The Plight of the Rohingya Muslims of Burma (Myanmar)

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We here consider the plight of the Muslims of Burma who are suffering at the hands of its Buddhist rulers. We consider their suffering because although we are not bonded to them by language or race or land, we are bonded to them by the strongest bond on earth, the bond of Islam. The Prophet (saw) said, «مثلُ المؤمنين في تَوادِّهم ، وتَرَاحُمِهم ، وتعاطُفِهِمْ ، مثلُ الجسَدِ إذا اشتكَى منْهُ عضوٌ تدَاعَى لَهُ سائِرُ الجسَدِ بالسَّهَرِ والْحُمَّى» **"The parable of the believers in their mutual love, mercy, and compassion is that of a single body: when one part of it suffers, the rest of the body responds with sleeplessness and fever."** Thus, before we speak of their suffering, let us review their bond with us.

Indeed, the Muslims of Rakhine State Have Been Loyal to Islam for Centuries

The Rohingya people predominantly follow Islam. They are from Rakhine State, formerly known as Arakan State, in Myanmar, formerly known as Burma. Their bond with the Islamic Ummah is such that even their ethnic heritage includes that of the Muslims from the Arabs and the Mughal rulers of India. The word Rohingya means "inhabitant of Rohang," which was the early Muslim name for Arakan. The Rohingya population is concentrated in the historical region of Arakan, an old coastal state upon the borders of South and Southeast Asia. Due to its coastline on the Bay of Bengal, Arakan was a key centre of maritime trade between Burma and the outside world. The Muslim traders of the Arab lands carried the Dawah to Islam in the coastal areas of southeast Bengal, bordering Arakan, since the 9th century. Indeed, the Muslims for centuries knew that trade must never be a distraction to the opportunity to make Dawah to Islam. Many of the Buddhist mushrikeen became Muslims and the Rohingya population trace their history to this period. Many of the Arabs settled and married locally, thus contributing to the lineage of the Rohingya until this day.

The Enmity of the Buddhist Mushrikeen of the Arakan Empire

Allah (swt) said, ﴿لَتَجِدَنَّ أَشَدَّ النَّاسِ عَدَاوَةً لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا﴾ **"You will surely find the Jews and those who associate partners with Allah to be the most intense in enmity toward those who believe."** [TMQ Surah Al-Maa'idah: 82]. It is not surprising that the Buddhist mushrikeen rulers of Burma are oppressing the Muslims of Arakan State today. They are bonded in shirk with their ancestors of the Rakhine Empire which waged war on the Muslims at the height of its 500 years in power.

The Mughal–Arakan Wars were a series of conflicts fought between the Rakhine empire and the Muslims of the India from 1602 to 1666, primarily over the Buddhist brutal occupation of Chittagong, Sandwip, and south-eastern Bengal.

Unlike the rulers of Muslims today, the rulers in the Islamic era mobilized armies in response to the occupation of the lands of Muslims. In 1664, Shaista Khan was ordered by the brilliant Islamic ruler from amongst the Mughal rulers, Aurangzeb, to attack the occupying forces within Chittagong.

At the end of December 1665, Shaista Khan dispatched his son Buzurg Umed Khan with 4,000–6,000 or 6,500 men and a fleet of 288 warships to liberate Chittagong. After the liberation of Sandwip, a strategic island, Ibn Husain was ordered to advance with the fleet by sea, while Farhad Khan and Mir Murtaza were directed to march by land in support of the fleet.

On 14 January 1666, the army of Muslims crossed the Feni River, entering the stronghold of the mushrikeen. On 23 January, the navy of Muslims under Ibn Husain, encountered a naval force of the Buddhists. The mushrikeen enemy appeared and opened fire. The vanguard of the Muslims boldly advanced, causing the lighter enemy vessels to flee.

After an initial engagement, Ibn Husain's light and swift ships pursued the enemy, capturing many of them. A second, larger fleet of the mushrikeen then appeared and fought until sunset

before retreating. Ibn Husain forced their retreat. On the morning of 24 January, the navy of the Muslims advanced, striking fear in the ranks of the Buddhist mushrikeen, who began towing their larger vessels upstream into the Karnafuli River, with other vessels assisting in the retreat.

The mushrikeen then regrouped their fleet in battle order between Chittagong and a midstream island. As the navy of the Muslims entered the mouth of the Karnafuli, the mushrikeen opened heavy fire from both their vessels and the fort at Chittagong.

Seeking victory or martyrdom, the Muslims launched a daring combined land-and-water assault. The mushrikeen were defeated: many sailors abandoned ship or surrendered, numerous vessels were sunk, and 135 warships were captured by the Muslims.

On 25 January the warships of the Muslims besieged Chittagong fort. The garrison, left helpless after losing its navy, resisted for a day before surrendering to Ibn Husain on the 26th.

The liberated city was renamed to Islamabad (the land of Islam) by the Islamic ruler, Aurangzeb. The liberation of Chittagong shook the entire Rakhine empire, causing its collapse, even though it had been at the peak of its five centuries of tyranny.

Indeed, within this majestic history is a lesson for the sons of Aurangzeb, Shaisah Khan and Ibn Husain today in the armies of Bangladesh and Pakistan. After the victory of the Mughal commanders, the ties between them and the Rohingya increased, such that there is also a Mughal influence on the lineage of the Rohingya, until this day.

The Enmity of the Modern Buddhist State of Myanmar

Allah (swt) said, ﴿وَإِنِ اسْتَنصَرُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ فَعَلَيْكُمُ النَّصْرُ﴾ **"And if they seek your help in matters of Deen, it is your obligation to extend support."** [TMQ Surah Al-Anfaal 72]. However, today there is no Aurangzeb to answer the pleas for support from the Rohingya, so they have faced decades of discrimination and repression under successive rulers from amongst Buddhist mushrikeen.

Effectively denied citizenship under the 1982 Citizenship Law, they are one of the largest stateless populations in the world.

In early 2012, police began patrolling the Rakhine states. Buddhist monks started distributing magazines calling the Rohingya "terrorists" who would take over the state with "uncontrollable" birth rates. They were handing out pamphlets that said, "You need to wipe out these people or they'll take your land" within the key Muslim town of Sittwe.

Buddhist villagers, dozens of them bused in from outside Sittwe town, threw petrol bottles on homes, shops, and masajid as riot police opened fire on Rohingya trying to douse the flames.

Narzi—targeted as the largest Muslim neighborhood and economic hub in Sittwe, home to about 10,000 Rohingya—was burned to the ground. Any structures left standing amid the rubble were bulldozed in the days that followed.

Violence returned in October 2012, planned and instigated by local officials and Bhuddist monks. Security forces stood by watching the attacks or joined in. Police opened fire on the Rohingya who were fleeing.

The authorities' ethnic cleansing of Rakhine State took root. In the town of Sittwe, where about 75,000 Rohingya lived before 2012, only 4,000 remain.

The 2012 violence and ensuing displacement inflamed anti-Islamic sentiment throughout Myanmar and ushered in an era of increased oppression, in both policy and practice, that laid the groundwork for more brutal and organized military atrocities.

As the central Rakhine camps were set up in 2012 and 2013, authorities began imposing overlapping systems to restrict Rohingya's movement—checkpoints and barbed-wire fencing, curfews, draconian permission procedures and police escorts, harassment and threats, and daily extortion and bribes.

In rural Sittwe, Myanmar officials have interned about 110,000 Rohingya in a sprawling cluster of camps cordoned off with barbed wire fencing, most only kilometers from where they lived before 2012.

The remaining 30,000 Rohingya and Kaman are confined to sites in Pauktaw, Myebon, Kyauktaw, and Kyaukpyu townships, further cut off by inaccessible waterways and terrain.

From 2012 to 2015, about 170,000 Rohingya Muslims fled persecution in Myanmar and the refugee camps of Bangladesh on overcrowded smugglers' boats.

In May 2015, pushbacks by Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia left an estimated 8,000 Rohingya adrift in the open sea, at risk of dehydration, illness, and drowning. Harrowing details of violent traffickers, mass graves, and hundreds of deaths at sea triggered regional and international pledges to better protect migrants and trafficking victims in Southeast Asia.

Crimes Since 2017

Starting in August 2017, Myanmar security forces razed several hundred Rohingya villages and killed Rohingya women, men, and children throughout northern Rakhine State, forcing at least 700,000 to flee to Bangladesh.

The campaign began following August 25 attacks on government outposts by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA). The Burmese military summarily executed several dozen Rohingya Muslims in Maung Nu village in Burma's Rakhine State on August 27, 2017.

Witnesses said that Burmese soldiers had beaten, sexually assaulted, stabbed, and shot villagers who had gathered for safety in a residential compound, two days after Rohingya militants attacked a local security outpost and military base.

Government forces have responded with mass killings, rape, arbitrary detention, and arson since. Satellite imagery indicated burnings taking place at 17 separate sites across northern Rakhine state between August 25 and 30, 2017. Satellite imagery revealed that more than 288 primarily Rohingya villages were either substantially or completely destroyed since late August.

More recently, hostilities between Myanmar junta forces and the Arakan Army in Rakhine State resumed in November 2023. Both sides have been responsible for serious abuses, including targeted attacks on civilians, arson, and unlawful conscription.

Then, on 2 May 2024, there was another attack in which Arakan Army fighters deliberately fired on unarmed villagers who were seeking safety after the armed group advanced on two Myanmar military bases in the vicinity. Details of the massacre only began emerging more than a year later, after some survivors fled to Bangladesh and Malaysia.

The estimated 600,000 Rohingya who remain in Rakhine State are subject to persecution and violence, confined to camps and villages without freedom of movement, and cut off from access to adequate food, health care, education, and livelihoods.

And instead of supporting their Muslim brothers, the rulers of the Muslim states around Burma have worsened their suffering.

The Rulers of Bangladesh Treat the Rohingya Muslims Worse than Animals

About one million Rohingya are currently living in overcrowded camps in Bangladesh, most of whom fled Myanmar in 2017 to escape the military's crimes against humanity and possible genocide.

Expanding families are crammed into bamboo and tarp shelters on steep, deforested hillsides that are highly vulnerable during the monsoon season.

There are deaths and injuries in the congested camps due to lethal cyclones, floods, and landslides. The rulers of Bangladesh have done nothing to reduce overcrowding in the refugee camps and did not maintain embankments, drainage, access routes, and emergency relocation sites.

The deadly risks facing Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh were evident from landslides in July 2026 that killed at least 17 people and displaced more than 3,000.

The Rohingya Coordination Platform reported that between July 4 and July 9, there were 286 weather-related incidents across the camps in Cox's Bazar, affecting 26,119 refugees, including 95 landslides that displaced 4,307 people, partially damaged 2,809 shelters and destroyed 13.

Several learning centers, toilet and tap-water facilities, retaining walls, pathways, stairways, bridges, and roads have also been damaged.

The Rulers of Malaysia Seek to Abandon the Rohingya Muslims to the Buddhist Mushrikeen

On July 23, 2026, Malaysia's deputy foreign minister informed parliament that 5,000 Myanmar nationals in immigration detention would be sent back to Myanmar.

On July 29, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said that Myanmar authorities had agreed to take back 5,000 ethnic Rohingya.

There are no authoritative figures on the number of Myanmar migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in Malaysia. In Malaysia, there are about 194,000 refugees and asylum seekers from Myanmar, including 126,000 ethnic Rohingya.

Recent announcements by Malaysian officials about plans to send people back to Myanmar come amid surging immigration raids and xenophobic rhetoric that have fostered intense public hostility toward the Rohingya Muslims.

A Call to the Islamic Ummah and Its Armies!

The Rohingya Muslims of Burma are our brothers and sisters. They suffer at the hands of the mushrikeen because they refuse to give up their Deen. It is a Shariah obligation upon the Islamic Ummah to support them.

That support will never come from the current rulers of the Muslims, as is clear from their inaction over the Muslims suffering in Palestine, Occupied Kashmir, India and East Turkestan (Xinjiang).

Worse, in the case of the Rohingya, the rulers of Muslims worsen their suffering by making them live in conditions that are not fit for animals and expelling them so they again face their oppressors in Burma.

They do not extend their support, even though the navies of Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia and Malaysia can easily overwhelm the Buddhist mushrikeen rulers of Burma, in the manner that the heroic commanders of Aurangzeb did.

There is no doubt that the Islamic Ummah and its armies must remove these heatless rulers and re-establish the protective shield of the Islamic ruling governance.

So let the Muslims strive with Hizb ut Tahrir for the re-establishment of the Khilafah (Caliphate) on the Method of the Prophethood. Let them contact their relatives and friends within the armies of Muslims and demand that they grant their Nussrah to Hizb ut Tahrir for the re-establishment of the ruling by the Shariah Law of Allah (swt).

It is then that the Khaleefah (caliph) will mobilize the armies and finally rid the world of the tyrants and their tyranny. Allah (swt) said, ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمُ انفِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ اثَّاقَلْتُمْ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ ۚ أَرَضِيتُم بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ ۚ فَمَا مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ﴾ **"O you who have believed, what is the matter with you that, when you are told to go forth in the cause of Allah, you cling heavily to the earth? Are you satisfied with the life of this world rather than the Hereafter? But the enjoyment of the life of this world is but little compared to the Hereafter."** [TMQ Surah At-Tawba: 38].