

# ARAKAN REPORT



**İNSANI** THE FOUNDATION FOR  
FREEDOMS AND  
**YARDIM VAKFI** HUMANITARIAN RELIEF

JULY 2012



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# Introduction



**T**his report elaborates on violence that broke out in Arakan in June 2012, the background of the violent incidents and rights violations against Arakanese Muslims. The objective of this report is to bring to the public opinion developments in the region, inform the Islamic world and international community, and urge decision-making bodies to take necessary steps to end escalating acts of violence in Arakan.

Incidents deemed humiliating to human dignity have been going on in Arakan for long years. Recent clashes have left more than 1,000 Muslims dead and over 90,000 Muslims homeless. Most of the Arakanese fleeing violence are seeking refuge in camps in neighboring Bangladesh. However, faced with

unimaginably inhumane conditions at these camps Arakanese Muslims are losing hopes for a better future. Kala, a 75-year-old Arakanese refugee who has been in these camps for long years, describes refugees' despair: "We are waiting for death that will relieve us of our suffering." To make the matters more tragic, Bangladesh not only has been denying refugees that have been coming since June entry into the country but also returning those who arrived in the camps in the past years.

This report on the ongoing violence in Arakan has been prepared using interviews with refugees who fled Arakan and sought shelter in different countries, information provided by human rights organizations, and 14-year-long experience of IHH in the region.

## Historical Background

Arakan, which has an area of 50,000 square-kilometers lying north to south on the Bangladesh-Burma border, has a deep-rooted historical heritage. The oldest known history of Arakan dates back to 3rd century BC. In the region today known as Arakan, Dhanyawadi and Vesali kingdoms were established in the 1st century AD and 3rd century AD respectively.

Islam arrived in Arakan in the 8th century with Arab merchants. Muslim Arabs, who had a significant place in maritime commerce, had established strong commercial relations with South Asia, Southeast Asia and Far East, and had founded small commercial hubs in the region stretching from Arakan to Sumatra Island and Java.

In the 15th century, an Islamic kingdom was founded in Arakan when the king Naramekhla adopted Islam, and Islam started to rapidly spread to neighboring areas.

### Burmese and British occupation

Under the Burmese occupation that began in 1784, two Arakanese native groups Muslim Rohingyas and Buddhist Rakhine faced repression and persecution. Thousands of Arakanese fled their homeland to escape the Burmese persecution and south shelter in India. The British ended Burmese rule in Arakan in 1826 and held the region under the colonial rule for over 120 years.



### The two native groups pit against each other

Arakanese natives Muslim Rohingyas and Buddhist Rakhines lived side by side in peace until the 19th century. However, Thakin Party, which aimed to end the British occupation of Burma that began in 1826, provoked Buddhist Rakhines against Muslim Rohingyas. When Burma was separated from India in 1937 with colonial rule remaining in place, Thakins seized power inside Burma. Seeds of hatred were sown among ethnic groups with the propaganda that Muslims posed a serious threat to Buddhism and would gain ground and wipe out Buddhists if not stopped, and therefore Rakhines preferred to live under the Burmese rule to a peaceful, independent life with Muslims.



## 1942 Massacre

The first major attacks against Indian and Bangladeshi Muslims began after the British withdrew from the region. Defenseless Muslims were forced to seek refuge in India and Bangladesh to escape violence. Arakanese Buddhist Rakhines began mass killings of Muslim Rohingyas after Indian and Bangladeshi Muslims left the country. On 28 March 1942, Rakhines attacked Muslims in Chanbilivillage of Minbya Township, and butchered women, men and children with swords and spears. The attacking Rakhines raped women before brutally killing them and ransacked the area after the massacre. Gold, silver and other valuable possessions of Muslim Rohingyas were confiscated by Thakin leaders and their animals, crops and property were given to looters. It is said that the Lemro River running through the area turned red with the blood of innocent civilians.



During the 40-day long attacks that erupted in the town of Minbya and spread to the entire Arakan province at least 150,000 Arakanese Muslims were killed, villages were looted and demolished. The settlement areas east of the Kaladan River that were once predominantly Muslim had only a small percentage of Muslim population after the attacks.

The mass killings forced many Arakanese Muslims to seek refuge in neighboring countries, particularly in Bangladesh. The events of 1942 made cohabitation in the future practically impossible for the Rohingya and the Rakhine, two brotherly nations with a common history.

## Attacks continuing

Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, which played a significant role in independence of Burma, laid off many Muslims and replaced them with Arakanese Buddhists shortly after independence. Encouraged



by anti-Muslim policies of the state, Buddhists stepped up their attacks on the Muslim community without facing any preventive measures from the government. Moreover, the government restricted movement of Muslim Rohingya fleeing violence from Maungdaw, Buthidaung, and Rathedaung to Akyab (officially Sittwe), leaving thousands of Muslims at the mercy of aggressive Buddhists.

Even before recovering from the 1942 massacre Muslims found themselves as the target of yet another attack by the Burmese in 1947. In that period certain Muslim groups launched armed resistance against the Burmese state but failed. In 1954 when Muslim groups got more organized and powerful, the Burmese army launched a bloody attack called the Operation Monsoon and eliminated Muslim forces. The same year thousands of Muslims were either killed or deported from the country on grounds that they had aided mujahids. During a visit in 1959 to the Muslim-populated Buthidaung and Maungdaw cities, Burmese Prime Minister promised equal citizenship to Muslims, and consequently Muslim mujahids gave up arms and surrendered to the state.



## 1962 Military Coup

Repression of Muslims in Burma continued unabated until the 1962 coup. In 1962 the military took over power and nationalized all private enterprises and banks. As a result, Muslims, who controlled major enterprises in Arakan up until that year, lost their economic power. Coup leader General Ne Win issued a number of notices to Arakan authorities to restrict movement of local Muslims. State-controlled media began propaganda broadcasts claiming Rohingya Muslims were not native of Arakan and urged Arakanese Buddhists to act against the Muslim population. Such broadcasts, whose only aim was to pit Buddhist Rakhines against Muslim Rohingyas, escalated tension in the region.

When he took over power Ne Win moved to put Buddhists in charge of Arakan administration. Almost all Muslim police officers working in border areas were appointed to distant parts of the country. Muslim civil servants were threatened with dismissal or being removed from northern Arakan. All but a few Rohingya civil servants and teachers were replaced with Burmese and Rakhines who had migrated to the region several years ago from eastern Pakistan. The military regime abolished Mayu Frontier Administration and brought the region under the control of central government. Tighter economic restrictions were imposed on Muslims

and Buddhist Rakhines took over the inter-town trading that was once controlled by Muslims.

In this period the military junta became increasingly more disrespectful to the rights of Muslims. It became routine for Muslim opinion leaders to be detained at night by the military and released after being tortured. Injustices against the Muslim community were encouraged by authorities.

With support from Burmese authorities, Buddhist Rakhines began attacking and usurping possessions of Muslims whenever they saw fit. When Muslims applied to police stations to complain they would frequently find themselves in the defendant position on trumped-up charges. Maltreatment of the police daunted Muslims and they simply gave up asking for justice.

After seizing power the military junta launched a merciless offensive called "Immigrant Investigation Operation." Physical torture, molestation of women, extortion, and similar mistreatment acts became a matter of ordinary life. Many innocent people were labeled as illegal immigrants and arrested. Hundreds of people were forcefully removed from their homes in Kyauktaw, Mrohaung, Pauktaw, Myebon and Minya, and deported to Bangladesh.





## King Dragon Operation

With “King Dragon Operation” in March 1978, the Burmese government aimed to intimidate the Muslims and force them to leave Arakan. The operation was launched in the largest Muslim village in the town of Akyab and had a ripple effect throughout the region. The reports that Muslim masses had been arrested in Akyab, women and men and children, young and elderly everyone had been tortured, women had been raped and killed, quickly reached the entire northern Arakan. Police and immigrant scrutiny officers of the Nagamin Team, set up by the military, reached Buthidaung region and terrorized the local community. Hundreds of Muslim men and women were arrested, many were killed after being tortured and women were raped.

Arakanese Muslims, who were terrorized by brutal attacks and no longer had security of life and property, were forced to leave their homes to protect their honor. The Rohingya people headed for the Bangladeshi border through formidable route, but once again were targeted by Buddhist Rakhines and security forces and all their possessions were confiscated. Most of the Muslims fleeing mass killings in Arakan were killed while escaping. Those who could reach the Naf River that marks the Bangladesh-Burma border were forced to jump into treacherous waters of the river when their boats were fired on. In the course of several months over 300,000

Arakanese refugees arrived in Bangladesh and were placed in makeshift camps by the authorities.

As Nagamin Units withdrew from evacuated villages, Rakhines, who had looted and burned down Muslim houses and had stolen their animals, moved in.

## Buddhismization of Arakan

The Myanmar state, which aims to wipe out the Islamic heritage in the country and completely reshape the region, has been building Buddhist temples in almost every corner of northern Arakan. Hill tribes of Murung, Chakma, and Saak have been ordered to settle the land taken from Muslims, and Buddhist Rakhines coming from Arakan and even Bangladesh have been placed in areas previously populated by Muslims. Faced with aggression from the new despot settlers that are backed by the government, Arakanese Muslims have begun migrating out of Arakan.

From 1990 onward, hundreds of thousands of Arakanese have fled to neighboring Bangladesh as refugees to escape pressure and persecution. Muslims villages were evacuated on ground that they would be rebuilt as model settlements, but Buddhist Rakhines were placed in the evacuated villages. As part of the policy to make Arakan Buddhist, the name of Arakan state was changed to Rakhine and the name of the state capital was changed from Akyab to Sittwe.



## Rights Violations To Date

### Massacres

The Burmese rule in Arakan paved the way for a period marked with rights violations against the Rohingya people. In the 1938 massacre, thousands of Arakanese Muslims were killed and more than 500,000 were forced to leave their homeland. In 1942 Muslims were target of another massacre that claimed 150,000 Muslim lives. The death toll of attacks on Muslims in 1947, the Monsoon Operation of 1954 and the King Dragon Operation of 1978 is in ten thousands. Intimidation and attacks against Arakanese Muslims continue as of today.

### Unlawful Detention, Torture and Maltreatment

In the years following the 1962 coup, the Rohingyas were subjected to unlawful detention, torture and maltreatment. Communal prayers and Qurban ritual were banned. It is known that during the 1978 King Dragon Operation large numbers of Muslim women, men and elderly people were subjected to

torture, imprisoned or executed. Arakanese Muslims are still facing arbitrary detentions, torture and mistreatment.

### Religious and Ethnic Discrimination, Revocation of Citizenship

The situation of Arakanese Muslims deteriorated in the aftermath of the 1962 coup. Most of the commercial enterprises owned by Rohingyas until that time were nationalized and thereby economic power of Muslims was reduced. State-controlled media started to portray Rohingyas as foreigners and Muslims in government positions were replaced with Buddhists.

The question of Arakanese Muslims is not the only problem the Burmese state has. The military regime has subjected ethnic minorities of Burma, where 64 native peoples and more than 200 languages and dialects are spoken, to systematic pressure and discrimination. The ethnic composition of Burma is 68% Bamar, 9% Shan, 7% Karen, 4% Buddhist





Rakhine, 3% Chinese, 2% Mon, 2% Indian, and 5% other ethnic groups, including Arakanese Muslims (Rohingyas). The fact that Arakanese Muslims, Shan and Karen people are systematically persecuted by the Burmese state has been confirmed by international institutions.

Ethnic groups face official discrimination at schools and governmental institutions, cultures, languages, history and identities of ethnic peoples are restricted or completely banned. Members of ethnic communities are used as forced labor by the military and face insulting treatment at work. These civilians are treated really badly and they sometimes pay the price of their ethnicity with their lives. Arakanese Muslims are worst affected by discriminative and restrictive policies.

The 1982 Citizenship Law left Rohingya out of the list of ethnic groups, labeling them as foreigners in their own native land. Today Rohingyas are still not recognized as citizen of Burma. By stripping them off their citizenship, Rohingyas were denied one of their most basic human rights. In those years the government openly supported anti-Muslim riots. Rohingyas were prevented from travelling outside

their towns; those living in northern Arakan were forcefully removed from their homes, coerced into forced labor, and subjected to torture.



## Building New Settlements and Displacement of Muslims

The most serious rights violations Arakanese Muslims have experienced at the hands of the Burmese military regime is the confiscation of Muslim property after they have been forced out of their homes and settling Buddhists in Muslim homes under the cover of model villages. Muslims are forced to work in the construction of these model villages. The villages are constructed from materials confiscated from Muslims and new homes are built in a way to resemble historical Buddhist homes. Buddhists living in Arakan, in central Burma and even in Bangladesh are encouraged to move into northern Arakan, where Muslims live, in an effort to reduce the overall percentage of Muslim population in the region. The Buddhist urged to settle in Arakan bring their relatives with them. Shelter, land, and livestock needs of new settlers are provided from confiscated Muslim property. On 25 March 1999, 34 new settlers were brought from Buthidaung to Akyab. Before their arrival authorities forced Muslims to make certain changes in the villages so that they would resemble old Buddhist settlements, even Buddha statues were erected in different parts of the villages. In February 2005, the military junta ordered Arakanese Muslims to build fences around their villages and forcefully employed Muslims for this work.

Evacuated Rohingya villages were settled by Buddhists and most of the displaced Rohingyas moved out of Arakan. Today the Rohingya community in Arakan is living under extremely hard conditions. The Burmese military junta frequently incites Arakanese Buddhist against Muslims and keeps



them under systematic pressure. This policy involves displacement of Muslims from their land and settling Buddhist in their place, confiscating possessions and property of Muslims, forced labor, shutting mosques and preventing new ones being built, and travel ban. Frequent acts of violence occur in the region as a result of inciting Buddhists against Muslims.

The objective in settling Buddhist in Muslim villages and towns is to reduce the percentage of Arakanese Muslims so that they would not be able to claim autonomy within Burma. Obliteration of Islamic heritage in Arakan and reshaping it as a Buddhist land is planned. The military regime not only alter demographic shape of Arakan and exploit Muslims but also arms Buddhists settled in the area and urges them to raid Muslim villages.





## Travel Ban

Arakanese Muslims have no freedom of travel in their own land. Muslims residing in cities and towns outside Akyab are banned from entering the Arakanese capital Akyab on any grounds including emergency medical treatment. They are also not allowed to travel to the Burmese capital Rangoon under any circumstances. Muslims cannot even visit villages and towns neighboring their own. Muslims with no travel cards and sometimes even those with authorized cards are forced to get off buses and trains. In one instance in February 2001, eight Muslims travelling to Rangoon were detained by police for travelling outside Arakan even though they had travel permits, and were sentenced to seven years in prison.

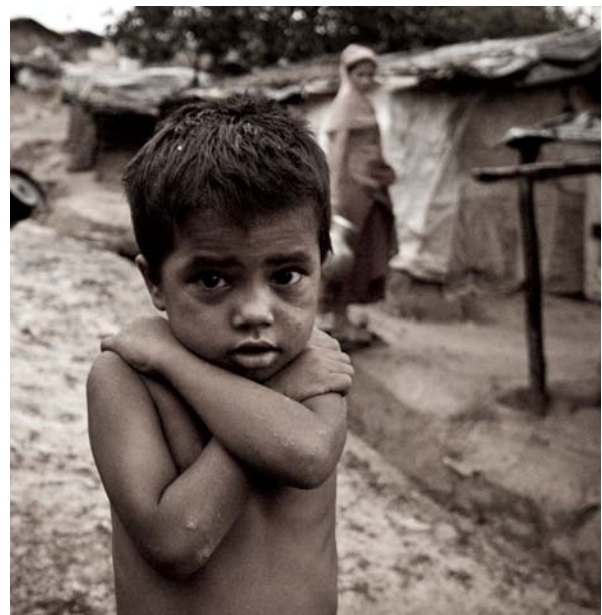
## Marriage Ban

Muslims face serious restrictions when they want to get married. Muslims have to meet a dozen of procedural requirements to receive a permit for marriage, which makes extremely difficult for Muslims to marry. A significant part of the Burmese government policy to reduce the Muslim population, the marriage restrictions create serious social problems for Muslims. Authorities demand couples to pay high taxes to get marriage permits. Both the man and the woman willing to get married have to pay a tax between 50 and 300,000 kyat. The waiting

period for the permit is approximately 2-3 years, those failing to pay the tax are not allowed to marry, and sometimes even those who pay the tax are not granted a permit. That's why some couples cross into Bangladesh illegally to marry.

## Destruction of Cultural, Historical Heritage and Values

Arakanese Muslims created a rich Islamic heritage with the states they founded in history. The Rohingya language is a member of the Indo-European



languages and is very similar to the language spoken in southern Bangladesh. The Rohingya people used Arabic script for about 300 years. The coins minted by Arakanese kings in history bore Islamic confession of faith in Arabic. Arakanese cultural heritage, just like that of other minorities in Myanmar, is being obliterated as part of Myanmarization policy by Burmese nationalists. The culture of Burma Muslims and especially culture of Arakanese Muslims is deemed foreign "Burma culture." Burma Muslims are even pressured to change their names. Artifacts dating back to the Islamic reign in Burma are being destroyed and place names are being changed. For instance, the Arakan name was changed to Rakhine and Akyab was renamed as Sittwe. Mosques and religious schools, which dot every corner of Arakan and occupy a significant role in Rohingya culture and religion, are either burned down or Buddhist temples are erected in their courtyard.

### Pressure on Christians and Buddhists

Burma Christians, particularly those living in rural areas, are finding their religious rituals being restricted. Religious leaders agree that politically-sanctioned religious discrimination is the main reason for the problem. Burmese Christians are



members of tribes that oppose military junta, which explains restrictions they encounter. Another point that proves religious persecution is that the government occasionally pressure Buddhist monks even though Buddhism is the majority religion and is officially propagated. The reason for suppression of Buddhist monks is that they oppose oppressive military junta. Although the accuracy and reliability of reports from inside Burma is debatable, the number of jailed monks is estimated to be around 300.





## Refugee Problem

Today hundreds of thousands of Arakanese Muslims are living as refugees outside Burma due to pressure of the military regime. There are 200,000 Arakanese Muslims in Pakistan, some recognized as refugees some not, 500,000 in Saudi Arabia and 10,000 in Malaysia. Although a signatory to the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees, Malaysia regards Arakanese refugees, together with other refugees in the country, as illegal immigrants and refuses to grant them refugee status. However, in 2004 Malaysia granted Arakanese permit to stay in the country and they are still living there without officially being recognized as refugees. The country with the highest number of Arakanese refugees is Bangladesh, where the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has a protection program in place. Between the years 1991 and 1992, about 300,000 Arakanese Muslims migrated because of persecution of the Burmese government to Bangladesh, which is a small, overcrowded and impoverished country.

On 28 April 1992, the UN brokered an agreement between Burma and Bangladesh for voluntary and safe return of Arakanese refugees; however, necessary measures were not taken to monitor refugees' return through impartial authorities or to assess their situation in the wake of return.

Out of all Arakanese refugees in Bangladesh, 23,000 returned to Burma in 1996. However, refugee influx from Burma to Bangladesh did not stop. Between 10-15,000 Arakanese fled to Bangladesh in 1996, while at least 5,000 Arakanese arrived in the country to escape forced labor, heavy taxation, rape and oppression. About 500 of them were deported to Burma upon entry into Bangladesh.

Most of the refugees arriving in Bangladesh were not allowed into camps. The Arakanese who were denied residence in camps opted for an illegal stay in the country in forests or slums instead of returning home.

Bangladeshi authorities stepped up pressure in May 2003 on refugees in two camps in the country to force them to return home and it had forcefully deported 230,000 refugees to Burma by 2005. The UNHCR is mostly responsible for forced deportation for planning to handover its responsibilities towards refugees to Bangladeshi authorities.

According to official figures, there were 20,000 refugees in Bangladesh under the protection of the UNHCR as of 2005 and they were living in Nayapara and Kutupalong camps in southern Bangladesh. Nayapara and Kutupalong are housing 12,000 and 8,000 refugees respectively. However, these figures are only the tip of the iceberg. Thousands of Arakanese are still fleeing to Bangladesh to



escape pressure of Burmese government. Most of them are staying as illegal economic migrants in the country since they are not allowed into camps. The number of unregistered “illegal immigrants” is estimated to be about 200,000 according to the Bangladeshi media, while Arakan Historical Society it is nearly 300,000. These unregistered migrants are striving to survive with no assistance and protection outside camps on the Bangladesh-Burma border under extremely difficult conditions. Arakanese Muslims, who are not recognized either by the Burmese military junta or Bangladesh, work illegally in factories without any rights and suffer from maltreatment by security forces.

Bangladeshi authorities resort to physical and psychological tactics to force refugees into repatriation such as detaining them and then giving them the option to either sign a document for return or be imprisoned. It is known that the families who refuse to return home get their ration cards confiscated, are sometimes tortured, transferred to different parts of camps, and find their shelters burned. Separating family members from each other have devastating effects. Most men prefer to escape from the camp instead of returning to Burma, which leaves the women and children helpless. The UNHCR remains indifferent to such developments.

Bangladesh, the UNHCR and Burma have failed to sign an agreement regarding the Arakanese refugees in Bangladesh and any solution proposed has remained on paper. The reason is that proposed solutions have failed to address the root causes of the problems and have even made the matter more complicated. The 1982 Citizenship Law enacted by the Burmese military junta declared all Arakanese Muslims as “illegal immigrants” and replaced their identification cards with new ones that effectively

stripped them off their citizenship, making them as foreigners in their own land. Existing and proposed solutions look for ways to relieve institutions and governments off their responsibilities towards refugees rather than safeguarding refugees’ rights. The 2003 UNHCR plan named “promoting self-sufficiency pending voluntary repatriation” fell short of solving the main problem of Arakanese Muslims which is their status as foreigners in their own land and bringing any real improvements to refugees’ life.

Human rights organizations monitoring rights violations against Arakanese Muslims have made a number of suggestions for solution to the UNHCR, international community and governments of Bangladesh and Burma. These organizations urged the Bangladeshi government, the UNHCR and international community to take necessary steps to prevent maltreatment of refugees at camps and stop deportation of refugees to Burma, where even refugees are even denied basic rights. The suggested solutions also included a call on the Bangladeshi government to ratify the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and 1967 Additional Protocol, assisting Arakanese refugees until conditions in Burma have improved enough for a safe return and protection for refugees. The proposals also demand granting the UNHCR the authority to supervise whether repatriations are voluntary or not and cooperation with major institutions and refugees to carry out a plan for ensuring self-sufficiency of returning refugees.





## Incidents Since June 2012

The last incidents broke out on 3 June when 10 Muslims travelling from the capital Akyab to Maungdaw were killed by Buddhist fanatics. Hundreds of Muslims gathered at the central mosque in Maungdaw to protest the attack but hardline Buddhists and the Burmese police, who viewed the protest as a threat to their existence, attacked the local Muslims and killed and wounded many. The Burmese police branded the protest as an uprising against the state and ordered the punishment of the Muslims involved in the incidents. Together with Buddhist fanatics the police began raiding Muslim villages and towns.

More than 300 Muslim villages, mosques and madrasahs were set on fire on grounds that they were sheltering the criminals. Mosques were besieged by Buddhist fanatics. According to independent human rights organizations, around 1,000 people have been killed and thousands of Muslims have been forced out of their homes and villages and into forests since violence erupted in June. Some Muslims set out with boats into Naf River and the Indian Ocean to reach Bangladesh, but hundreds were drowned to death when the Bangladeshi government denied them entry into the country. It has been reported that some of the wounded have secretly crossed into Bangladesh with their own means to receive treatment. A large number

of Arakanese with critical condition have been left to die.

Aided by Nasaka (Burmese border security force), Hlun-tin (riot police) and the police, Rakhine Buddhists have been trying to displace the Rohingya. While curfew was in place, security forces and Rakhine groups went from village to village and set fire to Rohingya houses and fired on those escaping burning houses. Independent sources report that many Rohingyas were burned to death in the houses and the bodies were taken away in trucks, adding it is not possible to verify exactly how many had been massacred. Reports from an area known as the fifth zone in Arakan state that at least one mosque and many villages had been set on fire. There are no independent media organizations in Burma but only a single media outlet that is supplied stories by the government.

It is reported that in the region under curfew property of Rohingya had been looted by Rakhines and the Rohingya community had been living in fear. No end date has been set for curfew, sources report. Homeless people find themselves as the target for security forces once the night falls. About 4m Arakanese are facing the risk of deportation and violence acts such as their houses being raided and burned. A serious humanitarian crisis is unfolding in the region.

## Current State Of Human Rights

1. Muslims continue to be killed in Arakan on a daily basis.
2. It is known that a large number of Muslims are currently jailed and are subjected to torture but their identities and exact number cannot be verified.
3. Women are being raped.
4. The ongoing travel ban and curfew imposed on the Rohingya population have completely paralyzed life.
5. Mosques, masjids, houses and villages are being set on fire and destroyed.
6. Masjids and madrasahs cannot be repaired without government permit. To monitor compliance with the regulation, masjids and madrasahs have to be photographed three times a year as a routine practice. If unpermitted maintenance is spotted, those responsible are sentenced to between six months and six years in prison plus a fine. No new mosques or madrasah have been allowed to be built in the last 20 years.
7. A photograph featuring all family members has to be handed to government officials every year. Families are required to pay taxes to the state for every child born and every family member died.
8. Muslims have no freedom of travel. A Muslim has to get permission and pay tax to travel from one village to another.
9. Muslims are forbidden from building their houses out of concrete; they have to make them from wood.



The houses are considered as state property and if they are burned down accidentally, owners are sentenced to prison sentences as long as six years.

10. To set up a business a Muslim has to establish partnership with Buddhist. In this partnership, the Buddhist partner owns half of the business without investing any capital.
11. Muslims have to pay annual taxes for the livestock they own.
12. Muslims cannot marry without a permit. A couple wishing to get married has to pay a tax. Sometimes they are denied a permit even if they pay the tax.
13. Muslims are deprived of all public services. For instance, when they get sick they cannot go to state hospitals for treatment.
14. Muslims are not allowed into higher education institutions.
15. Muslims are forbidden to work in public sector jobs. Today there is not a single Muslim civil servant in Arakan.
16. Muslims cannot own fixed line telephones or cellular phones.
17. Muslims are not allowed to own motor vehicles.
18. When Muslims are accused of a crime, they are not given the right to defense and are immediately imprisoned. The police or the army have the authority to raid a Muslim house without a warrant and





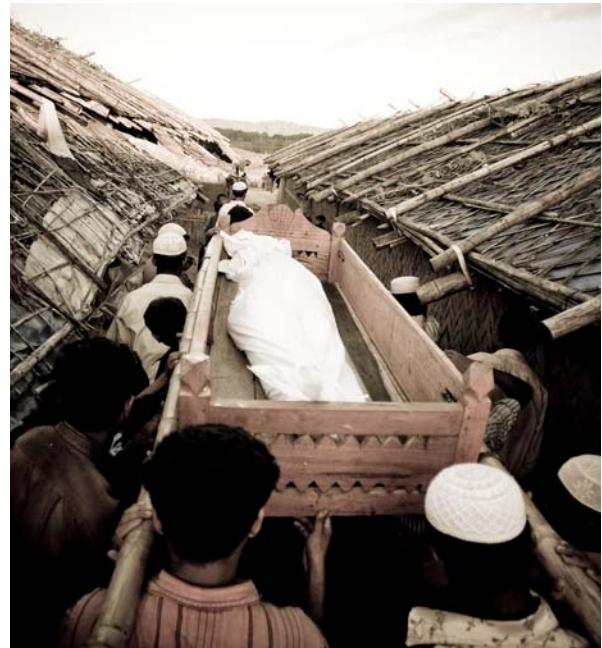
accuse its inhabitants of any crime. Raiding officers immediately jail the residents if they cannot get a bribe in return for not arresting them.

**19.** Muslims are subjected to curfew after nine o'clock at night and cannot visit their relatives or neighbors without permission from the police.

**20.** Muslims are forced to work for the state and Buddhists without receiving any wage in return.

**21.** Muslims have no right to citizenship. They carry white identification cards bearing the title "foreigner." These cards are only for identification purposes and do not entitle card holders to any rights.

**22.** Muslims are not issued passports. They are provided a document to cross into neighboring Bangladesh and sometimes they cannot return to their country because their documents are not accepted.



Arakanese Muslims sought shelter in neighboring countries to escape from decade-long systematic persecution and the year-long refugee life has become a hope for survival. Although it is not possible to estimate the exact number of refugees in Bangladesh, it is well-known by everyone, including the UN, that striving to survive in camps under extremely difficult conditions.

### The camps in Bangladesh where Arakanese refugees are sheltered:

- Kutupalong Refugee Camp. The camp housing 12,000 refugees is officially recognized by the UN.
- Nayapara Refugee Camp. The camp where 10,000 refugees has the official UN recognition.
- Leda Refugee Camp. The camp is housing 13,000 refugees and is officially recognized by the UN.
- Kutupalong Unofficial Refugee Camp. The 95,000 refugees staying in this camp are not treated as refugees by the UN and the Bangladeshi government. The camp residents are constantly experiencing food shortages. The Bangladeshi authorities do not allow entry to the camp which is plagued with frequent deaths from hunger.

It is known that more than 100,000 unregistered Arakanese refugees are struggling to survive in woods and villages across Bangladesh.

# Humanitarian Aid To Bangladesh-Arakan



## IHH RELIEF EFFORTS IN THE REGION

IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation has been for 10 years delivering donations of Turkish people to refugee camps in Bangladesh and meeting basic needs of the Arakanese. Every year and especially in Qurban and Ramadan periods, we deliver food, educational, health, social and cultural aid. The following is the list of aid we provided to Arakanese refugees over the last five years:

### 2006

- A project was launched to build a three-floor school (Ibni Abbas Islamia School) in Cox's Bazaar. The school that was completed in September 2007 provides education to about 1,500 students.
- A Computer Training Center was set up and it is now training 200 students.
- In total 39 water wells were built with 31 of them in the camps in Bangladesh and eight in Arakan.
- In Qurban season, 104 large head of cattle were slaughtered and the meat was distributed to 14,000 people. Another 10 cattle were also slaughtered in Arakan and was distributed to 2,100 persons.
- In Ramadan month food packages were delivered to

700 families (3,000 individuals).

- Clothing aid and allowance for Eid were given to 350 orphan students.
- Supplies of canvas, medicine, hygiene kits and similar items were distributed at Kutupalong refugee camp.
- Medical screenings were carried out at camps.
- Copies of the Holy Quran were distributed at camps.

### 2007

- The 50-person capacity orphanage within Ibni Abbas Islamia School complex was started to renovated.



- Food aid was delivered to more than 2,000 families (about 13,000 individuals) that were affected by monsoon rains.
- The 200 cataract patients at the camps were performed on and their vision was restored.
- In the Ramadan month 11,000 people were provided food aid.
- Stationery sets were distributed to 70 orphan students living in the camps.
- Clothes for Eid were given to 70 orphan students living in the camps.

## 2008

- Food aid was delivered to more than 2,000 families (about 12,000 individuals) that were affected by monsoon rains.
- In the Ramadan month around 10,000 people were provided food aid.
- In Cox's Bazaar, foundation was laid for a 50-person capacity orphanage (Daru'llman Orphanage). The orphanage was constructed of concrete and can be added more floors in the future.

## 2009

- Sponsorship was extended to 35 children within the scope of Sponsor Family System.
- Daru'llman Orphanage being built in the city of Cox's Bazaar was completed and inaugurated.
- In the Ramadan month 5,000 families (about 35,000 individuals) were provided food to suffice for a month.
- In Qurban period, 1000 shares of sacrificial animals were slaughtered in Teknaf and Cox's Bazaar and the meat was distributed amongst 10,000 people.



## 2010

- Twenty water wells were built in Arakan.
- Emergency food aid was delivered to Arakanese refugee camps.
- Food to suffice for a month was distributed amongst 10,000 families (approximately 70,000 people) in Ramadan.
- In March 2010, emergency food aid was delivered to 12,000 families.
- In Qurban period, 1000 shares of sacrificial animals were slaughtered in Teknaf and Cox's Bazaar and the meat was distributed amongst 10,000 people.

## 2011

- The construction of Hacı Ahmet Kinacı Mosque in Cox's Bazaar was completed and the building was inaugurated.
- As part of 2011 winter aid, 750 orphan and needy students were provided winter clothing, blankets and



stationery sets, while 500 families in need were given blankets and food packages.

- Within the scope of 2011 Orphans Solidarity Days organization, 200 orphan children were circumcised and examined for diseases. Another 20 young orphan girls were wedded and their wedding ceremony was financed.
- Thirteen water wells were built at the refugee camps.
- In total 581 shares of aqiqah and nazhr Qurban were slaughtered at three different times and the meat was distributed to impoverished Arakanese refugees.
- In the Ramadan month, 15,000 families (around 100,000 people) were supplied food (185 tons of rice) to suffice for a month.
- Foundation was laid for Sümer Mosque in Cox's Bazaar.
- Twenty orphans were put on regular assistance with Sponsor Family System. The number of local orphans added to the system reached 50.
- Emergency winter aid was delivered to 2,200 people.

## 2012

- The construction of Tepeaşan Family Mosque that will serve to 1,500 people was started.



- The foundation of Şahin Altunok and Avni Poçins Mosque that will serve 1,500 people was laid in Cox's Bazaar.
- A fish farm was purchased to fund Daru'llman Orphanage. The income generated by the farm will be used on orphans.
- Qurban shares were slaughtered and the meat was distributed amongst 500 families.
- Preparations were initiated for a vocational training project directed at women in need. The project will initially train 70 widows.
- In June, emergency aid worth €25,000 was delivered to 2,000 families.



## Findings, Analyses And Suggestions

It has been found that in Arakan, deep-rooted religious and ethnically-motivated violence has been rising and is officially fueled as a policy.

Recent clashes in the region have left more than 1,000 Muslims dead and over 90,000 Muslims homeless.

The fact that voter lists for the 2012 elections in Burma are scheduled to be published late this year is among the main reasons behind recent attacks on Muslims. The Rohingya population in Arakan is tried to be reduced so that Buddhists can gain more political ground.

Systematic acts of violence against Arakanese Muslims by the Burmese government qualify as genocide. Crimes against humanity are being perpetrated in Arakan. The UN and international human rights organization should call on the Burmese government to end pressure on Muslims.

Arakanese Muslims are fleeing to neighboring countries to escape spiraling violence they are facing. There are 28,000 registered and 500,000 unregistered Arakanese refugees in Bangladesh. Burma is regarded by China, the USA and Russia as a strategic region. China does not want to allow the USA gain influence in a country it is sharing border with. The USA, on the other hand, wishes to play an active role in Burma in case of crises with China.

Under these circumstances, the settlement of the problem of Arakanese Muslims is tied to the settlement of problems of the Burmese opposition and other ethnic groups in the country. This, however, is dependent on the end of restrictive regime and allowing ethnic groups in Burma a free political sphere. Otherwise, basic rights of Arakanese refugees in different countries, particularly in Bangladesh, and Muslims in Arakan will continue to be threatened.

Muslim Rohingya, who are regarded as foreigners





in their own land as per the 1982 Citizenship Law and issued different identification cards as the most striking proof of discrimination, should be reinstated as citizens of Burma. Forced displacement of Muslims from their villages to be replaced with Buddhists and forced labor should be ended.

Economic, political and military relations of the Burmese government should be put under the spotlight and necessary measures should be taken to cut resources feeding oppressive policies of the government.

Although the pressure international community has put on Burma is not independent of its strategic interests, replacing the Burmese junta with a more pro-liberty government will relieve to some extent

the suffering of Muslims in Arakan and Arakanese inhabitants living as refugees or illegal migrants in various countries, particularly in Bangladesh.

International community must immediately put an end to ongoing oppression in Burma. Countries should suspend economic relations with Burma until this objective has been achieved.

Steps should be taken to stop privileges to exploit the country's natural resources, especially gemstones reserves, being used for political means.

Islamic countries must end silence against the persecution of Arakanese Muslims and make their reaction felt. Islamic scholars should lead the Muslim community in this regard and issue statements that remind Muslims their responsibilities against ongoing persecution of Arakanese Muslims.

Turkey should take initiatives at different platforms to stop oppression of Arakanese Muslims.

It should be guaranteed that international aid agencies have access to Arakan and refugee camps outside Arakan to deliver assistance.

The area inside Burmese borders should be opened to human rights organizations and international observers.

Buddhists around the world should act to help end oppression in Burma.

Putting an end to human rights violations mentioned above and those committed during recent incidents, and punishing perpetrators is the responsibility of international community.

