

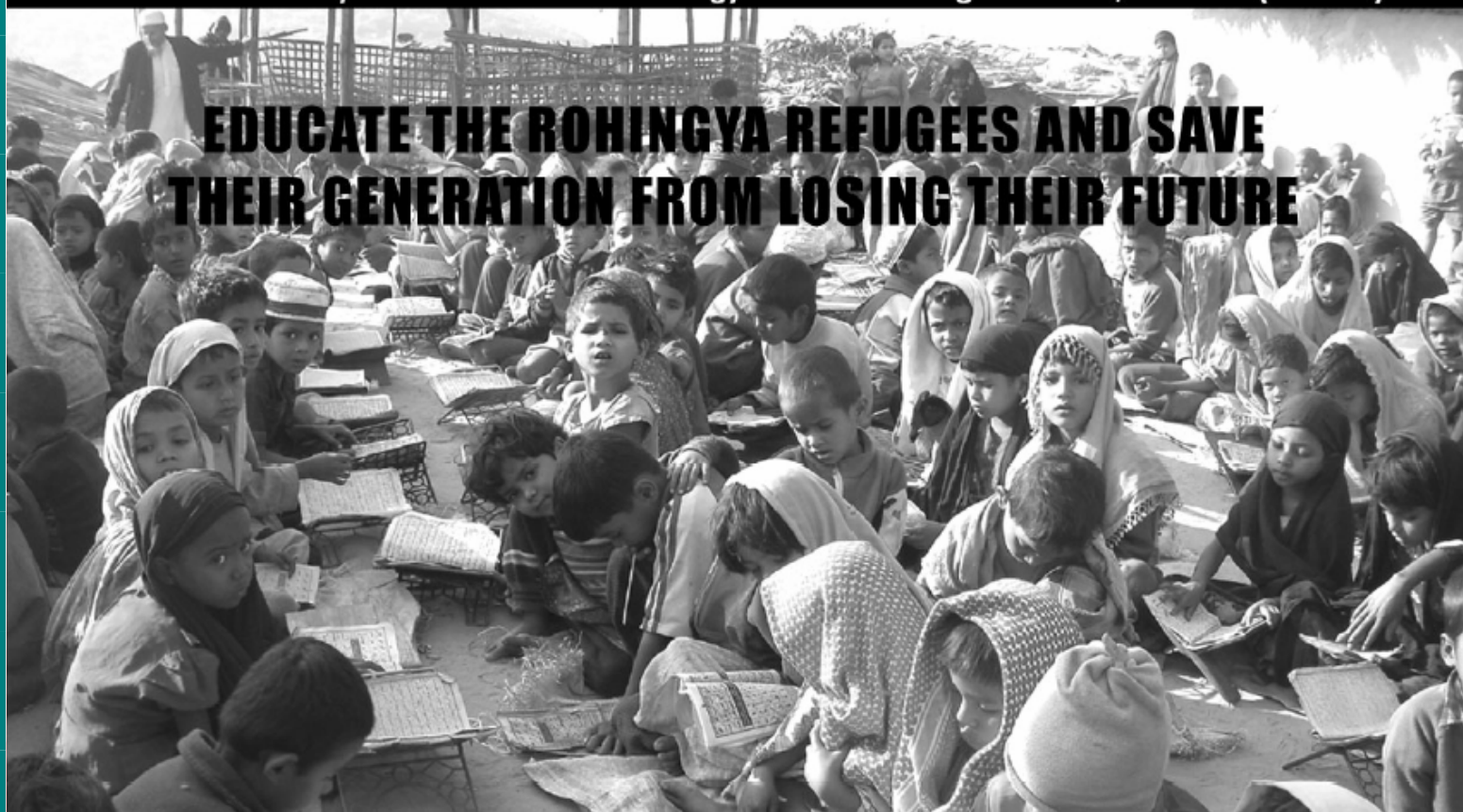


Monthly

ARAKAN

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

**EDUCATE THE ROHINGYA REFUGEES AND SAVE
THEIR GENERATION FROM LOSING THEIR FUTURE**



**Rohingya refugee children studying under open sky at an unofficial
refugee camp of Kutupalong, at Burma-Bangladesh border**

"Rohingya in Northern Arakan State of Burma continued to face "systematic and endemic discrimination" at the hands of the SPDC, which resulted in the denial of their "basic and fundamental human rights." : the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Tomás Ojea Quintana reports on 15 March 2010

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EDITORIAL

THE RESISTANCE DAY OF BURMA

On 27 th. March 1945, Burmese troops throughout the country rose up against the Japanese army. After the meeting between General Aung San and field Marshal Sir William Slim, the Burmese and Allied troops joined in the operations against the Japanese, which rapidly, crumbled. By 15th. June 1945 a victory parade was held in Rangoon at which the Burmese army participated alongside units representing British Empire and Allied forces. The resistance against the Japanese was thus over.

On 27 th. March 2010, (65 th. Resistance Day also known as Armed Forces Day) the Burmese citizens in Bangladesh hold a rally in front of the Supreme Court building in Dhaka protesting at the new electoral rules adopted by the Burmese military junta which stops Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from joining the polls. Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada summoned Burmese Ambassador to tell the Burmese military junta to hold free election including Aung San Suu Kyi. Mr. Okada also said he will discuss the issue with fellow foreign ministers at the Group of eight meeting in Canada including US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. On this resistance day Burmese autocrat Junta Chief warns against meddling in polls, "divisive acts" could spark anarchy and derail the transition to democracy.

Addressing 13,000 troops at the country's annual Armed Forces Day parade, Senior General Than Shwe said Burmese should oversee its own elections and urged patience and fair play. During the transition to an unfamiliar system, countries with greater experience usually interfere and take advantage for their own interests, the reclusive junta Supremo, wearing full military grab and adorned in medals, said in a speech. For this reason, it is an absolute necessity to avoid relying on external powers, he said in the address, which was broadcast to the nation and witnessed by foreign journalists who received a rare invitation to the isolated nation. Than Shwe did not reveal a date for the long-awaited polls, the first in two decades. The election has been widely dismissed as a sham to entrench nearly five decades of iron-fisted army rule. He failed to mention Bogyoke (General) Aung San, the founding father of the Burmese Army, the leader of the Burmese resistance movement against the Japanese Imperial Army and architect of the independence of Burma.

The United States and United Nations have expressed frustration about the lack of inclusiveness of the polls, which they say will be far from credible, suggesting continuation of sanctions. They are critical on the junta's refusal to release 2100 political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

There is growing momentum toward ending Burma's war crimes. Earlier the International Tribunal against women in Burma called on the United Nations to hold the junta accountable for its commission of rape and torture as weapon of war. The UN Special Rapporteur to Burma, Mr. Tomas Ojea Quintano joined this call by urging the

United Nations to initiate a Commission of inquiry to investigate crimes against humanity and crimes in Burma. British government supports the United Nations Security Council referring Burma to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Burma's biggest opposition said on 29 th. March 2010 it would not register for this year's election. The National League For democracy (NLD) party led by Aung San Suu Kyi, which won the last election in 1990 by landslide but was never allowed to rule, said the party leadership had agreed not to run. The election has been widely dismissed as a sham. The move by the NLD will seriously undermine the credibility of any polling in the eyes of foreign governments, which have urged the ruling Generals to ensure all groups

take part in the elections. The United States is critical of the new election laws, saying they makes a "mockery" of democracy.

The ceasefire groups are also withdrawing their commitment with the junta in their dispute over Border Guards Force (BGF). The junta is forcing to transform them to Boarder Guards Force (BGF). They refused to accept it. The long lasting civil war of Burma will be reinforced when the ceasefire groups turn against the junta. Karen National Union (KNU) is in war with the regime. Wa, Kokan, Kachin, Shan and Mon have strong armed wings to combat the junta. There is also non-ceasefire Shan armed group called Shan State Army

(SSA). In Northern Arakan State (NAS) Rohingyas are lured to polls by saying, they will be issued National Registration Cards. They promised for renovation of the mosques. But not yet permitted. They promised free movement of the Rohingya students of the Akyab University. But not yet materialized. They promised for the appointment of Rohingya teachers. But the authorities appointed Rakhine Buddhists only. The Rohingya were put in a cage by fencing the border between Bangladesh and Burma. They plan to raise BGF from Buddhist both locals and new settlers to guard the fence (Berlin Wall). The remedy is resistance against the regime with the cooperation of the people of Burma and the international community. ##

ROHINGYA REFUGEES IN BANGLADESH

By Nurul Islam

BURMA is a resource-rich Southeast Asian nation with a 52-million population of diverse ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious identities. Rohingyas are one of them living in Burma's northern Arakan state that borders 175 miles with Bangladesh. It is a tense region that produces constant outflows of Rohingya refugees into Bangladesh and other countries. Characteristically the influx of refugees from Arakan into Bengal was almost an intermittent phenomenon in Burma's history due to either Mongolian or Burmese invasions of Arakan or internal control problems and planned extermination of the Rohingyas. The successive Burmese governments have been pursuing a subtle strategy of 'Burmanisation' and 'Buddhist-insertion'. The ruling State Peace and Development Council practises policies of intolerance, bigotry and hostility towards non-Buddhist peoples particularly against Muslims and Christians within Burma.

WHO ARE ROHINGYAS ?

Rohingyas, a predominantly Muslim community, are one of the many ethnic nationalities in Burma. They are one of

the two major indigenous peoples of Arakan; the other is Rakhine who are largely Buddhists. 'The Rohingyas speak a



Mr. Nurul Islam

Bengali dialect similar to what is spoken in Chittagong region of Bangladesh, mixed primarily with words from Urdu, Hindi and Arabic languages, but also from Bama (Burmese) and English languages' (Amnesty International: 'The

Rohingya Minority: Fundamental Rights Denied', May 19, 2004). Rakhine are close to the Burman in religion and language. Rohingyas trace their ancestry to Arabs, Turks, Persians, Afghans, Bengalis and some Indo-Mongoloid people. Thus, they are an ethnic group that developed from different stocks of people with separate language, distinct culture and civilisation of their own. Their settlements in Arakan dates back to 7th century CE (Dr Habib Siddiqui, 'Rohingya: The forgotten people', the weekly Holiday, Dhaka, Bangladesh, September 2, 2005). The word 'Rohingya' comes from 'Rohang', an old name of Arakan.

The Rohingya population in north Arakan is united by ancient heritage and lived for many centuries in a contiguous area within well-defined geographical boundaries. The group identity of Rohingya people has grown over the past several centuries. The area between

the rivers Kaladan and Naf where Rohingyas still predominate has been known as traditional homeland' of Rohingya. During the colonial period, the British military command declared the northern part of Arakan as the 'Muslim

CC/42 dated December 31, 1942, Silver Jubilee Anniversary Publication (1975-2000) of Arakan Historical Society, Chittagong, Bangladesh, December 1999, p 44]. The former parliamentary government of Burma recognised Rohingyas as an ethnic nationality: The people living in northern Arakan are our national brethren. They are called Rohingya. They are on the same par in the status of nationality with Kachin, Kayah, Karen, Mon, Rakhine, Shan. They are one of the ethnic races of Burma (Prime Minister U Nu's radio announcement on September 25, 1954 at 8:00pm and public speech by former Prime Minister and Defence Minister U Ba Swe at Maungdaw and Buthidaung on November 3 and 4, 1959 respectively).

The Rohingyas had exercised the right to vote and right to be elected in all elections of Burma held in the colonial period (1935-1948), the democratic period (1948 to 1958, 1960 to 1962), the Burma Socialist Programme Party period (1974-1988), and the SLORC-held general elections in 1990. As such, they elected their representatives to the constituent assembly, to the parliament and the people's council at different levels. They even participated in the last SPDC referendum in 2008.

The Rohingya population is estimated to be more than three million many of whom are living in exile in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Thailand, Malaysia, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Europe and the United States. However, today 'the Rohingya Muslims are predominantly concentrated in the northern part of Rakhine State (Arakan), numbering approximately 1.4 million, almost half of the state's total population' (Refugee International, *Forgotten People: The Rohingyas of Burma*, June 16, 2005). Above and beyond, a sizeable number of Rohingyas are also living in other parts of Burma.

ARAKAN IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

ARAKAN found itself at the crossroads of two worlds: South Asia and Southeast Asia, between Muslim-Hindu Asia and

Buddhist Asia, and amidst Indo-Aryan and Mongoloid races. Throughout history Arakan had close relationship with Muslim Bengal in the fields of culture, economy and politics. 'During its days as an independent kingdom until 1784, Arakan encompassed at times the Chittagong region in the southern part of today's Bangladesh'



An MSF doctor examines a baby at the MSF project in Kutupalong makeshift camp.

Bangladesh 2010 © Giulio Di Sturco/VII Mentor

(MSF Holland, *10 Years for the Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh: Past, Present and Future*, March 2002, p 9). Historically, it had more interaction with the west, i.e. the region now comprising Bangladesh. The heyday of Arakan began with the spread of Muslim civilisation. The then Chairman of the Burma Historical Commission Colonel Ba Shin wrote: 'Arakan was virtually ruled by Muslims from 1430 to 1531' ('Coming of Islam to Burma 1700 AD, a research paper presented at Azad Bhavan, New Delhi, 1961, p 4). In 1784, the Burman king Bodawpaya conquered and annexed Arakan, and allegedly killed more than 200,000 people. It resulted in the exodus of almost two-thirds of Arakan's population into southern Chittagong. Such was the beginning of Burman colonisation of Arakan causing periodic influxes of refugees from Arakan into Bengal. When the British incorporated Arakan and the rest of Burma into its empire by 1885, many refugees returned to Arakan.

WHY HAVE ROHINGYA BECOME REFUGEES?

THE root cause of the outflows of refugees from Arakan into Bangladesh and other countries is the 'Rohingya problem', which is a problem of ethnic, religious and political persecution to rid Arakan of the Muslim population, and to

eventually turn it into a purely Burmanised Buddhist region.

'The Rohingya are one of the most persecuted and forgotten peoples on earth' (Mike Thompson, 'Burma's Forgotten Rohingya', BBC News, Saturday, March 11, 2006, 00:26GMT). The ruling military SPDC has deliberately deprived Rohingyas of their Burmese citizenship rendering them stateless in their own homeland. The human rights abuses and violations against Rohingyas are systematic, consistent and widespread, which amount to 'crimes against humanity' as well as 'attempted genocide', and are similar to the abuses discussed by the United Nations. 'The combination of the human rights violations the Rohingya face - from the denial of legal status to restriction of movement and economic

constraint - creates food insecurity and make life in Northern Arakan State untenable for many' [Chris Lewa, 'Issue to be raised Concerning the Situation of Rohingya Children in Myanmar (Burma): Submission to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, November 2003']. Medicine San Frontiers stated, 'Rohingyas are listed as one of the ten world's populations in most danger of extinction' (November 26, 2006).

Bangladesh 2010 © Giulio Di Sturco/VII Mentor An MSF doctor examines a baby at the MSF project in Kutupalong makeshift camp.

Rohingyas are living in a hostile environment facing ideological assaults from all directions, from both state and non-state actors. Buddhist Rakhine xenophobic academics (for example Dr Aye Chan, Dr Aye Kyaw) dreadfully called them 'influx viruses', floating people. Rohingyas are also hated and rejected for their skin and South-Asian appearance. The SPDC's racist characterisation of Rohingyas in recent diplomatic correspondence as 'ugly as ogres' is emblematic of its flagrant discrimination against and gross mistreatment of the Rohingyas. 'The cumulative impact of the matters described is not only revealing the darkest side of the human rights record of Burma but also that of neighbouring

Rohingya on the High Seas', Statement from the Burmese Rohingya Community in Australia, June 2009, in www.refugeecouncil.org.au).

The abovementioned factors are the root cause of the displacement of Rohingyas within the region, including Bangladesh. It is to be noted that the refugee outflows from Arakan 'did not result from counter-insurgency strategies as it is the case along the Thai-Burma border, but is direct outcome of policies of discrimination, oppression and exclusion against the Rohingya population' (Testimony by Chris Lewa, coordinator, on International Religious Freedom, January 21, 2008). Since 1948 about 1.5 million Rohingyas have been expelled or have had to flee their ancestral homeland for their lives.

THE MAJOR ROHINGYA EXODUSES

THERE were two major Rohingya exoduses from Arakan into Bangladesh, once in 1978 and another in 1991-92, each with more than 250,000 refugees. Despite repatriation, the problem remains unsolved and the exodus into Bangladesh is still continuing. 'In both these instances -1978 and 1991 - the Rohingyas went back incidentally not as citizens of Myanmar but as "stateless" people. And then after their return to Arakan they once again faced forced labour, lack of freedom of movement, periodic displacement, whimsical arrest and killing, and other forms of human rights violations, including torture and rape. If anything, this only helped to reproduce a dismal state of life and living of the Rohingyas, that is, within Burma as stateless and beyond the borders as refugees' (Professor Imtiaz Ahmed, 'Protected Statelessness in the Age of Globalization', paper discussed in the 'Forgotten Kingdom of Arakan Workshop' on November 24, 2005 at First Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand, p 21).

NEW ARRIVALS

DUE to continued persecution, there have been 'new arrivals' along the border that number more than 200,000 despite arrests and 'push back' by Bangladesh security forces.

Unfortunately, they are branded as economic migrants without realising their unbearable plight. Since they are not accepted in the existing refugee camps run by the UNHCR they are mingling among the local population of southern Chittagong, with those remnants from 1978 and those who were not then registered in the camps in 1991-92. However, an analysis of humanitarian condition of Rohingya in



Bangladesh 2009 © MSF : MSF staff assesses the humanitarian conditions at the camp.

Arakan would reveal a strong correlation between poverty and persecution. 'Thus it can be argued that the economic reasons for coming to Bangladesh have political roots' (MSF-Holland, '10 years for the Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh: Past, Present and Future', March 2002, p 28).

Bangladesh 2009 © MSF : MSF staff assesses the humanitarian conditions at the camp.

ANALYSIS OF THE REPATRIATION AGREEMENTS OF 1978 AND 1992

THE Rohingya asylum seekers from two major exoduses of 1978 and 1991-92 were the people who owing to 'well founded fear of being persecuted' in Burma, largely for reason of their ethnic origin and religion, had taken refuge in Bangladesh. These influxes were not a new phenomenon but continuation of the intermittent outflows of Rohingya

from Arakan over the decades. So the repatriation agreements, particularly in consideration of the recurrence of the refugee problem again and again, should have directed towards resolving the issue once and for all.

There was nothing in the agreements that would ensure their citizenship and ethnic rights, and the vital necessities like creation of congenial atmosphere for their safe and voluntary repatriation and rehabilitation under direct supervision of the UNHCR, guarantee for their basic rights and freedoms, reinstating of service holders, restoration of their moveable and immovable properties either destructed/confiscated or replaced with non-Rohingya hostile settlers, adequate compensation for all loss sustained, withdrawal of armed forces and terrorizing functionaries from Rohingya villages and areas and cessation of criminal atrocities against them.

ROHINGYA REFUGEES UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW

THE bases for an international concept of refugee may be sought in treaties, in UN practice, and in the UNHCR Statue. It

is persecution which has caused the Rohingya to flee their ancestral homeland of Arakan, where persecution against them is so barbarous and callous that their life is at stake and they are in danger of extinction. Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides: 'No one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment'. This is the responsibility of all states as well as the purpose of the United Nations to protect the life of people. 'There can be no doubt that the rule against torture has evolved into a jus cogens prohibition which every state has a duty owed to the international community to outlaw and to punish' (Geoffrey Robertson QC, *Crime Against Humanity: The Struggle for Global Justice*, Penguin Publication, second edition, 2002, p 103). Most notably, the 1984 Convention on Torture, ratified by 127 states, 'requires torture suspects to be put on trial or else extradited to a

Article 14(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: 'Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution', and Article 3(1) of the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment states: 'No State Party shall expel, return ('refouler') or extradite a person to another State where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture.' In the case of Rohingya they were mercilessly driven out of their hearths and homes. They had fled to neighbouring Bangladesh to seek asylum from persecution and to save their lives. They are refugees according to the General Definition of the term 'refugee' contained in Article (1) of the 1951 convention [Convention Relating to Status of Refugees, adopted on July 28, 1951 by the United Nations Conference of plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons convened under the General Assembly Resolution 429(V) of 14 December 1950; entry into force: April 22, 1954, in accordance with article 43], which defines a refugee is a person who 'as a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it'.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION OF THE REFUGEES

THERE are more than 28,000 official Rohingya refugees from 1991-92 exoduses still remain in the two camps of Nayapara and Kutupalong in Cox's Bazar district. In addition, about 62,000

refugees live in two unofficial camps of Leda Tal and Kutupalong respectively in Teknaf and Ukhiya townships, while an estimated 150,000 have intermingled with the local villagers. But the humanitarian situation of these uprooted people all together is very heartrending.

For more than a decade the refugees have been confined to overcrowded, tight spaces, with insufficient water, inadequate shelter. There was limited access to adequate sanitation. After about 18 years, instead of upgraded shelters, the UNHCR is now reconstructing refugee camps with 15 x15ft tin or bamboo walled and plastic roofed muddy rooms, which may, however, be counted as an improvement. But the living standard of the refugees does not improve. The situation is very serious particularly with the undocumented refugees. The majority of the refugees are malnourished with occasional reports of starvation. There have been reports of rape, intimidation, torture, looting and kidnapping of refugees by local goons and, sometimes, by the security forces.

Now and again the international community, including delegation of European Union and Dhaka based foreign diplomats had expressed their grave concern over the camp condition and unregistered Rohingya refugees. Since tensions sparked in August, 2009, between Bangladesh and Burma over the military regime's construction of a border fence, arrest and forced repatriation of Rohingya refugees or forced migrants dramatically increased and thousands of them were sent back to Burma by Bangladeshi authorities, where they are reportedly tortured, arrested or disappeared.

SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM

Rohingyas are potential or actual victims of massive atrocities and crimes against humanity. It is a problem of 'religious, ethnic and political persecution' against an ethnic minority Muslim community in Burma. Having political and humanitarian aspects, the

Rohingya problem affects the region and beyond and is essentially a regional problem with international perspective that warrants 'international responsibility to protect'. Recently, the member states of the Bali Process have shown interest in working towards the development of a regional solution to the issue confronting the Rohingya. But the regional cooperation must be grounded in recognition of and adherence to states' international protection obligations which are not only enshrined in international law but are fundamental principles of respect for human dignity. Regional solution must rest on securing improvements to the political situation within Burma such that the human rights of all peoples within its territory are respected. The Rohingya should be allowed to coexist as equal in Arakan. Their citizenship and ethnic rights are to be guaranteed, and their rights and privileges are to be ensured, on par with other national groups of the Union of Burma.

On December 29, 2009, the Bangladesh foreign secretary, Mohamed Mijarul Quayes, said Burma has agreed to accept 9,000 Rohingya refugees. By and large, it is a welcome news in the sense that now the homesick refugees can go back to their adored homeland. Even all refugees, whether official or undocumented, should be able to return homes in Arakan. But the question is how these terror-stricken refugees are to be repatriated to a country with a most repressive military regime that persecute and exterminate them without let or hindrance. In that context, Bangladesh put effective pressure on the ruling Burmese military regime to create congenial atmosphere for safe and voluntary repatriation of the refugees by exploring all available venues. Last not the least, the repatriation of Rohingya refugees should be voluntary and they should not be sent back without their deliverance. ##

MARCH 2, 1962 THE KILLING DAY OF DEMOCRACY

By AFK Jilani

Late General Ne Win overthrew the popular elected democratic government of U Nu on March 2, 1962 in a coup. All powers of the state legislative, executive and judiciary were under the control of 'Revolutionary Council' (RC) which was formed with top military officers headed by him. Habeas Corpus and all the writs were suspended. The reasons of the coup given by Ne Win were inefficiency of the political government to solve the outstanding issue of federalism, a faulty economy and bureaucratic and exploitative system of government, among others.

The military regime quickly launched one party political system and established Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) with its whimsical ideology of so-called 'Burmese way to socialism' an ambiguous amalgam of both socialist and Buddhists views. This is in fact an added device to blackmail the principle of 'Unity in Diversity' promised to nationalities at the time of independence. All of the top executives were the army officers and BSPP stalwarts. This military hierarchy was backing the BSPP government while they themselves were making fortune at the cost of the suffering millions. Attempts had been made to delude the people with a false heaven on earth in order to establish one party military dictatorship. Rights and freedom of the people particularly the country's Muslims were seriously denied.

In 1964, the Revolutionary Council abolished the special Mayu Frontier Administration and put the area again within the jurisdiction of Akyab district under the Home Ministry and the Rohingya Language Programme relayed from Burma Broadcasting Services (BBS), Rangoon was cancelled in October 1965. On May 1964 the BSPP government demonetised its currency notes of Kyats 50 and 100. Under the initial term of

swap sums, up to a value of 500 were to be exchanged. Above that sum only 50% refund was allowed while the saver's source of finance were investigated, taxed and in some cases confiscated. Later the regime changed the terms of the currency swap limiting refund to 25%. Thus, the Rohingya received a great financial shock and many businessmen went bankrupt.

Following nationalisation of the shops, demagnetisation and imposition of restriction on movements, the backbone



AFK Jilani

of economy of the Rohingya began to cripple. The Rakhines were given chance to make easy profits by drawing consumer goods from 'People's Shops' at cheap price only to sell them in the black market with lucrative profit. Except a few service holders, no Muslims were entitled to draw the ration quota from the 'People Shops' whereas it is open to all Buddhists. Due to restriction, the Buddhists now carried out business of Rohingyas only. In cross border trade some Muslims who yet continue business have to give lion shares to their Buddhists sleeping partners in-order to enable them to run their business

smoothly. Many poor Rakhine had turned rich overnight at the expense of the Muslims while other ethnic races were reeling in acute poverty. Use of violence was an instrument of state policy. The Rohingyas of Arakan have been made targets of genocide, oppression, repression and the regime enacted many black laws for Rohingyas in flagrant violation of the international norms. Thousands of indigenous people were rendered homeless and driven out of the country.

As the power abuse went on in full swing, arrest of prominent Muslims, in the dead of nights without warrant and subjecting them to torture and releasing them after extorting huge sum of bribe had become the order of the day. Law enforcing agencies and judges were clearly instructed to harass the Muslims and deny justice.

In 1967 bulk of the rice produced in Arakan was carried away to Rangoon causing rice shortage in Arakan and many people had died of starvation. Continuous hunger provoked anger among the people of Akyab and a riot erupted which was crushed down by deploying army at the scene who gunned down many on the spot. Persons seriously injured but still alive were said to have been dumped in mass graves in unknown places of Akyab.

Since 1962, Rohingyas were not issued with National Registration Cards (NRC) and those earlier given were taken back by the authorities from Rohingyas. Papers showing the list of household or family members were also denied to Rohingyas. Article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), states: "The child shall have the right to a name, the right to acquire a nationality..." But the Junta denied this right to Rohingya children despite Burma being a signatory party. The BSPP started to drive out

Rohingyas from the towns of Kyauktaw, Mrohaung, Pauktaw, Myebon, Minbya etc. and they were forced to board on boats bound for Buthidaung Township. The authorities confiscated all their immovable properties. The internal refugees had passed their days under open sky in Maungdaw and Buthidaung. In the post-Independent period when the disgruntled Rohingyas took up arms they were hoodwinked into surrendering their arms on the false promises of granting all the political rights and treating them at par with all other

nationalities. The Burmese authorities, however, overtly backed out from this solemn promise. The Rohingya had always been treacherously duped. Since the regime was fast moving towards Burmanisation of ethnic races in the country, it opened a chapter against Islam. Thus, the junta practised all necessary measures to de-Islamic the Muslims. As a result of this, many Muslims, male and female, are found today practising Buddhist culture and many of them even converted into Buddhism. The process of Burman

hegemony has been promoted, through assimilation of all ethnic communities, by way of Burmanisation, Buddhization, and the so-called Burmese way to Socialism. But the stumbling block in their way in Arakan has been the existence of the compact Rohingya community inhabiting en-bloc in this strategic frontier still retaining their strict socio-cultural entity. Thus, the Burmans adopted the policy of exterminating the Rohingyas in a systematic and planned way through various schemes and designs. ##

THE HUMAN-RIGHTS SITUATION OF NORTHERN ARAKAN

By SU Ahamed

The human-rights situation of Northern Arakan state (now called Northern Rakhine state, NRS) is as grave as ever and has never improved due to negative and anti-Rohingya policies being pursued by successive military regimes abetted by the local narrow nationalist Rakhine with a view that Arakan should be turned into a pure Buddhist land where all Islamic characters should be erased and Arakan should be a Buddhist country where Rakhine and ruling class Bama are entitled to live and Rohingyas live without any citizenship and fundamental human-rights as sub-human-beings or leave the country. For this reason, Bama and Rakhine are trying to rename Rohingyas as Bangalis and point Bangladesh as the promised land of Rohingyas which is as they allege is the ancestral homes of Rohingyas. History has ample proofs that Rohingyas are the bona-fide citizens of Arakan and eventually the rightful citizens of Burma as well. This fundamental fact is flatly and blatantly denied by both most of the Rakhines political activist and Burmese military rulers and this is core human-rights violation by denying Rohingyas right to live in Arakan. This is very much unwarranted that the issue of citizenship question is raised by the rulers of Burma where as the junta has the right to make it an issue. This is a man made issue

which has no foundations at all. It is undeniable and true fact that Muslims of



Rohingya : No where to go

Arakan lived as genuine citizens before and during the Arakan kingdom, British colonial period and after the independent of Burma spanning more than a thousand years. History is grossly distorted by Buddhist communal fanatics in complete collusion to commit wide spread human-rights violations politically, socially, religiously, educationally and economically.

Politically, Rohingyas of Arakan were active in all elections either held in British period and even democratic era or during the military rules. In all elections, Rohingya Muslims of Arakan formed own political parties, contested, voted, nominated and held parliamentary seats. Now Rohingyas expect the same but to change the status quo, conspiracies are hatched. Political party like National Unity Party

(NUP) and another would be political party named Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) is active all over northern Arakan persuading Rohingya to join them and cooperate with them in upcoming election. The NUP is the offshoot of previous ruling party Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP) and never did any good to Muslims but conspired to push them into the category of aliens. It was hardly possible for a Rohingya to get membership of the party in those days (1970s and 1980s). Now all Rakhine NUP is trying to win the hearts of Rohingyas by using some previous Rohingya henchmen of the party by giving false promises that nationality status will be ascertained. This is the BSPP turned party that cancelled Rohingyas from the list of indigenous peoples of Burma. It never tolerated and still denies the existence of Rohingyas in Arakan. This party is fully responsible for today's human-rights violations committed against Rohingya Muslims of Arakan.

Another social organization called Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA), a SPDC patronized party which is poised to turn into politics is also organizing Rohingyas in the villages by using the Village Peace and Development Council (VPDC). The VPDC chairman is powerful and is employed by

SPDC. Rohingyas tried to get Memberships of USDA before but were never accepted like BSPP and NUP. Now USDA is openly offering Rohingya memberships and the same is done by NUP nowadays. These two parties are behaving like they have got permissions from SPDC to conduct election campaign where as no other political activities are seen when no formal declaration regarding election is announced. Rohingya from the village-tracts are lured with false promises that nationality status will be entertained if support is given. But it had never happened before and Rohingyas in northern Arakan are now living in such a situation that no one dares to take a collision course with the military supported schemes. As NUP and USDA are all dominated by Rakhine Buddhists, Rohingya Muslims are definitely skeptical of their motives behind and Rohingya got lessons under BSPP rule when citizenship status enjoyed by Rohingya Muslims was sabotaged and looted.

The entire Rohingya Muslim community living in Arakan will surely support any political party either comes from the ruling military side or any other side if the status of nationality and citizenship automatically reestablished. Most important thing is that Rohingya Muslims form own political party and exert to establish their own identity within the Burma constitution. For this reason, Rohingyas living in Arakan and those living in Rangoon and other parts of Burma should be given to meet freely to formulate a future course to the benefit of the whole community and the community itself does not fall prey to other detrimental political groups

coming in disguise of friends. A congenial atmosphere is to be created to endeavor all Rohingyas to sit together and discuss for the future political curse.

The prevailing situation with regards to Rohingyas or Arakan is so desperate with iron-handedness of all administrations including Nasaka forces deployed over northern Arakan where Rohingya Muslims are overwhelmingly inhabited. Rohingya extermination is its core policy and every tactic is used to make Rohingya desperate and leave the land. Every year population census with household photos is kept to check how many Rohingyas could be reduced. Birth registration has become so difficult to add to the household list where as deletion of any one from the list is most welcomed and instantly red marked as fled to Bangladesh. Since less new born babies are able for enlistment after giving extra money, as many as 50,000 Rohingya Muslims youths are rendered stateless without documents and huge problems will arise while the questions of them will come up in future. Rohingya young generation is under threat of undocumented persons thus there will be no future for them in their home land. This coming generation will have to face severe human-rights abuses.

Arbitrary arrests and illegal confinements and unwarranted long term jail sentences are continued to be handed down in northern Arakan on the basis of communalism. In 2008, some 10 Rohingya Muslim community leaders including the chairman of the legal Muslim social organization called Myanmar Muslim Organization, namely U Than Htun (Mohammad Salim) and other Muslims totaling 10 were arrested from the office of the organization while

they were on regular meeting alleging that they were plotting against the government. This Organization never engaged in any such activities but rather had been keeping very good relations with all departments like Nasaka, district and township local administrations. No evidences are found to support the allegation of treason but they were handed down long jail terms up to 10 years and are languishing in the prisons of Buthidong, Akyab, Kyaukpuru and Sandwe. During the court proceedings 3 were not found guilty and acquitted but later the anti-Muslim fanatics from Maungdaw and Maungdaw court attorney in collusion filed review petition in divisional court in Akyab the 3 were brought under punishment as the same as other jailed persons. Among the 3, one Mir Ahmad from Shweza Village is now languishing in Buthidong jail with very much poor health and other 2 are still absconded. A total injustice is carried out on these innocent Rohingya and their petitions up to the apex court in Rangoon were proved to be futile exercise because the case itself was grossly politicized with full communal hatred.

The establishment of new Buddhist Natala villages put a big burden for Rohingya Muslims as they have to surrender land, cattle and labor in implementing the projects. In recent days a new settlement is underway in Yaung Chaung village-tract (15 miles south of Buthidong) where more than 200 houses are under construction where huge Rohingya Muslims forced labor is used. Carpenters as well as helpers from Buthidong and Maungdaw are forcefully mobilized and took to the work side and they have to work day and

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night against their will and with meager payments. Gross human-rights violations are committed where nearly 1000 Muslims forced labors are working. Some 15 saw- mills from Buthidaung owned by individuals are forcefully taken away for use in the construction. This place where Nasaka region no-10 is established in recent months where about 700 acres of Muslim owned paddy and other cultivating lands are confiscated to distribute among the new Buddhist settlers who are to come after the completion of the houses. They will come from Rangoon and other parts of Burma.

Religious persecution is also widely seen. Muslims religious establishments like Mosques and Madrasas (Religious schools run by self-help basis) are mostly targeted. From January 1st, 2010, the Mosque is left dark and electricity is cut as punishment and intimidation to the Muslim community.

Last year, an entire Rohingya Muslim village was uprooted and all inhabitants are rendered as Internally Displaced Persons (IDP). The village called Amtollia

(in Shweza village-tract, eastern hamlet, some 1.5 miles to the north-east of Maungdaw) is disappeared with about 80 households and the Mosque was destroyed and 7000 bricks stored in the Mosque compound were taken away by the Nasaka forces stationed in Kayinchaung camp under Nasaka sector no-6. The villagers are living in scattered ways and some are ended up in make-shift camps in Bangladesh.

Rohingya students are barred from learning higher education and technical, professional and lines like law are not allowed to pursue. Hundreds of Rohingya students are not given any chance to study by denying admission and on the other hand many students have to get dropped from the universities for unwarranted harassment by the authorities such as deliberate delay in travel pass issuance. Mass extortion by every governmental department is underway and all resources are siphoned and take away. No jobs are offered to Rohingya Muslims are all economic activities are sabotaged besides seizure. Without external

remittance, the very existence is unthinkable and major portion of the money sent from abroad is seized by Nasaka, police and other armed forces besides local administration. Nothing can be moved without unofficial payments in any governmental offices. Everywhere human-rights violation is clearly seen and all authorities are deeply involved in it and no counter measures are taken thus every one indulges in it with free hand.

The livelihood of the entire Rohingya community in Arakan is like passing it in most nightmarish way with no end in sight. Restriction on marriage is strictly applied in most unnatural way and punishment is there for a natural thing. No one knows how long these agonizing days will continue and how far the Rohingya of Arakan are to live under such harsh situation. International community, U.N, OIC, ASEAN, all neighboring countries of Burma, specially China, India, Thailand and Bangladesh to pressurize military regime to stop harassment and persecution against the Rohingyas. ##

SHIFTING SANDS AT NORTH ARAKAN (Illusion or Reality) ?

By H Rahman

Rohingya ethnic cause in north Arakan again comes in to prominence before military junta's 2010 sham election. The State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) is determined 2010 election without any regard to international community sincere advice and suggestion and Burmese people ardent desire for free, fair, inclusive and credible election and genuine democracy. The SPDC announced rules and regulations of coming election and formation of political parties were allowed and restriction of political activities was relaxed. The military is in a state of dilemma regarding the status of Rohingya of Arakan, as the successive regimes put this community in a state of

statelessness. Now the military has to allow the Rohingyas to vote and to be elected as all other elections from 1936 to 1990 due to lack of justification of denial and effective pressure of international community. It is worth mentioning that elected MP of 1990 election U Kyaw Min (a) Shomshul Anwarul Haque was imprisoned for 47-years and his family members 17 years each by the military junta's kangaroo court.

In 2008 military junta engaged deputy home minister Brig-Gen. Phone Swe thorough study of actual ground situation of north Arakan and Rohingya community. He managed over whelming support from Rohingyas 2008

constitution referendum to the satisfaction of military junta. They want the same support and cooperation from Rohingyas at the coming 2010 election with joining Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) a political affiliate of SPDC.

The special envoy of north Arakan Brig-Gen. Phone Swe contacted Rohingya entrepreneurs of Rohingya community at Rangoon and made several facts finding mission to north Arakan and studied thoroughly ground reality, perception and mind set of entire Rohingya community of Arakan. It seemed that he found out racist preaching wrong and encouraged by over whelming support at referendum,

at long last some policy orientation towards Rohingyas is perceived.

On 16 March 2010 Burmese Prime minister Gen.Thein Sein accompanied by 12 ministers reached the Buthidaung and held meeting where township and district officials of Maungdaw and Buthidaung, USDA members, Rakhine and Rohingya civil societies members were attended. In this meeting he told that Rohingyas living in Arakan state are citizens of Burma. He added that he watch the movie named "Maiya Shaukti" produced by UNHCR and notice many similarities Burmese culture and tradition with Rohingyas such as men wear longyi and shirts like other nationals of Burma and women also do the same. They can read, write and talk Burmese language and more over the way of life of Rohingyas also the same as Burmese. He emphasized that Rohingyas and the government can work together for the betterment of Burmese people and development of the country. He reiterated that Rohingyas have been staying here and shall stay here and no need to go any where. He explain that erecting fence along the border between the Burma-Bangladesh is against no one but only to prevent unwanted persons entering in to the country, to thwart international terrorism, to stop cross border illicit drug and arms smuggling. He told the audience that Rohingyas are majority in North Arakan and shall have legitimate constitutional rights to vote and to be elected. On 17th March, a Rohingya delegation consisting of 16 Rohingya elders headed by U Aung Zaw Win (Zakir Ahamed) arrived at Maungdaw.He held meetings both in Maungdaw and Buthidaung with Rohingyas elders. He explains purpose of the delegation and extensive discussion were made among the participants. Though they had bitter experience of the government behavior of last five decades; they have no

political leverage to think other alternatives. Therefore, they unanimously decided to join USDA and participate forth coming election.

On 18 March Brig-Gen. Phone Swe held a meeting at Maungdaw district administration hall, Rohingya elders, district civil officers, Nasaka and military officers attended. He said that Muslim of Arakan state are ready to join USDA, they are citizen of Burma and they are getting citizenship cards and instructed district immigration officer to make it available before the election. He clearly mentioned Rohingyas as "Burma Muslim" and confessed that government is under tremendous pressure from international community for Rohingyas.

A couple months ago, government orders DPDC to allow all Rohingya students to go to Akyab University with their student ID cards only. But DPDC chairman U Aung Soe Nyunt ignore higher authority directive. More over, western military commander issued a directive to recruit primary teachers from Rohingyas but to our utter surprise, DPDC chairman recruited 100 Rakhine youths instead for which he was removed from his post. It is learned that Arakan state immigration officer also transferred due to above irregularities.

It is established fact that Rohingya ethnic cause has taken and regional and international dimension, effecting many countries and regions such as ASEAN (Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand), South Asia (Bangladesh, Pakistan and India), Middle East (Saudi Arabia and Gulf countries) and Australia, Japan, USA and European Union. There are more than 1.5 million Rohingyas in above countries. These Diaspora are not integrated in host countries and staying as stateless people in above countries.

Main opposition political parties, National League for Democracy (NLD), decide not to participate military junta's sham election because of 2008 undemocratic constitution and

discriminatory election rules and regulations. The military is creating some small political parties with their direct participation such as National Unity Party(NUP) and Union Solidarity and Development Party(USDP) and colluded some other more than 25 parties with lackeys and collaborators to eye wash international community and dupe Burmese people.

Border Guard Force (BGF) is deceitful stratagem of military junta and offshore and by product of ceasefire mechanism to factionalize and weaken nationalities will ulterior motives to deprive them political leverage and assimilate them in Barman's melting pot. Now nationalities realized doomsdays scenario and rejected it in totality after much damages and sufferings.

Shifting sands in North Arakan is really illusion because the military junta deliberately and intentionally putting aside (core issue of ethnic rights of Rohingyas) which was enjoy by them from 1960 to 1974.That means more than twelve years after General Ne Win's coup-d-etat of March 2 1962.Rohingya exercised freedom of movement,marriage,worship,right to education , health care and right to lively hood from 1948 to 1974. Settlement and land seizure were introduced to pauperize the Rohingyas in their homeland. The military didn't mentioned any thing about 1.5 million Rohingyas expelled by successive government with various way of persecution. The destiny of Rohingya is in the hand of Rohingya themselves. They shall build the consensus of fundamental issues by themselves. The primary task will be cooperating with democratic movement, integrating nationalities legitimate struggle and establishing symbiotic relationship with sister community Rakhaines with the help and cooperation of international non- governmental organisations and communities.##

ARAKAN ROHINGYA NATIONAL ORGANISATION ARAKAN, BURMA

Press Release (16 March 2009)

ARNO WELCOMES AND SUPPORTS MR. TOMAS OJEA QUINTANA'S CALL FOR A UN COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

Arakan Rohingya National Organisation (ARNO) sincerely welcomes and supports the recommendation of the United Nations Special Rapporteur Tomas Ojea Quintana to establish a UN Commission of Inquiry with a specific fact-finding mandate to address the question of international crimes perpetrated by the ruling military SPDC in Burma.

As a state policy, the Burmese military regimes has long been committing grave human rights violations and abuses across the country and are widespread, systematic and consistent, particularly against the ethnic peoples, which amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes under the terms of Rome Statue of the International Criminal Court.

We appreciate that Mr. Quintana is the first UN Special Rapporteur to visit northern Arakan State, and that he is

deeply concerned about the systematic and endemic discrimination faced by the Rohingya, which is framed as an immigration problem, leads to basic and fundamental human rights being denied to them, and urges the regime to end the unacceptable discrimination, human rights abuses and resultant severe economic deprivation they face, including denial of citizenship, under 1982 Citizenship Act, which contravenes generally accepted international norms to ensure that there is no State-sanctioned discrimination on the basis of religion and ethnicity.

Mr Quintana's third visit to Burma from 15 to 19 February 2010 is a significant mission and his report on the situation of human rights in Burma is based on factual findings. Likewise, his recommendation for an UN Commission of Inquiry to investigate crimes against

humanity and war crimes is very timely to save the people of Burma from the scourge of international crimes.

The 2010 general election will not benefit the people nor will it advance democratic reform in Burma. The government formed after the election will not be democratic, because it will be formed in accord with the 2008 SPDC Constitution, which is a distortion of democracy and is to uphold military dictatorship to enslave the people.

We call upon the UN member states to support Mr. Quintana's move and efforts in the interest of international peace and security, and for the protection and promotion of democracy and human rights in Burma.

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UN ENVOY SEEKS WAR CRIMES PROBE IN BURMA

(A special U.N. Rapporteur on Human Rights wants Burma for Criminal Accountability)

March 12, 2010 : BANGKOK - A United Nations special envoy has called for a probe into whether Burma's ruling junta is guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity, in a report to be addressed on Monday March 15, 2010 by the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva. Tomas Ojea Quintana cited "systematic violation of human rights" when he visited the country in February, fueling an international outcry against repression and abuses against the Burmese people. The regime this week issued new laws for elections set for later this year that bar detained opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi from taking part.

"According to consistent reports, the



AFP: Tomas Ojea Quintana briefs journalists at the Rangoon International Airport on Feb. 19, 2009 after six days visit

possibility exists that some of these Human rights violation may entail Categories of crimes against humanity or war crime under the terms of

statute of the International Criminal Court," said the report.

Quintana said the "mere existence of this possibility" requires Burma to investigate the allegations. The junta has failed to remedy abuses such as the recruitment of child soldiers, discrimination against the Muslim minority in northern Arakan [Rakhine] state, and the deprivation of basic rights to food, shelter, health, and education.

"Given this lack of accountability, U.N. institutions may consider the possibility to establish a commission of inquiry with a specific fact-finding mandate to

address the question of international crimes," he said. Rights violations "are the result of a state policy that originates from decisions by authorities in the executive, military, and judiciary at all levels," he said. Quintana also renewed a call for Burma to free more than 2,100 political prisoners, as well Aung San Suu Kyi, ahead of this year's elections.

Aung San Suu Kyi has called on followers to respond to Burma's "unjust" new election laws, which officially annul the result of the country's last elections in 1990, which the NLD won by a landslide. The junta never allowed the party to take power.

ROHINGYA CITED

Burma's "severe human rights abuses"- such as deaths in custody, rape, and torture-were also highlighted this week in the U.S. State Department's annual report on human rights worldwide. With a mounting international outcry over abuses suffered by the minority Rohingya people, the rapporteur notably said he was "deeply concerned about the systematic and endemic discrimination faced by the Muslim community."

"This discrimination, which is framed as an immigration problem, leads to basic and fundamental human rights being denied to this population. Measures taken against this population include restriction of movement, limitations on permission to marry, and forced labor. "The Special Rapporteur urges the government to end the unacceptable discrimination, human rights abuses and resulting severe economic deprivation

they face. This ethnic minority continues to be denied citizenship, under the 1982 Citizenship Act.

PERSECUTION OF MUSLIM ROHINGYA

In his report to the UN Human Rights Council, the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma Tomás Ojea Quintana said that Rohingya in Northern Arakan State continued to face "systematic and endemic discrimination" at the hands of the SPDC, which resulted in the denial of their "basic and fundamental human rights." Ojea Quintana said the SPDC continued to deny Rohingya their right to citizenship and subjected them to restriction of movement, limitations on permission to marry, and forced labor. In addition, the SPDC continued to refuse to issue birth certificates to many Rohingya children. As a result, these children face discrimination with regard to education, healthcare, and employment.

Boston-based Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) this week called on the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to "assert its mandate to protect and assist" Muslim Rohingya who are languishing in an unregistered refugee camp in Bangladesh. The report also called on the UNHCR "to press the government of Bangladesh to allow humanitarian aid to flow unhindered to the Rohingya and to launch a coordinated appeal to donor nations for humanitarian relief and protection for this neglected population."

"Thousands of Rohingya who fled intolerable persecution in Burma now face equally bleak conditions in Bangladesh, because the government there has refused to recognize their status as refugees," said Richard Sollom, director of research and investigations at PHR.

PHR said the Bangladesh government must end its arrest and forced repatriation of Rohingya into Burma and end a campaign of ethnic incitement against the group within its borders. It condemned the Bangladesh government's failure to protect the refugees, as well as human rights violations in Burma that have caused an estimated 300,000 Rohingya to cross the border to the North. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell told reporters in Bangkok Friday that Washington's new policy of engagement with Burma appeared to be failing.

"The U.S. approach was to try to encourage domestic dialogue between the key stakeholders, and the recent promulgation of the election criteria doesn't leave much room for such a dialogue," said U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell.

Campbell said the United States will keep talking with all parties inside Burma, including the government. But it won't lift sanctions without concrete progress toward democratic reform - notably freeing Aung San Suu Kyi and letting her party participate in elections.

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Sources: RFA

ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION: OIC REITERATE ITS COMMITMENT FIRMLY COMBAT ALL FORMS OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

OIC News Letter Issue 12, 24 March 2010

On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 21), OIC Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu underlined and recalled the universal virtues of brotherhood, mutual respect and tolerance, which are indispensable

to preserve stability, peace and security in our globe.

In a message he issued on the occasion, Ihsanoglu reiterated OIC's commitment to cooperate and to interact closely with the UN, particularly the Human Rights Mechanisms and Bodies, to strongly and

firmlly combat all forms of racism and racial discrimination. The theme of this year celebration 'Disqualify Racism' is timely and pertinent, as it became all the more urgent to mobilize all our efforts to eradicate this scourge, which constitutes a serious threat not only to victims of

racism, but also for international stability, peace, security and orderly conduct of relations between societies and countries.

On this important and meaningful day, the OIC calls upon the international

community to vigorously express its deep concern and rejection of the systematic and negative stereotyping of Muslims and Islam, as well as other religions and their followers, by denouncing categorically all forms and

manifestations of hate, intolerance and discrimination against any human being. The OIC also calls for the reinforcement of the existing legal provisions and mechanisms to combat discrimination based on race or religion or any other pretext. ##

ARAKANES ROHINGYA TO BE A BIGGER PROBLEM FOR THE REGION IN FUTURE: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS EXPERT

By Tin Soe : Kaladan News : March 25, 2010

Chittagong, Bangladesh : Arakanese Rohingyas will be a bigger problem for the region in future.... It requires a long-term solution, said Professor Imtiaz Ahmed of International Relations department from Dhaka University on March 23, 2010. The Arakanese Rohingya situation has become more complex as many refugees, who had been repatriated to their country in the past, had entered Bangladesh again as they did not find any development and change in the attitude of the Burmese authorities, he added.

About 251,000 Arakanese Rohingyas were registered between November 1991 and June 1992 and 237,000 of them went back home. The influx has, however, continued for several years, deepening the crisis. On the other hand, 200,000 to 400,000 undocumented Burmese people struggle to survive unrecognized and largely unassisted in densely populated Bangladesh where a strong competition over work, living space and resources, including forests, is inevitable at a local level.

Prof. Imtiaz said Bangladesh and Burma needed to rebuild relationship on sectors such as trade, commerce and education instead of remaining "hostage to the Arakanese Rohingya crisis." He criticized the UNHCR for not taking the return of the Arakanese Rohingyas as a priority issue. "They stopped documenting the Arakanese

Rohingyas in 1991 as they [UNHCR] have shifted their focus to Africa and Eastern Europe."

He said several hundred Arakanese Rohingyas received help in migrating to other countries. "The third-country



Professor Dr. Imtiaz Ahmed

repatriation is a pulling factor for the Arakanese Rohingyas.... Many procure Bangladesh passports to travel to other countries," he said. Professor Akmal Hussain of the same department said it might be possible to resolve the problem involving a third country or countries in the process.

The UNHCR's senior protection officer Arjun Jain, however, believes the listing of undocumented Burmese entrants would be "one step forward" for their repatriation. "It is necessary to identify who they are? Why and where they have come from," he told the press yesterday. When asked

whether they (the UNHCR) were asking the Burmese authorities to create atmosphere conducive to permanent repatriation of its citizens, he said, "We are working in Burma and holding discussions with the authorities. He described Bangladesh's move to involve China in the process as "encouraging."

Experts, however, suggested taking a combination of bilateral, regional and international approaches to resolve the issue. Experts believe the crisis involving the Arakanese Rohingya people was deepening as Burmese citizens have continued illegally crossing the border almost every day and international quarters are asking Bangladesh to identify them. The EU head of delegation in Bangladesh, Stefan Frowein, on February 20 said the Bangladesh government should make an inventory of the undocumented Rohingyas.

The Arakanese Rohingyas, an ethnic, linguistic and religious minority community in Burma, have a tendency to flee en masse to neighbouring Bangladesh because of the state-sponsored violence in their country. The Bangladesh authorities consider the Arakanese Rohingyas illegal "economic migrants" as many of them use Bangladesh as a transit point to migrate to countries such as Australia, Europe, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Malaysia. International quarters, on the other hand, believe they are "political migrants." ##

DHAKA SEEKS BEIJING'S ASSISTANCE TO SOLVE ROHINGYA PROBLEM

Kaladan News : March 23, 2010

Chittagong, Bangladesh: Bangladesh government management and register the unregistered Rohingyas, has requested China and sought its services at refugee camps in Cox's Bazar. The minister said that the authorities were trying to identify the NGOs involved in such activities. "We have asked the NGO Bureau to investigate the matter and take action."

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Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dr. Dipu Moni

"This has created a huge burden on us," she said while addressing a press briefing on the Prime Minister's state visit to China. On other hand, Food Minister Dr Abdur Razzaque said on March 18, a section of foreign media are publishing wrong stories about Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh such as using objectionable words like crackdown, although any such incident has never ever occurred while he met UNHCR representative, Craig Sanders, in Dhaka at his office. The UNHCR representative agreed that foreign media reports about Rohingyas in Bangladesh are not correct, and appreciated the

He also asked the UNHCR should take immediate action to solve the Rohingya problem as Bangladesh has not been carrying this burden for a long time. "International agencies, including UNHCR, are creating pressure on the government for registering more Rohingyas living outside the camps. We, being a poor nation cannot give shelter to so many refugees and therefore want their repatriation to their homeland," Razzaque said after a meeting with UNHCR Bangladesh representative Craig Sanders at the secretariat.

Replying to Sanders' request to

Razzaque said any initiative to register them encourages them to enter Bangladesh, as they think international organizations will help them or resettle them in some developed countries. During the Prime Minister of Bangladesh including Foreign Minister Dipu Moni's visit to China, they talked about building a deep seaport; to boost trade and investment between their respective countries and the Kunming-Chittagong road and rail links through Burma including raising the Rohingya problem, according to sources.

China gave a very positive and

encouraging response to Bangladesh's proposals on building a deep seaport and the Kunming-Chittagong road and rail links through Burma, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said. She also said if the deep seaport is built, China will also get benefit out of it and the cost of Chinese products would be less because of smaller distance. On removing the trade gap, the Foreign Minister said the matter was discussed during the official meeting when the Chinese side expressed willingness to provide duty-free access to more Bangladeshi products and increase in the volume

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A Rohingya old sick woman seeking divine blessing at Burma-Bangladesh border

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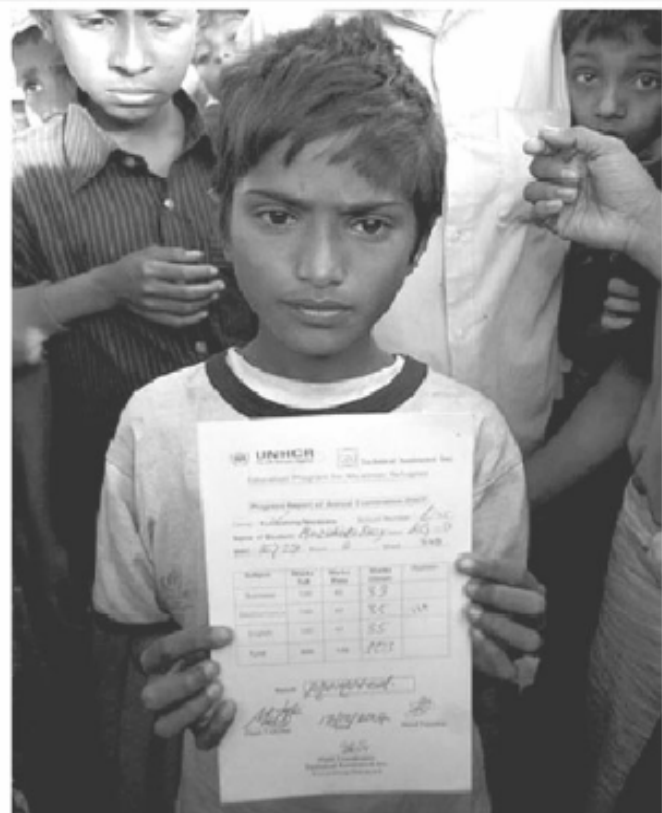
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Rohingya Refugee holding UNHCR Card