

# **History of Arakan**

**(Burma)**

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## FOREWORD

Burma, once known as a land of peace and plenty, has unfortunately lost both its beautiful features. According to the claims of the Muslims of Arakan Division, the Burmese section on the borders of the Chittagong Division of Bangladesh, they are around one million but even according to Reuters and other foreign correspondents they are around 600,000. Perhaps the truth lies somewhere between the claims of the Rohingyas (the Arakanese Muslims are known by that name) and the estimate of the foreign correspondents, who have gone over to places like Cox Bazaar, Tek-Naf, etc. to see the truth for themselves.

As to the fantastic claim of the Burmese Government that these Rohingyas are not an indigenous people but have migrated from Bangladesh, nothing could be farther from the truth. Even according to authentic historians like Harvey, whose books (big and small) are held in high esteem even by the authorities in Burma, the Arab traders were in Arakan from around the 7th century. Later it was primarily through these Arab merchants that Islam spread into Burma, first in Arakan and later into Burma proper when the pleasure of spreading the message of Islam was shared also by merchants from the Indian sub-continent and from Iran and some even from China in the north.

Historically, when a Prince, of the glorious Moghul Empire of Delhi, the brother of the famous Emperor Aurangzeb, called Prince Shuja, was defeated, he sought refuge in Arakan. Why? because at that time there was already in Arakan a peacefully settled and well-established Muslim community. And this too was hundreds of years back, to be exact 1658.

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When Burma had a democratically elected Council (Parliament) there used to be a number of Muslim members of the Council from Arakan and some held high governmental and ministerial positions also. There used to be hundreds of duly recognised and registered Muslim schools also in the Arakan Division itself with a separate Muslim Deputy Inspector of schools to look after these Muslim schools. Rohingyas speak the local dialect with the same fluency as any other Arakanese and quite a number of these are also masters of the Burmese language. It must not be forgotten that Burma has many a different nationality, all forming part of Burma, like the Chins, the Kachins, the Shans, etc. Like these are also the Rohingyas and all these only point to the indigenous character of the Arakanese Muslims.

Unfortunately, just because these Rohingyas are in one secluded part, cut off from the main stream, they should not be denied their national rights. To live there as honourable citizens is their birth right. How can these people be denied their basic human rights? It is against the Charter of the United Nations and what is happening in Arakan for the past few months, is in blatant violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a Declaration accepted by Burma also. Suppression and terrorism has solved no problem: it will not be the panacea for the ills of Arakan. We hope the leaders of the Burma Government will rise to the occasion and settle this problem amicably and honourably. It is not a question between Burma and Bangladesh. It is a human question and the conscience of the world community will have to be moved that justice is meted out to these neglected ethnic groups of Arakan who are subjected by interested gangs to all sorts of rape and rapacious acts, leading to all sorts of murderous, disgraceful and disgusting conduct of the attacking gangs and some times with the connivance, any

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active participation by those responsible for maintaining law and order. A halt has to be called to the existing deteriorating situation and the sooner the better, lest the fire should spread to the other parts of the country, which the Government of Burma will not like or does the Burma Government want to compel the people of Arakan to rise in open revolt out of utter desperation. Both the alternatives, we submit, are bad for the Government of Burma is really sure of their ground. It claims why do they not permit outside free and independent Agencies, even International Bodies, to send their representatives on Fact-finding Missions to see things for themselves in the broad, day-light and tell the world the truth.

This book is the result of an objective study of the history of Arakan, for the world to know the truth about the history of the Muslim community in Arakan and not fall a prey to the repeated propaganda that they are not Burmese nationals but that they have sneaked into Arakan illegally. This lie has to be nailed.

In all fairness it must be admitted that like other citizens, these Rohingyas are holders of their government-issued Identity Cards but to deprive them of their legal weapon, there are cases on record, that these Rohingya peoples used to be called in groups to the Police Station to bring with them their Identity Cards and on the pretext of checking the same before the very eyes of the genuine holders of the cards these were torn to bits just to deny them their legal identity: protests, even by responsible people, had no effect. But how about their houses and gardens and agricultural land and rice and other mills which belie the false charges. Are these not proof enough to demolish the concocted stories that these Rohingyas are new-comers? Nobod



Some cynics, or to be exact some keen observers, remark and perhaps rightly, that the Government of Burma is staging these scenes in Arakan to divert the world's attention from the sore economic and socio-political ills of the country.

Nobody likes to leave their homes and hearths. The bones of their great great grand fathers are buried there. These poor victims, who have been compelled to leave their lives, deserve the sympathetic support of all lovers of mankind. These refugees have come naked or in tattered rags; they are so famished that even their ribs are seen. Breasts of their women-folks have been chopped off. The camps are horror-scenes where death and decay reign supreme. When will the International conscience be fully aroused. We are most grateful to the Press of the world for lifting some corners from these deadly scenes to arouse mankind. We are equally appreciative and grateful to the International Agencies who are already carrying the Mercy-Mission in the Camps of the refugees.

I congratulate Moulvi Nur Ahmad Saheb, the Convenor of Dawah wal Irshad section of the Motamar Al-Alam Al-Islami to have brought out this timely and informative publication. My thanks are also due to the editors of the book, who want to remain anonymous, for their painstaking work.

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## INTRODUCTION

History is the mirror of life and measure of its performance. It reflects human life in all its passing phases and evaluates its works through ages. History upholds the great romance of human experience in the past. It is through this mirror that others can know of a people who can as well know themselves through this mirror and also guide themselves properly. The correct assessment of a people's past history determines the pace of its present progress and the shape of its future.

We and our people, in Arakan, are yet unknown to the outside world. Our history has long since been remained totally neglected and unwritten. To understand the history of the Muslims of this land, a study of the histories of Burma proper, Bengal, Islamic world, Indonesia, China and a few other Southeast Asian countries is of vital importance. Of all these countries Bengal and the Islamic World played a distinctive role of their own for several centuries, favoured by some natural peculiarities and circumstances.

Had we not been subjected to suffer from the grim ordeals of life at the hands of those who lived together with us peacefully for centuries and also were governed and ruled by our ancestors, an investigation into our past history would

surely be not possible till eternity. It is perhaps a blessing in disguise for us that we have anyhow at last become conscious of our very existence under the Socialist Government of Burma. We the Muslims of Arakan have a more than 1300 year-old tradition and history of our own, expressed in our shrines, cemeteries, sanctuaries, seminars, socio-cultural institutions etc. found scattered even today over every nook and corner of the land.

Whatever so far have been found written about Arakan or Burma are centered round Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and a few non-Muslim personalities. All that are found about Muslims are merely collateral and mostly corrupted. In spite of once being the majority community in Arakan, with centuries-old tradition, culture, history and civilisation of our own we received little or no attention from any quarter. By His grace, the days are not far off when, to the surprise of our persecutors, the 'Gordian Knot' of our numerical strength too will be cut as an evidence in support of our decades-long assertion of being in majority at least up to 1942 A. D. But the irony of fate is that this protracted ignorance of the remarkable contributions of ours in various fields of activities in Arakan and Burma proper have not only misled the world but also obviously illusioned some literates amongst us.

To be able to understand fully and correctly about a people it is also of utmost importance to know their history and geography of their country. As is evident from traditions, accounts, texts, annals, chronicles and histories, hundreds of saints and mystics from the Islamic lands in Western and Central Asia preached Islam, simultaneously with its advent, along all the coastal areas from Oman to Philippines and China to which "Kaya-pari/Kaira-pari and Hanifar Tonkies (shrines)", in the Mayu Territory between the rivers Kaladan and Naaf, the shrines of "Babaji Shah Monayam" of Ambari and "Pir Badr Shah" at Akyab also bear a conclusive testimony.

As a prelude to the above historical events it can authentically be asserted that the history of the Muslim people is indeed a chequered one. For, so-long as our Holy Prophet (SM) lived, he remained the central figure of attraction. By the time the prophet passed away almost the whole of Arabian Peninsula has embraced Islam. With his unwavering faith in Allah and with his firm belief in his mission, he had left behind a great example for his followers to emulate. The early Muslims with the missionary zeal of the Master, carried the torch after him almost with the same fervour and enthusiasm covering more than half the world.



The mental of Prophethood fell on our Holy Prophet Mohammad (SM) in 610 A.D. and within 50 years of this date of advent of Islam the Arabs (the Arabic speaking people inhabiting the Arab home-land including North Africa, Eastern Mediterranean, Iraq and the Arabian peninsula) constructed the first Mosque at Canton in Southeast China to which region they had been undertaking voyages along the old-established sea-route to the Far East since 300 A.D. They had already a trading post in Canton—for many centuries the only entry by sea into the country.

Besides the above sea-route, the Arabs and other Muslims like those of the Persians, Moers, Moghuls and Indonesians also used the old Chinese land-route through Arakan for minimizing their travel durations going to Burma and China.

From the 7th to 10th centuries the Capitals of present Arakan were successively at Wesali, Laungret and a few other cities along the river Lemro when Hinduism and Buddhism prevailed over the region. But, after a chaotic rule of about 5 centuries Mrauku was founded by King Saman or Saw Mwan (a corruption of Solaiman), on his restoration to the throne of Arakan in 1430 A. D., by Ilyas Shahi Sultan Naseruddin Shah of Gaur the then capital of Muslim Bengal (1342-1576 A. D.)

It is particularly to be noted in this connection that Islam was first introduced in Arakan during the periods of some Hindu Dynasties that preceded the Chandra Dynasty ( 788-957 A.D. ), by the Sufis Mystics and the Arab, Moorish and Persian traders, within 50 years of the advent of Islam ( i.e. 610-660 A.D. ). So, we can conveniently presume this date of the first introduction of Islam in Arakan to be 660 A. D. at the latest.

The Muslim population went on increasing during the long period of 5 centuries following the conquest of the Easterly Hindu state of Wesali in 957 A.D. by the Mongolians. Their position was so well established that they were acclaimed as King makers in Arakan. They, however did not aspire to set up any kingdom of their own till the momentous year of 1430 A.D. when the deposed Buddhist (Magh) king Naramithla was restored to the throne of Arakan under the Muslim name of Solaiman later corrupted into Saman or Saw Mwan.

Solaiman was the first king of this last dynasty of Mrauku. With him there began an era in the history of Arakan. The country became enlivened with the impact of renaissance in every sphere of life all over Mrauku which by the time of king Salim Shah or Razagri (1593-1612 A.D.) became extended as far as Moalmein in Tenasserim Division of Lower Burma.

Persian was adopted as the state language which continued upto 1836 A.D. when the British Colonial Rulers in Arakan switched it over to English. Muslim coinage was brought into circulation. Mosques, Pagodas, educational and cultural institutions were profusely built. The democratic force of Islam produced momentous effects in the domain of education and knowledge as well. The patronage of the kings of this lineage stimulated the rapid development of the Arabic, Persian, Rohingya, Bengali and Burmese languages and literatures. The Buddhists (Maghs) also graduated themselves in Muslim studies and even embraced Islam in numbers.

Really, the country's administrative systems and the people's cultural and social life were revolutionised. The land was blooming with prosperity and real happiness. In other words, all that is Muslim was adopted and unflinchingly adhered to for over 3 centuries. The Muslims (our ancestors) and the Buddhists of Aryan and Indo-Mongolian stocks lived side by side in perfect amity. Of course, with the fall of the Chandra Dynasty Hinduism vanished forever from Arakan and some of its followers that survived the calamities later became assimilated.

Apparently, the Muslims all through this glorious period remained predominant till 1784

A.D. in which year king Bodawpaya conquered the Mrauku Empire and barbarously plundered its Capital city of Mrohaung. Thousands of the people, irrespective of caste and creed, were savagely massacred. Hundreds were made captives. Mosques, Pagodas, Shrines, Seminaries, Libraries (including the Royal Library) and several public establishments were razed to the ground as a far-flung effect of which, inter alia, we are now being condemned and persecuted as undesirable aliens on our own soil in Arakan.

The ignominious rule of the Burmese kings from the other side of the Arakan Yoma (Mountain) also tumbled down when the Britishers conquered Arakan in 1824-26 A.D. (1st Anglo-Burmese war). In 1885 A.D. the conquest of the whole of Burma was completed by them and thenceforward they remained in the country as rulers till January 4, 1948. It was on this day that the last British Government handed over authority to the 1st President of the Burmese Republic in accordance with the treaty which had been signed in London on October 17, 1947 and was admitted as an independent member of the United Nations later in 1948. As to what political upheavals took place, particularly relating to Arakan, will be taken up later on.



As regards our national identity, we can with all impunity at our command aver on the basis of some undisputed historical references that the entire present Muslim population of Arakan are the direct progeny of the early Muslim settlers of the land inhabiting the area, as an ethnic race, for the last 1316 years and number about 15,00,000, inclusive of nearly 5,00,000 who emigrated to India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, U.A.E., Saudi Arabia, U.K., U.S.A., Singapore and Thailand to escape persecution. The Indians and the Pakistanis numbering about 12,00,000 who came to Burma as immigrants left the country decades back. Those who left after 1962 have also been compensated. So to brand the majority of the indigenous Muslims in Burma now as aliens is nothing short of racism.

Our relations with the Buddhists remained traditionally harmonious and cordial till 1942 in which ominous year about 80,000 of our innocent and unarmed people were massacred by a militant group of Buddhist Nationalists whose popular cry is "To be a Burman is to be a Buddhist."

Traditionally and historically we the two ethnic races in Arakan: the Muslims and the Buddhists, are known as ROHINGYAS and MAGHS who in subsequent references may be understood as such.

Due to sheer ill luck we could neither make ourselves nor our problems known to the outside world being deplorably handicapped by the total lack of means of publicity and propaganda. Whereas, the propaganda of the Union of Burma has been so well organised, so widely and deeply penetrative and so effective as to form a thick and solid barrier between world public opinion and possible efficiency of the propagation of the justice of our genuine cause.

By way of an illustration it can, however, be pointed out that there are 6 Muslim Organisations in Burma proper who are obviously under the influence of the Central Government. In this context a reference may be made to a report published in the issue dated October 13, 1975 of the government owned Daily— "The Guardian", on the subject of criticisms in some "Foreign Publications" relating to state oppression of the Burmese Muslims.

The report reveals that U Ko Ko the Minister of Home and Religious Affairs of Burma along with his 2 Deputies, in a privately convened plenary conference, met the leaders of the said 6 Muslim Organisations in Rangoon. After due deliberations the Minister declared the World Press criticisms as unfounded and "Wage to



tarnish Burma's image and to sow dissent among religionists", which were "repudiated by the Muslim leaders themselves". In addition, the Ministers are reported to have said that "there was complete freedom of religion in the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma".

It is crystal clear that no representative of the Rohingyas from Arakan was called upon to attend the conference though they constitute half of the total Muslim population of Burma. The Muslims of Burma proper have no other alternative than to act up to the dictates of the government being scattered and disintegrated from the rest of the Muslim world. Whereas, it is otherwise in Arakan.

## ARAKAN

### GEOGRAPHY

It is a fact of history that geography plays a great part in shaping the political life of a country and moulding the socio-cultural pattern of its people. The physical features and natural peculiarities indeed reflect the life and culture of the land. The history of a country cannot be appreciated without the knowledge of its geography. Hence, an idea of the natural peculiarities form an essential preliminary to the study of its history.

Wherefore, in placing this Brochure before the peace-loving civilised world and the consciences of its extremely advanced peoples it is felt absolutely necessary, in the first instance, to describe the geography of our rightful and sacred motherland where we have been established for several generations and have our homes and families and our dead.

The geographical peculiarities of this region of Arakan had thus a tremendous influence on the political, social, spiritual, economic and cultural life of the ROHINGYAS and the MAGHS. The natural features of this land, which were, and even now are, peculiar to itself, left distinctive marks on socio-cultural institutions, mental outlook, way of life, education,

food, dress, and manners and custom of its people. Arakan has thus some geographical features of its own and which distinguishes it from the rest of Burma.

It is a narrow mountainous strip of land along the coast of the Bay of Bengal and stretches north and south touching Bangladesh on the northwest, India on the north and the Chin Hills on the northeast. It is separated from the rest of Burma by the Arakan Yoma which lies extended from the Chin Hills, on the north, to the Bay, on the south. It has a 171-mile border with Bangladesh, both by land and sea, to which it traditionally serves as "The Gateway to the Far East", by land. There are some plausible historical references also describing it as "The Greater Chittagong" having centuries-old trade, political, social and cultural relations with Chittagong proper and other parts of Bengal as well.

Its total area, including rivers and forests, is 14,914 sq. m., presently inhabited by 2 million people of the Rohingyas and Maghs, in equal proportions, excluding about half a million of those Rohingyas who, since 1942, fled the land, to various countries of the world, to escape persecution and not counted at home due to gross racial discrimination. The composition of the population itself reflects the gradual development of the history of the land. But, however, the

politically-motivated statistical data and the periodical census reports will not, and cannot, at the least, bolster the above averment of the composition, for many obvious reasons.

In all, there are seven rivers: The Naaf, Mayu, Kaladan, Lemro, An, Taungup and Sandoway. The Naaf is the boundary line between Arakan and Chittagong. The Kaladan is the biggest one. It rises from beyond the Arakan Hill Tracts and flows into the turbulent Bay of Bengal at Akyab, the chief sea-port for the whole of the region. Like the Kaladan the rest of the rivers flow into the Bay with some variations. All of these rivers are tidal and easily navigable all the year round. Particularly, the mouths of the Kaladan and the Lemro are very wide and deep where scores of ocean-going vessels of various descriptions: sailing and steam, could be seen all the year round, mostly manned with Muslim sailors hailing from different parts of Muslim world, specially from Bengal—Chittagong, Noakhali and Sylhet districts.

A couple of miles, up the river Naaf, there lies, on its eastern estuary, the port of Maungdaw. This riverine port was established purely by the Rohingyas almost at the same time of the colonisation of the fishing town of Akyab, in Akyab Island, by the Muslim sea-faring and maritime people from the West, Indonesia and Bengal.



On both the banks of the historical river Lemro there flourished some ancient cities like Wesali, Launggret, Parim and Mrauku (Mrohaung / Pathariquillah) which, through passage of time, became overshadowed by the rapidly developed town of the modern Akyab. The other interior riverine ports: Kyauktaw, Bandar, Minbya, Pauktaw, Paletwa, Taungbazar, Buthe-daung, Rathedaung, An, Taungup, Gwa and Sandoway, all predominantly inhabited, since very long, by a mixed population of the Rohingyas and Maghs, are not intended to be touched herein for brevity of time and space.

However, the importance of the river Mayu cannot instantly be ignored for several reasons, the principal one of which is that it rises from the northern hilly area and gently flows meandering through the heart of the alluvial area between the eastern bank of the Naaf and the western estuary of the longest Kaladan river, admittedly and traditionally known as "The Muslim Majority Area in Arakan". The paramount historical importance of Mrohaung cannot also be overlooked, mostly on the incontrovertible fact that it is the solitary ancient city which has overlived 545 years of vicissitudes in Arakan and was also the pompous centre of Islamic civilisation and culture, at least from the time of king Solaiman (corrupted into Saw Mwan, 1430-1434 A.D.) the founder of the Mrauku

dynasty, upto 1784 A.D. in which year the Burmese King Bodawpaya pillaged Mrauku (Mrohaung) and conquered the Mrauku Empire. On the other hand, Akyab gradually developed from a lowly Muslim fishing, trading and piratical rendezvous to the status of the present capital of "The Arakan State" (Burma), mainly through endeavours and enterprises of the Muslims, followed lastly by those of the western Christians and a handful of Chinese people from Indonesia and Burma proper. Surprisingly, among the Rohingyas and the Maghs there were also two well-to-do German and Jew families established since long.

The climate is tropical with an average annual rainfall of 200 inches. The mountainous areas are hotter and colder than the coastal belts. The off-shore Islands and the Islets, in addition, enjoy a maritime climate. On the whole its climate is very conducive to its indigenous people. The two panoramic islands of Cheduba and Ramree amidst the deep blue Bay water are also fertile with a mixed Rohingya and Magh population primarily engaged in agriculture and trade. In all these islands and islets too the Rohingyas were in clear majority but, unfortunately, they are now reduced to minority and persecuted.

There are five over-land routes which lead to China and India. The An, Taungup and

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Universal man cannot forget his history. So we cannot abandon and cynically consign the past history of our people to oblivion. Every country : big or small, has history of its own. For centuries Arakan had been the scene of rise and fall of some civilizations : Hindu, Buddhist and Islamic. In prehistoric days it was sparsely inhabited by cannibals and heathens who had to flee the region due to the gradual influx of the Hindus and Buddhists, from India, through Behar, Orissa, Assam and Bengal. During the period from at least 100 to 788 A.D., some Hindu dynasties ruled over certain limited areas of this region, with their capital along the river Lemro.

Some Hindu Kings of the Chandra dynasty founded the city of Wesali (the capital of the kingdom of Wesali) in 788 A.D., on the river Lemro, 50 miles from the Bay of Bengal. There was also a small Hindu Kingdom at Ramu, a place 10 miles off Cox's Bazar on the coastal region between Arakan and Chittagong which came in direct contact with the Arab merchants and became popular with them.

History is replete with most authentic references and direct evidence of the Arabs being

in contact with the Far East since 300 A.D. Simultaneously with the advent of Islam in 610 A.D. a considerable number of Muslims of different affiliations—Arabs, Persians, Turks, Moors, Indonesians and Abyssinians found home in Arakan.

"In the 8th and 9th centuries of the Christian Era the Arabs were foremost seafaring and Maritime people of the world and the Arab merchants sailed to all waters to far off countries of the East and the West. The eastern trade of Arab merchants flourished so much so that the Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal turned into Arab lakes. There is evidence to show that the Arab sea route followed the line of the coast of Bengal and Arakan and the Arab merchants established extensive commercial relations with the sea ports of these countries".

Buddhism arose as an offshoot of Hinduism and in the city of Wesali both Hinduism and Buddhism were practiced but sometimes after the influx of Muslims, a Mongolian invasion took place in Arakan which ended the Chandra dynasty in 957 A.D. Hinduism in the Easterly Hindu state of Wesali thus vanished forever. This invasion not only closed the epoch of the Chandras but also carried away the Pala Kings of Bengal at the same time. Wesali could never reemerge but in Bengal the Hindus regained their supremacy in a few years by pushing back the barbaric Mongolians into the deeper mountainous areas.



"The Mongolians were savages and following their invasion supervened a period of darkness. But, however, by continuous contacts with the conquered people, in course of time, many of them became educated in the mixed culture of the country they had conquered. The capital was removed from Wesali to Lemro river fifteen miles south east".

"There during the ensuing centuries numerous dynasties ruled, each with its own city but always in the same locality. Few archeological remains of this period of 5 centuries exist, though brick foundations may be seen on the Lemro bank. There was no coinage during the period of 5 centuries". One thing appears to be certain that the Mongolian conquerors who ultimately could not assimilate themselves with the Buddhists and the Muslims gradually receded to the neighbouring mountainous regions of Arakan and Bengal.

"Over the mountains in Burma proper was the quaint Kingdom of Pagan. There existed a road connecting the Lemro with Pagan. The road was known as Buywet-ma-nyo". During the period of 5 centuries the Maghs kept contacts with Pagan, especially in matters of religion. "It was along this road that the religious ideas and Burmese writing, in South Indian inscript, came over to Arakan, during the 11th and 12th centuries. No inscription in the Burmese script

are found in Arakan before this period". It is, however, to be noted that the youngest daughter of the ill-fated Moghul Prince Sha Shuja named Ameena, also escaped from the palace of the then king of Arakan in 1660 A.D. or there after by the said route, to Central Burma which was even in those remote days was as well the home of several wealthy and powerful Muslim families.

Burmese language like Bengali originated from Pali and Sanscrit. The Muslims later on introduced Arabic, Persian and Bengali also. It is understood from a comparative study of the relevant historical writings that at Wesali, Bengali, well imbued with Pali and Sanscrit words and phrases, was generally used to be spoken and written by both the Hindus and the Buddhists. But, with the rapid growth of Muslim population Arabic, Persian and Bengali too began to be used by this mixed population of the Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims. With the coming of the Mongolians their dialect too slightly found way into the arena of the languages then prevalent in Wesali.

After the disappearance of Hinduism and the assimilation of the Mongolians there remained only the two distinctive races of the ROHINGYAS and the MAGHS who through centuries lived together in perfect peace and

amity till 1942 in which year, at the heinous instigation of a murderous group of the Buddhist Nationalists, hundred of Rohingya settlements were devastated and about 80,000 of unarmed and peaceful Rohingyas were savagely massacred, the agony of which is still sharpened by the memory of the gruesome tragedy.

Anyway, by the time the Burmese writing came over to Arakan a lingua franca had already developed. It was termed as ROHINGYA. Subsequently it also began to be written in Arabic and Bengali characters. Whereas, the Magh Buddhists who were originally of Aryan stock from Magadha of Behar in India, during the 11th and 12th centuries, developed a dialect by addition of Burmese words to ROHINGYA. In course of time it was termed as MAGHI. In fact, both of these terms are one and the same and freely spoken by both these indigenous races of Arakan even to this day. Of course the latter, i.e. the Maghi is not a written language but "merely a dialect". In other words, these two sister lingoes are inseparable from each other.

In the field of politics and amidst the pages of some recent Burmese historical works, we, to our greatest surprise, find the terms "Arakanese" and "Arakanese Language", attributed to the

Maghs, in the face of quite Contrary historical evidence of utmost importance. In this connection an independent European Historian writes :

"The question of the emergence of the Arakanese language is more difficult. Whether it was the language of the Mongolian invaders of the 10th century or whether it filtered across the mountains after contact with Burma in the 11th & 12th centuries is undecided ..... The question awaits judgement".

The Muslims, however, never tried to establish any kingdom of their own but remained satisfied as king makers till 1430 A.D. as they were more interested in carrying on their traditional trade and propagating Islam. It is not at all a fact that "Muslims were not to arrive till 1203" in Arakan. The Magh King Naramithla was deposed in 1406 A.D. by the heir-apparent to the throne of Ava. "He fled the country, taking refuge at Gaur, the capital of the Sultans of the Muslim Bengal. The Magh King remained there for 24 years leaving his country in the hands of the Burmese. Ilyasshai Nasiruddin Shah became Sultan in 1426 A.D. Naramithla graduated himself in Muslim studies and turned away from what was Buddhist and familiar to what was Muslim and foreign. In so doing he loomed from the mediaeval to the modern, from



the fragile fairy-land of the Glass Palace Chronicle to the robust extravaganza of the Thousand Nights and one Night". He eventually accepted Islam under the name of Sulaiman Shah. Then, "Sultan Nasiruddin Shah restored him in 1430 A.D." under the assumed Magh title of Saw Mwan and Mrauku was built.

It is noteworthy that "one of that Sultan's Coins was recently found near the site of the city. It is a unique document in the history of Arakan ... In this way Arakan became definitely orientated towards the Muslim States. Contact with a modern civilization resulted in a renaissance. The country's great age began".

It took the kings of Arakan a hundred years thereafter to learn the doctrine of Islam. When it was thoroughly understood, they founded what was known as the Mrauku Empire. For the hundred years, 1430-1530, Arakan remained very close to the Muslim Bengal and further learnt its history and politics. In 1531 A.D. Zabauk Shah under the assumed Magh title of Minbin ascended the throne and founded the Mrauku Empire which extended upto Moulmein in lower Burma. Persian was the court language of Mrauku since 1430 A.D.

When Zabauk Shah came to the throne (1531-53 A.D.) he turned Mrauku into the

strongest fortified city of the Bay and modernised his navy by building a large fleet manned mainly with hardy Rohingya boatmen in co-operation with the Portuguese in lieu of trade concession. The sudden rise of Arakan into unprecedented importance in the Bay is principally due to its Islamisation. "Arakan had turned into a Sultanate. The court was shaped on Gaur and Delhi; there were unachs and the seraglio, the slaves and the executioner". There were absolute freedom of religion, thought, movement, culture-nay all fundamental rights and freedoms. Zabauk Shah embellished Mrauku with mosques, pagodas and monuments. The architecture of the mosques and monuments were neither Indo-Islamic nor Indian but of a particular type came to be known as "Bengali Muslim Architecture" of the Muslim Bengal period.

"Zabauk Shah founded the prosperity of Mrauku but Salim Shah (Rezagri) consolidated it. He ruled from 1593 to 1611 A.D. The century from 1540 to 1640 A.D. was indeed very brilliant and imposing. Copying the imperial court of Delhi its kings adopted the title of Padshah. But gradually Mrauku dwindled to insignificance and was finally conquered by the Burmese king Bedawpaya in 1784 A.D. who invaded the realm under advice of one Ngathande, one of the six pretenders of the country.

The Burmese administered Arakan from 1784 to 1825 A.D. but taught nothing to the people of the country.

The fall of Mrauku was a mortal blow to both the Rohingyas and the Maghs for everything that was materially and culturally Islamic was raged to the ground and hundreds of the Rohingyas were brutally killed. Two hundred thousands are said to have fled to Bengal. The Muslims, in fact, could not ever emerge as rulers. But, had the Mrauku Rule been continued with the same fervour and tactics as in the beginning Muslim supremacy in Arakan would never end. As for the Maghs 'the Mahamuni image of Lord Buddha was removed to Amrapura, where it now sits'. Moreover, almost all rare documents of the Hindu and Buddhist periods were mostly destroyed and the rest carried away to central Burma by Bodawpaya in 1784 A.D.

The Burmese king had never used coins and hence he copied the Muslim design of the Mrauku period. This Burmese period too was a chaotic one. The Burmese Governor of Mrauku found it in a very lawless state. One Chinbya organised a rebellion. To secure peace and maintain order the Burmese put to death many Rohingyas and Maghs and deported others.

Having been disgusted with the Burmese administration the people of Mrauku enthusiastically sided with the Britishers and facilitated in every way their occupation of the country during the 1st. Anglo-Burmese War of 1824-26 A.D. "When the Burmese had fled and Mrauku was occupied by the English its people expected that the history of 1430 A.D. would be repeated and that a Mrauku prince would be placed on the throne. But unfortunately the legitimate line had been exterminated years before and it would have been

difficult to select one from the descendants of various usurping commoners who followed, a prince acceptable to the popular opinion".

The British administration in Arakan, however, continued peacefully upto 1942. Persian was retained as court language uptill 1836 A.D. The people were given facilities of all sorts in freely exercising their basic rights and fundamental freedoms. Urdu and Persian were taught even upto the University level. There was no racism but the policy of "Divide and Rule" was still perceivable. By 1885 A.D. the whole of Burma was conquered by the Britishers and in 1937 it was separated from India. The independence to Burma was given on January 4, 1948. Arakan achieved statehood on December 15, 1974 under the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma, headed by U Ne Win who seems to have utterly failed to properly appreciate and evaluate the Rohingya image.

Almost all the aliens (12,00,000) in Burma left the country by the year 1942 and a negligible number of them who remained there on account of their interests in business, industry, immovable property etc. had to leave to the last person, on payment of compensation or otherwise, on or before 1964. Hence, there is now no real question of any infiltration of foreign nationals



into Burma through any of her borders. In the face of such clear historical facts and administrative records it is, unequivocally and absolutely, a gross contravention of all International Laws and norms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to thus exterminate the Rohingya population and establish settlements of Buddhist on the usurped lands, on the basis of such false and unwarranted facts. The Rohingyas of Arakan are even now in majority, as they were also in the past 500 years. But, unfortunately, this reality has still remained shrouded in mystery. By what names the old Arakan was called anterior to 788 A.D. is immaterial here. What is actually relevant is the term ROHANG.

## ROHANG

So far scholarship has not been able to discover the etymology of the word ROHANG. However, it is undoubtedly of Persian origin. We are quite sanguine that our scholars in the nearest future will surely carry on the subject further in respect of the exact significance of this word ROHANG and its ultimate derivation. But it is, so far, a well known fact that the Arab and Persian traders of the earliest days attributed this name to the old kingdom of Wesali, at least a century prior to the Chandras, which country they used to visit and after availing the necessary period of rest, took to their onward journey to Central Burma and far-off China (Yunan, Canton etc.) through land routes across the Arakan Yoma and the river Irrawady, to minimise their travelling durations. As tradition and history state, Islam was first introduced into this region of ROHANG by saints and mystics and subsequently by Muslim traders.

“Hundreds of saints and their followers came, in different times, to Bengal and the region now known as Arakan, from Persia and other Muslim lands, along the old-established sea-route and spread themselves in towns and remote villages. They promoted the faith, fostered mysticism and divine love and contributed to

the mental and morale well-being of the people. Their exemplary character, extraordinary moral force and great feeling for the suffering community drew the mass of the non-Muslims wherever they went. To this was added the great literal and cultural force of Islam, which the saints, missionaries and merchants held before the seekers after ideal and also to the persecuted and degraded peoples of the society of the time. The activities of these ideal characters attracted non-Muslims, the Buddhists as well as the Hindus of every class to the fold of Islam".

There are several places in the present Arakan which are associated with some of these celebrated saints and mystics one of whom is Pir Badr-al-Din Badr-i-Alam. His Astana (resting place) is situated on the coast of the Bay of Bengal, at Akyab. The people over there traditionally call it as the Dargah (shrine) of Badr Shah or Badr Moqum. It is daily visited by hundreds of people, irrespective of caste, creed, age and sex. Most of them were Sufis mystics as well as 'Alim', well versed in Arabic and Persian.

The Muslim population of Arakan are yet popularly known as Rohingyas and 'Inshallah' will remain to be known as such in future to so long as a single Rohingya is alive. But, for God's sake let their genocide and extermination be stopped ere it is too late.

However, man proposes and God disposes. In spite of intermittent vandalism one can still witness the remnants of hundreds of ancient mosques including that of general SANDIKHAN (1433 A.D.) who was sent from Gaur by Sultan Nasiruddin Shah to restore king Solaiman (Saw Mwan) to the throne of Arakan in 1430 A.D.

Particularly, during the Mrauku period (1430-1784 A.D.) the Rohingyas held eminent posts in the country's administration. By way of illustration mention may be made of Zuzil/ Zalil Lashker, Daulat Quazi, Ashraf Khan, Sayed Mohammad, Mirza, Majlis, Solaiman, Sayed Sha Aloal and thousands of others who were Chief Ministers and Secretaries, Army and Navy Generals, Quazis, Court poets, Courtiers, Royal guards, Religious teachers, Cultural and Educational Heads etc. The superior ideas, culture, etiquette and ways of life of the Rohingyas to an appreciable extent reacted the Maghs in many ways. The Maghs uptill this day speak Rohingya as well, the original lingua franca of these two communities in Arakan. The word Arakanese attributed to the Magh alone, is highly erroneous, misconceived and misleading. Looking at the past history of Arakan it can legitimately be asserted that if the indigenous Rohingyas cannot claim Arakan as their sacred motherland the Maghs too have no right at all to be the sons of the soil. 1.5 million Rohingyas are also bonafide citizens of Burma. As such,



would the Ruling Junta be, good and wise enough, to see things in their true perspective and restore all the usurped rights and freedoms of the Rohingyas and promptly Halt their persecution and rape, genocide and extermination ?

That old Arakan was known as **ROHANG** is a historical fact which is not susceptible of any criticism. "It is known from the Arab geographers that the Arab and Persian merchants in their eastward voyage visited the port of Ornashin (a corruption of Rohang or Roshang—old Arakan and Abena (Burma)". To quote an authentic reference, mention may unhesitatingly be made of the Ballad on the "Lamentation of Ameena", the youngest daughter of the ill-fated Moghul prince Shah Shuja, composed after his death, at Mrauku, during the middle of the 17th century by Sayed Shah Aloal, the celebrated Rohingya saint-poet who was also the captain of the Royal Guard of the then Mrauku King, wherein the poet amply mentioned about the Kingdom of Rohang and Rohingyas.

The poet similarly referred to Rohang and the Rohingyas also in his two other popular Ballads: 'Saiful Muluk Badiuzzamal' and 'Sekander Nama' which were composed in 1669 and 1673 A.D. This also finds support in Dr. D.C. Sen's two Ballads on 'The Bereavement of Pari Banu' the wife of the said Moghul Prince and 'The lamentation of Shuja's daughter'.

The history of Arakan on the whole is not at all a complicated one, but it has been made to be so by some interested intelligentsia in Arakan and Burma proper, like that of Saya San Shwe Bu of the family of Re Kyaw Thu of Akyab (originally from Ramu) and U San Tha Aurg, director of Higher Education, University of Rangoon. Above all, the Burmese King Bodawpaya who plundered Mrauku (Mrohaung) in 1784 A.D. is basically responsible for the destruction of everything that was Islamic. He is also responsible of getting the history of Arakan written by U Kala, on the basis of two unauthentic Magh chronicles which were absolutely devoid of everything about the Rohingyas. Consequently, at this material stage of our existence we are deplorably handicapped in fully vindicating our past image.

Anyway, truth cannot be suppressed for long. It will come to light sooner or later. The only fault with the Rohingyas in Arakan is that "They are Muslims" and yet kept up their tradition and culture and also that they are not ready to worship any image other than that of Islam. Let the International Bodies judge as to whether 1.5 million of Rohingyas, since the last two and a half decades, are being treated by the Government of Burma, in accordance with natural justice and principles of the Charter on Human Rights, or not.

## ROHINGYA OPPRESSION

### Statistical Figures 1942-1976

No.	Crimes	Approx.	Remarks
1.	Destruction of settlements	692	Over the whole region.
2.	Exodus/Expulsion	5,00,000	—do—
3.	Massacre	1,00,000	Massive in 1942
4.	Arson	5,000	Over the entire region.
5.	Rape	1,500	—do—
6.	Murder	5,000	Mostly by B.T.F. now alarmingly increased.
7.	Detention (Rohingyas & other Muslims)	3,000	Mostly in Arakan-Maungdaw, Buthidaung, Akyab, Rathedaung; Insein, Moulmein, Prome, Mandalay, Shan State etc.
8. a)	Destruction of Mosques, Meqtab and Madrasahs	600	
b)	Desecration of Holy Books & Scriptures	2,00,000	
9.	Confiscation of Waqf lands & Trust properties	2,000	(acres)
10.	Confiscation of land, properties etc.	—	Worth Millions of Kyats.
11.	Removable from Govt. Services (including nationalised organisations)	10,000	
12.	Missing	20,000	Govt. explanation is 'left the country'.
13.	Unemployed/underemployed	1,50,000	

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### WORLD PRESS

To add to the miseries of these indigenous Rohingyas, from day to day, they are wantonly and ruthlessly persecuted on absolutely false allegations of violation of laws: The Burma Immigration (Emergency Provision) Act, 1947; Burma Immigration (Emergency Provision) (amendment) Act, 1957 and the Union Citizenship Act, 1948. The repression and oppression by arbitrary, wrong and illegal application of the Registration of Foreigners' Act, to the natural born Rohingya citizens, is one of the hundred examples of the present Union Government's hellish ulterior motive to annihilate the Muslim population of Arakan. In this context the cases of **Hasson Ali Vs Immigration Deptt.** and **Mehar Ali Vs Immigration Deptt.** (Cri. Misc. Applications No. 155 and 156 of 1959) may specifically be referred to in which their Lordships of the Supreme Court of Rangoon remarked: "Thus mere race or appearance of a person or whether he has a knowledge of any language of the Union is not the test as to whether he is a citizen of the Union". As such, it is not comprehensible as to why the Union Government, contrary to the explicit Rule of Law, is demonstrating such a hardihood of mass expulsion of the Rohingyas from the country, culminating in their tragic plights in alien lands like Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in particular.



In context to the atrocities committed by the Union Government and some clandestinely Government-manoeuvred organisations, we venture to draw World attention to a few striking news items and editorial comments in some of the countries mentioned above which are as follows :—

A report published in the PAKISTAN OBSERVER (Dacca), dated March 29, 1956, under the caption, "PAKISTAN FOREIGN POLICY RELATING TO BURMA", says "At one time there were as many as 30,000 Arakanese refugees in the East Bengal ..... We have every confidence with us that the Burma Government would do their utmost to create a sense of confidence and security in the minds of the Arakani Muslims now living in Arakan".

A report published on August 27, 1959, in the PAKISTAN TIMES (Dacca), under the caption, "BURMA READY TO TAKE BACK REFUGEES—NEGOTIATIONS GOING ON : ZAKIR'S STATEMENT", says "The Burmese Government is agreeable to take back their nationals which had entered Pakistan as refugees.

This was disclosed by the Governor, Mr. Zakir Hussain at Patenga airport this morning just after his return from Cox's Bazar. The Governor added that negotiations between the government of Burma and Pakistan were going on in this behalf. Replying to a question from

a reporter, the Governor said that the refugee problem at the Pak-Burma border was under investigation of the Government. Asked about the number of refugees in Cox's Bazar, Mr. Zakir Hussain revealed that it was over 10,000 .....

The Governor disclosed that the Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong Hill Tracts, Mr. Iqbal Karim was deputed to investigate into the question of the influx of refugees and to report to him (the Governor).

Mr. Kaiser Rashid, Vice-Consul for Pakistan at Akyab who also returned to Chittagong in the same plane with the Governor, said that the number of refugees was 12,000". But unfortunately, the Burmese Government has not even by 1976 taken back any such refugees.

In the Independence Day supplementary issue of the MORNING NEWS, August 14, 1969, discussing the subject of rehabilitating the refugees at the wake of Independence in Pakistan it is said, "In 1968 the Provincial Government held a census which revealed that there are 2,82,662 refugee families in East Pakistan. This figure includes 1,090 families who entered into East Pakistan from Burma".

A letter of Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed published in the BANGLADESH OBSERVER on August 6, 1974, under the caption, NON-NATIONALS, says "However, in this context, it will not be out of place to say that Bangladesh is also being

clandestinely subjected to similar pressure on its already over-stretched national economy, through intermittent influx of Burmese nationals along the Arakan Border. We do not pretend to know the actual number. Whatever might be the causes of their exodus it appears to be certain that none as yet cared to take notice of this problem which directly concern our national economy".

A report published on March 11, 1975, in the BANGLADESH OBSERVER under the caption, "GOVERNMENT LEVEL TALKS ON REFUGEES LIKELY", says, "Two camps, one at Balukali and other at Teknaf were opened for the refugees from Burma. The number of refugees could not be ascertained. A number of refugees are staying at Bayazid Bostami, Chittagong and others reached Jessore.

The S.D.O. Cox's Bazar told this correspondent on Saturday: 'all refugees will be brought to this relief camp where care is being taken. Medical care is also being provided'. It is learnt from knowledgeable source that Government level conference was being arranged in this regard but the S.D.O. declined to give the exact date and venue of the conference".

A report also published on the same day in the Daily MORNING NEWS (Dacca), under the caption. "GOVERNMENT'S ATTENTION DRAWN: EXODUS FROM BURMA", says "Few

thousand families of Burmese nationals were recently pushed into Bangladesh in a deplorable condition. Some of the families are in camps, reports. ENA.

It is reliably learnt that the Government of Bangladesh has drawn the attention of the Burmese Government on the matter".

A report published in the BANGLADESH TIMES (Dacca) in its issue of March 23, 1975 under the caption, "BURMESE MUSLIMS", it is described, "Burmese Muslims have been coming as refugees to Bangladesh for about two months. It is reported that about two hundred such refugees are coming here daily from Burma. According to reliable sources some Burmese miscreants have forcibly driven them to Bangladesh after looting their belongings.

It is also alleged that the Burmese Administration is silent regarding this, though it is a matter of great concern for Bangladesh as Bangladesh herself is yet to be rehabilitated and the war-torn country is not capable of rehabilitating the refugees.

This is certainly a new humanitarian problem for the U.N. to solve the great problem. This may easily be solved if the Burmese Administration kindly look into the matter and check the miscreants by punitive action".

An earlier report published in the said Daily on March 12, 1975 under the caption, "BURMESE NATIONALS PUSHED INTO BANGLADESH", it is written. "A few thousand families



of Burmese nationals were recently pushed to Bangladesh in deplorable condition. Some of the families are in the camps. It is reliably learnt that the Government of Bangladesh have drawn the attention of Burmese Government on the matter".

Mr. Najmul Hasan a correspondent of the HINDUSTAN TIMES in its issue dated March 24, 1975 in describing the Rohingyas in distress wrote: "Over 250 Burmese Nationals, allegedly disposed of their land and evicted out of their villages in Arakan, have arrived in Delhi, after crossing over from Bangladesh and losing Rs.70,000/- to currency changing touts, looking for a home, occupation and a country they can call their own.

The scrawny and hungry men, women and 123 grimy-faced naked children.....ragged up at the Azad Park overlooking Jama Masjid, waiting for official help which is already 10 days late in coming. The first group of refugees arrived on March 13 with their pots and pans ..... took refuge on the step of the mosque.

The refugees speak ROHINGYA said to be a Burmese dialect and come from different villages in the Maungdaw district of the Arakan province about 200 miles away from Chittagong in Bangladesh. Most of them have their Nationality Cards and land deeds affixed with legal stamps current when the British Governed Burma,

The refugees ....., alleged that the Government seized their land, varying in size from 5 to 30 acres, paid them no compensation and also pushed them out of the country ... .. They lived in the open for two days. Some of the children exposed to the cold fell seriously sick. It was then that Jamat-e-Islami stepped in and appealed to the residents of the area to help".

A news published on March 24, 1975 in the INDIAN EXPRESS under the caption, "DESTITUTES FROM BURMA" says, "157, women, men and children who have come all the way from the Arakan Hill of Burma, are camped in Azad Park, ill-clad, ill-fed, penniless and utterly demoralized ..... this people all Muslims. say that they have been deprived of their holdings by the Burmese regime, which had sent them packing from there.

They were taken to the Bangladesh border by the Burmese-Police and sent across.

They finally came over to Calcutta from where they came by train ..... most of them without tickets".

An article by S. Hasan Mutahar, published in the Journal, vol. 3, No.11. September, 1976 of RABETAT AL-ALAM AL-ISLAMI (Muslim World League, Mecca) under the caption "Burma's Muslim Minority" says, "Reports about the plight of Muslims in Burma continue to reach the Rabeta headquarters from that

country as well as Pakistan and Bangladesh. Instances of intimidation, persecution, violence and even murders are not unusual in the Arakan region where a substantial portion of the population is Muslim, ..... It seems that, instead of maintaining law and order, the police and civil administration have a special role to play, i.e. of protecting and encouraging the miscreants and Buddhist communalists whose anti-Muslim campaign includes planned and blatant attempts to deprive the victims of their property and business.

A few months ago, the MWL Secretariat-General received the information that 'The Socialist Republic of Burma does not allow Muslims to perform Hajj claiming that this would entitle other religious groups (Christians, Hindus, etc.) to demand permission for pilgrimage to their holy places, which would cost Burma lots of hard currency'. The position at that time might have been ambiguous and confusing for one reason or another, but the same pretext cannot always be handy and made use of. The Government of General Ne Win will, therefore, be well advised to clarify its policy in regard to several hundred thousand Burmese Muslims, especially when it has repealed the amendment of 1961 in the Constitution (which had declared Buddhism as the State Religion) and recognised the right of every citizen 'freely to profess and practise his religion'.

Thousands of Burmese Muslims are anxious to come for Umrah and Hajj. They can afford the journey to and from Mecca at Mukarramah and maintain themselves during their stay in Hejaz. The travel facilities which are available today did not exist in the previous centuries, and yet Muslims from all corners of the world used to perform this divinely-instituted obligation, the fifth pillar of Islam, without let or hindrance. Now communication and conveyance is no problem, and the Burmese authorities are no hermits, either. Rangoon, Mandalay and Moulmein, if not Akyab and other remote townships, are connected with each other and with important stations in South-East Asia by air service. And a special provision in the national budget of Burma for Hajj expenses cannot be termed an impossibility; Muslim States will immediately respond to any request to help solve the issue of foreign exchange required for these neglected sufferers. Thus it is simply a matter of reappraisal based on understanding, goodwill and justice".

#### CERTAIN TRANSLATED FOREIGN PUBLICATIONS

The Daily PASBAN (Urdu), Dacca, East Pakistan  
Dated, May 11 & 14, 1955

EXECUTION OF ULEMAS & MUSLIM DIGNITARIES,  
DESCRICATION OF HOLY QURAN, MANHANDLING,  
LOOTING, KIDNAPPING AND RAPE IN BURMA



On pleas of N.R.C. verification processes the Immigration Authorities use to molest and humiliate Muslim women for which reason hundreds of the Muslims had to flee the country. The Immigration personnel imposed such tortuous questions regarding nationality that no men of ordinary intellect could answer the questions properly. Thus they are trying to prove Muslims as foreigners and on their ouster fill up the vacuum with the Magh immigrants from East Pakistan.

#### 84,000 Muslims massacred in the year 1942

In the welter of Anglo-Japanese War of 1942, the Allied Forces retreated from Arakan leaving a huge arms (with the Buddhist Maghs). Taking advantage of the situation the Maghs started massacre of the Muslim population, in which 84,000 of innocent Muslims were slaughtered, burnt down many villages, mosques and religious scriptures and institutions. Besides, 50,000 of them who escaped persecution were kept at Rangpur Refugee Camps by the British Government. But, in spite of their repeated appeals to be rehabilitated in their original lands have not been taken back as yet.

#### 33,000 Muslims pushed into East Pakistan in 1948

In the later part of 1948, when Mujahid Movement against the Burmese Government was extensively going on, the Burmese Armed Forces killed and arrested many Muslims, burnt

down many of their villages, kidnapped and raped their women. Muslims being thus terrified, fled the country and took shelter in East Pakistan numbering about 33,000.

#### A Method to reduce Muslim Population

The Burmese Government, for the purpose of the settlement of Maghs in the Muslim areas, convened a settlement committee. They came to a decision to settle down about 70,000 Maghs from East Pakistan and other parts of Arakan. In materialising this scheme the Government confiscated arable lands of the Muslims of the areas where they formed 98 percent of the population.

#### Atrocities Conducted in 1955

On January 28, 1955 the Burmese Army shot dead one innocent Haji Nur Ahmed of Lower Razar Bil (Auk-Nanra) in Rathedaung township. Another man namely Mr. Naju Meah of the same village was bayoneted to death. The Army also manhandled some villages and extorted huge amounts.

#### Rape and Murder not-Unusual

On February 1, 1955, the Burmese Army kidnapped two daughters, two sisters and two sisters-in-law of Mr. Sayed of Palipara (a village in Zedibyin sub-township) and raped them.

Three young women—one wife of Mr. Fazlur Rahman and his two sisters; the wife of Mr. Kala Meah (Member) with his two sisters; the wife of Mr. Abdul Rahman with his daughter-in-law, including three other young girls of his relations were also kidnapped and raped. Uncountable numbers of women from different villages were also forcibly carried off and dishonoured. They also inhumanly killed 4 Muslim dignitaries from the same village.

In course of Army patrol duties and official tours the Army and Civil personnel burnt down to ashes 3 mosques and hundreds of religious scriptures including Holy Quran and Hadiths. Even on February, 1955 the Burmese Army desecrated a mosque in Kyaungdaung village (Haji Ismail Mosque) which ultimately was turned into army camp.

Lawless arrests and carrying off women folk have been going on continuously, particularly, in the villages of Shwetpyin, Annukpyin, Thinganet and Kudikchaung (Kodankauk). During the month the Army arrested 4 men and 10 women from Shilkali village of Rathedaung township. Again from the village of Barabill 2 men were arrested and one Miss Gul Bahar from the same village was raped to death.

#### Villages on Blaze

The Burmese Army burnt down the villages of Indin and Thinbawgwe (kolung) in southern Maungdaw and brutally killed one Mr. Gani Ahmed of Kolung village.

#### Arrested Muslims starved to death

One night, while some army personnel were attempting to commit rape on a Muslim woman of Kanhpu (Kamarzabil) in Maungdaw township, the villagers rounded up the culprits but they were later physically tortured by another section of the Army who came from the same camp to rescue them. They also subsequently arrested 50 old men of the village. They were dragged to the camp and put to death by starvation.

A renown wrestler namely Tayum Gulal of Kunniapara village, Maungdaw township was shot dead by the Army, on his refusal to produce his sister Miss Fatema Khatoon who had gone into hiding to escape rape.

#### Ulemas Being Killed

Maulana Abdul Qadir of Nyaungbingyi (Shairapara), Maungdaw township was brutally killed on his refusal to produce before the Army his only daughter.



#### Rape Cases Everywhere

A virgin girl from Shidderpara (Kanyindan) village, a mile from Maungdaw town was kidnaped and kept confined for 7 days inside the camp for satisfaction of their lust. In Faqira Bazar, a village in Maungdaw township, 3 men were shot dead for reporting the Commission of rape cases by the Army, to their commanding officer.

#### So Many Houses Gutted

A Muslim settlement of 2000 houses including mosques and schools, from Shabe Bazar to Faqira Bazar of Maungdaw township were burnt down to ashes by the Burmese Army and thousands of Muslims were also inhumanly killed.

#### Attempt to Murder

Maulana Abdul Jabbar, a well-known saint, of Bawli Bazar, Maungdaw was brutally beaten by the Army as a result of which he became unconscious but the Army presuming him to have died, threw his body into the nearby jungles.

#### Ulemas Disgraced

The Burmese Army on a false allegation of collaboration with the Mujahids looted the properties of Haji Maulana Sultan Ahmed of Faqira Bazar. His house was also burnt down. The Army tethered and tortured one Maulana Darbesh Ali of Garatarbil (Gara prang) for teaching Arabic in the village Madrasa and when

his brother Maulana Ashraf Zaman came to his rescue he too was disgraced and jeered at after being made nude.

#### Juma Prayer not Allowed

On one Friday, Maulana Abdul Hai, Principal of the Al-Haj Maulana Sha Abdul Jabbar Madrasa was arrested by some Army Personnel. Moulvi Mohammed Shafi, Pesh Imam of the attached Mosque, on seeking permission to perform Juma prayer, was beaten up by the Army personnel and nobody was allowed to perform any prayer the whole day.

#### Forced Marriage of Muslim Girls by Army Personnel

Some Buddhist Armed personnel carried off and forcibly married 5 Muslim virgin girls belonging to the village of Shabe Bazar, Maungdaw township. On another occasion 2 virgin daughters of Master Sayed Hussain of Kazirbil (Sabaigon), Maungdaw township were similarly married by some other Army personnel. On threats of such commission of crimes in future the villagers got terrified and abandoned the villages.

#### Maulana Sufi Osiuddin Ahmed Killed

During the absence of Maulana Sufi Osiuddin Ahmed of Merulla (Myin Hlut) village the Burmese Army burnt down his house to ashes for no apparent reasons. On hearing the matter

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when the Maulana went to lodge a report to the commanding officer he was killed by butts of guns.

The above mentioned cases of atrocities were committed within a period of 4 months in 1955. Atrocious crimes of this and various other natures are apprehended in future too.

For these acts of inhumanity, the Burmese Prime Minister is fully responsible.

The Daily AHFAG (Urdu), West Pakistan  
Dated, August 26, 1959.

MR. ZAKIR HUSSAIN ARRIVED AT COX'S BAZAR  
TO MAKE AN INQUIRY OF THE MUSLIM  
REFUGEES COMING FROM BURMA

The Burmese Government accuses the Muslims as  
Mujahids' Agents: Condition in Arakan  
deteriorating -

Cox's Bazar 25 August: The East Pakistan  
Governor Mr. Zakir Hussain arrived here by  
plane to make an on-the-spot enquiry about the  
Muslim refugees who are coming from the  
Burma side.

Mr. Zakir Hussain explained to the press-  
man before he left Chittagong for Cox's Bazar  
that the Government of Burma is accusing the  
Muslims of Burma residing in Arakan Division

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as the collaborators of Mujahids. The Govern-  
ment of Burma is driving away the Muslims of  
Arakan under the false accusation and pretext  
of being Agents for the Mujahids. The Governor  
also expressed the attitude of Burmese Govern-  
ment on its Muslim subjects as prejudicial. The  
East Pakistan Martial Law Administrator and  
G.O.C. Major General M. Omrao Khan accom-  
panied the Governor to the Pak-Burma border to  
investigate the condition of the refugees.

The Daily KOHISTAN (Urdu), Lahore, West Pakistan  
Dated, September 4, 1959.

THE WOEFUL TALE OF ARAKANESE MUSLIM  
REFUGEES

In 1948, the very year of the independence  
of Burma, 30,000 Arakanese Muslims had fled to  
East Pakistan to escape persecution, harassment  
and genocide by a section of the Maghs.

During the year of 1949 the Government  
Forces invariably carried on various kind of  
atrocities such as looting, raping, physical torture  
and arson as a result of which many such villages  
went out of existence and 20,000 Muslims were  
also pushed into East Pakistan.

The Daily ITTEFAQ (Bengali) Dacca, Bangladesh  
Dated, March 4, 1975.

THE BURMESE MUSLIM REFUGEES IN JESSORE  
400 Burmese Muslims took shelter in the  
Jessore Town Hall. The leader of the refugees



Mr. Noor Mohammed told that they are the bonafide citizens of Burma. He further told the newsmen that due to continuous persecution by a section of Buddhists and State Authorities as many as 15,000 Rohingyas from Maungdaw area in Arakan crossed the border to Jessore, Moghulhat and Rangpur. They were forcibly deprived of their properties but got no remedy from any quarter.

The Daily IITEFAQ (Bengali) Dacca, Bangladesh  
Dated, March 6, 1975.

#### BURMESE MUSLIM EXODUS TO BANGLADESH

About 500 Muslims have been coming daily as refugees to Bangladesh. They were pushed into Bangladesh by Burmese Authorities and Maghs. They have left all their movable and immovable properties in their own country.

The MUSTAQEEN WEEKLY (Urdu) Delhi, India  
Dated, April 14, 1975.

#### UN PAY ATTENTION; HUNDREDS OF MUSLIMS PUSHED OUT FROM THEIR MOTHERLAND BY THE BURMESE GOVERNMENT

Say where would to go—These Muslims—lying in  
open space in front of the Delhi Jama Mosque:

In Urdu Park, in front of Jama Masjid, Delhi about 300 Muslim refugees from Burma under the tattered sheds are passing their lives. Among them are included women and children who had established hearth and home in Burma. They had their own lands and jobs. The

Government seized all their properties and drove them away from their homes.

The Burmese police led the refugees to the border with Bangladesh and ensured that they crossed over. They were defrauded of Rs. 70,000/ by money changing touts. They escaped into India under cover of darkness. From the border to Calcutta they travelled in buses. The rest of the journey to Delhi was completed by train, mostly without tickets.

The PURBADESH Daily (Bengali) Dacca, Bangladesh  
Dated, April 16, 1975.

#### BURMESE REFUGEES TO BE SENT BACK

(By our correspondent Ranju Islam)

Due to oppression and suppression by the Government of Burma and the Buddhist (Maghs), many Muslims from Arakan, in scattered condition, have been crossing over to Bangladesh where they have been concentrated in relief camps at Teknaf. While visiting the relief camps the refugees, who have National Registration Cards of their own, expressed their woeful plight in their own dialect. In Teknaf there are as many as 630 refugees from 104 families till now wherein they are living in a very heart-stricken position.

The exodus from Aiyab-side of Burma into Bangladesh stretched for two months is still in continuation. Many of the refugees are living along the hill-side mixed with the locals. It is estimated that about 1500 of them recently

entered into Bangladesh. One refugee Mr. Abdul Gaffar of Zibongkali described that they had to leave all their belongings, properties and lands at the hands of the Maghs.

Another refugee, Mr. Samiuddin expressed that the Burmese Government had ruthlessly driven out his mother with two brothers for which he had to flee his motherland.

Another refugee told that atrocious crimes, loot, physical torture, confiscation of properties and rape became the daily routine for the Maghs and the Government Authorities. It culminated in their mass exodus into Bangladesh to escape persecution, oppression and suppression.

When asked the Teknaf authority concerned explained to the reporter that the refugees were kept in the relief camps on humanitarian grounds and most of them, mainly women and children, are suffering from diseases.

The Daily ITTEFAQ (Bengali) Dacca, Bangladesh  
Dated, May 19, 1975.  
20 DIED OF GASTRO-INTESTINAL DISORDERS  
IN RELIEF CAMPS

Cox's Bazar May, 18 : 20 Burmese refugees died of Dysentery and Diarrhoea in relief camps at Balukali and Teknaf. There are 1288 and 514 refugees at Teknaf and Balukali refugee camps respectively, who came here 3 months ago. It is also learnt that exodus of refugees to Bangladesh are taking place daily.

## HISTORY

1978

## WORLD PRESS

May it please Your Excellency,

Date: 15-4-78

We are addressing you this memorandum on behalf of the following councilors of the Rabitah Al-Alam Al-Islami (World Muslim League) of Mecca regarding the plight of Muslims of Burma with special reference to the Muslim population of the province of ARAKAN.

It is an acknowledged fact that Muslims are living in Burma for the last 1000 years. They are in majority in Mawnglow, Boothalaung, Raitislaung, Kayokto and Akyab in the province of Arakan. During the last 30 years many towns and settlements have been destroyed as a result of persecution.

The inhabitants of this area have been cut off from the rest of the Muslim World. They have not even been allowed to go to Mecca for Holy pilgrimage. They are restricted from travelling freely in different parts of Burma as if they are hostages confined to Arakan division only.

In last February thousands of Muslims have been put into jail on flimsy grounds without any trial. The life, honour and property of any Muslim is neither safe nor secure.

The local non-Muslim officials and army personnel are harassing, creating problems and torturing the innocent and peaceful Arakanese Muslims on the plea of making enquiries about their national status in spite of the fact that these people are living there for the last several centuries but to deprive them of their basic rights and national status they are called into the police stations and asked to produce their Identity Cards and when they produce the same they are forcefully snatched and destroyed.

These people are being dislodged from their houses and lands and put in concentration camps where inhuman treatment is meted to them. The children and women folk are also mistreated and tortured in these camps.

It will not be out of place to mention that Shan, Karen, and Kachin tribes have been given provincial autonomy and are well settled. Likewise, Muslim population can also be treated at par with them so that they may live as honourable citizens of Burma which they are.

Rabitah Al-Alam Al-Islami, Mecca, requested the Burmese Government to allow a team of four councilors to visit Burma to enquire the grievances of Muslim community there but there was no response to this plain request.

The atrocities committed on Muslims of Arakan can not be hidden from the world and particularly the Muslim countries. It is a clear violation of the Human Rights.

The present Burmese regime cannot bring prosperity and well-being of the people of Burma by shedding blood of innocent Muslim citizens.

We draw the attention of your Government through Your Excellency to the affairs of the Muslims of Arakan and request that the persecution and genocide of Muslim population may kindly not only be stopped but that these will not be repeated in the future.

We hope your Government will abide by the Human Rights Declaration of the United Nations by treating the Muslim minority accordingly.

We hope Your Excellency will convey our sentiments to the Burmese Government.

Mawlana Zafar Ahmad Ansari  
Member, Rabta-e-Alam-e-Islami  
(World Muslim League) Mecca,  
Member,  
Council of Islamic Ideology of  
Pakistan.

Dr. Inamullah Khan  
Member,  
Rabta-e-Alam-e-Islami  
(World Muslim League)  
Mecca, and  
Secretary General,  
Motamer-e-Aalam-e-Islami,  
(World Muslim Congress)  
Islamabad.

Mawlana  
Jamil Mian Farangi Mahali  
Member,  
Rabta-e-Alam-e-Islami  
(World Muslim League), Mecca.



## Telegram

CABLE TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Excellency Dr. Ahmedakasin Gaye  
Islamiah  
Jeddah.

Excellency out of three million muslims in Burmah live in Akyah District Comma Arakan Division of Burma near border of Bangladesh stop they live under stress and strains and threats of different kinds but this February more than a hundred thousand muslim men women and children murdered in cold blood also mutilated many of those compe to live in concentration camps die of starvation and ladies raped otherwise ill treated beside many muslims madrasah and Qur'an copies destroyed and burned stop urgently and earnestly request your excellency to take up matter at Dakar Conference and save help a million muslims from extermination and inhuman torture stop muslim of minority areas look upto Islamic Conference with hopes stop if need be please take up matter with an human rights commission and draw burmese Government direct attention for stopping death and destruction of their Arakanese muslim citizens stop Zafar Ahmad Assaf, member, Foundation Council World Muslim League Mecca, Member, Council of Islamic Ideology and Member Parliament of Pakistan.

## DAWN

Thursday, May 4, 1978

## Burmese refugees

WITH Bangladesh sealing off its 150-mile border with Burma after an influx of several thousand refugees, the situation in the Arakan Province of Burma appears to have assumed the proportions of a crisis. Reports about trouble in the area, affecting largely the Muslim community, had been appearing for some days. An intermittent flow of refugees was also there and quite a few of them had come as far away as Pakistan. But the crossing over of so many thousands in a sudden rush is an extraordinary eruption. While sealing off its border with Burma, the Bangladesh Government has expressed concern at the "massive influx of Burmese nationals into our territory". Dacca had been quietly negotiating with Rangoon since the refugees started coming early last month but these consultations evidently produced no positive results. In fact, the refugees have claimed that 50,000 to 60,000 Muslims, reportedly evicted from their ho-

mes in north-west Burma, Province. It is, thus, essentially a matter of ab-Bangladesh. They also spoke of torture, rape, arson and looting. Some even claimed that they were evicted by the Burmese troops at gunpoint. Though these factors call for a sympathetic approach towards refugees, it is obvious that the Bangladesh Government cannot do much about it, apart from turning away illegal immigrants. This is what it has done.

The Union of Burma has long been plagued by revolts and civil wars. Previously, the news of such turbulence reached the outside world only when it spilled over the border into Thailand. This time, happenings on the border on the other side have broken Burma's somewhat remarkable isolation from the rest of the world. It was reported some time ago that in the course of their long-range insurgencies on eastern border, the Communist guerillas were being supported by traditionally anti-Communist separatist insurgents. It should not be surprising to find some traces of separatism among the persecuted people of Arakan

essentially a matter of absorbing various ethnic communities into a more cohesive Burmese nation. This task is made difficult by the existence of many races and languages in Burma. More than 100 indigenous languages, not mere dialects, have been counted. This potential hurdle in the way of integration has been aided by persisting insurgencies and a lack of law and order in large, peripheral mountain and plateau areas. All this could be conducive to persecution of minorities.

Though official figures are not available, it is estimated that Muslims constitute about ten per cent of Burma's population. No Government should allow the alienation of a large and loyal segment of the country's population, least of all one that is confronted with a variety of divisive and disruptive forces. It is sincerely hoped that the Burmese Government will establish law and order in the troubled area and protect the affected population from persecution and eviction.

Meanwhile, the concern with the afflicted has no being expressed in some doubt enhanced our hu-Muslim countries is quite manitarian concern. We understandable. A number trust the Government of of appeals have been Burma will take steps to made to world organisa- restore law and orter in tions and individual lead- the Arakan area and bring ers, including the Islamic to book the lawless ele-Secretariat, the UN Secre- ments who have been tary-General and the UN threatening the lives, ho-Human Rights Commis- nour and property of the sion. Our religious kinship Muslims of the area.

# THE PAKISTAN TIMES

Monday, May 8, 1978—29 Jamadi-ul-Aw wal, 1

## Influx of Burmese Bangladesh faces vast problems

DACCA, May 7: An influx of 85,000 Muslim refugees in less than a month is posing vast humanitarian problems for impoverished Bangladesh and causing a rift in its relations with neighbouring Burma.

The Bangladesh Government has already called for the repatriation of the refugees who have fled across the border, saying the Burmese army drove them from their homes at gunpoint. The Burmese Government has not formally commented

on the exodus, except for brief report in the official Burmese news agency which alleged that many of the refugees were illegal immigrants from Bangladesh who had reportedly fled to escape immigration checks.

The agency claimed 20,000 Bengalis had left Burma because they lacked proper entry and registration papers.

But these refugees gave a totally different picture and some of them even produced their national registration cards to back claims to Burmese nationality.

They have alleged a concerted campaign against the Muslim community in the province of Arakan, bordering the Chittagong district of Bangladesh, and have accused Burmese troops of rape, torture and robbery.

According to officials here, some of the Muslims have come across the border with bullet injuries.

The refugees now live in more than 300 tented camps put up along the border by the Bangladesh Red Cross. Food and other facilities are provided by the government.

With an extensive health campaign said to have been launched by the Red Cross and the Bangladesh Army Medical Corps, no outbreak of diseases have so far been reported in the camps. But the arrival of the monsoon during the next two months could alter the situation in the remote tip of the country where natural disasters occur regularly.

Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Tobarak Hussein said after a recent tour of the frontier: "We certainly need international help to keep these people alive".

A nation of over 75 million people with serious economic woes of its own is hardly in a position to support a relief operation of this size which could cost up to one million U.S. dollars a month, according to officials.

There has so far been no detailed explanation for the sudden exodus from predominantly Buddhist Burma, though some of the refugees have spoken of a Burmese campaign against the growing economic power of the Muslims in Arakan.

But according to some observers here, the Burmese Government suspected the Muslims of supporting rebel groups fighting against the Government of President Ne Win.

Some of the rebel groups are known to be demanding autonomy for Arakan, a jungle clad province separated from the rest of Burma by massive mountain ranges.

Because of religious affinity with the Bengali state and for geographical reasons the Muslims developed close ties with Bangladesh or East Pakistan as it was known before the break-up of Pakistan in 1971. The eviction problem goes back to 1942 when some Muslims are said to have fled from Burma following communal riots.



There had been a few brief flare-ups since, but the issue never came in the way of good relations between the two neighbours.

The issue was taken up by Bangladesh for the first time in 1975 following the arrival of some 3,500 people and President Ziaur Rahman mentioned it to Burmese leaders when he visited Rangoon last year.

The two Governments agreed then to look into the problem and Burmese Foreign

Minister Brig. Gen. Myint Maung discussed the issue in detail during a recent visit to the here.

But, according to informed sources, little progress was made at the talks. The sources said the Burmese envoy here had been called to the Foreign Office several times in recent weeks and told of Bangladesh's concern over the exodus, but there had been no response from Rangoon.—Reuter

## DAWN KARACHI

DAWN MONDAY, MAY 15, 1978

### Gleanings from Urdu Press CALL FOR JIHAD ON FOOD FRONT

#### Burma and Bangladesh

REPORTS about exchange of firing between the Security Forces of Bangladesh and Burma are tragic inasmuch as they constitute an ugly blot on an otherwise fair record of neighbourly relations. For the past few weeks Bangladesh, at first very cautiously and then with growing concern, has been reporting arrival of thousands of refugees thrown out in distressing conditions from across the border. The Adviser on Foreign Affairs, Mr Shamsul Haq, recently paid a visit to Rangoon in this connection but the number of evictees has now exceeded 80,000

and the Burmese Government has adopted a baffling attitude which in his own words is "vague and disconcerting". Thus an unreasonable deadlock has been created in the talks initiated by Dacca while thousands of men, women and children are daily pouring into the Chittagong Hill Tracts narrating harrowing tales of such atrocities which would leave only a heart made of stone unmoved.

Meanwhile, the Government of Burma has come out with explanations of its campaign to "expel foreigners". Initially Rangoon had altogether denied any eviction but now it says that only those

persons were being expelled who did not possess citizenship certificates. Anyone acquainted with the procedure in the developing countries for issuance of citizenship certificates, knows that most of the citizens in such countries do not possess even residence certificates what to say of citizenship certificates and yet they are enrolled as voters and accepted as full citizens on the basis of residence, education or ownership of property. This system is in vogue in India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh also. It is therefore beyond comprehension why in Burma alone a poverty-ridden minority is being asked to produce citizenship certificates and on being unable to do so is being driven out of their hearths and homes?

Anyway, the scope of the issue is widening and the Bangladesh Adviser on Foreign Affairs has warned that the United Nations and other world agencies would be approached if the mass expulsion is not stopped. Obviously Bangladesh could not be expected to bear this burden single-handedly, and the world community should at least protest to the Government of Burma and stretch a helping hand towards Dacca. However, if other nation could shoulder this issue then the Islamic world ought to step forward in response to the call of the Muslim World League and review their relations with Burma and cooperate with Bangladesh in providing temporary rehabilitation to the unfortunate Muslims of Burma. It is not a mere matter of religious affinity but also of supporting an oppressed people. Oppression, in whatever form, is oppression and voice must be raised against it.

We appeal to the Government of Burma to desist from this utterly immoral behaviour towards its own citizens and to adopt positive

measures to end the tension on its borders among which purposeful dialogue with Bangladesh must get top priority.—  
Hurrirret, Karachi, May 9.

## BURMESE MUSLIMS

(Continued from page 1)

carried out a survey to classify 100,622 people as Burmese citizens or foreigners in the Western township of Buthidaung were 23,400 "Bengalis" had left for Bangladesh by the end of last month.

An official report, released by the Burmese news agency last night, said the survey showed 631 irregularities for which due action was taken against the defaulters. But it did not spell out the action taken. It said that "Bengali bandits" recently attacked a Police station in the area and seized two Burmese Customs volunteers who were later handed over to Bangladesh border guards.

The bandits also set fire to an immigration outpost of some Bangladesh border guards, it added. Other incidents reported were

the arrest of a "Bengali" for throwing a knife at a Burmese soldier, an aborted attempt to commit arson in Maungdaw town and intrusion into Burmese territory by Bangladesh border patrols.

Earlier, the Government here accused Bangladesh border security guards of having fired upon Burmese Police outposts and Army columns.

They also said that anti-Burmese elements were trying to cause trouble near the border by agitating thousands of "Bengalis"

who fled into Bangladesh to escape immigration checks".

The townships of Buthidaung and Maungdaw are situated near the Bangladesh border. They have a combined population of 318,572 made up of Burmese, Arakanese and other indigenous races such as Mro, Ddaingnet and Tausungthas.

The largest concentration of illegal immigrants was found in that area and most of them were Bengalis who came from the Chittagong district of Bangladesh", Burmese authorities said.

Official sources said that it was difficult to know the total of Bengalis who had entered Burma because they crossed the border in large numbers in search of a better life despite efforts of the Government here to stem the tide of "illegal immigration".—APP-  
Reuter.

Meanwhile refugees from Burma are continuing to cross the border into Bangladesh at the rate of about 5,000 a day.

BBC said most of the refugees leaving Burma are Muslims although there are some Hindus as well.

## DAWN

7 Jamadī-us-Sani, 1398

Monday, May 15, 1978

# ISSUE TO BE RAISED AT UN Genocide of Muslim minority in Burma

The World Conference on Religion and Peace which concluded its week-long deliberations at Bangkok on Saturday, has decided to raise the issue of genocide of Burmese Muslims at the United Nations immediately.

This was disclosed in Karachi yesterday by Dr Inamullah Khan, Secretary-General, Motamar Alam al-Islami while talking to newsmen on his return from Bangkok after attending the conference.

He said the conference directed its Regional Secretariat at Singapore to immediately raise the issue at the United Nations Commission for Human Rights and UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Dr Inamullah said he explained in detail the problems of Muslim minorities in Asia and particularly their plight in Burma at the conference.

He appealed to the world conscience and UN to stop the genocide of Muslims. He said participants at the conference from Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sin-

apore, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and India expressed their concern over the genocide.

The Motamar Secretary-General, who earlier attended the Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference at Dakar, said "It was a historic one". He said it was for the first time that the conference was held in an African state.

He said the Motamar and Rabita Alam al-Islami delegations called for a joint defence pact among Muslim countries at the

Dakar conference to face the enemies of Islam. The question of plight of Muslims in Burma and Philippines was also considered.

Dr Inamullah Khan said the conference decided that Muslim countries should have still closer cooperation in the economic and cultural fields in future and exchange radio and TV programmes.

BURMESE VERSION

Reuter adds from Rangoon:  
The Government in Burma has

(Continued on page 7 col 4)

6 Jamadī-us-Sani, 1398

Sunday, May 14, 1978

## EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNT

# Burmese Muslims machinegunned

PARIS, May 13: Thirty Burmese soldiers set up eight machine-guns and fire into a mass of Muslim refugees on Bangladesh border on April 23, the Florida weekly news magazine "Le Nouvel Observateur" reported today.

In an eye-witness account, the Observer's correspondent Francois Hauter affirmed that the massacre was an episode in a deliberate Burmese Government plan to drive a million Rohingya—Burmese Muslims from the Arakan Province — out of the country.

Bangladesh border guards had been preventing the 18,000 refugees from crossing a river into Bangladesh, M. Hauter wrote,

But they were so shocked at the machine-gunning that they shouldered their rifles and opened their fire on the Burmese soldiers, he related in another article in the newspaper "Le Quotidien de Paris".

Three of the soldiers fell, and the rest fled. The refugees stampeded across the river, some of them sinking into the mud beneath the weight of the wounded people they were carrying.

A woman with a deep stab wound in the left breast said she was the sole survivor of 17 women attacked earlier by Burmese soldiers. She said they cut off the breast of the other women, then stabbed them to death, but let her flee to tell the other Rohingyas and terrify them.



Mr Hauter wrote that about 100 of the Muslim peasants were shot to death and a large number wounded during the machine-gunning.

Before that incident, he had visited the refugees huddling across the river for several days. A number of them already had been wounded by bullets or had their faces bashed in by blows from rifle butts, he said. They were sucking leaves — their only nourishment except earthworms.

Since April 23, the Bangladesh Government has allowed refugees to cross the border, but is too poor to take care of them, M. Hauter said.

His last sight of the nightmare at the border was a woman scratching the ground with her finger nails in search of something to eat.

He said the 40,000 to 60,000 refugees who have crossed the border accuse the Burmese Army and Police of unleashing a genocide campaign called "Operation Dragon" on Feb 6.

The French correspondent said the Burmese Government, weak and threatened by rebellions in several provinces, was trying to stay in power by sacrificing a Muslim minority to the Buddhist majority, "especially since the Rohingyas had rich rice lands" — AFP

## THE MUSLIM WORLD

May 13, 1978

### Plight of Burma Muslim

Bangladesh on May 5 called on Burma to repatriate thousands of Muslims who have fled across the border in the past few weeks to escape alleged brutality by the Burmese army.

A spokesman of the Bangladesh Foreign Office said that their return to homeland was "the best solution to the vast humanitarian problem" created by the influx.

The number of Burmese refugees in border relief camps in Bangladesh has now soared to 100,000 according to official figures released in Dacca on May 9.

The Motamar Al-Alam Al-Islami (World Muslim Congress) as early as February 1978, when this genocidal extermination was started by Burmese authorities, brou-

ght the sad plight of Arakanese Muslim citizens of Burma to the notice of the world. Then continuously in the month of March and more so in April, Motamar (World Muslim Congress) made fervent appeals to the world's conscience especially UN and other international forum. Also in its Memorandum to the 9th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers this inhuman story of forceful eviction of Burmese citizens by Rangoon Government as well as trampling of their basic human rights were made known by Motamar to the leaders of the Islamic world gathered in Dakar Conference. We are happy that now the other Muslim international bodies and governments are taking sincere interest in this matter and are supporting the call of the Motamar Al-Alam Al-Islami regarding Burmese Muslim citizens residing in the Arakan area.

The Rabitah Al-Alam Al-Islami in a statement issued in Mecca on

May 7 expressed deep concern at the reported expulsion of thousands of Burmese Muslims to Bangladesh, and called on all Islamic countries to condemn the Burmese Government's action. The Rabitah urged the Muslim countries to "reconsider their relations with Burma in an attempt to obtain total respect for the legitimate rights of minorities and Muslim communities".

It is time an urgent move is undertaken by the Islamic Secretariat firstly the Islamic Solidarity Fund should help the refugees now in Bangladesh allied with it, the Red Crescent should move to give relief to the Muslim being driven out, and secondly, talk with the government of Burma should begin by the Islamic governments.

## THE MUSLIM WORLD

### MOTAMAR NEWS

May 6, 1978

#### Cable to UN's S. G.

Maulana Hasan Musanna Nadyi, President of Pakistan Chapter of World Muslim Congress in a cable to H. E. Dr. Kurt Waldheim said :

"World Muslim Congress draws Your Excellency and UN Human Rights Commission urgent attention to the genocidal extermination of Muslim citizens of Burma residing in Arakan province of Burma. It is an acknowledged fact that Muslim citizens of Arakan are living there for nearly one thousand year specially in Maungdo, Boothidaung, Rathidaung, Kayokto and Akyab districts. Despite continuous destruction of lives and properties they have tried to live without protesting but recent ruthless extermination by governmental and non-governmental authorities stands unparalleled when women were

brutally violated and mutilated, children barbarically killed and men violently exterminated. We beseech Your Excellency's immediate intervention to stop these atrocities perpetuated upon poor Muslims of Arakan citizens of Burma. It is a clear violation of Human Rights and genocide on basis of racial discrimination and which must be stopped forthwith".

Cables on similar line were also sent to the concerned UN offices and agencies as well as to International N.G.O's such as World Congress of Religions for Peace. Earlier he has also moved H. E. Dr. A. Karim Gaye of Islamic Secretariat at Jeddah.

#### Arakanese Exodus

Motamar Hqs. are glad to note that the world is now taking serious note of the recent happenings in Arakan where the Muslim ethnic group is subjected to all kinds of suppression and are forced to leave their homes and hearths and seek refuge in Bangladesh. So far over 1,45,000 refugees are irking at their existence in sprawling camps in the Chittagong Division.

We are also glad that UN concerned agencies are also taking interest in this humanitarian aspect of the Arakanese Muslims.

We are happy to note that the Motamar's representative to the UN Dr. Viqar Ahmed Hamdani has conveyed all our representations including the telegrams from Takanaf and the memos of Rohingyas Patriotic Front to all the concerned authorities in the United Nations.

We are also happy to record that Dr. Homer Jack, the Secretary-General of WCRP, is taking deep interest in this humanitarian issue and in conjunction with Dr. Hamdani, is doing his best both to raise this issue in the concerned quarters to seek the relief for the Rohingyas who have been compelled to flee from their homes.

(68)  
THE SUNDAY TIMES,  
MAY 14 1978

## The day Burma's census turned into a bloodbath

A MOTHER protects her child as Burmese soldiers open fire. This exclusive photograph was taken at Taungbro on the Burma-Bangladesh border on April 23. It lifts the veil on one of the world's great unreported tragedies—the exodus of 150,000 Burmese Muslims forced to flee their homes in Burma and seek refuge in neighbouring Bangladesh. Burma is predominantly a Buddhist country but it has a large Muslim minority living in the Arakan region.

This year the government ordered a census of the whole population. It called it Project Dragon King. In the Arakan the census seems to have turned into religious persecution if one can believe the refugees' stories and the testimony of two French journalists who witnessed this border shooting incident in which, they report, 100 people were killed.

The tragedy extends to Bangladesh. The government cannot feed its own 87 million people. In one camp, 18,000 Burmese are said to be sheltering.

## Burmese Muslims being taken to labour camps

TEKNAF (Bangladesh), May 16: Refugees from Burma said yesterday young Muslims in that country were being rounded up by the Burmese Army and taken to labour camps.

They said the Muslims, aged between about 14 and 25, were being used to build a highway linking Rangoon with Akyab in northeast Burma across the Arakan hills.

Officials at eight Bangladesh refugee camps confirmed that no young Muslims had checked in.

.....  
Meanwhile, Mr. Fuad Abdul Hamid al-Khatib, Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Bangladesh and leader of a six-man Islamic delegation to the border area, yesterday watched as about 200 refugees crossed the river Naaf into Bangladesh in small craft with their meagre belongings.

Speaking to reporters after visiting the Teknaf border post overlooking Burmese territory, the envoy said: "It (the influx) must be stopped at all costs otherwise it will lead to another Palestinian-type problem."

He said his Government would strongly take up the refugee problem with the Burmese authorities.

The Rangoon Government has denied charges by the refugees that its Army is waging a campaign of terror against a Muslim minority in Burma. It alleges those fleeing across the border are illegal immigrants trying to avoid checks by Burmese immigration officials.—  
Reuter. \*

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4715

(69)  
MAY 14 1978  
NEW BIRMINGHAM, LONDON, MAY 16, 1978  
PAGE 20 F

## ISLAMIC COUNCIL EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER EXTERMINATION OF MUSLIMS IN BURMA

"Muslims in Burma facing worst genocide in modern history which has already resulted in the migration of 150,000 Muslims indiscriminately killing Muslims sparing neither women nor children nor old men. Seek immediate intervention of the United Nations to put an end to the unprecedented grim tragedy of cold-blooded massacre. Victims who have sought refuge in Bangladesh need immediate relief. Please send a United Nations team to Burma to investigate situation and another to refugee camps in Bangladesh to assess refugee's needs".

Mr. Azzam's identical cable to the Saudi Arabian Monarch, the Libyan leader and President of the United Arab Emirates said:

"Muslims in Burma facing large scale genocide which threatens their very existence. Persecution and killing has forced over 150,000 Muslims to flee their homes to seek shelter in adjoining Bangladesh. Burmese Soldiers reportedly indiscriminately killing Muslims sparing neither old, children nor women. Situation causing grave concern and in this hour of gravest crisis the Muslim Umma looks upon you to use your influence and resources to

save the Burmese Muslims from total extermination and relief to those who are languishing in refugee camps in Bangladesh. May Allah make you an instrument for the preservation of Islam and its followers.

## Burma sends refugees to labour camps

TEKNAF (Bangladesh), May 16: The refugee influx would develop into another Palestinian problem unless it was checked. More than 100,000 Muslims have crossed into Bangladesh from north-west Burma, according to official sources in this country.

At the same time, the Saudi leader of an Islamic delegation to Teknaf on the Burma-Bangladesh border warned that Refugees reported yesterday that Muslims—aged between



ed up by the Burmese Army and some were being used to build a highway linking Rangoon with Akyab in north-east Burma across the Arakan hills.

Officials at eight Bangladesh refugee camps confirmed that no young Muslims had checked in. Meanwhile, Fuad Abdul Hamid Al-Khatib, Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Bangladesh and leader of a six-man Islamic delegation to the border area yesterday watched as about 200 refugees crossed the river into Bangladesh in a small craft with their meagre belongings.

Speaking to reporters after visiting Teknaf border post overlooking Burmese territory, the envoy said: "It (the influx) must be stopped at all costs otherwise it will lead to another Palestinian problem."

He said his Government would strongly take up the refugee problem with the Burmese authorities.

The Rangoon Government has denied charges by the refugees that the Army is waging a campaign of terror against a Muslim minority in Burma. It alleges those fleeing across the border are illegal immigrants trying to avoid checks by Burmese immigration officials.

According to a New Delhi report: Indian Railway Police intercepted batch of 52 Burmese Muslim evacuees who had crossed over to India through the Tripura state border in East India and were on their way to the Brahmaputra Valley by train, reports reaching here said.

The reports said that the evacuees have been pushed back into Bangladesh. This was the only batch of evacuees detected in the eastern area where strict surveillance was being maintained to check infiltration by Burmese refugees.—Reuters/APP.

## Burmese Muslims being taken to labour camps

TEKNAF (Bangladesh), May 16: Refugees from Burma said yesterday young Muslims in that country were being rounded up by the Burmese Army and taken to labour camps.

They said the Muslims, aged between about 14 and 25, were being used to build a highway linking Rangoon with Akyab in northeast Burma across the Arakan hills.

Officials at eight Bangladesh refugee camps confirmed that no young Muslims had checked in.

Meanwhile, Mr. Fuad Abdul Hanud al-Khatib, Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Bangladesh and leader of a six-man Islamic delegation to the border area, yesterday watched as about 200 refugees crossed the river Naaf into Bangladesh in small craft with their meagre belongings.

Speaking to reporters after visiting the Teknaf border post overlooking Burmese territory, the envoy said: "It (the influx) must be stopped at all costs otherwise it will lead to another Palestinian-type problem."

He said his Government would strongly take up the refugee problem with the Burmese authorities.

The Rangoon Government has denied charges by the refugees that its Army is waging a

campaign of terror against a Muslim minority in Burma. It alleges those fleeing across the border are illegal immigrants trying to avoid checks by Burmese immigration officials.—Reuters.

## Islamic Council urges UN to save Burmese Muslims

LONDON, May 17: The Secretary-General of the Islamic Council of Europe, Mr. Saleem Azzam, has asked United Nations Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim to intervene to stop what he described as the genocide of Muslims in Burma, the Council said today.

In a telegram, Mr. Azzam said Muslims in Burma were facing genocide "which has already resulted in large scale deaths and migration of over 150,000 Muslims to adjoining Bangladesh."

He asked Mr. Waldheim for immediate United Nations intervention "to put an end to unprecedented grim and bloody tragedy", and for dispatch of UN investigation team to Burma.

In telegrams to King Khalid of Saudi Arabia, Libyan President Qaddafi, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan of the United Arab Emirates, Mr. Azzam asked them to use their influence and resources "to save Burmese Muslims from total extermination and relief for those who languish in refugee camps in Bangladesh".

### REPORT AWAITED

In Kuala Lumpur, Malaysian Foreign Minister Rithauddeen said the Malaysian Government is awaiting an official report on the

Influx of Muslim refugees from Burma into Bangladesh.

He added that the Government would have to study the problem closely before it could play its part to help solve the issue.

Malaysia would like to see the problem facing Bangladesh and Burma solved amicably, he said.

He was commenting on a newspaper report quoting Bangladesh High Commissioner here, K. M. Saifulla, as saying that his country would be seeking Malaysia's good office to solve the issue.

### MEMORANDUM

In Karachi, the International Affairs Department of Islami Jamiat-ul-Talaba Pakistan has sent a memorandum to Muslim youth organisations the world over to apprise them of the plight of Burmese Muslims.

He calls on Muslim organisations to make concerted effort to mitigate the sufferings of their Muslim brethren. The Jamiat has appealed to every Muslim organization.

—To send cables the leaders of the Embassy and Consulate-General of Burma in their own country.

—To send cables the leaders of Burma to stop the forced exodus into Bangladesh of Burmese Muslims.

—To send cable or write to UN Secretary-General deploring his inexcusable silence on the Burmese traumatic situation and asking him to oversee the restoration of human rights in Burma, and —To publicise the contents of the report through international news media exerting pressure on the Burmese Government to guarantee the security of life and property of Muslims and to let them live their lives according to the dictates of Islam.

## Help Burmese refugees: R.C. League's appeal

GENEVA, May 17: The League for Red Cross societies yesterday appealed to member organisations to help the Bangladesh Red Cross feed and shelter scores of thousands of Burmese refugees streaming into the country.

The League said more than 140,000 people, mainly women and children, were living in shelters made of metal sheets, plastic material and tree branches in seven camps in the area of Chittagong.

Thousands more were crossing the frontier daily, it said. Sanitary arrangements were extremely precarious and storms and torrential rains made their situation worse, it added.

The Bangladesh Red Cross Society which administers the camps, needed funds to buy food, medicine, clothing and material for shelters, the League said. It added that Bangladesh Government was providing food and some shelter.

The League, grouping 125 national societies around the world, said it was sending two representatives to the area to help the Bangladesh Red Cross.

It gave no reason for the flood of refugees. But official sources in Dacca last week said they were mainly Muslims and quoted some as telling Bangladesh Government officials that the Burmese Army drove them out at gunpoint.

## Malaysia may mediate B.D., Burma issue

KUALA LUMPUR, May 17: The Malaysian Government is awaiting an official report on the influx of Muslim refugees from Burma into Bangladesh, Foreign Minister Tengku Ahmad Rithauddeen said today.

He added that Malaysia would have to study the problem closely before it could play its part to help solve the issue. His country would like to see the problem facing Bangladesh and Burma solved amicably, he said.

He was commenting on a newspaper report quoting Bangladesh High Commissioner here, Mr. K.M. Saifullah, as saying that his country would be seeking Malaysia's good offices to solve the issue.

—Reuter.

## 130,000 Burmese Muslims in BD

DACCA, May 18: At least 130,000 Burmese Muslims have fled into Dacca after being evicted from their homes by Burmese authorities recently, Presidential Adviser for Foreign Affairs Shamsul Haq said yesterday.

He was speaking to reporters at Dacca airport after a visit to the refugee camps accompanied by Czechoslovakian Ambassador to Bangladesh Adolf Pnar.

Mr. Haq said the plight of the evictees is so distressing that it warrants their immediate repatriation and rehabilitation.

He said most of the refugees were women, children and old men. Meanwhile, a plane carrying relief goods from Britain for the Burmese Muslims was expected to reach Dacca today from London.

United Nations agencies were rushing milk powder and some financial help has been promised by the Mecca-based Muslim World League.—APA.

## Burmese town devastated by cyclone

RANGOON, May 18: A cyclone today devastated Kyaukphuy, a

town on Burma's west coast with a population of 200,000 people, officials sources said here.

The number of casualties was not immediately known, but first reports said 900 per cent. of the town had been destroyed.

The official sources said winds of up to 100 miles per hour (160 KMH) had flattened most of the buildings in Kyaukphuy situated on the Bay of Bengal about 240 miles (365 kilometres) north-west of Rangoon.

Many boats moored at the town's jetty were reported to have been blown ashore.—Reuter.

## Burmese Muslims

(Continued from page 1)

flow in supplies of childrens clothing and polythene sheets to Dacca yesterday, the first international relief for Muslim refugees who have crossed into Bangladesh from Burma.

A Red Cross spokesman said the International Red Cross will send representatives to make an on-the-spot study of why the Muslims are crossing into Bangladesh at the rate of 5,000 a day.

He said the move was in response to international concern of the problem.

The Foreign Office here said the Government would cooperate with the International Red Cross which would be sending its representatives to the Burmese border where a total of 135,000 refugees have crossed into Bangladesh.

No date was given for the arrival of the Red Cross representatives.—APP/Reuter.



Crises

# Flight of the Rohingyeas

They had been there ever since Islam began its long, leap-frogging swirl through Southeast Asia, a devout and self-reliant people who proudly called themselves the Rohingyeas. Their land lay in the rugged Arakan territory of southwestern Burma, with India to the north and Bangladesh to the west. And while much of Burma seethed through war, colonialism, independence and insurgency, the Rohingyeas lived quietly and contentedly in their frontier fastness.

That, at least, was how tearful Rohingyea refugees told it last week. In the past month at least 110,000 of them have poured across the border

into Bangladesh, and the tide was still flowing this week. The trauma and trappings of the dispossessed are easily seen in the area around Cox's Bazaar, a beach resort 95 mi. from Chittagong, and in the towns that dot the "finger" of Bangladesh lying between Burma and the Bay of Bengal — Gundhum, Nhila, Whaikhyang. Rohingyea Muslims straggle in bearing babies in slings, bedrolls under their arms. Some carry their parents, too ill or old to walk, on their backs. Women beg strangers to listen while they tell of husbands and brothers shot dead, houses looted and burned, mothers and daughters raped while their families were forced to watch. "They are coming at the rate of 2,000 to 3,000 a day," a harried local official told Iranian correspondent Safa Haeri in the town of Nhila, 100 mi. southeast of Cox's Bazaar, last week. "The ration of milk and rice I have is hardly sufficient for 2,000 people — and already I have 20,000 in this camp."

Yet if the signs of distress and exodus are clearly visible, the reasons are not. The Bangladesh government has no explanation — not for the record, anyway. For its part, Rangoon waited until this week before breaking what had seemed to be an embarrassed silence: the refugees, said Burmese government officials, were actually Bangladeshi nationals fleeing an "immigration check" code-named Dragon King.

The refugees say Dragon King was launched in February. But that is the only point on which their accounts dovetail with Rangoon's. They claim the operation is an anti-Muslim drive intended to force them from their

ancestral homes, and that it was preceded by similar though smaller campaigns in 1955, 1959 and 1975.

Some of the refugees have set up a "Committee in Aid of Burmese Rohingyeas" at Cox's Bazaar, where last week they issued an "appeal to the world community." In recent years, they claimed, some 400,000 of their number had left Arakan to migrate to Bangladesh and other Muslim countries farther west. Moreover, they said, previous campaigns had been only minor affairs compared with the "large-scale extermination" aims of Dragon King: so far, 150,000 Rohingyeas in the Budhidoung area and 50,000 more in Maungdaw have been forced to flee for their lives.

Whatever the reasons, the exodus certainly took neither government by surprise. Bangladeshi officials visited Rangoon several weeks ago — evidently in an attempt to avert what they saw as an approaching crisis — and only last month a ministerial-level Burmese delegation went to Dacca. That the problem actually worsened after those talks is seen by diplomats as dramatic proof of deep-rooted problems about which both Bangladesh and Burma have chosen to remain silent.

Political observers fear the situation will get a lot worse before it gets better, and not merely because of the political implications. Bangladesh, one of the poorest nations on earth, does not have the capacity to support a sudden influx of destitutes who may already number more than 200,000. The territory into which the refugees are flowing is particularly backward even by Bangladeshi standards: trees provide the only protection from a scorching sun, and there is no provision for additional food supplies. Many babies have been born since the influx began; most have died of starvation or heat.

Already, too, the strain has begun to inflame local passions. Trees near refugee camps are festooned with banners and posters bearing slogans such as DOWN WITH THE FASCIST REGIME IN RANGOON and NO FRIENDSHIP WITH THE MURDERERS IN BURMA. One local functionary told Correspondent Haeri:

"If a peaceful solution isn't found quickly, the only possible solution will be war. If the Burmese won't take these people back, the best way for us to cope with the problem will be to arm the refugees and help them form a liberation front. Let them go back to their country and fight for their homes and their language and their dignity. I'm sure Rangoon will understand that."

Confirming the sudden rise in tensions, the Burmese government this week charged that "armed bands" from Bangladesh had attacked soldiers conducting a drive against illegal immigrants. Burma's official news agency said Bangladeshi police had also fired on security outposts and army patrols. Dacca responded by lodging a formal protest against Burmese policy on the Muslims of Arakan. According to some sources in the Bangladesh capital, President Zia ur-Rahman was on the verge of calling off next month's presidential election — a step made even more likely this week when a half-million government employees went on strike to press pay demands.

While a poor and backward corner of Asia moved closer to crisis point, diplomats in Dacca, New Delhi and elsewhere this week expressed fears that a "third party" might soon become embroiled — if it wasn't already. Any serious attempt to launch a Rohingyea Muslim "liberation front," for instance, would be sure to win Arab attention. More immediately, observers pointed out, popular feelings in Bangladesh could turn fiercely against the country's Buddhist minority (there are some 30,000 Buddhists in Cox's Bazaar alone).

Most ominous of all, reported sources in Dacca, was the spreading suspicion that big-power interests — presumably Soviet, since the Russians maintain naval installations at Chittagong — might be involved. If that is true, the world may hear much more of the weeping Rohingyeas in the weeks and months ahead.



## 130,000 Burmese Muslims in B.D. World nations asked to help solve problem

KARACHI, May 18: Shaikh Zaheeruddin, Bangladesh's Ambassador to Pakistan, today asked the comity of nations to rise to the occasion and help solve the humanitarian problem created by the eviction of Muslims from their hearths and homes by the Government of Burma.

Replying to a welcome address presented at a luncheon hosted in his honour by Mr. Inamullah Khan, Secretary-General, Motamar Alam-i-Islami, at a local hotel, he said that it was incorrect to suggest that the Burmese Muslims were migrating voluntarily.

Shaikh Zaheeruddin, who is to leave here tomorrow for Dacca on his way to Rangoon as Bangladesh's Ambassador to Burma, said that there had not been a single precedent when the people had left their native land willingly.

He said that from the evidence it had been established beyond any shadow of doubt that the Burmese Muslim refugees had their roots in Burma for the last one thousand years. He was sure that the Burmese Government would take back its Muslim nationals after its temperament had cooled down.

Shaikh Zaheeruddin said that after taking over his assign-

ment as Bangladesh's Ambassador to Burma he would do his best for the solution of the problem in an amicable and honourable manner.

Speaking of the relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh, Shaikh Zaheeruddin said that these were based on mutual understanding and fraternal feelings as existed between two independent and sovereign States.

He said "We have been able to establish these relations on a firm basis." These relations had been further strengthened after the recent visit of Bangladesh President General Zia-ur-Rehman.

He recalled that the "two Generals" General Zia-ur-Rehman and General Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq—had discussions in the most friendly and cordial atmosphere on matters of mutual interest. He further recalled that he had found the two Generals smiling and in pleasant moods after the meetings.

Shaikh Zaheeruddin believed that General Zia-ur-Rehman's three-day visit to Pakistan had created considerable goodwill between Pakistan and Bangladesh.

At least 130,000 Burmese Muslims have fled into Dacca

after being evicted from their homes by Burmese authorities recently. Presidential Advisor for Foreign Affairs, Shamsul Haq said yesterday.

He was speaking to reporters at Dacca Airport after a visit to the refugee camps accompanied by Czechoslovak Ambassador to Bangladesh, Mr. Adou Praz.

Mr. Haq said the suffering of the evictees is so distressing that it warrants their immediate repatriation and rehabilitation. He said most of the refugees were women, children and old men.

Meanwhile, a plane carrying relief goods from Britain for the Burmese Muslims was expected to reach Dacca today from London.

United Nations agencies were rushing powder milk and some financial help has been promised by the Mecca-based World League of Muslims.—APPIAPA.

## UNICEF relief for Burmese Muslims

UNITED NATIONS, May 18: The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is providing emergency relief assistance to over 120,000 people mostly Muslims who have fled into Bangladesh from Burma during the past few weeks, it was announced last night.

UNICEF is initially providing 50 kg and diet supplementary kits which contain a complete range of standard drugs for mother and child health care including tetra-cycline capsules, oral rehydration salts, essential vitamins and iron supplements.

In addition, UNICEF is providing 10,000 packets of oral rehydration salts for children suffering from severe dehydration caused by acute dysentery and diarrhoea. It is also helping the Bangladesh Government to sink 500 wells to provide clean drinking water for the people in the camps and has provided two ships to transport relief goods to

Officials on the spot expect the present number of displaced persons to increase to 200,000 based on the current flow of people into Bangladesh, estimated at 3,000 to 4,000 daily.

The Bangladesh Government has appealed to the United Nations to provide humanitarian assistance to the displaced persons, most of whom are located in six camps in the Chittagong district and the Chittagong Hill Tracts district which border Burma.

United Nations officials report that these people are living in extremely poor and unsanitary conditions, with many of the children in a "precarious" condition. Most people have erected makeshift huts fashioned from small branches of trees and leaves. The first heavy rains of the monsoon season recently deluged the lying camps causing severe hardships.

Meanwhile a Boeing aircraft

(Continued on page 6 col 6)



## Disturbance on the border of peace

By Daud Majlis

Dacca: During his recent visit here, the Burmese Foreign Minister Brigadier-General Myint Maung described his country's border with Bangladesh as "a border of peace." One week after he returned home, the border became a symbol of woe for thousands of Burmese Muslims who were evicted from their homes in Arakan province and pushed into Bangladesh.

At the time of writing more than 70,000 Burmese nationals had crossed to Bangladesh seeking sanctuary from what they allege is "inhuman torture, atrocities and systematic persecution" by the Burmese authorities. According to one estimate more than 50,000 evicted Burmese nationals are still living in the jungles along the border trying to get into Bangladesh.

Some of the refugees who have taken shelter in Bangladesh fear that the Burmese authorities are trying to evict virtually all the 1.2 million Muslims from Arakan. Rangoon considers them foreigners, while Bangladesh does not accept them as its nationals.

Rohingya, as the Burmese Muslims in Arakan are known, have lived in Burma for periods ranging from three generations to over three centuries. Some of their forebears went to Burma from what is now Bangladesh's eastern district of Chittagong, but over the years they lost contact with their original homeland. They have neither relations nor friends in this country. Most do not even speak the language.

The evicted Burmese Muslims continue to pour into Bangladesh in an unending stream, haunted by the memory of their horrifying experience and exhausted by the perilous trek to safety. All tell the same tale: armed Burmese soldiers came in hordes to their area, singled out the women for rape and the young men for murder.

Officially six camps have been established for the refugees. But they also set

### THE EXODUS REVERSED



up camps on their own initiative as they reach Bangladesh. They are all strangely silent, speaking only when directly questioned. In one camp, this correspondent met Sultan Ahmed, who last year harvested about 1,000 tons of rice from his own land. He crossed to Bangladesh with about 80 members of his family. At 75 he is now a pauper. He says his 30-year-old son, Shamsul Alam, was kidnapped and murdered by Burmese soldiers.

Mariam Khatun Khatun, 32, came with her three children because "the brutes killed my husband." Like most of the latest wave of refugees, she comes from Buthodong district.

Most of those being thrown out are small traders and businessmen. They also have a little land. Very few are really rich, but they dominate Arakan's economic life. The clash between the original Burmese and the Arakan Rohingya is mainly economic: the natives want to take over what the Rohingya

built up over the centuries.

Action to evict the Rohingya from Arakan began in 1942 when nearly 400,000 Muslims were thrown out of Burma. About 200,000 have gone to Pakistan, some to the Middle East and Canada. The remainder live in Bangladesh.

When the Burmese Government introduced identity cards for its citizens, the Rohingya Muslims were refused national registration cards (NRC). Instead they were offered foreigners registration cards (FRC). But they refused to accept them and demanded NRCs since they were genuine Burmese nationals. The result was that most received no card at all.

The few who were issued NRCs had to surrender them a year ago, because the authorities wanted the cards "in connection with a survey," and never got them back. Now the non-cardholders are being penalised as infiltrators from Bangladesh. According to one estimate more than 6,000 such "infiltrators" languish in Burmese jails.

Early in April the Bangladesh presidential adviser, Kazi Anwarul Haq, went to Rangoon to initiate negotiations, which continued when the Burmese Foreign Minister came to Dacca in mid-April. The negotiations were inconclusive, but were due to be resumed in Rangoon. Before this happened, however, it is alleged that the Burmese authorities unleashed a campaign of terror against the Arakan Muslims in a unilateral bid to solve what they now describe as their "minority problem."

► *Denzil Peiris writes:* Observers noting the reverse flow of refugees from Burma into Bangladesh would have been reminded of an Asian saying: "Saturn [the god of misfortune] has dropped on to the beggar's bowl." Undoubtedly, the "international basket case," as Bangladesh was dubbed by former United States secretary of state Henry Kissinger during the 1971 liberation war, could not take on the extra burden of feeding and sheltering these refugees.

Burma's Ministry of Home Affairs said the Government was "implementing a project for the systematic scrutiny of people residing in the State for classification of citizens and foreigners according to the law and for exposing and taking action against foreigners who have entered the country illegally..."

Indeed, the Burmese Government said that other races besides the Bengalis had been "scrutinised." After inspections from December 13-31 last year, action had been taken against 174 Chinese under the Registration of Foreigners Act. Others at the receiving end of the searches included Nepalese, Pakistanis and Indians.

Burma claims that during one of these operations towards the end of April, "because of agitation by unscrupulous persons and because they were unable to produce *bona fide* registration certificates, about 19,457 Bengalis abandoned their homes and absconded."

While Burma blamed the Bengalis for their exodus and denied allegations of racial discrimination, it is possible that some officials engaged in the searches may have been caught up in the atmosphere of resentment against immigrants.

Colonial rule in Asia — whether French or British — has left several time bombs in the form of race tension. A feature of alien rule was the importation of indentured labour, traders and minor officials to the colonies. Some foreign Asian traders functioned as usurious moneylenders, and merchants to whom peasants were forced to sell crops at exploitative prices to settle loans.

Growing rich through these deals, some immigrants became rural landowners. The crops they harvested included implacable resentment against themselves.

This latest exodus could have been partly spurred by impoverished Burmese peasants seeing an opportunity to grab some of the property and other possessions of the alien Bengalis.

## DAWN

### \$5 lakh U.N. aid for refugees Burma seeks to hold dialogue

RANGOON, May 20: The thousands of Muslims crossing from north-eastern Burma into neighbouring Bangladesh have not been in danger of religious persecution from Burmese authorities, the Burmese Government said here yesterday in a State-run newspaper, reports DPA.

The Government accused Bangladesh of inspiring rumours of State oppression against Bengali Muslims in Burma, and said that most of the fugitives had left Burma to escape immigration authority controls in the frontier region.

The Paper chided Bangladesh for registering complaints with the U.N. over the refugee influx and suggested that Dacca instead initiate a "bilateral dialogue" with Rangoon on any mutual "frontier problems."

Although Bangladesh claims that about 100,000 refugees from Burma, have arrived authorities in Rangoon place the number at just 35,000.

The League of Red Cross Societies said in Geneva yesterday that 140,000 Burmese had recently fled to Bangladesh and that 119

of them, mostly children, had died in refugee camps there, according to AFP.

The situation, it said, was worsening steadily with the daily arrival of some 4,000 new refugees. Sanitary conditions were disastrous, and epidemics were feared due to the lack of drinkable water.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Poul Hartling, said yesterday that he had set aside \$500,000 in emergency aid for about 200,000 Burmese refugees, says Reuter.

The refugees were driven from their homes at gun-point by Burmese troops in a campaign of murder, arson and rape directed against Burma's Muslim minority.

Burma claims those who fled were Bangladesh nationals and therefore illegal immigrants in Burma. The LRCC, appealing for aid for the refugees on Tuesday, said that they were mainly women and children.

## THE MUSLIM WORLD

Eye-Witness Account: May 20, 1978

### Massacre of Burmese Muslims

Thirty Burmese soldiers set up light machine-guns and fire into a mass of Muslim refugees on Bangladesh border on April 23, the Florida weekly news magazine "Le Nouvel Observateur" reported in Paris May 13.

In an eye-witness account, the Observateur's correspondent Francois Hauter affirmed that the massacre was an episode in a deliberate Burmese Government plan to drive a million Rohingyas — Burmese Muslims from the Arakan Province — out of the country.

Bangladesh border guards had been preventing the 18,000 refugees from crossing a river into Bangladesh, M. Hauter wrote.

But they were so shocked at the machine-gunning that they shouldered their rifles and opened their fire on the Burmese soldiers, he related in another article in the newspaper "Le Quotidien de Paris".

Three of the soldiers fell, and the rest fled. The refugees stampeded across the river, some of these sinking into the mud beneath the weight of the wounded people they were carrying.

A woman with a deep stab wound in the left breast said she was the sole survivor of 17 women attacked earlier by Burmese soldiers. She said they cut off the breast of the other women, then stabbed them to death, but let her flee to

tell the other Rohingyas and terrify them.

Mr. Hauter wrote that about 100 of the Muslim peasants were shot to death and a large number wounded during the machine-gunning.

Before that incident, he had visited the refugees huddling across the river for several days. A number of them already had been wounded by bullets or had their faces bashed in by blows from rifle butts, he said. They were sucking leaves — their only nourishment except earthworms.

Since April 23, the Bangladesh Government has allowed refugees to cross the border, but is too poor to take care of them, Mr. Hauter said.

His last sight of the nightmare at the border was a woman scratching the ground with their fingernails in search of something to eat.

He said the 40,000 to 60,000 refugees who have crossed the border accuse the Burmese Army and Police of unleashing a genocide campaign called "Operation Dragon" on Feb. 6.

The French correspondent said the Burmese Government, weak and threatened by rebellions in several provinces, was trying to stay in power by sacrificing a Muslim minority to the Buddhist majority, "especially since the Rohingyas had rich rice lands".



- D A W N

# Exodus Of Burmese Muslims Continues

## UNHCR Aid For Refugees

GENEVA, May 20: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Paul Hartling said yesterday he had set aside 500,000 dollars in emergency aid for the estimated 200,000 Burmese refugees who have fled into Bangladesh.

He said the aid, following a fact-finding mission to the area, would provide food, shelter and medicine.

The refugees, encamped on the Bangladesh border were driven from their homes at gunpoint by Burmese troops in a campaign of murder, arson and rape directed against Burma's Muslim minority.

Burma claims those who fled were Bangladesh nationals and therefore illegal immigrants in Burma.

The League of Red Cross Societies, appealing for aid for the refugees on Tuesday, said they were mainly women and children.

A UN official here estimated today that 3,000 to 4,000 were still crossing into Bangladesh daily.

The Bangladesh Red Cross Society has reported that 119 people, mostly children have died in relief camps, the League of Red Cross societies said.

A League representative in Dacca quoted the Bangladesh Society as saying some 10,000 people were at the frontier waiting to enter Bangladesh.

The representative described sanitation conditions in the camps as "appalling", & said the Bangladesh Society feared epidemics could break out. — Reuter.

### UNICEF STATEMENT

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund said yesterday in Geneva that more than 120,000 people have fled Burma to neighbouring Bangladesh in the past few weeks and between 3,000 and 4,000 more refugees were crossing the border daily.

A UNICEF statement said there would soon be 200,000 Burmese refugees in Bangladesh camps.

UNICEF was providing essential drugs and foodstuffs, and also helping the Bangladesh Government to provide clean drinking water in the six main camps in the Chittagong District and the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the statement said.

United Nations officials in Geneva have said the refugees are mainly Muslims, but the Burmese authorities do not regard them as Burmese. — PPA-Reuters.

## Rabita to raise Burmese Muslims plight at U.N.

The Rabita al-Islami will take up the matter at the United Nations to stop the genocide of Burmese Muslims.

This was stated in Karachi yesterday by the Deputy Secretary-General of the Rabita Dr. Safwat Saqa al-Amini, while talking to newsmen before his departure for Dacca after his four-day tour of Pakistan.

Dr. Amini said that he, along with members of his delegation, will stay in Bangladesh for about three days and will meet the Burmese Muslims, who had taken refuge there.

He said his delegation is also intending to visit Burma to see the plight of the Muslims there, provided the necessary permission was granted. He said that he will submit his detailed report to the Rabita about what has happened to the Burmese Muslims.

## THE MUSLIM WORLD

May 27, 1971

### Aid to Burmese Refugees

According to AFP, the League of Red Cross Societies said in Geneva on May 19 that 140,000 Burmese Muslims had recently fled to Bangladesh and that 119 of them, mostly children, had died in refugee camps there. It said the situation was worsening with the daily arrival of some 4,000 new refugees. Sanitary conditions were disastrous and epidemics were feared due to the lack of drinkable water.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Paul Hartling, said on May 19 that he had set aside 500,000 US dollars in emergency aid for about 200,000 Burmese refugees.

The Motamar Al-Islami Al-Islami is glad to note that the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund has provided relief in the shape of drugs and diet.

Conditions in the refugee camps are highly unsatisfactory and at places the position is "precarious". The massive exodus and the magnitude of suffering demands aid in larger measure. All humanitarian agencies should join hands in the relief operation. Especially because the refugees happen to be Muslims, the Islamic States should help Bangladesh in providing relief to brother Muslims.

In a Burma Government statement, it was said that only those who have fled who were running away in a bid to dodge an "emigration check". The world press as well as agencies like the Red Cross do not support the statement. The families who were uprooted had

lived in the Arakan border of Burma for generations.

Let us hope that the Governments of Bangladesh and Burma will jointly consider the case of Burmese Muslims who were driven out and see that justice is done to them.

## THE MUSLIM WORLD

February 25, 1978

### Muslim Minorities in Burma-II

(Continued from previous issue)

**Basic Islamic Education:** There are a large number of Madrassahs all over the country. All are managed by individual Muslims. A few have Committees of management. All Madrassahs are financed by collections from the Muslim Community. There is need for improvement both in the teaching and management and for strengthening the financial position of the Madrassahs. About 60% of Muslim girls and boys receive basic Islamic education in these Madrassahs and about another 20% at home. There are around 20 Darul Uloom to train Ulema, Imams, Khateeb and Faqoohs. They are run by private individuals. A few have Committees of management. Like the Madrassahs, they are financed by the Muslims. Their curriculum needs drastic changes. Basic religious education is not imparted in State schools. Almost all Darul Uloom have also arrangements for training of Huffaz and Qaris. There are about six special institutions which specialize in the training of Huffaz. Except in the Darul Uloom, Arabic is not taught as a language. There are one or two Muslims educated in Al-Azhar University, Cairo

who conduct Arabic classes. Attempts have been made for inclusion of Arabic among foreign languages taught at the Government's Institute of Foreign Languages, but so far the request has not been granted.

**Higher Secular Education:** Muslims were running three High schools for boys and one for girls in Rangoon. These were nationalized in 1964. There are a large number of Muslim men and women who are University graduates, a fair number who have been educated abroad. However, the number of University educated Muslims is about half of what it should be in proportion to their percentage in the population.

#### Professions and Higher Services:

There are a good number of Muslim lawyers, engineers and doctors, both men and women. There are Muslim lecturers and professors at the University and Colleges. There are some Muslims in high positions in the civil services and in the armed forces. Their number is, however, much below their percentage in the population. There have been only two Muslim Judges of the High Court. Four Muslims have held office as Cabinet Ministers from time to time, during the days of Parliamentary democracy.

**General:** Apart from the translation of the Holy Quran, the Muslims of Burma can derive satisfaction from two other activities established them.

**Muslim Free Hospital:** This Hospital in Rangoon, which started as a dispensary about 40 years back, is a large one and is located in the Centre of Rangoon. It has rendered and is rendering very useful service to the sick of all communities, irrespective of religion.

**Muslim Central Fund Trust:** The idea of this Trust is based on the Bait-ul-Mal. It is a voluntary effort. At one time, for years, it used to collect funds and distribute it among Girls' Homes and Boys' Homes, Darul Uloom, Islamic tuition classes. It provided funds for the translation and publication of the Holy Quran. It also supported needy Muslim students at the Universities and technical institutes. Due to nationalization of most businesses, the income of the Trust has gone down. It now confines its activities largely to the printing of the Holy Quran and support of needy students at the Universities and technical institutes. There are several Muslim Halls in Rangoon. The leading Muslim organizations are: The Jamiat Ulama-e Islam, the All-Burma Burman Muslim Organization and the Islamic Religious Affairs Council.

Reference has already been made to some difficulties particularly non-grant of permission to perform Hajj delay in grant of permission to print Islamic religious literature, particularly the Holy Quran and the small quantity of paper allocated for the purpose.

The Muslims of north Arakan (which adjoins Bangladesh), who are known as Rohingyas have been subjected to a great deal of difficulties, specially of a discriminatory nature. The Rohingyas constitute the majority in the Maungdaw and Buthidaung areas. Their numbers are also large in the Kyauktaw area and in Akyab area. Their total number is certainly larger than 500,000. They are a settled local

population, who have lived in the area for more than five hundred years. They are citizens of the country. Being concentrated in a small area, they have preserved their language and culture, but that is no reason to subject them to any kind of discrimination, amounting to suppression. In recent years, it has been wrongly alleged that they are foreigners and under this false plea they are pushed across the border. Several hundred have been arrested under immigration laws for alleged unauthorized entry into the country; a number of them are in detention for more than ten or fifteen years. They, of course, refuse to leave the country, as they rightly assert that they are Burmese citizens and have no other country to go to. Muslims of north Arakan are not allowed to go to other parts of the country, except with a permit, which again is a clear example of discrimination. There are frequent complaints of forced removal from lands, of violence and of assaults on women. It is difficult to say how much of all this is with the knowledge or connivance of the authorities but the fact remains that the Arakanese Muslims are suffering thereby.

**Contact with International Muslim Organizations:** Contact, especially with the Motamar Al-Islami (World Muslim Congress), is maintained by some Muslim organizations. The Rabitah Al-Islami Al-Islami has a councillor there but is not allowed to attend its meetings.



# DAWN KARACHI

Thursday, May 25, 1978

## Islamic Conference deeply concerned

### Burmese Muslims' eviction

JEDDAH, May 24: The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) is deeply concerned at the news of the deplorable fate of the Muslim community in Burma. "The horrors Muslims in Burma are currently suffering, have been confirmed by various reliable sources," a statement issued by the (OIC) Secretariat General said on May 16.

"For more than six weeks, the Muslim community in Burma has been facing persecution, murder and eviction by the military authorities there. The persecution of children, women and old men and the desecration of mosques, schools, and Islamic centres and the Holy Quran has been unbelievable," the statement added.

The statement referred to the sufferings of the Burmese Muslim refugees in temporary camps in Bangladesh and neighbouring countries.

The actions committed by the Government of Burma against its Muslim nationals clearly show fanatical objectives which negate the basic human rights of one of its communities," the statement said.

#### 1,30,000 REFUGEES

According to Bangladesh Radio the number of Burmese Muslim refugees sheltered in eight different refugee camps has exceeded 1.30 lakh.

The influx of Burmese Muslims continued unabated till yesterday. incessant rains during the last five days have increased the miseries of the Burmese refugees.

The radio added that the Secretary General of the Islamic Conference Secretariat, Mr Karim Gaya, has called upon the Muslim world to help solve the Burmese refugees' problems.

In a statement Mr Ahmad Karim Gaya has urged Muslims all over the world to offer all possible assistance to provide relief to Burmese Muslim refugees.

#### 186 REFUGEES DIE

The Bangladesh news agency said yesterday 186 Burmese refugees, most of them children, had died in border camps after crossing into Bangladesh and many more were seriously ill.

Quoting official sources, the agency said most of the deaths were caused by diarrhoea and

malnutrition. Torrential rains in Bangladesh in the past few weeks the last four days had flooded and between 3,000 and 4,000 more eight camps housing 200,000 refugees were crossing the border daily.

The agency said thousands of the evicted people were crossing into Bangladesh every day, fleeing from "atrocities" by the Burmese authorities.

Despite Government efforts to restrict them in camps, the refugees had started moving out to urban areas, the agency said.

#### UNICEF STATEMENT

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund said yesterday in Geneva that more than 120,000 people have fled Burma to neighbouring

A UNICEF statement said there would soon be 200,000 Burmese refugees in Bangladesh camps.

UNICEF was providing essential drugs and foodstuffs, and also

helping the Bangladesh Government to provide clean drinking water in the six main camps in the Chittagong District and the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the statement said.

United Nations officials in Geneva have said the refugees that are mainly Muslims, but the Burmese authorities do not regard them as Burmese.—PTI/Reuter.

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taws (Chittagonians) who could prove they were lawful citizens of this country.

Burmese officials have accused Khawtaws of entering Burma illegally over the years and to disappear from the eye of the law by mixing with ethnically similar Khawtaws living on the Burmese side of the border.

Journalists who recently visited the border region said that the presence of Chittagonians was overwhelming despite the flight of thousands of them.

They estimated that there were roughly two Muslims in the area for every one Muslim who fled. Those who remained continued to live peacefully in the region, they said.

Burmese Deputy Minister for Home and Religious Affairs said that the Khawtaws always crossed the border into Burma whenever there were natural or political calamities in Bangladesh.

"Burma had to look after 16,921 Khawtaw refugees in 1971-72 during the time of internal strife in Bangladesh. When the time for repatriation came many of those managed not to go back home by mingling with other Chittagonians living legally in by Burma", he said.

But local authorities in the Western Arakan Province said that the main reason for the movements of the Khawtaws was economic.

They said that rice, tobacco and other foodstuffs were regularly smuggled out of Burma across the Western border although the Burmese Government's recent anti-smuggling measures had somewhat reduced such illegal practices.

Out of a total of 1.3 million people in Arakan Province, 29 per cent are Muslims. But in Buthtadaung, Muslims account for 85 per cent of the 165,000 population while in Maungdaw, 90 per cent of the 235,000 inhabitants are Muslims.—Reuter

24 Jamadi-su-Sani, 1393

Thursday, June 1, 1978

Vol. XXXVII No. 149

### Refugee influx causing tension

—TABARAK HOSSAIN

DACCA, May 31: Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Tabarak Hussain said today an influx of more than 150,000 Muslim refugees from Burma had caused serious tension on the border and strained relations between Dacca and Rangoon.

He said the refugees were being driven out of Burma and were still arriving at the rate of about 5,000 a day.

"This is a violation of human rights", Mr Hussain told a Press conference here.

Although there had been no clashes between Bangladeshi and Burmese troops, Mr Hussain said, but there had been firing from the Burmese.

Bangladeshi forces had fired back in self defence but there were no reports of casualties, he said.

Mr Hussain reported that nine relief camps had been set up near the border to accommodate the refugees until they could be returned to Burma.

A total of 230 people had died in the camps where mass vaccinations were being carried out against smallpox, cholera and dysentery.

Mr Hussain said some refugees were fired on by Burmese forces to make them cross into Bangladesh.

"No country has the right to expel minorities to take shelter in another country", he said.

## BURMESE MUSLIMS GIVE Harrowing accounts of rape, atrocities

COX'S BAZAAR, June 3: Muslim refugees who have recently fled Burma to Bangladesh, and maintains that many of the Muslims had originally come from Bangladesh and were not legally Burmese.

But the refugees said the Burmese were deliberately forcing them to leave in a "de-Muslimising" of the Arakan region.

In Bangladesh officials said most of the refugees had been born in Burma and were apparently being expelled because of fears that Muslims would become the majority group in the Arakan region.

This could cause problems for the Central Government in Rangoon, which is already tackling breakaway movements in other parts of Burma, the officials said.

One refugee, Shaperi Dasp trudging the last few miles, said: "Burmese soldiers raided our home in the night and took away young men and compelled them to do forced labour", he said adding that he and his forefathers had been born in Burma and had Burmese identity papers.—Reuter.



# DAWN DAWN

Saturday, June 3, 1978

Tuesday, June 6, 1978

## WFP food aid for Burmese Muslims

## Muslim world's concern over Burmese DPs

HOME, June 2: The UN's World Food Programme (WFP) will give emergency food aid worth 2.2 million dollars to Bangladesh to help feed 200,000 displaced persons who have come from Burma, a spokesman said today.

"In view of the urgency, WFP has authorised the Government of Bangladesh to borrow food from current WFP-supported development projects," the spokesman added. The stocks will be replaced.

The aid was authorised by Director-General Edouard Saouma of the UN's Rome-based Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), who oversees WFP emergency projects.—Reuter.

ISLAMABAD, June 3: The Assistant Secretary-General of the Islamic Secretariat Mr Qasim Zehri, who called on President Zia-ur-Rahman at Bongo Bhawan, yesterday, has said the entire Muslim world is deeply concerned by the refugee problem, created by the action of the Burmese Government.

Mr Zehri is leading a delegation from the Islamic conference to make an on the spot assessment of the problem.

He stressed the need for immediate solution of the problem so that the Burmese Muslims can return to their homes in Burma.

He assured the President that the Islamic Secretariat and its members will do everything possible to assist Bangladesh to face this crisis.

Mr Zehri was confident that with the spirit of Islamic solidarity, Muslims throughout the world will stand by Bangladesh.

President Zia expressed his appreciation that such a high level delegation visited Bangladesh to make on the spot assessment of the problem.—FP1

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IMPACT INTERNATIONAL 26 MAY—6 JUNE 1978

MUSLIMS IN BURMA

## Operation Dragon King

LAST MARCH the World Muslim Congress in Karachi sent a telegram to UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim calling attention to 'the genocidal extermination of Muslim citizens of Burma residing in Arakan province'. It spoke of the 'continuous destruction of Muslim life and property' in an area where Muslims have been living for almost 1,000 years and where they form the majority. It also said that the extermination of Muslims by Burmese governmental and non-governmental agencies has recently become more 'ruthless'.

This, it has now become chillingly clear, is no exaggeration. The situation in Arakan is now being described as 'one of the world's great unreported tragedies' (*Sunday Times*, 14 May) in which some 150,000 Burmese Muslims have been forced to flee their homes in Burma and seek refuge in neighbouring Bangladesh. The problem has reached such proportions as to be a source of renewed tension between the authorities in Dacca and Rangoon.

The immediate cause of the continuing tragedy is said to

be the census of the whole population which the Burmese government ordered earlier this year. On 7 May 1978 Rangoon radio admitted that the Burmese Department of Immigration and Manpower under the Ministry of Home and Religious Affairs was 'determined to carry out Project Naga Min (Dragon King) for classifying citizens and non-citizens but was experiencing problems in the Arakan State in examining people individually. The problems it said concerned illegal Bengali immigrants into Burma. It was these who were fleeing from the immigration check while some unscrupulous ones among them had committed acts of intimidation, arson and theft and even ambushed Burmese immigration officials.

The official Burmese account hardly fits in with the testimony of journalists and the accounts given by evacuees as they struggle into steadily overflowing and inadequate camps which have been set up in Bangladesh to receive them.

An eye-witness account tells of the refugees as they 'straggle in bearing babies in

slings, bedrolls under their arms. Some carry their parents, too ill or too old to walk, on their backs. Women beg strangers to listen while they tell of husbands and brothers shot dead, houses looted and burned, mothers and daughters raped while their families were forced to watch'. The Muslim World Congress had also spoken in March about the brutal violation of Muslim women, the mutilation of children and the violent killing of men in Arakan. Two French journalists who witnessed the scenes portrayed in the cover picture say that 'over a million Burmese Muslims are in danger of being exterminated'. They report that 100 people were killed in one incident. There seems to be no doubt that the Burmese authorities are carrying out a deliberate campaign of oppression and persecution against the Muslims of Arakan.

That the problem is not one of illegal Bangladeshi nationals in Burma is evidenced by the fact that it has been simmering for some thirty years now but has worsened considerably since 1962 when the military government of General Ne Win assumed power in Burma through a coup d'état. In fact, since 1962 the overall situation of Muslims in Burma has worsened.

There are about three million Muslims in Burma, nearly ten per cent of the total

population. They form the second largest religious community in the predominantly Buddhist country. The first constitution of independent Burma had a clause recognizing the special place of Buddhism, and another clause which recognized Islam, Christianity and some other religions professed by citizens of the country.

Muslims live all over the country. There are Muslims in every town. There are groups of Muslims or Muslim-majority villages in Shwebo, Kyanka Kyaukse, Pinyinmana, Moulmein and Moulmeinmyun areas. The largest concentration of Muslims is in the province of Arakan where they form the majority. Here the people call themselves Rohingyas. Their number is more than 500,000 although higher figures have been claimed at times. They are a settled population and have lived there for more than 500 years, preserving their language and culture. Apart from Rohingyas, Burmese Muslims can be roughly divided into two groups: those of Indo-Pakistan origin who have retained some links with the subcontinent and those who are Burmans or have become Burmanized and whose language is Burmese. There is also a small number of Chinese Muslims or their descendants.

For a long time now the Rohingyas have been subjected to a lot of pressure. During the last 30 years many

towns and settlements are said to have been destroyed as a result of persecution. Long before the present wave of persecution associated with Operation Dragon King, there have been reports that Rohingyas were dispossessed of their lands and physically forced to cross the border into East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. The situation was contained somewhat during the time of Ayub Khan who is reported to have issued a thinly veiled warning to the Burman government by saying, 'I hope you do not want our forces to cross the border'.

Nonetheless, the Rohingyas were subjected to harassment. For a Rohingya to go from Akyab in north Arakan to Rangoon he needs an official permit. This rule does not apply to any other citizen. Their National Registration Certificates (NRCs) have been seized and torn. From time to time, immigration department staff, even before Operation Dragon King, have made raids and, on the allegation that they are foreigners, Rohingyas have been forced to take out Foreigners' Registration Certificates (FRCs). This means not only the loss of citizenship rights, but also the payment of an annual fee to the Government. Children of foreigners are not allowed to attend professional courses at the Universities. If a Rohingya refuses to leave the country or to take out a FRC on the plea that he is a citizen, he is placed under

detention. In 1971 (before the break-up of Pakistan) the Pakistan embassy had deputed an officer to meet the detainees — the conclusion was reached that they were not Bengalis (East Pakistanis). In July last year it was estimated that there were 500 or more such persons in jail for as long as 15 years or more. These include a number of Rohingya women. Some had with them small children, who have since grown up in detention. In the jails they are treated as ordinary criminal offenders.

Muslims in Arakan, like Muslims in the rest of Burma, have been faced with a number of problems since the armed forces took over in 1962. No one has been allowed to go on Hajj since then. The import of books has been nationalized with the result that no copies of the Qur'an or other Islamic literature are allowed to be imported. Approval has only been given for printing 3,000 copies of the Qur'an which has been translated into Burmese. Islamic literature sent as gifts are not allowed since authorities want to see translation of these into Burmese. In some places, construction of mosques has not been permitted and in a few cases waqf lands have been sequestered by the government.

In Arakan itself, the Rohingyas say they are the victims of an anti-Muslim purge. Other reports allege that the embattled Burmese



Government is taking action against an incipient Arakan secessionist movement. If there is an incipient secessionist movement, the wave of persecution, killings, torture and expulsions is certainly a draconian way to deal with it. This is especially so since other provinces of Burma in which the Shan, Karen and Kachin people predominate have been given provincial autonomy and are well settled. The Muslim population of Arakan can also be treated at par with them so that they may live as honourable citizens of Burma which they claim to be and which they are.

Instead an alternative is being proposed which could bring prolonged instability and suffering in the area. Officials in Bangladesh have been reported as saying ominously: 'If the Burmese won't take these people back, the best way for us to cope with the problem will be to arm the refugees and help them to form a liberation front'.

Such an eventuality could spell greater trouble for Muslims in the whole of Burma from the military socialist government. Muslims have noted that the Burmese as a whole are a friendly, polite and generous people. Except for once serious riot which took place in 1936 and the continuing repression in Arakan, Muslims have lived in peace close to the Burmese Buddhist localities and

villages. The Muslims, it has also been noted, have fully participated in national activities including the struggle for independence and have always been loyal to the country. The Burmese Government would do well to heed the numerous calls from all over the world to rehabilitate the refugees and put an end to the atrocities. □

● **Bangladesh protest.** Bangladesh has lodged a strong protest with the Burmese Government against the 'repression and forcible expulsion of Burmese nationals belonging to a particular ethnic and religious minority'. Bangladesh called upon Burma to desist from measures responsible for the exodus of Burmese nationals into Bangladesh in the interest of good neighbourly relations and the maintenance of peace on the border. It urged Burma to take urgent and appropriate measures for the immediate repatriation of the Burmese nationals to their homes. The note pointed out that while Bangladesh is attempting to provide the basic needs of refugees solely on humanitarian grounds, the burden of providing shelter and food to over a hundred thousand refugees have placed an extremely severe economic strain on Bangladesh.

The Foreign Affairs advisor Prof. Muhammad Shamsul Haq in a cable to UN Secretary General has asked for all possible assistance to solve the alarming problem.

## BURMA.

### Political background

Burma was an independent kingdom, or a number of kingdoms over the centuries. It was one kingdom in the 19th century, with local chieftains in some areas, who owed allegiance to the king.

The British occupied it in three stages in 1824-26, 1852 and 1885. They took the coastal areas of Arakan and Tenasserim first, followed by Lower Burma, and finally Upper Burma, when they occupied the then capital, Mandalay, and took the king, Thibaw, a prisoner.

The large bulk of the population is ethnically Burmese. It has been suggested that centuries ago, they came from Turkestan, one branch going to Tibet and the other to Burma. Linguistically, experts say, there are some similarities between Tibetan and Burmese languages. The people on the Arakan coast to the west and the Tenasserim coast in the south speak Burmese, but with accents of their own.

All along the land borders, there are small racial minorities — Chins on the north west — they are akin to Lushais of India; small numbers of Nagas; Kachins (who call themselves Jingpaws) in the north — there are Jingpaws in China also; Shans in the north east and east — they are akin to

Thais and their two languages are very similar; Kayahs to the east; Mons to the south-east and Karens who have some concentration to the east, but are scattered all over Lower Burma.

Traditionally, feelings between the Karens and Burmese have been strained. Shortly after independence, the Karens and Mons started rebellions. After a few years a Karen State was conceded and a Mon State assured, but these steps did not help to end the rebellions. A fair proportion of the Karens, estimated at between 20 to 30% are Christians, mostly Baptist.

From the beginning of independence a Kachin State, a Shan State and a Kayah State were established. These states had a measure of autonomy in regard to health, education, and local administration. At their own request the Chin area was made into a Special Division, but later became a State. The States had their State Councils, Head of State and Ministers.

Within a few years after independence, rebellion spread to parts of Shan State and later Kachin State and even Chin State.

During the Second World War, when the Japanese had occupied Burma, an underground Anti-Fascist

League was started. Communists were in it and played a leading role. Later this became the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL).

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, some young, patriotic Burmans joined together to form a nationalist organization, vaguely socialist, called Do Bama Asiayone (We Burmans Association). They called themselves Thakins (Masters), the word then usually applied to the British. These young patriots added the word Thakin as a pre-fix to their names e.g. Aung San (later General Aung San, and father of the independence movement) became Thakin Aung San; U Nu (later Prime Minister) became Thakin Nu. The Thakins were later to split into some three groups.

In 1940, Aung San was deputed to go to China to seek help to fight the British and secure independence. The Japanese intercepted him and persuaded him to take their help. Aung San returned to Burma in disguise, collected 29 other young men. They received military training from the Japanese and returned to Burma as the spearhead of the Burma Independence Army. Ne Win (later General Ne Win and now President Ne Win) was one of the group.

Within a few months of working with the Japanese and seeing Japanese behaviour as rulers, the Thakins became disillusioned. They had to lie low, but quietly organized an uprising,

which coincided with the Allied re-entry into Burma.

By then, the AFPFL was a powerful organization with Aung San, not only its President, but undisputed leader. He was a man of flawless character, absolutely honest and selfless. With the approach of independence, the Communists became vociferous. They called negotiated independence a "sham" and insisted on armed struggle. Differences grew and Aung San threw the Communists out of the AFPFL in late 1946. Aung San went to London early in 1947 with the slogan 'Independence within one year'. The Aung San-Attlee agreement was signed agreeing to the grant of independence within a year. The racial minorities were persuaded to join the Union of Burma. A Constituent Assembly was elected and the drafting of the Constitution started. All the basic principles were settled and a good deal of the drafting was done by mid-July.

On the 19th July, a group of armed men forced entry into the Cabinet Room, Aung San and six Ministers, including an elder brother of Aung San, a Shan Chieftain and a Burman Muslim, U Razak were killed. The plan included the murder of U Nu, then Speaker, but he was not in his room.

The murderers were traced and arrested the same afternoon. They had been backed by an ex-Premier, U Saw, who had accompanied Aung San to

London. There was an open trial by a Tribunal, presided over by a Senior Judge. U Saw was allowed to engage a British counsel. Several men were found guilty, some including U Saw were sentenced to death and others to terms of imprisonment.

The British Governor invited U Nu on that fateful 19th July to become Premier and he accepted. The drafting of the Constitution was completed. Burma became independent on 4th January 1948.

Shortly afterwards the Communists (who later split into two) and the Karens started rebellions. At one time Rangoon was surrounded by the rebels — within about 10-12 mile from the City centre. Mandalay was occupied by the rebels, who were joined by a part of the army, for a short while. Steadily the whole Burma proper, and all the lowlands were re-taken by Government. The rebels moved into the hilly areas. Rebellion has continued since and is still going on.

Steady progress was made in all sectors — agriculture, industry, education, health, etc. Parliamentary elections took place in 1952, 1956 and 1960.

Differences mostly personal had grown among leaders of the AFPFL from about 1957. The party split in 1958. Prime Minister U Nu invited General Ne Win, then Commander-in-Chief of the Army to form a Caretaker

Government and hold elections. General Ne Win took oath of office as Prime Minister late in 1958. Elections were held early in 1960. The group led by U Nu, which called itself the Pyi Daung Zu Party (Union Party) won an overwhelming victory. In a few months, differences arose, again mostly personal.

On the 2nd March 1962, the armed forces led by General Ne Win seized power. The President, the Chief Justice, the Prime Minister and several Ministers were arrested and kept in detention for several years. There were no charges, no enquiries and no trials.

The reasons given, at first for coup were two: (1) the adoption of Buddhism as State Religion under the leadership of U Nu and (2) the likelihood of concessions to the racial minorities, who were asking for a federal form of Constitution. It was alleged that the country was about to be shattered, but, over the years, no evidence has been produced that this was, in fact, the situation.

Within a few months, the new Government announced its socialist policies, political parties were banned, a new party the Burmese Way to Socialism Party (Myanmar Socialist Lanzin Party) was formed.

A new Constitution was promulgated in 1975.

Export of rice and teak and import of some goods had been nationalized in the days





of parliamentary democracy. The Ne Win Government fully nationalized all imports and exports, almost all industries and banks (including foreign banks). Except in the case of banks and perhaps some British companies, no compensation has been paid, although it was promised. All schools have been nationalized. The economy has been shattered. There is little legal trading. Government does not have foreign exchange for spare parts, or adequate quantities of raw materials. Smuggling is general.

In the autumn of 1976, Mr McNamara, President of the World Bank visited Burma. Hopes were raised that there

would be a change of economic policy. The Party Congress met in February 1977. The Prime Minister (U Sein Wim), the Deputy Prime Minister, U Lwin and some 12 others were thrown out on the grounds that they were not following the Party line.

Politically, U Ne Win, the President is firmly in power, despite the economic mess and dissatisfaction. The regime is not popular, but there is no organized opposition. Ex-General San Yu, who was regarded as a soldier and non-political, has steadily moved left. He is General Secretary of the Party and is next to Ne Win in power and influence.

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## THE MUSLIM WORLD

April 22-29, 1978

### Burma:

In Burma, recently i.e. in February, 1978, in the Arakan Division of Burma mass killing of Muslims was undertaken by Burmese political commissars aided by military armed forces, when most dirty and gruesome deeds were committed and heinous and ruthless murders took place, especially in Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships. Nearly one hundred thousand Arakanese Muslims were either killed in cold blooded murder or were pushed into the sea on way to Bangladesh for temporary refugee on the plea that they are not the indigenous children of the Burmese racial stock, even though the Arakanese Muslims are there for hundreds of years: the bones of their great grand-parents are buried there. If they are not the nationals of Burma who else are? For the last few years their lives, honour and property—including their Masajid and madrasahs—nothing is safe. Will the leaders of the Islamic Conference do something on their own or through the U.N. to save the half million Muslims of Arakan from the occasional genocidal tremors. We are not speaking of the rest 2.5 million Muslims in other parts of Burma who are more or less O.K., except for the fact that even they are also not allowed to go either for Hajj or for higher Islamic studies or get Islamic books.