All-Party Parliamentary Group for the
Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes
Against Humanity

Crimes Against Humanity
The Case of the Rohingya People in Burma

Prepared By: Aydin Habibollahi
Hollie McLean
Yalcin Diker
INAF – 5439 Report Presentation
Ethnic Distribution

- Burmese 68%
- Shan 9%
- Karen 7%
- Rakhine 4%
- Chinese 3%
- Indian 2%
- Mon 2%
- Other 5%
Religious Distribution

- Buddhism 89%
- Islam & Christianity
Demography

Burmese government has increased the prominence of the Buddhist religion to the detriment of other religions.
Rohingya Organization

- ~1% of national population
- ~4% of Arakan population
- ~45% of Muslim population
Rohingya Organization

- Arakan Rohingya National Organization (ARNO)
- Domestically not represented
Cause of the Conflict

• Persecution and the deliberate targeting of the Rohingya started in the late 18th century when the Burmese occupation forced large populations of both the Rohingya Muslims and the Arakanese Buddhists to flee the Arakan state.

• The Takhine Party, a predominant anti-colonial faction, began to provoke the Arakanese Buddhists against the Rohingya Muslims convincing the Buddhists that the Islamic culture was an existential threat to their people.

• The seed of hatred between the two sides was planted by the Takhine Party and the repression began immediately in 1938 when the Takhine Party took control of the newly independent state.
Current Status

• June and October 2012, sectarian violence between the Rohingya Muslims and the Arakanese Buddhist killed almost 200 people, destroyed close to 10,000 homes and displaced 127,000. A further 25,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Sir Lanka, and Thailand.

• Tensions are still high between Rohingya Muslims and Arakanese Buddhists and human rights violations persist.
Chief Characteristics of the Conflict

- Massacres
- Denial of Citizenship
- Forced Displacement
- Travel Ban
- Restriction on Education
- Restriction on Employment
- Marriage Difficulties
- Discrimination Against Culture & Religion
- Refugee Problem
Theory

Michael Lund’s Conflict Curve

- Violence directed toward Rohingya is escalating, having reached a stage of overt crisis in 2012
- Represents a transition from instability to violent conflict
Theory

Kaufman’s paths to war

• Violence directed toward the Rohingya Muslims provoked by dominant ethnic group
• June 2012 violence:
  • Communal and mass-led
  • Popular chauvinism
• October 2012 violence:
  • Planned and organized by the elite
  • Government jingoism
International Reaction

Human Rights Watch

- Crimes committed against the Rohingya in 2012 represent state-supported crimes against humanity, part of an overall campaign of ethnic cleansing
- Indirect state involvement included:
  - Failure to prevent the violence committed by armed mobs in June 2012
  - Unwillingness to investigate or persecute those involved
- Direct state involvement included:
  - Organization and coordination of October 2012 violence by Arakan state’s religious and political leaders
  - Systematic crimes against humanity with the objective of removing the Rohingya from their territory
  - Distribution of anti-Rohingya hate speech and propaganda
International Reaction

Genocide Watch

• Burma at the extermination stage, the seventh of the eight stages of genocide:
  – Mass killings legally known as genocide, occur at the hands of armed forces in conjunction with local militias.
  – Current massacres of the Rohingya Muslims and other minority ethnic groups such as the Shan, Kachin and Karen by the Burmese army.

• Updated Genocide Emergency Alert for the Arakan State of Myanmar, with calls for:
  – End of human rights violations against the Rohingya
  – Full citizenship for Rohingya
  – Bangladeshi government to allow the UNHCR to register Rohingya refugees
Assessment

Crimes against Humanity

• The Rohingya are subject to crimes against humanity by the Burmese government
• Potential for the crimes against humanity to persist due to:
  – Ongoing human rights violations against the Rohingya and Muslims in the Arakan State.
  – Ongoing religious persecution, arbitrary arrests and restriction of movement of the Rohingya Muslims.
  – Over 1,000 individuals, largely Rohingya men and boys, have been arbitrarily detained in poorly run prisons characterized by torture and maltreatment.

Genocide

• Considering an outbreak of violent conflict toward the Rohingya has not occurred since October 2012, genocide does not appear to be occurring at this point in time
• Should the Burmese state fail to end its crimes against humanity, there is potential for the situation to escalation to genocide.
Current Canadian Assistance

1. $15.6 million, five year Canadian International Development Agency program (2010-2015) provides food and health care to Burmese refugees in neighbouring countries.

2. The Canadian International Development Agency contributed a further $3.6 million in humanitarian assistance to Burma, $3 million was allocated to the World Food Programme, $400,000 to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and $200,000 to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

3. $1.8 million, five year Democracy Envelope of the Global Peace and Security Fund (2012-2017) which is aimed at increasing democratic capacity and supporting independent media.

4. $100,000, annually extended Canadian Embassy (Bangkok) program aimed at small scale human rights awareness fund for Burmese relates issues.
Recommendations

1. All-Party Parliamentary Group is urged to encourage the Canadian government to promote democracy in its bilateral dealings with member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and at every international and regional forum for Burmese national reconciliation and reform.

2. In order to extend the reach of NGOs to the Arakan region, the All-Party Parliamentary Group should consider lobbying for improved relations with the Burmese government.

3. All-Party Parliamentary Group is urged to establish dialogue with prominent NGOs and all relevant stakeholders in the Arakan region to establish and host a truth commission in Canada.
Work Cited

- Pictures: Human Rights Watch