International responses to human rights violations in Myanmar: the case of the Rohingya

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Abstract

While Myanmar is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country, the Bamar (Burmese) nonetheless comprise almost 70 percent of the country’s total population. Of the many ethnic groups in Myanmar, the Muslim Rohingya, are mainly centered in the Rakhine (Arakan) State, which borders Bangladesh. Although the position of these people as a distinct ethnic group was recognized by the U Nu government (1948-1962), the introduction of the 1982 Citizenship Act by the country’s military government, however, have rendered them stateless. Subject to a wide range of systematic human rights violations by the Myanmar authorities, the Rohingya have often sought refugee in Bangladesh as well as many other countries in the region and beyond. Whilst most like-minded states and international organizations have duly responded to the issue, especially by providing humanitarian assistance and criticizing the Myanmar junta for its treatment of the Rohingya, however, much remains to be done to find a permanent solution to the issue of statelessness of these people. The purpose of this article is therefore to analyze responses from some segments of the international community over the issue of human rights violations on the Rohingya and the resulting exodus of these people from Myanmar. As such, this article will examine responses from Bangladesh, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the regional community, the United States, the European Union (EU), the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

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Although the Rohingya are from Rakhine State in Myanmar, the country's government claims that they are foreign interlopers. Myanmar officials have suggested that the Rohingya burned down their own villages to garner international sympathy. The two soldiers' accounts shatter that official narrative. It is not clear what will happen to the two men, who are not under arrest but were effectively placed in the custody of the International Criminal Court on Monday. They could provide testimony in court proceedings and be put in witness protection. They could be tried. The Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (The Gambia v. Myanmar), commonly referred to as the Bengali genocide case, is a case currently being heard by the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The Bengali people are a Muslim Indo-Aryan ethnic minority in Buddhist majority Myanmar who, in recent years, have faced mass persecution and ethnic cleansing that has been described as a genocide. The state government deems them illegal immigrants, but the plight of the Rohingya in Myanmar, hundreds of thousands of whom have fled to neighboring Bangladesh, has attracted widespread international attention. However, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has failed to take action, hindered by Russia's and China's use of their veto powers. Myanmar's security forces committed "human rights violations on a colossal scale," including killing more than 10,000 civilians, the systematic and coordinated rape of women, and the destruction of entire villages. As a result, an estimated 727,000 Rohingya refugees fled from Myanmar into neighboring Bangladesh, putting the total Rohingya refugee population in Bangladesh at an estimated 921,000 as of September 2018. International Response to the Rohingya Crisis. Enjoying this article? Marginalized communities in Myanmar still face “grievous human rights violations” at the hands of security forces, a UN-appointed independent expert said this week, while repeating her call for an international and independent probe into the 2017 exodus from Rakhine state. | Rohingya refugees who fled Myanmar to safety in Cox's Bazar. 3 July 2019. Human Rights. Marginalized communities in Myanmar still face “grievous human rights violations” at the hands of security forces, a UN-appointed independent expert said this week, while repeating her call for an international and independent probe into the 2017 exodus from Rakhine state.