



Forum: Special, Political and Decolonisation Committee (GA4)

Topic: The case of Rohingya people in Myanmar

Student Officer: Jo Anagnostopoulou

Position: Co-chair

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

It is my greatest pleasure to welcome you all to the Special and Political and Decolonization Committee of the 3rd St Catherine's Model United Nations Conference. My name is Jo Anagnostopoulou, I am a sixteen-year-old student from Ekpedeftiki Anagennisi School, and I am beyond excited and happy to be serving as one of your Co-Chairs.

First and foremost, I would like to begin by congratulating you on your decision to join the MUN community. Speaking from my experience, UN simulations will help you familiarise yourselves with diplomacy, politics, and global issues that today's society encounters. I attended my school's club 4 years ago and admittedly I consider it the best decision I have ever made, since MUN cultivates various virtues, including critical thinking and problem-solving skills. During the conference, you will find yourselves discussing intriguing matters and policies, but also creating long-lasting bonds.

Having said that, it is my utmost honor to serve as a member of the Presidency on such a prestigious committee. GA4 has always fascinated me since it addresses crucial issues that concern today's political leaders. As the next generation, it is our duty to pave the way for peace and prosperity. I feel delighted to inspire young delegates such as yourselves with my passion for such matters.

Should you have any further questions, I am more than willing to help. You can contact me via email at jo.anagnostopoulou.08@gmail.com. I look forward to seeing you soon!

Kind Regards,

Jo Anagnostopoulou



TOPIC INTRODUCTION

The issue of ethnic cleansing in Myanmar refers to the forcible displacement of the Rohingya minority from their own country. Myanmar, located in Southeast Asia, ranks one of the 25 most populated nations worldwide. "It contains 135 recognized minorities, Rohingyas though are not considered one of them"¹.

The Rohingya are Muslim communities that have been established mainly in the western part of the country, in an area named 'Rakhine State' and "constitute 4 percent of the Burmese population"².

The Burmese government has always been hostile towards minorities, especially to the Rohingyas, classifying them as illegal immigrants and denying them vital human rights, including arbitrary deprivation of nationality, severe restrictions on freedom of movement, threats to life and security, denial of rights to health and education, forced labour, sexual violence, and limitations to their political rights, among other violations, according to UN Human Rights Council's report on Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar published in July 2015. The Buddhist state of Myanmar has launched multiple operations aiming to commit ethnic cleansing.

The situation deteriorated recently, when a group of Rohingyas attacked the national forces, sparking another wave of anti-Rohingya persecution. A vast number of Rohingya people began seeking asylum in countries nearby, such as Bangladesh, resulting in a domestic refugee crisis. Currently, the numbers of refugees are increasing dramatically and Myanmar is being accused by the United Nations of committing ethnic cleansing.

¹ Blakemore, Erin. "The Rohingya People—facts and Information." National Geographic, 8 Feb. 2019, www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/rohingya-people

² Minority Rights Group Int. "Muslims and Rohingya." Minority Rights Group, 5 Feb. 2021, minorityrights.org/minorities/muslims-and-rohingya/



The situation in Myanmar left the global community in shock, with the Secretary General of the United Nations himself describing that exact minority as "one of, if not the, most discriminated people in the world"³.

This crisis is to be examined and dealt with immediately, since it has led to genocidal violence against a specific minority, a criminal action that follows decades of persecution under International Humanitarian Law.

Taking into consideration that this year's Conference has as a theme: "Post-War Societies", it is of paramount importance to address the case of Rohingya people in Myanmar. Past attempts to resolve the issue are thought to be passive, while the matter has not been recognized enough so as to combat the crisis entirely. Thus, discussing this exact issue in GA4 will cover the topic from a deeply political aspect.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Coup d'état

"The sudden, violent overthrow of an existing government by a small group. The chief prerequisite for a coup is control of all or part of the armed forces, the police, and other military elements"⁴

Cox's Bazar

"Cox's Bazar is one of the largest refugee camps in the world and it is located on the coast of southeast Bangladesh. About one million Rohingya refugees live in Cox's Bazar"⁵.

Ethnic Cleansing

³ British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).. "Myanmar Rohingya: What You Need to Know About the Crisis." BBC News, 23 Jan. 2020, www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-41566561

⁴ Britannica. "Coup d'état." Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 26 Oct. 2023, www.britannica.com/topic/coup-detat

⁵ United Nations High Commissioner for refugees. "Bangladesh." UNHCR, www.unhcr.org/countries/bangladesh.



“Ethnic cleansing refers to the practice of removing or killing people who belong to an ethnic group that differs from the ruling group in a country or region”.⁶

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

“IDPs are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized border”.⁷

Rakhine State

“Rakhine State is the most western state in Myanmar and has a population of three million. It hosts the majority of the Rohingya population and its citizens have been subject to constant prosecution”.⁸

Rohingya People

“The Rohingya are a stateless Indo-Aryan ethnic group, the majority of which are Muslim, who have lived for centuries in the Buddhist nation of Myanmar. Currently, there are about 1.1 million Rohingya in the Southeast Asian country”.⁹

Stateless People

⁶ Britannica. “Ethnic Cleansing.” Encyclopædia Britannica, www.britannica.com/dictionary/ethnic-cleansing

⁷ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. “About Internally Displaced Persons.” *OHCHR*, www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-internally-displaced-persons.

⁸ United Nations International Children Emergency Fund. “Rakhine State.” *UNICEF*, www.unicef.org/myanmar/rakhine-state.

⁹ Al Jazeera. “Myanmar: Who Are the Rohingya?” *Al Jazeera*, 18 Apr. 2018, www.aljazeera.com/features/2018/4/18/who-are-the-rohingya.



“Stateless is considered a person who is not recognized as a citizen or a national under the laws of any country and, consequently, cannot enjoy the rights that are associated with citizenship”.¹⁰

Tatmadaw

“Tatmadaw means armed forces in Burmese, but the name has become synonymous with the current military authority, given its huge power in the country and global notoriety”.¹¹

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Myanmar's decolonization and independence

Myanmar, which at the time was known as Burma, was captured by the British in 1824, and was a part of the British colonies up until 1948. During the entire period of British colonialism, Burma was unsatisfied with the state of power, which resulted in fighting using warfare against the British. Burma became a province of India shortly after, however it only lasted until 1937.

When World War II erupted, Myanmar was under Japanese occupation before attaining its freedom in 1948. The Union of Burma was eventually established as a parliamentary democracy, a system of governance that turned out to be ineffective causing domestic conflicts due to poor representation of minorities in the parliament. Despite the fact that Burma had become by that time its own sovereign country, political and military instability, civil war, and financial struggles led to a military coup d'état in 1962.

¹⁰ UNHCR. “Statelessness Explained.” *UNHCR*, www.unrefugees.org/news/statelessness-explained/#What%20does%20it%20mean%20to%20be%20stateless?

¹¹ “Tatmadaw: Myanmar's Notoriously Brutal Military.” *BBC News*, BBC, 2 Feb. 2022, www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-56660483



The military formed a new regime in 1974 came into effect and transferred power from the armed forces to a People's Assembly. However, the military preserved its control over political decisions.

By 1988, corruption, financial instability related to Myanmar's currency, and food insecurity led to massive protests. In August 1988, the army engaged in hostilities with protesters, killing at least three thousand and displacing thousands more.

Eventually, the government fell in 1989 and the military constitution dramatically changed into an administrative process as the state's name was altered from the Union of Burma to the Union of Myanmar.

Reasons behind the conflict

Myanmar is a diverse country, since it contains approximately one hundred ethnic groups. Ever since the British colonies, ethnic Burmans, known as the Bamar, have enjoyed a privileged position in society throughout the decades.

On the other hand, multiple minorities including the Rohingya have no clear legal status in Myanmar as they cannot be recognised as citizens. As a result, access to healthcare, education, and jobs for them is almost impossible. Rohingyas as a Muslim minority are even prohibited from freely practicing their faith. The situation has hardly improved in the past, since ethnic minorities are not represented in the government and they have been excluded from the general election, thus the issue has never been internally addressed and human rights violations continue to take place to this very day.

That exact sense of dissatisfaction resulted in numerous armed disputes between minorities and Tatmadaw. Recent tensions have strengthened due to illegal activities in natural resources, such as illicit gem mining and drug trade.



Background of the Rohingya population

According to the Arakan Rohingya National Organisation, “Rohingyas have been living in Arakan from time immemorial. The Rohingya is an indigenous Muslim minority group in Myanmar that mainly inhabits the Rakhine State. They constitute 1 % of the total population, 4% of the Rakhine state population, and 45% of the total Muslim population inhabiting Myanmar”.¹²

The Rohingyas migrated from India to Bangladesh during British rule. Back then, Myanmar was considered as a province of India. Therefore, the Rohingya migration could be categorized as internal migration. However, after Myanmar gained its independence, the migration was believed to be illegal and the Rohingyas were not included as a part of the ethnic minorities living in Myanmar by constitution.

In 1982, a new citizenship legislation was implemented that established three levels of citizenship. In order to acquire the lowest level of citizenship, proof of living in Myanmar prior to 1948 had to be provided to the authorities. The Rohingya population failed in establishing proof while applying for citizenship, due to the lack of essential documents.

The fact that Rohingyas differ when it comes to appearance and religion has turned them into subjects of racism. The government, which is of the opinion that Rohingyas are unequal, has brainwashed the society to exclude them for all political and non-political activities. Despite being a significant part of the population, the stateless

¹² Chan, Bettina. “A Brief Historical Background of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar.” *The Organization for World Peace*, 29 Nov. 2017, <https://theowp.org/a-brief-historical-background-of-rohingya-muslims-in-myanmar/>



Rohingyas are unable to obtain health care, state education and political rights. “For instance, in comparison to non-Rohingya dominant regions in Rakhine State, Rohingya-dominant regions suffer from acute malnutrition and higher mortality rates”.¹³

“Operation King Dragon”

Operation King Dragon is a significant part of Myanmar’s history. Tensions have always affected Burma’s political stability, particularly in Rakhine State after the 1950’s, when Muslim communities had started demanding autonomy from the Myanmar government. Thus, Operation King Dragon, also known as Operation Nagamin, was launched on February 6th, 1978 to register all Burmese nationals in the governmental systems and exclude foreigners. Rohingyas were forcibly evicted by immigration authorities and military personnel leading to a vast mass of “200.000 Rohingya refugees fleeing to Bangladesh”.¹⁴

According to the refugees, the military committed heinous crimes against humanity, such as forced labor, rape, and murder. The United Nations (UN) created fifteen camps in Bangladesh to house refugees, while the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in collaboration with the government of Bangladesh provided humanitarian aid. Despite the attempts to improve the living conditions, violence had escalated so drastically that it was implausible for the Rohingya to reintegrate into Burmese society.

1982 Citizenship Law

¹³ Chan, Bettina. “A Brief Historical Background of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar.” *The Organization for World Peace*, 29 Nov. 2017, <https://theowp.org/a-brief-historical-background-of-rohingya-muslims-in-myanmar/>

¹⁴ Pandey, Ashutosh. “Myanmar’s Rohingya: A History of Forced Exoduses – DW – 09/09/2017.” *Dw.Com*, Deutsche Welle, 28 Jan. 2020, www.dw.com/en/myanmars-rohingya-a-history-of-forced-exoduses/a-40427304#:~:text=1970s%20%E2%80%93%20200%20C000%20Rohingya%20fled%20to%20Bangladesh%20after,by%20an%20army%20that%20indulged%20in%20widespread%20brutality.



The Burmese government, in order to minimize the number of ethnic groups within its borders, voted for a citizenship law under which only “national races” that settled in Myanmar prior to 1824 could access full citizenship. The Rohingyas were not considered one of these official indigenous races and were automatically excluded from full citizenship. Naturalized citizenship was also given to individuals and their children who could provide evidence that they had been living in Myanmar prior to 4 January 1948, the date of state succession from the British. However, “due to a lack of documentation and the arbitrary and discriminatory implementation of the law”¹⁵ Rohingyas were denied access to naturalized citizenship as well. Hence, a vast number of people nowadays are deprived of their citizenship, because of this exact citizenship law that is based on outdated data.

“Operation Clean and Beautiful Nation”

The aforementioned operation had such a vast impact on Myanmar’s society, resulting in an even more violent persecution attempt. Operation Clean and Beautiful Nation was a military operation conducted by Myanmar Armed Forces, Tatmadaw, near the borders with Bangladesh. The operation was carried out from 1991 to 1992, under the auspices of the military government, named State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC).

The recent establishment and expansion of the rebel and political group “Rohingya Solidarity Organisation” (RSO) was used as the pretext of the launch of the operation. As in Operation Dragon King, the government’s goal was to forcibly evict all “illegal immigrants” from the area and to combat political instability caused by radical groups, like RSO. Indeed, “200,000 civilians were displaced”¹⁶, but future attacks by the

¹⁵ Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK. “Myanmar’s 1982 Citizenship Law and Rohingya.” *Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK*, Dec. 2014, <https://burmacampaign.org.uk/media/Myanmar%E2%80%99s-1982-Citizenship-Law-and-Rohingya.pdf> .

¹⁶ Blakemore, Erin. “The Rohingya People-Facts and Information.” *National Geographic* , 3 May 2021, www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/rohingya-people.



RSO were not prevented. The organization continued to engage in political activities until the end of the 1990s.

969 Movement

The radical monk, Ashin Wirathu, initiated the 969 Movement in September 2019, which openly spread anti-Muslim rumours and hatred. “The number 969 refers to attributes of the Buddha, his teachings, and the monkhood. But 969 monks have been providing the moral justification for a wave of anti-Muslim bloodshed that could scuttle Myanmar’s nascent reform program”.¹⁷

Many Buddhist monks in Myanmar engage in political activism by representing radical religious parties that even the government does not dare to challenge. Public policies are designed to align with Ma ba Tha (Organisation for Protection of Race and Religion) in fear of religious retaliation. Due to the increased pressure radical monks put on the Burmese government, discriminating laws have been passed such as the Religious Conversion Law, the Interfaith Marriage Law, and the Population Control Law, which mainly target Muslims in the country.

The Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA)

As a result of the oppression Rohingya people undergo, armed clashes periodically take place between Rohingya ethnic riot groups and Myanmar’s police forces. Ever since October 2016, an armed Rohingya insurgency group has dynamically come to the surface.

The Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (commonly known as ARSA), consists of mostly Muslim Rohingya insurgents who operate within Rakhine State, located in northern Myanmar. The insurgency was established in the aftermath of violent outbursts

¹⁷ Marshall, Andrew R.C. “Special Report: Myanmar Gives Official Blessing to Anti-Muslim Monks.” *Reuters*, 27 June 2013, www.reuters.com/article/us-myanmar-969-specialreport-idUSBRE95Q04720130627.



between Buddhist and Muslim communities in Rakhine State in 2012. The Arsa insurgents have access to small firearms and some homemade explosives.

In the eyes of the Myanmar government, the group is a terrorist organization whose leaders have been trained abroad, in countries like Saudi Arabia, since 2013. On 25 August 2017, ARSA launched an attack against Myanmar's police forces mobilizing a large number of Rohingya villagers, overwhelmingly armed with bladed weapons or sticks. The encounter led to the death of 20 police officers. In accordance with Amnesty International's estimations, the vast majority of Rohingya people did not support Arsa's activities.

Amnesty International has documented serious human rights abuses committed by ARSA against different ethnic and religious communities residing in Northern Myanmar. Pertinent amongst the crimes committed are the events of 25 October 2017. On that date, ARSA attacked the Hindu community in the village of Ah Nauk Kha Maung Seik. ARSA fighters assembled around 70 Hindu men, women, and children, executed the vast majority of them, and abducted the rest. On the same day, around 45 men, women, and children, residents of the neighboring village of Ye Bauk Kyar disappeared, while their whereabouts still remain unknown.

Human Rights Violations Against Rohingyas

Deprivation of the right to nationality

In 1982, a new Citizenship Law was introduced in Myanmar, having adverse effects on the Rohingya population. In accordance with the Law's provisions, full Burmese citizenship is inexorably linked with one's membership in the 'national races'. Unfortunately, the Rohingya are not considered to be one or part of these national races. It follows that they are regarded as foreigners and as such have been arbitrarily deprived of their right to nationality.



Completely restricting their access to civil documents like birth certificates and national registration cards, leaves the Rohingya legally and administratively invisible. Statelessness further puts at high risk their future education and work prospects, limits their freedom of movement and traps them in a vicious cycle of poverty and marginalization.

On an international level, the 1954 Convention regarding the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness are the leading international instruments addressing statelessness, complemented by other international human rights treaties including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Despite their importance, the government of Myanmar has not yet ratified the two Conventions, thus it has not undertaken the obligation to abide by their rules. This creates serious ambiguities and above all a margin for human rights abuses.

Deprivation of basic needs and rights

As a result of their persecution, around one million Rohingya fled Myanmar in the year 2017 seeking refuge in the neighboring Bangladesh. Their nightmare, however, does not seem to end, as they are currently living in overcrowded camps in the area.

The majority of them have found their way to the Cox's Bazar refugee camp. Currently, Cox's Bazar is the world's largest refugee camp providing shelter to around 1.24 million people including Rohingya. The living conditions are devastating. According to reports by the International Committee of the Red Cross, which is actively engaged in alleviating the refugees' pain, there is limited access to clean water, food and basic healthcare, while the cramped conditions highly encourage the spread of diseases.¹⁸ The International Migration Organization has reported that as a result of the inhumane

¹⁸ British Red Cross. "What Is Happening in Cox's Bazar?" *British Red Cross*, 4 Aug. 2023, www.redcross.org.uk/stories/disasters-and-emergencies/world/coronavirus-threatens-coxs-bazar



conditions in the camp, women and girls are lured into situations of forced labor and trafficking.¹⁹

The estimated 600,000 Rohingya who remain in Rakhine State are subject to severe persecution, and bloody violence. They are confined to concentration camps and villages without the prescribed freedom of movement and with limited access to adequate food, health care, education, and work prospects. Their marginalization in camps has conditioned their survival upon humanitarian aid.

“No amount of aid is enough to solve the crisis,”²⁰ says Federico Sersale, UNHCR’s head of office in Sittwe, the Rakhine state capital. “While it is imperative to assist, access to rights and freedoms, social cohesion between communities, the closure of camps, and allowing the Rohingya to return to their homes or places of choice are crucial to lasting solutions.”²¹

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date of the Event	Event
January 4th, 1948	Myanmar gains its independence from Britain

¹⁹ International Organization for Migration. “Girls Sold into Forced Labour Largest Group of Trafficking Victims Identified by IOM in Bangladesh Refugee Camps.” *International Organization for Migration*, www.iom.int/news/girls-sold-forced-labour-largest-group-trafficking-victims-identified-iom-bangladesh-refugee-camps.

²⁰ UNHCR. “Stateless Rohingya Continue to Struggle for Survival in Myanmar.” *UNHCR*, www.unhcr.org/news/stories/stateless-rohingya-continue-struggle-survival-myanmar.

²¹ UNHCR. “Stateless Rohingya Continue to Struggle for Survival in Myanmar.” *UNHCR*, www.unhcr.org/news/stories/stateless-rohingya-continue-struggle-survival-myanmar.



March 2nd, 1962	Myanmar's parliamentary democracy is put to an end after the military's Coup d'état
February 6th, 1978	Operation "King Dragon" is initiated
October 15th, 1982	Burma Citizenship Law that denies citizenship to Rohingya people is passed
September 8th, 1988	State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) is established
July, 1997	Burma is admitted to Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN)
December 23rd, 2004	UNGA passes resolution A/RES/59/263 addressing the human rights conditions in Myanmar.
January, 2007	"China and Russia veto a draft US resolution at the UN Security Council urging Myanmar to stop persecuting minority and opposition groups" ²²
September, 2012	The 969 Movement against Muslims is implemented
August 25th, 2017	First ARSA attack on Myanmar's security forces takes place

²² BBC. "Myanmar Profile - Timeline." *BBC News*, 3 Sept. 2018, www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-12992883



September 29th, 2017	Boat carrying Rohingya refugees sinks near Bangladesh's coast and 60 people are found dead while fleeing Myanmar's violence
April, 2018	Special Envoy Myanmar is established by the UN General Assembly
February-December 2021	Mass killings of civilians are committed due to political instability
December 21st, 2022	Security Council passes resolution S/RES/2669 regarding violence in the Southeast Asian nations and release all arbitrarily detained prisoners
October 10th, 2023	28 people are killed in a refugee camp by military forces

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Bangladesh

Bangladesh, as one of the nearest nations to Myanmar, receives annually an enormous wave of refugees, considering that “the Rohingya people have faced systematic disenfranchisement, discrimination, and targeted persecution in Myanmar’s Rakhine State for decades”.²³ Thus, Cox Bazar, the largest refugee camp worldwide, has

²³ Humanitarian Response. “2323 Joint Response Plan Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis.” *Humanitarian Response*, Dec. 2023, www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/bangladesh_2023_jrp_rhc_appeal_en.pdf.



been established to provide a temporary shelter to refugees in need. "About one million Rohingya refugees live in Cox's Bazar".²⁴

With Bangladesh ranking third in the world among states most hit by natural disasters, Rohingya refugees, who live in temporary shelters in a highly congested camp setting, are highly exposed to weather-related hazards, such as cyclones, flooding, and landslides. The government has cooperated with various organizations and programs including the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organisation, World Food Program, and United Nations High Commission for Refugees to improve living conditions within the refugee camps, offer humanitarian assistance regarding protection, food, water, shelter and health.

China

As a country that borders Myanmar, China has always been its closest diplomatic ally and greatest trading partner. China has been supporting Myanmar's government throughout the years, as it aims to expand infrastructure and investments in its neighboring state.

After the coup, the Chinese government immediately recognized the new military leaders, since they wanted to preserve their strong influence on the Tatmadaw. Furthermore, China has defended Myanmar from the imposition of UN sanctions by vetoing a draft resolution on the issue and providing material and verbal support for its response to the alleged terrorist attacks.

United States of America (USA)

The USA's relationship with Myanmar has always been distant. The American government has imposed numerous sanctions on the Burmese up until the Obama administration when a different approach was taken towards tackling the issue. The attention was drawn to increased humanitarian aid, relaxed restrictions on new US

²⁴ UNHCR. "Bangladesh." *UNHCR*, www.unhcr.org/countries/bangladesh.



investments, and the improvement of the diplomatic negotiations by appointing the country's first ambassador.

The Trump administration followed the same path but differed as far as sanctions are concerned. This time sanctions were kept only on specific people. The US has clearly stated that perpetrators of all crimes against Rohingyas are to be brought before justice and punished accordingly.

Arakan Rohingya National Organisation (ARNO)

“The Arakan Rohingya National Organisation emerged in 1998 as a broad-based organization of the Rohingya people with a pledge to promote ‘Rohingya unity’ and to realize the hopes and aspirations of the Rohingya people”.²⁵

ARNO is promoting collaboration between credible Rohingya socio-cultural civil society organizations and intergovernmental organizations, namely the European Union, Human Rights Watch, Fortify Rights, and Burma Campaign U.K. This organization aims to maintain Rohingya’s ethnic identity and tackle the issue of ethnic cleansing.

Additionally, ARNO has organized online seminars or so-called webinars, so as to raise awareness of the situation in Myanmar. The most recent webinar took place on 16 July 2021 and addressed the issue of human trafficking as a form of modern slavery in Burma.

World Food Program (WFP)

In July 2017, the WFP reported that “up to 80,500 Rohingya children under the age of five are suffering from acute malnutrition”.²⁶ WFP conducted a Food Assessment

²⁵ ARAKAN ROHINGYA NATIONAL ORGANISATION (ARNO). “About Arakan Rohingya National Organisation (ARNO).” *ARNO*, 24 Apr. 2018, www.rohingya.org/about-arno/.

²⁶ Staff, MEI, et al. “Waves of Genocidal Terror against Rohingyas by Myanmar and the Resultant Exodus since 1978.” *Middle East Institute*, 1 Jan. 2020, www.mei.edu/publications/waves-genocidal-terror-against-rohingyas-myanmar-and-resultant-exodus-1978.



among the Rohingya population between December 2016 and March 2017, and then released its findings.

According to the report “About 38,000 households corresponding to 225,800 people are suffering from hunger and are in need of humanitarian assistance, none of the children from 6 to 23 months met the minimum adequate diet, only 2.5 percent reached minimum dietary diversity and 8.5 percent met the minimum meal frequency”.²⁷ Living under such inhumane conditions can possibly lead to health issues or even death.

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

“Working with the Government of Bangladesh and partners, UNICEF is helping provide water and sanitation, including the establishment of diarrhoeal treatment centers, health services for children and pregnant women; support for access to quality education via establishing learning centers”.²⁸

It is of paramount importance for an organization that serves human rights and ethics to ensure that Rohingya refugees have equal educational opportunities, access to health care and services, clean water and sanitation, as well as access to livelihood opportunities.

According to UNICEF employees, “All children deserve equitable and inclusive access to education. To help prevent a lost generation, UNICEF and partners have enrolled more than 300,000 children in classes”.²⁹ Rohingya children and their parents have clarified that they want an education based on the Myanmar curriculum, as they would like to feel included in the Burmese community, reintegrate and eventually

²⁷ Staff, MEI, et al. “Waves of Genocidal Terror against Rohingyas by Myanmar and the Resultant Exodus since 1978.” *Middle East Institute*, 1 Jan. 2020, www.mei.edu/publications/waves-genocidal-terror-against-rohingyas-myanmar-and-resultant-exodus-1978.

²⁸ UNICEF. “Rohingya Crisis.” *UNICEF*, www.unicef.org/emergencies/rohingya-crisis.

²⁹ UNICEF. “Rohingya Crisis.” *UNICEF*, www.unicef.org/emergencies/rohingya-crisis.



become equal members of it. The 2023/24 school year marks the first time that Rohingya refugee children regardless of their age will be studying under the Myanmar Curriculum.

RELEVANT UN TREATIES CONVENTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

[A/RES/53/162](#)

This is among the first General Assembly resolutions that address the deteriorating situation in Myanmar regarding human rights violations. It was adopted without a vote on 25 February 1999.³⁰ The Resolution contains general clauses that do not specifically address the genocidal violence against the Rohingya.

Nevertheless, Operative Clause 10, highlights Myanmar's duty to safeguard the human rights of the ethnic minority residing in its territory and take appropriate measures to protect the fundamental right to life. The legal importance, however, of the resolution is limited, as it created no legally binding effects on States, thus the implementation of solutions introduced is not ensured.

[A/RES/59/263](#)

On 23 December 2004, the UNGA adopted another resolution addressing the human rights conditions in Myanmar. The resolution again, notwithstanding its general character, addresses among others issues relating to the treatment of ethnic minorities, making thus an indirect comment on the inhumane treatment of Rohingya. Further, the resolution highlights the need to put an end to crimes including rape, torture, and extrajudicial executions, whose victims are usually Rohingya people.

³⁰ UN Library. *Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar* ;, United Nations, digitallibrary.un.org/record/265898?ln=en.



Noteworthy is Operative Clause 3 which emphasizes on the need for political reform and the subsequent establishment of a more inclusive system of governance in Myanmar, something that is inexorably linked with the long-term elimination of discrimination and violence. Although the ideas proposed are vital to tackling the issue, the resolution does not mention in detail how they will be enforced.

[S/2007/14](#)

This is one of the few draft resolutions concerning the protection of the Rohingya minority that has been debated by the members of the UN Security Council. The draft resolution urged Myanmar to effectively end and prohibit any form of persecution and violence directed against the Rohingya people and to respect their fundamental human rights.

Despite its good intentions, the resolution was ultimately vetoed by the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China, which proves that the international community remains polarised even when the human rights of innocent people are at stake.

[S/RES/2669](#)

On 21 December 2022, the Security Council adopted a resolution on the issue of Rohingya, calling for the immediate de-escalation and end to all forms of violence and the release of all prisoners.

Further, the Council reiterated its emphasis on upholding democratic institutions and processes in order to pursue constructive dialogue and reconciliation. In that regard, it stressed the importance of international cooperation in solving the issue and acknowledged the central role of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in proposing peaceful solutions to the crisis.



Through the resolution the members of the Council reflected on the pressing need for humanitarian assistance and underscored the need for delivery of humanitarian aid to all, covering an aspect of the issue that is highly undermined by the Burmese government.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Myanmar and Bangladesh

The Government of Bangladesh and the UN have agreed upon a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a protection and policy framework for the Rohingya humanitarian response on Cox' Bazar. The MoU stands as a means of support towards the Rohingya population until they can ensure their safe and sustainable return to Myanmar. "The humanitarian program takes care of almost 900,000 Rohingya refugees in the country".³¹

The agreement makes the ground fertile as it allows for close cooperation between the Government and the UN as it engages a large number of Rohingya refugees living on the island in activities and services, such as education, skills training, livelihoods, and health.

Although this measure has helped thousands of Rohingyas, it seems like "a diplomatic feint rather than a serious step forward in resolving this crisis that has seen

³¹ UN. "Un and Government of Bangladesh Sign Memorandum of Understanding for Rohingya Humanitarian Response on Bhasan Char in Bangladesh." *United Nations*, <https://bangladesh.un.org/en/150722-un-and-government-bangladesh-sign-memorandum-understanding-rohingya-humanitarian-response>.



more 700,000 refugees flee to Bangladesh since October 2016”.³² The agreement itself focuses on the treatment of refugees and does not address vital issues like the reintegration process. Not having included such an essential aspect of the matter has led to the hosting of too many refugees for the capacity of the camp.

Special Envoy Myanmar

The Special Envoy has been established to continue making all diplomatic efforts to offer humanitarian aid and community-based resilience support and protection services, guided by the moral principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, and the UN Charter.

“The Special Envoy amplified the latest call from the Security Council for an immediate cessation of all forms of violence in Myanmar, full respect for human rights and the rule of law, and full, safe and unfettered humanitarian access to all those in need. It called for immediate and specific de-escalation steps including ending aerial bombing and the burning of civilian houses and infrastructure”.³³

The Special Envoy expressed its deep concern about civilian displacement across communities and the need for more innovative infrastructures for humanitarian actors to reach those affected with lifesaving support. The program has based its funding on stakeholders and donors who are willing to invest in such resilience support services. Although this attempt has improved the situation, we cannot neglect the fact that ongoing hostilities are still taking place in Myanmar and Bangladesh within Cox Bazar.

³² Della-Giacoma, Jim. “Reading between the Lines of the Bangladesh-Myanmar Mou.” *Governance and Development Soapbox*, 29 Nov. 2017, <https://abtgovernance.com/2017/11/29/reading-between-the-lines-of-the-bangladesh-myanmar-mou/>.

³³ UN. “Note to Correspondents: Statement by the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy on Myanmar, Noeleen Heyzer Secretary-General.” *United Nations*, 17 Aug. 2022, www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/note-correspondents/2022-08-17/note-correspondents-statement-the-secretary-general%E2%80%99s-special-envoy-myanmar-noeleen-heyzer#:~:text=The%20Special%20Envoy%E2%80%99s%20mandate%20as%20an%20impartial%20actor,c onsistent%20with%20the%20principles%20of%20the%20United%20Nations.



POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Investigating and overviewing human rights conditions

Creating panels of experts for the investigation of human rights conditions would be a beneficial solution on both national and international scales. Each member state of the UNGA can select an expert in the field of political science, international law, and IDPs, so as to represent the country in the panel. Within the panel heinous crimes such as genocides and ethnic cleansing could be prevented by submitting reports to track progress made on an international level. In that way, perpetrators would be brought before justice and punished accordingly.

As far as the situation in Myanmar is concerned, all neighboring nations could send reports regarding the Rohingya's ethnic cleansing to avoid biased information. If the conditions deteriorate, the panel will urgently discuss the matter from a holistic point of view. Furthermore, human rights conditions in refugee camps could also be addressed. Especially in big infrastructures such as Cox Bazar, violations of International Humanitarian Law can be observed daily.

Providing Humanitarian Aid to IDPs

The protection of civilians fleeing hostile and violent environments must always be a priority for the international community when responding to such crises. Both access to medical aid and care and psychological support are extremely important to facilitate the re-integration of displaced Rohingya into society.

The role of the UN agencies including UNICEF, IMO, WHO, WFP, and UNHCR has



proved to be fundamental in safeguarding IDPs' and refugees' human rights. Food, water, sanitation supplies, and shelter facilities are equally important in ensuring Rohingya's wellbeing. To that end, an integral solution for the effective delivery of humanitarian aid would be the complete removal of Myanmar's restrictions when it comes to the delivery of food and medical supplies to the camps. Imposing sanctions on Myanmar through UNSC can urge the government to offer humanitarian aid to refugee camps in collaboration with the aforementioned organizations, instead of enforcing blockade policies that deteriorate the living conditions within the infrastructures.

On the other hand, reintegration is also of paramount importance to all Rohingyas after leaving Cox Bazar. Hence, all aforementioned IGOs, mostly UNICEF and ILO could help with family tracing and job finding, to reintroduce victims to civilian life.

Addressing the question of Ethnic Cleansing

The perpetrators of the ongoing crimes and particularly the genocidal violence must be brought before competent Tribunals and face legal charges for committing crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. The office of the ICC Prosecutor has already initiated investigations in Myanmar to collect the necessary information and press criminal charges against the responsible individuals. Members of the international community are called to support the acts of the ICC, facilitate its investigations, and work together to serve justice for the victims.

Additionally, the SC could impose sanctions on the government of Myanmar for failing to protect the fundamental rights of its people as well as on political and religious figures and influential personnel that exploit their power and brainwash the public.

Assessing past legal frameworks

The legal framework surrounding Rohingyas should be discussed by the international community and specified under the auspices of UNGA. Seeing as population graphs have been completely altered, resulting in inaccuracy of the Myanmar



Constitution and the Burmese Citizenship law, the issue of re-evaluating existing frameworks in order to include all minorities in Myanmar ought to be brought forward to the General Assembly or even the Security Council. Via this exact measure, Myanmar will be highly encouraged to engage in diplomatic discussions to provide a more inclusive citizenship law.

Arbitration and the recognition of thousands of stateless people living within the nation is required and can be achieved via negotiations as well as potential amendments and changes. New legislation should not only cover the aspect of citizenship status but also the religious, legal, social, and economic space for the recognition of their basic human rights.

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