

Burma's Authoritarian Rule and Depopulation of Rohingya

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The Development of Burma's Authoritarian Rule and Depopulation of Targeted Ethnic Minorities including Rohingya Muslims of Arakan State

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Crimes and Human Rights Violations by Burma's Ruling and Government Military Against the Rohingya Muslims:

- **Ethnic Cleansing**
- **Denial of Citizenship** - rendered practically stateless.
- **Arbitrary arrest, torture and extra-judicial killing**
- **Abuse of Rohingya Women and Elders including**
Using *rape as a weapon of war*
- **Restriction of Movement** - permit required traveling outside village.
- **Restriction on Ability to work or find job**
- **Arbitrary Taxation and Extortion**-including taxation on all produce and animal offspring, travel permits, repair of housing
- **Forced Labor** – mostly violent, military income projects, includes use of pregnant women, children and elderly, connected with detention.
Family income is lost and family unprotected.
- **Land Confiscation** - loss of agricultural income generation
- **Forced eviction** – loss of income and social network, displacement
- **Destruction of homes, offices, schools, mosques,** etc.
- **Religious persecution** – systematic destruction of Islamic sites- illegal to repair and rebuild
- **Ethnic and religious discrimination**
- **Restrictions on Marriage and number of children**
- **Registration of Births and Deaths in Families**
- **Restriction on peaceful assembly**
- **Restriction on Education** - discrimination, cost, travel unsafe.

Governments of Bangladesh, Malaysia and Indonesia have committed human rights violations and brutal persecution of Rohingya and others populations fleeing Burma.

History of Rohingya and Burma

- 7th-14th Century First Muslims were Arab merchants, who came and married locals in Arakan Territory, followed by other Muslims by sea then land.
- Peacefully-coexist with and part of Arakan Kingdom.
- 15th Century Arakan Kingdom Coin with Arakan and Arabic Inscriptions
- 1784 Burman Kingdom attacked and captured Arakan Kingdom.
- 100,000+ Rohingya and Arakan Buddhists killed, enslaved or fled into Bengal India.

British Colonial Burma- *involuntary collective of kingdoms and territories with borders designated by the British not the inhabitants.*

- 1824 Arakan region captured and under British Colonial India rule, by 1883 remainder of today's Burma was captured by the British.
- British Strategy of Divide and Rule –creation of allies and control

- Arakan and other border kingdoms and tribes allowed some autonomy and role in rule, administration and colonial army.
- Burmans forced from area brutally dominant to most submissive.

Burma ~1900 One of world's largest rice exporter, richest British colony and had high literacy rate.

WWII Many Burma border ethnic minorities joined British Forces in fight against Japanese and Burman forces.

- Atrocities against border ethnic minority civilians committed by Burman, Japanese and local allied forces.

In Arakan, some Arakan Buddhists joined Burman-Japanese attack on Rohingya civilians.

- 100,000 Rohingya civilians killed, 80,000 escaped into Bengal India.
- 294 villages depleted of Muslims by murder, escape and destruction.
- Most Muslims pushed into northern Arakan.

Burma's Independence

1947 Assassination of General Aung San. Pangalong vision gone.

- 1948 constitution gave ethnic minorities national representation without equal rights.
- Political and armed ethnic minority opposition to Burman dominant rule without minority equal rights arose in all seven ethnic borders areas.

1962 Start of Military Dictatorship Authoritarian Rule

- Dictator General Ne Win-Isolationist, anti-intellectual, Burman elitist
 - All Opposition Crushed.
 - Regime formed new and only political party permitted.
 - Divide and rule strategy- to diffuse and redirect regime opposition by pitting subpopulations against each other and make local allies in conflict.
 - Creation of Enemies to blame for hardships and militarization.
 - Information control through censorship and propaganda.
 - General oppression to make populace vulnerable and submissive.
- Economic barriers including military corruption
- Dismantling education system. Schools began teaching that Muslims and other opposition minorities were a threat to security and civilization, i.e. take over, hatred and violent. University students first Burman opposition group, started protesting Summer 1962.
 - Rule labeled "Socialism" to gain full military State control through ownership while corrupting and neglecting government services.
 - Economic Isolation
 - Burmans welcomed military that freed them from colonial rule.

Initially many Burmans welcomed the military that help free them from colonial suppressive rule. Early regime propaganda and censorship set the military role as protector.

Regime Targeted Brutal Persecution of Border Minorities-Why?

- Burmanization - Only Burman Buddhism, i.e. one ethnicity, one race and one religion as acceptable members of State.
- British divide and rule strategy- Burmans resented higher colonial subjugation than minorities.
 - Many *minorities joined British WWII fight against Burmans.*
- *Minority political and armed opposition to Burman-dominant rule and lack of equal rights* upon independence and with military rule.
- Borders are rich in natural resources.
- *Strict control of human, commerce and information traffic flow*

Minority women and children fleeing regime military attack.

Development of Anti-Muslim Attitudes – Why?

- Burman ethnic, racial and religious elitism

- Regime aided and abetted Islam phobia, i.e. belief that Muslims intent on takeover, violence and forced conversion.
 - Resentment by previously dominant now submissive Burmans
- Indian civil servant administrators in colonial Burma
- Land lost to Indian moneylenders, especially in The Depression
- Preferential treatment of Rohingya versus Arakan Buddhists by British India.
- Eventual regime tactic to divide populace to gain control and instigate strategic sectarian conflict.

Rohingya and Arakan State under Authoritarian Military Rule

Most Arakan Buddhists have opposed regime rule. Regime divide and rule strategy has favored Arakan Buddhists. Many Arakan Buddhists have been regime allies in the discrimination and brutal persecution of Rohingya.

- Rohingyas not allowed government jobs, Arakans were.
- Rohingya's movement and travel controlled and restricted.
- Rohingya businesses began to be confiscated by the ruling military.
- Only Arakan Buddhists were inducted into military regime political party.
- Rohingya forced labor, land confiscation and arbitrary taxation and extortion created economic insecurity.
- Increasing military violence toward Rohingya.
- Government schools- teachers discriminate, extort money, mistreat and force Rohingya to learn Buddhism. Poverty, safety and restricted travel create barriers to Rohingya school attendance.
- Rohingya forced to use government services often run by corrupt and discriminating military and Arakan Buddhists.

Targeted Persecution Increased Border Area Regime-Opposition

1978 Regime Border 'Four Cuts' Campaign – cut the supplies of food, funds, recruits and information to weaken armed opposition groups *by systematically terrorizing the civilian population in resistance areas.*

1978 Regime Military Campaign Against Rohingya

- Mass arrest, torture, rape and killing of Rohingya
- Destruction of mosques and other religious persecution

Mass Exodus to Bangladesh

~182,000 repatriated back to Arakan, many involuntarily by violence and coercion. Many returned to find property and means of income generation lost.

1982 Burma Citizenship Law denies Rohingya as Burmese national races and declares Rohingya not citizens, at best foreign residents.

- Used to *escalate discrimination, persecution, human rights violations and ethnic cleansing against Rohingya.*

- Used to deny repatriation of all future Rohingya victims of ethnic cleansing flight. Believed to be regime backlash against 1978 international pressure to repatriate Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh.

1988-1990 Pro-Democracy Peaceful Protests against Military Rule

Students attacked, killed, detained and tortured for speaking out against military control, corruption, brutality and human rights violations. Escaping students hunted by military, took up arms for self-defense.

Aung San Suu Kyi's wisdom and non-violent leadership united regime-divided nation, She won 1990 election, military ignored results. She was awarded '91 Nobel Peace Prize.

- New dictators increased against all internal opposition brutality and international financial and geo-political relationships.
- Burma renamed Myanmar, Arakan renamed Rakhine.

1991 Military Crackdown on Border Opposition hits Rakhine

- Rohingya civilians suffered a worse escalation of mass killing, rape, torture, detention and home & mosque destruction than 1978.

'91-'92 Mass Exodus to Bangladesh

- 250,000+ Rohingya fled to Bangladesh.

May 1992 Government of Bangladesh (GoB) stopped granting refugee status

despite continued Rohingya arrivals fleeing persecution.

- GoB forced repatriation by withholding food, violence and coercion.
- ~20,000 Rohingya remained in two UNHCR funded refugee camps.
- GoB has restricted UNHCR access limiting protection of refugees.
- GoB has forced new arrivals back to Burma by threat and actual violence.

1992 Regime military establishes NaSaKa Border Force throughout Northern Rakhine (NRS), where majority of Rohingya live. Since, most frequently cited for committing human rights violations against Rohingya. Restriction on the freedom of movement and other abuses increased significantly after the creation of the NaSaKa.

1992 Burmanization Replaces Rohingya villages with Burman Buddhists = NaTaLa Villages. Decrease the % Muslims in Rakhine

Rohingya villages taken by *forced eviction and land confiscation*.

Rohingya *forced labor* used to build many new villages, including Buddhist pagodas.

Burmans transferred in from central Burma, often poor or criminals.

New NaTaLa villagers increasingly implicated in individual and mass anti-Rohingya violence, theft and property destruction.

1995-9 Regime campaign to reduce uncontrolled rural villages.

1997 Violence Exodus of ~30,000 Rohingya to Bangladesh

- Included Rohingya forcibly repatriated and returned 1992-4.
- All denied refuge by GoB.

Rathidaung Township, third most Northern and populated with Rohingya, from 53 Muslim villages in 1995 to two in 1999.

2003 Regime Population Control of Rohingya.

- Mandatory regime permission to marry for Rohingya only. Permits too expensive for many very poor to marry and often delayed many months.

- Marriage without permission punished with prison, very high fines, violence, expulsion and forced public bride nudity reported.

- Rohingya must sign contract to have no more than three children.

In 2006, regime decreased allowed children to no more than two.

Export of energy sources is largest source of regime private income and geo-political power.

Regime Natural Resource Development Associated with Minority Human Rights Violations

August 2012 Physicians For Human Rights

Uranium is a natural resource of Burma – N. Korea, Iran are military allies of the regime.

Regime transformation of Rakhine State to International Economic Zone after 2004 discovery of large natural gas reserves offshore Rakhine, also inland Northern Rakhine.

Kaladan Multimodal Transportation Project -Sittwe Deep Sea Port 2012

India funding and building river and road corridor (L) Massive land confiscation, forced eviction, loss of income and military brutality.

ROHINGYA ETHNIC CLEANSING RESULTS IN REGIME

ENRICHING AND EMPOWERING LAND ACQUISITION

2007 Saffron Revolution- Buddhist monks and nuns peacefully protested regime price inflation (5X's) of domestic energy and other essential goods amidst widespread protracted severe poverty.

<http://dailynews-malas.blogspot.com/2007/12/shot-at-sight-best-news-pictures-of.html>

Regime response to any opposition- Buddhist monks and nuns attacked, hunted into jungle arrested, tortured and killed.

2008 May 2 Cyclone Nargis- Regime initially refuses international aid.

- Eventually allows and confiscates food and other aid.
- Good quality rice exported for profit as victims fed moldy, rotten rice.
- Many arrested and tortured for aiding victims and criticizing regime.
- UN SG accepted regime relief team report that aid delivered and people OK.

2008 May 10 – Referendum for New Pro-regime Constitution

92% Approval with widespread fraud, coercion and intimidation.

- Mandatory 25% parliament seats to military
- Nargis aid used to coerce vote for new pro-regime constitution.

2003 and 2008 Western Country Regime Financial Sanctions

Jan 2009 Thai Guards beat, detained then towed 1000 stranded Rohingya men and boys out to sea to die

Rohingya flight via sea and victims of human trafficking continues as hopelessness gives them no choice.

2010 March- Emergency Report “Stateless and Starving” by Physicians for Human Rights reveals Government of Bangladesh’s dire conditions set for Rohingya where food aid denied despite adequate sources and violence, causing massive malnutrition crisis

Regime “Reform to Democracy” Propaganda Campaign

- **2010 Nov. 8 Election** -Massive regime voter fraud and intimidation. **Regime wins 82% of Parliament seats**
- **2010 Nov. 13 Aung San Suu Kyi released** after suspiciously timed arrest and trial.
- **2011 Oct. ~200 Political Prisoners Conditional Release- forced to sign agreement to re-arrest if suspected of regime opposition.**
- **2011 Massive military leadership “retirement” to civilians.**
- **2011 Mar.- New President (Former General) Thein Sein**
- **2012 Jan. Prominent Political Prisoners Conditional Release.**
- **2012 Mar 31- Election Aung San Suu Kyi and NLD “landslide” = 6% parliament seats. Regime/military occupy 77% seats.**
- **2012 April 17 –U.S. first Western Country to ease sanctions.**

Continued Regime Military Human Rights Violations

March 2011 Burma Military breaks ceasefire in Shan State.

- Seized northern territory by **destroying civilian villages, killing, rape, torture, women as human shields.**
- Regime propaganda of civil war and rebellion against election results.
- Territory includes **China's Trans-Burma Pipelines, multiple dams for hydropower export & vast opium poppy fields.**

April 2011 Burma Military began fighting in Kachin State.

Human rights violations- include civilians killed, raped, forced evicted, forced labor, entire villages destroyed.

Kachin State rich in natural resources, including jade, gold, silver, copper, waterways for hydropower and timber.

Physicians For Human Rights “Under Siege in Kachin State, Burma” 11/2011

2012 Feb/Mar. Twice re-arrested Buddhist Monk U Gambira imprisoned and tortured leader of Saffron Revolution . *Barred from monasteries. Felt forced to disrobe.*

2012 May – “Use of Rohingya for Forced Labor Prevails” -Arakan Project

2012 July 6-7 – 20-30 Student & youth activists arrested across country for protests, despite new national law making protests legal.

2012 Escalation of Regime Ethnic Cleansing of Rohingya

May 28 – Rakhine Buddhist woman raped and killed, allegedly by three Muslim men.

June 3 – Rakhine mob beat dead 10 Yangon Muslim men off a public bus in South Rakhine.

June 8 – Muslim men and boys prayer and protest turned violent against Rakhine property and people. Muslims were issued curfew.

June 8 -10- Muslim and Rakhine communities committed property and personal violence.

June 10 – State of emergency called regime puts military in control. *Only Muslims curfewed.*

Start of Burma army, NaSaKa and local forces committing, instigating and allowing wave of concerted violence against Rohingya communities including

Burma: Violence in Arakan|Human Rights Watch Getty images 2012 www.HRW.org

June 15 – UN SG Special Advisor Nambiar called for investigation into violence.

Bangladesh armed officials have actively push refuge seekers off shores.

GoB stopped relief in makeshift camp areas to avoid attracting arrivals.

Burma army and Rakhine restricting humanitarian access to Muslims.

WHO – 114 IDP Locations in Rakhine State (L) 102 in Sittwe Township (R) 25 July 2012

June 18 – Aung San Suu Kyi characterized the sectarian violence in Arakan State incorrectly as the result of the government's failure to enforce immigration laws.

July 12 – President Thein Sein said that the “only solution” would be to expel the Rohingya to other countries or to camps overseen by UNHCR.

August 4 – UN Human Rights Spec. Quintana Rakhine visit concerns regarding systematic discrimination against the Rohingya community and serious human rights violations in Rakhine. Called for an independent and credible investigation into allegations of human rights violations.

August 17 – President Thein Sein refused international independent investigation team. Appointed national investigation commission with outspoken anti-Rohingya and conditionally released political prisoners as team members.