

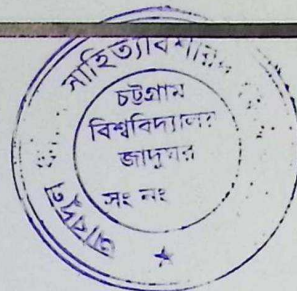
Published as a sequel to
'The Testimony of Sixty' 1971

THE TESTIMONY OF SIXTY

*on the crisis of Rohingya's
in Myanmar*

SIXTY men and women have been to, seen and lived in a situation which defies description. The horrific reality and crisis of today's Myanmar - the massive acts of violence and atrocity which resulted in more than half a million Rohingya people to flee from their motherland and take refuge in neighboring Bangladesh has stunned the world. The military crackdown led to the destruction of village after village, brutal killings, torture and rape. The attack on unarmed Rohingya civilians has been referred to as a 'textbook example of ethnic cleansing', while the Rohingya community is identified as the 'world's most persecuted minority'. *The Testimony of Sixty* is an attempt to give voices to the voiceless Rohingya victims. In the words of survivors, witnesses, aid-workers and journalists *The Testimony of Sixty* attempts to let the world know about the extent of the Rohingya tragedy and stories of great human suffering.

Under the auspices of OXFAM, a similar publication titled '*The Testimony of Sixty on the Crisis in Bengal*' came out in October 1971 at the backdrop of Bangladesh Liberation War during which 10 million refugees had to leave their country and take shelter in different camps in India. Time goes on, civilization evolves and history repeats. The Bengal crisis took place in '71 and the present Myanmar crisis is happening



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Sketch by Shahjahan Ahmed Bikash

today. It has in '17. Since the 25th of August, more than 600,000 Rohingyas have taken shelter in Bangladesh. As of now, the Rohingya refugee influx continues. This fastest growing refugee crisis has touched the hearts and minds of people with consciousness but the international organizations and leading nations have not responded duly to the crisis.

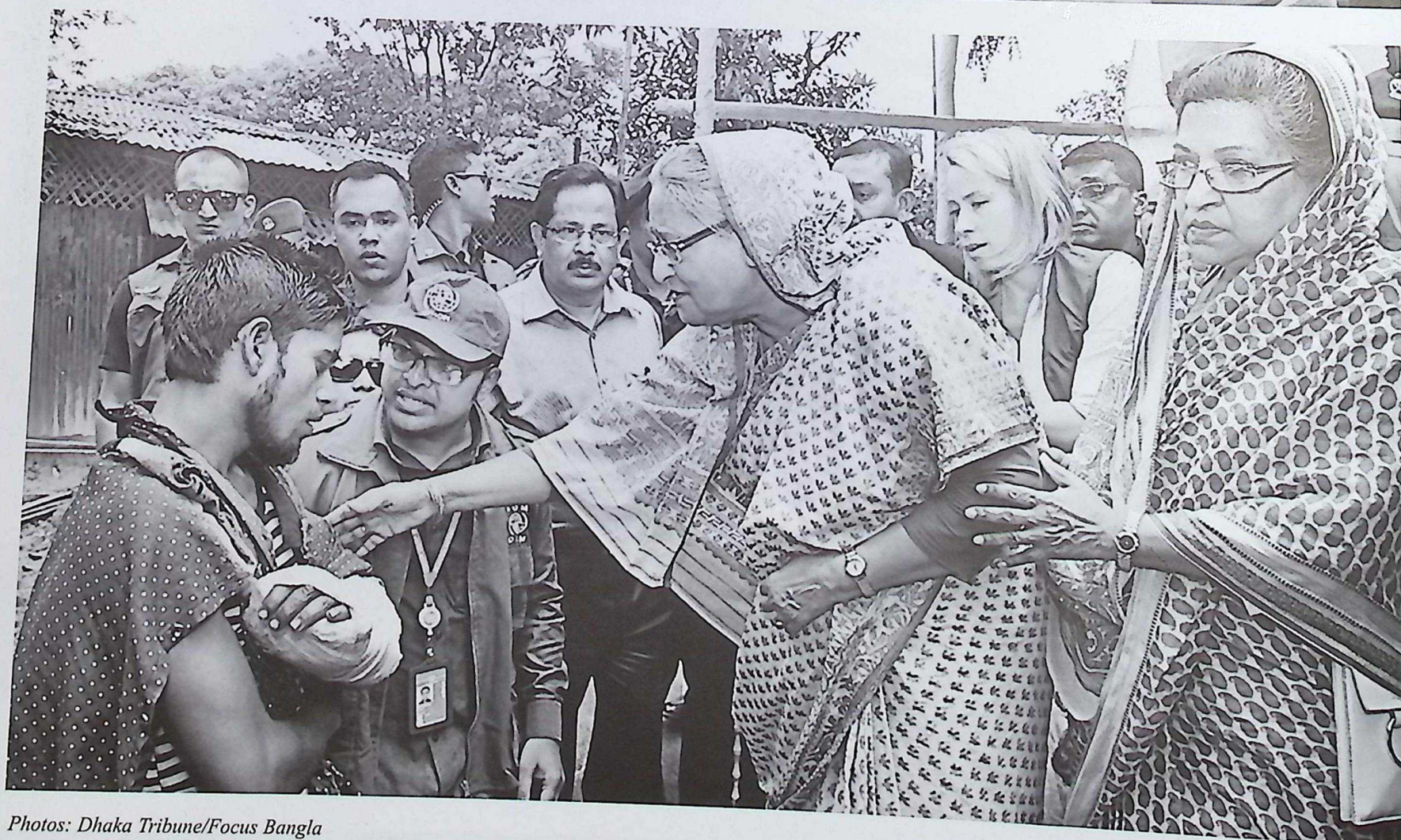
In October, a team of young researchers from the Center for the Study of Genocide and Justice (CSGJ) of the Liberation War Museum went to the Rohingya refugee camps in Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar to collect narratives from the survivors and witnesses of atrocities. A glimpse of the testimonies are added here. Given the magnitude of the crisis and the need to raise a collective voice for the persecuted Rohingyas, the CSGJ likes to put forward the following appeal:

TO THE WORLD COMMUNITY, we urge to use all bilateral, multilateral, and regional platforms at their disposal to support the formation of a UN Interim Administration and to call upon the United Nations Security Council to take measures to immediately halt the atrocities. At the same time it is imperative to adopt a mandate in overseeing the implementation of the recommendations made by the Advisory Commission on the Rohingya People in Rakhine State (Final Report by Kofi Annan). Bangladesh being a nation victim of Genocide has extended its whole-hearted support to the Rohingya refugees which is commendable but requires urgent cooperation from the international community to meet the massive humanitarian catastrophe. We further appeal to the UN and the international community to take concrete action against the perpetrators accused of violation of international human rights laws and crimes under international law.

Center for the Study of Genocide and Justice
Liberation War Museum
Bangladesh



Photos: Dhaka Tribune/Focus Bangla



Photos: Dhaka Tribune/Focus Bangla

VOICE OF HUMANITY

Address
by
Sheikh Hasina
Prime Minister of Bangladesh

The United Nations
New York

21 September 2017

Mr. President,

This is the 14th time I am addressing the UN General Assembly. And this time I have come here with a heavy heart. I have come here just after seeing the hungry, distressed and hopeless Rohingyas from Myanmar who took shelter in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. This forcibly displaced people of Myanmar are fleeing an 'ethnic cleansing' in their own country where they have been living for centuries.

I can feel their pain as I, along with my younger sister, had been a refugee for 6 years after my father, the Father of the Nation of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and almost all members of my family were assassinated in 1975.

In 1974, in the first ever address of Bangladesh in this Assembly, my father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman said, "I know that the souls of our martyrs join us in pledging that the Bengalee nation fully commits itself to the building of a world order in which the aspirations of all men for peace and justice will be realized".

Mr. President,

We are currently sheltering over 800,000 forcibly displaced Rohingyas from Myanmar. The ongoing atrocities and human rights violations in the Rakhine State of Myanmar once again aggravated the situation at the Bangladesh-Myanmar Border. Hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas from the Rakhine State are entering Bangladesh to flee violence. As estimated by IOM, in last three weeks over four hundred thirty thousand Rohingyas entered Bangladesh. We are horrified to see that the Myanmar authorities are laying landmines along their stretch of the border to prevent the Rohingyas from returning to Myanmar. This people must be able to return to their homeland in safety, security and dignity.

At the same time, I condemn all kinds of terrorism and violent extremism too. Our government maintains a 'zero tolerance' policy in this regard. I thank the members of the Security Council and also the Secretary General for their proactive attempts to stop atrocities and bring in peace, and stability in the Rakhine State of Myanmar.

I further call upon the United Nations and the international community to take immediate and effective measures for a permanent solution to this protracted Rohingya crisis. In this regard, I propose the following actions:

First: Myanmar must unconditionally stop the violence and the practice of ethnic cleansing in the Rakhine State immediately and forever.

Second: Secretary General of the United Nations should immediately send a Fact-Finding Mission to Myanmar.

Third: All civilians irrespective of religion and ethnicity must be protected in Myanmar. For that "safe zones" could be created inside Myanmar under UN supervision.

Fourth: Ensure sustainable return of all forcibly displaced Rohingyas in Bangladesh to their homes in Myanmar.

Fifth: The recommendations of Kofi Annan Commission Report must be immediately implemented unconditionally and in its entirety.

Mr. President,

In the 1971 war of liberation, we endured an extreme form of genocide. In the 9-month-long war of liberation against Pakistan 3 million innocent people were killed and more than 200,000 women were violated. The Pakistan military launched the heinous 'operation searchlight' on 25th March which was the beginning of the 1971 genocide.

The 1971 genocide included targeted elimination of individuals on the ground of religion, race and political belief. The intellectuals were killed brutally. To pay homage to the victims of the genocide, our national parliament has recently declared 25th March as "Genocide Day."

In Bangladesh, we have already undertaken the daunting task of bringing the key perpetrators to justice through the International Crimes Tribunal. I urge the international community to take collective actions to prevent recurrence of such heinous crimes anywhere anytime. I believe, recognition of past tragedies like the 1971 genocide would guide us to achieve 'never again'.

Mr. President,

Terrorism and violent extremism have become a major threat to peace, stability and development. Terrorists have no religion, belief or race. Having been a target of a number of terrorist attacks myself, I personally empathize with the victims of terrorism and appreciate their need for protection.

We denounce the use of religion to justify violent extremism. I have involved families, women, the youth, the media and religious leaders at the community level to offset the spread of violent extremism. In this regard, I reiterate my calls:

First, stop supplying arms to the terrorists;

Second, stop terrorist financing; and

Third, settle all international disputes peacefully.

Mr. President,

To conclude, I would like to say, we do not want war. We want peace. We want people's wellbeing - not destruction of humanity. We want sustainable development. Let this be our collective goal.

I thank you.

Khoda Hafez

Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu

Long Live Bangladesh

THE ROHINGYA ALARM

Bernard-Henri Lévy is one of the founders of the "Nouveaux Philosophes" (New Philosophers) movement. His books include *Left in Dark Times: A Stand Against the New Barbarism*, *American Vertigo: Traveling America in the Footsteps of Tocqueville*, and most recently, *The Genius of Judaism*.

The campaign of ethnic cleansing now being carried out against Myanmar's Rohingya confronts the world with one of those moments that seem to arrive unannounced. In fact, we should by now be able to recognize in such episodes the accelerating pulse of genocide.

PARIS — As is so often the case, it was an artist who sounded the warning. His name is Barbet Schroeder, and the alert that he issued came in the form of his fine, sober film *The Venerable W.*, a portrait of Myanmar's Buddhist monk Ashin Wirathu. Known as "W," Wirathu is the other face of a religion that is widely perceived as the archetype of peace, love, and harmony. And behind his racist visage lies a broader Buddhist embrace of violence that takes one's breath away.

Oct 23, 2017 explains what's most significant about President Xi Jinping's political report to the 19th National Congress.

Shown at the 2017 Cannes Festival, Schroeder's film attracted an impressive amount of media attention. And, in a subsequent television appearance, Schroeder warned that the Rohingya, the Muslim minority in Myanmar's Rakhine State, lay in the sights of Wirathu's bloodthirsty "969 Movement."

That should come as no surprise. The Rohingya are a million men and women rendered stateless in their own country. Deprived of the right to vote, of political representation, and of access to hospitals and schools, they have faced pogroms whenever the military that has tyrannized Myanmar for a half-century has tired of starving them.

The Rohingya's unique status is stunning in its calculated cruelty. They are simultaneously rootless (officially unrecognized in a country so obsessed with race that it counts 135 other "national ethnicities," making them literally *one race too many*) and root-bound (legally barred from moving, working, or marrying outside their village of origin, and subject to restrictions on family size).

So here we are, confronted with one of those moments that seem to arrive unannounced but that, by now, we should be able to recognize as the accelerating pulse of genocide.

Nearly 400,000 people have now been transferred from the realm of subhumans to that of hunted animals, smoked out of the villages to which they had previously been confined, driven out on the roads, shot at, tortured for fun, and subjected to mass rape. Those who survive are arriving at makeshift camps just across the border in neighboring Bangladesh, which, as one of the world's poorest countries, lacks the resources, though not the will, to offer proper shelter to the swelling ranks of refugees.

The United Nations, overcoming its customary

pusillanimity, has drawn on what remains of its moral capital to condemn these crimes, declaring the Rohingya the world's most persecuted minority. For those inclined to see and remember, the situation in Rakhine State recalls the ethnic cleansing that occurred in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s and the even worse massacres in Rwanda in the same decade.

But many are not inclined to see. Because the Rohingya's persecutors, by restricting access to journalists and photographers, have denied their victims a face, and because the Rohingya are Muslims at a bad time to be Muslim, nearly the entire world is turning a blind eye.

Confronted with this tragedy foretold, the world should meditate on what my late friend, the philosopher Jean-François Revel, called unused knowledge and the passion for ignorance.

We should curse the naiveté that led many, including me, to sanctify the "Lady of Rangoon," Aung San Suu Kyi, herself the subject of a film, this one intended to be hagiographic but, in hindsight, appalling. Since becoming Myanmar's *de facto* leader last year, Suu Kyi has to their fate. Suu Kyi seemed to deserve the Nobel Peace Prize that she won in 1991, when she appeared to be the reincarnation in one body of Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, and the Dalai Lama. But from the moment when she solemnly assured the world that she had seen nothing in Sittwe, that nothing had happened in the rest of Rakhine State, and that the string of alarming reports to the contrary was just the "tip of an iceberg of disinformation," her Nobel Prize became an alibi.

The Rohingya are the latest cohort of the existentially naked: people dispossessed of everything (including their own death), shut out of the human community, and thus stripped of rights. They are the people Hannah Arendt predicted would become fixtures of humanity's future, living (or living dead) reproaches to hollow declarations of human rights.

But, before that happens, I will make a wish. Tomorrow, a very different woman, the prime minister of Bangladesh, will appear before the UN to appeal for an international response to the Rohingya crisis. I have known Hasina for nearly 50 years, and I have had many opportunities to appreciate not only her nobility of spirit but also her deep and abiding attachment to a moderate and enlightened Islam that fully respects the rights of man — and of women.

My wish is that humanity's conscience will be there to hear her address in New York City, and that, because she is heard, the alarm she raises will not have the ghastly resonance of a death knell.

WHEN WILL THE WORLD WAKE-UP

Julian Francis

Aid-worker of 1971 Refugee Crisis
Friend of Bangladesh Liberation War

When I was interviewed earlier this year by bdnews24.com, I spoke about the recurring nightmares of 1971 which I experienced last year. For about a month in June 2016, I would wake up at night, sometimes screaming, and in my nightmares I would always be standing in a very muddy refugee camp with a dead Bangladeshi baby in my arms. At the time, last year, I sought psychiatric help and after a short holiday away from Dhaka, I was no longer affected by the recurring nightmares which was a great relief. However, now, seeing the tragic live news footage on TV channels every day coming from Teknaf, my nightmares have returned. The lines of thousands of refugees coming from Myanmar to Bangladesh are very reminiscent of the scenes experienced by me 46 years ago. The only differences between 1971 and 2017 is that all the news now is 'live' and in colour while in 1971 news took time to move from place to place, country to country and was, mostly, in black and white only.

What I wrote in September 1971, published in Oxfam's document "The Testimony of Sixty" about the refugees from Bangladesh pouring across the Benapol/Bongaon border crossing, I could be writing today in Teknaf:

"There are no walls to keep the rain from blowing in, nor any partitions except lines of washing to separate one family from the next. The thatched roof seems to sweat smoke, but just as the smoke drifts out the rain comes in at every pore, and the mud floor which is their bed gets wet and slimy.

Regularly each hut disgorges a hundred refugees or more who form queues for their government rations, queues for the wells, queues for a place at the trench latrines. Those with dysentery seldom make it to the queue. The children form lines for their daily dollop of special nutritious food. This is the totality of life for nine million refugees-there is no work, there is no money. They knew what they were coming to. They knew, that despite everything, it was better than what they were leaving, for here there is a chance of physical survival. We shall go on trying to help them survive here. Please do not give up at your end. But above all, please push, press and persuade everyone with influence until the refugees are safe again. Get them out of these monstrous camps."

(Julian Francis, September, 1971)

In 1971, we heard from the refugees about genocide, about villages being razed to the ground by the Pakistani Army and their collaborators. We saw people with bullet wounds and wounds caused by bayonet and knife stabbings. Nothing, it seems has changed from 1971 to 2017 except, perhaps, the reported brutality is worse than 1971.

I am amazed that the world's media is giving far more importance to the hurricanes affecting Florida where a few people will lose their lives, instead of a man made humanitarian crisis which is costing hundreds if not thousands of lives.

When will the world wake up?

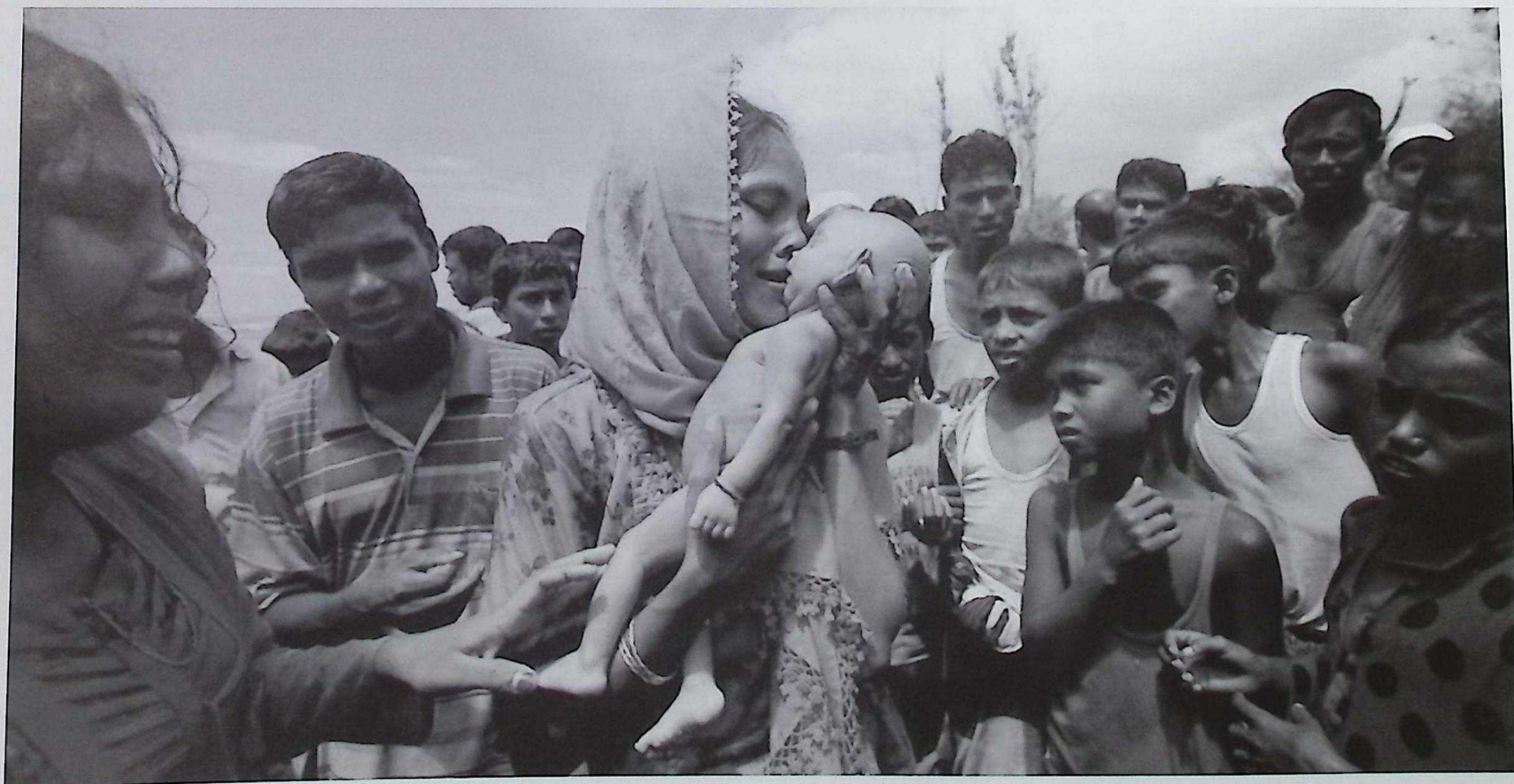


Photo: Reuters

FIGHT AGAINST RACISM

During August-September 2017, more than 430,000 Myanmar Muslims/ Rohingya fled Myanmar for Bangladesh. Another more or less 100,000 are also in the pipeline. Prior to that another 400,000 Rohingya entered Bangladesh on different occasions. In all Bangladesh will have to take the load of 1 million Rohingya which is very difficult for a lower mid income and densely populated country like Bangladesh. Despite all these constraints the Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina gave them shelter and committed to extend all basic necessity from human rights perspective for which she was acclaimed by the world community.

Following the recent influx, I led a four-member team on an emergency fact-finding mission from 9 to 11 September 2017. In fact, this was the Commission's second visit to camps. National Human Rights Commission Bangladesh expresses its disappointment with the continued and on-going extreme violations of human rights of Rohingya by Myanmar Army and Security Forces. We strongly condemn this arbitrary and indiscriminate killing of Rohingya including children and women and raping the of Rohingya ladies. We urge the OIC and ASEAN member states and UN organs to consider referring the matter to the International Court of Justice or International Criminal Court, as it deems fit, through appropriate channels for a durable and sustainable solutions of Rohingya crisis.

We observed that most of these refugees, particularly, women and children were traumatized. They were traumatized to the extent that they had gone emotionless. They were more concerned about safety rather than food. In fact, some of the Rohingya refugees showed desperate attempt of knowing the religious leaning of persons helping them. They felt more comfortable, relaxed and assured while finding many of the social workers and members of the host community were Muslims. They seemed to be valuing the social protection that Bangladesh is offering to them. This, in my opinion, is a clear indication of the impact of racial discrimination.

If one were to analyze the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the term "racial discrimination" means any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life, it is clear that Rohingya were severely subject to racial discrimination.

To prevent further escalation of the crisis and in the greater interest of human rights, Bangladesh has sent out a call for action to many international, regional and local entities which directly and indirectly has a stake in this crisis, including the UN agencies, AICHR, OIC and

diplomatic missions operating in Dhaka. The Commission appreciates the role of OIC Contact Group on Myanmar adopts plan of action on the persecutions of Rohingya.

The call for action has proposed a four-principled formula; 'Triple I + P'; which stands for;

1. Immediate end to violence: We strongly recommend that all forms of violence including mental violence and use of disproportionate force on Rohingya, particularly use of violence on women, children and elderly should immediately stop. It is the unequivocal responsibility of the Government of Myanmar to ensure of protection Rohingya living in Rakhine, regardless of their religion, ethnicity or citizenship status.

2. Immediate and unhindered access to humanitarian aid: The Commission is deeply concerned of the lack of access for providing humanitarian assistance in Rakhine. The Commission, makes it clear and loud that that key humanitarian principles- humanity, neutrality and impartiality- as endorsed in the General Assembly resolution 46/182, be upheld at all times and that the Government of Myanmar provide immediate and uninterrupted access of all relevant agencies to deliver humanitarian aid to all affected during the crisis, without any discrimination.

3. Immediate aid to give access to refugees: Bangladesh being an overly populated country lacks sufficient resources to meet the basic needs of all Rohingya currently seeking refuge in its territory. Therefore, it is an absolute necessity on the part of the international community to come forward in the support of the distressed to ensure essential supplies such as clean drinking water, food, clothing, basic health facilities and temporary shelter.

4. Permanent solution: The Commission urge the United Nations and the international community to mobilise political pressure on the Government of Myanmar to find a durable solution for this crisis. The durable solution must include the right to return to their homeland in a safe, secured and dignified way. The Commission emphasises that all fundamental human rights of the Rohingya should be respected during the process of resolving the current crisis.

Although Rohingya issue is not an issue to be ignored, looking at its dimension of fallout and scale of impacts on the region and beyond, this has, however, not received required attention of the world community in the past. The magnitude of persecution and atrocities being faced by the Rohingyas this time is way above anybody's imagination and that the world cannot afford to overlook it any more. The Commission firmly believes that the international community must play a critical role in addressing this ongoing crisis. And we have the Kofi Annan Commission's Report, which has charted out specific recommendations and actions for the Government of Myanmar in particular and the international community at large.

Kazi Reazul Hoque
Chairman, National Human Rights
Commission of Bangladesh

Speech delivered in the
Istanbul International Ombudsman Conference
Turkey

LETTER TO AUNG SAN SUU KYI

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0A2
September 18, 2017

Dear Aung San Suu Kyi,

It is with profound surprise, disappointment and dismay that your fellow Canadians have witnessed your continuing silence in the face of the brutal oppression of Myanmar's Rohingya Muslim people. I remain deeply concerned about the situation they face and for the protection of all ethnic minorities in Myanmar.

In June of 2012, in delivering the Nobel Lecture in Oslo, you said this, "When the Nobel committee awarded the Peace Prize to me [in 1991] they were recognizing that the oppressed and the isolated in Burm [Mynmar] were also a part of the world, they were recognizing the oneness of humanity."

In the same address, you cited this passage from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. "Disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want had been proclaimed as the highest aspirations of the common people."

The situation in Rakhine State betrays these moral commitments. Since violence erupted on August 25, reports indicate that 415,000 refugees, 70% of whom are women and children, have fled Bangladesh to date, with additional people internally displaced. Emblematic of longstanding discrimination and gross violations of human rights, reports cite the disproportionate use of force, extrajudicial killings and burning of villages by security forces. Landmines are allegedly being laid with systemic violations of international law, which, if established by a court of law, amount to crimes against humanity. The United Nations is denied access to investigate fully and international crimes against humanity. The United Nations is denied access to investigate fully and international humanitarian agencies lack safe and unhindered access to help all those in need.

As has been stated by my Minister of Foreign Affairs, there is no escaping the conclusion reached by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein, that the "situation seems a textbook example of ethnic cleansing."

I am profoundly concerned by the policy and actions by Myanmar authorities apparently

intended to remove the civilian population of Rohingya muslims from Rakhine state. The responsibility for resolving this crisis falls squarely upon you and upon military leadership of Myanmar, including Commander-in-Chief Min Aung Hlaing.

As the de facto democratic leader of Myanmar and as a renowned advocate of human rights, you have a particular moral and particular obligation to speak out against this appalling cruelty, and to do whatever is in your power to stop it. By publicly condemning the violence and taking immediate steps to protect and defend the rights of all minorities, you can help guide the people of Myanmar to surmount these deep ethnic divisions.

I also call on the Myanmar security forces to end all violence and to hold all perpetrators of human rights violations accountable on the basis of independent and impartial investigation. The Myanmar government must welcome publicly the return of all Rohingya Refugees and this must be accompanied by a firm commitment to address their citizenship, equality before the law and the realization of rights for all ethnic minorities. I also call on the government to provide full access to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and to facilitate safe and unimpeded international humanitarian access to provide life saving assistance for all civilian populations.

Canada welcomes your acknowledgment of the recommendations of the advisory commission on Rakhine State and the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Committee. I firmly believe that a road map to implement these recommendations is the only way to achieve lasting peace and stability. The future of reconciliation and lasting democracy in Myanmar depends on it. Canada stands ready to support you in these efforts.

Again, to cite your 2012 Nobel lecture, you said, "Of the sweets of adversity, and let me say that these are not numerous, I have found the sweetest, the most precious of all, is the lesson I learnt on the value of kindness. Every kindness I received, small or big, convinced me that there could never be enough of it in our world."

These are laudable words. In order for them, and your various honours, to retain any meaning, you must defend the Rohingya Muslims and other ethnic minorities in Myanmar.

Sincerely
Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada

Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada

চ বি জাদুর আকর্ষণ

GENOCIDE OF ROHINGYA MINORITY

The Rohingya are a Muslim ethnic minority of one million people that has lived in Rakhine state for centuries, but which increased during British colonialism to provide labor for agriculture. They face systematic religious and ethnic discrimination because under Myanmar's constitution, they are not classified as one of 135 legally recognized ethnic minority groups with Myanmar citizenship. Ethnic Burmese consider the Rohingya as "illegal immigrants" from Bangladesh. Bangladesh does not recognize the Rohingya as its citizens.

Without citizenship, the Rohingya have no civil rights in Myanmar. They are stateless.

- * The regime refuses to issue identification cards to Rohingya, which are necessary to be able to travel, as well as to obtain passports and enroll in higher education.
- * They are denied land and property rights and ownership. The land on which they live can be taken away at any time.
- * The Rohingya people are barred from government employment.
- * Marriage restrictions are imposed on them. They are limited to two children per couple.
- * They are subject to forced labor, extortion and other coercive measures.
- * Public services such as health and education are neglected. Illiteracy is 80%.
- * More than 40,000 Rohingya children in western Myanmar are deprived of rights to travel, to attend school, or to marry in the future, because their parents had an unauthorized marriage or exceeded the two-child limit the Myanmar government has imposed on the Rohingya. These blacklisted children are refused birth registration, and so are not included in family lists and must be hidden during the authorities' population checks.
- * The Rohingya are subject to curfews and other restrictions on basic freedoms.

The Rohingya are a dehumanized and persecuted minority in Myanmar. Many attempt to flee to Bangladesh or Malaysia in rickety boats, but are not accorded the rights of refugees in those countries. Every year hundreds of these boat people drown. Others are maimed or killed by land mines sown at the border by the Myanmar army, who also shoot people who are running away.

Genocide Watch uses a ten stage model of the processes that lead to genocide. They are not linear. Many of them occur simultaneously. But they provide a logical model for seeing the early warning signs and understanding how to prevent genocide by countering each stage.

1. Classification divides the society into "us" versus "them." The Rohingya and Kachin are classified as non-Burmese ethnic groups, with religions other than Buddhism. Most Rohingya are denied citizenship. The 1982 Citizenship Law holds that only members of

the 135 groups named in the law that were deemed to be in Burma prior to 1823 can be citizens.

2. Symbolization provides ways to identify the groups. Rohingya and Kachin speak their own languages, have their own clothing, and have their own places of worship. The identity cards that Rohingya once held were taken away in 1989, and new ID's have only been issued to around 4000 Rohingyas on the condition that they say they are "Bengali," validating the government's false narrative that they are immigrants from Bangladesh.
3. Discrimination against Rohingya includes denial of government jobs, health care, education, and confiscation of land and property.
4. Dehumanization includes propaganda that Rohingya are jihadists, terrorists, murderers, and thieves. The leader of the 969 Movement, Monk Ashin Wirathu, has said that he wants to lead a campaign to purge Burma of all Muslims - "starve them to death, make them homeless." He was jailed for his involvement in burning alive an entire Muslim family - a well-to-do grocer and a Haj returnee - in his birthplace.
5. Organization includes the 969 movement, extremist orders of monks, and the Tatmadaw government army and police. They carry out the murders and disappearances, torture, rapes, and arson of Rohingya villages.
6. Polarization has resulted in creation of concentration camps for Rohingyas and separation of them from the Rakhine Buddhist population.
7. Preparation has included planning for aggression and arson against Rohingya villages, and recently the buildup and invasion by large numbers of Tatmadaw troops in Rakhine state, with trucks and heavy weapons.
8. Persecution [itself a crime against humanity] has included forcing the Rohingya into concentration camps, denying them medical care, food, and water, torture, and mass rape. Many Rohingya have fled in rickety boats and large numbers have drowned while fleeing.
9. Genocidal massacres have resulted in thousands of deaths. Starvation and death from disease in concentration camps, especially of children and the elderly, have cost thousands of lives. Births are restricted through limits on family size to two children. Others cannot get birth certificates, a violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Myanmar is a state-party.
10. Denial permeates government statements, including the statements of Aung San Suu Kyi. The UN Commission of Inquiry, UN Special Rapporteur and other neutral observers have been barred from the country.

Testimony of
Dr. Gregory H. Stanton
to the Permanent People's Tribunal
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
18 September 2017

JUDGEMENT OF THE PERMANENT PEOPLE'S TRIBUNAL

Panel of Judges :

Daniel Feierstein (Argentina)
Zulaiha Ismail (Malaysia)
Helen Jarvis (Cambodia-Australia)
Gill H. Boehringer (Australia)
Nursyahbani Katjasungkana
 (Indonesia)
Shadi Sadr (Iran)
Nello Rossi (Italy)

University of Malaya
Faculty of Law
 18-22 September 2017
 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

'Persecution of Rohingya – a summary'

The Rohingya are an ethnic minority of Burma/Myanmar who have been subjected to institutionalised and systematic denial of identity and rights for decades. The integral and fundamental parts of their identity, such as language, culture, religion and history, have been criminalised, prohibited to be taught, suppressed and contradicted.

The government of Myanmar has denied the right to nationality of Rohingya through different laws and policies which have subsequently caused the deprivation of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

The gross human rights violations in Myanmar/Burma have been massively documented in detail by the UN, international NGOs and Myanmar human rights and civil society organisations. The Prosecution presented several fact-finding reports to this Tribunal as evidence, which confirmed testimonies which were heard by the Tribunal in London and Kuala Lumpur hearings.

International crimes against the Rohingya

1. Arbitrary detention and torture

The Tribunal both in London and Kuala Lumpur sessions heard several accounts of arbitrary arrests of civilians, including children and young people, by the armed government forces. Several witnesses testified before the Tribunal about the different types of physical and mental torture which they had been subjected to while in detention.

2. Enforced disappearance

Both personal and expert witnesses testified before the Tribunal about many cases of people who had been arrested by the government forces and have not been seen or heard from since then, and their families do not know their fate or whereabouts. The survivors of the recent crisis have also given reports of missing family members.

3. Rape and other forms of sexual abuse

The Tribunal heard first-hand horrific accounts of Rohingya women who had been raped in their homes, their villages and the IDP (Internally Displaced People) camps by military forces. They also witnessed other women being raped or gang-raped. The memories of the victims of rape are usually bonded with horrendous scenes of the killings, disappearances and injuring of their family members, their children and neighbours, the burning of their homes, and destruction of their belongings.

Rohingya women are reported being subjected to other forms of physical and psychological sexual violence such as violation of bodily integrity by groping their private parts during body searches, as well as forcing them to undress in public.

Four survivors' testimonies also presented a horrific pattern that Rohingya women who had been raped by the military were raped again on numerous occasions, some for several months, by the smugglers and other people who took the advantage of their situation, along their way from Rakhine through Thailand to Malaysia.

The Tribunal was informed that, despite being traumatised and impaired, they often do not receive the support they are in desperate need of from the UNHCR in Malaysia.

4. Extrajudicial killing and causing bodily harm

The survivors of the Rohingya persecution shared unimaginable experiences with the Tribunal of their fellows being severely injured, shot dead, slaughtered with knives or burned alive. Several massacres in different villages across Rakhine state were reported to the Tribunal by the expert witnesses. These reports also included some details about throwing the bodies of the victims into mass graves.

5. Confiscation of property and destruction of buildings

Several accounts presented to the Tribunal clearly described looting, confiscation of property and destruction of homes, shops, workplaces, mosques and other buildings and indeed entire villages in the areas in which Rohingya people had lived.

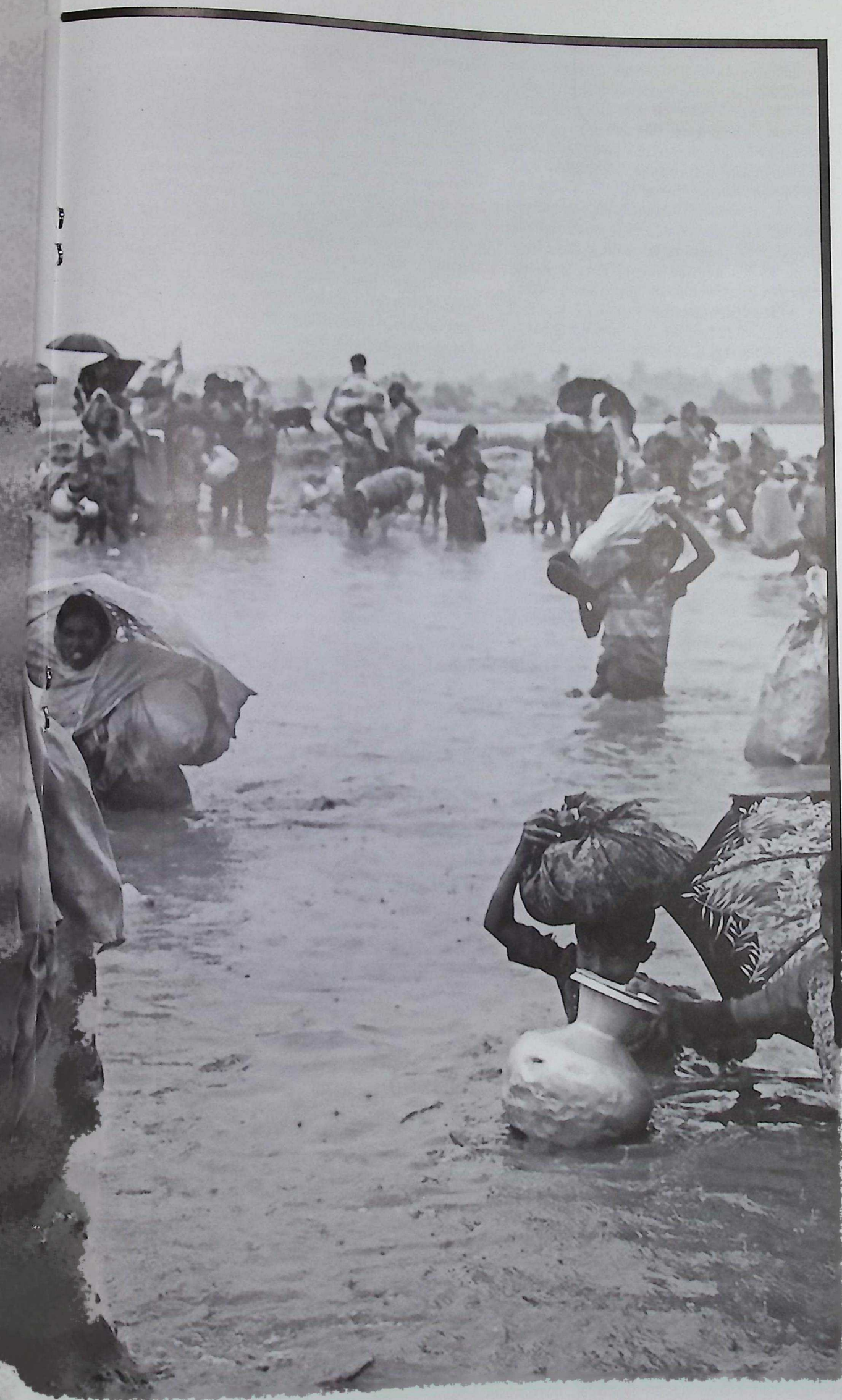
In most cases that were brought before the Tribunal, the armed government forces or non-state actors take all valuable belongings of the Rohingya people and subsequently burn or destroy the buildings. Several accounts were given of confiscation of land and other properties by either the government or ultra-religious Buddhist groups.

6. Internal displacement and forced exile

Over the course of only three weeks in August-September 2017, more than 400,000 Rohingya, mostly women, children and the elderly, had to flee their homes and entered Bangladesh. However, the number of Rohingya refugees who had to escape state persecution over the past few decades is much higher than that, with Bangladesh alone soon expected to be hosting 1 million Rohingya refugees in total.

The Tribunal heard several testimonies of Rohingya refugees who were forced to leave their homes and their country, Myanmar, by Border Guard and other Army forces accompanied by Rakhine Buddhist mobs, sometimes including monks. According to the testimonies and other evidence, forced exile takes the form of directly pushing the populations of villages near the border out of the country, often by terrorising them by burning their homes and seizing their belongings and killing their relatives and other villagers, or indirectly through imposing severe and intolerable hardship on them.





MOISES SAMAN took this photo when Rohingya Refugees make a run past Border Guards of Bangladesh on 17 October 2017, during a moment of confusion as heavy monsoon rain came down near the Bangladesh-Myanmar border.

'COMPLICIT' IN MYANMAR'S 'ATROCITY CRIMES'

The United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, and the Special Adviser of the Responsibility to Protect, Ivan Simonovic, call on the Government of Myanmar to take immediate action to stop and address the commission of atrocity crimes that are reportedly taking place in northern Rakhine state. The Special Advisers have been following the situation in northern Rakhine state for several years and have warned that there was a risk that atrocity crimes could be committed there. Risk factors they identified included very deeply rooted and long-standing discriminatory practices and policies against the Rohingya Muslims population, a failure to stop acts of violence against that group and a failure to put in place conditions that would support the peaceful coexistence of different communities in Rakhine state. "Despite warnings issued by us and by many other officials, the Government of Myanmar has failed to meet its obligations under international law and primary responsibility to protect the Rohingya population from atrocity crimes. The international community has equally failed its responsibilities in this regard", the Special Advisers stated.

The Special Advisers welcomed recommendations presented by United Nations Security Council Members during an Arria formula meeting on Myanmar on 13 October and urged for an immediate end to the violence in northern Rakhine state, full humanitarian access and the safe, dignified and voluntary return of refugees to their homes. In addition, they highlighted the importance of allowing the Human Rights Council independent international fact-finding mission to access northern Rakhine state to ascertain the veracity of the facts.

A recent report by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights describes vicious, well-organised, coordinated and systematic attacks by Myanmar security forces, often in concert with armed Rakhine Buddhist individuals against thousands of civilian Rohingya, committed with an intent to drive that population out of Myanmar and prevent them

from returning to their homes. These acts are reported to be in response to attacks by militants on 25 August 2017 against Myanmar police posts and a regimental headquarters. United Nations sources indicate that more than 530,000 Rohingya have fled to Bangladesh since then. A few thousand Buddhist and Hindu civilians are also reported to be displaced while fleeing attacks by militants. "Once again, our failure to stop atrocity crimes makes us complicit. When will we live up to our countless promises of 'never again'?" the Special Advisers asked. They emphasized that those implicated in the commission of atrocity crimes must be held accountable, whatever their status.

During the discussions at the Security Council, the Special Advisers were encouraged by what seems to be a consensus among the membership of the Council and the Government of Myanmar to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, headed by Kofi Annan. They acknowledged as positive the appointment by the Myanmar Government of a ministerial committee to follow up on these recommendations. However, the Special Advisers noted, "True commitment will come with implementation. Any further delay in implementing the recommendations of the Advisory Commission, including on issues of citizenship, will mean further violence and destabilization for the region." They also urged the international community to support the Myanmar Government in this regard.

Finally, the Special Advisers urged the Government of Myanmar to work towards a national identity in which all populations of Myanmar, including those that identify themselves as Rohingya, feel part of. "Peace and development in Myanmar will only come with unity and peaceful coexistence of all populations", the Special Advisers concluded.

Note: The expression "atrocity crimes" is used by the Special Advisers to refer to three crimes under international law: genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Statement by

Adama Dieng

United Nations Special Adviser on the
Prevention of Genocide

and

Ivan Simonovic

United Nations Special Adviser on the
Responsibility to Protect on the situation
in

Northern Rakhine State, Myanmar



Photo: Reuters Danish

A BUDDHIST'S VOICE

Dr. Maung Zarni was born in 1963 into a Burmese Buddhist family in Mandalay, a year after General Ne Win came to power in a military coup. He has been a human rights activist for nearly 30 years and has written extensively on democratisation, Islamophobia and Rohingya genocide. He was educated at the universities of Mandalay, California, Washington and Wisconsin from which he earned his PhD in Curriculum and Instruction in 1998.

Prothom Alo: *How do you see the Myanmar's latest quest to resolve the Rohingya crises?*

Maung Zarni: Aung San Suu Kyi has assigned three civil diplomats to handle the issue abroad. Thaung Tun, her national security adviser, just about 10 days ago went to New York and delivered his North Korean-esque unbelievable official remarks at the recent Security Council, denying everything factual and documented about the genocidal killings and expulsion of Rohingyas ... Then Kyaw Tint Swe, a key civilian career diplomat who has spent entire career serving the military regimes since Ne Wins time, is now Suu Kyi's minister for the state counsellors office. He helped take the wind out of the sails in May 2008 when the regime came under enormous pressure to allow access to the cyclone victims stranded without emergency relief or drinking water. He came to Dhaka to deceive Hasinas' government about the Suu Kyi government's intention to take Rohingyas back, in order to diffuse international pressure and divert the attention away from the genocidal persecution in his country.

Then Win Mra, a Rakhine careerist in the foreign affairs ministry, like the other two, has climbed the ladder by defending the militarys human rights records at the international meetings in New York, Geneva, etc. He now heads the so-called National Human Rights Commission, which does not respect the rights of Rohingyas to self-identify.

Suu Kyi is surrounded by these men whom I would not hesitate to call poisonous snakes.

Prothom Alo: *Are you optimistic about the resumption of repatriation?*

Maung Zarni: The repatriation proposal is a tactical move by the regime, whose ultimate strategic scheme is to destroy the Rohingyas existence, history, identity and legality. If in doubt, read the 25-year collection of UN documents, human rights documentations and press clippings going back to 1978. And Rohingyas do not want to go home. Would you, were you a Rohingya?

Prothom Alo: *What about ARSA? How do you see the alleged secessionist movement by the Rohingya people?*

Maung Zarni: I don't know about the ARSA, but the Rohingya secessionist movement is not exceptional or unusual for ethnic minorities. Rakhine Buddhists were fighting for their sovereignty which they lost to the Burmese feudal state on 1 Jan 1785. Other ethnic minorities such as Karen Christians also sought independence, and so have the Kachin, Shan, Karenni, etc. at various points in the countrys post-independence history. It is racist and unfair to keep portraying the Rohingyas as seeking a separate territory for themselves.

Prothom Alo: *There is a perception in some quarters among the Bangladeshi people that Rohingyas are keen to get autonomy and that could irritate the Burmese authorities.*

Maung Zarni: Indeed, no Rohingya leader, inside or among the diaspora, is demanding anything special for Rohingyas. They only want to live in peace, with basic human rights and legal citizenship, which they enjoyed fully in the 1950s and 1960s in western Burma where their roots have been put down for generations. It is patently false to say - as a former Bangladeshi ambassador to Burma claimed in his Dhaka Tribune interview recently - that once Rohingyas are recognised as an ethnic group they would be entitled to an autonomous status.

There are many ethnic groups that are officially considered ethnic groups of Burma, but only a handful are granted distinctly ethnic region status.

Prothom Alo: *What about the response of Burmese monks to the crisis? Do not you see anything positive happening to embrace the Rohingyas within the territory of Myanmar?*

Maung Zarni: Absolutely nothing positive is arising out of the predominantly Buddhist civil society. The societal response to the genocide of Rohingyas makes me think Myanmar society today is far more thoroughly brainwashed and genocidal towards Rohingyas than Nazi Germany at the height of Hitlers power, for there was serious resistance from the conservative elements and German communists towards the Nazi genocide. But there is no such resistance in Burma today. There is, however, a parallel between the collaborating role the Christian churches, both Protestant and Catholic, played in the Nazi genocide and the cheer-leading role the Buddhist Order, by and large, has been playing. It is chilling that the men and women who call themselves monks and nuns help popularise the genocidal view towards Rohingyas. The main problem is the Burmese public, including monks, have been subjected to this extremely effective state propaganda which portrays falsely Rohingyas as illegal Bengalis, who are land-grabbing, extremist Islamists hell-bent on setting up an Islamic nation in North Arakan or Rakhine with help from Bangladesh and the Middle East. The public and the monks are completely delusional and fear-stricken, and they do not know the realities of Rohingyas and what the countrys military is doing to this Muslim community for nearly 40 years.

Prothom Alo: *Were the Rohingyas given the status of indigenous ethnic minority in 1948 amended citizenship law as Kula or Kala not as Rohingyas?*

Maung Zarni: In the amended Citizenship Law all inhabitants of Arakan were mentioned under the single 'indigenous' category, Arakanese, which included both Buddhist Rakhines and Rohingya Muslims, as well as other smaller ethnic communities.

The Daily Prothom Alo
11 October 2017

WHEN NEWSMAN AND AID- WORKER CRACK UP



Photo: CSGJ

"As I walked out of the refugee camp, my phone rang. The instant I said hello, my wife could hear it in my voice.

"What's wrong?" she asked.

"I just finished the worst interview of my life," I said.

I was standing near the border of Myanmar and Bangladesh, where half a million Rohingya people, probably one of the most unwanted ethnic groups on the planet, fled after government massacres in Myanmar. I had just said goodbye to a young woman named Rajuma and watched her — a frail figure in a red veil — disappear into a crowd with one of the most horrible stories I had ever heard.

I've covered genocide in Sudan and children being blown apart in Iraq. I've been dispatched to earthquakes, hurricanes, civil wars, international wars, insurgencies and famines. As foreign correspondents, this is what we do, rush into the world's biggest disasters. In 20 years of doing this, I've become a specialist in despair.

But Rajuma's story stopped me.

She told me (and everything she said was consistent with dozens of other witness accounts) that Myanmar government soldiers stormed into her village in August and burned down each house. They separated the men from the women and summarily executed the men. Then they raped the women.

But before raping her, Rajuma said, the soldiers snatched her baby boy from her arms and threw him into a fire. The baby was screaming for her as he burned to death.

We were sitting together in a hut with a translator, the three of us hunched over on little plastic stools. As Rajuma started sobbing, my forehead creased and I got angry at myself.

"Why am I putting her through this? Is anybody going to want to read something so awful? I don't even want to write this story."

I think I'm becoming the opposite of numb. Each tragedy I've covered, each loss I've absorbed, has rubbed away a little more of the insulation we all create, or were born with, that keeps the ills of the world safely away. After years of this work, I don't have much insulation left. Now when I go off on assignment, I'm all nerves.

Even before I met Rajuma, I could barely keep it together. My first day in the refugee camps, watching Rohingya men try to remain dignified as they were herded into lines to wait for a pack of glucose biscuits, made my eyes sting.

I was shocked but soon learned that for decades the Rohingya have been walking around with bull's-eyes on their foreheads. Scapegoated like the Jews in Nazi Germany, called insects like the Tutsis during Rwanda's genocide, they are Muslim people in a Buddhist land, dehumanized by their own government and made easy prey.

So I started thinking: If we don't cover this, that's even worse. That would be a further injustice, a further insult to the Rohingya's humanity. It would be like telling Rajuma that the world

couldn't be bothered about what she suffered. It was very difficult to bring that interview to an end. As we parted ways, what was I supposed to say? In our culture we might say she should "see somebody." But there were no psychotherapists around and I knew she was headed back to a plastic tarp held up by bamboo poles with nothing to do but think about those moments that I had asked her to conjure up.

I wanted to give her every dollar in my wallet. Or hug her. Or punch someone in the face. This is the worst part of being a journalist: feeling helpless. Not only is there nothing you can do about the horrors in front of you, but in most cases there's only so much you should do. We are recorders, witnesses, not aid workers. Of course, if Rajuma were bleeding in front of me and needed my help, I wouldn't hesitate to give it. But that wasn't the situation here; her baby was dead and she would be traumatized forever.

"Ami dukkhito." Of the few Bengali words I learned, those were the ones I used the most. I said them to dozens of Rohingya who lost everything.

Sometimes, it's the only thing to say.

Ami dukkhito. I'm sorry."

JEFFREY GETTLEMAN

The New York Times

19 October 2017

"If my mother was facing the same struggle, someone would have had helped. So remembering her, I helped the elderly woman, thinking someday my mother could be in the same situation too. We all have humanity and someone or the other has to come forward to help from a humanitarian point of view. We all know of the ongoing humanitarian disaster that is taking place in Myanmar and why all the people are coming to Bangladesh, walking for days. The elderly woman was not even able to walk properly that day and she was yet to cover many more miles. So I went to help the elderly mother and carried her for the rest of the distance. When I was carrying her, I felt I was carrying my own mother across no man's land."

MAJOR ASHIKUR RAHIM

Border Guard Bangladesh

Dhaka Tribune, 24 October 2017

"I am here to serve the helpless Rohingyas coming from Myanmar. There are so many girls in this camp who had been physically abused. Umme Salma is one of them. Salma is only 14 years old girl who was gang raped by the Myanmar military. Her parents didn't want her to come along with them. She was abandoned by her parents.

In spite of all her distress, she came to the medical center alone, to help herself. Salma is now pregnant of four months."

REHANA

Bangladesh Nurse

Balukhali Camp, Ukhiya

LONG JOURNEY TO BANGLADESH

"Buthidaung is in Maungdaw Township and marks the most attacks of clearance operation by the Myanmar military. When we saw other villages near to our village on fire, we immediately took shelter in the hills and the forest. During hide-out, I was constantly worried about being attacked. After lying low for a while, we decided to move towards the Naf river, which divides Bangladesh and Myanmar. We walked for seven days, with no food. Sometimes we were between hills, sometimes watery paddy fields. We thought that the path would never end and we would die here. We carried our kids over our shoulders, with sacks and pots and a few belongings that we could save was hanging from our body. After seven days we reached Piongchori, where Bangladeshi boatmen were queued to cross Rohingyas over to the Bangladeshi border. However, even the sympathy and humanity of the boatman came at a price and didn't expand to letting the fleeing Rohingyas cross the border for free. Here the water was above waist length and the tide was high, needless to say, we were fatigued to the point of death. Feeling endangered we went aboard the thin boat exchanging my daughters bangles and earrings made of gold. Crossing the canal of the river, we stumbled on Balukhali border, and walked towards Bangladeshi land, now crossing the paddy fields."

RASHIDA BEGUM (38)
BUTHIDAUNG, MYANMAR

"In Tola Tuli, the Myanmar military showed no remorse in their violent atrocities against the innocent Rohingya population. I do not know if I should be grateful to be alive or miserable as I lost the rest 21 members of my family. The army killed the men at once and took us women inside a house and kept as their hostage. They raped many women by dragging them out of the camp. Later, at night they put fire on the house. Most women died in their sleep and a few of us ran outside crossing dead bodies on the open field. I kept running with burn wounds on my body towards the dark forest. In the morning, the military came back only to find ashes. I fell asleep in the forest and woke up again at night. I kept walking through the hills and seven days passed with no food, water and medicine. I couldn't even spare a moment to grief for my lost family. While in hiding, I found more people like me. Together we walked and then took a boat near the Bangladeshi border with the help of a Majhee. I reached the Balukhali border and was quickly rushed to the medical camp."

SHAHIDA BEGUM (35)
TOLA TULI, MYANMAR

"We decided to flee Myanmar and go to Bangladesh by a boat fearing for our lives. We arranged for boats to cross through the river. However, just as we were about to board the boats, the Chairman of our village saw us. A few

of us quickly ran and swam over the other side of the canal in Diontoli. I saw the soldiers walking out with the Chairman and trying to talk to the villagers. They took them to a corner and began shooting at once. They snatched babies off from women's lap and threw them on the canal. Witnessing such violence most villagers jumped on the river to save their lives. My mother also jumped with my four-year-old daughter Mustakima and two-month-old son Saddam Hossain. Three of them was washed away by the strong tide. My youngest son survived with me and we walked for seven days to reach the border of Bangladesh."

MUSTOFA ALI (44)
TOLA TULI, MYANMAR

"In our village the Myanmar military installed land mines during the night. In the day, as the mines began exploding the soldiers began attacking with launchers and guns. It was a well planned way of forcing us to leave. As I began maneuvering I got shot on my right foot and fell. My father and brothers picked me up and kept running amidst splinter shells and heavy smog. My father, Bura Mia and three brothers tied a cloth and put pressure on my wounds to stop bleeding. A seven-day walk became a long walk of 20 days for us as I was an extra weight on my families shoulder. We ate leafs from the forest and water from the canal. My father also paid a person to carry me in crossing the border when my family couldn't any longer. In this rigorous journey, many times I thought I am about to take my last breathe. It is only because of my family that we made this long journey to Bangladesh."

SABUR AHMED (20)
BUTHIDAUNG, MYANMAR

"We are from the village of Kazipara in Tombur district. It is situated right opposite the Balukhali border of Bangladesh, facing the narrow canal. I was a businessman in Myanmar and I visited Bangladesh before when there was peace and harmony. I could walk over to the border with permission and shop groceries from the Balukhali border markets and then walk back to my home. However, that border crossing was long ago closed. I decided to cross the border as military attacks began reaching out from Maungdaw, Buthidaung, Noapara, Hatipara, Bolibazar ect. This time it took us fifteen days to reach Bangladesh as this time it is for survival and on a longer route. It was extremely difficult for my parents to make the walk leaving everything behind. The journey was scary and perilous and soon viewed hundreds of boats on the horizon. A few boats drowned due to overload and heavy tide, with babies over board. Facing danger and near death experiences in both land and water we have made our journey to Balukhali, alive."

NURUL AMIN (46)
TOMBUR, MYANMAR

No matter how close the Rohingyas geographically live in line with the Bangladeshi border, the tale of each Rohingya shadows a horrific experience of the journey they covered from Myanmar. The testimony of Rohingyas are just a glimpse of the countless harrowing tales of million displaced Rohingyas, who made their journey to Bangladesh facing peril. Few examples are given here from testimonies collected by the CSGJ team.

VICTIM'S VOICE

On 14 and 15 October 2017, a team of young researchers from Center for the Study of Genocide and Justice (CSGJ) of Liberation War Museum visited the Rohingya refugee camps in Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar to collect testimony from the victims who experienced atrocities in the Northern Rakhine State and fled away to Bangladesh to save their lives. The camps visited during the collection of testimonies are Kutupalong West Hindu Para, Kutupalong, Palongkhali, Thaingkhali and Balukhali. Researchers in the team included Emraan Azad, Shaoli Dasgupta, Prethee Majhabin, Muhaiminul Islam Mubin, Luthfunnahar Shancyi, Ehsan Mazid Mustafa, Hasan Mahmud Ayon, Md. Niamot Ali, Kamrun Nahar, Naureen Rahim, Iftekhar Sahariar, Md. Pizuar Hossain, Ranjan Singha and Hasib Mahmud Khan Aninda. The team collected 67 testimonies using a set of questionnaire and taking help from local interpreters. Rohingya respondents interviewed are from both Muslim and Hindu communities. Among them, male and female respondents are 32 and 35 respectively. 10 children were also interviewed.

“Although problem with Rohingyas and Maghs existed for a long time in Buthidaung, it was never as horrific as in recent times. Stabbing, arson, slaughter, bullets shots became almost a daily phenomenon for us. It is during such catastrophe that I lost my eldest son Horihero Sheel. For days he remained missing, with no one being able to tell of his whereabouts. We could not get help from local police station. Anyone I asked about my Horihero would tell me that he would not return.

One day during lunch, my husband heard people creating havoc in our neighborhood. As he stepped out of the house, he sensed something was terribly wrong from the looks in people's face. He followed the crowd and reached a pond surrounded by people. As he dared to look in the pond, he saw our son's dead body floating on the pond. Being an elderly man himself, he could not bear the loss of his son among many others and succumbed to death out of trauma and heart failure.

Some days before the discovery of the dead body of my son, a group of attackers as we call it 'Kala-Party' abducted him from the road near to our house. Horihero was coming back to house from market at night.

Members of the Kala-Party used to dress up in black cloaks which looked like 'Burkhas' (Veils used for covering one's face as well as body), only revealing their eyes. They used to attack mostly during night and that is why we failed to recognise their faces. As night falls, they break into houses and either drag someone out or put fire on households with men, women and children inside. They stab, shoot and destroy almost everything in their vicinity. What I now can remember they used to speak in the language of the Maghs during the attack. As attacks persisted, we stopped going to market for food and for a while were surviving with food shared by the Muslim neighborhood.”

FULLOSREE SHEEL (50)
BUTHIDAUNG, RAKHINE

“I used to ride my motor bike in Myanmar, with passengers on hire. I was denied education by our Hukumat (Government), as they shut down all the schools and Madrashes (Religious schools for Muslims) particularly for the Rohingya population after the year of 2012. As a young Rohingya, I was deprived of my right to livelihood and was under the oppression and torture by the Myanmar army. Mosques and Madrashes were either shut down or burnt to ashes. Any religious assembly or procession was banned. Even the minimum right to pray together in Mosques would lead to threats and torture. We secretly sacrificed animal during the Qurbani Eid (also called Eid-ul-Adha or Sacrifice Feast is an annual festival of the Muslim believers) in the

previous years, because if they caught us we would be subject to fine and torture. Religious freedom was curtailed by the Government who would reach out to the Chairmen or Members of a locality and ask them to spread new rules on religious practice. Most of the Chairmen/Members (local representatives) were from Magh community; hardly any of them was Muslim. They would meet the government officials every month and receive leaflets stating rules for the Rohingya Muslim to follow. It was their duty to make sure that we the Rohingya Muslims were following their rules. The leaflets were also distributed in the locality sometimes. The leaflets were in Burmese language and stated rules about banning Rohingyas from talking in groups of more than two, restricted movement after eight o'clock at night and religious practices like Namaz (five times prayer in a day) and Tabligh (socializing for spreading faith of Islam) in Mosques.”

HAMID HOSSAIN (26)
CHAKAIYA, MUNDUMORON, RAKHINE

“The identity card issued to the Rohingyas identified us as 'Bengalis'. They said we are not Rohingyas, but we are 'Bengalis'. That we were merely 'Mehmaans' (guests) from Bangladesh. We were asked to get citizenship card only if we accepted that we are Bengalis living in Burma.

It was right after the Eid-ul-Adha in September 2017, that the military began forcing us to escape our country with intense attack on our community. Although we have been living through much discrimination for years, the nature of atrocities committed by the Burmese soldiers became fierce from the beginning of this year. Attacks by the military soldiers in Khaki (drab light-brown color) colored uniform and armed with heavy weapons were severe and horrific on us. They would target one village and fire guns aggressively and put fire on houses until the people were either dead or escaped. During night around 3-4 AM, they would fire launchers on houses, killing anyone living inside and destroying everything. I witnessed my uncle being shot dead by the military. I could not even stop for him. To save my life I had to keep on running. Even after the brutality by the Myanmar military forces, I am still trying to contact my sister and brother-in-law who could not travel with us to the border. A few days back I heard from them and was shocked to hear that the soldiers are still continuing the brutality. If there is truly peace I will go back to my country, but only as a Rohingya; I fled home out of desperation and to seek protection to life.”

MOHAMMED YAKUB (25)
BUTHIDAUNG, RAKHINE

“I used to work as a daily worker in Myanmar. As the attacks became more frequent in the recent times, I made my family member escape towards the Bangladeshi border a few days before the Eid-ul-Adha. I stayed back to leave later as I wanted to collect a few belongings and money before leaving for good.

As I was hiding my things and getting prepared to escape, the military attacked our village Ludain. They were shouting and firing relentlessly. In trying to escape the brush fire of the soldiers I got wounded on my left leg as a bullet hit my left ankle. Shells of the bullets also hit my elbow. It took me five days to reach Bangladesh after being wounded by the gun shot. My house was put on fire, and people were being slaughtered by the soldiers. I received medical assistance after reaching Kutupalong camp, Cox's Bazar. Without any medicines I survived for five days as I tied my ankle tightly with a cloth.

I don't know why they were killing us. We didn't do any harm to them. They killed my brothers. Three of us were laid down on the ground and they were about to slaughter us. It is their strategy to shoot us first to make us weak and then to slaughter us as we can't escape them then. I was beside the river so I jumped, and that's when the bullet hit me. Since I was in the water I couldn't feel anything. After I got up from the river, I tied myself up to a stick and later was spotted by a few people. They asked for money to help me and thus I had to pay my last belongings I tucked in my 'Lungi' (a type of sarong and a traditional male garment worn around the waist) to these Burmese men for survival.”

MOHAMMAD ILIAS (40)
LUDAIN, RAKHINE

“On 9 October 2016, the Myanmar military army came to our village and asked for my maternal uncle, aunt's husband Sirajuddin and said they have a meeting to attend. They went to several houses on that day and asked for elderly educated people (Aleem and Elemdar) speaking of a meeting. They said they are going to the police station of the regiment Quarter 5, BGP (Border Guard Police, Burma) camp. The soldiers took a total of sixteen wealthy, religious, educated men firstly to a camp, and then got them out to a Buddhist temple and initially slaughtered two of them there. After killing two, they tortured the fourteen rests. They were physically tortured to death. Our Hindu neighbors who reside in that area broke the news to us. They told us that our uncles were severely tortured. If one soldier would get tired from beating the civilians, another would take over. They did not even release my uncle and other respected men. Even after such brutality we could do nothing. What could we do? We were denied of our right to education and freedom to form and discuss about religion and politics. They killed all knowledgeable persons in our locality. We lost our local representatives from Rohingya community. All were killed and butchered. Assembly of any kind would lead to us being killed and tortured. There are government officials but they would never help us. Since that day, the atrocities became more intense. They asked us to cross to Bangladesh and leave Myanmar. They ordered to put away our roof tops and boundaries. My grandmother is still there, she has no food, she can't pray and her area is surrounded by the military now. She is still reluctant to leave her home, her motherland, and her people. Will the situation ever change? Will we be able to return to our village? Only He knows!”

MD. JAMIL (22)
NATHKHURA, MUNDUMORON, RAKHINE

“I have no identity card and no documents. All our cards said we are 'Bengalis' living in Myanmar. Nothing survived the arson attack by the military. The access card we received for shopping were to be displayed at all time, otherwise we would be subject to beating in public. I had a family picture which is a mandatory document ordered by the Hukumat (Burmese Government). If there were more than three children, then Rohingyas were subject to either fine or imprisonment. Through maintaining a family picture, the government officials would make sure if there were more children after the previous year. It was mentioned in our marriage document, 'Kabin-nama', not to take more than three children. We were also distributed a medicine called 'Dibu' from hospitals which stopped the menstruation cycle of women and prevented from having kids. We women were always scared to go to the market place and also hospitals. We mostly sent our husbands to the nearby markets. Young beautiful and unmarried women were kidnapped by soldiers from markets and houses. They were raped and tortured in the jungles and were abandoned. Some survived, some didn't. The village Hatipara is close to our village, where the magnitude of torture and sexual violence on women was extreme. The soldiers would undress the women, throw them on the street and pee on them. The entire village was burnt down by the soldiers. Men, women, aged people and children were stopped from getting out of the houses and burnt alive by tossing petrol on the houses. Many 'Muftis' (Islamic scholars) were slaughtered and their houses were burnt. While fleeing Myanmar, I witnessed mutilated dead bodies of hundreds of Rohingyas on the streets, ponds everywhere.”

RAFIQA (23)
KHINCHONG, BOLIBAZAR, RAKHINE

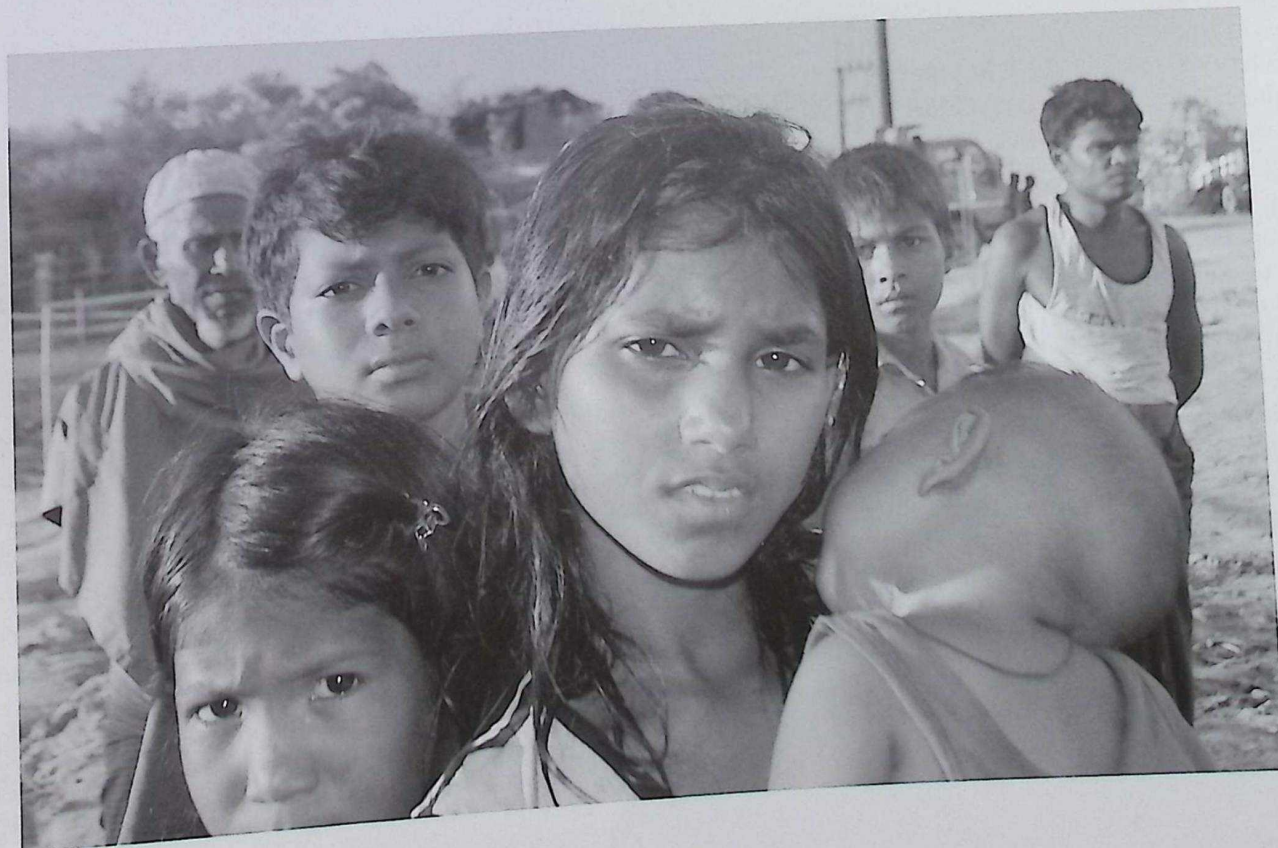


Photo: CSGJ

"For last 3-4 years, the atrocities are going on by the military, the Government and the local Maghs. Chakma Magh and Chak Magh were involved in looting our property. Me and my mother-in-law witnessed attacks on relatives by gunfire, slaughter, arson. We saw women being dragged out of their household and kicked to death. The attackers used to say, "This is not your country. This is not your village. You are not Rohingyas. Go somewhere else." This was common when military and Maghs used to destroy our property. If we said that we are Rohingyas and our forefathers have been living in this land for time immemorial, the soldiers used to ask for proof.

In order to get married, we had to give money, ranging from 200,000-300,000 Burmese Kyat to the government officials, although we would marry within our community and neighborhood. Widows are not allowed to remarry and as Rohingyas we are banned from having children more than three.

In a locality called Garoti Bill, more than hundred Rohingya men ranging from all ages except women were killed by using launchers and then thrown in the nearby river. Kids, teenagers, men and elderly men were all killed. During that time the women were inside houses. These men were gathered from market places and their workplaces and killed near Garoti Bill. Children mostly accompany their fathers when they go to work, and thus were killed together. Women were not spared just because we would be inside our houses. The military would attack with launcher and many would die being trapped inside the houses. The moment we would see a village nearby being attacked, we would go into hiding."

UMME HAYER (22)
CHAKAIYA, MUNDUMORON, RAKHINE

"At one dawn, Burmese military raided our house, situated in Dio Toli, Rakhine. The military looted 3 lakh Burmese Kyat and two pairs of golden ear-rings. After tying up my parents, the soldiers dragged me away from my house. The scenario was so unbearable for my father that he started screaming in the name of Allah. Father was asking them, "Why you are taking away my child. Please forgive us. Leave her." At this moment, one of the soldiers came towards my father, instantly kicked at his face with boots, and then shot him spot-dead. All these happened in front of me and my mother. We were helpless and seeing my father murdered I started vomiting and became senseless.

When I regained consciousness, I found myself in a forest and it was already night. I was feeling weak and having intolerable headache. Later, I understood that I was dragged into the forest by the military and raped.

How lucky I was that they didn't kill me, they showed their mercy on me! I was then searching my clothes as I was lying naked on the ground. I tried to stand up and walk, but I couldn't do so. Two days later, I was rescued by some local people. They were perhaps Rohingyas. They helped me reach my mother. Afterwards, my mother and I decided to leave our village. With the help of the neighbors and relatives, we eventually board into a boat and arrived in Bangladesh on the day of Eid-ul-Adha, September 1, 2017."

SAKINA JAHAN (PSEUDONYM) (19)
DIGOL TOLI, RAKHINE

"When I was about to board on the boat to escape with my parents and family members, the Chairman of our village Mansai Magh stopped and took us to a nearby hill by assuring us that we will not be harmed and he would give us protection. We went there on his assurance. After reaching there, we saw some 20-40 peoples like us were confined there. We saw the presence of military also. We were ordered to remain silent, sit quiet and surrender all of our belongings. We followed their order. As the evening was approaching, the military started separating girls from the crowd and taking them to a tent. Anyone who was protesting was instantly killed by the military. Eventually they killed many of us by shooting, chopping by chopper and knife. I saw this massacre happening in front of my eyes. I lost my family members. I had three children including two sons and a daughter. My children were thrown alive to a cannal. My wife was taken to the tent with other girls. I don't know what happened to her and where she is now."

NUR ANGKIS (24)
TOLA TULI, MAUNGDAW, RAKHINE

"I lost my all family members including my parents and siblings. Our house was burnt and I managed to save my life by fleeing away. Some local Maghs assisted the army to attack us. Men and women were brutally killed. Women were targeted according to their age. Some were kept inside the camp. Some were killed on the spot. Women inside the camp were violated by the armed forces.

I saw many of our relatives inside the camp. Most of them were sexually abused. I was physically tortured. At one point of time, the camp was torched with fire. Women inside the camp were shouting and did not receive any help. When I felt that my right leg was burning, I realized something very pathetic. My younger sister was raped and killed.

During this massacre, it was close to evening. When I regained my sense, it was in the middle of the night. I saved myself by running away

from the camp when it was early morning. In the morning, when I was inside the forest, I noticed the military came to the camp. But they did not find anyone expect the burnt ashes and dead bodies."

SAFIQA BEGUM (15)
TOLA TULI, MAUNGDAW, RAKHINE

"My right leg was shot. I cannot now walk. Some parts of the bone were broken. My entire right side of the body, specially right hand, was severely affected due to the sprinters thrown by the military. My friend helped me go to the nearest forest before becoming completely senseless. We stayed ten to twelve days inside the forest. During these days, I took some herbal treatment using green leaves and herbs. With the help of my brothers and relatives, I managed to come to Bangladesh after spending almost eight days at a stretch on walking.

They burnt our houses. Military put mines near to our villages. Hundreds of people were killed in a single spot. The government of Myanmar, with the help of local elites, first exploited us economically. They occupied our local market, school and religious institutes. Last five to six years, we were facing similar kind economic exploitation."

SABBIR HOSSAIN (20)
BUCHIDAUNG, RAKHINE

"One day at 7'o clock in the morning, I and my daughter heard that very near to our house someone was firing bullets. Hearing the loud sound both of us got out of the room and rushed to the back side of our house. Once we were there, I saw that my fifteen years old son was lying dead on the road and a group of military men were walking and busy in open firing. We were terrified. I immediately realized that my son was shot dead by the military personnel.

Seeing us standing there, the military tied us up by rope. In front of us, three military men ripped off the dead body of my son with machete and then they left.

After experiencing such a frightened situation, I burst into tears. At that moment, five or six military men came to us and asked us to give our ornaments to them or else they would snatch the ornaments from us and torture us. Without a single argument, we just gave them our ornaments and asked them not to harm us. But who cares to the prayer of Rohingyas like us! Those military men ordered me and my daughter to get undressed. I was then eight-month pregnant and those military started their ruthless torture upon me and my daughter. At first my hands and feet were tied up tightly and also they tied up my mouth with a rope and also hit on my head with a betel nut box and that made me very

weak. Those military men started slapping and punching me so hard that my teeth had also fallen. They raped me from my front and back as well. Three of the military men raped me from front and the rest three from my back. As they raped me from my back, it caused immediate miscarriage. Still those military men did not stop. Thereafter, they started to bite my private parts and they bit until blood came from those parts. My physical condition is so bad that I cannot now walk properly, my vision gets blurry and I cannot even move my hands in a proper way.”

ANOWARA BEGUM (PSEUDONYM) (35)
CHAINDAPA, RAKHINE

“I saw violence in neighboring area, which is why we fled to Bangladesh. For a long time, the local mosques are locked up. We are not allowed to take more than 3 children. “Dibu” injection was given to girls for the purpose of controlling birth rate among the Rohingyas. Our children were often offered poisonous chocolates by the military. We lost our women and children. Burmese military used to rape young girls and other forms of sexual violence. Not so ‘good-looking’ and brown women were asked to look at the shining sun by raising the heads up. And the male members were tied up while they (military) raped the girls. In 2012, the army started violence by targeting our religious leaders – all ‘Moulavis’ (Muslim elderly educated people). Then the Burmese military started slaughtering rich Rohingya Muslims and they are now attacking general people. Local Maghs assisted them to attack us.”

MOHAMMAD SALEH (27)
BOLI BAZAR, MAUNGDAW, RAKHINE

“The atrocities started from 2012. The military threatened us, the Rohingya people and used to say that we didn’t belong here (Myanmar). If we accepted the Buddhist religion, only then we would belong to the country. We are only victimized as we are Muslim. Some of us are dead and the others flew away here.

It was about one month ago. All men were absconding from home. Only my little younger brother was at home. While he was studying in the house military entered into the house. They killed my younger brother, closed the door, and then raped my wife, my mother.

After that incident we walked three days long, crossed the border, took shelter here. Now, I am living here with my wife Anwara Begum and my father in another hut with my mother, near to me. Some people ask me why I am keeping my wife with me after that incident. My question to them is what I can do! She has done none of this willingly. Military raped her, and she had nothing to do to it.”

MOHAMMAD RAFIQUE (21)
BURA SIKDER PARA, MAUNGDAW, RAKHINE

“One day military attacked us all on a sudden. We didn’t know what to do. Military murdered my husband and my three children in front of my eyes. They shot my husband and injured the male children at first then killed them; they hit my little young girl with *Da* (sharp local weapon, made of iron) and beat me. I was senseless. I woke up at the scream of my young girl child and found myself in a burning house. I got out by breaking the fence of one side and through the chicken *khoyar* (local word stands for cote). People took us to Bangladesh along with my child. I got treatment here in Kutupalong. They (Military) were attacking our people. They were shooting the men and throwing them into a

hole, and then they were pouring the petrol on the dead bodies and setting fire. They were raping women who were beautiful, killing the women who were old and burning the children alive. They were capturing the women and disgracing them by putting their (military) hand in the genitals of the women. Near to my house, the military captured around 20-25 women and locked them up in a room, raped them and finally burnt them.”

MAMTAZ (30)
TULA TOLI, BANIBAZAR, RAKHINE

“I was the local representative (Member) of my locality called Tola Tuli, Bolibazar, Maungdaw. It is the place where most incident of torture have taken place. Burmese military came to our village from the city and set up camps in the schools. The Magh Rabata (Myanmar’s language stands for local Chairman) made a false promise to us that he asked the military not to attack Rohingyas. We believed his words and stayed in our houses. But that was a betrayal. The military eventually attacked us including our children. They were cut into pieces and thrown to the canal in front our eyes. Before leaving for Bangladesh, we hid in jungle. From there we saw a helicopter was patrolling on air and pouring patrol over houses and after that all the houses were burnt.”

RAHMAT ULLAH (47)
BOLI BAZAR, MAUNGDAW, RAKHINE



Border Guard Police of Myanmar used to bring out all the family members of Rohingya Community to take photo like this in order to verify the total number of family members each year, said Pormina (25) from Poddong, Maungdaw.

Photo: CSGJ

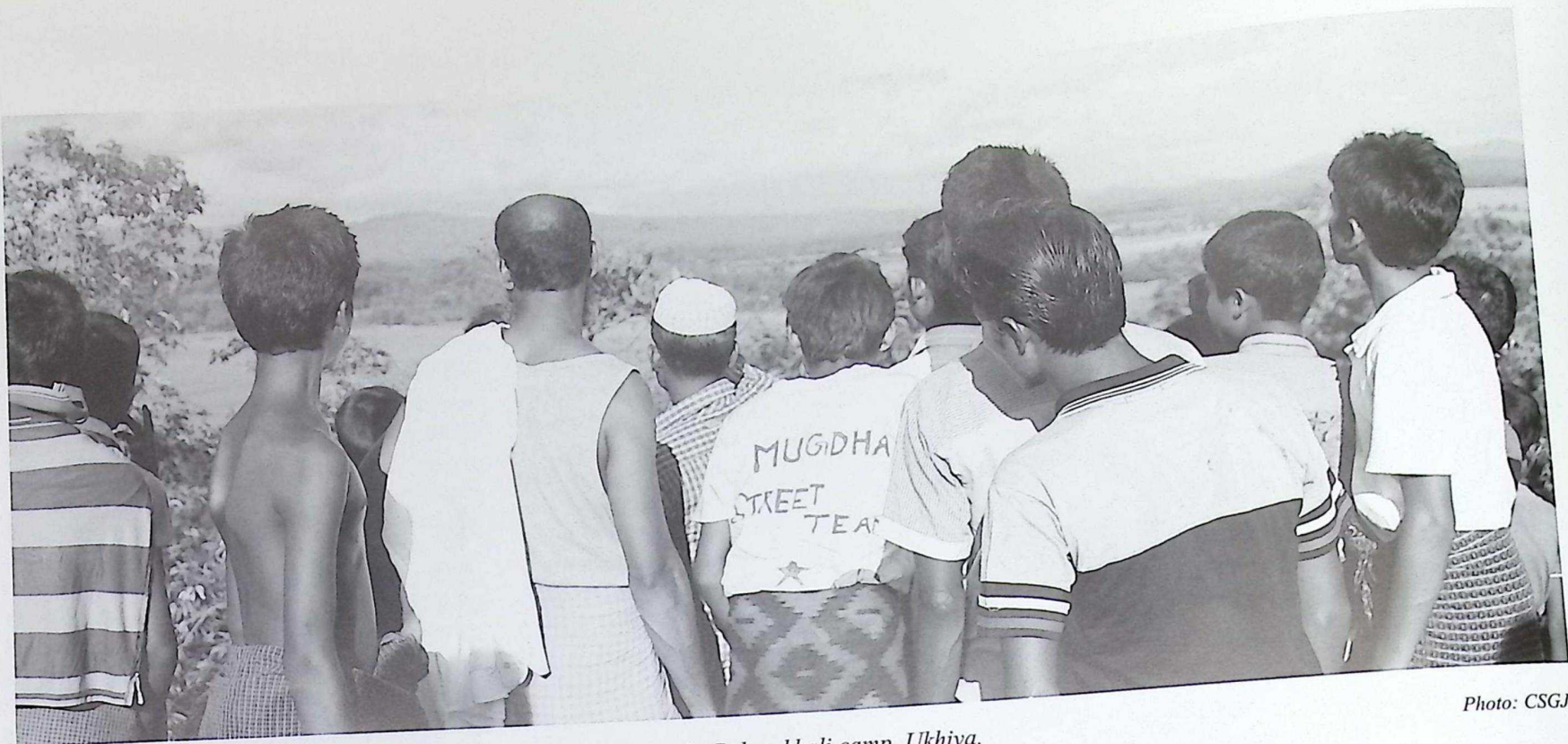
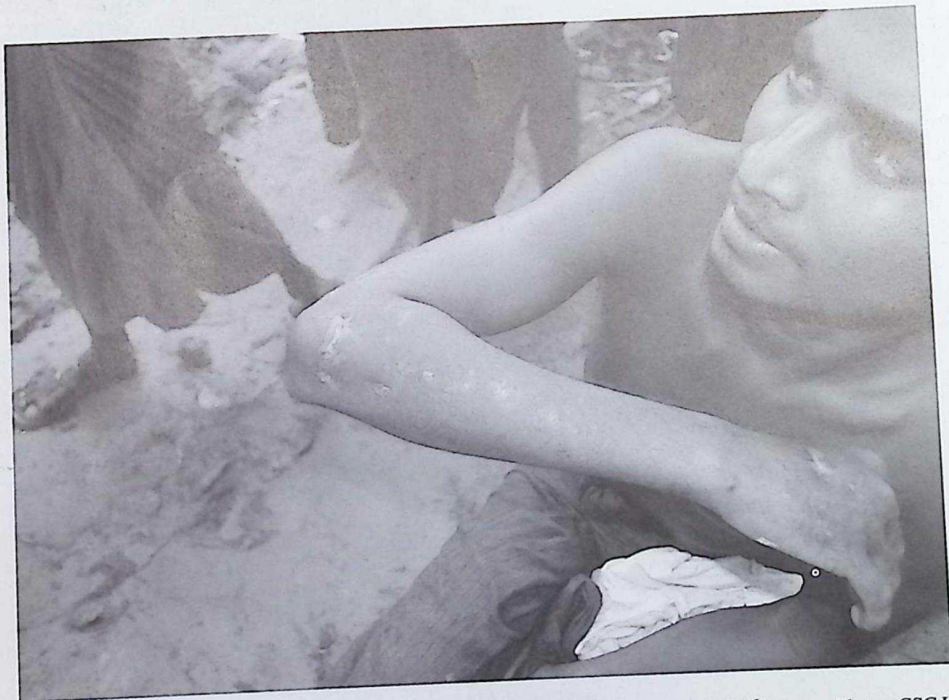
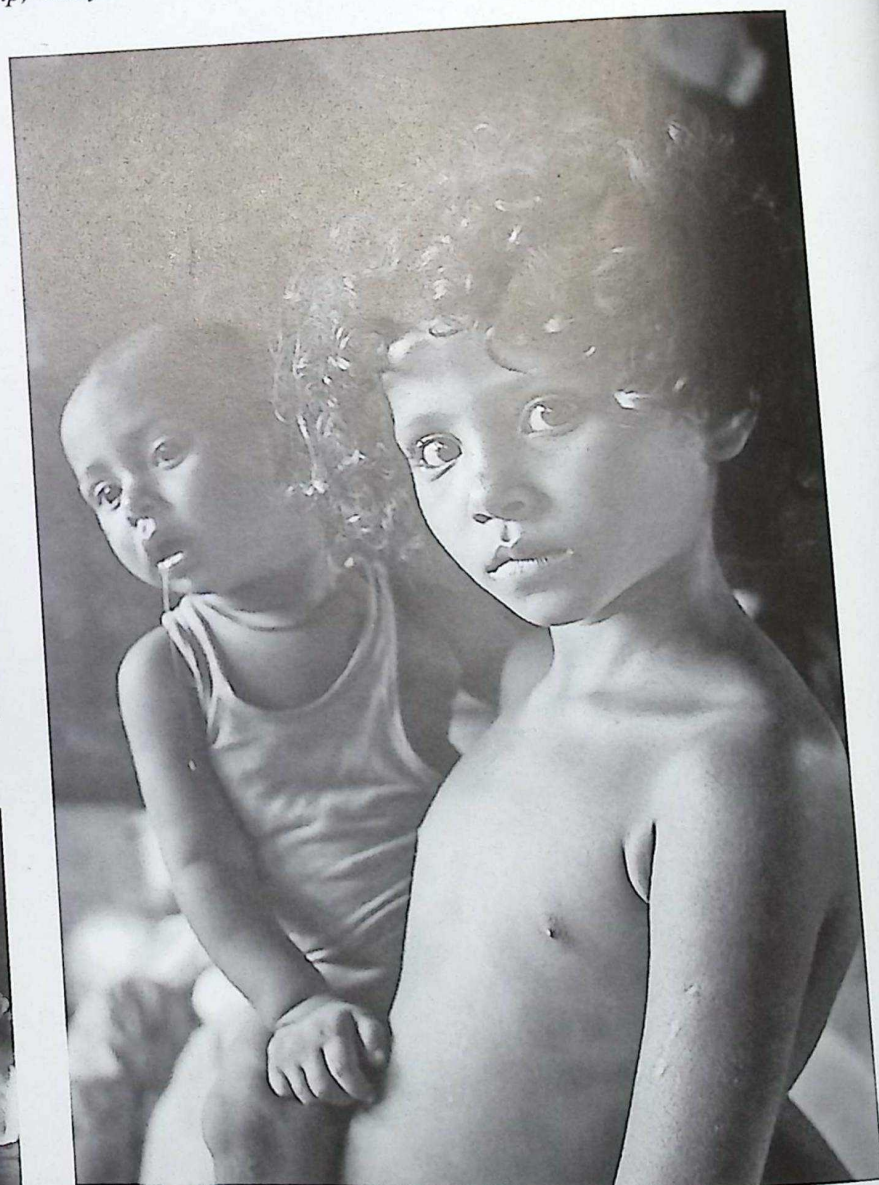


Photo: CSGJ

Rohingya refugees staring towards the motherland Myanmar from the Palongkhali camp, Ukhiya.

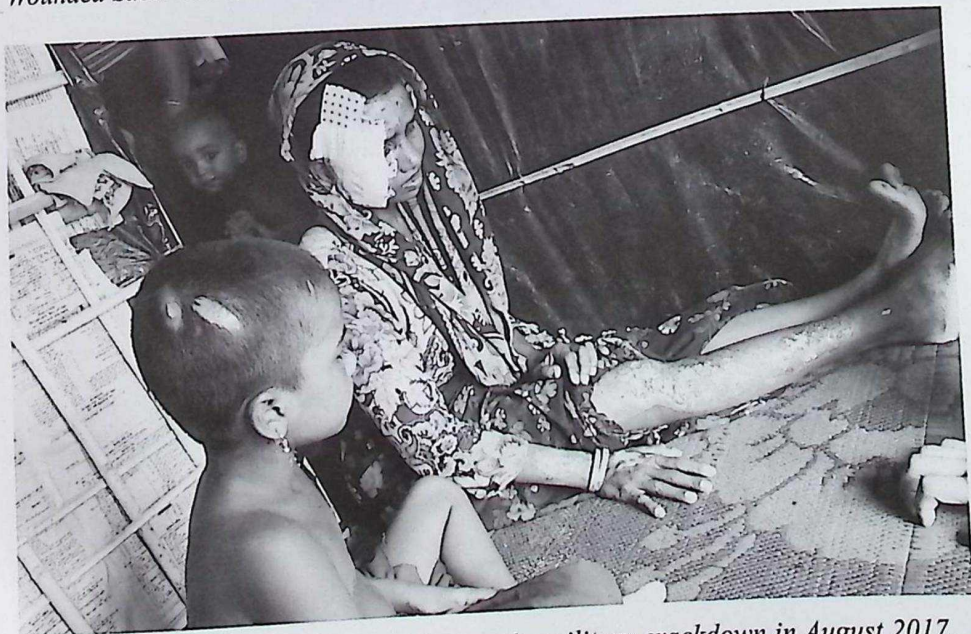


Wounded Sabir Rahman was shot and stabbed by the Myanmar's military. Photo: CSGJ



Untold plight of Rohingya children refugees.

Photo: AP



Mamtaz and her daughter burned during the military crackdown in August 2017. Photo: CSGJ

“I lived with my family at Mingizipara there in Myanmar. I was an elected Rabata (Myanmar’s local language stands for local chairman). I also had a cloth store there. Along with it, I cultivated my agricultural land. My ancestors were from my birthplace, Rakhine. No member of my family ever came to Bangladesh before this incident and we have no other relatives in Bangladesh. Before Eid-ul-Adha, the military and Magh attacked us with weapon, gun, *da* (locally made sharp weapon made of iron), knife. They were attacking at night, setting fire to house, capturing the boys, raping the girls. Though I was not directly attacked but due to fear I crossed the border with my family and walked along four days long to reach Kutupalang and I have been here for one month. We had nothing to defend ourselves; even they seized our *da* used for agricultural purposes. We had nothing to defend ourselves from their weapons. And the same situation is still going on what I saw at the time of leaving my motherland.”

ISHAQUE (70)

MINGIZIPARA, MAUNGDAW, RAKHINE

“I couldn’t tolerate all these happening with us in Myanmar and so I have left my country. I have left my relatives with whom I have no contact today. I don’t know how they are doing there in Myanmar, may be they are still alive, may be they are killed, I don’t know. The Maghs and military tortured me. The Magh people used to threaten us by saying, “Go away from here, otherwise we will kill you all.” Eventually, they killed my relatives, snatched away properties. They destroyed all mosques and killed Muslim Aleems (the educated Muslims) of my area. Suddenly, one day, the military people came and torched all the houses of my village. I lost my home. I’ve seen so many dead bodies around me, my neighbors were brutally killed. Children were scorched to death, women were raped and my good luck saved me that day. I, along with my family, kept hiding behind a nearby hill for two days. Then I fled to Bangladesh to save my life, to save my family. I had no other option. It took five days to reach here. Now I don’t know what’s next?”

MD. ISMAEL (33)

CHIKONCHORI, RAKHINE

“Chikonchori hosted a majority of Muslim population and peacefully co-existed with Hindus. Lately, attacks broke out in several Hindu areas, such as, Borabazar, Hatipara, and Paikkyapara and everyone had to flee their houses at once. With the occurrence of brush fire, arson and slaughter, almost everyone near us went into immediate hiding. These attacks were carried out by armed men wearing black cloaks revealing

only their eyes, locally known as ‘Kala-Party’. Members of the Kala-Party soon increased their level of atrocities and within days almost all the villages were empty and burning. Amidst chaos and out of panic we began running and took shelter in the hills and forest. My husband was not at home when we fled and so we had to leave him behind. I don’t even know if he is alive.”

BOBITA (22)

CHIKONCHORI, RAKHINE

“For women and young teenage girls, the freedom to physical mobility was curtailed in the fear of facing the wrath of the Myanmar military. Women seen in the markets were subject to rape, extortion and sexual assault by the military soldiers. Hundreds of teenage girls were held captive at gunpoint from markets by the soldiers, with only a few victims coming out alive. Gradually, women and girls stopped stepping out of their houses. Still, the atrocities by the military did not stop; rather, they began arson attacks in our houses and continued until only ashes remained. Attacks with launchers always occurred unexpectedly and our only mode of survival was through running. There was no way out. If we stepped out they will stab us, if we stay inside the house they will burn us. You can survive from this only if you can run, otherwise not. I would never go back. I would rather take poison, but still not go back.”

RASHIDA BEGUM (50)

BUTHIDAUNG, RAKHINE

“My name is Anowara. I am 10 years old. I have a 20 year old brother who is mentally disabled and another 8 year old younger brother. Our mother passed away when my younger brother was born, in Kyamong. My father was a cultivator there. We didn’t go to school as they were shut down, and couldn’t play too far either. We mostly stayed within our village and inside the houses and never went to schools. One day, the military and the Maghs attacked our village and began shooting and stabbing relentlessly. Within seconds the houses were on fire. We started running with our neighbors and went into hiding in the nearby hills. We crossed the Bangladeshi border with hundreds of strangers, initially by walking and then taking a boat. It is only when the registration process began in the Bangladeshi camps that people asked where our father was. People from our locality said he is dead. We didn’t even get to see him one last time. It is only after crossing the border that we have been recognized as ‘Yatims’ (orphans).”

ANOWARA (10)

KYAMONG, MYANMAR

“I am from Kyamong, Myanmar. After coming to Bangladesh, I have been made the ‘Majhi’ or leader of 78 houses in Kutupalong camp - may be because I am 18 years old and understand Bengali better than others. Myanmar Government, military and Maghs were all against the Rohingya ethnicity. They never gave us proper recognition. Our locality had majority Muslims. I studied till 2008 till Class IX, most boys are uneducated as all the schools and Madrasahs of our community have been shut down in 2012. We were always oppressed because of our ethnicity. We didn’t have access to hospitals. We only bought tablets from markets for every disease.”

MD. JUNAYED (18)

DUMBAL, RAKHINE

“In Burma, I was an Imam (Muslim person who leads prayer) in the mosque of our locality. The Myanmar military destroyed everything. We had seven mosques in our locality, one of which was an ancient one. They burnt all of them to ashes. They didn’t let any Rohingya to survive. They began attacking with launchers and burnt down all the houses. My brother died, my niece and nephew passed away due to the attacks. My brother was already sick and couldn’t survive being in hiding in the hills. It is our fault to be a Rohingya and a Muslim. We should have never read the Kalma (Testifying faith to Allah and His Messenger), never.”

MAULANA SHAKER (40)

TUMBURU, RAKHINE

“We had good relationship with our neighbors of different religion except the Maghs. They used to help the Burmese military to torture us. The military and the Maghs have snatched away our properties, killed thousands of Rohingya people, raped our mothers, sisters and daughters and then threw them in river. My uncle was shot by a gun. Military destroyed my house with fire. I feel lucky as I am still alive.”

EMAM HOSSAIN (25)

BUTHIDAUNG, RAKHINE

“I was chosen first by the group, six clean-shaven soldiers carrying guns and machetes. One of the men held me tightly on the floor. I started screaming, but a second soldier hit me in the face with his hand and undressed me fully. I was silent when they raped me, there was nothing I could do. All of the schoolgirls were raped and there were loud screams everywhere.”

NURAILA (PSEUDONYM) (18)

ROHINGYA GIRL

© REUTERS

“I am 12 years old. My house is in Bura Shidapara. I am trying to draw out the trauma I have faced back home. Now we are playing with colors. But the picture is way more than just colors. You can see in the picture that there is a helicopter on air which is releasing petrol on the village. People wearing uniforms and armed were shooting recklessly. They are the military. They slit through my younger brothers throat when he was sleeping. They also killed my new born sister. After they opened fire on the villagers they put fire on our houses. The 11-year old Manzur is also from my village. He drew what he witnessed in our market place. You can see he drew how the military is choking a few people and stepping and kicking them. They were Manzur's family. He also tried to draw our journey here. How we were in hiding and the military was chasing people and killing them. They were also putting fire on people and they were running like that. We saw dead bodies on our way here. They were everywhere. A woman was hiding and when the military found her they cut her throat. They put fire on the houses and as soon as people were coming out of the house, the military was shooting them. They killed children of our age and even younger. They threw several children on fire and witnessed their death. We drew how we are now lined up to enter the borders of Bangladesh.”

KHURSHIDA (12)
ROHINGYA GIRL CHILD
DAILY KAALER KONTHO

“I am from Charukomba. I used to live there with my family including my brothers and sisters. We had a total of 10 cows back home, and we own a shop. Now nothing is left. We have been forcibly displaced and we are being asked if we burnt our

own house down. Is the Myanmar Government going to reward us if we do so? Or is the Bangladesh Government? The Myanmar military threatened to kill us if we didn't put our own house on fire. They even took picture of it. After we did so, we are asked to run, and then they fired bullets at us. What did I get by burning my two-storied wooden building with my bare hands? Did I get a mansion? Fearing for our life we fled our homeland and crossed the Teknaf border on Friday.”

RAFIQ (19)
CHARUKOMBA, RAKHINE
DAILY SAMAKAL

“They (military) killed my husband, torched my house. I fled to Bangladesh at night and it took 12 days to come here. I gave birth to this child at the camp. Now, I am very much concerned about my life as I don't know how I will survive.”

SHARIFA BEGUM (21)
MAUNGDAW, RAHINE
ACTION AID BANGLADESH

“About 15 days ago, the Myanmar army cordoned my house at night. They woke us up and I thought they had come to speak to me about something so we make them tea and snack. Little did I know what was actually happening. No sooner than I had opened my door, a bunch of young men entered and started looting everything. Then they held me at gunpoint and told me to leave and threatened to kill me otherwise. As we were leaving, I saw them setting my house on fire. I kept looking back, watching my life burn down. I did not know that the ungrateful Moghs and their associate armed forces also looted my jewellery stores! I had about hundred crore Myanmar Keyt worth of gold ornaments there! My neighbours told me that I was robbed of everything when we were fleeing.

I arrived at Kutupalong last Thursday (October 19) after being on the run from the army for 10 days. Residents of my village found me here and made me a plastic hut to sleep in. I now have to ask for food like a beggar. I never thought I would ever have to live like this. During Bangladesh's Liberation War, many people from Chittagong and Cox's Bazar took shelter at our house.”

DIL MOHAMMAD (60)
DHAKA TRIBUNE

“One night in early September, the Myanmar military along with local Buddhists stormed our house late at night when we were all asleep. They searched every room in the house and captured my brothers namely Khairul Amin, Rafikul Alam and Shanchu Alam. The Myanmar army and local Buddhist leaders were targeting the young men in the village. They took my brothers and other young men to a jungle with their hands tied and eyes blindfolded. The Buddhists slit their throats and the rest were killed by the army. Some of the dead were burnt and the rest were buried in mass grave in the remote areas. On that night, I fled through the backdoor with my parents. We joined thousands of fellow Rohingya to escape to Bangladesh. I did not realise how true my brother Khairul's advice to find safety really was, after the crackdown on August 25.”

MOHAMMAD YUNUS (12)
POYRABAZAR, RAKHINE
DHAKA TRIBUNE

