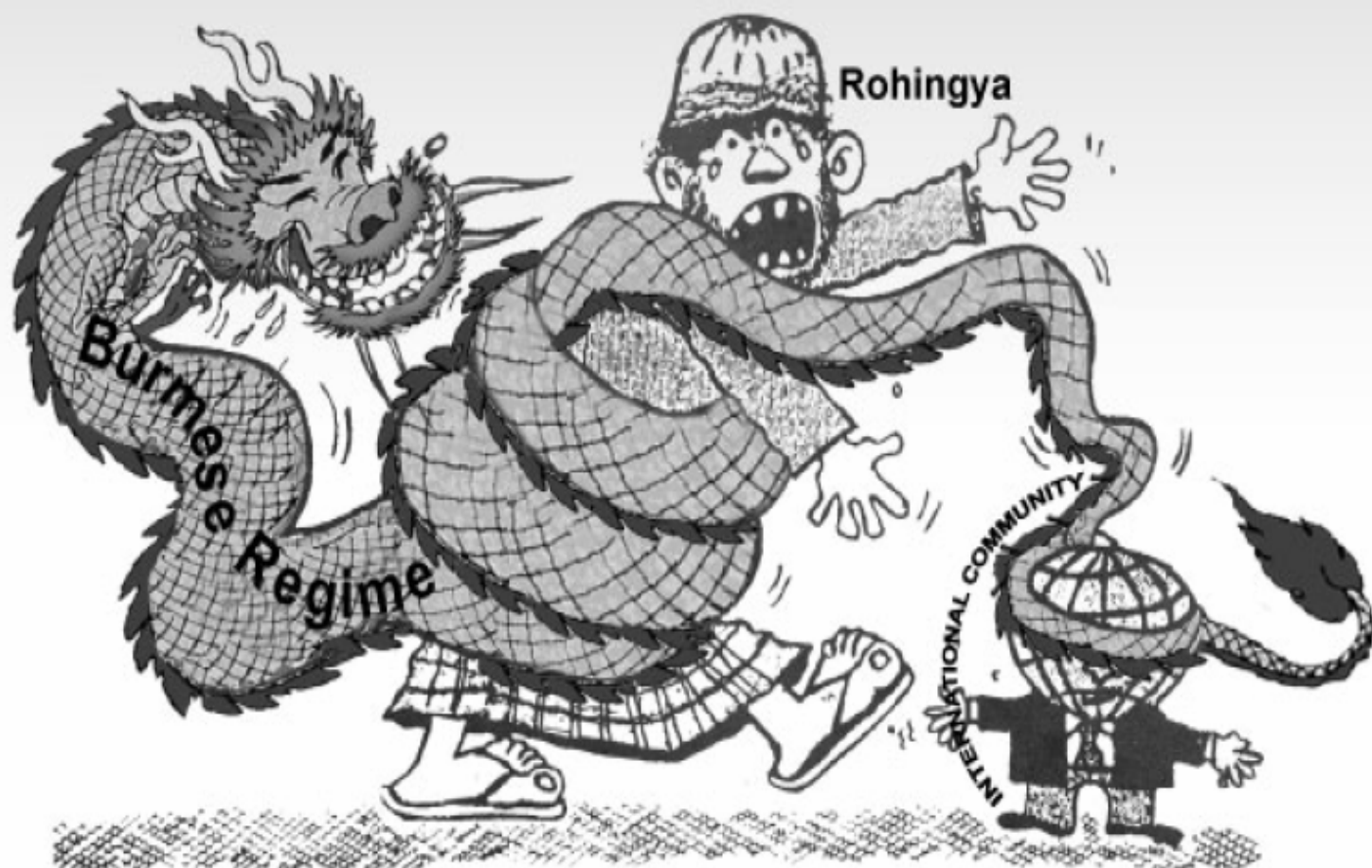




Monthly

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News and Analysis of the Arakan Rohingya National Organisation, Arakan (Burma)

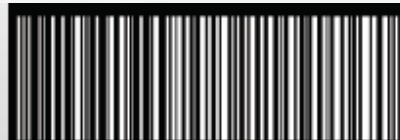


**King Dragon or Nagamin Operation in 1978
against the Rohingyas**

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EDITORIAL

Rohingya! The burden of Sisyphus

The exodus of Arakanese Muslim and Buddhist from Arakan to Bengal is not a new issue. There existed the exodus of people of Arakan to Bengal and Bengal to Arakan from the beginning of the history. It is indeed the legacy of history for Bengal to bear the burden of refugees from Arakan. In 1404 AC the king of Arakan, Naramaikhla (1401-1434), was forced to flee to Gaur, the capital of the Bengal Sultanate. The Sultan welcomed the refugee king and in 1430 the Sultan of Bengal restored him to the throne of Arakan.

In 1660 A.C., the Mogul Prince Shah Shuja fled to Arakan. This important event brought a new wave of Muslim migration to the kingdom of Arakan. Shah Shuja, his family members, his sons and daughters and everyone wearing Moorish beard had been beheaded by the king of Arakan for his lust for his daughter and his wish to grasp the Prince's riches. In 1665 to 1666 a large Mughal force conquered Sandwip, Chittagong and Ramu.

After the death of Shah Shuja, the Muslim Kaman unit played a decisive role as king makers of Arakan. Fresh Afghan mercenaries from North India were continually reinforcing these units. From 1666 until 1710 the political role of Arakan was completely in their hands. Ten kings were crowned and dethroned by them. In 1710 Sanda Wizaya succeeded in gaining upper hand over them, forcing most of the Kamans to go into exile to Rambree. The two last kings of Arakan, Sanda Thaditha and Thamada were the descendants of Kamans. Their descendants live in Rambree, Chaduba, Kyaukpyu, Myebon, Sandoway and in a few villages near Akyab and they bear the same name to this very day. Their language is Arakanese and their customs are similar to that of Rakhaing in every thing except religion, Islam.

Since 1710 A.C things went out of control. There was disturbance all over Arakan. As a result two sided migration took place: the Buddhists (Rakhine) going eastward and the Muslims (Rohingya) northward in the land between Sankhu (sangu) River in Chittagong and Saindaung Range (east of the Mayu River) and Akyab became almost depopulated. Subsequent Muslim refugees came from the eastern side of Kaladan River and settled down there. They are still known as Rohingyas. Their language is an admixture of Bengali, Arabic, Persian and Rakhine.

In 1785 when Burmese King Bodaw conquered Arakan, many people crossed to Bengal. Captain Cox settled some of them in a place, which was later known as Cox's Bazar. When the British occupied Arakan in 1825, the people who migrated to Bengal 40-years before started to return to their former home land, Arakan.

In 1942 militant Rakhine equipped with firearms supplied by the nationalist Burmans carried out a massacre against the innocent, illiterate, poor and unarmed Muslims throughout Arakan. As many

as 100,000 Muslims were killed and some 80,000 were forced to flee to East Bengal which was then under the British rule. During this pogrom the militant Rakhine destroyed some 307 Muslim villages.

Soon after the Independence of Burma in 1948, Burma Territorial Force (BTF) mainly Rakhine rampaged towards Muslim villages. The memory of BTF period and their brutality still shudders the conscience of every living Rohingya till today. Thousands of Rohingyas were made homeless and nearly 50,000 had fled to the then East Pakistan.

In 1958, during the Caretaker government of Gen. Ne Win, his army had driven out the Rohingya Muslims from 27-villages of northern Maungdaw. They were accepted back only when Pakistan government had strongly protested.

In 1978, the Ne Win's BSPP government driving out 300,000 across the border to Bangladesh carried out the Naga Min operation. Under an agreement without

condition to restore the rights of Rohingya, that the Bangladesh government repatriated some 200,000 refugees to Arakan while according to UNHCR estimate 40,000 died in Bangladesh camps, the rest diffused into Bangladesh society. Still, the SLORC insisted that more people were returned to Burma than actually left from Arakan State in 1978 (Human Rights Watch Asia Sept. 1996, Vol.8 No. (C) Page 20 f.n. 48).

The SLORC which came into power after suppressing 1988 democratic uprising resulting in killing about 3000 and detaining hundreds of pro-democracy activists reactivated Rohingya extermination as a result 300,000 Rohingya had to flee again to Bangladesh in 1991/92. Their repatriation began since 22nd September 1992 following an agreement between Bangladesh and Burma on 29 April 1992.

Meanwhile, unabated infiltration of

Rohingyas from Arakan to Bangladesh continued alongside the repatriation and push-back, making the whole thing look like the burden of Sisyphus. Unfortunately the new arrivals have been pushed back or arrested when detected. Bangladesh though not a party to the 1951 Convention Relating to the status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol should fulfill its obligations with regard to the non-refoulement of the Rohingya refugees.

Push back and arresting them is not a solution to refugee issue. Bangladesh should sympathize and show compassion and try for a permanent solution to their issue with the coordination of international communities. All Rohingya refugees will go back to Burma when the situation is favourable. For the time being they should be given refugee status so that they can breath freely.

KING DRAGON (NAGA MIN) OPERATION OF 1978

By AFK Jilani

Time and tide rolled on but chauvinism, vilification, apartheid, racist, campaign of terror, dragnet arrest and imprisonment, secret killing, deportation, expulsion, conversion to Buddhist cult, forced labour, wounding of religious feeling, raping of Rohingya womenfolk, settlements on Rohingya's land by Buddhists both from inside and outside, confiscation of land, relocation, restriction on marriage, movement and religion, denial of job, education and health care, etc.etc. went on unabated till the February 1978, whom the ruling junta in pursuance of a pre-planned sinister design, again started a sham immigration, actually a military operation deploying thousands of Burmese army and notorious Lun Htins (para-military) commando brigade wearing red towel around the necks and cruel military intelligents with hundreds of immigration officers, firstly from the town of Akyab, under the damn

name 'Naga Min' (King Dragon) operation.

"Ukhia (Cox's Bazar), May 12, 1978, some rare drops of tear trickled down the tanned cheeks of a BDR Jawan as he went to describe the hellish situation in



Bashir Was brutally murdered by the Burmese Army on 23 April 1978

which Burmese refugees were allowed to cross into Bangladesh, reports BSS.

"It happened at a border outpost near Teknaf yesterday when BSS correspondent asked him why they had allowed illegal trespassing of Bangladesh

border by Burmese nationals. Seemingly, every shocked, the Jawan told that initially they tried to push back the evictees beyond the border. But after a couple of days 'we saw thousands of panic-stricken people, severely tortured, wrath-ful and evicted by the racist Burmese authorities gathered on the other side of Bangladesh border' he said with a voile full of indignation.

"We heard frequent gun-shots, saw sky-reaching flames in-side Burmese territory, heard heart-breaking cries of men, women and children who were running for safety towards Bangladesh". Besides, we saw many people wounded by Burmese gunners, pale in pain but still struggling for survival, the Jawan said. What should they do when thousand s of "Insan (human)" the true member of the "Ashrafuk Muklukat " were dying in front of their eyes.

"A deep sense of humanity and

brotherhood quelled all questions and let aside all about legitimacy of action and code of law, he added in a soaked voice, his eye balls danced in anger but tears still rolled down.

"Sun bowed to the west, but the last ray played on the face of the BDR personnel and his cheeks were seen glittering. After a very few moments, the sun set fully. The entire horizon echoed the sweet Azan from a nearby mosque. The Jawan rushed to say his Magreb (sunset) prayer. (People's view, Chittagong, Saturday, May 13, 1978.)"

"In order to prepare the justification for



victims of rape

a large-scale eviction of these Muslims from Arakan, the state controlled Burmese press began to publish articles and news dispatches in 1977-78 alleging the Rohingyas as the illegal Bangladeshi immigrants. There-after, Burmese authorities launched a combined operation of army; police, lunhtin and immigration personnel code named "Naga Min Operation" (The King dragon operation). Teams of officials accompanied by police and army visited homesteads ostensibly to weed out illegal residents. Soon reports began to trickle out from the area that these teams were engaged in pressure tactics to make whole families leave the land of their ancestors for Bangladesh." The article of Sayyid Anwarul Karim,,

(Bangladesh 10-8-97 ,The Independent Daily of Bangladesh.

Terrified by the ruthlessness of the operation and total uncertainty of the security of their life, property, honour and dignity large number of Muslims started leaving their homes and trudged a cross hilly areas, rivers, creeks, valleys and dales towards Bangladesh. On their way they were robbed. Many were drowned. As soon they left their homes, the local racist Rakhine started pillaging their houses, sometimes putting them on fire and carried away their cattle. Within a few months the number of refugees was nearly 300,000.

The murdering madness of 'Burmanisation': The plights of the refugees from Burma continue to get wide coverage in the leading newspapers of France according to delayed reports received in Dacca.

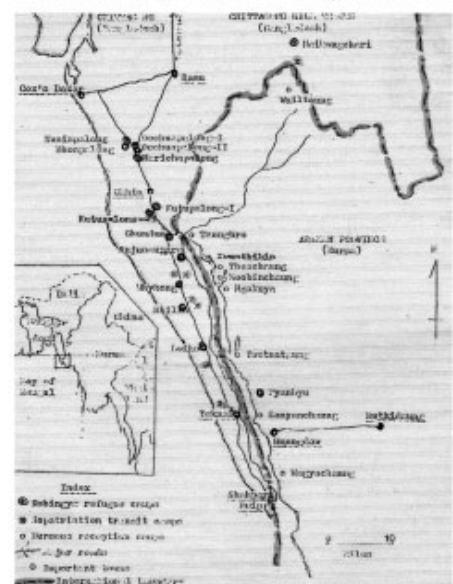
'The prestigious French weekly, 'Le Nouvel observateur,' in its issue of May 19, 1978 carried a story from its correspondent, François Hauter, under the caption, 'Massacre in Burma'. The article gave most vivid details of the massacre perpetrated by the Burmese army on the refugees. François Hauter, in his article, wrote that on April 23, when he was in a refugee's camp at Tampru on the Burmese side, "thirty Burmese soldiers appeared at the top of the hill which overlooks the camp. Everything happened very fast. They loaded their machine guns, opened fire and aimed into the crowd. The refugee is flung themselves towards the rivers those who fell were trampled. Some who carried invalids sunk into the mud." The article continued: ... "Men, women, children and old people crossed the river in chaos. This time the Bengali soldiers shocked by the massacre they had just witnessed gave up trying to turn them away. Next to me, an old man, hit by four bullets, would be in agony for twelve hours. Near him, another wounded his right knee in pieces. One stops the flow of blood with leaves. Many were dead. Impossible to

establish the number of wounded. The refugees group together again, was pressing close against each other by thousands."

Commenting on the plights of Rohingya, François Hauter continued: "the Rohingyas of the Arakan province have had for the past several months lived in the throes of a genocide that has no equal in Cambodia." (The Bangladesh Times, Monday, June 5, 1978).

Repatriation Agreement: A bilateral agreement was signed between the two countries without the representation of the refugees. And 200,000 people returned home while 40,000 died in refugee camps according to UNHCR reports and the rest diffused into Bangladesh society or left for the Middle East countries. Unfortunately the contents of the bilateral agreement were not made public leaving the Rohingya in total uncertainty of their future in Burma.

In the words of, Prof. Mohammed Shamsul Huq, the then Foreign Minister



Map of Refugee camps in 1978

of Bangladesh, the sudden influx of refugees into Bangladesh in huge numbers created an enormous problem for the Bangladesh Government in terms of providing (a) accommodation, (b) food, (c) water and

(d) sanitation. Besides the resource constraints, the most serious difficulty faced by Bangladesh initially was the lack of experience in coping with 200,000 refugees. Even after external assistance in cash and kind started coming, the management of as many as 13 camps was a colossal operation.

The Government of Bangladesh felt that the sooner the refugees could be repatriated to their respective homes in Burma, the better it would be for all concerned. Efforts were intensified at various levels for speedy implementation of the agreement signed between Bangladesh and Burma

on 9 July 1978 that is, within three months from the beginning of the exodus of Burmese refugees to Bangladesh and while the exodus was still continuing. By 29 December 1979, the repatriation operation was virtually completed. (Mohammed Shamsul Huq, 'Bangladesh in International politics').

The situation was exacerbated by the lack of development projects and planning to integrate the refugees who returned in 1978 and 1979, many of whom remain landless and without documentation. Throughout the period of military rule there was efforts to assimilate the Rohingyas and access to

the Burmese education system was very limited. A clear indication of the neglect of northern Arakan is found in health surveys conducted by UNICEF and UNHCR. It was found that Buthidaung and Maungdaw had the lowest ratio of hospital bed per 10,000 inhabitants in Burma (1.1 and 1.2 respectively). Unsurprisingly, infant mortality rates were also in Burma, at 114 and 213 deaths, per 1,000 births for Maungdaw and Buthidaung respectively. All kinds of atrocities towards Rohingyas are intensified to flee Burma and starve anywhere in the world or drown in the ocean. ##

THE NAGAMIN (KING DRAGON) OPERATION OF 1978: Chronology

The NAGAMIN (King Dragon) operation has been launched in Arakan in order to annihilate the remaining Rohingya population of the region. This merciless atrocious operation was started February, 1978 under special supervision of former Deputy Home Minister U Khin Maung Ti directed by the fascist Government of late General Ne Win. The details chronologies are as follow:-

On the day of Feb.6, 1978 a number of



wounded Rohingya 23rd April 78

250 well armed Immigration official arrived at Akyab from Rangoon. They

started the King Dragon operation at Akyab town and its suburban area on the 11th Feb.1978 with the active collaboration of a large number of heavily armed forces from Burma Army, Burma Navy and police department together with the members from civil administration department and the Rakhine members of the Burmese Socialist Programme Party (BSPP). During the course of raid they encircled and blocked the Rohingya Quarters and villages at dawn (the prayer time for Muslim) and made house to house searches. They started harassing and arresting lots of innocent Rohingyas under the false and wanton allegations that they are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. So far over 5000 Rohingyas (men, women, old men, children and pregnant women) were arrested. They were kicked, beaten and persecuted. Finally, they were taken away to the concentration camps. The condition of these concentration camps is considered worse than solitary confinement. None of them are supplied adequate food and other necessities of life. No relative and friends are allowed to visit them. Many of them are dying of hunger, malnutrition and lack of medical care.

On 17th Feb. 78 about 400 women,

herded like animals in the army trucks were taken to and fro between concentration camps and the Akyab Central Jail. The beastly Immigration officials and the police constables were so rough and merciless in treating with the women folk that thousands of Rohingyas of the areas naturally got provoked and turned out for a demonstration calling for the immediate release of the: innocent Rohingyas and stoppage of the Dragon Operation. But



An aged refugee women weeping in distress

the police and army opened indiscriminate gun firing at the demonstrators killing 4 of the peaceful

demonstrators and injuring others seriously. Subsequently the police and the army arrested many Muslim prominent persons and the students on the suspicion of being the instigators of the demonstration. Some of them were killed due to brutal beating. Among those who were arrested is a very famous Muslim preacher namely Maulana Abdul Monaf of Kawardail (Ambari village tracts), Akyab. He was arrested at midnight from his home and was tortured inhumanly. He was beaten by gun butts, his beard were plucked and burned as a result of which he succumbed to death due to his injuries on Feb. 27.

On 18th Feb, 78 the "mobile court" had imprisoned over two thousand Rohingyas in Jails under so-called Immigration Act 6 (2); National Registration Act 13 (I); and Foreigners Registration Act 5 (I). They are still in the concentration camps. There are many instances where parents are considered to be the citizens of Burma, but their children are condemned to be aliens. Something so puzzling to simple common sense. This is the way how laws of the jungles are practiced in Burma today.

On 20th Feb., 78 a meeting was held in the Arakan State Hall, Akyab where Western Command Commander Col. Min Gaung, and Chairman of the Arakan State council Major Kyaw Maung, (Rakhine) had delivered speeches on the operation. They openly threatened the Rohingyas that they will take serious action, if necessary will pass death sentence, if any Rohingya is found to be standing against the interest of the Dragon Operation.

On 21st Feb., 78 news was obtained that most of the women (approximately 500) in the concentration camps were very harshly interrogated, helplessly beaten and 'were subjected, to rape. It is heart breaking to report that modesty of our mothers and sisters (90% of them) were raped by the chauvinist policemen, immigration personnel, and the Burmese military. Even some of the

young girls were taken away from the concentration camps. They are still missing.

It should not be out of point to mention here that the women and men including their children are kept in the same room without giving any facility of bath, washing, and latrine, drinking and sleeping since their arrest. It is also known that the authorities are poisoning the food deliberately to the prisoners in the concentration camps. Up to the end of February nearly 30 Rohingyas died of starvation, rape, torture, murder etc. The authorities even did not allow dead bodies to be taken



wounded rushed towards Bangladesh on 23rd April 78 away by their relatives for burial. One

can imagine the Nazi-like atrocities are being committed to our Rohingya people in the concentration camps.

On 1st March, 78 a group of operation party went to Myebon township of Kyaukpru district and arrested over 500 Rohingyas. All of them were thrown into the jails without any legal procedure.

On 3rd March, 78 the Dragon Operation team went to Kyauktaw Township and arrested about 200 Rohingyas. Most of the Rohingyas of the area deserted their hearth and home in fear of rape and heinous atrocities committed by both the government official as well as the local nationalist Rakhine.

On 5th March, 78 an advance group of

Burma Army under the Command of Major Sein Min was posted to Buthidaung and Maungdaw area as an auxiliary force for helping the Dragon Operation. This group of army directed a terror of rapes, murders, and lootings upon the Rohingyas in the Buthidaung area.

On 9th March, 78 daughters and wives of many Rohingyas of Buthidaung township were raped by the Army men. There were also many such instances and evidences of inhuman crimes committed to lesser known people.

10th March, 78 the Burmese Army entered Tharatkamanu and Dabruchaung villages, a couple of miles away from Buthidaung town, and raped many young girls and looted the villagers.

On 15th March, 78 4 Burma Navel gun-boats arrived at Buthidaung from Akyab. These gun-boats brought 200 immigration officials including some of senior officers such as Major Sein Min, Captain San Sein, Immigration officer Paw Zan, People, s Judge Aung Sein Tun and Inspection officer Kyaw Tha Nu.

On 16th March, 78 at Buthidaung early in the morning, the immigration personnel started house to house inquiry and arrested more than 300 Rohingyas including some 60 young girls; some of them were high school students. The daughter of retired sub-inspector of police Abdur Rahim, the daughter and sister of Abdus Samad, the daughter of A. Basher (school teacher) are among those who were molested inhumanly by the Burma Army, Immigration personnel and local narrow minded nationalist Rakhine. Judges of the mobile courts composed of immigration officials, Socialist Programme Party members (Local Rakhine) and other local authorities had sentenced more than 30 young girls to imprisonment on false allegations that they are aliens. They kept them in their offices all night and victimized them to rape and other cruelties.

On 17th March, 78 about 100 imprisoned Rohingya girls were transported from Buthidaung to the Maungdaw jail. On the same day it was reported that one young girl Rabia (18 years old) was inhumanly raped by about 20 jail policemen of the Akyab Central Jail and died after some hours later.

On 18th March, 78 thousand of Rohingyas from Kyauktaw, Akyab, Rathedaung, Myebon, Buthidaung etc, continued to run away to safer places. Most of them reached Maungnama, Wabag, Kawarbil (Kyiganbyin), Pranpru (Minglagyi), Hatimar (Santhabran) etc" etc. villages of Maungdaw on their way to seek refuge in Bangladesh.

On 19th March, 78 5 women of no.2 Western Quarters Buthidaung, who escaped into hiding in fear of rape, were discovered by the Army. They were taken to the military camp where they were dishonoured and raped. On that day the Burma Army raped wife of Samiuddin, daughter of Abdul Aziz, and killed her at the Nakyindauk pass. They also looted 17 refugee families who were crossing the Mayu Mountain ranges.

On 20th March, 78 the Dragon Operation team went to a famous village called Nyoungchaung, south of Buthidaung and launched their criminal atrocities and a clash was taken place between the operation party and the villagers. As a result 3 innocent Rohingyas were shot to death. On the same day an old man who was fleeing with his young girl along the Maungdaw Buthidaung road was attacked by 7 local Rakhine, and they carried away his daughter forcibly. The young girl was raped and killed by them.

On 21st March, 78 the Operation team went to Ngwedaung (Moidaung) village where they looted and tortured the villagers. So, most of the villages went to the hill side to cross over the Mayu mountain ranges but the Burma Army followed and captured 50 of them. They

were tortured barbarously and detained them in Buthidaung Jail. The nationalist Rakhine were in full partnership in looting the Rohingya villages specially for rice, paddy, and other live stock.

On 24th March, 78 a meeting was held at the Maungdaw Cinema Hall where the Maungdaw Party Unit General Secretary Kyaw Aye presided over the meeting. He strongly warned the people of the area not to help those Rohingyas who ran away from their villages.

On 25th March, 78 Captain Zaw Win (Rakhaine), from the Pakira Bazar (Thamantha) camp, arrested many renowned Muslim religious preachers in



A Rohingya refugee camp at Tombro Arakan which was attacked by Burmese Army on 23 April 1978 Maungdaw:

1. Moulana Noman S/O Moulana Motiur Rahman (35 years old) Hatimara village,
2. Moulana Mubarak S/O Darbesh Ali (35 years old), Hatimara village,
3. Moulana Zafar S/O Darbesh Ali (30 years old), Hatimara village,
4. Ameer Dil Mohammed S/O Sawkit (34 years old).

This beastly Army officer tortured all the Moulana very inhumanly on allegation that they have been giving food and shelter to the refugees who came over from Buthidaung side. On the same allegation the ex-headman Sultan Ahmed of Dudan village and Haji Sultan of Fokirapara (Krarubran) were also arrested and beaten mercilessly. Later they were taken to the Maungdaw jail.

By 26th March, 78 the following villages of Buthidaung town were wholly or partly burnt down by the Burma Army or by the Rakhine nationalities. Dabinsara (Dawinsara), Zadibrung, Kadirpara, Gonibarpara, Nakindak Aunghla Bran (Morissabil),

N g a r a n c h a u n g , Kyinokthi (Kinisi) Hokkapara, Kanbran, Monirbil and so on.

On 27th March, 78 hundreds of refugees were arrested by the Burma Army and were detained in the 4th mile concentration camp (surrounded by barbed wires), Maungdaw, 15 girls are forcibly hauled away from the concentration camp to the Army camp for unholy purpose. Three of the girls are still missing.

On 29th March, 78 the Western command as well as Regional Party Chairman Col. Min Gaung accompanied by other 15 high officials reached Buthidaung from Akyab and held a close door meeting in the party Unit office, Buthidaung. In the evening the Colonel and the team proceeded to Maungdaw.

On 30th March, 78 in the early morning Col. Min Gaung and his company left for Alaythangyaw (Haisurata) sub-township and instructed the Dragon Operation team to be on alert as the situation was grave due to mass exodus of Rohingyas

towards Maungdaw area.

On 23rd April, 1978 After many time push back the Rohingya refugees finally allow in to Bangladesh on 23 April 1978 on the day the Burmese Army came and fired to unnamed refugees. Many were killed and wounded on that day.

The Bangladesh government established 13 refugee camps at the border area at Cox's Bazar and Bandarban Hill District.

On July 9, 1978 The Bangladesh and Burmese government signed repatriation agreement of Rohingya refugees.

SUMMARY

In the wake of this Dragon Operation nearly 300000 Rohingyas were rendered home-less in Buthidaung, Rathedaung, Kyauktaw, Akyab, Myebon, etc. Being driven out of their homes, less unfortunate Rohingyas took shelter in the villages of Maungdaw area such as Pranpru (Minglagyi), Darugarzaga (Thaychaung) Borgiarbil (Kyauklayga), Nayapara (YwaThit) BaluLhali, Zambonia, Wabeg, Dowrabil, Kawarbil

(Gyiganbran) and Maunganama etc. etc"

More than 30 villages of Buthidaung Township such as Kwasoon, Sangodan, Pran Hla, Waragyunt, Alaychauag, Kagyapa, Maraungana, Maunggritnung, Nakyindauh, Migyounggongswa, Anchaung, Thanganet, Khransama, Scinyanwae, Mangnama, Palidaung,

Tatminchag, Nanragoon, Ngaranchaung, Letwaydat, Scinyanbran, Phokaungehaung, Kizarbil, NgwedaNG, Chowaprun, San Oo Brung, and Buthidaung etc. are either totally or partially, depopulated.

More than 40000 Rohingya refugees died in refugee camps some are settled

in Bangladesh those who are not registered in refugee camps and run away from the camps.

Most of the repatriated Rohingya refugees became Internally Displaced People (IDP). Although the Burmese government accept most of the refugees they never able to settle in their original places. ##

600 Burman Buddhist Families to Settle at Buthidaung

Monday, 01 February 2010

Buthidaung: The Burmese junta plans to shift 600 Burmese Buddhist families from Burma proper to Buthidaung Township in Arakan to settle in model villages currently under construction, said a source close to the authorities.

"They are reportedly coming to our township before the Burmese New Year in April 2010 from Rangoon and other parts of Burma to settle in five model villages. The authorities are now constructing the five model villages in southern Buthidaung," the source said.

Five model villages are being constructed on the banks of the Mayu River between Phon Nyo Lake and Ngwe Daung Village in Buthidaung Township. Ngwe Daung Village is located on the western bank of the Mayu River and is

close to northern Rathidaung Township about 20 miles north of Sittwe.

"The authorities have constructed 120 houses as well as a primary school and a hospital in each model village. It is likely to settle 120 families in each model village," a villager from the area said. The authorities are now forcibly rounding up Burmese people, who are homeless and living in illegal areas in Rangoon and Mandalay, for settlement in Buthidaung Township.

According to a report by the VOA Burmese section, Burmese authorities recently said that 500 Burmese families living in an illegal area on Mudita Road in North Okkalarpa in the former capital Rangoon will be shifted to settle in

Buthidaung and Maungdaw Townships in Arakan. The authorities told the families that if any family did not wish to move to Buthidaung and Maungdaw, the family would need sign a form, the report added. The military authorities have long supported Burmese settlers by providing agricultural land, cattle, and tractors when they arrive in the model villages. It also arranges for schools, hospitals, and monasteries for them from government revenue.

In northern Arakan State, there are now over 40 model villages built by the military authorities with over 20,000 settlers living in them. The authorities construct the Buddhist model villages in northern Arakan to balance the population between Buddhists and Muslims. ##

SARAPA KILLS ROHINGYA MAN IN MAUNGDAW, ARAKAN

Kaladan News, February 5, 2010

Maungdaw, Arakan State: Sarapa (Military Intelligence) killed a Rohingya man after torturing him severely on January 4, in Maungdaw Town, Arakan State, after calling him to their office, according to a close relative of the victim on condition of anonymity.

The victim was identified as Zahir Ahmed (47), son of Boshor from Ward No.2 or Khari Para of Maungdaw Town.

On January 3, at about 8 am, the victim was called by Sergeant Maung Pru of Sarapa to their office in Ward No.1 of Maungdaw Town, while the victim was standing in front of Hamidul Hougue's betel quid shop at the Khari Para crossroad.

The victim's relatives believe that after taking him to the Sarapa office, he was severely tortured by the Sarapa Sergeant for a confessional statement saying he was involved in W-Y tablets or heroin business. In the evening, the victim's son was called to the Sarapa office to pay Kyat 5 million for his father's release. But, the victim's son was not able to arrange such a large amount of money in a short time. The Sarapa officer is an expert at extorting money from Rohingya people by torturing them over false allegations, a local trader said.

However, the Sarapa Sergeant denied

that the victim was killed by him. But, an eyewitness, who did not want to be named in Maungdaw town, said that the victim was called to the office by the Sergeant and tortured. Higher authorities must inquire into the murder immediately and give exemplary punishment to the culprit, said a relative of the victim.

However, on January 4, at about 4 pm, the body of Zahir Ahmed was found by local people floating in the Shwe Zaar River. The Maungdaw police station was informed. Police immediately went to the spot and took the body to the police station. The police sent it to Maungdaw General Hospital for post-mortem. Till 9

p.m. yesterday, the relatives of the victim did not know about the post-mortem report.

According to local villagers, who found the body in the river, there were many marks on the body. "We believe that he was tortured severely in the Sarapa office for a confessional statement that he was involved in drug business," a relative of the victim said. "The Rohingya community cannot tolerate Rohingya people being killed like dogs and

thrown into the river," said a local youth. Besides, on January 26, Moulvi Ali Hussain (24) from Labbaw Zaar village of Maungdaw Township was also arrested by Sarapa officer Maung Pru on suspicion that he was involved in WY tablets or heroin business. However, he was released on January 31, after he paid Kyat 2.5 million, a relative of the victim said.

On January 17, Md. Yunus, son of Nabi Hussain, from Paung Zaar Pin Chay

village of Maungdaw Township was arrested by Sarapa Sergeant Maung Pru on the allegation that he was involved in heroin smuggling. He was set free on January 20, after paying Kyat 1.2 million, said a local villager.

Rohingya villagers are being harassed and fleeced by Sarapa, police, army, Nasaka and other Township authorities. The big question is how long the Rohingya community will survive in Arakan soil?" asked a Rohingya elder on condition of anonymity. ##

EIGHTEEN REFUGEES SENT TO JAIL IN BURMA

Kaladan News, February 8, 2010

Maungdaw Arakan State: Eighteen Arakanese Rohingya refugees, who were pushed back by Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) on January 26, from Shapuri Dip of Bangladesh were arrested by Burma's border security force Nasaka and sent to Buthidaung jail on February 2, said a close relative from Maungdaw.

The 18 Arakanese Rohingyas were arrested by Nasaka personnel of Fatanzar(Padinn) Nasaka camp, Maungdaw Township and were brought to the Nasaka camp and detained for eight days. Of them, two Arakanese Rohingyas hail from Kiladaung (Ducheeyartan) village of Maungdaw Township and the rest are from nearby villages. They recently crossed the Burma-Bangladesh border. The Nasaka extorted money from them after promising them that they would be released and enlisted in the family list. But, they were not enlisted and sent to jail.

The arrested refugees including women and children were sent to Maungdaw police station a day before their verdict

in Maungdaw court. On February 2, they were sentenced to five years in jail each by Maungdaw court for illegally border crossing and then sent to Buthidaung jail, according to sources from maungdaw.

On February 6, the BDR Commander Col Mozamal Hussain of BDR Battalion of Teknaf and one of the police officers of Teknaf police station discussed increase in arrests of Arakanese Rohingyas and to push them back to Burma from Teknaf in Bangladesh. According to the two officers, Arakanese Rohingyas came to Bangladesh hoping to be settled in a third country with the help of refugees who have been living in Bangladesh, said a local elder from Teknaf.

On that day, 21 Arakanese Rohingyas were pushed back to Burma by BDR. They were arrested from Teknaf and entered Bangladesh recently. The same day, another 19 Arakanese Rohingyas were pushed back to Burma from Balukhali points. They were arrested from Teknaf-Cox's Bazaar Highway, said a relative of one of the victims. The same

day, another 11 Arakanese Rohingyas were arrested by police from Burir Dala area of Ukhiya union of Cox's Bazaar district living in small houses. They were pushed back to Burma from Balukhali BDR camp. They were Ms Fulmoti (35), Ms Hafeza Khatoon (40), Ms Sarmeher (30), Mamtaz (25), Anwar Sadek(18), Md. Shohel (12), Abdu Shukur(21), Kamal Hussain (23), Anwar Islam(8), Nurul Islam(24) and Ms Shuna Meher(19), said a local from Ukhiya

On January 28, four refugees from Leda camp were arrested by local people while they were going to Barsara village to find work. They were handed over to the local police. They were identified as Md. Elias (20), Room # 14, Block-F, Mohiuddin (26), the same Room, and same Block, Moktar (20), Room # 107, Block-F Abdu Rahim (23), Room # 159, Block-B. Now, they are in Cox's Bazaar jail. Relatives did not know about their arrest until February 5. Police filed a case against them for border crossing, said a refugee from the camp.

On the other hand, Burma's authorities

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are building barbed wire fences on the Burma- Bangladesh border to resist illegal Arakanese Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh entering. The Arakanese Rohingya refugees who have long been sneaking through the border don't want to go back and the Burmese authorities are not interested in taking them back. Against this back ground,

the Burmese authorities are erecting barbed wire fencing along the border, some local Bangladeshi people said.

What is going unnoticed is the "ethnic cleansing" on the western and eastern borders of Burma. But it seems that most of their targets are Christians in the eastern border and Muslims in the western border. The Bangladesh

government and local people want to force Arakanese Rohingyas back into Burma. The ruling military junta has been forcing Karen, Shan and Arakanese Rohingya to flee their homes and they find their way across the border of Thailand and Bangladesh to refugee camps, according to an Arakanese Rohingya leader. ##

SEVEN-VILLAGERS SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS IN JAIL IN MAUNGDAW

Kaladan News, February 8, 2010

Maungdaw, Arakan State: Seven Arakanese Rohingya villagers were sentenced to five years in jail each on February 1 by the Maungdaw court. The conviction was to do with the murder of two Natala villagers' by unknown miscreants on September 24, 2009, said a close relative of one of the victims in Maungdaw.

They were arrested by police and Nasaka on January 23. The victims were identified as Azizullah (70), son of Nurul Haque, his younger brother Tanda Meah (42) and his son Maulvi Khorim Ullah (20), Omar Hakim (70), son of Haji Khasim and his son Rashidullah (18), Ziaul Haque (20), son of Abul Fayaz and Abu Sidique (35) son of Abdul Latif, a Village Peace and Development Council (VPDC) member. They all belong to west Kilaidaung (Ducheeyartan) village of Maungdaw Township.

Abu Sidique was arrested by Burma's border security force - Nasaka of Padinn (Fatanzar) camp and the rest were arrested by Maungdaw police. Among them, Ziaul Haque (20) was released after paying Kyat 3.5 million and the rest were sent to Buthidaung jail. Two Natala villagers were hacked to death and one

was seriously injured in Maungdaw Township when six unidentified miscreants wearing masks attacked them in a video parlour after a video show, on September 24, at about 12:30 am.

On September 24, morning, the Tactical Operation Command Commander (TOC) of Buthidaung town, Maungdaw Township PDC Chairman, the Maungdaw District PDC Chairman and Lt. Col Aung Gyi Director of Nasaka went to the spot and asked the local authorities to find the perpetrators, said a village elder on condition of anonymity.

The authorities found "Chinkali (in Burmese) or hooks", which were widely used by students in the 1988 democracy uprising, in the room where the two Natala villagers were killed. It proved that the killers were Natala villagers because such hooks belong only to Natala villagers. The authorities did not find any clue that Arakanese Rohingya people were involved in the murder, and authorities confirmed that no Arakanese Rohingya were involved in the incident.

However, earlier, seven villagers including Haji Shamshu and Haji Ismail

were arrested by Nasaka on suspicion of the killings. Later, they were released because no evidence was found.

The incident was said to have occurred among Natala villagers on account of enmity but some officials wanted to blame it on the Arakanese Rohingya villagers to extort money and to harass them, said a trader.

After the murders, every night Nasaka personnel went to the villages and checked the family lists and extorted money from the villagers when they found one of the family members absent from home because he was sleeping in the shrimp project. They extorted Kyat 200,000 to 300,000 from the head of the family. After which there was no development.

But, after some time, the police and Nasaka suddenly went to the Kilaidaung (Ducheeyartan) village again on January 23, and arrested another seven villagers on the allegation that they were involved in the killings. There was no proper inquiry and they were sent to jail on February 1.

"We are surprised, why the authorities arrested some innocent villagers and sent them to jail," a local businessman said. ##

UNREGISTERED ARAKANESE REFUGEES DIE OF STARVATION IN MAKESHIFT CAMP

Kaladan News, February 9, 2010

Ukhiya, Cox's Bazaar: Thirteen unregistered Arakanese refugees have died of starvation in Kutuapalong makeshift camp because most were

unable to go outside the camp to work for fear of arrest by authorities in Bangladesh, said a refugee from the camp on condition of anonymity. The

deaths occurred between January 10 to 15, 2010.

The dead were identified as Katiza (50), wife of late Kalu, Md. Toyub, (18), son of

Md. Zakaria, Md. Rafique (5), son of Zafar, Kalirur Rahaman (45), son of Fazar Ali, Abdul Monaf (35), son of Ali Ahamed, Rina Akter (3), daughter of Abdur Razaka, Asharaf Meah (50), son of Karim Uddin, Hussain Ahamed (50), son of Abdul Kader, Hamida, Noor Mohamed, Md. Boni Amin Sultan Ahmed (45), son of Bodi Alam, Ahamed Ullah (3), son of Fazal Meah and Md Younus (3), son of Abdu Salam. They all belong to Kutupalong makeshift camp. The Arakanese Rohingya refugees died between January 10 to 15, 2010 after arrests of Arakanese Rohingyas started on the border in the beginning of January 2010 by authorities and local people. Among them, Katiza died on February 7. According to sources, the food was insufficient. They could eat one day, but the next two days there was no food.

According to our correspondent, many Rohingya refugees are sitting in the camp without any work. They can't go outside the camp to work to support their family for fear of arrest by police, Bangladesh Rifles and local people. In the makeshift camp, nearly 50,000 unregistered refugees are living in a critical condition. Of them, over 50 per cent refugees will starve today, said a refugee committee member from the camp. A committee member Rabiul Alam from Kutupalong makeshift camp said, "I have 12 family members, my wife cooked half a kilogram of rice for my children. That is insufficient but, it will just about save the children's lives."

Some refugees go to the mountain to collect firewood to sell it in the refugee camp and cook food. Every refugee has to pay Taka 10 to the villagers who work

under the forest department, a refugee said on condition of anonymity.

On February 8, the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) of Battalion No. 42 arrested 18 Arakanese Rohingyas from different areas like Dum Dum Mea, Saparan and Shapuri Dip under the union of Teknaf. Later, they were pushed back by BDR the same day, said a local from Shapuri Dip.

Since January 2010, more and more Arakanese Rohingya refugees have been arrested by authorities and local people and sent to Cox's Bazaar jail, and their family members are facing starvation, said a relative of the victim who is in Cox's Bazaar jail. If the operation against the refugees continues by the Bangladeshi authorities, more refugees in the camps are expected to die of starvation, another camp inmate said. ##

ARNO WELCOMES EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

Arakan Rohingya National Organisations (ARNO) welcomes the resolution of the European Parliament dated 11 February 2010 which, inter alia,

- * Welcomes the fact that the Government of Bangladesh is allowing a fact-finding mission by its south Asia delegation to examine the situation of the Rohingya population in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban Districts next week, and calls on Bangladesh Government to recognize that the unregistered Rohingyas are stateless asylum seekers who have fled persecution, and to provide them with adequate protection, access to livelihood and other basic services;

- * Strongly condemns the ethnic cleansing campaign directed by the Burmese military junta against minorities, including those seeking refuge in neighbouring countries; condemns systematic violations of human rights, fundamental freedoms and basic democratic rights of the people of Burma, including politically motivated arrests and arbitrary charges,

repression and intimidation of Buddhist monks, restrictions on freedom of assembly, association, movement and expression;

- * Calls for immediate and unconditional release of Daw Aung Suu Kyi; under the present condition with the ban on Daw Aung Suu Kyi standing as a candidate the elections in Burma cannot be considered free and democratic; calls on the Burmese military junta to open immediately a genuine tripartite dialogue;

- * Urges the SPDC to take without delay the steps needed to ensure a free and fair, transparent and all inclusive electoral process, consistent to international standards and agreeing to the presence of international observers;
- * Calls strongly on the Burmese military junta to put an immediate end to the continuing recruitment and use of child soldiers, and to protect the children from armed conflict;

- * Expresses grave concerns at the continuing discrimination, human rights violations, violence, child and forced labour, displacement and forms

of repression suffered by numerous ethnic and religious minorities, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, rape and other forms of sexual violence, torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment;

- * Calls on the Royal Thai Government to continue providing shelter and protection to Karen refugees fleeing abuses in Burma and to work with Office of the UNHCR, the Thai-Burma Consortium and the international community to find an alternative solution that ensures the safety of the 3000 Karen refugees;

- * Urges the governments of China, India and Russia to use their economic and political leverage with the authorities of Burma in order to bring about substantial improvement in the country and to stop supplying the Burmese regime with weaponry and other strategic resources.

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FORCED LABOUR FOR ROAD RENOVATION IN MAUNGDAW

Kaladan News, February 16, 2010

Maungdaw, Arakan State: Burma's border security force - Nasaka has been using forced labour of local villagers for renovation of a road since February 2. The road connects Maungdaw Town to Bassara village, said a local trader.

Every day, 15 to 20 villagers from every village in Nasaka area No.7 of Maungdaw Township have to send villagers to the site for road renovation. They have to go in the morning with their own food and return after sun set. No wages are paid by Nasaka.

Villagers not complying with the order will be fined Kyat 2,000 by the Village Peace and Development Council

(VPDC). The road is being repaired for Nasaka officers to enable them to visit their camps comfortably by car, said a local youth.

In northern Arakan, villagers are engaged in forced labour for road construction, forced labour for barbed wire fence construction on the Burma-Bangladesh border, forced labour for Natala (model) villages, forced labour for paddy plantation of the army or Nasaka, forced labour for growing vegetables for army or Sarapa (Military Intelligence), and forced labour in military or Nasaka or Sarapa camps though the junta had declared earlier

that there is no forced labour in the country, said a local elder.

In north Arakan, local or foreign journalists are not allowed to see the forced labour situation. When foreign delegates visit Arakan, they are not allowed to talk freely to the villagers. The foreigners are only allowed to meet villagers in front of security personnel briefed by the authority, said a school teacher preferring not to be named.

Although international bodies pressurize Burma on human rights violations, the Burmese military junta ignores it and increases forced labour. ##

NASAKA PHOTOGRAPHS ROHINGYA FAMILIES IN BUTHIDAUNG

Kaladan News, February 9, 2010

Maungdaw, Arakan State: Burma's border security force (Nasaka) of area No.9 has been taking photographs of Rohingya families in Buthidaung Township in Arakan State, since January first week, said a local trader on condition of anonymity. On February 5, Nasaka personnel took photographs of villages of Mee Gyaung Gaung Swee village tract in Buthidaung north.

Nasaka is taking family group photographs (6" X 4") of Rohingya families and collecting Kyat 3,000 from each family, the trader added. If a family wants to delete the name of a family member from the list due to death or marriage or in the event of the person having gone abroad for political or economic reasons, the family has to pay Kyat 3,000 to the Nasaka.

If anyone wishes to increase the number of members in the family list, in the event of a birth or a

bride being taken into the family, it has to pay Kyat 3,000. If a villager is absent during the exercise of taking of photographs of family members, his guardian will pay Kyat 10,000. After his arrival to his village, he will go to the concerned Nasaka camp to have his photograph taken.

According to sources, some poor families, who are unable to pay such high amounts, are facing difficulties. There is no fixed form for the collection of fees in Nasaka areas and the fees depend on the area Sector Commander of the Nasaka.

"Our village tract has many families in four villages and if the Nasaka collects Kyat 3,000 per family, they rake in lots of money. It is a big business for the Nasaka," said a local schoolteacher. "Why does the Nasaka take photographs of only Rohingya people? Is there any reason behind it?" asked a local elder.

The Nasaka comprises of personnel from the army, police, immigration, customs, Military Intelligence (MI). It has been taking photographs of Rohingya families for the list since January first week, in the township of Buthidaung, Arakan. Other communities such as Rakhine, Chakma, Mru, Thet, and Kumi among others have been exempted.

The expenditure for food for the Nasaka personnel is being borne by the Village Peace and Development Council (VPDC) members. Nasaka personnel have lunch while they are at the work site, and in the evening they return to their camp. The costs incurred will be passed on to the villagers, said a local elder who preferred not to be named.

Earlier, in 2008 and 2009 the Nasaka took photographs of Rohingya villagers in Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Rathedaung Townships, in Arakan State.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT DELEGATION VISITS BURMESE REFUGEE CAMP

Kaladan News, February 9, 2010

Ukhiya, Bangladesh: A high level delegation of the European Parliament visited the Kutupalong registered Burmese refugee camp yesterday, at about 10 am. They saw the situation in the official camp and unofficial makeshift camp, which is situated near the official Kutupalong camp where over 45,000 Arakanese refugees live under the open sky, said a refugee elder from the camp on condition of anonymity. The thirteen - member delegation of the European Parliament accompanied by country representative of United Nations High Commissioner for refugees (UNHCR), Camp-in-Charge, police personnel and other officials of different NGOs paid a visit to the Burmese refugee camps. A refugee from the camp said that Fazalay Rabbe, the Camp-in-Charge of Kutupalong registered camp summoned all block committee and camp committee members to the office and kept them there till the delegation left the camp. The block committee members were unable to talk to the delegation about the camp situation.

Meanwhile, some Arakanese Rohingya refugees, including women, holding aloft banners marched to the delegation in the camp demanding immediate and a durable solution and permission for their children's education. After the delegation left the camp, the Camp officer Fazalay Rabbe ordered the block and camp committee members to collect the banners, being held aloft by refugees in front of the

delegation. If the committee members did not comply with the order, they would be arrested and sent to jail, refugees said.

This was similar to an incident in 1997 in the refugee camps. The camp authorities had called all the camp leaders, who were made to wait in the office room and could not talk to the delegation, which visited the refugee camp. However, some refugees talked to the delegation secretly and gave applications to them regarding the refugees' situation. Being informed, later, those refugees were arrested by camp authorities and sent to jail. One of the refugee Majis (leader) named Shamshu Alam, MRC # 6,610, Block # B of Kutupalong registered camp, was detained and beaten up severely by the camp authority for exposing the situation of the camp to the delegation, after camp authority forbidden the refugees for not revealing refugee problems to them. The Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), police and Ansars beefed up security around the refugee camp for the delegation yesterday.

Refugees from the camp also shouted slogans holding banners saying that there is no security for refugees in Bangladesh. They demanded resettlement in third countries, said another refugee on condition of anonymity. They left the Kutupalong registered camp at around 11:30 am. Then, they visited MSF and ACF clinics of the unregistered Kutupalong refugee camp where they give basic treatment to the unofficial

camp inmates, said another refugee in the camp.

A new report released today by The Arakan Project states that an unprecedented crackdown by the Bangladesh government on Rohingyas from Burma is creating a grave humanitarian crisis for tens of thousands of refugees. The report "Unregistered Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh: Crackdown, forced displacement and hunger" calls on the Bangladesh authorities to immediately cease mass arrests and forced displacement of unregistered Rohingya asylum seekers and ensure that they are adequately protected and provided with access to food. Concurrently, anti-Rohingya movements among the local Bangladeshi population and the local media are fuelling xenophobia, calling for Bangladesh to rid itself of the Rohingya.

Over the last month and in Cox's Bazaar District alone, hundreds of unregistered Rohingyas have been arrested, either pushed back across the border to Burma or sent to jail under immigration charges. In several areas of the District, thousands were evicted with threats of violence. Robberies, assaults and rape against Rohingyas have increased significantly.

After eviction or for fear of arrest and assault, thousands of self-settled Rohingyas have been forcibly displaced and most flocked to the Kutupalong makeshift camp for safety. The makeshift camp population has

now increased to over 30,000. Director of the Arakan Project. They do not receive food relief and cannot leave the camp to look for work or they could be arrested. About 30,000 refugees in this camp are going hungry and are now at risk of starvation, the statement added.

"Hunger is spreading rapidly among the already malnourished population in the makeshift camp and a grave humanitarian crisis is looming. Bangladesh must end this crackdown at once or these refugees will start dying from starvation," said Chris Lewa, "At present, the situation of refugees is very awful in the refugee camps. We do not want to live here. We are not allowed to go out of the camp to work for supporting our family members. It is similar to a prison as well as we are unable to return to Burma. We did not get any support from any quarter. Now, we are facing with food crisis. Some refugees died with starvation. So, the delegation is requested to settle us to third countries," said one of the refugee committee members on condition of anonymity. ##

EXTORTION FOR FAMILY LISTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS IN NORTH ARAKAN

Kaladan News, February 16, 2010

Maungdaw, Arakan State: Since the advent of this year, Burma's border security force (Nasaka) has forced villagers to pay heavy fees for renewing family lists and to take photographs in Maungdaw District in north Arakan, said a businessman from Maungdaw Town on condition of anonymity.

The villagers were fleeced for enrolling their newborns and for deleting the names of their deceased from the family list. Since the first week of February, the villagers of Myoma Kayan Dan (Shikdar) Para of Maungdaw Township have been photographed and their family lists renewed by Nasaka. Two local villagers Abdu Gaffer and Mohamedullah were appointed by Nasaka along with the present Village Peace and Development Council (VPDC) Chairman for collecting and checking the villagers' lists.

The two unofficial clerks have collected all the family lists of

villagers and are checking it in place of Nasaka. They demand Kyat 20,000 to 50,000 from the villagers who want to enlist newborns. If the money is paid, the villagers will not want to go to the Nasaka office. These men are the agents of the Nasaka, said a local villager who declined to be named. A villager said, "We have to buy a form, which is signed by the VPDC Chairman for newborn children, for Kyat 2,000, but earlier we bought it for Kyat 500. But this was not informed to us by Nasaka."

A village elder from Myoma Kayan Dan village said, "We are forced to pay 5,000 Kyat for removing the names of our deceased family members and 4,000 Kyat for a group photograph." The Nasaka and members of the VPDC conduct family lists renewal operations among the Rohingya community in north Arakan in the beginning of every year.

An inhabitant of Maung Nama village of Maungdaw Township said that the family list and photograph renewal operation was completed recently in their locality and they had to pay Kyat 4,000 for a family photograph, Kyat 3,000 for enlisting newborns and Kyat 3,000 for deleting the dead from the list. A local elder from Powet Chaung village tract of Maungdaw Township said, "We have already paid Kyat 10,000 for a family photograph, Kyat 10,000 for enlisting newborn children, Kyat 20,000 for deleting the name of a man, who has gone abroad, from the list. In our village, taking photographs and renewing family lists started since February 9."

Another local villager from Powet Chaung village said, "The Nasaka takes photographs from four sides of the mosque, Moqtub (primary level religious school) and Madrasa (Arabic school) and villagers have to pay Kyat 2,500

villagers have to pay Kyat 10,000 per mosque or Moqtub or Madrasa."

There is no fixed form to collect money from villagers regarding taking photographs and renewing family lists. It depends on the local Nasaka commander, who is the boss of his area, said a trader from Maungdaw Township

who declined to be named.

Though the Burmese junta declared that the exercise is in order to combat illegal immigration into Maungdaw District, which is close to the Bangladesh border, in fact, there is no one entering Burma as an illegal migrant from Bangladesh.

But many people go from Arakan to Bangladesh. The listing exercise is because of extortion from Rohingya villagers and for calculation of the Rohingya population and how the regime's persecution has succeeded in driving Rohingya people from Arakan State, said a local elder from Maungdaw Town. ##

STATEMENT OF THE ARAKAN ROHINGYA NATIONAL ORGANISATION ON THE 63RD UNION DAY OF BURMA

Arakan, Burma, 12th February 2010

12th February marks the 63rd Union Day, a very important day for the people of Burma. On 12th February 1947 the Union Treaty was signed at Panlong, Shan State, between father of the nation Gen. Aung San and leaders of the nationalities to take the independence together from the British and to form Burma a Federal Union on the agreed upon principle of 'unity in diversity'.

Thus the Panglong spirit of 'unity in diversity' is the basis for the unity of the ethnically diverse peoples of Burma. It is equally important for the development of federal democracy and perpetuation of peaceful democratic Burma. It was recognition that we respect, tolerate and uphold the differences of culture, language and life style that exist among the different peoples of Burma. Never the less, we were and are united for building a strong Union, the Union of Burma that ensures national self-determination equality, justice and sustainable

development. This Union is to be free from any sort of discrimination on grounds of culture, religion and ethnicity. It is not to accommodate domination of one people by another and the emergence of 'prime nation' or 'sub-nation'; but every people is equal in the Union. It is to be noted that diversity is not a weakness, but strength.

Since Burmese independence the union spirit was not fully respected. Particularly, under military rule from 1962, the Panglong spirit has been hijacked; the union treaty and the union structure have been destroyed. Inter-conflicts and intra-conflicts have been systematically created, so that peoples are not united for continuation of military rule. Resentment developed among the diverse national groups that gave rise to civil war continuing till today.

For many years Burma was without a constitution. The SPDC has given a strange constitution in 2008, which is

distortion of democracy, and it does not match with any known constitutional system of the world. It looks like as if sovereignty belongs to the military, not to the people. To them people are not trustworthy, while they claim they are the saviours of the country. It is to legitimise their illegitimate military rule. They are now going still unscheduled election this year. But the election based on this undemocratic constitution cannot give us federal democracy, human rights and culture. So we strongly oppose and condemn it.

Last not least, at this trying situation, let us revive the union spirit of Panglong and resist the conspiracy of the military dictators in full unity, with unity of mind, unity of purpose and unity of dedication.

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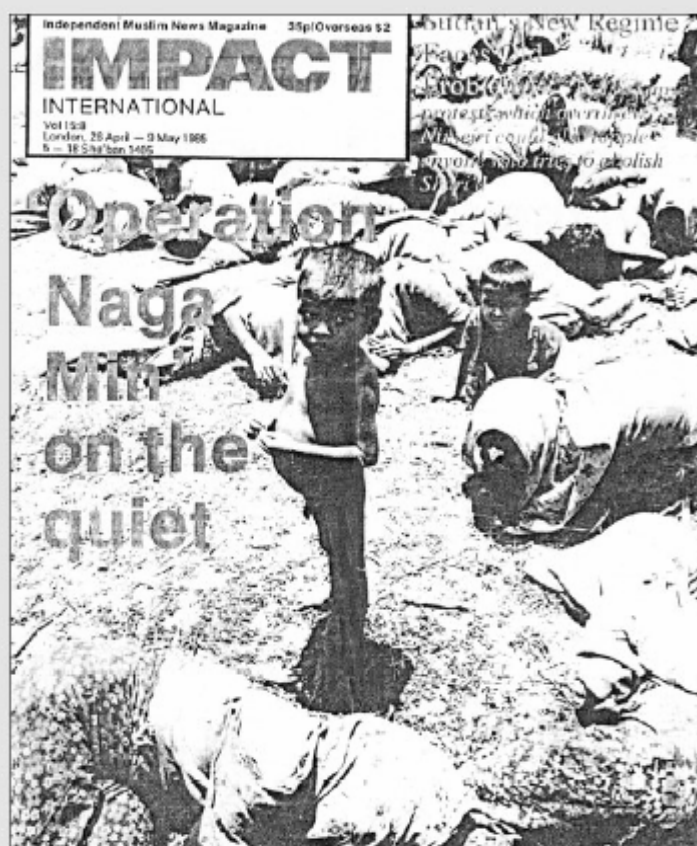
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