

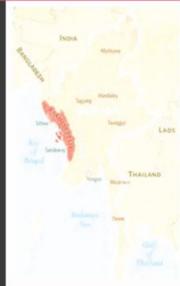
THE TALE OF A PERSECUTED PEOPLE

Their mass exodus into Bangladesh and attempted entry into Thailand, Malaysia and other nations to escape a brutal ethnic cleansing at the hands of the Myanmar military junta has been termed the "world's fastest growing refugee crisis." They have been termed the "most persecuted minority in history" by the United Nations. Their history is one filled with sectarian violence and a struggle with identity that is unique in the modern world. This is the story of a systematically oppressed people—the Rohingya.



8TH CENTURY

The Rohingya, a people of South Asian origin, dwell in an independent kingdom in Arakan, known as Rakhine State in modern-day Myanmar.

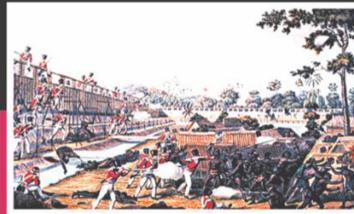


9TH—14TH CENTURY

The Rohingya reportedly come into contact with Islam through Arab traders. Ties forged between Arakan, East Bengal.

1790

The three Anglo-Burmese wars end with British capture of Mandalay. Burma becomes a province of British India.



1790

Captain Hiram Cox, British emissary to the Burmese king in Mandalay, is told to settle the century-long conflict between Arakan refugees and local Rakhines. He founds the town of Cox's Bazar, where groups with ties to Rohingya live today.



1824–86

The three Anglo-Burmese wars end with British capture of Mandalay. Burma becomes a province of British India.

1824–86

Census of 1921 categorises Rohingya as Arakanese.

1921

Japan occupies Burma with help from the Japanese-trained Burma Independence Army (BIA). As the British retreat, Burmese nationalists attack Muslim communities whom they accuse of benefiting from British colonial rule. BIA later transforms into the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) and resists Japanese rule.

1921

Burma gains independence with U Nu as prime minister. In its first year, the new Republic of the Union of Burma is on the brink of collapse.



1921

Britain liberates Burma from Japanese occupation with help of Burmese nationalists led by Aung San (Aung San Suu Kyi's father), including Rohingya fighters, who feel betrayed as the British don't fulfil promise of Arakan autonomy.



1921

Tensions exist with the Rohingya, many of whom want Arakan to join Muslim-majority Pakistan. The government retaliates by removing Rohingya civil servants. As a result of Rangoon's preoccupation with insurgent groups in lower and central Burma, the Mujahid revolt grows rapidly. At one stage, most of Arakan is in the hands of this and other rebel groups.

1784

King Bodawpaya conquers Arakan. Refugees flee to Bengal.



1784

Rohingya are included with the Indian population as an ethnic group of Indian origin in the 1911 census.

1784

Led by armed groups known as Mujahids, elements within the Rohingya try to resist the new Burmese government. The insurgency slowly collapses.

1784

Rohingya Independence Force (RIF) is created after Ne Win's government bans the Rohingya Students' Union and the Rohingya Youth League.

1784

Caretaker government led by army chief of staff, General Ne Win, takes power after a split in the ruling AFPFL party.



1784

Arguing that Burma's squabbling politicians cannot hold the country together any longer, the military, led by General Ne Win, seizes power in a coup in March. He abolishes the federal system and enforces "the Burmese way to socialism" by nationalising the economy, introducing one-party rule, and banning independent news media. The military junta takes a hardline stance against the Rohingya.

1784

The new constitution comes into effect, transferring power from the armed forces to a People's Assembly headed by Ne Win and other former military leaders. The Rohingya Patriotic Front (RPF), a later version of the RIF, is created. It seeks the creation of an independent Muslim state near Bangladesh and champions the cause of the disadvantaged Muslims in Arakan, but later splits into several factions.

1784

Opposition National Democratic Front is formed by region based minority groups, who mount guerrilla insurgencies. About 15,000 Rohingya flee into Bangladesh to escape persecution.

1784

The junta begins Operation Nagamin or Dragon King, which they say is aimed at screening the population for foreigners. More than 200,000 Rohingya flee to Bangladesh, amid allegations of army abuses.

1784

A massive military operation forces another 200,000 Rohingya to flee into Bangladesh. This operation includes the forced relocation of Muslim villagers and results in widespread looting, rape, arson and the desecration of mosques. Bangladesh strikes a UN brokered deal with Burma for the repatriation of refugees, under which most Rohingya return to Arakan State.

1784

New citizenship law excludes the Rohingya from a list of 135 official ethnicities living in Myanmar. This effectively renders the Rohingya as a stateless people. Citizens, as defined by the 1947 constitution, are persons who belong to an "indigenous race", or have lived in British Burma prior to 1942.

1784

National League for Democracy (NLD) leader Aung San Suu Kyi is put under house arrest as Myanmar prepares for general elections.



1784

Around 230,000 Rohingya returned to Arakan, now known as Rakhine, under repatriation agreement.

1784

China and Russia veto a draft UN Security Council resolution at the UN Security Council urging Myanmar to stop persecuting minority and opposition groups.

1784

Thailand expels hundreds of members of the Muslim Rohingya minority who appeared off its coast. Myanmar denies the minority's existence. Several hundred Rohingya are subsequently rescued from boats off the coast of Indonesia.



1784

Military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) claims victory in the first election in 20 years. A week after the election, Suu Kyi—who had been prevented from taking part—is released from house arrest.