

2012

Violence breaks out in Arakan State between Rohingya Muslims and Arakan Buddhists, with sectarian violence rocking four townships. President Thein Sein declares state of emergency following the death of 88 and displacement of 90,000 people.

Rohingya are refused citizenship by successive Burmese governments. President Thein Sein tells the UNHCR: "not at all possible to recognise the illegal border-crossing Rohingya who are not our ethnicity."

Rohingya men are accused of raping and killing a Buddhist woman. Buddhist nationalists respond by burning Rohingya homes, killing more than 280 people and displacing tens of thousands. Human Rights Watch characterises the anti-Rohingya violence as "crimes against humanity" carried out as part of a "campaign of ethnic cleansing."



2015

Myanmar invalidates the identification cards ("white cards") held by many Rohingya, forcing them to apply for citizenship as "Bengalis," suggesting their illegal migration from Bangladesh.

Queen Mary University of London-based research group reports that 100,000 Muslims, formerly living in mixed communities, have been forced into squalid camps in an overcrowded and isolated detention complex on the outskirts of Sittwe.

2013

Buddhist monks meet at a Buddhist leaders' conference in Yangon and propose an inter-faith marriage law to impose restrictions on Buddhist women seeking to marry Muslim men, including making it necessary to obtain permission from authorities and for the Muslim man to convert to Buddhism.

Organisation for Islamic Cooperation Secretary-General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu urges the government of Burma/Myanmar to assume responsibility to eradicate incitement and discrimination against Muslims, including the law limiting Rohingya families to two children.

President Thein Sein announces the disbandment of the border security force, NaSaKa, which was long accused of committing grave human rights violations against the Rohingya, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest as well as detention and torture.



2014

UNHCR says it is receiving increasing reports of abuse and exploitation of Rohingya and other Muslims who fled Myanmar by boat to escape violence in Arakan State, estimating that over 86,000 people have fled on boats since June 2012, including 55,000 during 2013 and 15,000 between January and April 2014.



UNHCR reports that some 87,000, mostly Rohingya, fled from Arakan/Rakhine State by sea from the Bay of Bengal since the June 2012 outbreak of violence, during which at least 200 people died.

Muslims prohibited from registering as 'Rohingya' in the country's April census, the first to be held since 1983.



Five UN special rapporteurs release a statement expressing alarm at the enactment of the Population Control Healthcare Bill, the first of four so-called "Protection of Race and Religion" bills, saying the bills "particularly discriminate against ethnic and religious minorities and have the potential to fuel existing tensions in the country."

2016

UNHCR reports that some 2,000 people, mostly Rohingya Muslims, died trying to cross the Bay of Bengal since 2012.



Htin Kyaw is sworn in as president, ushering in a "new era" as Suu Kyi's democracy movement takes power after 50 years of military domination.

Police claim that three border-guard posts were attacked by hundreds of Islamic militants, killing nine policemen. Police initially claim the attackers had links the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation, a militant group believed to have been defunct for decades. The area is declared a counterterrorism "operation zone." Later, the government claims the assailants were members of a jihadist group, Aqa Mul Mujahidin, led by a man who was trained by the Taliban in Pakistan. A few days later, on a trip to India, Suu Kyi tells the Hindustan Times, "That is just information from just one source, we can't take it for granted that it's absolutely correct."

2017

Rohingya insurgents attack 30 police stations, triggering a massive military response. Thousands of Rohingya flee from Rakhine state.

Bangladesh initially deploys Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) with guns to turn refugees back. Hundreds die as they try to cross the Naf River, which runs along the border of Bangladesh and Myanmar.

As images of dead children and sunken boats in Naf circulate, Bangladesh is set alight with protests demanding the refugees be allowed in. The government reverses its stance and starts allowing Rohingya in.

As the crisis unravels at high speed, the international community struggles to respond. The United Nations convenes emergency sessions, but China makes clear it will veto any resolution.



Rohingya who made it to Bangladesh are reporting rapes, massacres and mass burning of men, women and children. Satellite images suggest the Rohingya villages have been burned to the ground.

Sources:

The Wire; Alal o Dulal Collective; Agence France-Presse (AFP); Reuters; The Hindustan Times; The Wall Street Journal; The New York Times.

Troops are deployed to areas surrounding Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Rathedaung towns in northern Arakan state. Within days of the lockdown, more than 800 Arakanese Buddhists arrived in the state capital Sittwe. More than 1,200 Muslims flee their villages and seek shelter in Buthidaung. State media reports that Buddhists were being evacuated by helicopters citing safety concerns.

Fiona MacGregor, a Scottish investigative journalist for the Myanmar Times, reports that rights groups had documented dozens of sexual-assault cases committed by Burmese security forces against Rohingya women in the operation zone. MacGregor is fired for "damaging the good name of the paper." Her editor, Douglas Long, is fired two weeks later for "undermining the mission of the paper" shortly after he spoke about the incident with a representative of the Committee to Protect Journalists.

Suu Kyi dismisses reports of atrocities: "That kind of fake information... was simply the tip of a huge iceberg of misinformation calculated to create a lot of problems between different communities and with the aim of promoting the interest of terrorists."



UN reports indicate that half a million Rohingya have fled the country to Bangladesh. One report states that nearly 30,000 of the refugee Rohingya are trapped in the mountains of Rakhine State, with no access to food or water.

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