

Rohingya people

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The **Rohingya people** (/roʊˈɪndʒə, -hɪn-, -ɪnjə/; historically also termed **Arakanese Indians**^{[19][20]}) are a stateless^[21] Indo-Aryan people from Rakhine State, Myanmar. There were an estimated 1 million Rohingya living in Myanmar before the 2016–17 crisis.^{[1][22]} The majority are Muslim while a minority are Hindu.^{[23][24][25][26][27]} Described by the United Nations in 2013 as one of the most persecuted minorities in the world,^{[28][29][30]} the Rohingya population are denied citizenship under the 1982 Myanmar nationality law.^{[31][32][33]} According to Human Rights Watch, the 1982 laws "effectively deny to the Rohingya the possibility of acquiring a nationality. Despite being able to trace Rohingya history to the 8th century, Myanmar law does not recognize the ethnic minority as one of the eight "national races".^[33] They are also restricted from freedom of movement, state education and civil service jobs.^{[33][34]} The legal conditions faced by the Rohingya in Myanmar have been compared with apartheid.^{[35][36][37][38][39][40][41]}

The Rohingyas have faced military crackdowns in 1978, 1991–1992,^[42] 2012, 2015 and 2016–2017. UN officials and HRW have described Myanmar's persecution of the Rohingya as ethnic cleansing.^{[43][44]} The UN human rights envoy to Myanmar reported "the long history of discrimination and persecution against the Rohingya community... could amount to crimes against humanity,"^[45] and there have been warnings of an unfolding genocide.^[46] Yanghee Lee, the UN special investigator on Myanmar, believes the country wants to expel its entire Rohingya population.^[47] Under the 2008 constitution, the Myanmar military still control much of the country's government, including the ministries of home, defense and border affairs, 25% of seats in parliament and one vice president.^{[48][49]}

The Rohingya maintain they are among the indigenous communities of western Myanmar with a heritage dating back over a millennium, with influence from the Arabs, Mughals and Portuguese. The community professes itself as the descendants of people in precolonial Arakan and colonial Arakan; historically, the region was an independent kingdom between Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent. Rohingya legislators were elected to the Parliaments of Myanmar until persecution increased in the late-20th century. Despite accepting the term *Rohingya* in the past,^{[50][51]} the current official position of the Myanmar government is that Rohingyas are not a national race, but are illegal immigrants from neighbouring Bangladesh. Myanmar's government has stopped recognizing the term "Rohingya" and prefers to refer to the community as Bengalis.^[52] Rohingya campaign groups, notably the Arakan Rohingya National Organization, demand the right to "self-determination within Myanmar".^[53]

Rohingya people

Ruáingga □□□□□□□□

رُأَينِغ



Total population

1,547,778^[1]–2,000,000+^[2]

Regions with significant populations

Myanmar (Rakhine State), Bangladesh, Pakistan, Thailand, Malaysia, India, United States, Indonesia, Nepal, Saudi Arabia

 Myanmar 1.0^[3]–1.3 million^{[4][5][6]} (before 2016–17 crisis)

 Bangladesh 900,000+ (inflow of at least 400,000 since 25 August 2017)^{[7][8]}

 Pakistan 200,000^{[9][10][11]}

 Thailand 100,000^[12]

 Malaysia 40,070^[13]

 India 40,000 (in 2017 as refugees from Myanmar)^{[14][15]}

 USA 12,000+ (in 2017 as refugees from Myanmar)^[16]

 Indonesia 11,941^[17]

 Nepal 200 (in 2017 as refugees from Myanmar)^[18]

Probes by the UN have found evidence of increasing incitement of hatred and religious intolerance by "ultra-nationalist Buddhists" against Rohingyas while the Myanmar security forces have been conducting "summary executions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture and ill-treatment and forced labour" against the community.^{[54][55]} According to the United Nations, the human rights violations against the Rohingyas could be termed "crimes against humanity".^{[55][56]}

Languages
Rohingya
Religion
Majority Islam, minority Hinduism

Before the 2015 Rohingya refugee crisis and the military crackdown in 2016 and 2017, the Rohingya population in Myanmar was around 1.1 to 1.3 million^{[4][5][6][1][4]}, chiefly in the northern Rakhine townships, which were 80–98% Rohingya.^[57] Over 900,000 Rohingya refugees have fled to southeastern Bangladesh^[58] as well as to other surrounding countries, and major Muslim nations.^{[59][60][60][61][62]. [63]} More than 100,000 Rohingyas in Myanmar are confined in camps for internally displaced persons.^{[64][65]} Following a Rohingya rebel attack that killed 12 security forces, August 25, 2017, the military launched "clearance operations" that left 400-3000 dead, many more injured, tortured or raped, villages burned, and over 400,000 Rohingya (about 40% of the remaining Rohingya in Myanmar) fleeing to Bangladesh.^{[66][67][68][69][70] [71]}

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The Rohingya population is concentrated in the historical region of Arakan, an old coastal country of Southeast Asia. It is not clear who were the original settlers of Arakan. Burmese nationalist claims that the Rakhine inhabited Arakan since 3000 BCE are not supported by any archaeological evidence. By the 4th century, Arakan became one of the earliest Indianized kingdoms in Southeast Asia. The first Arakanese state flourished in Dhanyawadi. Power then shifted to the city of Waithali. Sanskrit inscriptions in the region indicate that the founders of the first Arakanese states were Indian. Arakan was ruled by the Chandra dynasty.^[89] The British historian Daniel George Edward Hall stated that "The Burmese do not seem to have settled in Arakan until possibly as late as the tenth century AD. Hence earlier dynasties are thought to have been Indian, ruling over a population similar to that of Bengal. All the capitals known to history have been in the north near modern Akyab".^[90]

Arrival of Islam (8th-9th century)

Due to its coastline on the Bay of Bengal, Arakan was a key center of maritime trade and cultural exchange between Burma and the outside world, since the time of the Indian Mauryan Empire.^[91] Arab merchants had been in contact with Arakan since the third century, using the Bay of Bengal to reach Arakan.^[76] Starting in the 8th century, Arab merchants began conducting missionary activities, and many locals converted to Islam.^[92] Some researchers have speculated that Muslims used trade routes in the region to travel to India and China.^[93] A southern branch of the Silk Road connected India, Burma and China since the neolithic period.^{[94][95]} Arab traders are recorded in the coastal areas of southeast Bengal, bordering Arakan, since the 9th century.^[96] The Rohingya population trace their history to this period.^[97]

Besides locals converting to Islam, Arab merchants married local women and later settled in Arakan. As a result of intermarriage and conversion, the Muslim population in Arakan grew.^[76] Modern day Rohingya believe they descended from these early Muslim communities.

Settlers from Burma proper (9th-15th century)

The Rakhines were one of the tribes of the Burmese Pyu city-states. The Rakhines began migrating to Arakan through the Arakan Mountains in the 9th century. The Rakhines established numerous cities in the valley of the Lemro River. These included Sambawak I, Pyinsa, Parein, Hkrit, Sambawak II, Myohaung, Toungoo and Launggret. Burmese forces invaded the Rakhine cities in 1406.^[89] The Burmese invasion forced Rakhine rulers to seek help and refuge from neighboring Bengal in the north.^[89]

Kingdom of Mrauk U

Early evidence of Bengali Muslim settlements in Arakan date back to the time of Min Saw Mon (1430–34) of the Kingdom of Mrauk U. After 24 years of exile in Bengal, he regained control of the Arakanese throne in 1430 with military assistance from the Bengal Sultanate. The Bengalis who came with him formed their own settlements in the region.^{[98][99]} The Santikan Mosque built in the 1430s,^{[98][100]} features a court which "measures 65 ft from north to south and 82 ft from east to west; the shrine is a rectangular structure measuring 33 ft by 47 ft."^[101]



A coin from Arakan used in the Bengal Sultanate, minted 1554/5

King Min Saw Mon ceded some territory to the Sultan of Bengal and recognised his sovereignty over the areas. In recognition of his kingdom's vassal status, the Buddhist kings of Arakan received Islamic titles and used the Bengali gold dinar within the kingdom. Min Saw Mon minted his own coins with the Burmese alphabet on one side and the Persian alphabet on the other.^[99]

Arakan's vassalage to Bengal was brief. After Sultan Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah's death in 1433, Narameikhla's successors invaded Bengal and occupied Ramu in 1437 and Chittagong in 1459. Arakan would hold Chittagong until 1666.^{[102][103]}

Even after independence from the Sultans of Bengal, the Arakanese kings continued the custom of maintaining Muslim titles.^[104] The Buddhist kings compared themselves to Sultans and fashioned themselves after Mughal rulers. They also continued to employ Muslims in prestigious positions within the royal administration.^[105] Some of them worked as Bengali, Persian and Arabic scribes in the Arakanese courts, which, despite remaining Buddhist, adopted Islamic fashions from the neighbouring Bengal Sultanate.^{[105][98]}

The population increased in the 17th century, as slaves were brought in by Arakanese raiders and Portuguese settlers following raids into Bengal.^{[105][73][98]} Slaves included members of the Mughal nobility. A notable royal slave was Alaol, a renowned poet in the Arakanese court. The slave population were employed in a variety of workforces, including in the king's army, commerce and agriculture.^{[73][106][107]}

In 1660, Prince Shah Shuja, the governor of Mughal Bengal and a claimant of the Peacock Throne, fled to Arakan with his family after being defeated by his brother Emperor Aurangzeb during the Battle of Khajwa. Shuja and his entourage arrived in Arakan on 26 August 1660.^[108] He was granted asylum by King Sanda Thudhamma. In December 1660, the Arakanese king confiscated Shuja's gold and jewelry, leading to an insurrection by the royal Mughal refugees. According to varying accounts, Shuja's family was killed by the Arakanese, while Shuja himself may have fled to a kingdom in Manipur. However, members of Shuja's entourage remained in Arakan and were recruited by the royal army, including as archers and court guards. They were king makers in Arakan until the Burmese conquest.^[109] The Arakanese continued their raids of Mughal Bengal. Dhaka was raided in 1625.^[110]

Emperor Aurangzeb gave orders to his governor in Mughal Bengal, Shaista Khan, to end what the Mughals saw as Arakanese-Portuguese piracy.^{[111][112]} In 1666, Shaista Khan led a 6000 man army and 288 warships to seize Chittagong from the Kingdom of Mrauk U.^[113] The Mughal expedition continued up till the Kaladan River. The Mughals placed the northern part of Arakan under its administration and vassalage.^[114] The Muslim population became concentrated in northern Arakan. In 1960, Burmese health minister Sulta Mahmud cited the Kaladan River as the boundary between Rohingya and Rakhine areas.^[115]

Burmese conquest

Following the Konbaung Dynasty's conquest of Arakan in 1785, as many as 35,000 people of the Rakhine State fled to the neighbouring Chittagong region of British Bengal in 1799 to escape persecution by the Bamar and to seek protection under the British Raj.^[116] The Bamar executed thousands of men and deported a considerable portion of people from Rakhine population to central Burma, leaving Arakan a scarcely populated area by the time the British occupied it.^[117]



Set against the backdrop of the Arakan Mountains, Mrauk U was home to a multiethnic population, including the poet Alaol



Prince Shah Shuja received asylum in Arakan in 1660



A coin from the Kingdom of Mrauk U with Persian inscriptions

According to an article on the "*Burma Empire*" published by the British Francis Buchanan-Hamilton in 1799, "the *Mohammedans*, who have long settled in *Arakan*", "call themselves *Rooinga*, or natives of *Arakan*".^[77] However, according to Derek Tokin, Hamilton no longer used the term to refer to the Muslims in Arakan in his later publications.^[88] Sir Henry Yule saw many Muslims serving as eunuchs in Konbaung while on a diplomatic mission to the Burmese capital, Ava.^{[118][119]}

British colonial rule



An old mosque in Akyab during British rule

British policy encouraged Bengali inhabitants from adjacent regions to migrate into the then lightly populated and fertile valleys of Arakan as farm laborers. The East India Company extended the Bengal Presidency to Arakan. There was no international boundary between Bengal and Arakan and no restrictions on migration between the regions. In the early 19th century, thousands of Bengalis from the Chittagong region settled in Arakan seeking work.^[120] It is hard to know whether these new Bengal migrants were the same population that was deported by force to Bengal's Chittagong during the Burmese conquest in the 18th century and later returned back to Arakan as a result of British policy or they were a new migrant population with no ancestral roots to Arakan.^[121]



A mosque in Akyab

The British census of 1872 reported 58,255 Muslims in Akyab District. By 1911, the Muslim population had increased to 178,647.^[122] The waves of migration were primarily due to the requirement of cheap labour from British India to work in the paddy fields. Immigrants from Bengal, mainly from the Chittagong region, "moved en masse into western townships of Arakan". Albeit Indian immigration to Burma was a nationwide phenomenon, not just restricted to Arakan.^[123] For these reasons historians believed that most Rohingyas arrived with the British colonialists in the 19th and 20th centuries with some tracing their ancestry much further.^[80]

According to Thant Myint-U, historian and adviser to President Thein Sein, "At the beginning of the 20th century, Indians were arriving in Burma at the rate of no less than a quarter million per year. The numbers rose steadily until the peak year of 1927, immigration reached 480,000 people, with Rangoon exceeding New York City as the greatest immigration port in the world. This was out of a total population of only 13 million; it was equivalent to the United Kingdom today taking 2 million people a year." By then, in most of the largest cities in Burma, Yangon, Sittwe, Patheingyi and Mawlamyine, the Indian immigrants formed a majority of the population. The Burmese under the British rule felt helpless, and reacted with a "racism that combined feelings of superiority and fear".^[123] Professor Andrew Selth of Griffith University writes that although a few Rohingya trace their ancestry to Muslims who lived in Arakan in the 15th and 16th centuries, most Rohingyas arrived with the British colonialists in the 19th and 20th centuries.^{[124][125]}

The impact of British immigration was particularly acute in Arakan. Although it boosted the colonial economy, local Arakanese bitterly resented it.^[126] According to historian Clive J. Christie, "The issue became a focus for grass-roots Burmese nationalism, and in the years 1930–31 there were serious anti-Indian disturbances in Lower Burma, while 1938 saw riots specifically directed against the Indian Muslim community. As Burmese nationalism

increasingly asserted itself before the Second World War, the 'alien' Indian presence inevitably came under attack, along with the religion that the Indian Muslims imported. The Muslims of northern Arakan were to be caught in the crossfire of this conflict."^[127]

Shipping

Due to the terrain of the Arakan Mountains, the Arakan region was mostly accessible by sea.^[128] In British Arakan Division, the port of Akyab had ferry services and a thriving trade with the ports of Chittagong, Narayanganj, Dacca and Calcutta in British India,^{[129][130]} as well as with Rangoon. Akyab was one of the leading rice ports in the world, hosting ship fleets from Europe and China.^[131] Many Indians settled in Akyab and dominated its seaport and hinterland. The 1931 census found 500,000 Indians living in Akyab.^[132]



A Royal Indian Navy ship in Akyab Harbour

Legislators

Several Arakanese Indians were elected to Burmese native seats in the Legislative Council of Burma and Legislature of Burma. During the 1936 Burmese general election, Advocate U Pho Khaine was elected from Akyab West and Gani Markan was elected from Maungdaw-Buthidaung. In 1939, U Tanvy Markan was elected from Maungdaw-Buthidaung. Their elections in the Burmese native category set them apart from immigrant Indian legislators.^[133]

World War II

During World War II, the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) invaded British-controlled Burma. The British forces retreated and in the power vacuum left behind, considerable inter communal violence erupted between Arakanese and Muslim villagers. The British armed Muslims in northern Arakan in order to create a buffer zone that would protect the region from a Japanese invasion when they retreated^[134] and to counteract the largely pro-Japanese ethnic Rakhines.^[73] The period also witnessed violence between groups loyal to the British and the Burmese nationalists.^[134] The Arakan massacres in 1942 involved communal violence between British-armed V Force Rohingya recruits and pro-Japanese Rakhines, polarizing the region along ethnic lines.^[135]



Australian officers with Rohingya men wearing typical lungis

Tensions boiling in Arakan before the war erupted during the Japanese invasion of Southeast Asia and Arakan became the frontline in the conflict. The war resulted in a complete breakdown of civil administration and consequent development of habits of lawlessness exacerbated by the availability of modern arms. The Japanese advance triggered an inter-communal conflict between Muslims and Buddhists. The Muslims fled towards British-controlled Muslim-dominated northern Arakan from Japanese-controlled Buddhist-majority areas. This stimulated a "reverse ethnic cleansing" in British-controlled areas, particularly around Maungdaw. Failure of British counter-offensive attempted from December 1942 to April 1943 resulted in abandonment of even more of the Muslim population as well as increase in inter-communal violence.^[136]

Moshe Yegar, a research fellow at Truman Institute, Hebrew University of Jerusalem that hostility had developed between the Muslims and the Buddhists that had brought about a similar hostility in other parts of Burma. This tension was let loose with the retreat of the British. With the approach of Japanese into Arakan, the Buddhists instigated cruel measures against the Muslims. Thousands, though the exact number is unknown, fled from

Buddhist-majority regions to eastern Bengal and northern Arakan with many being killed or dying of starvation. The Muslims in response conducted retaliatory raids from British-controlled areas, causing Buddhists to flee to southern Arakan.^[137]

Aye Chan, a historian at Kanda University in Japan, has written that as a consequence of acquiring arms from the British during World War II, Rohingyas^[note 2] tried to destroy the Arakanese villages instead of resisting the Japanese. Chan agrees that hundreds of Muslims fled to northern Arakan though states that the accounts of atrocities on them were exaggerated. In March 1942, Rohingyas from northern Arakan killed around 20,000 Arakanese. In return, around 5,000 Muslims in the Minbya and Mrauk-U Townships were killed by Rakhines and Red Karens.^{[138][139]}

As in the rest of Burma, the IJA committed acts of rape, murder and torture against Muslims in Arakan.^[140] During this period, some 22,000 Muslims in Arakan were believed to have crossed the border into Bengal, then part of British India, to escape the violence.^{[141][142][143]} The exodus was not restricted to Muslims in Arakan. Thousands of Burmese Indians, Anglo-Burmese and British who settled during colonial period emigrated en masse to India.

To facilitate their reentry into Burma, British formed Volunteer Forces with Rohingya. Over the three years during which the Allies and Japanese fought over the Mayu peninsula, the Rohingya recruits of the V-Force, engaged in a campaign against Arakanese communities, using weapons provided by V-Force.^[135] According to the secretary of British governor, the V Force, instead of fighting the Japanese, destroyed Buddhist monasteries, pagodas, and houses, and committed atrocities in northern Arakan. The British Army's liaison officer Anthony Irwin on the other hand praised the role of the V Force.^{[144][145]}

Pakistan Movement

During the Pakistan Movement in the 1940s, Rohingya Muslims in western Burma organized a separatist movement to merge the region into East Pakistan.^[119] The commitments of the British regarding the status of Muslims after the war are not clear. V Force officers like Andrew Irwin felt that Muslims along with other minorities must be rewarded for their loyalty. Muslim leaders believed that the British had promised them a "Muslim National Area" in Maungdaw region. They were also apprehensive of a future Buddhist-dominated government. In 1946, calls were made for annexation of the territory by Pakistan as well as of an independent state.^{[136][137]} Before the independence of Burma in January 1948, Muslim leaders from Arakan addressed themselves to Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, and asked his assistance in incorporating the Mayu region to Pakistan considering their religious affinity and geographical proximity with East Pakistan.^[119] The North Arakan Muslim League was founded in Akyab (modern Sittwe) two months later.^[119] The proposal never materialized since it was reportedly turned down by Jinnah, saying that he was not in a position to interfere into Burmese matters.^[119]

Post-WWII migration

The numbers and the extent of post-independence immigration from Bangladesh are subject to controversy and debate. In a 1955 study published by Stanford University, the authors Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff write, "The post-war (World War II) illegal immigration of Chittagonians into that area was on a vast scale, and in the Maungdaw and Buthidaung areas they replaced the Arakanese."^[146] The authors further argue that the term *Rohingya*, in the form of *Rwangya*, first appeared to distinguish settled population from newcomers: "The newcomers were called Mujahids (crusaders), in contrast to the Rwangya or settled Chittagonian population."^[146] According to the International Crisis Group (ICG), these immigrants were actually the Rohingyas who were

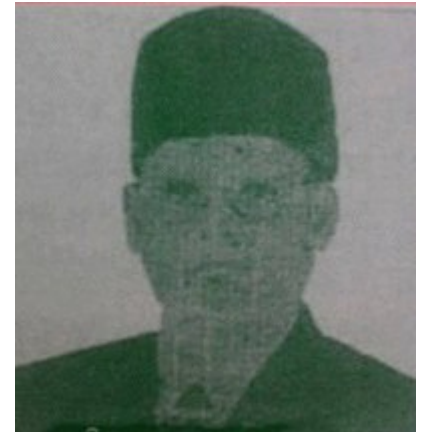
displaced by the World War II and began to return to Arakan after the independence of Burma but were rendered as illegal immigrants, while many were not allowed to return.^[147] ICG adds that there were "some 17,000" refugees from the Bangladesh liberation war who "subsequently returned home".^[147]

Burmese independence

The Rohingya community was recognized as an indigenous ethnic nationality of Burma, with members of the group serving as representatives in the Burmese parliament, as well as ministers, parliamentary secretaries, and other high-ranking government positions. But since Burma's military junta took control of the country in 1962, the Rohingyas have been systematically deprived of their political rights.^[148]

Rohingya political participation in Burma

In the prelude to independence, two Arakanese Indians were elected to the Constituent Assembly of Burma in 1947, including M. A. Gaffar and Sultan Ahmed. After Burma became independent in 1948, M. A. Gaffar presented a memorandum of appeal to the Government of the Union of Burma calling for the recognition of the term "Rohingya", based on local Indian names of Arakan (Rohan and Rohang), as the official ethnicity of Arakanese Indians. Sultan Ahmed, who served as Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Minorities, was a member of the Justice Sir Ba Oo Commission charged with exploring whether Arakan Division should be granted statehood. During the Burmese general election, 1951, five Rohingyas were elected to the Parliament of Burma, including one of the country's first two female MPs, Zura Begum. Six MPs were elected during the Burmese general election, 1956 and subsequent by-elections. Sultan Mahmud, a former politician in British India, became Minister of Health in the cabinet of Prime Minister of Burma U Nu. In 1960, Mahmud suggested that either Rohingya-majority northern Arakan remain under the central government or be made a separate province. However, during the Burmese general election, 1960, Prime Minister U Nu's pledges included making all of Arakan into one province. The 1962 Burmese coup d'état ended the country's Westminster-style political system. The 1982 Burmese citizenship law stripped most of the Rohingyas of their stake in citizenship.



M. A. Gaffar, a member of Burma's constituent assembly, called for recognizing Rohingyas in 1948

Rohingya community leaders were supportive of the 8888 uprising for democracy. During the Burmese general election, 1990, the Rohingya-led National Democratic Party for Human Rights won four seats in the Burmese parliament. The four Rohingya MPs included Shamsul Anwarul Huq, Chit Lwin Ebrahim, Fazal Ahmed and Nur Ahmed. The election was won by the National League for Democracy led by Aung San Suu Kyi, who was placed under house arrest and not permitted to become prime minister. The Burmese military junta banned the National Democratic Party for Human Rights in 1992. Its leaders were arrested, jailed and tortured.

Rohingya politicians have been jailed to disbar them from contesting elections. In 2005, Shamsul Anwarul Huq was charged under Section 18 of the controversial 1982 Burmese citizenship law and sentenced to 47 years in prison. In 2015, a ruling Union Solidarity and Development Party MP Shwe Maung was disbarred from the Burmese general election, 2015, on grounds that his parents were not Burmese citizens under the 1982 citizenship law.^[149]

As of 2017, Burma does not have a single Rohingya MP and the Rohingya population have no voting rights.^[150]

Mayu Frontier District

A separate administrative zone for the Rohingya-majority northern areas of Arakan existed between 1961 and 1964. Known as the Mayu Frontier District, the zone was set up by Prime Minister U Nu after the 1960 Burmese general election, on the advice of his health minister Sultan Mahmud. The zone was administered directly from Rangoon by the national government. After the Burmese military coup in 1962, the zone was administered by the Burmese army. It was transferred to the Ministry of Home Affairs in 1964 by the Union Revolutionary Council. The socialist military government inducted the zone into Arakan State in 1974.

Conflict in Arakan

The Rakhine for their part felt discriminated against by the governments in Rangoon dominated by the ethnic Burmese with one Rakhine politician saying, "we are therefore the victims of Muslimisation and Burmese chauvinism."^[126] *The Economist* wrote in 2015 that from the 1940s on and right to this day, the Burmese have seen and see themselves as victims of the British Empire while the Rakhine see themselves as victims of the British and the Burmese; both groups were and are so intent upon seeing themselves as victims that neither has much sympathy for the Rohingyas.^[126]

After Jinnah's refusal to accept northern Arakan into the Dominion of Pakistan, some Rohingya elders who supported a *jihad* movement, founded the *Mujahid* party in northern Arakan in 1947.^[151] The aim of the Mujahid party was to create an autonomous Muslim state in Arakan. By the 1950s, they began to use the term "Rohingya" which may be a continuation of the term Rooinga to establish a distinct identity and identify themselves as indigenous. They were much more active before the 1962 Burmese coup d'état by General Ne Win, a Burmese general who began his military career fighting for the Japanese in World War II. Ne Win carried out military operations against them over a period of two decades. The prominent one was Operation King Dragon, which took place in 1978; as a result, many Muslims in the region fled to neighboring Bangladesh as refugees. In addition to Bangladesh, a large number of Rohingyas also migrated to Karachi, Pakistan.^[11] Rohingya mujahideen are still active within the remote areas of Arakan.^[152]

From 1971 to 1978, a number of Rakhine monks and Buddhists staged hunger strikes in Sittwe to force the government to tackle immigration issues which they believed to be causing a demographic shift in the region.^[153] Ne Win's government requested UN to repatriate the war refugees and launched military operations which drove off around 200,000 people to Bangladesh. In 1978, the Bangladesh government protested against the Burmese government concerning "the expulsion by force of thousands of Burmese Muslim citizens to Bangladesh". The Burmese government responded that those expelled were Bangladesh citizens who had resided illegally in Burma. In July 1978, after intensive negotiations mediated by UN, Ne Win's government agreed to take back 200,000 refugees who settled in Arakan.^[154] In the same year as well as in 1992, a joint statement by governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh "acknowledged that the Rohingya were lawful Burmese residents".^[155] In 1982, the Burmese government enacted the citizenship law and declared the "Bengalis" are foreigners.^[156]

There are widespread beliefs among Rakhine people that significant number of immigrants arrived even after the 1980s when the border was relatively unguarded. However, there is no documentation proof for these claims as the last census was conducted in 1983.^[5] Successive Burmese governments have fortified the border and built up border guard forces.

After 1988 Burmese pro-democracy uprising

Since the 1990s, a new 'Rohingya' movement which is distinct from the 1950s armed rebellion has emerged. The new movement is characterized by lobbying internationally by overseas diaspora, establishing indigenous claims by Rohingya scholars, publicizing the term "Rohingya" and denying Bengali origins by Rohingya politicians.^[57]

Rohingya scholars have claimed that Rakhine was previously a Muslim state for a millennium, or that Muslims were king-makers of Rakhine kings for 350 years. They often traced the origin of Rohingyas to Arab seafarers. These claims have been rejected as "newly invented myths" in academic circles.^[75] Some Rohingya politicians have labelled Burmese and international historians as "Rakhine sympathizers" for rejecting the purported historical origins.^[157] Nonetheless, the term spreads with great success after the riots in 2012.

The movement has garnered sharp criticisms from ethnic Rakhines and Kamans, the latter of whom are a recognized Muslim ethnic group in Rakhine. Kaman leaders support citizenship for Muslims in northern Rakhine but believe that the new movement is aimed at achieving a self-administered area or Rohang State as a separate Muslim state carved out of Rakhine and condemn the movement.^[158]

Rakhines' views are more critical. Citing Bangladesh's overpopulation and density, Rakhines perceive the Rohingyas as "the vanguard of an unstoppable wave of people that will inevitably engulf Rakhine".^[159] However, for moderate Rohingyas, the aim may have been no more than to gain citizenship status. Moderate Rohingya politicians agree to compromise on the term Rohingya if citizenship is provided under an alternative identity that is neither "Bengali" nor "Rohingya". Various alternatives including "Rakhine Muslims", "Myanmar Muslims" or simply "Myanmar" have been proposed.^{[88][160]}

Burmese juntas (1990–2011)

The military junta that ruled Myanmar for half a century relied heavily on mixing Burmese nationalism and Theravada Buddhism to bolster its rule, and, in the view of the US government, heavily discriminated against minorities like the Rohingyas and the Chinese people in Myanmar such as the Kokangs and Panthays. Some pro-democracy dissidents from Myanmar's ethnic Bamar majority do not consider the Rohingyas compatriots.^{[161][162][163][164]}

Successive Burmese governments have been accused of provoking riots led by Buddhist monks against ethnic minorities like the Rohingyas and Chinese.^[165] In 2009, a senior Burmese envoy to Hong Kong branded the Rohingyas "ugly as ogres" and a people that are alien to Myanmar.^{[166][167]}

Rakhine State conflicts and refugees (2012–present)

2012 Rakhine State riots

The 2012 Rakhine State riots were a series of conflicts between Rohingya Muslims who are majority in the northern Rakhine and ethnic Rakhines who are majority in the south. Before the riots, there were widespread and strongly held fears circulating among Buddhist Rakhines that they would soon become a minority in their ancestral state.^[159] The riots finally came after weeks of sectarian disputes including a gang rape and murder of a Rakhine woman by Rohingyas and killing of ten Burmese Muslims by Rakhines.^{[168][169]} There is evidence that the pogroms in 2012 were organized with Rakhine men who participated in the riots telling International State Crime Initiative (ISCI) that they were told by the government to defend their "race and religion", were given knives and free food and were bused in from Sittwe to attack the Rohingyas.^[126] The Burmese government denies having organized the pogroms, but to date has never prosecuted anyone for the attacks against the Rohingyas.^[126] *The Economist* argued that since the transition to democracy began in Burma in 2011, the military has been seeking to keep its privileged position, and wanted to encourage riots in 2012 so that the military can pose to the public as the defender of Buddhism against the Muslim Rohingya.^[126]

From both sides, whole villages were "decimated".^{[169][170]} According to the Burmese authorities, the violence, between ethnic Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims, left 78 people dead, 87 injured, and up to 140,000 people have been displaced.^{[171][172]} The government has responded by imposing curfews and by deploying troops

in the region. On 10 June 2012, a state of emergency was declared in Rakhine, allowing the military to participate in the administration of the region.^{[173][174]} Rohingya NGOs overseas have accused the Burmese army and police of targeting Rohingya Muslims through arrests and participating in violence.^{[171][175]}

However, a field observation conducted by the International Crisis Group states that both communities were grateful for the protection provided by the military.^[176] A number of monks' organisations have taken measures to boycott NGOs which they believe helped only Rohingyas in the past decades even though Rakhines are equally poor.^[177] In July 2012, the Burmese Government did not include the Rohingya minority group in the census—classified as stateless Bengali Muslims from Bangladesh since 1982.^[178] About 140,000 Rohingya in Myanmar remain confined in IDP camps.^[65]

2015 refugee crisis

In 2015, the Simon-Skjoldt Centre of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum stated in a press statement the Rohingyas are "at grave risk of additional mass atrocities and even genocide".^[126] In 2015, to escape violence and persecution, thousands of Rohingyas migrated from Myanmar and Bangladesh, collectively dubbed as 'boat people' by international media,^[179] to Southeast Asian countries including Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand by rickety boats via the waters of the Strait of Malacca and the Andaman Sea.^{[179][180][181][182]} The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates about 25,000 people have been taken to boats from January to March in 2015.^{[183][184]} There are claims that around 100 people died in Indonesia,^[185] 200 in Malaysia,^[186] and 10 in Thailand^[187] during the journey. An estimated 3,000 refugees from Myanmar and Bangladesh have been rescued or swum to shore and several thousand more are believed to remain trapped on boats at sea with little food or water. A Malaysian newspaper claimed crisis has been sparked by smugglers.^[188] However, the *Economist* in an article in June 2015 wrote the only reason why the Rohingyas were willing to pay to be taken out of Burma in squalid, overcrowded, fetid boats as "... it is the terrible conditions at home in Rakhine that force the Rohingyas out to sea in the first place."^[126]

2016–17 conflict

See next sections:

- Autumn 2016 - Summer 2017
- Autumn 2017

Autumn 2016 - Summer 2017

On 9 October 2016, unidentified individuals who the Myanmar government claimed were insurgents attacked three Burmese border posts along Myanmar's border with Bangladesh.^[189] According to government officials in the mainly Rohingya border town of Maungdaw, the attackers brandished knives, machetes and homemade slingshots that fired metal bolts. Several dozen firearms and boxes of ammunition were looted by the attackers from the border posts. The attack resulted in the deaths of nine border officers.^[190] On 11 October 2016, four soldiers were killed on the third day of fighting.^[191] Following the attacks, reports emerged of several human rights violations allegedly perpetrated by Burmese security forces in their crackdown on suspected Rohingya insurgents.^[192]

Shortly after, the Myanmar military forces and extremist Buddhists started a major crackdown on the Rohingya Muslims in the country's western region of Rakhine State in response to attacks on border police camps by unidentified insurgents.^[193] The crackdown resulted in wide-scale human rights violations at the hands of security forces, including extrajudicial killings, gang rapes, arsons, and other brutalities.^{[194][195][196]} The military

crackdown on Rohingya people drew criticism from various quarters including the United Nations, human rights group Amnesty International, the US Department of State, and the government of Malaysia.^{[197][198][199][200][201]} The de facto head of government Aung San Suu Kyi has particularly been criticized for her inaction and silence over the issue and for not doing much to prevent military abuses.^{[194][195][3]}

Government officials in Rakhine State originally blamed the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO), an Islamist insurgent group mainly active in the 1980s and 1990s, for the attacks;^[202] however, on 17 October 2016, a group calling itself the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) claimed responsibility.^[203] In the following days, six other groups released statements, all citing the same leader.^[204] The Myanmar Army announced on 15 November 2016 that 69 Rohingya insurgents and 17 security forces (10 policemen, 7 soldiers) had been killed in recent clashes in northern Rakhine State, bringing the death toll to 134 (102 insurgents and 32 security forces). It was also announced that 234 people suspected of being connected to the attack were arrested.^{[205][206]}

A police document obtained by Reuters in March 2017 listed 423 Rohingyas detained by the police since 9 October 2016, 13 of whom were children, the youngest being ten years old. Two police captains in Maungdaw verified the document and justified the arrests, with one of them saying, "We the police have to arrest those who collaborated with the attackers, children or not, but the court will decide if they are guilty; we are not the ones who decide." Myanmar police also claimed that the children had confessed to their alleged crimes during interrogations, and that they were not beaten or pressured during questioning. The average age of those detained is 34, the youngest is 10, and the oldest is 75.^{[207][208]}

The Myanmar Armed Forces (Tatmadaw) stated on 1 September that the death toll had risen to 370 insurgents, 13 security personnel, two government officials and 14 civilians.^[209] The United Nations believes over 1,000 people have been killed since October 2016, which contradicts the death toll provided by the Myanmar government.^{[210][211]}

Autumn 2017 crisis

On August 24, 2017, the Rakhine Commission chaired by former U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan -- established by the new civilian Myanmar government to recommend solutions to the ethnic conflict and related issues in Rakhine state -- released its recommendations for alleviating the suffering of minorities (especially the Rohingya), calling for measures that would improve security in Myanmar for the Rohingya, but not calling for all measures sought by various Rohingya factions.^{[212][213]}

The following morning, according to Myanmar military officials, a Rohingya rebel group -- ARSA (Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army) -- led multiple coordinated attacks on police outposts and border guards, killing a dozen government forces, at the cost of over 50 dead among the rebels.^{[212][214][215][216][217][213][218]}

Almost immediately, the Myanmar military -- apparently teaming with local authorities and mobs of Rakhine Buddhist civilians -- launched massive reprisals that it described as anti-terrorist "clearance operations," attacking Rohingya villages throughout northern Rakhine state. Within the first three weeks, the military reported over 400 dead (whom it described as mostly "militants" and "terrorists") -- the U.N. estimated over 1,000 dead (mostly civilians), and other sources suggested as many as 3,000 -- in the first four weeks of the reprisals.^{[212][216][215][217]}

Refugees reported numerous civilians -- including women and children -- being indiscriminantly beaten, raped, tortured, shot, hacked to death or burned alive. and whole villages being burnt down by authorities and Buddhist mobs. Human Rights Watch released satellite photos showing the villages burning, but the Myanmar government insisted the fires were lit by Rohingya, themselves, or specifically Rohingya militants -- though the authorities offered no proof of the allegation, and refused or tightly controlled all media and foreign access to the area.^{[212][214][215][217][213]}

Myanmar's presidential spokesman reported that 176 ethnic Rohingya villages -- out of the original a total of 471 Rohingya villages in three townships -- had become empty. In addition to the 176 "abandoned" villages, some residents reportedly fled from at least 34 other villages.^[212]

In the first four weeks of the conflict, over 400,000 Rohingya refugees (approximately 40% of the remaining Rohingya in Myanmar) fled the country on foot or by boat (chiefly to Bangladesh -- the only other country bordering the Rakhine state area under attack) -- creating a major humanitarian crisis. In addition, 12,000 Rakhine Buddhists, and other non-Muslim Rakhine state residents were displaced within the country.^{[214][215]}

On 10 September 2017, ARSA declared a temporary unilateral ceasefire to allow aid groups to work in the region. Its statement read that "ARSA strongly encourages all concerned humanitarian actors resume their humanitarian assistance to all victims of the humanitarian crisis, irrespective of ethnic or religious background during the ceasefire period." However, the Myanmar government dismissed the gesture, saying "we don't negotiate with terrorists."^{[219][220][221]}

The violence and humanitarian 'catastrophe,' inflamed international tensions, especially in the region, and throughout the Muslim world.^{[212][214][215][216]}

September 13, Myanmar's presidential spokesman announced Myanmar would establish a new commission to implement some recommendations of Annan's Rakhine Commission, in their August 2017 report. ^[212]

The United Nations initially reported in early September 2017 that more than 120,000 Rohingya people had fled Myanmar for Bangladesh due to a recent rise in violence against them.^[222] The UNHCR, on September 4, estimated 123,000 refugees have escaped western Myanmar since 25 August 2017.^[223] (By September 15, that number had surpassed 400,000^[215]) The situation was expected to exacerbate the current refugee crisis as more than 400,000 Rohingya without citizenship were trapped in overcrowded camps and in conflict regions in Western Myanmar.^[222]

Myanmar's de-facto civilian leader and Nobel laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi,^{[224][225]} criticized the media's reporting on the crisis, saying that her government is protecting everyone in Rakhine state, and argued that the reporting was misinformation that benefitted the aims of terrorists.^[226]

Some reports suggest that the Myanmar military has ceded some border outposts to rebels armed with wooden clubs as part of encouraging Rohingyas to leave the country.^[227]

A Holy See diplomat stated that at least 3000 people were killed by Myanmar security forces in August and September 2017.^[228]

The U.N. Secretary General issued a statement, September 13, 2017, implying that the situation facing the Rohingya in Rakhine state was "ethnic cleansing." He urged Myanmar authorities to suspend military action and stop the violence -- insisting that Myanmar's government uphold the rule of law, and (noting that "380,000" Rohingya had recently fled to Bangladesh) recognize the refugees' right to return to their homes.^{[215][229]}

The same day, the U.N. Security Council issued a separate, unanimous statement, on the crisis following a closed-door meeting about Myanmar. In a semi-official press statement (its first statement on the situation in Myanmar in nine years) -- the Council expressed "concern" about reported excessive violence in Myanmar's security operations, called for de-escalating the situation, reestablishing law and order, protecting civilians, and resolution of the refugee problem.^{[215][229]}

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law and order, protecting civilians, and resolution of the refugee problem.^{[215][229]}

On September 19, 2017, Myanmar's civilian leader, State Councillor Aung San Suu Kyi, made a major televised speech on the crisis -- in English -- stating "We condemn all human rights violations and unlawful violence," and indicated a desire to know why the Rohingya were fleeing. But largely defended her prior position supporting the Myanmar military and its actions, and deflected international criticism by saying most Rohingya villages remained intact, and conflict had not broken out everywhere. Expressing no criticism of the Myanmar military, and denying that it had engaged in any "armed clashes or clearance operations" since September 5, she added, "We are committed to the restoration of peace and stability and rule of law throughout the state," and that the country was "committed to a sustainable solution... for all communities in this state", but was vague as to how that would be achieved.^{[224][230][231][232]}

Refugee relocation to Thengar Char island (2016-present)

In January 2016, the government of Bangladesh initiated a plan to relocate tens of thousands of Rohingya refugees, who had fled to the country following persecution in Myanmar.^{[233][234]} The refugees are to be relocated to the island of Thengar Char.^{[233][234]} The move has received substantial opposition. Human rights groups have seen the plan as a forced relocation.^{[233][234]} Additionally, concerns have been raised about living conditions on the island, which is low-lying and prone to flooding.^{[233][234]} The island has been described as "only accessible during winter and a haven for pirates".^{[233][234]} It is nine hours away from the camps in which the Rohingya currently live.^{[233][234]} 65,000 refugees have been estimated to have entered Bangladesh since October 2016: more than 200,000 are estimated to have been there already.^{[233][234]}

Genocide accusations

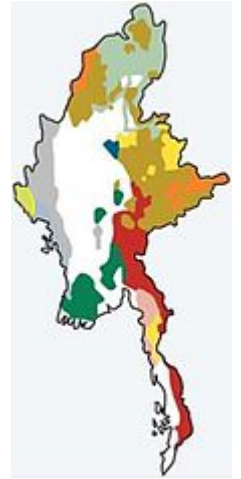
In 2015, an assessment by the Yale Law School concluded that there was a concerted campaign against the Rohingya, which could be classified as genocide under international law.^[235] An investigation by the media channel Al Jazeera English, along with the group Fortify Rights, found that the Myanmar military was systematically targeting the Rohingya population because of its ethnicity and religion.^[236] The International State Crime Initiative of the University of London issued a report stating that a genocide is taking place against the Rohingya.^[237] The United Nations High Commission for Refugees has used the term ethnic cleansing to describe the exodus of Rohingya from Myanmar.^[238]

Demographics

Those who identify as Rohingyas typically reside in the northernmost townships of Arakan bordering Bangladesh where they form 80–98% of the population. A typical Rohingya family has four or five surviving children but numbers up to twenty eight have been recorded in rare cases.^{[5][239]} Rohingyas have 46% more children than Myanmar's national average.^[5] As of 2014, about 1.3 million Rohingyas live in Myanmar and an estimated 1 million overseas. They form 40% of Rakhine State's population or 60% if overseas population is included. As of December 2016, 1 in 7 stateless persons worldwide are Rohingya per United Nations figures, and the Rohingya are the world's largest stateless community.^{[1][240]}

Prior to the 2015 Rohingya refugee crisis and the military crackdown in 2016 and 2017, the Rohingya population in Myanmar was around 1.1 to 1.3 million^{[4][5][6][1][4]} They reside mainly in the northern Rakhine townships, where they form 80–98% of the population.^[57] Many Rohingyas have fled to southeastern Bangladesh, where there are over 900,000 refugees,^[58] as well as to India,^[59] Thailand,^[60] Malaysia,^[60] Indonesia,^[61] Saudi Arabia^[62] and Pakistan.^[63] More than 100,000 Rohingyas in Myanmar live in camps for internally displaced persons, and the authorities do not allow them to leave.^{[64][65]}

The following table shows the statistics of Muslim population in Arakan. The data is for all Muslims in Arakan (Rakhine), regardless of ethnicity. The data for Burmese 1802 census is taken from a book by J. S. Furnivall. The British censuses classified immigrants from Chittagong as Bengalis. There were a small number of immigrants from other parts of India. The 1941 census was lost during the war. The 1983 census conducted under the Ne Win's government omitted people in volatile regions. It is unclear how many were missed. British era censuses can be found at Digital Library of India.



The **yellow-green striped section** show the approximate location of the Rohingya in Myanmar



Rohingya people in Rakhine State

Year	Muslims in Arakan	Muslims in Akyub District	Akyub's population	Percentage of Muslims in Akyub	Indians in Arakan (Including most Muslims)	Indians born outside Myanmar	Arakan's total population	Percentage of Muslims in Arakan
1802 census (Burmese)	Lost?						248,604	
1869	24,637			10%			447,957	5%
1872 census	64,315	58,255	276,671	21%			484,963	13%
1881 census			359,706		113,557	71,104	588,690	
1891 census			416,305		137,922	62,844	673,274	
1901 census	162,754	154,887	481,666	32%	173,884	76,445	762,102	21%
1911 census		178,647	529,943	30%	197,990	46,591	839,896	
1921 census			576,430		206,990	51,825	909,246	
1931 census	255,469	242,381	637,580	38%	217,801	50,565	1,008,535	25.3%
1983 census	584,518						2,045,559	29%

Language

The Rohingya language is part of the Indo-Aryan sub-branch of the greater Indo-European language family and is related to the Chittagonian language spoken in the southernmost part of Bangladesh bordering Myanmar.^[27] While both Rohingya and Chittagonian are related to Bengali, they are not mutually intelligible with the latter. Rohingyas do not speak Burmese, the *lingua franca* of Myanmar, and face problems in integration. Rohingya scholars have successfully written the Rohingya language in various scripts including the Arabic, Hanifi, Urdu, Roman, and Burmese alphabets, where Hanifi is a newly developed alphabet derived from Arabic with the addition of four characters from Latin and Burmese.

More recently, a Latin alphabet has been developed using all 26 English letters A to Z and two additional Latin letters Ç (for retroflex R) and Ñ (for nasal sound). To accurately represent Rohingya phonology, this alphabet also uses five accented vowels (áéíóú). It has been recognised by ISO with ISO 639-3 "rhg" code.^[241]

Religion

The Rohingya people practice Sunni Islam. The government restricts their educational opportunities; many pursue fundamental Islamic studies as their only option. Mosques and madrasas are present in most villages. Traditionally, men pray in congregations and women pray at home.

Health

The Rohingya face discrimination and barriers to health care.^{[1][242]} According to a 2016 study published in the medical journal *The Lancet*, Rohingya children in Myanmar face low birth weight, malnutrition, diarrhea, and barriers to reproduction on reaching adulthood.^[1] Rohingya have a child mortality rate of up to 224 deaths per 1000 live births, more than 4 times the rate for the rest of Myanmar (52 per 1000 live births), and 3 times rate of rest non-Rohingya areas of Rakhine state (77 per 1000 live births).^{[243][1]} The paper also found that 40% of Rohingya children suffer from diarrhea in internally displaced persons camp within Myanmar at a rate five times that of diarrheal illness among children in the rest of Rakhine.^[243]



Hashimiah Orphans Madrasah in Selayang, Malaysia

Human rights and refugee status

The Rohingya people have been described as "one of the world's least wanted minorities" and "some of the world's most persecuted people".^{[245][246]} The Rohingya are deprived of the right to free movement and the right to higher education.^[247] They have been denied Burmese citizenship since the Burmese nationality law was enacted.^[248] They are not allowed to travel without official permission and they were previously required to sign a commitment not to have more than two children, though the law was not strictly enforced. They are subjected to routine forced labour. (Typically, a Rohingya man will have to give up one day a week to work on military or government projects, and one night a week for sentry duty.)^[54] The Rohingya have also lost a lot of arable land, which has been confiscated by the military and given to Buddhist settlers from elsewhere in Myanmar.^{[249][248]}

The Rohingyas' freedom of movement is severely restricted and the vast majority of them have effectively been denied Burmese citizenship. They are also subjected to various forms of extortion and arbitrary taxation; land confiscation; forced eviction and house destruction; and financial restrictions on marriage. —Amnesty International in 2004^[244]

According to Amnesty International, the Rohingya have suffered from human rights violations under the military dictatorship since 1978, and many of them have fled to neighbouring Bangladesh as a result.^[244] In 2005, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had assisted with the repatriation of Rohingyas from Bangladesh, but allegations of human rights abuses in the refugee camps threatened this effort.^[250] In 2015, 140,000 Rohingyas remain in IDP camps after communal riots in 2012.^[251] Despite earlier efforts by the UN, the vast majority of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh are unable to return to Myanmar due to the 2012 communal violence and fear of persecution. The Bangladeshi government has reduced the amount of support it allocates to the Rohingyas in order to prevent an outflow of Rohingya refugees into Bangladesh.^[252] In February 2009, many Rohingya refugees were rescued by Acehese sailors in the Strait of Malacca, after 21 days at sea.^[253]

Thousands of Rohingyas have also fled to Thailand. There have been charges that Rohingyas were shipped and towed out to open sea from Thailand. In February 2009, evidence of the Thai army towing a boatload of 190 Rohingya refugees out to sea has surfaced. A group of refugees rescued by Indonesian authorities told that they were captured and beaten by the Thai military, and then abandoned at sea.^[254]

The Rakhine community as a whole has tended to be cast internationally as violent extremists – ignoring the diversity of opinions that exist, the fact that the Rakhine

Steps to repatriate Rohingya refugees began in 2005. In 2009, the government of Bangladesh announced that it will repatriate around 9,000 Rohingyas living in refugee camps inside the country back to Myanmar, after a meeting with Burmese diplomats.^{[255][256]} On 16 October 2011, the new government of Myanmar agreed to take back registered Rohingya refugees. However, Rakhine State riots in 2012 hampered the repatriation efforts.^{[257][258]}

On 29 March 2014, the Burmese government banned the word "Rohingya" and asked for registration of the minority as "Bengalis" in the 2014 Myanmar Census, the first in three decades.^{[259][260]} On 7 May 2014, the United States House of Representatives passed the United States House resolution on persecution of the Rohingya people in Burma that called on the government of Myanmar to end the discrimination and persecution.^{[261][262]} Researchers from the International State Crime Initiative at Queen Mary University of London suggest that the Myanmar government is in the final stages of an organised process of genocide against the Rohingya.^{[263][264]} In November 2016, a senior UN official in Bangladesh accused Myanmar of ethnic cleansing of Rohingyas.^[195] However, Charles Petrie, a former top UN official in Myanmar, said that "Today using the term, aside from being divisive and potentially incorrect, will only ensure that opportunities and options to try to resolve the issue to be addressed will not be available."^{[73][265]}

See also

- International reaction to the 2016-17 Rohingya exodus
- Arakan Rohingya National Organization
- Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army
- Rohingya insurgency in Western Myanmar
- Islam in Myanmar
- Rohingya language
- Rakhine people
- Kamein
- List of ethnic groups in Myanmar
- Rohingya language test of Wikipedia at Wikimedia Incubator

Notes

- See (Leider 2013) for a comprehensive survey of the academic opinion on the historical usage of the term. (Leider 2013: 216) citing Christina Fink: "small armed group of Muslims generally known as Rohingya". (Leider 2013: 215–216): Lewa in 2002 wrote that "the Rohingya Muslims are ethnically and religiously related to the Chittagonians of southern Bangladesh." Selth in 2003: "These are Bengali Muslims who live in Arakan State... Most Rohingyas arrived with the British colonialists in the 19th and 20 centuries."
- The term was not used during this period.

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- Mahmood; Wroe; Fuller; Leaning (2016). "The Rohingya people of Myanmar: health, human rights, and identity" ([http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(16\)00646-2/abstract](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(16)00646-2/abstract)). *Lancet*: 1–

themselves are a long-oppressed minority, and rarely attempting to understand their perspective and concerns. This is counterproductive: it promotes a siege mentality on the part of the Rakhine, and obscures complex realities that must be understood if a sustainable way forward is to be found.
—The International Crisis Group, *The Politics of Rakhine State*, 22 October 2014^[147]



Kutupalong Refugee Camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. The camp is one of three, which house up to 300,000 Rohingya people fleeing inter-communal violence in Burma