Since the beginning of 2008, scores of Rohingya Muslims from Burma have drowned and died on boat at the Andaman Sea in an attempt to reach Malaysia.
THE NEW PRESIDENT OF BURMA

According to a Burmese folk tale, the monk of a Buddhist monastery struck the pet monkey of the monastery once a day. After the death of the monk the new monk struck the monkey twice a day. When the third one came after the death of the second monk he struck the monkey thrice a day. So also the Burmese Dictator U Ne Win ruled the country for twenty six years with blood and iron policy. Than Shwe followed the suit by keeping the people of Burma under the iron heels of the army for two decades. The sham election was held on 7 November 2010 to prolong the army rule. Than Shwe may appoint himself or Gen. Shwe Mann as the new president of Burma. Whoever may be the third president would increase triple the horror of torture, persecutions, atrocities and all kinds of human rights violations.

The junta portrayed the election as a key step in shifting to civilian rule after five decades of military domination, but critics called it a sham and said the military shows little sign of relinquishing control. The US will not accept Snr. Gen Than Shwe as a civilian ruler of Burma. "A dictator in civilian clothing is still a dictator," said State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley. Despite the US stance, China, India and Southeast Asian governments are likely to accept regime officials as legitimate, civilian rulers of Burma following the election. "As the United States and The United Nations fail to exercise effective pressure the regime, the generals in Burma are now confident that the international community can’t and won’t do anything beyond issuing statements to stop their crimes against humanity and plan to build a permanent military dictatorship in the country," said U Aung Din of the US Campaign for Burma. I urge President Obama to renew his support for Aung San Suu Kyi and prodemocracy forces within Burma and work to ensure that elements of the international community are not tempted to recognize the mockery of the democratic process," said Senator Mitch McConnell.

The United States will support UN Commission of crimes against humanity or war crimes committed by the ruling Junta of Burma. Such commission of inquiry against the military leaders has been sought by the opposition groups. The issue took to prominence when Tomas Ojea Quintana, the UN special rapporteur for human rights in Burma, released a critical report to the Human Rights Council in March of this year. According to consistent reports, the possibility exists that some of these human rights violations may entail categories of crimes against humanity or war crimes under the terms of the Statute of the International Criminal Court," said Quintana. In the case of the Bosnian war crimes commission in the early 1990s the UN Secretary
By AFK Jilani

The Junta-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party claimed an overwhelming majority in the polls, winning 882 seats amid allegations of fraud and intimidation, plus the exclusion of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Without NLD, the largest party of Burma, and without the participation of over 2200 political prisoners, foreign observers and journalists how can it be free and fair election. Suu Kyi was released on November 13, days after the election. She is now 65, will undertake her political moves carefully and cautiously. Suu Kyi will be encountering a new generation of hardliner tough army leaders. Her National League for Democracy (NLD) was disband last year for opting to boycott the military-ruled country’s first election in 20 years in response to rules that bar her from taking part. The party won a 1990 election in a landslide but the result was never recognized by the regime. Burma, which has been ruled by the army since 1962, faces Western sanctions and boycotts because of the junta’s poor human rights record. Despite its huge natural resources, it remains one of the world’s poorest nations following decades of mismanagement by successive military regimes, and some areas have been wrecked by decades of civil conflict between the junta and ethnic rebels.

The election, however fraudulent, gave an opportunity for opposition voices to be heard. Optimists see positive development in the inclusion of some businessmen in the legislative assemblies. Though they are proxies, some of them understand economic reforms. Once some generals take off their uniform some ministers they will become freer. The proceeds of booming gas and other resource export and the prospect of additional revenue from new offshore gas development. But the new government would utilize all for their personal interest and they will become richer while the poor will get poorer. Burmese Rohingya women are cast their ballot at a polling station in Sittwe, in Rakhine state, on 7 November 2010. (Soe Zeya Tun/Reuters)

Calls are growing for an end to Western sanctions against Burma, but experts say a shift in policy is unlikely without progress on human rights and the support of democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi. Critics of the policy say sanctions, which have largely kept Western companies out of the resource-rich corner of Asia, are hindering development in what is one of the world’s poorest nations. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which includes Burma, and a group of ethnic political parties have also urged an end to measures, ahead of the new parliament’s opening on January 31. Suu Kyi told AFP in an interview last month that she wanted dialogue with the junta on sanctions. The Shan Nationalities Democratic Parties (SNDDP), the largest ethnic

agitation to remove the autocrats occurs it is usually a result of excessive political repression, nepotism and widespread violation of human rights. After all, what is happening in Burma today would make Tunisia under Ben Ali look like a land of milk and honey. The question is if such a ‘revolution’ is possible in Tunisia and Egypt then why not in Burma. #"
promised to issue red cards. The Rakhaines are carrying out systematic campaigns of vilification against it while distorting their historicity. SAT SOE. Win Latt, a Shan scholar, wrote that "The claim that the name 'Rohingya' is invented and therefore unacceptable completely contradicts the very foundational understanding of ethnicity. It is conceptually rigorous and empirically wrong. Ethnicity is not just a 'thing' but also a process. If we agree that Rohingya migrated from Bangladesh or somewhere else at one historical point in time, Rakhine must have another point in time. Both groups have migrated from somewhere else. None of them fell from the sky'.

Most of the Rakhines were migrated to Arakan after the independence of Burma. In the words of Mr. Sultan Mahmud, ex Health Minister of Burma, "thousands of Rakhines from Barisal, Teknaf, Ramu, Cox's Bazar and Chittagong Hill Tracts migrated to Arakan annually. They were welcomed by the Burmese authorities with flag and music, issued National Registration Cards...... provided with foods, clothes, medicines and building materials. They are finally settled on lands of Muslims. They are thus rehabilitated with arable lands seized again from Muslims with allotment of cattle, seed-grains and fertilizer free of cost. Over three hundred Rohingya villages were destroyed and occupied by the Rakhaine since 1942 Muslims massacre. Their landed properties were taken by the Rakhines."

In the most prosperous areas the government has established "Model Villages" populated by Rakhines and other Buddhists. Now many parts of Arakan Rohingyas have been relocated to be populated by the Rakhines of both inside and outside (Bangladesh) Rakhines. The localities of many mosques were turned to Buddhist monasteries and pagodas, with a view to changing Muslim character of Arakan and changing the real history. Ko Ko Thett a Helsinki-based Burma analyst wrote in the Irrawaddy magazine that "It is widely expected that the USDP will be aiming for near-hundred percent seizure of the available 438 parliamentary seats in the 664 member bicameral legislature. Yet the USDP's total success cannot be ascertained. As German political historian Hans Zollinger points out, charismatic leadership is an essential element in the electoral success of any Burmese political party in history. It was the charisma of Aung San, U Nu and Sut Kyi that was behind the sweeping success of their parties in 1947, 1960 and 1990 elections respectively. The USDP, which lacks both legitimacy as a state-backed party and charismatic leadership, may face more challenges than they have taken into account to the future, when faced with an opposition from both within and outside the electoral process." ##

**Rohingya and their right to Nationality**

**By Aman Ullah**

During the last one year or so, the SPDC is trying to organize the Rohingya people of Arakan through false promises that they will ease all the restrictions put on Rohingya step by step and they are taking steps to issue genuine nationality cards, allow free travel, building and repairing mosques, freedom of marriage including all other contentious issues would be addressed before holding the election.

Although, genuine nationality cards were promised to be issued to the Rohingya before the election, in actual, the regime is issuing only Temporary Registration Cards (TRC) to them, which does not confirm their full and equal citizenship status and cannot be used to claim citizenship.

In July 1995, after UNHCR convinced the authorities to provide all Rohingyas in Northern Rakhine State with some form of identification, the Burmese Immigration and Population Department (IPD) started issuing Rohingyas with a temporary stay permit, the Temporary Registration Card (TRC), which is also known as the "white card". However, not all Rohingyas have received such a card. The TRC explicitly states that the card does not give the holder any evidence of citizenship.

The Rohingya people are living in Arakan generation after generation for centuries after centuries and their arrival in Arakan has predated the arrival of many other peoples and races now residing in Arakan and other parts of Burma. Under the article 3 of Aung San-Ailete Treaty (1947) and the First Schedule to the Burma Independence Act, 1947, the Rohingyas are the citizens of the Union of Burma. They are also one of the indigenous races of Burma under section (1) (ii) and (iii) of the Constitution of the Union of Burma of 24 September 1947, enacted 4 January 1948.

Being one of the indigenous communities of Burma, the Rohingyas were enfranchised in all the national elections of Burma:
ARAKAN ROHINGYA NATIONAL ORGANISATION
ARAKAN, BURMA

Press Release

Rohingya boat people in Thailand need help and protection

26 January 2011

Our attention has been drawn to the case of the 158 distressed Rohingya boat people, who have been arrested by Thai police, on 22 and 24 January 2011, after arriving on the shore of southern Thailand with boat engine troubles. Due to continued persecution and crimes against humanity perpetrated against them by the Burmese military regime, the outflows of Rohingyas from their homeland of Arakan into Bangladesh and other countries is a regular phenomenon over the decades. Also during recent years the world has witnessed how the persecuted Rohingyas become desperate to make their ways, for safe shelter and protection, to Southeast Asian countries in particular, risking their lives through turbulent seas and oceans in rickety boats. Many of them were drowned or perished and eventually ended up in jails in some countries.

Due to sub-human condition with no life and property security, the 158 boat people have left their ancestral homeland in search of shelters and protection, and as such they deserve full sympathy, help and protection from the people and Government of Thailand. They should not be sent back to Burma under military or dictatorship rule. Push back to Burma or push out to the sea is not a solution. We, however, appreciate that the Thai authorities are providing them basic humanitarian assistance with food and water.

Meanwhile, the Rohingya problem, including their recurrent boat people crisis, which has regional and international perspectives, warrants immediate international and regional solution, where the KEY ROLE of the ASEAN is crucial.

We call upon the Government of Thailand not to push back the boat people and treat them humanely on humanitarian grounds. We also urge upon the international community, UN, OIC, EU, ASEAN, USA, UK, Bangladesh, India, Thailand and concerned governments to find out a permanent solution of the Rohingya problem.

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during the later colonial period (1935-1948), during the democratic period (1948-1962), during the BSPP regime (1974-1988) and 1990 multi-party general election held by the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). In their exercise of franchise, the Rohingya elected their representatives to the Legislative Assembly, to the Constituent Assembly and in the Parliament.

As members of the new Parliament, their representatives took the oath of allegiance to the Union of Burma on the 4th January 1948. Their representatives were appointed as cabinet ministers and parliamentary secretaries. They had their own political, cultural, social organizations and had their programme in their own language in the official Burma Broadcasting Services (BBS).

In spite of that, today, by a stroke of the pen in the hands of SPDC, the entire Rohingya people of Arakan lost all their rights and privileges. The SPDC is treating them as temporary residents. They are not only denied their nationality but also their citizenship rights. They are not tolerated and are systematically excluded and rendered "stateless" in their own homeland because of their religious belief and ethnicity. They were not among the so-called 135 ethnic nationalities of the country, recorded by the junta; with an ulterior motive or make them "stateless".

They are subjected to severe restrictions on movement, marriage and access to education, and suffer grave violations of human rights, including forced labour, extortion, exploitation, discrimination, abuse, rape, and religious persecution. Campaigns of terror, crimes against humanity and extermination have been perpetrated against them in a systematic, widespread and planned way.

Expelling the Rohingyas from their ancestral land and properties has become almost a recurring phenomenon since 1948. About 1.5 million uprooted Rohingyas have taken shelters in many countries of the world since the anti-Muslim pogrom of 1942 in Arakan.

Today, this group is increasingly rights less, jobless, homeless, landless and the most illiterate section of Burma's population. They are now people without a country dying alive and facing "slow-burning genocide".

Citizenship or nationality is a "right to have right." According to Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "everyone has the right to a nationality," and "no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality." As a member of the United Nations, Burma is legally obliged to take action to promote "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion."

Similarly, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Burma is a state party, provides for the right of a child to a nationality, and makes specific provision for the obligation to ensure implementation of this right under the state party's national laws in particular where the child would otherwise be stateless.

Nationality, according to the widely ratified international treaty defining criteria for granting citizenship, a principle appears to be emerging whereby nationality is defined as a "genuine and effective link" between the individual and the state. This focuses primarily on "factual ties" as a basis for nationality rights, determined by "the habitual residence of the individual concerned... the center of his interests, his family ties, and his participation in public life, attachment shown by him for a given country and inculcated into his children."

The International Court of Justice has
158 Rohingya Boat Voyagers Detained in Thailand

Kaladan News, 28 January 2011

Chittagong, Bangladesh: Two boat-loads of 158 Rohingya boat voyagers were held in Thailand on 22 and 23 January while they were sailing the Andaman coast in an attempt to reach Malaysia where they are likely to receive more humane treatment than in Thailand or their native Burma, according to a member of Rohingya boat voyagers’ watch group.

There are 38 youth under the age of 18 among the 158 Rohingyas being held, the member said. On January 22, the first group of 91 Rohingya boat voyagers faced engine trouble, which forced them ashore in Trang Province of Thailand, not far from the Malaysian border. The group had the good fortune to land among fellow Muslims, around Yao Beach on the island of Libong. The villagers gave the men food,” said Marine Police Colonel Pradit Korsaman, of Trang’s Kantang region. “However, they also took the precaution of calling the local police.”

“The voyagers said they had been at sea for 12 days. A spokesman in the group said they would be hanged if they were returned to Burma,” Colonel Pradit said.

Marine Police Colonel Pradit Korsaman said he thought the group was on their way from Burma to Malaysia. “We are providing basic humanitarian assistance with food and water, but they are illegal immigrants in Thailand. We have to follow our laws.” Another group of 67 Rohingya men landed on Sarai Island in Tarutao National Park in Satun Province on January 23. The men appeared younger but just as hungry and exhausted as the 91 all-male occupants of the first boat that came ashore in Trang on January 22.

Local Satun fishermen raised the Rohingya alarm again on January 23 when they spotted the unusual boat and its bedraggled occupants in the national park. “We had been at sea for 20 days after departing from Alaythanyaw Village of Maungdaw, Arakan State, Burma,” said Shabir Ahmed when Kaladan News Group was able to contact him by phone. The boat voyagers did not give details of their voyage, including how they departed from Maungdaw, where Nasaka authorities continually watch the Naf riverbank. “We crossed the fence secretly and departed with our boat,” was all Shabir Ahmed said.

There are 38 youth under the age of 18 among of this 67 group. The AFP news agency stated that Colonel Chawarat Plangsang, Superintendent of the Satun City Police Station, said: “Special branch police arrested these men and passed them on to us. We will check their health, fingerprint them, take photos, and hear what they have to say. “Tomorrow [Tuesday] we will pass them on to immigration.”

The police chief of Kantang District of Trang province, where the first boat with 91 men was found, said they would be sent back to Burma. But, in Satun, where the other 67 were being held, Colonel Chawarat Plangsang, of the Satun City Police Station, said the men would be handed over to the Immigration authorities, but did not say whether or not they would be deported.

“Sending the Rohingyas back into the hands of the junta would amount to inhumane treatment,” said the police chief in Kantang district to MCOT News website, which is majority-owned by the Thai government.

“Although it’s against humanitarian grounds, the illegal entry of foreigners must come under the [Thai] legal framework,” he reportedly said. “This is to prevent a similar problem from occurring again.”

“We’re certainly concerned about the fate of the reportedly two groups of 158 Rohingya boat people,” said Andrej Mahedtic, UNHCR spokesman. “We have approached the Thai government, and we have asked for access to these people in order to do two things - first to assess the
Rape or Trap for Village Head in Maungdaw South?

By Tin Soe, Kaladan News: Monday, 10 January 2011

Maungdaw, Arakan State: Three men, including an acting Village Peace and Development Council (VPDC) head, were arrested for allegedly raping two young women on December 29, according to a member of VPDC from Kyaukpond village.

Hashim Ulla, the acting VPDC head, is a former VPDC member who was promoted to serve as the acting head of his village after the last head of the village, Rafique, was found guilty in a rape case of a school teacher last October 2010, the member said.

"The allegation was made by two Rakhine from the Kodankauk Village of Rathedaung to the Burma Border Security Force (Nasaka) area number 8 in Myint Hlit," the village member added.

The two Rakhine were U Maung Kyaw Kine, the father of an 18 year-old girl, and U Kyaw Tin Maung, the father of a 22 year-old girl, both from a Natale (model) village of Kodankauk, according to a village elder from Kyaukpond. "We have heard that the two girls are not of good character and have worked as sex workers."

The two Rakhine filed the rape case against the VPDC head along with two other villagers, Moumana Kafayet Ulla and Hashim, on December 29 at Myint Hlit Nasaka camp where the three Rakhingas are being detained and Nasaka personnel who hospo to extort huge amount of money, he said.

The two Rakhine complained in the file that their daughters were hijacked and raped by Rakhinga men on December 19-20, and were later released to their village. "It is unknown why the two Rakhine waited until December 29 to file the case against the active village head and the other two Rakhinga."

On the other hand, some village
authorities from Maungdaw remarked that the former village head of Kyaukpandu, Rasique, may be behind this case to dismiss the acting village head, said a school teacher from Alyathankaw village.

"The former village head, Rasique, organized the two fathers of the Rakhine girls to file a case against the acting village headman," the teacher said.

The teacher believes the crime as reported could not have been committed because it would not have been possible for the three men to kidnap the two girls as there is an increased number of authorities helping Natala Villagers in northern Arakan. "How could the Rakhine girls pass with the Rakhine girls through the Natala Village?" the teacher asked.

"The two girls were not shouting when they passed through the village."

"Most of the villagers believe that this whole case is a trap to dismiss the new acting village headman from its post."

It is learned that the said two Rakhine girls were traveling from Ahungumaw to Kodankauk when they met nine Rakhinga men riding motorbikes to Kyaukpandu. The two girls asked the man to drop them at their village as the Rakhingas were going same way.

Kodankauk Village is between Ahungumaw and Kyaukpandu.

According to the filed complaint, the Rakhingas didn't stop at the Rakhine girls' village, but passed the village and took the girls to Kyaukpandu. The incident reportedly happened on December 19, and the case was filed on December 29 at the Myint Hlut Nasaka camp. The girls were taken to the Alyathankaw Clinic of Maungdaw South for medical test on December 29. The clinic's personnel advised the girls to go to the Ratchedang Hospital.

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### Human Rights Violations Continue in Northern Arakan

**Kaladan News, Friday, 10 December 2010**

Maungdaw, Arakan State: Rakhinga people along the western border of Burma are still suffering from continuing forced labor, religious discrimination and arbitrary harassment, said a local leader on condition of anonymity.

A group of officers from the Burma border security force, Nasaka's Area 6 in Maungdaw Township beat a sentry post guard with a stick on December 9 in Kyaw Hla Garr village without any reason, the local leader said.

The victim, identified as Ali Zuhar, 18, sustained severe head wounds and has been taken to a hospital in Maungdaw for treatment. Three other young men, identified as Zabin Noor, 23, Sayedul Amir, 23, and Emayet Ullah, 18, reported unspecified incidents of harassment by Nasaka personnel on the same night, according to a local school teacher.

Earlier that day, Mohamed Alam, 45, from western Narthill village was assaulted by Nasaka officers from a nearby camp as he was returning home after praying at a local mosque, said a villager who asked not to be named.

A trader in Maungdaw said another young man, identified only as Salay, 18, from eastern Narthill village, was also beaten by a section of Nasaka patrol who were reportedly drunk as he returned home from work.

Forced labors are conscripted to work on a border road project and the arrest of three elderly residents from Nanda Khali village for laying a new concrete floor in a mosque. The three men were trustees of the mosque, and relatives and neighbors paid 1.5 million kyats to Nasaka officers to secure their release after selling 4.8 acres of land owned by the mosque. However, the three men remain in Nasaka custody.

A local youth said Nasaka officers have been looking for eight other villagers in connection with the reflooding of the mosque, but that the men have gone into hiding to avoid arrest.

"Human rights violations have been increasing in northern Arakan State against the Rakhinga community since national elections were held on November 7, 2010," said a school teacher in Maungdaw. ##

### Checking lists and collecting more money in Northern Arakan

**Kaladan News, Monday, 17 January 2011**

Maungdaw, Arakan State: The Burma border security force (Nasaka) began checking household lists and collecting money for several forms in Rakhinga communities of northern Arakan State, according to a village authority head from Maungdaw.

The Nasaka started confirming the details of household registration lists and taking group photographs of families on January 7, the village authority head said.

"The Nasaka started checking and photographing at Block 1 and Block 5 on January 7. But, Nasaka officers were collecting 3000 kyat per family in Block 5, and only 1500 kyat per family in Block 1 where the community is a mix of Rakhine and Rakhinga, and the Block Authority Head is also Rakhine."

"The checking and photographing is only process to Rakhinga community, not for other ethnic such as Rakhine."

"Block 5 is a fully Rakhinga community with a Rakhinga Block Authority Head. The Nasaka forced the Block Authority to pay more money for each family."

"The Nasaka also demanded 3000 kyat to list newborn babies, and 3000 kyat for a dead person to be removed from a family list. In addition, if someone is not present at the time of checking, he or she will be listed as "runaway". The family will have to pay a large amount of money to remove such a person's name from the household list," said a village elder from Maungdaw.

In rural areas, the Nasaka is requiring families of the Rakhinga community to have a property book, which costs 5000 kyat per book. The book details the family's property, including land, shops, bicycles, domestic animals, and farming equipment for shrimp cultivation, said a businessman from Maungdaw. ##
Students flee from homes due to fear of Nasaka

Kaladan News, Monday, 17 January 2011

Maungdaw, Arakan State: Middle school students from Nari Bill Village of Maungdaw North have been fleeing their homes for fear of arrest by the Nasaka since December 30, said a local youth who asked not to be named.

On December 25, a youth named Abdul Hussain (20), son of Khadu Ra, hailing from Nari Bill Village of Maungdaw Township, was shot at by officers from Burma’s border security force (Nasaka) at about 13:30 am when he attempted to escape arrest with the allegation that he had an illegal mobile set. The officers failed to hit Hussain. The victim’s father, Khadu Ra, was arrested the next day, but was released after paying one million kyat two days later, said a relative of the victim.

Since then, the Nasaka has been trying to arrest some students of classes five to seven, as well as wealthy villagers, in connection with the case. The students have been afraid to sleep at their own homes, and have also been unable to attend school. Some of the villagers are also fleeing their homes to avoid the Nasaka.

In addition, Abu Sajid (28), Mouli Md. Rahim (55), and a student named Abdu Rahaman (20) were arrested recently by the Nasaka after being implicated in the case of deserter. The three had 100,000 kyat, 200,000 kyat, and 100,000 kyat extorted from them respectively. They all belong to Nari Bill Village of Maungdaw.

Authorities Prohibit Repair of Religious Buildings

Kaladan News, Wednesday, 29 December 2010

Maungdaw, Arakan State: The military junta again barred the repair of religious buildings in Maungdaw on December 15. The order was issued by Bo Than, the head of the District Religious Council of Maungdaw, but originated from the Maungdaw District Peace and Development Council and other related authorities, the local added. The order instructed the Maungdaw Juma Masjid Committee to halt repairs to the Juma masjid (mosque) which have been ongoing since November 2010, said a member of Masjid Committee.

“When the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) candidates came to organize the local Rohingya community in Maungdaw for the election, the repairing order was brought by the USDP candidate, U Aung Zaw Win, to show his party’s ability and its interest in religious affairs,” the committee member added.

“IT remained extremely difficult for Rohingya to acquire permission to build new, or repair existing, mosques, although internal renovations were allowed in some cases. Historic mosques in Akyab, Arakan State, as well as other areas, continued to deteriorate because authorities would not allow routine maintenance. A number of restrictions were in place on the construction or renovation of mosques and religious schools in northern Arakan State. In some parts of Arakan State, authorities cordoned off mosques and forbade Rohingyas to worship in them. Border security forces, Nasaka, continued to conduct arbitrary ‘inspections’ of mosques in northern Arakan State, demanding that mosque officials show permits to operate the mosques.”

Authorities have plans to destroy Rohingya homes

Kaladan News, Monday, 24 January 2011

Maungdaw, Arakan State: The group of authorities responsible for collecting family lists and photographs of Rohingyas is planning to issue more orders to have Rohingya homes destroyed, according to an official of the Maungdaw Village authority.

“The group is going to check Rohingya homes and around the housing compounds. They are looking for any changes to the houses like repairs, extensions, or additions of new buildings.”

“This is first time they are doing like this. Usually the authorities only check family lists and collect photographs, while collecting more money from the Rohingya community.”

This year after January 20, the group is going to begin checking entire house compounds, especially the backyards of homes, said a village elder. The authorities are led by U San Win, the Head of Immigration of Maungdaw Township who has ordered the destruction of two homes from Block 2 due to allegations of building without permission. However, the homes were built more than ten years ago and the owners obtained permission from concerned authorities of Maungdaw to repair their homes, the elder said.

“One family had made repairs to their toilet, which the authorities said was illegal because permission was not granted to add extensions to the home. The Rohingya community in northern Arakan State traditionally builds their bathrooms outside of their homes.”

“Another homeowner had permission to make repairs to his home, and he built a balcony onto his home. But the authorities said this was illegal and ordered the entire home to be destroyed.”

This is new method of the authorities to oppress the Rohingya community by ordering their homes and property to be destroyed, said a villager from Maungdaw. Additionally, the Township Peace and Development Council (TPDC) has ordered the Village Peace and Development Council (VPDC) to collect paddy from Rohingya farmers in the name of a relief fund at the rate of five tins per acre, according to a farmer from Maungdaw.

“In the past, the TPDC also collected our paddy like this, supposedly for relief, but the paddy was sold to officials in Maungdaw who sold it on to Bangladesh for money. This is just another way for the authorities to hurt and exploit the Rohingya community.”
Rohingya Forced labor is increasing in Maungdaw

*Kaladan News, Wednesday, 12 January 2011*

**Maungdaw, Arakan State:**

Rohingya Forced labor is increasing in Maungdaw Township of Western Burma. Burma’s Border Security Force (Nasaka) has been forcing Rohingya villagers to work on road construction projects along border fence since early this month.

For instance, every day since January 8, many villagers from Nasaka area No. 5 and 6 have had to go to work building roads along the fence line with their own food. The villagers have to get up from bed around 2 a.m. and begin cooking food in order to reach the work site by 4 a.m. Villagers must reach the work site by 10 a.m.

There are 22 villages in Nasaka area No. 5 and five villages in Nasaka area No. 6, including one Rakhain village. From every house, one person must go to the work site, excluding widows and handicapped villagers. Some villagers who pay 10,000 kyat per family to the Nasaka are also excluded from going to the work site, said another local trader who asked not to be named.

The road along the fence of Burma-Bangladesh border had already been completed, but the authorities now want to extend another 18 feet width along the road. As a result, forced labor from villagers is immediately needed to work on the road again, the trader added.

Besides, in Maungdaw South, in Nasaka area No. 7, villagers of Aley Tan Kyaw, U Daung, Thayy Kon Dan, Kunna Para and Korza Bill, etc. are also engaged in forced labor in construction of roads along the fence site, since January 1. Earlier, the concerned Nasaka commander provided 1,000 kyat per worker, but later villagers stopped receiving any money. It has been learnt that the commander along with the local Village Peace and Development Council (VPDC) Chairman misused the money for their own purposes, said a businessman from Maungdaw South.

In the meantime, the villagers under the control of Nasaka Headquarters of Kawar Bill of Maungdaw Township forced the villagers to provide wooden logs for baking bricks at the headquarters. At the same time, GE (Engineering Corps) personnel have come to Maungdaw Township and are forcing villagers to build local roads in the villages. A local youth said, “Villagers are barred from doing work to support their own family members as they have to go to the work site for road construction without receiving any support.”

A local politician said that the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) continue harassment and systematic human rights violations against the Rohingya community to weaken their will to resist and survive. Continued human rights violations have driven more Rohingya people from Burma to take refuge in Bangladesh, Thailand, and Malaysia, and as IDPs within Burma. ##

Security force extracts 700,000 Kyat from woman who sought medical treatment

*Kaladan News, Monday, 03 January 2011*

**Maungdaw, Arakan State:**

On December 28, Burma’s Border Security Force (Nasaka) extracted 700,000 kyat from a patient who went to Bangladesh for medical treatment with permission, but returned from Bangladesh not in time. The patient was identified as Ms. Khoita Begum (50), the wife of ex-school teacher Abul Abas, from Kyauk Hlagaar Village of Maungdaw Township.

Later, on December 28, 2010, the patient returned to her home, where she had to report to the concerned Nasaka camp. Major Kyaw Maung, the Nasaka commander of Nasaka Area No. 6 of Maungdaw Township charged her 700,000 kyat as a penalty for her late return.

At present, Rohingya villagers requiring medical attention are allowed to go to Sittwe (Akyab), the capital of Arakan State, only after paying large fees to the concerned authorities. However, many patients are not able to pay the amount required to legally travel to Sittwe. As a result, many Rohingya people suffer from ailments and are unable to receive proper medical treatment in northern Arakan State, where there is a scarcity of doctors and medicine for treatment. ##
Adviser to Bangladeshi FM visits Rohingya refugee camps

Kaldan news, Thursday, 13 January 2011

Teknaf, Bangladesh: An adviser to Bangladesh’s Foreign Minister Dr. Gohar Rezbi visited the Burmese refugee camps of Nayapara and Kutupalong on January 6, and met with concerned authorities of the camps regarding the refugees, said a refugee teacher from Nayapara camp.

At first, the adviser, accompanied by a delegation of officers, went to Ukhia to meet with Rohingya Resistance Committee (RRC) members from the Cox’s Bazaar district and held a meeting with them to discuss refugee matters. The RRC members demanded immediate repatriation of the refugees, said a local teacher from Ukhia.

Afterwards, the adviser and the delegation visited the official Kutupalong Camp to oversee the situation of the camp, including the nearby unofficial Kutupalong Camp, and asked about the situation of the refugees from the concerned authorities, said a refugee leader from Kutupalong camp.

The delegation members have been identified as Food and Disaster Secretary Doctor M. Aslam Alam, head of Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission (RRRC), Sub-officer of UNHCR Mr. Stephen, Assistant Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Nurul Alam Nezami, Teknaf Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) Commander Lt. Col. Mujamel Hossain, and Teknaf Union Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Nizam Uddin.

After visiting the Kutupalong camp, group traveled to Nayapara Refugee Camp and held a meeting with concerned authorities. The adviser asked the Camp-in-Charge about the situation of refugees and the problems they have been facing in the camp. The delegation, after overseeing the camp, then left for Teknaf to meet with RRC committee members.

After arrival at Teknaf, they held a meeting with local leaders of the Rohingya Resistance Committee (RRC) of Teknaf and discussed refugee issues. The local leaders from Teknaf told the adviser that they also want to see the immediate repatriation of the Rohingya refugees from Burma.

The adviser asked all of the local leaders, including the RCC members in the border areas, to be patient regarding refugee matters as the government is also being pressured by the international community regarding refugee issues. The government has procedures in place to settle refugee problems, according to a local elder from Ukhia.

On December 30, a group of RCC members made a long march to Cox’s Bazaar from Teknaf, a distance of nearly 84 kilometers, on foot to raise awareness about their displeasure with the Rohingya people among the government and local people. They submitted a seven-point list of demands to the government. These included: to create lists of illegal Rohingyas and seize lands which they have been occupying, to ban marriage between Rohingyas and the local population, to exclude Rohingyas from voter lists, to stop the validity of papers for Rohingyas to buy land, to ban Rohingyas from the local wage market, and to take stringent steps to stop Rohingyas from illegal entry into Bangladesh.

The RCC was formed in Ukhia of Cox’s Bazaar district last year with the aim of encouraging the government to repatriate Rohingya refugees immediately. Currently, it has branches in Teknaf and Cox’s Bazaar Town. The RCC has said that if their demands are not met by January 15, they will compel the government to act against the Rohingyas through a mass movement in Cox’s Bazaar.

Because of the RCC’s demands, the adviser of the Foreign Minister held meetings with RCC members in Ukhia, Teknaf and Cox’s Bazaar, as well as the refugee camps, said a local Politician from Teknaf on condition of anonymity.
Discrimination by blood bank officer in Maungdaw

By Tin Soe, Kaladan News, Tuesday, 25 January 2011

Maungdaw, Arakan State: The Rohingya community in Maungdaw is facing discrimination from a blood bank officer at Maungdaw General Hospital, according to a resident from Maungdaw.

Aung Kyaw Tehlin, the hospital's blood officer, required Rohingya blood donors to submit extra forms and has declined to take their blood for emergencies, even when the concerned medical officers ask for blood donations, the resident said.

"To give a blood donation, it is necessary to be registered first with the blood bank. But this was the first time we heard of this policy."

"Next, we brought another young Rohingya who had given blood at the hospital before, but the blood bank officer again declined to accept the youth's blood, even though the need was urgent. The young man had given blood five months earlier, but the officer said that he must wait a longer time before donating again," the member said.

"We know that a person is able to donate blood again after three months." "The officer asked to bring a Rakhine from Block Three to donate blood, even though the Rakhine will ask to be paid for giving blood."

It has been learned that the hospital's officer, Aung Kyaw Tehlin, is from Block Three, so it is suspected that he wanted to get money from the Rohingya community for the blood.

The Médecins sans Frontières-Holland (AZG) and ACF, NGOs helps the residents of Maungdaw who are not able to afford to go to the hospital to deliver babies, as the hospital asks 50,000 kyat for normal deliveries and more than 500,000 kyat for emergency cases, which is not affordable for poor people, said an officer from an NGO.

"NGOs need to follow up the cases after admitting a patient to the hospital, to look after what is going on with the patient and to check whether or not the medical services are going smoothly."

Sajeeds, who hails from Nurullah Village of Maungdaw, was admitted on January 17 by AZG's field officer Nur Hakim because of bleeding. She was kept in the hospital and was asked to pay 50,000 kyat by the hospital staff for treatment. However, Sajeeds was unable to pay the amount requested. The hospital released her the next day, even though she was still suffering from bleeding.

"If the AZG and ACF staff looks after the patient, cases like this will not happen, and the NGOs will not lose their funds."

"The hospital staff often treats patients brutally while they are in the hospital if the staff doesn't get any money from them. Cruel and inhumane methods have even been used with delivery patients while they are in the operation room," said a woman who previously suffered at the hospital. ###

Status of Rohingya repatriation plans unknown

By Tin Soe, Kaladan News, Monday, 24 January 2011

Chittagong, Bangladesh: The status of plans to repatriate Rohingyas back to Burma were unclear while Bangladesh and Burma renewed their commitment to establish physical connectivity when Foreign Minister Dipu Moni met with her Burmese counterpart U Nyan Win in Naypyidaw, Burma, on January 21, according to a Foreign Ministry press release.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni is currently in Burma to attend the 13th BIMSTEC (Bangladesh India Myanmar Sri Lanka Thailand Economic Cooperation) Ministerial Meeting.

The press release, however, did not mention Burma's response to the repatriation issue when Foreign Minister Dipu Moni proposed the
Rohingya woman delivers baby then dies in police custody

By Tin Soe, Kaladan News, Friday, 21 January 2011

Maungdaw, Arakan State: A Rohingya woman died while in custody at Maungdaw Police Station yesterday, according to an aide from the police station. Ms. Hamida, the wife of Yousuf, bailed from Myoma Kyanyindan Village. She delivered a child at Maungdaw General Hospital on January 19. Personnel from Maungdaw Police Station, led by Sub-Inspector Aung Kyaw Than, took the woman into custody after she delivered, the aide reported.

"Dr. Kyaw Maung Maung Thein, the head of the hospital, released Ms. Hamida from the hospital after she delivered her child. The doctor didn't say anything to the police about Ms. Hamida having just delivered and needing medical assistance."

The police kept Ms. Hamida and her newborn baby in custody without providing any medical attention. The woman died the morning of January 20. A police officer and police personnel took her body back to the hospital in a jeep to keep secret the fact that she had died while in police custody, said a local elder from Maungdaw.

"Sub-Inspector Aung Kyaw Than requested Dr. Kyaw Maung Maung Thein to issue a certificate stating that Ms. Hamida died in the hospital after delivering her baby. The police officer handed over the body of Ms. Hamida to her relatives to take home and bury according to Rohingya custom in their village," the elder added.

According to an officer from the police station, three months ago, Ms. Hamida was arrested while police personnel, led by Sub-Inspector Aung Kyaw Than, raided her house with information that her husband Yousuf was a drug peddler. While police raided the house, Yousuf was not at home, but police found seven Yaba [methamphetamine] tablets.

The police arrested Ms. Hamida, who was pregnant at the time, but told her that if her husband appeared at police station, she would be released.

"After one week, Yousuf appeared at the police station and confessed that he was a drug addict and the Yaba tablets were for his personal use. But the police didn't release Ms. Hamida and kept her in police custody."

"Now, Ms. Hamida has died and the police have released her dead body and newborn baby. But the police are still keeping Yousuf in police custody without any further evidence."It has been learned that Maung Nu, a drug agent of the district police head, wants Yousuf to work for him in the drug business. However, Yousuf has declined to work for him, so Maung Nu used a trap to pressure Yousuf.

"The drug traffickers and police officers are only thinking about their business and how to get easy money. They don't care about anybody else, and will destroy everything that hurts their business," said a politician from Maungdaw.}

Burma relations on June 11, 2009. "In the spirit of good neighbourly relations, Burma should take the refugees back after creating a friendly atmosphere, so that once the refugees are repatriated, they will be encouraged to stay on in their country."

Bangladesh Home Minister Sahara Khatun said in Parliament on June 29, 2009 that the Rohingya issue still remains unresolved even though the government is trying to resolve the settlement of Rohingyas through regional and international intervention. The Bangladesh Parliament has been raising the issue of foreign nationals’ status living as illegal immigrants in the country for a long time. The Parliament wanted to know how Burmese authorities are planning to handle the issue.

"A few thousand Rohingyas are living in registered camps run by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Around 14,015 registered Rohingya refugees are staying at Kutupalong Camps and 8,589 in Nayapara Camp in Teknaf. An additional 12,000 Rohingyas live in the unregistered Leda Camp in Cox’s Bazar, which is run with assistance from the European Union," the Home Minister said.

According to local NGOs, more than 500,000 Rohingyas are living in the border area between Burma and Bangladesh, many of them blending in with the local community. The UN estimates up to 300,000 Rohingyas are living outside of camps.

ARAKAN VOLUME. 3 ISSUE. 1 JANUARY 2011
Officers doing double duty as drug traffickers

By Tin Soe, Kaladan News, Thursday, 20 January 2011

Maungdaw, Arakan State: The high-ranking officers in Maungdaw, a border town between Burma and Bangladesh, are making the city a major drug transit point for western Burma, said a local businessman.

"A lot of drugs, especially Yaba [methamphetamine] tablets, are entering Teknaf, Bangladesh from Maungdaw, Burma and the drugs are being moved not only with the aid of high-ranking officers of Maungdaw, but by the officers themselves."

"The officers bring Yaba with them from Burma. As high-ranking officers, they are not checked by the concerned authorities, even though the authorities know that the officers are bringing the drugs to the border town for easy money."

The officers have their own agents to supply the drug in the town. The officers protect their agents from arrest, said a drug peddler from Maungdaw.

"Every officer has his own agent, and the officers meet their agents in their own home or other place which is safe for him." Maung Nu, the agent for the district police head, is meeting every evening at his residence in Myoma Kyanyinda Village to exchange money for Yaba tablets. Maung Nu also informs against the local residents who oppose or criticize his business."

"Fayaz, who is an informer and drug trafficker for Military Intelligence (Sarpara), harasses local Rohingya residents with false claims and allegations to extort money."

Similarly, Hamid Hussain, the owner of the Hitachi Electronics store, is working for all departments of Maungdaw, especially for the authorities concerned with drugs, by distributing Yaba to the traffickers and informing the police. He is also selling Bangladeshi mobile sim cards and handsets, which is illegal in Burma. Later, he informs on his customers to the police or the Burma border security force (Nasaka) to extort money, said a local resident from Maungdaw.

"Mubarak, the owner of a motor parts store, is also working for all departments, especially for high-ranking officers, the township authority head, district authority head, and Nasaka director. He supplies information about Bangladesh, and transfers Yaba tablets to Bangladesh with the help of the authorities. He also has good connections with Bangladesh politicians, officers, and businessmen."

Another drug dealer is Rashid Ahmed, who hails from Shwezar village. Ahmed works for the Nakasa, and was recently released from arrest by using his connection with the Nakasa. He harasses local people by making different allegations against them, such as that they possess Bangladeshi mobile phones, are drug peddlers, or are engaged with human trafficking and money laundering," said a politician from Maungdaw.

"He has so many drug peddlers in his village and Maungdaw to sell Yaba and transfer to Bangladesh where he has also many connections for drug business in Bangladesh."

"The Nasaka personnel are using him for easy money and to get information about the Rohingya community in the rural area and his village to extort money from them." Hnin Min Thein hails from Block 3 of Maungdaw, and has a good relationship with police personnel, including Sub-Inspector Shwe Maung (Surveillance), Sub-Inspector Hnin Aung (Drugs), and Sub-Inspector Thaung Htay (Traffic). He, along with other three Rakhine (one male and two female), is involved in trafficking drugs from Burma to Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh and is also wanted by Bangladesh authorities, according to an official from Maungdaw.

"Gayas Uddin is from Maung Ni Village and works for the police department. He also transfers drugs from Maung Ni to Bangladesh."

The drugs are being brought to Maungdaw by high-ranking officials, and are then handed over to their agents for supply in Maungdaw, Burma and Teknaf, Bangladesh. The officers are also collecting information about who is involving in the drug trafficking. Later, the officers use these connections in their own drug trafficking business, said the official. "The concerned department only arrests the people who are peddlers and users, not the agents or whole sellers." 

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ARAKAN VOLUME 3 ISSUE 1 JANUARY 2011
No justice to be found in Maungdaw court

Kaladan News, Thursday, 20 January 2011

Maungdaw, Arakan State: There is no justice to be had from Maungdaw court for members of the Rohingya community, according to an official of Maungdaw court who declined to be named.

Judges rarely treat Rohingyas sympathetically when they are fighting in court for their rights. In addition, judges often ask for bribes to settle cases or to file bail bonds, the official said.

"Among the judges, one duty township judge, U Kyaw Myint Htun, is the most corrupt. He always asks local residents for huge amounts in order to settle cases favorably."

"U Kyaw Myint Htun threatens locals involved in court cases that police are waiting for them, and he has the right to either send them to jail or release them. This is followed by his asking for monetary bribes."

Local residents who are unable to afford bribes to police officers are often forced to settle their disputes in court. Therefore, many innocent members of the Rohingya community are being sent to jail without a fair trial in the court, said a lawyer from the court.

"Defendants must pay the judge in order to have a fair trial or receive bail."

In Maungdaw court, there are five judges: two for the district and three for the township. ##

Diplomatic Initiative Underway To Resolve Rohingya Issues

By Shafiqul Bashar, BERNAMA.com

DHAKA - Diplomatic initiatives are underway for a permanent solution of the two-decade-old Rohingya refugee problem between Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Rohingyas, belonging to an ethnic group of western Myanmar, started entering Bangladesh territory from early 1980s for shelter due to unfavourable social and political situation in their homeland Arakan province.

Over 250,000 Rohingyas, mostly Muslims, were registered as refugees between 1991 and 1992 and given shelter at camps in Bangladesh with the assistance of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Following negotiations between Dhaka and Yangon, over 230,000 Rohingya refugees returned to their homeland in phases with the help of UNHCR. However, over 20,000 refugees remained at the camps.

On Saturday, Bangladesh minister for disaster management Abul Razzak met UNHCR representative Fia Prytz Phiri in Dhaka and discussed the repatriation of the Rohingya refugees.

"The Rohingya problem is an extra-

burden for a disaster-prone country like Bangladesh."

"This problem needs a quick solution and Bangladesh wants Rohingya refugees to go back to their country," the minister said, adding that diplomatic initiatives were underway to resolve the problem.

Praising Bangladesh for giving shelter to Rohingya refugees, the UNHCR representative described the Rohingya problem as a regional problem and said that joint initiatives by Bangladesh and Myanmar were needed to resolve the problem. ##
Independent Appeal: The children who are hunger for food and knowledge

By Andrew Buncombe Wednesday, 8 December 2010

These children are Rohingya, one of the world’s most beleaguered minorities, and their classroom is in an unofficial refugee camp in southern Bangladesh, miles from the border with Burma. In Burma, where they have lived in...

From inside the hut comes the sound of children quietly chanting. “A, B, C, D, E,” they go, cautiously working their way through the alphabet. It’s not much of a classroom, this hut of branches and tattered black plastic sheeting. The children sitting on the floor don’t have books or a blackboard for their teacher to write on. And yet those bright inquisitive pupils are keen to learn and enjoy their lessons. “I like studying English, Bengali and maths,” says eight-year-old Forninata. “When I am not at school I help my mother.”

These children are Rohingya, one of the world’s most beleaguered minorities, and their classroom is in an unofficial refugee camp in southern Bangladesh, 30 miles from the border with Burma. It is a wretched, dispiriting place, criss-crossed with open sewers and makeshift huts. The people are unable to leave without fear of being arrested and have to scratch around simply to survive. It is the sort of place that ought not to exist in the 21st century, and yet here are more than 40,000 people.

The Rohingya are a people that no one appears to want. In Burma, where they have lived in the western state of Arakan for hundreds of years, they are feared and mistreated. Apparently concerned about the “advance” of Muslims into a Buddhist country, the Burmese junta refuses to grant them citizen status and has enacted strict rules that govern their lives. They are even required to pay if they wish to move to another village. Twice in recent years - in 1979 and 1992 - large numbers have poured into Bangladesh. But the authorities here do not want them either. Terrified of encouraging more poor, needy people to head across the border, they do what they can to deter the refugees.

As a result, while 28,000 refugees are registered with the government, a further 200,000 migrants - some claim the figure is as high as 500,000 - are unofficial. While the official refugees live in shelters, receive food, medical care and educational support, the unofficial migrants are forced to fend for themselves.

The disparity between the small number of official refugees and the hundreds of

Children with firewood collected from a nearby forest in the Dam Dam Mesh refugee camp. In 1992 more than a quarter of a million Rohingya (Muslims from Burma) fled from Burma (Myanmar) to Bangladesh. Today, those Rohingyas who cross the border into Bangladesh still find themselves with nowhere to go. They are persecuted by the Burmese junta at home and are not recognised as refugees by the Bangladeshi authorities. The two official refugee camps house about 26,000 people.