



SPECIAL PUBLICATION ON ROHINGYA PROBLEM

ARAKAN

NEWS AND ANALYSIS OF ARAKAN ROHINGYA NATIONAL ORGANISATION (ARNO), ARAKAN, BURMA

THE ROHINGYA PROBLEM WHY AND HOW TO MOVE FORWARD

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***A Research Paper Read at the International Conference on
"Contemplating Burma's Rohingya People's Future in
Reconciliation and (Democratic) Reform,"
held on August 15, 2012 at the Thammasat University, Bangkok***



**CREATED AND EDITED BY M. A . ALAM, EXECUTIVE EDITOR OF ARAKAN MONTHLY
RELEASED ON ROHINGYA NATIONAL DAY 03 JANUARY 2013**

THE ROHINGYA PROBLEM: WHY AND HOW TO MOVE FORWARD

By Dr. Habib Siddiqui

[Author's Note: Keynote speech delivered at the International Conference on "Contemplating Burma's Rohingya People's Future in Reconciliation and (Democratic) Reform," held on August 15, 2012 at the Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand]



Organizers and panel speakers of Bangkok Conference held on August 15, 2012 at the Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand. (Dr. Habib Siddiqui 2nd from the left)

As a conscientious global citizen of our planet, I have been writing for the past 32 years since my days as a university student on a plethora of issues, which include history, culture and civilization of the peoples of the South Asia and the Middle East. I have also studied and written on international politics, human rights and terrorism. In my decades of studies I have not found a people that are more persecuted than the Rohingyas of Myanmar, or what used to be called Burma.

It is, therefore, necessary that we learn of this greatest tragedy of our time so that we can work towards finding a lasting solution to it. On a personal level, I consider it to be a privilege to be able to speak on the plight of this persecuted people in front of an audience that care and want to stop their misery. I take this opportunity to thank the organizers, esp. Mrs. Chalida Tajarosuk (People's Empowerment Foundation), Mr. Salim Ullah (JARO or Arakan Rohingya Organization-Japan) and Mr. Anwar Burmi (Rohingya National Organization in Thailand) for inviting me to this international conference.

ADMINISTRATIVE ETHNIC STATES AND REGIONS OF MYANMAR



My thanks are also to the university administrators, and faculty, staffs and students of the Political Science department of the Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand for hosting this much-needed event. Thank you all for joining us here, esp. those who came from different parts of the world (e.g., Japan, Canada, USA, Myanmar, Malaysia, Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia and Singapore).

I have come here not to debate but to discuss. I have come here not to talk as an expert on Arakan but to speak as a human being who cares deeply about our humanity. After all, what is more important than being an intelligent and rational person who can think, analyze and offer solutions that bind us all together on common themes that go beyond our identity as a race or an ethnicity?

The great Persian poet Shaykh Sa'di (1231-1291 C.E.) wrote:

“Adam’s sons are body limbs, to say;
For they’re created of the same clay.
Should one organ be troubled by pain,
Others would suffer severe strain.
Thou, careless of people’s suffering,
Deserve not the name, “human being”.”
[Tr. H. Vahid Dastjerdi (Mashriq-e-Ma'rifat)]

I would like to believe that we care and want to stop the suffering of the persecuted Rohingya people. As such, we deserve the name “human beings.”

International Laws on Fundamental Rights

Who would have thought that in our time, some 64 years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the world community to guide its behaviors and actions we would see so much of intolerance and persecution of peoples based on their race or ethnicity? The Preamble of UDHR reads:

“Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,... Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge, Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.”

There are 30 Articles of the UDHR, starting with “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights...” The second one reads: “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status...” When it comes to the Rohingya, ladies and gentlemen, not a single one of these rights is honored by the Myanmar government. These unfortunate people are denied their

right to citizenship while the 15th Article clearly states: “(1) Everyone has the right to a nationality. (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.”

The preamble of the United Nations says, “WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and”

And yet, the Myanmar government, being a member of the United Nations, denies citizenship right to the Rohingya people. By doing so, it is committing a terrible crime.

What’s wrong with Burma Citizenship Law (1982)?

The Burma Citizenship Law (1982) states: Chapter II – Citizenship

3. Nationals such as the Kachin, Kayah, Karen, Chin, Burman, Mon, Rakhine or Shan and ethnic groups as have settled in any of the territories included within the State as their permanent home from a period anterior to 1185 B.E., 1823 A.D. are Burma citizens.

4. The Council of State may decide whether any ethnic group is national or not.1

The name Rohingya was deliberately expunged from the list of 135 national races (which includes 1 Burman major race plus 7 deputy races plus 127 sub-races) of Burma, thus, opening the door for all types of discrimination. [A comparison with the 1948 Union Citizenship Act, as shown below, would reveal that the 1982 Law altered the word Arakanese to Rakhine, thus effectively excluding the minority Rohingyas of Arakan from their shared national status. Similarly, the word ‘ethnic’ was put in place of ‘races.’2] Because of their racial and religious ties with the people of Bangladesh – living on the other side of the Naaf River, they are treated as if they have migrated from there since the days of British annexation of Arakan in 1826 C.E., after the First Anglo-Burman War of 1824-26. Forgotten there is the historical evidence that the ancestors of today’s Rohingyas have lived in Arakan from time immemorial (see the history books written by experts like Professor Abdul Karim, Dr. Moshe Yegar and many others).3

Interestingly, the author of this highly discriminatory law during the military dictator Ne Win era was (late) Dr. Aye Kyaw, a Rakhine academic who was a key figure in the formulation of racial policy of the ANC (Arakan National Congress). Through this ‘criminal’ law, Dr. Kyaw ensured virtual elimination of the Rohingya people from his native Arakan, where they comprised roughly half the population (i.e., 47.75% according to the estimate of Dr. Shwe Lu Maung in 2005).4

As I have noted elsewhere ANC’s doctrine is Rakhine neo-Nazi Fascism, which espouses superiority of the Rakhine race over all other races in Arakan.5 [See the book – The Price of Silence: Muslim-Buddhist War of Bangladesh and Myanmar, A Social Darwinist's Analysis by Shwe Lu Maung alias Shahnawaz Khan, DewDrop Arts & Technology, USA (2005), pp. 232-244.] Interestingly, Dr. Kyaw had no moral bite to deny the Rohingya of their due share in citizenship while he himself became a naturalized U.S. citizen. He and many of his Rakhine racist followers (including Aye Chan, Khin Maung Saw), of course, did not have to prove ancestral ties of more than 160 years for acquiring citizenship in their adopted countries, something that they demanded that the Rohingyas and many other minorities must now do to be eligible for such rights! What hypocrisy and what a grave crime to rob an entire people!

Note that according to the draft constitution for the Arakan state, formulated by the ANC, “The citizenship of the Republic of Arakan shall be determined and regulated by law. The citizen of Arakan shall be known as Arakanese. Buddhism shall be the state religion. Only the Arakan legal entities and citizens of Arakan nationality shall have the right to own land.” Since the Rohingyas are classified as Arakan Bengalis they will be

subjected to a second class citizenship with no right to run for office or own land.⁶ It is an apartheid policy of exclusion, discrimination and marginalization of the Rohingya, who are derogatorily called the Kula (Kala) much like how the Afro-Americans were treated in the USA as the Black Niggers.

As noted by Dr. Shahnawaz Khan (Shew Lu Maung), the Rakhaing neo-Nazism is not an isolated small group, but it is a widespread phenomenon led by the umbrella group ANC and supported by most of the Rakhine intellectuals and professionals.⁷ The tactics of the ANC and hate provocateurs like Aye Chan, Aye Kyaw and Khin Maung Saw include the total marginalization of the Rohingya people by fomenting fear that if they are not “contained (or eliminated)” as a ‘virus’ they would take over the state. Some of the members openly state that “Save our land even as Hitler if necessary ... instead of losing out in foreign hands,” “put the Rohingyas in a concentration camp under UN supervision or settle them in a third country,” “mono-ethnic and majority race should control almost all so that the country can be developed easily,” “there should be no compromise on rights of ethnic Rakhine who is the descendant of Tibeto-Burman tribes (and not Bangali or Indo-Aryan),” “we inevitably have to compose our nation similar to Israel,”⁸ and “If Rohingya is to be recognized as indigenous race, any one who claims himself should take DNA test... If his DNA is different from those of the Bangali, he or should be accepted as ethnic Arakan citizen. If not, he should be chased out to Bangladesh or anywhere else away from our land.”⁹

Such utterly racist and hateful comments are enough to prove the Fascist leanings of many of the Rakhine leaders. Funny that racist Aye Chan’s father is Haradhan Barua (Bangali Magh) and mother is an ethnic Rakhine. I wonder if Mr. Chan, who had once again rather conveniently excused himself from defending his ‘influx virus’ thesis against us, would have passed the DNA test required by his fellow racists!

The Question of being Indigenous to Arakan

Are the Muslims of Arakan who identify themselves as the Rohingya indigenous to the soil of Arakan or Burma? Our studies show without any shadow of doubt that they are indigenous, something that has also been accepted by many historians (even within Burma, pre-dating the Ne Win era) and the founding fathers of the Union of Burma. Sao Shwe Thaik who led and organized the Panglong conference in March 1946 famously said, “If the Rohingyas are not indigenous, nor am I.” In 1946 General Aung San assured full rights and privileges to Muslim Rohingya Arakanese as an indigenous people saying: “I give (offer) you a blank cheque. We will live together and die together. Demand what you want. I will do my best to fulfill them. If native people are divided, it will be difficult to achieve independence for Burma.”

Under the First Schedule to the Burma Independence Act 1947, the Rohingya were considered citizens of the Union of Burma.¹⁰

“1. The persons who, being British subjects immediately before the appointed day,¹¹ are, subject to the provisions of section two of this Act, to cease on that day to be British subjects are the following persons, that is to say –

(a) persons who were born in Burma or whose father or paternal grandfather was born in Burma, not being persons excepted by paragraph 2 of this Schedule from the operations of this sub-paragraph; and
(b) women who were aliens at birth and became British subjects by reason only of their marriage to any such person as is specified in sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph.”¹²

Under Annex A of the Aung San-Attlee Agreement, 27 January, 1947, the Rohingya are citizens of the Union of Burma:

“A Burma National is defined for the purposes of eligibility to vote and to stand as a candidate of the forthcoming elections as a British subject or the subject of an Indian State who was born in Burma and resided

there for a total period of not less than eight years in the ten years immediately preceding either 1st January, 1942 or 1st January, 1947.”

Under Section 11 of the Constitution of the Union of Burma (1947), as shown below, the Rohingya are citizens of the Union of Burma:13

11. (i) Every person, both of whose parents belong or belonged to any of the indigenous races of Burma; (ii) every person born in any of the territories included within the Union, at least one of whose grand-parents belong or belonged to any of the indigenous races of Burma; (iii) every person born in any of territories included within the Union, of parents both of whom are, or if they had been alive at the commencement of this Constitution would have been, citizens of the Union; (iv) every person who was born in any of the territories which at the time of his birth was included within His Britannic Majesty’s dominions and who has resided in any of the territories included within the Union for a period of not less than eight years in the ten years immediately preceding the date of the commencement of this Constitution or immediately preceding the 1st January 1942 and who intends to reside permanently there in and who signifies his election of citizenship of the Union in the manner and within the time prescribed by law, shall be a citizen of the Union.

The Nu-Attlee Agreement (1947), signed between Prime Minister U Nu (Burma) and Prime Minister Clement Attlee (Great Britain) on Oct. 17, 1947 on transferring power to Burma was very important as to the determination of the citizenship status of the peoples and races in Burma. Article 3 of the Agreement states:

“Any person who at the date of the coming into force of the present Treaty is, by virtue of the Constitution of the Union of Burma, a citizen thereof and who is, or by virtue of a subsequent election is deemed to be, also a British subject, may make a declaration of alienage in the manner prescribed by the law of the Union, and thereupon shall cease to be a citizen of the Union.14

The Section 10 of the 1947 Constitution of the Union of Burma also states:

“There shall be but only one citizenship though out the Union; that is to say, there shall be no citizenship of the unit as distinct from the citizenship of the Union.”15

Article 3 (1) of the Union Citizenship Act, 1948 (original statement, and amended up to 1957) reads:
“ 3. Any person:-

(a) who was born in any of the territories which, at the time of his birth, was included in His Britannic Majesty’s dominions; (b) who had resided in any of the territories included in the Union for a period of not less than eight years in the ten years immediately preceding either the first day of January 1942 or the fourth day of January 1948; (c) who is of good character; (d) who has not done any act prejudicial to the security, peace or interest of the Union; and (e) who is not disqualified as defined in section 2 of the Union Citizenship Act, 1948, may apply to the officer in the district in which he resides for a certificate of citizenship.”16

[As can be seen by comparison with the amended version of 1960 (see below), the original statement did not have the “indigenous” racial criterion for citizenship.]

Article 3 (1) of the Union Citizenship Act, 1948 (as amended up to 1960) states:

“For the purposes of section 11 of the Constitution the expression “any of the indigenous races” of Burma shall mean the Arakanese, Burmese, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Kayah, Mon or Shan race and such racial group as has settled in any of the territories included within the Union as their permanent home from a period anterior to 1823 A. D. (1185 B.E.).”17 [Author’s note: Arakanese meant all residents of the state of Arakan, e.g., Rohingya and Rakhine.]

Article 4 (2) of the Union Citizenship Act, 1948 (as amended up to 1960) states:

“Any person descended from ancestors who for two generations at least have all made any of the territories included within the Union their permanent home and whose parents and himself were born in any of such territories shall be deemed to be a citizen of the Union.”¹⁸

These two categories of people and those descended from them are automatic citizens who did not require applying to court for naturalization. Rohingya are for all intents and purposes Arakanese and they are also a racial group who had settled in Arakan/Union of Burma as their permanent home from a period anterior to 1823 A. D. (1185 B.E.).

The Rohingyas were not subjected to any laws related to Registration of Foreigners before or after Burma’s independence such as the Foreigner Act (Indian Act III, 1846), the Registration of Foreigners Act (Burma Act VII, 1940) and the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1948.¹⁹

During colonial administration Rohingya representatives were elected from North Arakan as Burmese nationals from the national quotas.

The Rohingya people exercised the right of franchise (the right of citizenship and the right to vote) in all elections held in Burma from British colonial rule up to the present such as, 91 Department Administration election (1936), Aung San’s Constituent Assembly election (1947), all elections during parliamentary rule (1952, 1956, 1960), Ne Win’s BSPP (Burma Socialist Programme Party) constitutional referendum and election (1974) and SLORC military multiparty election (1990), military SPDC’s constitutional referendum (2008) and its multi-party election (2010).

There were Rohingya MPs. Minister, parliamentary secretaries, professionals, doctors, engineers, lawyers, academics, civil and military officers, and others who ran for the public offices. It is noteworthy that citizens whose parents hold FRCs (Foreign Registration Cards) are not allowed to run for a public office.

The parliamentary government (1948-1962) had officially declared Rohingya as one of the indigenous ethnic groups of Burma. The declaration from Prime Minister U Nu said:

“The people living in Maungdaw and Buthidaung regions are our national brethren. They are called Rohingya. They are on the same par in status of nationality with Kachin, Kayah, Karen, Mon, Rakhine and Shan. They are one of the ethnic races of Burma.”²⁰

As can be seen, the Rohingyas were accepted as indigenous to Arakan by all Burmese government that preceded Ne Win. Yet, they were rendered stateless through the highly racist 1982 Law.

What’s wrong with the Burma Citizenship Law of 1982?

As duly noted by Mr. Nurul Islam of ARNO, a lawyer by training, Burma Citizenship Law of 1982 is the most restrictive citizenship law in the world promulgated by late dictator Ne Win’s BSPP regime on October 15, 1982. It violates several fundamental principles of international customary law standards, offends the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and leaves Rohingyas exposed to no legal protection of their rights. It is conflicting government’s obligation to fulfill the rights of the child as stipulated by Article 7(1) of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 which states that the Child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right to a name, and to acquire a nationality.²¹ The Burmese government ratified this convention in 1991 and is obliged to grant citizenship to Rohingyas.

Note also that the 1982 Citizenship Law violates:

(1) Article 24(3) of the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966 also states, “Every child has the right to acquire a nationality.”

(2) Article 9 of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEADAW), 1979.

(3) Article 5(d) (iii) of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination 1965.

The 1982 Law promotes discrimination against Rohingya by arbitrarily depriving them of their Burmese (Myanmar) citizenship. The deprivation of one’s nationality is not only a serious violation of human rights but also an international crime.

The law continues to create outflows of refugees, which overburden other countries posing threats to peace and security within the region. Of the Rohingya Diaspora an estimated 1.5 million now live in Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, UAE, Thailand, Malaysia, India, Indonesia, USA, UK, Republic of Ireland, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Japan, and any other place they can find a shelter. The Rohingya refugee crisis with their boat people has become a regional problem of international dimension.

In his report to the United Nations in February 1996, the Special Rapporteur on Burma Professor Yozu Yokota stated, “Muslim population of Rakhine (Arakan) State was not recognized as citizens of Myanmar under the existing naturalization regulations and they were not even registered as so-called foreign residents ...Their status situation did not permit them to travel in the country...They are also not allowed to serve in the state positions and are barred from attending higher educational institution.”

He recommended: “The 1982 Citizenship Law should be revised or amended to abolish its over burdensome requirements for citizens in a manner which has discriminatory effects on racial or ethnic minorities particularly the Rakhine (Arakan) Muslims. It should be brought in line with the principles embodied in the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 30 August 1961.”²²

Another 16 years have passed by since 1996, and a new regime, headed by a retired general, purporting to be reform-minded has been sworn in, and yet the apartheid 1982 Law remains intact in Myanmar. A new pogrom has started and the suffering of the Rohingya continues. In July of this year, President Thein Sein said Rohingyas were not an ethnic group of Myanmar and asked the UN refugee group to help solve their problem by taking over responsibility for the Rohingyas in refugee camps or by sending them to third countries. Simply put, his government does not want them in Myanmar.

The 1982 Citizenship Law sanctions an apartheid policy, which epitomizes neo-Nazi Fascism. As I see, it is a blueprint for elimination or ethnic cleansing of ‘other’ races. Period! The United Nations define ‘Ethnic Cleansing’ as: “Purposeful policy designed by one ethnic or religious group to remove by violent and terror-inspiring means the civilian population of another ethnic or religious group from certain geographic areas.”

Thus, the latest pogrom against the Rohingyas of Myanmar is a continuation of that policy of total elimination of the Rohingya people, one way or another.

New ‘Myanmarism’

Since the days of military dictator Ne Win, the successive Myanmar regimes (military or quasi-civilian) have learned to exploit racial and religious sentiments to persecute minorities and non-Buddhists. As correctly noted in an earlier Karen Human Rights Group report, their power is rooted in the deep racism that has permeated

Burmese society since its beginnings; not only the racial supremacy complex which many Burmans are brought up with, but the racism of the Karen against the Burmans, the Burmans against the Shan, the Shan against the Wa, the Wa against the Shan, the Mon against the Burmans, the Rakhine against the Rohingyas, the Burmans against the Chinese, the Christians against the Buddhists, and everyone against the Muslims. The list goes on and on, and the military has always exploited it to turn people against each other and thereby increase its hold onto power.

The government propaganda continues to encourage a blind racist nationalism, full of references to ‘protecting the race’ – meaning that if Burmans (the majority Bamar people) do not oppress or eliminate other nationalities or races then they will themselves be oppressed, ‘national reconsolidation’ – meaning forced assimilation (through Burmanization and Buddization), and preventing ‘disintegration of the Union’ – meaning that if the Army (Tatmadaw) falls then some kind of ethnic chaos would ensue destabilizing the state. The regime has perfected this art of Myanmarism since the days of General Saw Maung who was handed down power after the bloody crackdown of 1988.

[The same recipe of containing the minority Rohingya is followed in the Rakhine state by the majority Buddhist Rakhine.]

The traditional Myanmarism has been Buddhism and militarism since the days of King Anawrahta (ca. 1044-1077 C.E.). The new Myanmarism is a toxic cocktail of ultra-nationalism and religious fanaticism (or religious ultra-nationalism, as coined by Dr. Shahnawaz Khan) as coded in the Lauka-thara-pyo,²³ which is the skeleton of the Buddhist political theology (based on the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha).²⁴

If the old one was dirty and ugly, the new Myanmarism is dirtier and uglier. In this, the ends justify the means; lies and deceptions are all too natural and acceptable strategies to rule and govern. It is a feudal recipe for disaster, which shuns pluralism, diversity and multi-culture – the very trend-setters for progress in our time. The 1982 Citizenship Law thus provides the very justification for the Myanmar regime towards elimination of the minority races like the Rohingya.

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Is there any solution to this problem facing the Rohingya and other ‘nameless’ minorities in Myanmar who are threatened to extinction? I believe there is. I call it the carrot and stick policy. I shall come to this later.

Rohingya Elimination is a Myanmar National Project

Millions of ethnic minorities are now internally displaced as a result of forced migration or what is called the ‘push’ factors. A larger number has been forced out to seek asylum outside as unwanted refugees in places like Thailand, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. It is tragic and its continuation is not desirable for the entire region.

In his book – *Worse Than War* – Daniel Jonah Goldhagen says that during mass murders, the murderers themselves, their supporters and those who wish to stand idly by practice linguistic camouflage. And this has been the case with the apartheid regime in Myanmar when it comes to its national project towards exterminating or purging out the Rohingyas.

Myanmar government wants to portray the Rohingyas as outsiders who had intruded into the country illegally. This small minority of probably less than 5%, living in a country of some 56 million, is even depicted as a demographic bomb, threatening Buddhist lifestyle. I did not know Buddhism is that frail. Funny that the Thein

Sein regime is even touted as a reform-minded government! If this be the attitude towards a persecuted minority one wonders how appalling it must have been during previous military regimes.

For decades what used to be whispered (and/or unheard by others) in government circles before the latest pogrom was unleashed against the Rohingyas of Myanmar has now become somewhat audible for all to hear. Their recent statements clearly show that for the past half a century, the Burmese (Myanmar) government ultimately has been the author of its own actions – their genocidal campaigns, their repeated pogroms, and their apartheid character to eliminate the Rohingya people one way or another. It is this policy which has led to forced exodus of more than a million of Rohingyas, let alone the inhuman condition that their people are subjected to day in and day out inside Myanmar.

As we have witnessed in the past with the Jews of Germany, Bosnian Muslims of former Yugoslavia, Kosovars of Kosovo of former Greater Serbia (and former Yugoslavia), and victims of Rwanda and Burundi, any time such mass extermination or eliminationist projects are launched, it is always about societies and their cultures that contribute to the circumstances that produce extermination plausible as a group or national project – a project that is led by the state, supported by a good percentage of the nation or its dominant group or groups, and which employs large institutional and material resources.²⁵

With the current ethnic cleansing in Arakan against the Rohingyas, we are once again reminded of this ugly truth that it is a national project in Myanmar that is led by a criminal neo-Nazi regime where a good percentage of Rakhine and Burman majority – brainwashed by their own brand of Julius Streicher in the likes of (late) Aye Kyaw, Aye Chan, Khin Maung Saw and others – are willing participants. The extremist Rakhine politicians and Buddhist monks play their respective roles providing the justification and necessary institutional and material resources for such extermination projects. ²⁶

It was all too natural, therefore, that Daw Suu Kyi and her NLD party members did not condemn this pogrom against the Rohingya, nor did others of the so-called democracy movement. They may not even realize how racists they are, and that is what such eliminationist national projects do to its people.

Dr. Maung Zarni of London School of Economics, who is an expert on Burma, recently said, “The racism against the Muslims in general, in Burma is pervasive across the majority, minority, civilian, military and class lines. And that is one of the scariest and most troubling aspects of this social transition in Burma. And the West has not spoken out against this issue, because the West is desperate to push its own strategic and commercial agenda in Burma. So what we have heard over the past one year or so, is that ‘Burma is a modern transitional democracy.’ And so now, the Burmese democratic transition is bringing about not necessarily concrete and irreversible democratisation process but the most ugly racism the world is witnessing.”²⁷

In such national elimination projects, as noted by Goldhagen, the targeted groups come to be seen as deleterious to the well-being of the executioner (often a majority) group. In some instances people deem the group’s perniciousness so great that they want to eliminate it. “In some of the cases such beliefs become socially powerful and coalesce into an explicit public and political conversation about elimination.”

And that is what has happened with the targeted Rohingya people. As part of a very calculated, sinister plan, the unfortunate murder of a Rakhine woman was used as the backdrop to simmer hatred and start the latest extermination campaign against the Rohingya people. It is not difficult to understand why the alleged criminal conveniently committed suicide in the prison so that no one would ever know the truth and whether or not he was used as a pawn in what was to follow. Thus, instead of a much anticipated inquiry report on grisly murder of ten Burmese (not Rohingya) Muslims in early June, we heard President Thein Sein’s statement that the Rohingyas cannot live inside Myanmar; they are unwanted.

As I have noted earlier, crimes at individual levels happen in all societies. But only in eliminationist projects are such crimes exploited to justify elimination of an entire targeted group.²⁸ To do this, the Myanmar regime has

employed all five principal forms of elimination – transformation, repression, expulsion, prevention of reproduction, and extermination of the Rohingya people. In spite of world condemnation, the regime, once again backed by its racist monks and mobs, therefore, refuses to allow outside inquiries and refuses to provide necessary food and shelter to the suffering Rohingya victims in this hot summer month of fasting.

President General Thein Sein has publicly stated that the Rohingya people should be expelled and the UN should take their charge as refugees, a call which was promptly rejected by the UNHCR. This attitude of the Myanmar government is worse than racial discrimination. It is an apartheid policy that has no place in the 21st century. The regime has been using the 1982 Citizenship Law as a convenient camouflage (a cover) to hide its sinister plan to depopulate Myanmar of any Muslims. Plain and simple! Let's call a spade a spade.

The military regimes that preceded Thein Sein have been practicing this Burmanization and Buddhization policy of the country for the last half a century. Soon after assuming power in 1962, General Ne Win's regime instituted the 'Four Cuts' policy, aimed at cutting off targeted groups from food, money, intelligence, and recruits. Even though Muslims of Myanmar, unlike other ethnic groups, were not part of any insurgent group, they did not skip persecution. Ne Win quickly nationalized all businesses and Muslims were the biggest losers. No compensation was offered by the Burmese authorities.²⁹ He also purged the armed forces and the civil bureaucracy of Muslims. Many fled (including those with Burmese or Karen spouses, known as the Zerbadi) to neighboring East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), West Pakistan (now Pakistan), Thailand, UAE and Saudi Arabia.

In the face of international criticism, the Burmese regime began to deny the existence of the Four Cuts policy in the late 1980s; however, evidence suggests that it remains a policy and practice even today. Anti-Muslim riots took place in Mandalay in 1997 and again in 2001. Some two dozen campaigns have also been directed against the Rohingya people to exterminate or evict them from their ancestral homeland in Arakan.

The real power in Myanmar still lies with the generals. President is their front man. They would continue to make sure that they control government and that the head of the state is a Burman from the majority race. To maintain their tight grip of power, they have created a toxic cocktail of ultra-nationalism (which is pure racism) and religious intolerance (which is bigotry) where the government patronized bare-foot monks are the flag-bearers of this new Myanmar. It is no accident that Nazi insignia – signs and symbols – are hot sales amongst the Rakhines and many Burmans today. They see themselves as the Fascist Germans of the Hitler-era ready to weed out their 'Jewish peril' – the Rohingyas totally. Even the so-called democracy movement icons and leaders have proven to be closet racists and bigots who approve of this new Myanmarism. Indeed, with the advent of a semblance of democracy, majority Buddhists feel they now have a license to kill and persecute minorities. This is tyranny of the majority at its worst.

Education

As I have shown earlier, the activities of the Myanmar regime since the days of Ne Win have been to heighten animosity among various communities, using one group against another. What goes on in the center by ultranationalists is followed in toto by the racists at the local state level. A transition to democracy alone has not and will not be enough to prevent the people tearing each other apart, irrespective of who forms the central government and whether or not it chooses to behave like a federal union with certain level of autonomy for each state. The first and biggest step in bringing about an end to the racism problem is to admit that it exists and to recognize its scale. Most racists inside Myanmar today are unaware of their despicable racism.

These leaders of Myanmar are also oblivious of the fact that citizenship based on ethnicity or race is an alien concept in the 21st century. Ethnicity based on race was an imaginary concept foisted by the imperialists to divide and rule, and cannot be used as a criterion for determining citizenship rights in our time. As such, the first thing the current regime can do is to bring its laws at par with international laws by amending the 1982 Citizenship Law so that Rohingyas and other minorities are accepted as equal citizens in Myanmar.

The current Rakhine-Rohingya tension can end, by partly expelling a few false notions in the minds of Rakhine and Burmese people that is embedded by text books and sustained false propaganda, authored and nurtured by the military regime and their paid historians and agents. If they instead go to older books of history, they would find not only the fact that as indigenous people the ties of the Rohingya people to the soil of Arakan is even older than the Buddhist Rakhines but also that as part of the larger Burmese Muslim community they partnered with Aung San in the independence struggle for Burma.³⁰ As I have amply demonstrated in my work on demography they were not implanted by the British.³¹ Because of their racial similarity with the Indians, they are often times falsely equated with the Hindu Chettiars or Marwaris and other Indian Hindu money-lenders or absentee landlords during the British colonial period.

What is even more ridiculous is that they are perceived as collaborators of the British Raj before and during the Second World War. In 1920s and 1930s, when Burma witnessed a series of anti-Indian pogroms, often led by Buddhist monks, such were crushed by colonial troops – mainly Indian Gurkha and Sikh (and not Rohingya) and ethnic Karen and Kachin soldiers. In 1942 when Japan invaded Burma, the majority Burmans and the racists within the Rakhine community aligned themselves with the invading Japanese forces and massacred more than a hundred thousand Rohingyas in Kyaktaw, Mrohaung, Kyataw, Rambree and Paktaw where 350 villages were burned down – souring the relationship between the two communities for decades to come. But as events unfolded, it did not take long for Aung San and his comrades to realize that Japan had no intention of liberating Burma; they were simply used as pawns in Japan's selfish imperial scheme. To this day, however, no apology has been issued for such an atrocity committed against the Rohingya and other affected minorities.

Abandoning All forms of Prejudice, Racism and Bigotry

The current antagonisms are compounded by the false notion that national success lies in racial purity and not in plurality. As I have shown earlier, the Rakhine Buddhist leadership, fascinated with Japanese imperial model of racial exclusiveness, wants to create a mono-ethnic state without any other race or religion. A visit to the USA and many parts of the Western Europe is sure to challenge that false notion and show that it is diversity of the workforce that is catalyzing success in our time. To quote Dr. Fareed Zakaria (of the Time Magazine and CNN) on this issue: “This infusion of talent, hard work and patriotism has kept the country vital for the past two centuries. And if we can renew it, it will keep America vital in the 21st century as well.”³²

Then there is the overwhelming belief that Rohingya Muslims, who probably constitute only 5% of the entire Myanmar population (counting even the exiled ones), are a demographic threat to the nation of 56 million. Sitting next door to China (with a population of 1.3 billion) and Bangladesh (150 million) where the population density is rather very high, most Rakhines and Buddhist Burmese assume that those people would one day take over their country unless they come hard on the Rohingya Kala and the Chinese Tayut. Thus the proximate linguistic (although very few Bangladeshis, even Chittagonians, can understand the Rohingyalish language spoken by the Rohingya people) and cultural links of the Rohingya with the Bangali makes the Rakhine and Burmese population feel threatened with dismemberment of their country – under pressure from Bangladeshi citizens. Bangladesh, thus, needs to be constantly cognizant of, and concerned with this Burmese/Rakhine apprehension, without sacrificing the right to voice support in a friendly way for the human rights of the Rohingya minority.

It is worth pointing out that democracy minus tolerance leads to fascism. If democracy is the rule of the majority, the protection of minorities against injustice and hegemony is not a matter of empathy of the majority. Human rights in a democracy are held to be inalienable – no human being could be deprived of those rights in a democracy by the will of the majority of the sovereign people. This basic governance norm of democracy seems to have been forgotten in recent months by the so-called reform government of Thein Sein, and the members of the new parliament which includes Daw Suu Kyi and her NLD members.

Most Rakhine and Burmese chauvinists seem allergic to the name Rohingya, claiming that the name did not exist before the 1950s. They are wrong. There are written records in English dating back to the late 18th century,

let alone the writings of Muslim poets of the early 17th century showing the name Rohingya.³³ In his treatise, “A Comparative Vocabulary of Some of the Languages Spoken in the Burma Empire,” written in 1799, British doctor Francis Buchanan wrote, “I shall now add three dialects, spoken in the Burma Empire, but evidently derived from the language of the Hindu nation. The first is that spoken by the Mohammedans, who have long settled in Arakan, and who call themselves Rooinga (Rohingya), or natives of Arakan.”³⁴ The Classical Journal, September and December, 1811, Vol. IV, London, mentions the name – ‘Rooinga’ in pages 107, 348 and 535. The name Rooinga can also be found Linguarum totius orbis Index of 1815 by Joanne Severino Vatero, Berlin.

But more importantly, these chauvinists ought to know that the most egregious denial of human rights is to deny the right of others to define and interpret their own identity, because this is a denial of human freedom and human dignity. If the Rohingyas have chosen that name, it is absolutely their right to be known as such. No one should have the audacity to deny that right. It is this fact alone which has rendered derogatory names like the ‘Black niggers (or Negro)’ or ‘Red Indians’ totally unacceptable today. These people are known today as the ‘African (or Afro-) Americans’ and ‘Native Americans’, respectively. The Burmese and Rakhine people better get used to this naming convention, as much as their own names have evolved.

If they had studied history objectively they would have known that history of the geographical region we call the South Asia including what is today called Myanmar, which is sandwiched between South Asia and South-east Asia, has no one beginning, no one chronology, no single plot or narrative. This essential fact is recognized by all great historians – Professors David Ludden, Abdul Karim, Romila Thapar, R.S. Sharma and many others – who spent their lifetimes to study the region. To these unbiased and genuine historians of the ancient India and Burma, the region did not have a singular history, but many histories, with indefinite, contested origins and with countless separate trajectories that multiply the more we learn about the region.

Obviously, such an understanding and analysis of history is unpopular and loathsome with communal, racist, xenophobic regimes and their propagandists and vanguards. The latter bigots would rather have it their way in which the minorities or the have-nots in power simply did neither exist nor mattered. To them, the affected persecuted people just appeared in the recent scene through mere accident of history like those possible through a magic lantern! That is the level of their disgusting chauvinism, which is often reflected through the claims and counter-claims of pen-pushing chauvinists and zealots of the Rakhine state of Myanmar.

Racism is a curse and must be fought relentlessly; otherwise for multi-ethnic and multi-religious countries like Myanmar (a hybrid state of states) it will tear it apart. Freedom-loving and democratic-minded opposition groups working outside Myanmar, therefore, must respect each other and shun racism and bigotry. It won’t be easy and fast though. After all, it has been in their political-DNA for way too long, nurtured and nourished by promoters of hatred and intolerance.

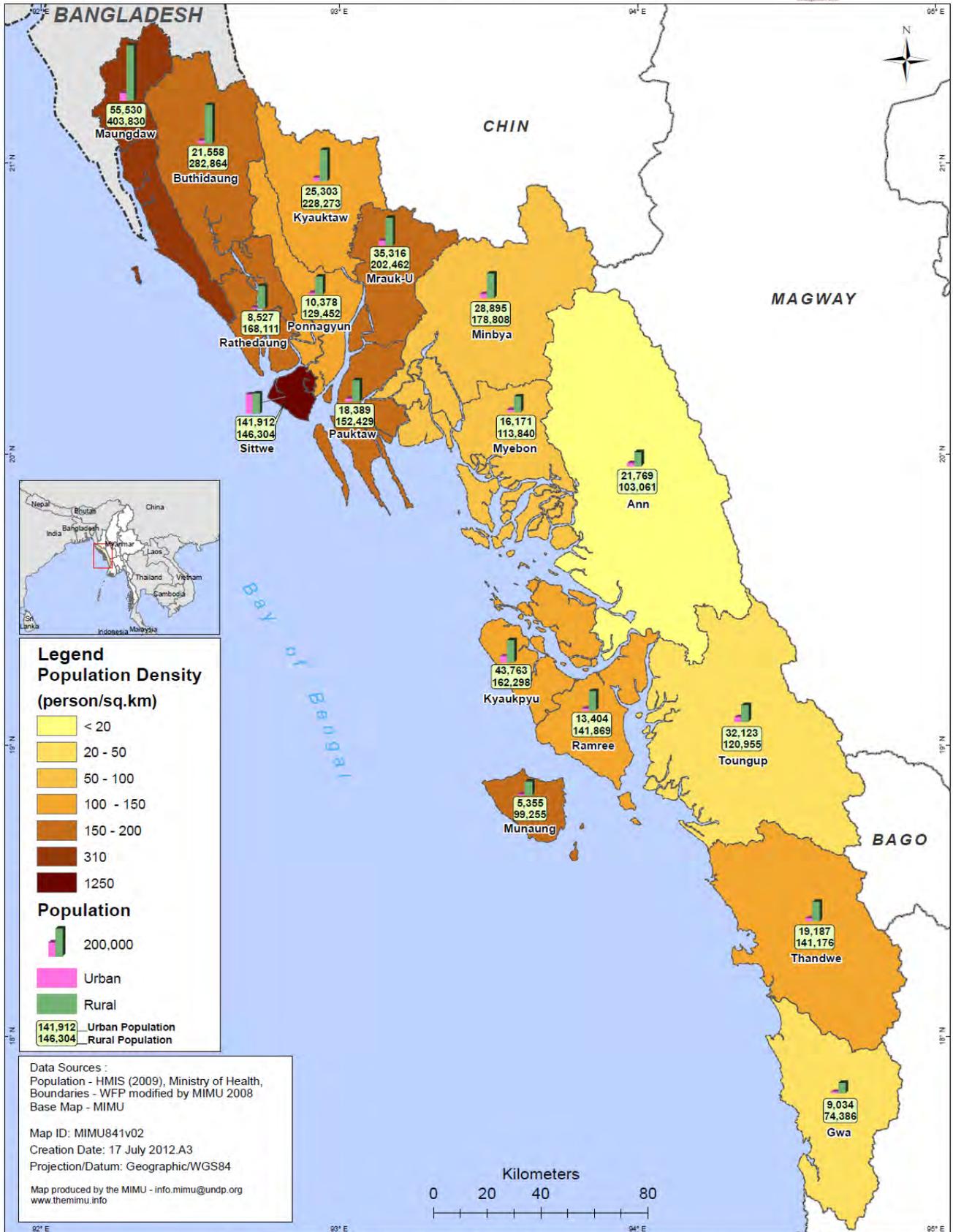
They must believe and respect all the Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That means, they must treat others that look different with respect and dignity. They must bury their pre-colonial chauvinist mindset that is not conducive to our time when increasingly human rights, freedom and democracy are all equally important. They should draw the lessons from former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. If they fail to do so, Burma will remain a country at war with itself, whether or not today’s regime is replaced by another government, civil or otherwise.

In the context of Arakan, it is important that there be a dialogue between the leaderships of the majority Rakhine and the minority Rohingya to bury prejudice and ease tension for a peaceful and respectable co-existence as equal citizens.

Myanmar Information Management Unit



Population & Population Density Map of Rakhine State Myanmar - 2009



Disclaimer: The names shown and the boundaries used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

RAKHINE STATE POPULATION TOWNSHIPWISE IN 2009

SL No.	Names of Township	Urban Population	Rural Population	Total Population
1.	Sittwe (Akyab)	1,41,912	1,46,304	288,216
2.	Maungdaw	55,530	4,03,830	459,360
3.	Buthidaung	21,558	2,82,864	304,422
4.	Rathedaung	8,527	1,68,111	176,638
5.	Kyauktaw	25,303	2,28,273	253,576
6.	Ponnagyun	10,378	1,29,452	139,830
7.	Marauk-U	35,316	2,02,462	237,778
8.	Pauktaw	18,389	1,52,429	170,818
9.	Minbya	28,895	1,78,808	207,703
10.	Myebon	16,171	1,13,840	130,011
11.	Ann	21,769	1,03,061	124,830
12.	Kyaukpyu	43,763	1,62,298	206,061
13.	Ramree	13,404	1,41,869	155,273
14.	Manaung	5,355	99,255	104,610
15.	Tongup	32,123	1,20,955	153,078
16.	Thandwe	19,187	1,41,176	160,363
17.	Gwa	9,034	74,386	83,420
	TOTAL	5,06,614	28,49,373	33,55,987

The Stick

As I have noted elsewhere, for every ideology, there is always an ideologue. This role is often shared by intellectuals, who are the real 'brains' that energize the wheel of the movement. So, as we have Aye Kyaw and Aye Chan (author of xenophobic works like the "Who are the Rohingyas?" and "The Influx Viruses") among the Rakhaings, steering the wheel of intolerance against the Rohingyas of Myanmar today, Julius Streicher (1885 - 1946) was the ideologue responsible for breeding hatred against the Jews of Germany.³⁵

Julius Streicher was a prominent Nazi prior to and during World War II. In 1923 Streicher founded the racist newspaper, *Der Stürmer* of which he was editor. The newspaper became a part of the Nazi propaganda machine spreading deep hatred of everything and everyone Jewish.³⁶

Streicher argued in the newspaper that the Jews had contributed to the depression, unemployment, and inflation in Germany which afflicted the country during the 1920's. He claimed that Jews were white-slavers and were responsible for over 90 percent of the prostitutes in the country. Eventually the newspaper reached a peak circulation of 480,000 in 1935. After the Nazi party was reorganized, Streicher became the party leader of Franconia. After 1933, he practically ruled the city of Nuremberg and was nicknamed "King of Nuremberg" and the "Beast of Franconia." His publishing firm released three anti-Semitic books for children, including the 1938 *Der Giftpilz* (The Poison Mushroom), one of the most widespread pieces of propaganda, which purported to warn about insidious dangers Jews posed by using the metaphor of an attractive and yet deadly mushroom.

On May 23, 1945, two weeks after Germany's surrender, Streicher was captured by the Americans. Chief Justice Jackson, chief counsel for the prosecution, spoke to the tribunal and explained to them the importance of what they were doing. He said, to paraphrase, that: "We are handing these defendants a poisoned chalice, and if we ever sip from it we must be subject to the same punishments, otherwise this whole trial is a farce." Interestingly, in Jackson's opening statement he claimed that the prosecution did not wish to incriminate the whole German race for the crimes they committed, but only the "planners and designers" of those crimes, "the inciters and

leaders without whose evil architecture the world would not have been for so long scourged with the violence and lawlessness ... of this terrible war.”

So, at Nuremberg, the ordinary Germans who threw Jews into crematoria were not tried, but only their leaders, who incited violence. It was not surprising, therefore, to find Julius Streicher included in that short list. He was found guilty of crimes against humanity at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trial and sentenced to death on October 1, 1946. Another person who didn't escape punishment at Nuremberg was Dr. Wolfram Sievers of the Ahnenerbe Society's Institute of Military Scientific Research, whose own crimes were traced back to the University of Strasbourg. They were not the typical people prosecuted for international war crimes, given their civilian professions. As Professor Noam Chomsky has argued there is a justification for their punishment, namely, those defendants could understand what they were doing. They could understand the consequences of the work that they were carrying out.³⁷

What is important here to stress is that Julius Streicher was not a member of the military. He was not part of planning the Holocaust, the invasion of Poland, or the Soviet invasion. Yet his role in inciting the extermination of Jews was significant enough, in the prosecutors' judgment, to include him in the indictment.

As we have noted from the latest extermination campaign against the Rohingyas of Myanmar, there was collusion from certain elements of the civil sector (Rakhine politicians and intellectuals) in this crime spree. They provided the justification for extermination. They acted like Julius Streicher of the Nazi era.

I would like to believe that by identifying and prosecuting both the state and non-state actors that are responsible for the on-going extermination campaigns we can show that such crimes against humanity will not be tolerated in our time.

It is high time that the UN and the international media take notice of this grave historic injustice to the Rohingyas of Myanmar. The Thein Sein regime must be obliged to accept the Rohingyas as equal citizens failing which the entire region would be forced to settle for decades of instability and insecurity, something nobody wants. It is for the good of the entire region – south and south-east Asia, let alone Myanmar that the regime fulfills its international obligations by reaffirming fundamental human rights and securing the life and dignity of the minorities within its territory, as are very clearly enshrined in the preamble of the Charter of the UN. The sooner the better!

However, as I have noted elsewhere the Myanmar government is known to have perfected the game of playing cat-and-mouse with the world community, hoping that such occasional extermination campaigns (dubbed as 'sectarian' clashes or riots) would soon be forgotten. After all, it has never been punished harshly for its horrendous records on a plethora of violations. In 2006, Special Rapporteur Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro stated: “As noted by the Special Rapporteur in his previous reports, the above-mentioned serious human rights violations have been widespread and systematic, suggesting that they are not simply isolated acts of individual misconduct by middle- or low-ranking officers, but rather the result of a system under which individuals and groups have been allowed to break the law and violate human rights without being called to account.” It is not by chance that when Tomas Ojea Quintana, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, urged an independent inquiry on Arakan Thein Sein promptly announced its own internal inquiry commission only to diffuse such outside pressures. ³⁸

It is, therefore, necessary for the world community to ensure that it is not fooled by such ploys again, and instead, to demand full compliance – including restoring Rohingya citizenship rights – within a prescribed period of, say, six months. If the regime fails to reform by improving the status of the minority Rohingyas, the ASEAN and the OIC, with or without the UNSC, must press for the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate the massacre, and indict the Myanmar government for its war crimes against the Rohingya and other minorities, violating international criminal laws based on the provisions stipulated under the Rome Statute of the ICC.

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which was adopted in July 1998 and came into force in July 2002, is a useful articulation of many of modern principles of international criminal law. As noted in a 114-page report “Crimes in Burma” (2009) by International Human Rights Clinic (IHRC) at Harvard Law School, the five common elements of a crime against humanity are as follows: (1) there must be an “attack”; (2) the attack must be “directed against” a “civilian population”; (3) the attack must be “widespread or systematic”; (4) the conduct of the perpetrator must be “part of ” such an attack; and (5) the perpetrator must have “knowledge” that, or intended that, his or her conduct is part of such an attack. The Report says, “Of the Rome Statute provisions on war crimes the most relevant to Burma are Articles 8(2)(c) and 8(2)(e), which cover serious violations in conflicts of a “non-international” (or internal) character... To constitute a war crime in the context of an internal armed conflict, the act must be committed against persons taking ‘no active part in the hostilities’. A war crime involves a perpetrator committing one of a number of prohibited acts, such as rape or torture, in a situation that meets certain common elements.”³⁹

If anyone is looking for evidences there are plenty to indict the Myanmar regime for its crimes against humanity. Unless the Myanmar government corrects or is pushed to correcting its Rohingya problem soon by allowing them to live as equal citizens, I am afraid that the agenda could be hijacked by extremists on both sides of the Muslim-Buddhist divide which could lead to war of secession, further threatening the regional peace and security.

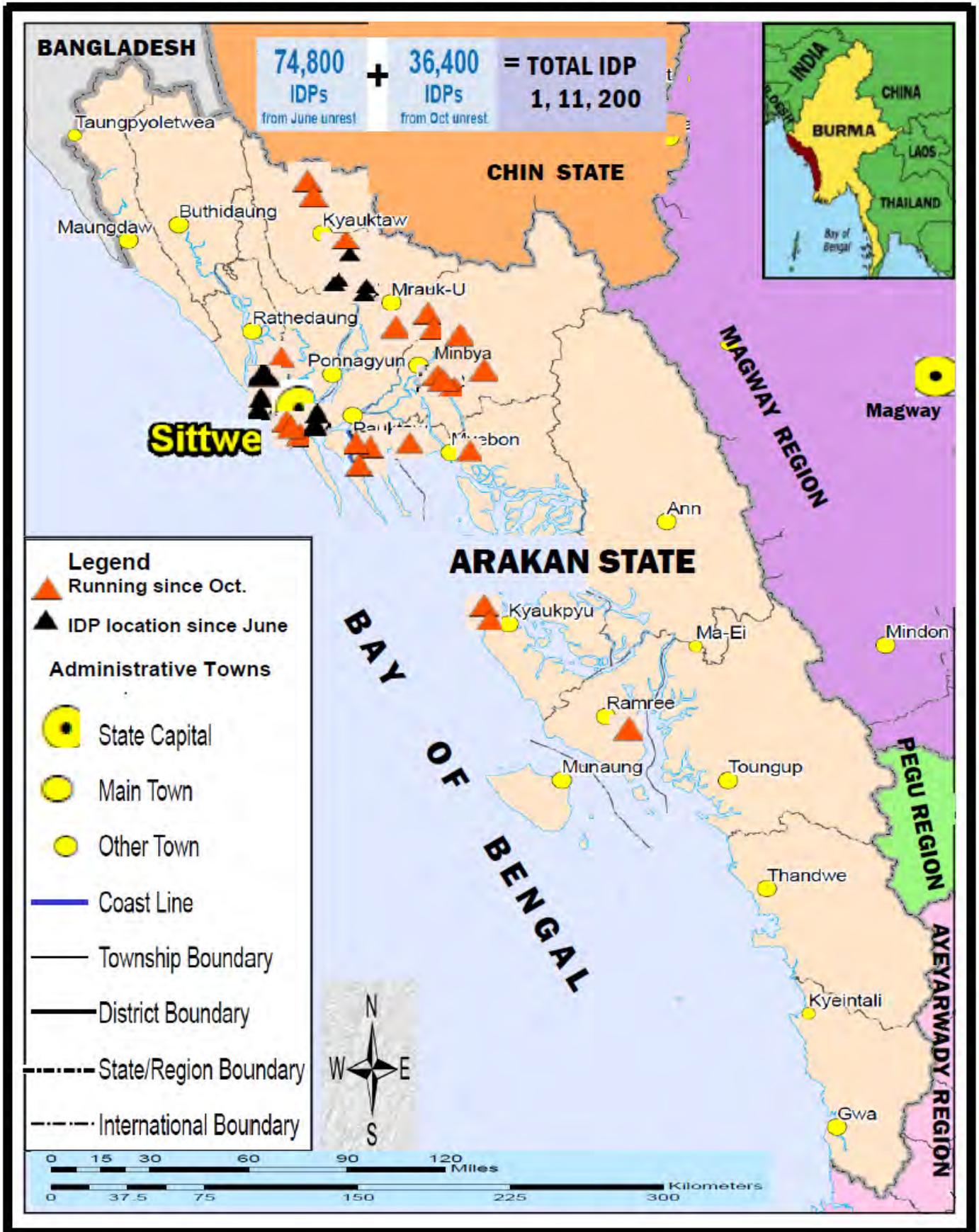
It is worth noting here that the UN Security Council has the power under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to take measures “to maintain or restore international peace and security” when it determines “the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression.” Article 41 of the Charter allows the Security Council to take action that does not involve the use of force. As articulated in Article 33 of the Charter, whenever the Council “deems necessary,” at “any stage” of a dispute, it may intervene “to ensure prompt and effective action” to safeguard peace and security. Myanmar is a prima facie case for the UNSC to intervene to ensure that the Rohingyas are protected from any further violations of their human rights.

In its 2009 report the IHRC stated, “UN actors documenting of reported violations have been strongly suggesting these violations may constitute crimes against humanity and war crimes under international criminal law. This creates a strong prima facie case that such crimes have been occurring, and justifies intensified UN Security Council action to investigate the scope and scale of these potential crimes... If the international community and the UN Security Council fail to take action the evidence presented in this report suggests that the grave humanitarian situation in eastern Burma and elsewhere in the country will continue unchecked. The perpetrators of serious human rights and humanitarian violations will remain unaccountable. A culture of impunity will persist that is highly conducive to the continuance and escalation of violations.” And as the latest pogrom testifies, these fears have become reality for the Rohingya people.

The report recommended, “To help prevent future violations, the UN Security Council should create a Commission of Inquiry mandated and sufficiently resourced to investigate adequately the situation and make appropriate recommendations based on its findings. This Commission should apply all relevant international criminal and humanitarian law standards, in order to analyze whether or not the ongoing widespread and systematic violations may amount to crimes against humanity or war crimes. The international community, particularly the member countries of the United Nations, should make it clear to the Security Council that such action is needed. Finally, the Security Council should be prepared to act upon findings and recommendations made by such a Commission, including a potential referral to the International Criminal Court, the permanent body established to investigate, try, and sentence those who commit war crimes and crimes against humanity.”

Three years have passed by since the IHRC Report surfaced. And yet today, the lives of persecuted Rohingya are infinitely worse. Simply put, they face extinction. How long can the UNSC afford to do nothing when it comes to protecting their lives? How about starting with an international inquiry commission, as recommended by Tomas Quintana?

RECENT RAKHINE STATE EMERGENCY REPORTED IDP FIGURES : 5 NOV 2012  OCHA



It would be the greatest tragedy of our generation should we allow the perpetrators of ethnic cleansing to whitewash their crimes against humanity. The UNSC must demand an impartial inquiry and redress the Rohingya crisis. The Rohingya people need protection as the most persecuted people on earth. Should the Thein Sein government fail to bring about the desired change, starting with either repealing or amending the 1982 Citizenship Law, the UNSC must consider creating a 'save haven' inside Arakan in the northern Mayu Frontier Territories to protect the lives of the Rohingya people so that they could live safely, securely with honor and dignity as rest of us.

Unless, the Myanmar government restores the fundamental rights of the Rohingya people, let no government reward it with lucrative business deals, nor lift the current sanctions. Otherwise, they must share the guilt of aiding mass murder, making a mockery of everything that we cherish dear and noble, letting the bleeding and suffering to continue. If they truly want to see change, they better walk the talk! The US and her western partners must establish concrete, identifiable benchmarks, as I hinted here, to make sure the so-called reform is irreversible and inclusive for persecuted minorities like the Rohingya. They should insist that "ethnic cleansing" of any minority is unacceptable and is a crime against humanity, and ensure that Myanmar's reforms include its minorities, embrace international human rights standards, and end its ethnocentric agenda.

If the Thein Sein regime is truly reform-minded, let it prove itself by doing what is just, morally right and honorable. It has the choice to either pick up the carrot or be beaten by the stick. It can capture this moment to either make history or be dumped in its garbage, sealing the fate of the country much like what happened to Yugoslavia and its leader Milosevic. I pray and hope that it chooses inclusion over exclusion, diversity over racism, tolerance over intolerance, wisdom over idiocy and ultimately life over death.

Thank you for listening.

References and Endnotes:-

1. <http://www.ibiblio.org/obl/docs/Citizenship%20Law.htm>
2. Race refers to a person's physical appearance, such as skin color, eye color, hair color, bone/jaw structure etc. Race presumes shared biological or genetic traits, whether actual or asserted. Ethnicity, on the other hand, relates to cultural factors such as nationality, culture, ancestry, language and beliefs. It connotes shared cultural traits and a shared group history. Some ethnic groups also share linguistic or religious traits, while others share a common group history but not a common language or religion. An ethnic group or ethnicity is a population of human beings whose members identify with each other, on the basis of a real or a presumed common genealogy or ancestry. See, e.g., http://www.diffen.com/difference/Ethnicity_vs_Race for differences between the two. Rohingyas are in general darker skinned Aryan/Semitic looking people although some have mix of Mongoloid features. The Rakhines are mostly Mongoloid people. The shared group identity makes either of them a distinct ethnic group. The physical differences also point to their racial differences.
3. See, e.g., The Crescent in Arakan by Moshe Yegar, http://www.kaladanpress.org/v3/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=216%3Athe-crescent-in-arakan&catid=36%3Arohingya&Itemid=36; <http://danyawadi.wordpress.com/2012/03/04/%E1%81%82%E1%81%89%E1%81%88%E1%81%8B-historical-document-of-rohingya-%E1%81%8A%E1%80%9E%E1%80%99%E1%80%AF%E1%80%AD%E1%80%84%E1%80%B9%E1%80%B8%E1%80%A1%E1%80%B1%E1%80%91%E1%80%AC%E1%80%80%E1%80%B9/>; The Rohingyas: A Short Account of Their History and Culture by Abdul Karim.; The Advent of Islam in Arakan by Dr. Mohammed Ali Chowdhury, http://www.kaladanpress.org/v3/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&catid=36%3Arohingya&id=217%3Athe-advent-of-islam-in-arakan-and-the-rohingyas&Itemid=36

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5. http://theamericanmuslim.org/tam.php/features/articles/anc_policy_statement_on_the_peoples_of_arakan_shows_lack_of_foresightedness/
6. *The Price of Silence*, op. cit., p. 235.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 239.
8. Reported in <http://elevenmyanmar.com/opinion/539-i-wil-tell-the-real-truth-6>
9. See, *The Price of Silence*, op. cit., for such quotations from the internet postings of Rakhine racists.
10. "Rohingya tangled in Burma citizenship politics" by Nurul Islam (UK): <http://danyawadi.wordpress.com/2012/05/30/rohingya-tangled-in-burma-citizenship-politics-by-nurul-islam-uk/>
11. The phrase "appointed day" meant 4 January 1948 – the day Burma was to become an independent country. The British parliament approved the Burma Independence Act on December 10, 1947, and Burma formally achieved its independence from Britain on January 4, 1948.
12. http://www.burmalibrary.org/reg_burma/archives/199507/msg00015.html
13. http://www.blc-burma.org/html/Constitution/1947.html#AMENDMENT_OF_THE_CONSTITUTION
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16. [http://www.ibiblio.org/obl/docs/Union_Citizenship_\(Election\)_Act-1948.htm](http://www.ibiblio.org/obl/docs/Union_Citizenship_(Election)_Act-1948.htm)
17. http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs/UNION_CITIZENSHIP_ACT-1948.htm
18. *Ibid.*
19. For a thorough discussion on this issue, see, e.g., S.L. Verma's "The Law Relating to Foreigners and Citizenship in Burma", 2nd Edition, Mandalay 1961.
20. Radio speech by Prime Minister U Nu, 25 September 1954 at 8:00 PM; Public speech by Prime Minister U Nu and Defence Minister U Ba Swe at Maungdaw and Buthidaung respectively on 3 & 4 November, 1959.
21. <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm>
22. <http://danyawadi.wordpress.com/2012/05/30/rohingya-tangled-in-burma-citizenship-politics-by-nurul-islam-uk/>; see also: <http://www.unhcr.org/3bbb286d8.html> as to how the Law violates Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, UNHCR (1961).
23. It is like the Burmese version, although written by a Rakhine monk Thu Mrat of the 14th century, of *The Prince of Niccolo Machiavelli* (1498-1527 CE).
24. *The Price of Silence*, op. cit., pp. 169-207.
25. For the latest video of the pogrom, see, e.g., http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=8EVHaBDAQ_0#!
26. For the latest video of the pogrom, see, e.g., http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=8EVHaBDAQ_0#!
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32. *Time Magazine*, June 18, 2012, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2116713,00.html#ixzz24mY1UkXj>
33. Bengali medieval Poet Alaol (1608-1680 CE) mentions about the city of Rosang (Rohang) in Arakan in his poems. In the medieval works of the poets of Arakan and Chittagong, like Quazi Daulat, Mardan, Shamser Ali, Quraishi Magan, Alaol, Ainuddin, Abdul Ghani and others, they frequently referred to Arakan as 'Roshang', 'Roshanga', 'Roshango Shar', and 'Roshango Des'. [Nalinikania Bhattasali Commemoration Volume, Dacca Museum, 1966, P.356; Qazi Daulat: *Sati Moyna O Lor Chandrani*, edited by N. Ghasal, P.45; Alawal: *Saiful Mulk Badiuzzamal*, edited by Ahmed Sharif, P.63; Alawal: *Tohfa*, ed. *Ibid.*, P.78; Puthi Parichili, *Ibid.*, PP.242,349 & 600.]

34. See, e.g., the statement of Puran in 1799 to British doctor, Francis Buchanan as recorded in "A Comparative Vocabulary of Some of the Languages Spoken in the Burma Empire", SOAS Bulletin of Burma Research, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2003), pp. 40- 55. It reads, "I shall now add three dialects, spoken in the Burma Empire, but evidently derived from the language of the Hindu nation. The first is that spoken by the Mohammedans, who have long settled in Arakan, and who call themselves Rooingya (Rohingya), or natives of Arakan."

35. See this author's article on xenophobia: <http://dandelionsalad.wordpress.com/2007/08/12/xenophobia-a-brief-analysis-by-dr-habib-siddiqui/>

36. See: <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/sturm28.htm> for samples of xenophobia against Jews.

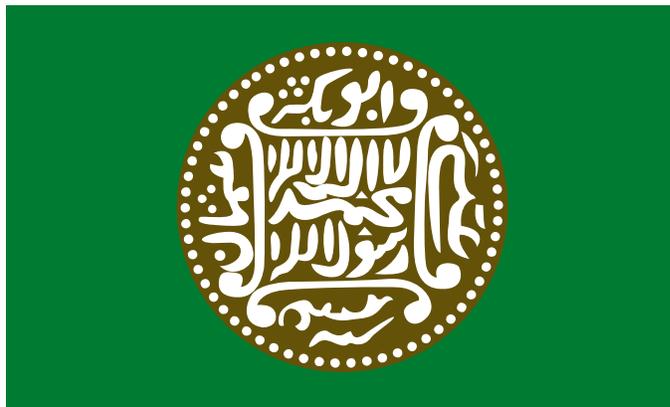
37. <http://www.counterpunch.org/schivone08032007.html>

38. Full statement of the UN special rapporteur on Burma, Tomas Ojea Quintana:

<http://www.mizzima.com/edop/opinion/7689-full-statement-of-the-un-special-rapporteur-on-burma.html>

39. <http://www.law.harvard.edu/programs/hrp/documents/Crimes-in-Burma.pdf>

Notes: Posted on August 29, 2012 by Kaladanpress.com **END**



**ROHINGYA
NATIONAL FLAG**

**PLEASE
COMMEMORATE
ROHINGYA
NATIONAL DAY ON
JANUARY 3, 2012**

ဇန်နဝါရီလ (၃) ရက်နေ့.

သည် တိုင်းရင်းသား

ရိုဟင်ဂျာ အမျိုးသားနေ့.

ဖြစ်ကြောင်းအသိပေးနှိုးဆော်အပ်ပါသည်