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JANAB SHABBIR HUSSEIN
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“ The possibility exists that some of these human rights violations may entail categories of crimes against humanity or war crimes in Burma.”

TOMAS OJEA QUINTANA,
UN RIGHTS ENVOY



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AN ABSURD ACT OF DISCRIMINATION

Not a single Rohingya minister was inducted in the nine member minister of Arakan State government though half of the population of Arakan is Rohingya. It is an open insult to the Muslims of Arakan. This is the new government's new crime committed against the Rohingyas of Arakan. We are shocked, outraged and dismayed for it. Moreover we condemn it. Before and during the elections they promised many things and now they are doing nothing. Sayagyi U Razzak was education minister in the cabinet of Bogyoke Aung San's provisional government. He was assassinated along with Aung San. In U Nu's government there were always two Muslim ministers. They were U Rachid and U Khin Maung Latt (Abdul Latif). During the Nu-Tin government or AFPFL (Clean) government U Rachid and Mr. Sultan Mahmud were the Muslim ministers. And Mr. Sultan Ahmed, Mr. Abdul Gaffer and Mr. Abul Basher were parliamentary secretaries with the power of deputy ministers. Mr. Sultan Mahmud was from Akyab (Sittwe) township of Arakan and was Health Minister. Mr. Sultan Ahmed was a native of Maungdaw township of Arakan, and served as parliamentary secretary from 1947 to 1958. Mr Abdul Gaffer and Mr. Abul Basher were from Buthidaung township of Arakan. Sayagyi U Ka was Education Minister of the Caretaker Government of Gen. Ne Win.

The British Burma Municipal Act was extended to Akyab on 1st October 1874. The committee was consisted of six officials and five non-officials. This body was responsible for and managed police, roads, hospital, conservancy, beggars and water supply within the limit of the town. The committee as newly constituted in 1882 was relieved of charges for police and was entrusted with additional responsibilities and powers in respect of schools, hospital, vaccination and similar charges. The committee consisted of three officers - the Deputy Commissioner was president, the Civil Surgeon was vice president and the Executive Engineer - two members nominated by the government and twelve members elected from the public: European-2, Muslim-4, Buddhist-4 and Hindu-2. Thus the British had given equal right to Muslims and Buddhists of Arakan.

In the history of Arakan there were many Muslim prime ministers, ministers, judges and high officials appointed by the kings of Arakan. But the Muslims were neglected and ignored by the Burmese military governments since 1962.

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COVER STORY

12th Death Anniversary of Brother Shabbir Hussein

Brother Shabbir Hussein was born on 18 April 1941 in a respectable Rohingya family at Ponyolic village under Buthidaung township, Arakan, Burma. His father was late Master Ahamadur Rahman and the mother was late Salima Khatun. Late Shabbir Hussein had his early schooling at his native village, and had his middle and high school education at Buthidaung and Akyab (Sittwe). Having matriculated from Akyab Government High School in 1959 he joined Intermediate College at Kyauk Pru; then he continued his studies in Arts and Science University of Rangoon from 1962 until he secured his B.A degree with economics and political science in 1965. With a vision he attended the Basic Military Training of the University Training Crops (UTC) in 1962-65.

In his student life he participated in various social welfare and cultural activities and joined many socio-political Organisations. He was a Central Executive Committee member of Muslim Students Association (MSA) and Danya Waddy Students Association (DSA) at Kyauk Pru College from 1959-1962. Late Shabbir Hussein was General Secretary of the Rangoon University Rohingya Students

Organisation from 1961 to 1964 as well as Central Committee member of the Rangoon University Muslim Students Association (RUMSA) from 1962 to 1964.

After his graduation, Shabbir Hussein joined the Ministry of Trade Corporation in Burma and worked as township trade manager until he joined the underground freedom movement of Rohingya Independence Force (RIF) in 1969. He actively played a key role when the members of the RIF and Rohingya National Liberation Party (RNLP) were working together in the interest of the Rohingya people.

In 1973 the name of the Organisation was changed to Rohingya Patriotic Front (RPF), under the leadership of late Mohammed Jafar Habib; and served as a Central Committee member in his various capacities, including In-charge of Training Centre, Secretary for Publicity and Information and Secretary for Foreign Affairs. In 1975 when substantial quantity of youths and educated Rohingyas who joined RPF went underground, it was he who successfully imparted them basic military training. Almost all present day Rohingya leaders got basic military training from him. It will remain as a milestone in the history of Rohingya freedom movement.



LATE BR. SABBIR HUSSEIN

In 1984 Shabbir Hussain became the President of RPF. When RPF and a faction of Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO) led by Nurul Islam merged into a broad based organization of the Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front (ARIF), he was elected as its Chairman, in the first Rohingya National Council (RNC) convened in 1987; and he was elected Vice-President in the next term. During the course of his struggle, he had visited a number of countries to attend various seminars and conferences,

Cont. P. 4

From P. 2 EDITORIAL

They are ungrateful toward the Muslims of Arakan in particular and the Muslims of Burma in general. It recalls me one instance from the history of Burma:

While the Burmese king Anawrahta (1044 - 1077) was ruling the Burmese people from Pagan the Mon king Manuha was ruling the Mon people from Thaton, the then port city. An Arab ship was wrecked. And two young Muslim brothers escaped from the jaws of the death with the help of broken planks. The abbot of the royal Buddhist monastery found them at the seashore, took them to the monastery and adopted them. They were Byawi and Byatta. One day the monk and the two Muslim brothers found a death body of a Muslim saint in the deep forest. The monk was furious when he came to know that the death body of the saint [zawzi] was eaten by the two brothers. They grew up mighty with the strength of fighting the elephants. The king was afraid of their strength and looking for a chance to kill them. He had trapped Byawi as the daughter of the king's Prime Minister was found in the arms of Byawi, Byatta escaped to Pagan and took shelter at the court of the King Anawrahta. With the help of Byatta, King Anawrahta conquered Thaton and Manuha was taken prisoner of war. Byatta was married to a woman of Popa from where he had to carry magnolia [sagawa] flowers seven times a day to the Palace at Pagan. He had two sons in the service of the king. With their help the king won the battle with Chinese. On their return journey from China, the two sons of Byatta, Shwe Pyine Gyi and Shwe Pying Ngay were beheaded by the king Anawrahta because they refused to put bricks on the construction of a Buddhist Pagoda as they were Muslims. It shows that from the very beginning the Burmese were ungrateful toward Muslims. Anawrahta was killed by a mysterious mad buffalo. ##



Late Br. Shabbir Husein with ABMU President U Tin Maung That (a) U Razaak



Late Br. Shabbir Husein with Karen Leaders

From P. 3 and also for lobbying and campaigning for the rights and freedom of the oppressed and persecuted Rohingya people. Late Shabbir Hussein had devoted his whole life in the Rohingya freedom movement giving remarkable contributions at the service of the Rohingya people. He was a qualified trainer, a

good commander and a prudent leader. Above all, he tried hard for the complete unity of the Rohingya people, even while he had been suffering mysterious diseases, until his death. As a Rohingya he seemed to have made the best use of the last moment of his life. He died on 25 January 1998 with liver serosis while serving as the Vice-President of ARIF. Although it is 12 years now that he passed away, he remains a living memory in the hearts, minds and history of the Rohingyas. ##

ENC Welcomes Founding of UNFC

Wednesday, 16 March 2011 18:59 S.H.A.N.

A two-day quarterly meeting of the Ethnic Nationalities Council (ENC) at an undisclosed venue along the Thai-Burma border which concluded yesterday had welcomed last month's formation of another ethnic alliance, United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC), according to sources returning from the meeting.

"The ENC, as a proponent for political and social action, has been weak on the military part of the struggle," a participant told the meeting. "The emergence of an alliance that will focus its efforts on military actions therefore is to be welcomed."

Nevertheless, the two sides must meet to discuss and agree on a common strategy. "The best course is a merger," said another participant. "But the next best thing would be common goal (s) and diverse actions." 'Common goals, diverse actions' was a principle introduced by the late Chao Tzang Yawnghwe (1939-2004), who was the principal adviser to the grouping.

The ENC was formed in 2001. The UNFC came into being on 16 February, the result of the Border Guard Force (BGF) program, which aimed to combine all the diverse armed groups that had concluded ceasefire pacts with Naypyitaw under a central command. It has 11 member organizations, of which 2 are from the ceasefire groups: Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) and the New Mon State Party (NMSP).

The other group Shan State Progress Party / Shan State Army (SSPP / SSA) better known as the SSA 'North', that had initially agreed to become a member of its military wing but not of its political wing, later backed off. "We are for a state-based setup," Col Perng Fa, leader of the SSPP / SSA delegation later told SHAN. "Since we cannot accept the UNFC's indifference to the concept, it's better to be just an associate partner for the time being."

The SSA North meanwhile is under heavy military pressure by the Burma Army to surrender. Bloody clashes have begun since Sunday in Monghsu and Tangyan townships. ##



Photo: Hseng Nounng

Chao Tzang Yawnghwe

Muslim Prime Ministers and Ministers of Arakanese Kingdom

AFK JILANI

According to Daulat Kazi, " The king made Ashraf Khan his Chief Minister and the commander of his army. One day the king Thiri Thudama (Salim Shah-II) went on hunting expedition with his army. The king with his army stayed there for four months. The chief minister returned to his court with the permission of the king. When Ashraf Khan sat in the court the Mughal, the Pathans and numerous Hindus sat in rows. Asharaf Khan was like full moon in its sixteen parts." Asharaf Khan was virtually in charge of conducting all state affairs.(Missing Links in Arakan History By S.N. Goshal P-258.)Sri Bara Thakur was the Lasker Wazir or war minister or defence minister of the king Narapatigyi (1638-1645 A.D.) The war minister Sri Bara Thakur was blessed with a son by praying to God.

MAGAN Thakur was the son of Sri Bara Thakur. Alaol Writes, ' He was the famous Magan who possessed excellent qualities, he was extremely handsome, and there is no end of his virtues. His generosity was known throughout the country, he was born in the family of Siddiq and he was a Sheik and he was well known in the world by his good birth and good deeds. He was an Alim himself and was learned and he recognized merit. He brought learned men of his country and honored them." Sri Bara Thakur was the war minister of the king. By begging to God he got the offspring in the morning. Because he was obtained by praying or begging, he was given the name as Magan. "Thakur" was the official title given by the king. "The princess was extremely pretty and polite, the king brought up his daughter with great care.

Seeing the tender age of the princess the king was thinking as to whom the guardianship of the princess was to be given. The king made Magan Thakur the guardian of princess because he was a great virtuous man When the king died the princess became the chief queen. She appointed her guardian the prime minister of the kingdom."

The fact is that the king Narapatigyi had no son, but only a daughter.

When the king became old, he appointed Magan Thakur, who was a minister, and who belonged to a good Arab family, guardian of his daughter. After the king's death she was married to Thado Minthara, the nephew of the king, i.e. the king's daughter was married to her cousin. Thado Minthara became king and the king's daughter became the chief queen of the kingdom. Magan Thakur became the chief or prime minister of the kingdom. But the king Thado Minthara died in 1652 and was succeed by his minor son Sanda Thudama (1652-1684).Sanda Thudama was a minor and the queen ruled the country as regent.

She gave her guardian Magan Thakur the authority to rule the country on her and her son's behalf and he was promoted to be the chief minister or Prime Minister of the kingdom. Magan Thakur ordered Alaol to compose epic work Padmavati, which the poet completed in 1651 during the reign of Thado Minthara. Magan Thakur later ordered to compose Saiful Mulk Badiujamal. Alaol began the work, but before completing the book Magan Thakur died and the composition of the book remained incomplete.

After the death of Magan Thakur Sayyid Musa was appointed Prime Minister of Arakan.Sayyid Musa remained in this office for about a decade under the king Sanda Thudama. Alaol received patronage from him and at his order completed the composition of Saiful Mulk Badiujamal. He completed the book in 1669-70A.D.

The next Muslim prime minister of Arakan was Nabaraj Majalis. He ordered Alaol to compose the famous Persian book Sikandarnama of Nizami Ganjabi. Once the Prime Minister sat in the assembly of learned men, arranged foods and drinks for the guests. Those present in the assembly praised the Prime Minister for his good deeds, particularly the construction of Mosques and excavation of tanks. In reply Nabaraj Majlis said that mosques and tanks were not permanent. In old days great men did these beneficial works, but they did not last.Only books have lasted, books pleased the readers, books impart education. Illiterate people became learned by reading books;

books and poets are honored not only in their own country but also out side, and books last until the day of resurrection. The book Sikandama was completed by Shah Alaol in 1673 AD.



A.F.K. JILANI

Nabaraj Majlis was so important a personality that he administered the coronation oath to the king Sanda Thudama. Shah Alaol says about this:" The great religious king had a Prime Minister known as Nabaraj MAJLIS. Now I will tell something about Majlis. When the king died, the crown prince came to sit on the throne. Outside the throne, he stood facing the east.

The Majlis wore his dress and standing before the prince and advised him, "Treat the people as your sons, do not deceive upon the people, be just in religious and legal matters, do not allow the strong to oppress the weak, you should be kind, truthful and religious, behave well to the good people and destroy the wicked, always be generous and do not vacillate or be restless, do not harm anybody for past fault, and he advised the king in many other matters." The king agreed to abide by his advice and follow his admonition. Then the king saluted Nabaraj Majlis and then others of his family.

Sayyid Muhammad Khan was a minister of the king Sanda Thudama. Alaol says: "He was a king of kings, owner of huge wealth and his chief war minister was Sayyid Muhammad. His body is blue and his face is like a full moon. He speaks smilingly and he is learned in many subjects, in Arabic, Persian, Indian and Maghi languages. He is a good singer and remains busy with music day and night. Many scholars adorn his court and remain busy discussing philosophical subjects. I attend his court and he brings me up giving food and drinks.

Cont. P. 6

From P. 5 He keeps me obliged to him by giving salt, grin and betel-nut. He shows me favour and I attend his court as a member of his assembly. I discuss many tales about religious subjects and I related to him the most fascinating story of Sapta Paikar." At his request Alaol composed the Haft Paikar in 1660 A.D.

Sri Manta Sulaiman was a minister of the king Sandra Thudama. At his request, Alaol composed Tuhfa and completed the unfinished Satimaina Lor Chandrani. He says as follows about the minister Srimanta Sulaiman in his Lor Chandani: "Srimanta Sulaiman is a very virtuous man and he brings up virtuous foreigners with care. He became extremely glad to receive me and always entertains me with food and clothes. Learned people always discuss in his assembly on philosophical subjects. Once he sat in his court and discussed on various subjects. By chance the story of Lor Chandrani came up for discussion. The poem remained incomplete, and if completed, readers and hearers will be happy.... considering this the great Sulaiman ordered me to complete the book. At his order Alaol composed the poem in Bengali verses. "Sri Manta Suleiman was a amatya or minister, and he was a finance minister.

We can say that Burhanuddin was the first Lashkar Wazir (defence or War minister) of Arakan. His name is found in Nasirullah Khondkar Shariatnamah. In giving his genealogy the poet writes;" He was patient, heroic and there was no end of his honour. His name was Hamid-uddin, the intelligent. In Bangalah of Gour, he was a great minister. His son Burhanuddin was virtuous and eminent in using arms. By chance he left the country and with relatives settled in the country of Rosaang (Arakan). In those days there was no horse and horseman in Roshang. Seeing him with horse and elephant the king appointed him the Lashkar Wazir." Nasrullah Khondkar wrote his book in 1749/50, and as he was the 7th descendant of Burhanuddin, the latter was alive about the last of the 16th century.

There might be more Muslim ministers. So far we get the names of eight Muslim ministers of Arakan, four of them were Prime Ministers.



Gold Coin minted in the early period of Maruk-U Empire with Muslim KALIMA

The new so-call civilian government of Burma failed to include Muslim minister in the central government cabinet and no single Rohingya Muslim minister is included in Arakan State ministers. For the information of the readers the list of the Arakan State Ministers is given below as stated in the New Light of Myanmar dated. 15 February 2011.

- 1) Defence Services Personnel Hluttaw Representative Col Htein Lin,
 - 2) U Kyaw Khin of Yanbye Township Constituency (2),
 - 3) U Kyaw Thein of MraukU Township Constituency (2),
 - 4) U Soe Aye of Gwa Township Constituency (2),
 - 5) U Mya Aung of Maungtaw Township Constituency (2),
 - 6) U Tha Luche of Sittway Township Constituency (1),
 - 7) Dr Aung Kyaw Min of Taunggup Township Constituency (2),
 - 8) U Aung Than Tin of Ponnagyu Township Constituency (2) and
 - 9) U Hla Han of Thandwe Township Constituency (1).
- to the nomination of State Ministers.

The elected Chief Minister of the Arakan State nominated Chin National Representative U Ko Ko Naing for State Minister for National Races Affairs. The State Hluttaw approved the nomination and appointment of U Ko Ko Naing.

As the Rohingyas are excluded in the ministerial body of Rakhine State, Rohingyas are left out from the Rakhine State affairs. The Rohingyas should seek for the restoration of Mayu district out of Rakhine State as the Elected Democratic Government of the Hon'ble Prime Minister U Nu had created Mayu Frontier District in 1961 for the Rohingyas' welfare and developments under Central Government. ##

Source: Prof. Dr. Abdul Karim, "The Rohingyas: A Short Account of their History and Culture", Printed at Sonali Art Press, Chittagong, Bangladesh in 2000.



Haran Lay/ The Irrawaddy

Thailand towed Rohingyas out to sea again, report voyagers

12 February 2011, Kaladan News

Chittagong, Bangladesh. Rohingya boat voyagers were set adrift in an engineless boat on the high seas by the Thai Navy, according to a member of a boatload of ninety-one Rohingya males that drifted ashore on remote islands in Indian territory.

The 91 voyagers were found in villages on the Car Nicobar Islands, police officials have told the News of India Service. "All of them were starving and 25 of them have been admitted to hospital."

"They reached the main city of Port Blair on Thursday, where they will be questioned by security agencies," according to Senior Police Officer George Lalu.

"The voyagers said they were trying to enter Malaysia illegally through Thailand with the help of 'agents' before they were caught by the Thai Navy." "They had been at sea without food or water for more than a week," said the doctors from the local hospital.

"We were kept in a dark room with minimum food [in Thailand]. After nearly seven-to-eight days they set us adrift on the open sea in an engineless boat with minimal rations and water," one of the voyagers told police officials.

However, Thai authorities have denied that they have forced any of the Rohingya onto the high sea in an engineless boat. "We had 'intercepted' a group of 91 Rohingya in Songkhla Province in early January, but we deported them after the proper formalities were completed," said a Thai official in Songkhla. "They were sent back by boat to Myanmar."

"Although it's against humanitarian grounds, the illegal entry of foreigners must come under the (Thai) legal framework. This is to prevent a similar problem from occurring again in the future," Kantang District Officer Visit Tungpong said.

In December 2008, nearly 300 Rohingya were rescued from the Andaman Sea after the engines were removed from their boats and they were towed out to sea by the Thai Navy. Thousands of Rohingya — a Muslim minority group living mostly



in Northern Arakan State — have fled Burma to escape persecution. An estimated 200,000 Rohingya live in refugee camps in Bangladesh. Many of them—especially those living in unofficial camps—attempt to escape poor conditions by attempting to reach Southeast Asia by sea.

Some immigration offices in southern Thailand acknowledge that they have Rohingya boatpeople in custody, but officials at the Immigration Centre at Ranong, on the Thai-Burma border, deny every holding a boatload of 91 Rohingya males.

On the popular international holiday island of Phuket, where a boatload of 68 voyagers landed a few days ago, immigration officers say they are continuing to hold 33 Rohingyas, but have sent 35 others north to the neighboring province of Phang Nga. However, the immigration officials in Phang Nga said they have no knowledge of the group.

In the southern city of Songkhla, where immigration officials acknowledge they are holding 67 males from the second boatload of Rohingya to reach southern Thailand recently, nine under-age males are being given special protection by local social development authorities, an immigration spokeswoman said. The whereabouts of the entire first boatload of 91, which arrived in southern Thailand on January 23, and 35 of the 68 from the Phuket boatload, remains a mystery today.

A reliable source has told Phuketwan, a web-based news group, that the 91 Rohingya from the first boatload that arrived on the coast of Trang on January 22 were trucked north to Ranong, but that they were described in paperwork as "Burmese from the south [of Thailand]."

A reliable source has said that the 67 in the second boatload were at one stage on their way north to Ranong, but their bus turned back when authorities in Ranong reported that journalists were waiting to greet them. Voyagers on one boatload that landed in Thailand last month are said to have asked local people, "Is this Malaysia?" Muslim-majority Malaysia is believed to be the preferred destination for the would-be refugees.

Hundreds of Rohingya are believed to have perished when the Thai military covertly towed boats out to international waters and released them, with no power and little food or water, in January 2009. Rohingyas are persecuted in Burma and likely to be treated badly by the junta government if they are returned. UNHCR spokesman Andrej Mahecic last week reiterated a call for access to the Rohingya being held in Thailand.

"We would like to assess whether there are people among them who might be refugees and might be in need of international protection," he said. Human Rights Watch issued a statement on February 2, 2011, **Cont. P. 8**

From P. 7

urging the Thai government to give the United Nations refugee agency unhindered access to 211 detained ethnic Rohingya asylum-seekers to determine whether they qualify for refugee status or not, but just over a week later more than 90 turned of the voyagers turned up in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and have been without food and water for more than a week "Is this just a coincidence?" asked the Bangkok Pundit, "Or instead of granting access to HRW were the Rohingya dumped at sea?"

The Lawyers' Council of Thailand (LCT) released a statement demanding the government to "tackle Rohingya trafficking organizations" after 68 Rohingya were arrested in Phuket last week, and 158 in Trang and Satun provinces were arrested last month. The LCT, described as the Thai equivalent of a bar association, issued their statement a week after Human Rights Watch (HRW) urged the government to allow UN access to determine whether any of the detainees were seeking refugee status.

The council calls on the Thai government to allow "refugee-related organizations to access and provide support [to Rohingya], and in cases where they are victims of human or labor trafficking, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and other concerned departments must intervene and deliver necessary assistance."



A Thai gunner aims at the Rohingya refugees at the high-seas; the refugees raise their hands and ask for mercy.

"illegally deport Rohingya people" and that it "seriously prosecute human trafficking gangs", even while the status and location of the 226 Rohingya is currently unclear amid conflicting reports of transfers and possible human rights abuses by the Thai authorities, much like the case in 2009.

"This whole exercise is like a massive game of hiding the peanut under the ever-moving coconut shells - and only the Thais know where the peanut is," HRW spokesperson Phil Robertson said. The mysterious landing of 91 men on the remote Andaman and Nicobar Islands at the weekend closely followed the arrival of 226 would-be refugees on the holiday island of Phuket along Thailand's southern coast.

Were these the same 91 men who arrived in Thailand on January 22, the first in a new wave of persecuted Rohingya boatpeople sailing

south from Burma and Bangladesh? And have they been "pushed back" into peril on the open sea by the Thai military? Thai Immigration officials said no, and claim those 91 are still in captivity in Thailand, but being held as "Burmese from the south", not Rohingya.

Two aid organizations have sent representatives who are now trying to interview the distant island castaways to clarify whether they have been mistreated in contravention of international laws, or are a separate boatload with the same precise number of voyagers as the boat that landed in southern Thailand on January 22. Maybe yes, maybe no, imply senior Thai officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who have conceded privately to two NGOs that there has been at least one recent "deportation" of boatpeople from Thailand.

Yet even the officers we spoke to in the Royal Thai Navy and Immigration agree that it's time the Thai Government clarified its policy to end their own confusion and frustration, according to Phuketwan. Human Rights Watch spokesperson Phil Robertson says the Thai Government has the responsibility to be open and honest about what has happened to all of the recently arrived would-be refugees.

"The Thai government should be much more transparent on how many Rohingya are being detained, and provide details on who the individuals are, which immigration detention centers they are in, and what special measures are being taken to protect children under 18, who should not be locked up with adults."

Cont. P. 9



Hungry and dehydrated Rohingya Boat people from the sea.

From P. 8 Immigration officials in the southern city of Songkhla say that 58 of the boatload of 67 that arrived on January 23 are still being held in detention there. They also say that nine boys, all aged under 15, have been separated from the men and are now being cared for by social welfare authorities.

Songkhla officials also say they could provide documentation that would show they sent the 91 men from the first boatload north to the Thai-Burma border Immigration Centre in Ranong.

The United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) has been granted access to 135 would-be refugees – most likely Rohingya – who have been held in Thailand by the Foreign Ministry since January 2010.

Ms. Kitty McKinsey, Senior Regional Public Information Officer, UNHCR Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, says of the 135 now acknowledged as being held in Thailand: "We are getting good cooperation."

A UNHCR team is expected to head for the southern centre of Songkhla next week to talk to 58 men and nine boys who arrived on the coast of southern Thailand on January 23, the second of three boats to reach Phuket or the Andaman coast within nine days.

Nine boys aged under 15 from the second boat have been taken into the care of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. One was previously said to be 12 years old.

The UNHCR will interview the boat-people in Songkhla, as well as others being held at present in Phuket and the neighboring province of Phang Nga, to determine whether they are from Burma or Bangladesh. There's a presumption that all Rohingya are refugees," Ms. McKinsey said. However, Rohingya are officially prohibited from applying in Thailand for refugee status.

Officials of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees remain "gravely concerned" about media reports that a boatload of 91 possible asylum seekers in the remote Andaman and Nicobar Islands may have begun their most recent voyage involuntarily from Thailand. ##

PUBLIC STATEMENT OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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17 February 2011

Thailand/India/Indonesia: Rohingyas at risk need protection

Hundreds of Rohingyas fleeing systematic persecution in Myanmar require immediate assistance from Thailand, India, and Indonesia.

A group of 91 persons believed to be Rohingyas, who landed on the Andaman Islands, India, in early February 2011, claim that the Thai navy put them out to sea in January 2011 in an engineless boat with limited food and water. Thai authorities, however, claim that they returned 91 persons detained in Thailand to Myanmar in late January 2011. Amnesty International called on the government of Thailand to institute a prompt, independent and transparent investigation into how Thai authorities treated this group.

Thai authorities have detained hundreds of individuals claiming to be Rohingyas, including children, since January 2011. A further 129 persons claiming to be Rohingya arrived in Aceh, Indonesia on 17 February 2011. The Rohingya, who live in Myanmar's Rakhine State, suffer from systematic persecution, including forced labour, forced eviction, land confiscation, and severe restrictions on freedom of movement. The Myanmar government refuses to grant them citizenship, rendering them stateless, in violation of their international rights. Many Rohingyas have fled to Bangladesh, and have tried to seek work in other countries.

In late 2008 and early 2009, Thai security forces pushed hundreds of Rohingyas to sea in unseaworthy boats. Some of the Rohingyas subsequently died at sea. A number of those rescued are detained and remain with indeterminate status on the Andaman Islands, India without a proper assessment of their protection needs.

Amnesty called on the governments of Thailand, India and Indonesia to act on their obligations under international human rights and customary international law, including by giving persons claiming to be Rohingyas on their territory access to full and fair refugee determination procedures, and to grant the United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR access to them.

Amnesty International emphasized that the Rohingya would be at risk of human rights violations if returned to Myanmar. No Rohingyas, or other asylum seekers, should be returned to Myanmar against their will if they have a well founded fear of persecution.

Amnesty International has urged Myanmar to stop the systematic persecution of the Rohingyas. Amnesty International has also urged Myanmar's neighbours to provide the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) immediate access to all Rohingyas in their territory and to ratify the UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, its 1967 Protocol, and the UN Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.

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UN OFFICIAL URGES INQUIRY INTO BURMA RIGHTS ABUSES

By LALIT K JHA, Thursday, March 10, 2011, THE IRRAWADDY

One year after first recommending that the United Nations establish a Commission of Inquiry (Col) on war crimes and crimes against humanity in Burma, Tomás Ojea Quintana, the UN's Special Rapporteur on human rights in the country, has reiterated his call in a new report.

In a progress report submitted to the UN General Assembly on March 7 and released to the press on Wednesday, Quintana said the human rights situation in Burma remains serious, but also notes that last year's election offers opportunities for positive developments, provided the government demonstrates the necessary political will.

The report, which suggested the establishment of a Col as one option among others, also pointed out that while it is the role of Burmese authorities to undertake measures to improve the human rights situation in Burma, that responsibility falls to the international community if they fail to do so.

"While the Government has responded that allegations of violations of human rights are investigated already by competent authorities, in the context of the gross and systematic nature of human rights violations in Myanmar [Burma] over a period of many years, the Special Rapporteur reiterates that it is essential for investigations of human rights violations to be conducted in an independent, impartial and credible manner, without delay," the 20-page report said.

Quintana, who hasn't visited Burma since February of last year, said his requests for a visa to return to the country to examine the post-election situation have been repeatedly rejected by the Burmese government. Since the Nov. 7 election, he has expressed concern over restrictions on parliamentarians' freedom of expression.

The report also noted that 2,189 prisoners of conscience remain in detention in Burma as of January 2011, and urged the Burmese military junta to immediately release all political prisoners.

Another area of concern is growing tensions between the regime and ethnic armed groups. The report said that the Kachin were excluded from the political process, while the Wa and Mongla groups refused to participate. There are reports of cease-fire groups re-arming in anticipation of resumption of renewed conflict.

The report also highlighted the Burmese regime's failure to

adequately guarantee the basic right of citizens to an education, despite burgeoning revenue from exports of resources.

"Myanmar must take appropriate measures towards full realization of the right to education to the maximum of the available resources," the report, noting that multi-billion-dollar profits from natural gas sales to Thailand have not been used to improve the educational infrastructure in the country.

Arguing that the new government must prioritize the economic, social and cultural rights of citizens, the report said there will have to be fundamental changes to how the government manages its budget.

Observing that funds from the sale of natural gas are estimated to account for 70 percent of the country's total foreign exchange reserves, with sales totaling around \$3 billion annually, the report said that if these funds had been included in the state budget, they would have accounted for 57 percent of total

budget revenue.

"Instead, they contributed less than 1 percent of total budget revenue, with much of this revenue reportedly never entering Myanmar," the report said, demanding that these funds need to be included in the government's budget and managed transparently with proper checks and balances.

UN Said Burma Burdens Its Neighbourhood Countries

"Increasing numbers of Burmese asylum-seekers in Southeast Asian states is evidence that Burma's domestic crises are having a negative impact on the region, a top UN official has said according to Reuters and Democratic Voice of Burma.

Tomas Ojeas Quintana, the UN's special rapporteur to Burma, made the remarks after a visit to Malaysia, which has become home to some 84,800 registered refugees and asylum-seekers. **Cont. P. 11**



In this photo taken on March 15, 2010, Tomás Ojea Quintana, United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights in Burma, arrives at a news conference after his speech at the Human Rights Council in Geneva. (Photo: Reuters)

From P. 10 He spoke of “an extra-territorial dimension to the human rights problem in Myanmar [Burma]” as more and more people leave the country in search of better livelihoods.

“Countries in the region have a particular interest in persuading the Government of Myanmar to take necessary measures for the improvement of its human rights situation,” he stressed.

The comments will likely attract the attention of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) bloc, which has to date kept out of Burmese domestic affairs as part of its cornerstone non-interference policy. How much further it will go to maintain that is debatable, as heavy fighting in Burma’s border regions combines with rampant state-sanctioned human rights abuses to fuel a heavy spill-over into neighbouring countries.

Thailand is already home to nine camps housing nearly 150,000 refugees from Burma, and has been heavily criticised in recent months as

it seeks to contain increasing numbers by encouraging many to return, despite stability across the border remaining highly questionable. But with Thailand reliant on Burma for some 30 percent of its energy needs, it has stopped short of any substantial criticism of the regime. Indeed alongside the 84,000-odd registered Burmese in Malaysia are hundreds of thousands of additional migrants from Burma who remain unregistered and, facing the perennial [threat of deportation](#), live in a constant state of limbo. Similarly, in Bangladesh, of the nearly 400,000 refugees from Burma’s Muslim Rohingya community that have fled persecution in Arakan state, only 22,000 are registered by the UN’s refugee agency, and their burden on the country’s already stretched resources is evident.

Quintana’s comments come amid a resurgence of the debate over whether Western nations should maintain sanctions on Burma that are aimed at pressuring the regime

into improving its human rights record. It follows a study by the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) in which they claimed the embargo wasn’t hurting Burmese civilians.

Tan Sri Razali Ismail, a former UN special envoy to Burma, yesterday (Feb. 24, 2011) however called for the lifting of sanctions, saying that Burma “has to begin to prosper” and blaming the country’s pathetic agricultural output on the West’s blockade. “They are now importing rice, which is ridiculous,” he told the Second Asian Mediation Association conference held in Malaysia this week, adding that he disagreed with opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi who “insisted on sanctions”.

The Malaysian national, who has in the past represented Kuala Lumpur in ASEAN, said however that Southeast Asia should have an independent mediation unit to handle regional crises, something that critics of the bloc have long called for. ##

Collection of Family Lists and Photographs Resumes in Maungdaw

21 February 2011 Kaladan News

Maungdaw, Arakan State: Since February 15, local Nasaka personnel, along with Village Peace and Development Council (VPDC) personnel of Maung Nama Village, have again started collecting family lists and taking photographs of Rohingya villagers in Maung Nama Village of Maungdaw Township. The authorities are collecting 2,500 kyats per family for family group photographs, 3,000 kyats to add newborns to the family lists, and 3,000–5,000 kyats to delete deceased family members from the lists. To change

a new one, the villagers must pay 6,000 kyats. Authorities also took photographs of mosques and Maqtab (Primary Arabic Schools) from all four sides, then required 15,000 kyats per location, said a religious leader from the locality.

They do not list newborn in family lists if the child is more than seven-months old, and also do not list women who are married to men from other Nasaka areas within the township. They also too decline to list the children from such couples, even if the couples were married with permission from the concerned authorities.

However, they list women who are married to men within the same Nasaka area after taking 25,000 kyats. Before marriage, the women were listed with their parents, but after marriage, her husband wants his wife to be listed on his family list. If the tactics of the Nasaka continue, Rohingya youths will not able to marry girls from other towns or from other Nasaka areas within the same townships. “The authorities take family lists and photographs of Rohingya people once or twice per year. What is the main objective of this?” asked a youth from the locality. ##

Torture results in loss of eye, broken hand for Rohingya man

Tuesday, 15 February 2011 Kaladan

Maungdaw, Arakan State: A Rohingya man lost an eye and suffered a broken hand after being tortured by the Burma Border Security Force (Nasaka) on February 12, according to a Nasaka aide posted at the entry and exit point of Maungdaw. “Mard Karim, the Rohingya who was arrested from Block Number 5, where he had been hiding for alleged drug trafficking since February 8, was tortured day and night after his arrest. During the interrogation inside the Nasaka camp, Mard Karim lost one eye and received a broken hand. After causing him to lose his eye, the Nasaka personnel sent him to Maungdaw General Hospital, said a local from Fayazi Para.”

He is in very critical condition now in the hospital where he is taking treatments. The doctor said he needs more special treatments to save his life. Alternately, a Rakhine, Nyi Nyi Htun, the son of Ba Htun, who hails from Block Number 3, was arrested with Yaba [methamphetamine] tablets and one Bangladeshi mobile phone. He was sent to jail for one year only, whereas Mard Karim, who is suspected of drug trafficking, suffered a broken hand and lost one eye, said a local politician from Maungdaw. “Mard Karim was arrested without any evidence, but Nyi Nyi Htun was arrested and caught red-handed, but the system of authority reacted differently to the two men. Why?” ##

Bangladesh Army destroys poppy fields along Burma-Bangladesh border

Friday, 25 February 2011 21:48 Kaladan Press

Chittagong, Bangladesh: The Bangladesh Army, along with a joint team, destroyed seven poppy plantations during a drive in remote areas of Remacry of Tanchhi Upazila in Bandarban, near the Burma border on February 23, according to an officer from the border.

A joint team of the army, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), Narcotics Control Department, and the police conducted the drive at Karaikashan, Ivaanman Jhiri. The authorities chopped down the poppy plants before burning them, the officer said.

Officials related to the drive said it is predominantly Burmese militant outfits that lure Bangladeshi hill tribe people into growing poppies.

Regional Commander Brig. Gen. Md Emdadul Hoque, Hill Tracts District Parishad Chairman Kyi Thu Hla, Deputy Commissioner Mijanur Rahman, and Superintendent of Police Kamrul Ahsan were also with the team. Army Ruma Zone Commander Lt. Col. Wasim, leading the drive, said the 14-day-long drive started on February 19 and the operation will continue to clean up areas between Remacry and Bhalupara.

The Team distributed vegetable seeds and musical instruments to the hill tribe people in remote areas of Bandarban close to the Burma border to discourage poppy cultivation and encourage the preservation of indigenous culture.

A total of 29 hill tribe families received seeds and instruments at Remacry of Bandarban. The army had destroyed a total of 122 poppy gardens in 2010 throughout these areas.

On July 29, 2010, Bandarban Hill District security forces in Bangladesh seized 15 arms along with ammunition from remote areas of the district, and destroyed about 20 acres of poppy fields in Sangu Reserved Areas under the Ruma, Alikadam, and Thanchi Security Zones of Bandarban Hill District of Bangladesh near the Burma border. The poppy fields were prepared during the cleaning of lands for cultivation by Mru hill tribes and other local people on the outskirts of the forest.

The Mru and local people were supported by the insurgent group, the Arakan Liberation Party (ALP), said an aide of the BDR on condition of anonymity. "At least 27 secret places



A poppy plantation in a remote area of Thanchi upazila in Bandarban, Army personnel, inset, destroy the plantation of poppy.



were raided. During the raids firearms were recovered and poppy was destroyed."

Poppy fields on 18 bighas of land were destroyed by law enforcement agencies during three separate drives in Shahbazpur Union under Shibganj Upazila in Chapainawabganj District. Poppy fields in villages near the Burma borders, in addition to poppy plants and seeds, were last destroyed in Khulna City during the first week of March 2009.

So far, 35 poppy fields on 100 acres owned by insurgent groups from Burma have been destroyed by the army and the BDR along the Bangladesh-Burma border areas since February 17, 2008. The insurgent groups of Burma recruit local

people to grow the poppy in remote areas. Such operations are launched annually to destroy poppy fields and to protect the minority people from illegal cultivation. On the night of February 24, 2007, security personnel of the army and the BDR raided Alikadam and arrested three Burmese migrants (Rakhine) and destroyed the poppy crop. They also destroyed nine huts during the operation, according to a source from Nykhonchari in Bandarban District, Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). Sources say that a permanent army camp is required in the border area to provide indigenous people with alternative work so that they do not indulge in poppy cultivation. ##



World Leaders Stand in Line for the Anointed One / Haran Lay/ The Irrawaddy

Nasaka Commander Deceives Villagers in Maungdaw

Monday, 21 February 2011, Kaladan News

Maungdaw, Arakan State: The Nasaka commander of Sector number 7 of Aleythan Kyaw village in Maungdaw Township gave permission to villagers to make a stepladder for their mosque after taking a bribe, but later the permission was rescinded. The villagers were cheated by the commander, said a local businessman.

On February 13, Major Sein Win, the Burma's Border Security Force (Nasaka) Commander of Sector No. 7 of Aleythan Kyaw Village of Maungdaw Township gave verbal permission to the local villagers to make a stepladder for a mosque which is established in the compound

of Aley Than Kyaw Madrasa after taking 100,000 Kyats.

As a result, on February 14, the local villagers immediately bought sand, bricks, and cement from the market to build the stepladder for the mosque.

However, on February 15, only one day later, the stepladder was completely destroyed after a Sarapa (Military Intelligence) officer was sent to the mosque.

The Nasaka commander sent the Sarapa officer to the mosque to destroy the ladder as if he did not know anything about the matter. No one has capability to do anything without the knowledge of the

commander, said a schoolteacher.

In addition, the Sarapa officer also fined the villagers the cost of 15 cement bags. A cement bag is being sold for 8,000 kyats in the market. According to a villager, the Sarapa officer told them that if he did not fine the villagers, he would be sacked from his job.

After knowing about this situation, the people of the world can understand how Rohingya villagers of northern Arakan State, Burma, are subject to seemingly endless oppression and deceit, said a trader from the locality. ##

PRESS TV (IRAN) MYANMAR MUSLIMS FACE PERSECUTION

Friday, 25 February 2011

Waves of ethnic Muslims have attempted to flee by boats in the face of systematic oppression by the Myanmar government since the beginning of this year, a report says.

Known as the Rohingya, they have been given the label of one of the most persecuted peoples in the world, a Press TV correspondent reported.

The government of Myanmar refuses to recognize them. They say the Rohingya are not native and classify them as illegal migrants, although they have lived in Myanmar for generations. Communities living in the Rakhine state of Myanmar are reportedly made to work against their will, often evicted from their homes and severely restricted in movement, ownership and opportunities.

"Whether one is an educated Rohingya with a proper job, or one is an illegal migrant or at the lower end of the economic strata, it doesn't matter, the discrimination is across the board," Benjamin Zawacki of Amnesty International told Press TV.

Those attempting to escape face discrimination and inhumane treatment by immigration authorities of receiving countries.



The Burmese government has said it will take back ethnic Rohingyas who have fled to neighbouring countries. But it will only do so if they identify themselves as Bengalis, as it refuses to recognise the Rohingyas as one of its official minorities. Tens of thousands of Rohingyas have left Burma in recent years and washed up in Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia even in Sri Lanka.

Recent groups of refugees have drifted ashore to India, Indonesia and Thailand.

"There were a number of Rohingyas, ninety-one in fact, who washed up on the Nicobar Islands in India, claiming to have been put out to sea by Thai authorities, in a boat that was unsea-worthy, without an engine," Zawacki stated.

"But at the same time, the Thai authorities are claiming that the same number of people, ninety-one Rohin-

An additional 129 men claiming to be Rohingya washed ashore to Indonesia in February. In neighbouring Bangladesh, they mostly end up as illegal migrants with over 200,000 such registered cases. In Thailand, they experience poor conditions with limited opportunities and lack of recognition as refugees.

Leading human rights groups have called upon governments receiving the refugees to grant them full rights towards the refugee verification process. ## Source: Burma Net News

From P. 15

problem warrants 'international responsibility to protect' with 'individual responsibility' of the perpetrators.

Despite being a people who participated in all elections held in Burma from 1946 (British colonial period) to November 2010 elections – including SPDC's 2008 referendum-- and who, in exercise of their right of franchise, voted their representatives to parliaments and different levels of administration in Burma, are now perfidiously rejected and denied citizenship to become potential or actual victims of massive atrocities. This is jungle behaviour unknown to any civilizations, international law and practices. On the other hand, they are unwanted by Burma's neighbours who subject them to arrest, intimidation, harassment, and, above all, 'push back' to Burma and 'push out' to the high sea to die, while Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights say, "Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution".

So the most pertinent right in this connection is their right to stay and live without disturbance in their country which, today, constitutes customary international law, reflecting the traditional position that the "natural" place for an individual is the territory of the State of nationality on his homeland.

By all legal standards the Rohingya, who have natural and spiritual attachment with their homeland of Arakan, are an integral part of the Burma Society. Their problem is a manmade tragedy -- created by the racist Burmese autocratic regime and reinforced by the local xenophobes -- having political and humanitarian dimensions of regional and international concern.

A permanent solution should be found out with the concerted efforts of the international community. Unless the root causes of the Rohingya problem, their displacement and marginalization are dealt with effectively there can be no genuine, long-term solution.

The issue of statelessness also needs to be dealt with concretely. Food security, economic and social development, respect for the religion and culture, freedom of movement, political participation, property ownership, access to schools and livelihood opportunities, and the right to marry are some of the key issues to be dealt with. On the whole, Burma is the most important element of equation which should bear the brunt of the responsibility. UN has a duty to protect international peace and security and as such, it should timely and effectively take an initiative as its former Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali assured at the time of Rohingya refugee influx into Bangladesh in 1978: "U.N. would endeavour to achieve a political solution to the crisis not merely for the time being but for future as well." For the purpose of a permanent solution to the Rohingya problem:

- o *The citizenship and ethnic rights of the Rohingyas should be recognized in an unequivocal term; they should be able to co-exist as equal in Arakan; and, as an ethnic group, their rights and privileges must be guaranteed on par with other national groups of the Union of Burma.*
- o *Given the hostile attitude of the Rakhines (towards Rohingyas) rejecting to share power with the Rohingya people in Arakan on the principle of parity, a Rohingya Autonomous State should be granted in their traditional homeland in North Arakan, in the interest of peace and security, development, and peaceful co-existence in Burma.*

Meanwhile, the following immediate measures are of paramount importance:

1. Effective international pressure needs to be mounted on the Burmese regime demanding to immediately end its discrimination, human rights violations and abuses against the Rohingyas.
2. The Rohingya boat people crisis calls for a regional solution where the role of ASEAN is vital; and Bangladesh, India and Burma's neighbours in ASEAN seeking solution should force the regime to create condition conducive for the peaceful living of the Rohingya people which requires their rights to be respected with due tolerance in Burma.
3. The international community should influence the Burma opposition groups or democratic forces, including ethnic nationalities' forums, to accommodate the Rohingya people in their numerous alliances with due respect and open-mindedness.
4. The democratic and political process in Burma should be inclusive, and Rohingya should be a part of it ensuring them 'the right of equal footing' in all national activities in the country. ###

Authority collects tolls from religious devotees in Maungdaw

Friday, 18 February 2011, Kaladan News

Maungdaw, Arakan State: An officer from the Traffic Police Department collected tolls from religious devotees in Maungdaw yesterday, according to a village elder from Maungdaw. Sub-Inspector Thuang Htay of the Traffic Police ordered Hindu religious devotees to pay tolls for the district head officer's car petrol, the elder said.

"Every truck must pay for two gallons of petrol for the district head officer's car," the elder explained. The Hindu community from Maungdaw and Buthidaung make

a pilgrimage to Kyaukpandu in southern Maungdaw once a year for religious programs with trucks. They often stay overnight there, said a Hindu devotee from Maungdaw. "Every year, we organize this religious tour, but this year we are facing new tolls from traffic officers." "The officer was asking us to pay for two gallons of petrol. He mentioned a private petrol shop. We had to pay the money to the shop and get a receipt for the police officer." "This year, we lost 50,000 Kyats as the officer ordered petrol for ten trucks." ##

From P. 16 the Thai Prime Minister Abhisit promised to bring those responsible to account. Despite this, in January 2011, Thai security forces again outrageously and forcibly pushed back to sea 91 ethnic Rohingya asylum seekers, in an engineless boat with little food and water, who were later rescued by the Indonesian fishermen.

Aspect of the Rohingya Problem:

The Rohingya problem has political and humanitarian aspects. They are one of the most persecuted, forgotten, voiceless, least wanted and underrepresented peoples in the world. They were made stateless in 1982, and deemed to be illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. "The Rohingyas are victims of institutionalized persecution and have been rendered stateless by Burma's 1982 Citizenship laws... Rohingyas are believed to be subjected to the most harsh restrictions and reprisals in Myanmar."² Besides, "Rohingyas are listed as one of the ten world's populations in most danger of extinction."³

Special Rapporteur Paulo Sergio Pinheiro stated, "I am particularly concerned that Muslim minority in Rakhine (Arakan) State remained excessively restricted and the vast majority of them remained defacto stateless."⁴ Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Burma Tomas Ojea Quintana stated, "Despite being in this region for generations, this (Rohingya) population is stateless. This population is not recognized by the Government as one of the ethnic groups of the Union of Myanmar and is subject to discrimination. Without having the citizenship, this Muslims of North Rakhine cannot participate in the active life as they should. Their access to health care, education and employment is very limited. Their movement in the country is restricted. They need to obtain permission from the authorities to get married. They cannot obtain birth certificate for their children. However the Government allowed them to participate in the referendum on the adoption of the new Constitution, and for this reason provided them with temporary registration cards. What is more significant than the possibility to vote for the Constitution of a Nation to show that one belongs to the Nation? If this population was considered apt to give its views on the adoption of the Constitution, then it should be granted all other privileges, including the citizenship, which recognized ethnic groups, citizens of Myanmar do enjoy in the Union."⁵

Rohingyas' dilemma:

In an effort to deny the Rohingyas of their ethnic rights and "due share" in Arakan/Burma, the Burmese regime and vested interest groups in Arakan are trying to obliterate the Rohingya historicity. The regime has rejected the existence of Rohingyas as an ethnic group in Burma.

2. Amnesty International: "Rohingya Minority: Fundamental Rights Denied", 2004.
3. Statement of MSF dated 26th November 2006.
4. Extract from Statement by Special Rapporteur Paulo Pinheiro to the 61st Session of the UN Commission on
5. Statement of Special Rapporteur Tomas Ojea Quintana in the 10th Session of Human Rights Council in March 2009. Human Rights. Item 9, Geneva 29, March 2005.

The Buddhist Rakhine Arakanese also reject them as an ethnic group in Arakan. This unmerited view has greatly influenced most of the leaders of the Burma democracy movement and ethnic peoples, and are reluctant to accommodate Rohingyas in their numerous alliances thus excluding them from the country's political and democratic process. Consequently, the Rohingyas are in catch-22 without international protection in the absence of national protection.

Xenophobia against Rohingyas:

The Rohingyas are not tolerated in Burma because of their ethnicity and religion, and also for their skin and south-Asian appearance. "Racist disdain for the Rohingya by the Burmese authorities was exemplified recently in Burmese diplomatic correspondence which characterized the Rohingya "as ugly as ogres". This ought to be beyond the tolerance of international civil society."⁶

Like Ne Win Senior General Than Shwe extremely hates the Rohingyas. In April 1994 while ordering to kill over 400 ethnic Rohingyas from Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships in retaliation for attacks by Rohingya rebels, he commanded Gen Win Myint, the commander of the Western Regional Command, "Eliminate them! Don't even leave an infant alive! They are just kala [a degrading term for people of Indian descent], not human! Sentence them to the maximum imprisonment!"⁷ This condescension is an inhuman act of international crime, let alone his crime against humanity of murder.

Despite the historicity of their contribution, rich culture and ethnic identity in Arakan, and their recognition as an ethnic group by the Burma parliamentary government (1948-62), the ruling Burmese regime and xenophobes in Arakan reject the Rohingyas of their right to nationality with preconceived and politically motivated idea. Some of the Rakhine xenophobes are carrying out systematic campaigns of vilification against the Rohingyas. For instance, Dr. Aye Chan (Japan) spitefully characterized the Rohingya as "influx viruses in Arakan"; Dr. Aye Kyaw (USA) abhorrently labelled them as "floating people"; and U Khin Maug Saw (Germany) vilely called them "illegal foreign Bengalis".

SOLUTION TO THE ROHINGYA PROBLEM

The long standing Rohingya problem is an issue of '*religious, ethnic and political persecution*' to rid Arakan of the Muslim population. It is an '*ethnic cleansing*'; and the violations of human rights against them are systematic and widespread that amount to '*crimes against humanity*' with international jurisdiction. The Rohingyas are both an ethnic and a religious group and are as such, protected by the Genocide Convention. Thus the Rohingya

Cont. P. 14

6. Human Rights Watch, 2009, Burma Perilous Plight Burma's Rohingya Take to the Seas. Asia Pacific Refugee rights Network (APRRN): Joint NGO Statement for a Regional Solution for Rohingya :6 March 2009.
7. "Than Shwe, the Trembling Dictator", by Aung Htut in Irrawaddy dated March 5,2011.

ROHINGYA PROBLEM AND SOLUTION

By Nurul Islam

ROHINGYA PROBLEM

The Rohingya problem is one of the long-standing and deep-rooted problems of “*ethnic, religious and political persecution*”. It is a systematic elimination of an ethnic Muslim community from their ancestral homeland of Arakan. The problem is a manmade tragedy deeply entrenched in fanaticism, religious bigotry, hatred and xenophobia, fortified with Burmese regime’s policies of Burmanization, de-Muslimization, exclusion and extermination of the ethnic Rohingya population with intent to turn Arakan into a Muslim-free Burmanized Buddhist region. Thus their problem is a forcible dispossession of their land and their expulsion from their homeland, in the most inhuman manner, by use of force and application of black laws.

Human Rights Violations against Rohingyas:

All the peoples of Burma are suffering at the hands of the military regime and the Rohingyas are the worst victims. In addition to forced labour, forced relocation, expulsion, rape, land confiscation, arbitrary arrests, torture, extrajudicial killings, relentless taxation and extortion on daily basis, the Rohingyas are singled out specifically and face further worst levels of discrimination. In particular, Rohingyas are denied citizenship rendering them stateless in their own homeland. They are instead treated as “temporary residents”, and as a result face the following abuses:

Severe restrictions on movement: – Rohingyas have to obtain specific permission to travel from one village to another and from a village to a town – causing a serious impact on their access to employment, education and health care as well as on all their activities. Even their MPs are not spared from this humiliation. On 29th July 2005, U Kyaw Min (alias) Shamsul Anwarul Haque, a Rohingya M.P. of National Democratic Party for Human Rights (NDPHR), elected in 1990 elections from Buthidaung, was sentenced to 47 years in jail, while his wife and three children were sentenced to 17 years each for travelling and residing in Rangoon.

Severe restrictions on marriage: – Special permission must be obtained for marriage normally on huge bribe, and without it the application is often delayed or denied. Marriage permission is, off and on, opened and closed. Hundreds of applications are pending permission for a long period of time; and the impatient couples who married without permission are either serving jail terms or have left the country.

Severe restriction on education: – Rohingya boys and girls are deprived of their right to education. There are still Rohingya villages without primary schools. The Rohingya students are severely restricted to pursue higher studies in colleges and universities. This marginalized community have become the most illiterate section within Burma’s population with illiteracy rate running 85%.

Restriction on trade and business: – They are restricted to carry on trade and business and have no employment opportunity -- including access to government service-- with no source of income to live on. Their malnutrition rate runs at 60%.

Extortion and food insecurity: – Rohingyas face constant demands for money from NaSaKa border security force, army, police and other repressive functionaries. The regime is creating food insecurity and “starving the Rohingya minority group by creating an artificial price hike in rice and other essential foods.”¹

Religious persecution: – The Rohingyas are denied permission to build new mosques and *madrassas* (religious Schools) or renovate or extend the existing ones. Some mosques and religious institutions have been closed down. Unwarranted restrictions are imposed on congregations. Many villagers are imprisoned for making inevitably necessary minor repair works to mosques.

Rohingya refugees:

From 1948, an estimated 1.5 million Rohingyas fleeing persecution in Burma are living in Diaspora particularly in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Thailand and Malaysia. Bangladesh is the first country of asylum for most Rohingya refugees. About 28,000 registered Rohingya refugees are now living in two UN camps in Cox’s Bazar District in squalid condition, while over 250,000 undocumented refugees live outside the camps in vulnerable situation.

There were two major exoduses of Rohingya into Bangladesh, one in 1978 and the other in 1991-92, each exodus with more than 2,50,000 people. Although many were repatriated involuntarily to Burma, some later returned to Bangladesh along with new groups escaping tyranny, where they face severe poverty, strained relations with the local people; and crackdowns, arrest and ‘push back’ by the authorities. In recent years, some of them died of starvation as they were not allowed to go out of their makeshift camps to work for livelihood. Those living in Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Thailand and other countries face various humanitarian crises

Rohingya boat people:

Endless persecution in Burma and the unwelcoming attitudes of neighbouring Bangladesh prompted many Rohingyas to seek refuge elsewhere. For few years, thousands of Rohingya made perilous journey, in rickety boats, to escape persecution and imposed poverty, in search of protection in Southeast Asian region. Between December 18 and 30, 2008, Thai navy had intercepted more than 1,000 Rohingya boat people on Thai territorial waters, abused and pushed out to high sea. n boats without engines and sufficient supplies. According to survivors, more than 500 were drowned. Some of them were rescued and/or detained in Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia. Eventually, in response to international concerns,

Cont. P. 15

1. Voice of America (VOA), Washington, 22 September 2005.