 and communal violence of 2012, this mass departure of Rakhine people accelerated which increased their vulnerability to human trafficking and exploitation as well.³⁹ Due to the lack of legal channels for migration and unavailability of authorised documentation, many choose to travel through Bay of Bengal with assistant of migrant smugglers. Consequently, human trafficking has become an acute regional issue in Rakhine State. There remains a high risk for these migrants to drown at sea or become the victims of trafficking networks.⁴⁰ Andaman Sea/Bay of Bengal crisis is one such example that highlights the scale of the human rights abuses, migrants are routinely subjected to.⁴¹ Besides, the risks of irregular cross-border migration at stake, people still prefer it as they are left with no choice.

Aung San Suu Kyi Stance

Myanmar has a long history of oppression against a voice of freedom, even if it is a simple demonstration for education reforms or land confiscations.⁴² It is because "the authorities rely on a range of draconian laws to silence and lock up 'critics,'" Patel says, "as long as these laws remain on the books, arbitrary arrests and detentions are likely to continue."⁴³ Nobel Peace Laureates Suu Kyi (1991) herself is a former prisoner of conscience. She led her party NLD to a win in 2015 election, first openly contested election in 25 years. Appointed as state counsellor at a crucial stage in Rakhine history, there are concerns over how Suu Kyi's NLD-led government be able to break the ice.⁴⁴

There is a lot of confusion about the whole issue in Rakhine State. On one hand there are numerous allegations of abuses by the armed forces, based on the videos viral on social media showing soldiers beating civilians they suspect of being linked to

an ethnic armed group. On the other hand, Suu Kyi declined any claims of ethnic operation,⁴⁵ and reaffirmed her political stance “there is no ethnic or religious war taking place in the Rakhine state”.⁴⁶ She addressed it as a Muslim catastrophe (Muslims killing Muslims) resulting into exodus, which her government is trying to find “why”, to amend at priority.⁴⁷ In response to the international pressure, her stance remained, “What exactly is it that they are condemning?”⁴⁸ Not to forget when she said, “Let me be clear that I would like to be seen as a politician, not some human rights icon,” shortly after her release from house arrest in 2010. She is thus a politician who instead believes is doing best to take forward the peace process.⁴⁹ She self-claimed “peace process” is leading to peace for whom, is a pitfall in the pursuit of real peace. Many high-profile influencers have also publicly criticised Aung San Suu Kyi for her stance throughout the course but her response has remained clear and constant: she appealed for international understanding but said her country did not fear international scrutiny.⁵⁰

In her speech on September 19, 2017 to the international community, she commented for the first time on Rohingya situation after the August 2017 crisis, emphasizing upon the complex situation the country is in due to decades of neglect, which her nascent democratic government is working hard to rectify systemically and strategically.⁵¹ Nevertheless, we observe that she is not only challenged by foreign observers and rights’ advocates on remaining ignorant of the issue at stake,⁵² she has been criticised by her country’s Buddhist nationalist movement as well for her leniency towards Muslims.⁵³

Nevertheless, Aung San Suu Kyi has won support from some world leaders, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi included. President Modi has offered his full support to her, which is viewed by the experts as New Delhi’s strategic position to protect its ties with Myanmar. Though India has extended assistance for Rakhine, it has taken a strong stand on the influx of about 40,000 Rohingya over the years, vowing last month to deport them all.

An Insight

Research shows that the country is going through a lot of simultaneous transition, most importantly in her governing system that has took a shift from an authoritarian military system to democratic governance, and redirecting her economy to a market-oriented economy. In addition to the new democratic government is straining to bring the century old conflict in its ethnic group of border areas to peace.⁵⁴ Western countries and China see Myanmar as a gateway for east and west, and Myanmar has signaled their willingness to strengthen their ties with China.⁵⁵ This new advancement in China-Myanmar relationship is seen by experts as the reasons Rohingya crisis is fanned by external global players.⁵⁶ However, the focus of this paper remains to restore situation of Rohingya in Rakhine State and, of course, control the outflow of refugees from that region.

Although the Rohingya Muslims’ conflict has been cast in religious terms,⁵⁷ there is no obvious semblance against government on Rohingya’s part as a religious community. The government, however, has often expressed a definite ethnic semblance

against Rohingya which appear unresolvable either by force or separation. Hence, it should be remembered that Rohingya crisis is not a religious conflict between Rohingya Muslims and the central government, but the weak policy which discriminates between inhabitants and exasperates conflict and differences in all aspects, including religion.

The discrimination against ethnic minorities is not a new phenomenon. They have difficulty accessing basic civilian rights around the world, which is mainly because of the minority rights are not adequately protected under constitution. Moreover, it is worth noticing here that none in the world are stateless or identity-less like Rohingya. "The Muslims in Rakhine constitute the single biggest stateless community in the world" stated Kofi Annan, Chair Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, on the very first page of his report.⁵⁸ Under its term, the Rohingya identity cause is just and legal. So far, unfortunately, Rohingyas are maintained to be Bangladeshi nationals. Although the term 'Rohingya' gained political connotation only after 1950s, their existence and strong influence has been present in Rakhine since the 8th century. They are as much rightful to be the native to Myanmar as any other ethnic group residing there.

Recent democratic reforms, after decades of military rule, have altered little for the Rohingya. Even as Junta frees hundreds of political prisoners, opens the economy and prepares to share power through elections, Rohingyas are still prevented under 1982 law from basic human rights.

Clear Policy by Bangladesh

Rohingya Muslims migration en mass to Bangladesh started back in 1978 with the launch of crackdown named "Operation King Gragon". The then Major General Zia-ur-Rahman, founder of the main opposition party BNP, ordered for issuing passports to these immigrants. In 1982, soon after Bangladesh's proposed policy, Myanmar government of the time revoked Rohingya Muslims nationality by law and made them officially stateless. Upon request from the Saudi government of the time,⁵⁹ Major General Zia-ur-Rahman and Pakistan president General Zia-ul-Haq, promised the Saudi King that they would give passports to the Rohingyas.⁶⁰

In an interview with Dhaka Tribune, Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dipu Moni reflected on a historical event which she sees as a mistake by the then government. She stated: "Pakistan gave them passports with a BM [Burmese Muslims] code without having recognised them as Pakistan nationals, whereas, Bangladesh issued them passports with Bangladeshi nationality. That was not only a historic mistake, but an offence too". She said that her government is trying to amend it.⁶¹ Saudi foreign minister had also requested Bangladesh to issue a document that may strip the Rohingyas of Bangladeshi nationality. Clarifying her government's stance on this sensitive issue, Dipu Moni implied, "We do not want the Rohingya Muslims to suffer, but they must forego Bangladeshi nationality,"⁶² Rohingya immigrants are a huge burden to Bangladesh's economy. With the population of 1,252 people per sq. km of land (2016),⁶³ Bangladesh hardly has enough land and resources to accommodate the migrants.⁶⁴ Although Bangladesh has set refugee camps close to Myanmar border but it is no less than a death chamber against habitation because of the extreme weather and

topographical conditions.⁶⁵ Keeping the circumstances upfront, Bangladesh will have to come up with a clear policy that may amend their previous mistakes and weak stance towards the sensitivity of the real cause.

Call for Restraint

Peace-building begins with enhancing the moral-political climate which necessitates empowering the weak, and providing necessary aid to hapless people. Myanmar government shall take necessary steps to stop the illegal flow and mass emigration of Rohingyas to neighbouring countries and reconsider their policy on peace and stability sooner rather than later. It would require to mobilise and excerpt enough international public pressure to influence Myanmar's government policies, especially to change position on its Citizenship Act 1982.⁶⁶

To meet the desired, the identity crisis should be addressed first and foremost, that is, to accept Rohingyas as nationals of Myanmar. Second, their urgent humanitarian needs must be satisfied, who deserve homes and not ghettos or camps they are confined to. The way Rohingyas are marginalized politically, economically and socially is totally inhumane. Either the crisis is planned (as blamed by media) or Rohingya Muslims' extremism turning uncontrollable (as claimed by the Myanmar government), killing of people and pushing them out the borders by dissociating any possible identity -sympathy far apart- with them is clearly not a solution. It is wrong, and everyone is justified for feeling outraged when they believe this is happening, as it plainly is in some Rohingya case. It is rather a strategic immaturity and policy failure on government's part. No doubt it is equally important for the regional countries to have a clear policy towards Rohingya immigrants, specially Bangladesh, and urge Myanmar government to carry out the remedial measures.

NOTES

- ¹ Gwillim law, "Administrative Subdivisions of Countries", (NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 1995), pp. 253-54. For map, see: http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs6/MIMU001_A3_SD%20&%20Township%20Overview.pdf
- ² Expressing his insight on the early recruitment of Rohingya, Army Commander Sr. Gen. Min Aung Hlaing quoted to media on September 2, 2017 saying: *It (army) won't ease off its campaign, describing it as 'unfinished business' dating back to World War II. Army was pursuing its patriotic duty to preserve Myanmar's borders and prevent Rohingya insurgents carving out their own territory in northern Rakhine State. We will never let such a terrible occurrence happen again.* "Myanmar Says Clearing of Rohingya Is Unfinished Business From WWII", CETUS News. Available at: <http://www.cetusnews.com/news/Myanmar-Says-Clearing-of-Rohingya-Is-Unfinished-Business-From-WWII-.Bkg5ATeYYb.html>
- ³ Namely: Chin, Kachin, Karenni, Karen, Mon, Shan and Rakhine. Each State is named after the seven largest minority ethnic nationalities in the region. The states are further subdivided into districts and townships.
- ⁴ According to UN, Myanmar stands at 150th out of 195 on the Human Development Index. Available at <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr14-report-en-1.pdf>
- ⁵ Asian Development Bank, "Myanmar, unlocking the potential, country diagnostic study", August 2014. Available at <https://www.adb.org/countries/myanmar/economy>
- ⁶ King Wan Chern, "Why the Myanmar economy is slowing, and how it could bounce back", 25 July 2017. <https://www.mmtimes.com/business/26948-why-the-myanmar-economy-is-slowing-and-how-it-could-bounce-back.html>
- ⁷ King Wan Chern, 25 July 2017. Wong Kyin Pyu is executive vice president of Maritime Silk Road Society.
- ⁸ Domestic drug use and drug trafficking in Golden Trangle -bordering Thailand, China and Laos- is a rising problem. Myanmar remains second largest producers of the world's opium, which feeds demand for heroin in China. Myanmar is also a production hub for methamphetamine and ecstasy. Steve Finch & Mong La, *Burma's 'Wild East' Is a Debauched Land of Drugs and Vice That Reforms Forgot*, Mar 09 2014. Available at <http://time.com/17651/burmas-wild-east-is-a-debauched-land-of-drugs-and-vice-that-reforms-forgot/>
- ⁹ Suez Canal opening in 1869 uncovered large tracts of land for cultivation, increasing the demand of Myanmar rice. However, farmers were forced to borrow money from Indian moneylenders to prepare the new land for cultivation. Indian moneylenders gave money at such a high interest rates people often ended up losing their land and livestock. While the country prospered with flourishing economy, the power and wealth remained in few rich hands and the deserving largely failed to reap the rewards. George Orwell's novel "Burmese days" is a fictional account of this time.
- ¹⁰ Myanmar has the economic potential. She is rich in natural resources; she has reserves not only of gemstones (including gold, silver, and platinum), but coal, tin, tungsten, zinc, and copper as well; water is abundant and climatic conditions are favourable. Everything that can make a region ideal for great agricultural growth and economic enhancement. <https://www.oxfordbusinessgroup.com/overview/setting-pace-country-leading-regional-pack-growth-rates>
- ¹¹ Madani, D.H. and N. Mas-Guix. 2011. The Impact of Export Tax Incentives on Export Performance: Evidence from the Automotive Sector in South Africa. *Policy Research Working Paper* 5585. Washinton, DC. World Bank. p.94
- ¹² McKinsey Global Institute, "Myanmar's moment: Unique opportunities, major challenges", 2013. Also see: <https://www.oxfordbusinessgroup.com/overview/setting-pace-country-leading-regional-pack-growth-rates>
- ¹³ UNICEF Report on Rakhine State, 2012. Available at: https://www.unicef.org/myanmar/Rakhine_State_Profile_Final.pdf
- ¹⁴ For map, see: http://themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/State_Map_TS_Rakhine_State_MIMU_1264v02_02Nov2016_Topo_A1.pdf
- ¹⁵ World Bank staff estimates from 2009-2010 IHLCA survey.
- ¹⁶ "Population and Housing Census of Myanmar, 2014" Census Report vol. 1, p. 6.
- ¹⁷ For details, <http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/pdf/VAW.pdf>
- ¹⁸ Natural disasters is another challenge that play its part in migration of people from Rakhine State. In October 2010, Rakhine State was hit by severe cyclonic storm Giri that destroyed about 14,000 homes and displaced more than 71,000 people. 2015 flood is another example, when their harvest was devastated and transportation impeded due to intense rainfall and landslides. Inflation is also a persistent problem and their structural issues keep it high. For details, visit <https://www.oxfordbusinessgroup.com/overview/setting-pace-country-leading-regional-pack-growth-rates>.
- ¹⁹ Colin Clarke; Ceri Peach; Steven Vertovec (26 October 1990). *South Asians Overseas: Migration and Ethnicity*. Cambridge University Press. p. 46. ISBN 978-0-521-37543-6.
- ²⁰ Andrew Simpson (2007). *Language and National Identity in Asia*. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press. p. 267.
- ²¹ "There were at least a million of the Rohingya ethnic group living in Myanmar, most of them Muslim, though some are Hindu." <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-41260767>
- ²² Mahmood; Wroe; Fuller; Leaning (2016). "The ROhingya people of Myanmar: health, human rights, and identity". *Lancet*: 1-10. Available at [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(16\)00646-2/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(16)00646-2/fulltext)
- ²³ Leider, Jacques P. "Rohingya: Rakhine and recent Outbreak of Violence: A Note" (PDF), Network Myanmar.
- ²⁴ 1982 Citizenship Law designates three categories of citizens: (1) full citizens, who provide evidence to prove the birthplace and Burmese nationality of ancestors prior to the first British annexation in 1823. This includes nationals from Rakhine State. Failing this, one is classified as an (2) associate citizen if only one (or more) post-1823 ancestors was a citizen of another country. (3) naturalized citizen, who has a parent who was a full citizen and one who was an

associate citizen. According to the terms of the law, only full and naturalized citizens are “entitled to enjoy the rights of a citizen under the law, with the exception from time to time of the rights stipulated by the State.” All forms of citizenship, “except a citizen by birth,” may be revoked by the State. “Burma Citizenship Law”. *Government of Burma*. UNHCR. 15 October 1982. For the Rohingya Muslims from Rakhine State, becoming a registered citizen is almost impossible.

²⁴ <http://www.embassyofmyanmar.be/ABOUT/ethnicgroups.htm>

To add here, Myanmar government does not officially recognise several ethnic groups in the list of 135, including Burmese Indians (2%), Burmese Gurkha, Anglo-Burmese (52,000), Burmese Chinese and Panthay (together 3%).

²⁵ Adam Taylor. “The battle over the word ‘Rohingya’”. Washington Post.

²⁶ “Why Burma Is Trying to Stop People From Using the Name of Its Persecuted Muslim Minority”. Time (magazine). 9th May, 2016.

²⁷ “Discrimination in Arakan”, Vol. 12 (3), Human Rights Watch., May 2000. Also: “Muslim influence in the kingdom of Arakan”, Arakan Rohingya National Organisation (ARNO) Arakan, Burma 13 January 2012.

Francis Buchanan-Hamilton historically documented the usage of the term Rohingya in 1799, in an article called “A Comparative Vocabulary of Some of the Languages Spoken in the Burma Empire”, *Asiatic Researches*. The Asiatic Society. 5: 219–240. Among the native groups of Arakan, he wrote are the “Muhammedans” who have long settled in Arakan, and who call themselves *Rooinga*, or natives of Arakan.”

Though the etymological root of the word is disputed, the most widely accepted theory is that *Rohang* derives from the word “Arakan” in the Rohingya dialect and *ga* or *gya* means “from.” By identifying as Rohingya, the ethnic Muslim group asserts its ties to land that was once under the control of the Arakan Kingdom, according to Chris Lewa, director of the Arakan Project, a Thailand-based advocacy group. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/rohingya-migrant-crisis>

²⁸ “Burmese government accused of trying to ‘expel’ all Rohingya Muslims”. *The Independent*. 14 March 2017.

²⁹ According to IOM Appeal for Rakhine State, “Rakhine State has the lowest percentage of households with access to improved sanitation in the country (48% compared to a national average of 84%), as well as the lowest primary school enrolment rate (71.4% compared to a national average of 87.7%).” IOM Appeal for Rakhine State. Available at: https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/country_appeal/file/IOM-Myanmar-Appeal-April-2016-April-2018.pdf

³⁰ For details, see: Ibid

³¹ For further details, see: Ibid.

³² For further details, see: Ibid.

³³ “The development of the Sino-Myanmar energy project coincided with the intensification of the Rohingya conflict in 2011-2012 when 120,000 asylum seekers left the country escaping the bloodshed.” The situation is even worse for their children born in refugee camps in Bangladesh. As foreigners, they experience discrimination in many ways. For further details, [http://www.ronpaulforums.com/showthread.php?514678-Extremist-Monks-Myanmar-\(Burma\)-faces-anger-from-Muslim-world-over-Rohingya- plight&p=6522031&viewfull=1&styleid=37](http://www.ronpaulforums.com/showthread.php?514678-Extremist-Monks-Myanmar-(Burma)-faces-anger-from-Muslim-world-over-Rohingya- plight&p=6522031&viewfull=1&styleid=37)

³⁴ Thulasi Wigneswaran, “Reconciliation in Rakhine State”, *New Mandala*, 11th Oct, 2016. Available at: <http://www.newmandala.org/reconciliation-rakhine-state/>

³⁵ The Denmark-based European Rohingya Council (ERC) report.

³⁶ Visual explainer of Rohingya 2017 crisis has been documented in maps by Al-Jazeera, available at <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2017/09/rohingya-crisis-explained-maps-170910140906580.html>. Former President Thein Sein’s spokesperson, Zaw Htay was promoted to deputy director general of the President’s Office under Myanmar’s current National League for Democracy (NLD) government.

³⁷ <http://www.thedailystar.net/world/myanmar-rohingya-refugee-crisis-1%2C000-killed-Myanmar-%20violence-%20un-rapporteur-1459426>. “Over 168,000 Rohingya likely fled Myanmar since 2012”, UNHCR report, available at <http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2017/5/59099off4/168000-rohingya-likely-fled-myanmar-since-2012-unhcr-report.html>; “190,000 Myanmar nationals’ get residency relief in Saudi Arabia”, *Al Arabiya English*, available at <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/gulf/2017/01/25/Over-190-000-Myanmar-nationals-granted-Saudi-residency.html>; Zia Ur Rehman, in his article “Identity issue haunts Karachi’s Rohingya population” states: “Their large-scale migration had made Karachi one of the largest Rohingya population centres outside Myanmar but afterwards the situation started turning against them.” *Dawn*, available at <https://www.dawn.com/news/1165299>.

³⁸ In October 2010, Rakhine State was hit by Cyclone Giri, displacing more than 71,000 people and destroying at least 14,000 homes.

³⁹ https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/country_appeal/file/IOM-Myanmar-Appeal-April-2016-April-2018.pdf

⁴⁰ IOM appeal (Myanmar / Rakhine State) April 2016- April 2018. p.3. Available at: www.iom.int

⁴¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/15/world/asia/burmese-rohingya-bangladeshi-migrants-andaman-sea.html>

⁴² Available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa16/3430/2016/en/>

⁴³ Simon Lewis, *TIME | World*, Mar 31, 2016. Available at <http://time.com/4275928/burma-myanmar-civilian-government-challenges/>

⁴⁴ Champa Patel, Amnesty International’s director for Southeast Asia, told TIME.

⁴⁵ “There is no possibility of crimes against humanity, no evidence of ethnic cleansing [of Rohingya],” Vice-President Myint Swe (former military regime’s Chief of Military Security Affairs) stated to reporters on 6 August 2017. Interview available at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-39507350>.

⁴⁶ Again on September 19 Aung San Suu Kyi speech on “National Reconciliation and Peace”. Full speech available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJkg2_7zuUo

⁴⁷ Ibid

- ⁴⁸ Suu Kyi interview to BBC's Fergal Keane. BBC News 6 April 2017. Available at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-39507350>
- ⁴⁹ Full speech available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJkg2_7zuUo
- ⁵⁰ She said so in her first address to the U.N. General Assembly on 22 September 2016 as national leader. For details see: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-un-assembly-myanmar-suukyi/in-first-u-n-address-as-leader-suu-kyi-defends-efforts-on-rohingyas-idUSKCN1R2P8?il=0>. And again in her nation televised speech on September 19, 2017.
- ⁵¹ Aung San Suu Kyi speech on "National Reconciliation and Peace" September 19, 2017.
- ⁵² Testimony of Daniel P. Sullivan, "Burma's Brutal Campaign Against the Rohingya", 27 September 2017, pp. 6-8. Available at <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA05/20170927/106434/HHRG-115-FA05-Wstate-SullivanD-20170927.pdf>. Daniel P. Sullivan is Senior Advocate for Human Rights Refugees International. Also see: "Rohingya crisis: Suu Kyi speech criticised by global leaders", 20 September 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-41329662>, "The Rakhine State Danger to Myanmar's Transition", 8 September 2017, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/myanmar/rakhine-state-danger-myanmars-transition>. Bob Geldof handed back his "Freedom of the City of Dublin" award on 13 November 2017, as a gesture in protest over Suu Kyi handling of Rohingya crisis.
- ⁵³ <http://time.com/4275928/burma-myanmar-civilian-government-challenges/>
- ⁵⁴ World Bank, "Myanmar Overview". Available at <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/myanmar/overview>.
- ⁵⁵ "China has very large investments in Rakhine", Mosyakov said. "After the massive Rakhine energy reserves were discovered in 2004 they attracted China's attention. By 2013 China completed oil and natural gas pipelines, which connect Myanmar's port of Kyaukphyu with the Chinese city of Kunming in Yunnan province. The oil pipeline allows Beijing to deliver Middle Eastern and African crude by passing the Malacca Straits, while the gas pipeline is transporting hydrocarbons from Myanmar's offshore fields to China." For details, see: <https://sputniknews.com/analysis/201709051057098493-myanmar-rohingya-energy-china-soros/>
- ⁵⁶ According to deputy director of the Institute for Strategic Studies and Prognosis at the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia Dmitry Mosyakov, it appears that some established global economies are seeking to contain the rapid economic development of ASEA nations, by instigating inner strife within the bloc. <https://sputniknews.com/analysis/201709051057098493-myanmar-rohingya-energy-china-soros/>
- ⁵⁷ Some experts see the crisis as setting with religious dimension staged with a multilateral "humanitarian intervention" following the Kosovo model. As a matter of fact, the conflicts couched in religious terms are more likely to become transformed in value conflicts that often result into mutually conclusive or zero-sum issues lacking a common ground to resolve their differences.
- ⁵⁸ "Towards the Peaceful, Fair and Prosperous Future for the People of Rakhine", *Final Report of the Commission on Rakhine State*, August 2017. Available at: http://www.rakhinecommission.org/app/uploads/2017/08/FinalReport_Eng.pdf
- ⁵⁹ KSA has the largest (2 million) Bangladeshi community among all foreign nationals Around 500,000 Rohingyas are living in Saudi Arabia with Bangladeshi passports, says Expatriates' Welfare Minister Mosharraf Hossain. <http://www.arabnews.com/news/458697>
- ⁶⁰ However, no official record is available regarding the number of Rohingya Muslims who got Bangladeshi passports during that time.
- ⁶¹ See: <http://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2013/07/20/rohingyas-in-ksa-must-forgo-bangladeshi-passports/>
- ⁶² <http://www.arabnews.com/news/458697>
- ⁶³ See: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.POP.DNST>
- ⁶⁴ A top Bangladesh government source said. <https://newsin.asia/sushma-swaraj-tells-sheikh-hasina-india-bangladesh-rohingyas/>
- ⁶⁵ "Bangladesh to build one of world's largest refugee camps for 800,000 Rohingya", <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/06/bangladesh-build-worlds-largest-refugee-camps-800000-rohingya>
- ⁶⁶ We second Ambassador Khalid Mahmood's insight on the proposed solution to the issue at skate, that he highlighted in a Round Table Discussion on "The Dilemma of Myanmar's Stateless Rohingyas" organized by MUSLIM Institute on 02 June, 2015 at National Library of Pakistan, Islamabad. <http://www.muslim-institute.org/images/articles/newsletter-speech-khalid-mehmood-rohingyas283.pdf>