

## **The Ongoing Genocide in Myanmar – The Final Episode of a Master Plan for Extermination of Rohingyas: Needs urgent actions of world leaders**

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The long term process of extermination of the Rohingyas is all very well known to the whole world. This includes systematic mass killing of a helpless civilian population, indiscriminate gang rapes of girls and women, burning of thousands of homes and places of worship, and forcing them to leave their ancestral land. This horrific destruction of the most persecuted ethnic minority of the world has been happening with madness, arrogance and total disregard for any human rights and international obligations of Myanmar military led government and Buddhist nationalist thugs.

If history is any evidence, then former Burmese and current Myanmar Government not only has a long record of deliberately denying facts on its criminal acts but also shifting the blames on the victims. Fabricated stories coming from the Myanmar Government officials and military leaders that the Rohingyas burned their own homes in Rakhine are only a part of the mountain of lies they have been using to hide their heinous crime.

Myanmar Government has been also accused of oppressing a number of other ethnic groups such as Kachin, Chin, and Shan. These groups have been fighting against the Myanmar Government to gain freedom from the army-led rule and systematic discrimination. Many armed fighters of these groups are active in the southern Myanmar bordering northern Thailand.

The whole world has seen the satellite images of hundreds of villages burning after the Rohingyas left their houses, leaving everything behind, only to avoid being thrown in to the fire or shoot by guns. It is well recorded that, last year alone, hundreds of the Rohingyas were locked inside their homes and burned alive.

The US Secretary of State has asked for justice, British PM has called it heartbreaking, French President has termed it genocide, UN has referred as textbook example of ethnic cleansing, and the Human Rights and Charity Organizations have shared the worst atrocities and chilling stories, yet Myanmar is trying to blame the Rohingyas. If the Myanmar Government/army did not have anything to hide, why they did not allow international observers to visit the affected region? Why they did not grant unrestricted access to the UN agencies and representatives of diplomatic missions to visit Rakhine state? Why they did not allow international aid and humanitarian organisations free access to the affected people and places of residence of Rohingyas.

Since the denial of legitimate citizenship of Rohingyas in their ancestral land in 1982, Myanmar Government has ban Rohingyas from public education, jobs, and mixing with local Buddhists. Prior to the recent exodus of over 800,000 refugees, repeated government initiated massacres forced thousands of Rohingyas to enter Bangladesh in 1978, 1991-2, and then in 2012, 2015 and 2016.

A 2015 study of the International State Crime Initiative (ISCI), Queen Mary University London, led by Professor Penny Green reveals that in 1952 the Rohingya population in Rakhine was 1.2 million which reduced to 774,000 in 2008. How is this possible? ISCI discovered a leaked document adopted by the regime in 1988 which reveals the State Peace and Development Council's (SPDC) commitment to eliminating the Rohingyas from Myanmar: (1) not to provide citizenship and identify them as insurgents (2) reduce population growth by restricting marriage and oppressive measures including charging huge amount of money for giving birth of babies (3) increase Buddhist population by bringing settlers from other places and outside the country (4) restrict travel by introducing Form 4 (which is required by the foreign nationals for travel), and total ban to travel to Sittwe, the capital of Arakan State (5) forbid higher education (6) deprive government services (7) forbid owning land, shops and buildings, and confiscate all existing properties (8) ban construction and renovation of mosques, schools and houses (9) secretly convert Muslims to Buddhism (10) court shall always give verdict in favour of Buddhists so that Rohingyas leave the country (11) avoid mass killing to avoid attention of Muslim countries.

Article II of UN Resolution 260iii states, genocide means (a) killing members of the group (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group (c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part (d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group (e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. It also notes, "Persons committing, conspiring, inciting, or attempting genocide (article III) shall be punished, whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials or private individuals." The Myanmar Government and its Buddhist nationalist collaborators are guilty of every one of the above crimes.

The Head of UN Human Rights Commission described the situation of Rohingyas as the test book example of ethnic cleansing. This crime of ethnic cleansing clearly constitutes the crime of genocide. Cleansing of a race,

religion or ethnicity is achieved through massive arson, gang rape, mass killing, and forced eviction. In Myanmar, all these genocidal tools are being used against the Rohingyas.

The UN Security General Mr Antonio Guterres told that the speed of arrival of Rohingyas to Bangladesh as the fastest growing refugee in human history. Only a highly motivated genocidal regime with well-planned military operations could create such an exodus in such a short time.

On 27 October, in an interview with CNN, Mr Thomas Nybo, famous Freelance Photographer and Filmmaker, who spent 39 days with Rohingyas in the refugee camps in Bangladesh to record stories for UNICEF says, "Every person you talk with has a story that competes for the worst story you've ever heard." He told that 6 out of 10 refugees are children who have seen and experienced the worst atrocities that is even hard to comprehend. He testified the claims like "Rohingya free village" and "go and never come back" by Buddhists of Myanmar. What else is the world waiting for to take actions on the criminal rulers and butcher military officers responsible for the textbook ethnic cleansing of Rohingyas?

Myanmar is telling that they will take the displaced Rohingyas back if they have valid papers to prove that they are from Rakhine. Ironically, the said papers were never issued to the Rohingyas. Obviously when they were running for lives, did they have time or mind to think about papers even if they had it? How they would save the papers when they could not save their families and homes? Ironically, the influx of refugees is still entering Bangladesh with the all familiar stories of ongoing process of freeing Rakhine from Rohingyas.

They are also trying to use the trick of bilateral negotiation with Bangladesh to defuse the global outcry while they would never take the Rohingyas back unless they are forced through an international agreement via the UN. Myanmar will never listen to Bangladesh alone, and leaving the refugees, as they are, would certainly be a serious security risk to the region and a free gift to the terrorists to recruit future generation of suicide bombers.

For the global peace and security of the region India, China and Russia have a greater role to play. However, until now these countries have not clearly come out to condemn the genocide in Myanmar. Bangladesh Government must use its good diplomatic and trading relationship with these key countries to get them on board for a negotiated solution to force Myanmar to resettle Rohingyas in Rakhine. It is a challenge for the UN to demonstrate that its permanent members are united for the sake of humanity putting aside differences to keep the UN relevant and regain the trust of peace loving people.

It will be a huge task to convince the Rohingyas that it is now safe for them to return to their homes, and that they will have citizenship and security to live with dignity. The long term oppression and unthinkable killing, torture, burning, raping, discrimination, and deep rooted animosity and distrust between the perpetrators and victims would require effective international intervention and trusted third party to develop confidence and ensure security, as an essential precondition for return of refugees.

In the Second World War the Buddhists led Burmese Government supported Japan and Rohingyas in the then Arakan state fought for the British army. Unfortunately, when the colonial power left the Subcontinent Arakan state was left under Burma (now called Myanmar), and the hostilities between the Rohingyas and Buddhists continued. The Myanmar Government exploited the historical division and religious differences in oppressing Rohingyas by taking side with the majority Buddhists nationalists instead of caring for the minority community to create a harmonious nationhood.

Hardline Monk Ashin Wirathu, the leader of anti-Rohingya Buddhist movement Ba Ma Tha has been continuously inciting violence and directing his group to annihilate Rohingyas in pursuance of his terrorist agenda. This group successfully backed the 2015 passage of four race and religion laws that clearly discriminates against Rohingyas. They are responsible for mass murder and crime against humanity. This group must be banned in Myanmar and listed as a terrorist organization abroad. Many Rohingyas believe that the leader of anti-Muslim Arakan National Party, Dr Aye Muang is also behind the move to make Rakhine free of Rohingyas.

An estimated 1.2 million Rohingya Muslims have been evicted from their farm lands, gardens, homes, businesses, and community institutions like mosques and madrasa, and the local Burmese Buddhists have grabbed these Muslim properties with the blessings of the Government. This has accelerated the genocidal activities against the Muslims and generated a popular support in Myanmar. Such a huge economic temptation attracted people to the crime and helped implement Government plans. Obviously, the anti-Muslim campaign has been used as a tool of mass-scale robbery, raping, arson and killing against the Muslims.

Recently Al Jazeera reported, "because of such an evil motive, a cataclysmic crime against the Rohingya Muslims could run for decades with the public support. But the UN and the world leaders continue to commit their own crime of silence and inaction, too. It is indeed an extreme form of moral collapse as well as the worst form of leadership failure that even the worst genocidal regime in Myanmar could enjoy support from so many states. Such supportive leaders for the genocidal state have indeed proven that they are the part of the same moral disease."

Why can't the world leaders get out of this shameful chronic inaction against Myanmar and move forward to create an example of justice for the mankind?