

Committee: Security Council
Issue: The question of Myanmar
Student Officers: Emre Erciyas & Hakan Yaşar

I- Introduction

Myanmar (Burma) is a predominantly Buddhist country in Southeast Asia bordering India, Bangladesh, Thailand, Laos, and China. Roughly 88% of the population is Buddhist while 4.3% of the population is Muslim according to the state, but the Muslim population claims that roughly 6-10% of the population is Muslim. The Muslim population is mostly spread across the country but the Muslim Rohingyas, which is around 800,000 people, live in a state called Rakhine which shares borders with the Muslim nation of Bangladesh. The Muslim population faces persecution and they don't have access to fundamental human rights. The state of Myanmar does not give full citizenship to the Rohingyas and many have fled to their neighbour, Bangladesh. Myanmar doesn't even recognize them as an ethnic group. The state sees them as illegal immigrants from neighbouring Muslim countries who migrated to Myanmar. The government of Myanmar and China agree that the Muslim population is invading Myanmar and it will terrorize the country if it is not eradicated. The citizens and officials in Myanmar also think that Rohingyas are radicalized by Islamic beliefs and that they will only cause destruction.

The dispute between the Rohingyas and the state dates back to WW2 and the British colonial era. Rohingyas have long wanted independence and revolted against their state to join Bangladesh several times. The latest crisis began on August 2017 when the police attacked the Rohingyas. According to several human rights organizations, the government of Myanmar attacked, raped and killed many Rohingyas. The Rohingyas are known to be the world's most persecuted minority. The government denies these allegations and calls these events as "clearance operations". According to UN this is the world's largest growing refugee crisis. The Security Council is the only UN organ that can make binding decisions to stop the human rights abuses, prevent the biggest refugee crisis the world has ever seen and find a long-term solution to end the conflict which has killed many innocent people for decades.

II- Involved Countries and Organizations

Myanmar

The government of Myanmar has long denied the human rights abuses against the Rohingyas. The government identifies the Rohingyas as stateless people that settled in Rakhine. The state counsellor of Myanmar (Aung San Suu Kyi) who received a Nobel Peace Prize for leading the democratic movement in Myanmar has also been silent during the crisis and supported the military's action against the Rohingyas. The government says the attacks against the Rohingyas were in response to the attacks on Burmese border posts. The attacks by the government of Myanmar have been criticized by the UN, US Department of State and the international community.

Bangladesh

Many Rohingya refugees have fled to Bangladesh to seek asylum. It is estimated that there are over 900,000 Rohingyas living in the refugee camps in Bangladesh. The government of Bangladesh needs more humanitarian aid to help the Rohingyas in refugee camps. Many political, religious figures

and countries have supported Bangladesh both economically and politically. Even the pope has denounced the actions taken by the military of Myanmar in his visit to Bangladesh to help the refugees.

China

China is the only country that supports Myanmar in this issue. Chinese government has said "the world should support the efforts of Myanmar in safeguarding the stability of its national development". As a nation which is one of the Security Council members that have the veto power, China is the only country that stands against sanctions against the state of Myanmar. Even though China supported the General Assembly's decision to condemn the government of Myanmar, it will not allow the council to implement sanctions.

China's stance on the issue is the only reason why the Security Council is having a hard time reaching a consensus about Myanmar. The delegate of China is expected to defend the government of Myanmar however the delegate should work with the council members to find a solution that will be accepted by both sides. I personally urge the delegate of China to check the 8th website in Useful Links section.

III- Focused Overview of the Issue

Rohingyas in World War 2

During World War 2, Rohingyas allied with the British against the Rakhine Buddhists who were allied with the Japanese. In return, Britain promised to support a Muslim state in Burma. However after the war, the new state which was established after the declaration of independence in 1948 did not recognize the Rohingyas as their citizens. The government started to systematically discriminate the Rohingyas. From the foundation of Myanmar to 1961 Rohingyas fought for independence. After the failure of these militias, Islamic movements started to grow however it was stopped when the government forced launched a huge operation against the Islamist insurgents called the Operation Dragon King.

Operation Dragon King

Operation Dragon King was a huge military operation against the Rohingyas in Burma. This was the first military operation against the Rohingyas by the military of Myanmar. 250 thousand Rohingyas fled Myanmar. This operation was conducted by the military to disarm and expel Islamic insurgents who were fighting for independence. There were mass arrests and reported of torture by the government of Myanmar. After the refugee crisis the United Nations sent humanitarian aid to the refugees in Bangladesh.

2016 Refugee Crisis

Most recently Myanmar's police and armed forces attacked the local Rohingya population as a response to attacks on Myanmar's border posts in October. These attacks were criticized and condemned by many countries and organizations as there were many reports of human rights violations. In 17 March 2016, the US Department of State released a broad report on the issue. According to the Human Rights Watch 1,250 houses were burned by the military. Office of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) also released a report which stated that the military was conducting massed killings including children and women. According to the military and the government, all of these reports are incorrect and propaganda by the western powers.

IV- Key Vocabulary

Persecution: Hostility and ill-treatment, especially because of race or political or religious beliefs; oppression.

Dispute: A disagreement or argument.

Propaganda: An incorrect and biased information that aims to promote a point of view.

V- Important Events & Chronology

Date (Day/Month/Year)	Event
1942	Arakan massacres following the Japanese invasion of Myanmar
4 January 1948	Myanmar declares independence from Britain
1948	Rohingya insurgency begins
2 March 1962	Coup d'etat in Myanmar which started an era of authoritarian rule.
February - June 1978	Following Operation King Dragon, 200,000 Rohingyas left Myanmar.
1982	The government passed the citizenship law which didn't recognize Rohingyas as a race.
August 1988	People Power Uprising was a student uprising for a democratic Myanmar
1989	The military junta changes the name Arakan to Rakhine State.
1991-1992	Refugee crisis after Rohingya led political party was banned and military operations began.
2012	Rakhine State riots start.
9 October 2016	Insurgents attacked Burmese border post, the government blamed Rohingya Muslims for the attack.

2016-2017	Following the major crackdown, thousands of Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh starting a new refugee crisis.
-----------	---

VI- Past Resolutions and Treaties

31 October 2017 - A/C.3/72/L.48 - United Nations passed a resolution on the situation of human rights in Myanmar. This was the first UN resolution on the human rights violations in Myanmar. The UN strictly condemned the violence against Rohingyas however sanctions were not implemented. GA resolutions are not binding which means the government of Myanmar doesn't have to take any actions. The UN Security Council has not adopted any resolution regarding this situation.

VII- Possible Solutions

As this topic will be discussed in the Security Council, which has binding powers, there can be many different solutions that delegates can propose. However, delegates should not forget that they are representing the ideas of the country.

As the Security Council, delegates can condemn hostile actions committed by a nation or a group. This will clearly show that Security Council supports one side. Sanctions may also be necessary to convince the government of Myanmar however delegates should reach a consensus with the delegation of China which is a P5 nation that supports Myanmar to prevent a possible veto threat. Furthermore, the delegates could write clauses that calls for negotiations between the two sides to be made in order to discuss the opinions of both sides in a diplomatic manner.

Don't forget, this is the Security Council which means we are going to debate clause by clause. The delegates don't have to write a full resolution however, they should have strong clauses that can solve the issue. The delegates can use operative phrases like "Demands", "Decides" or "Condemns" which are strong phrases that are needed to solve this crisis. The voting procedure is a little bit different from the normal voting procedure but we will explain it in the conference.

The delegates should not forget the humanitarian aid that is needed for the refugees in Bangladesh and delegates should ensure that the government of Myanmar would never commit human rights abuses again when the refugees come back to their country. There can be a control mechanism to prevent future human rights abuses. Rohingyas are still not considered as citizens of Myanmar which means they are currently stateless. Delegates should find an action plan to integrate them into society and make them a part of the community. Terrorism among Rohingyas should also be eradicated. Two ethnicities are in an open conflict for a century which means the Security Council should find a way to find a lasting peace. Without citizenship their rights won't be ensured. The delegates can force the government of Myanmar to reform their laws or to make a referendum in Rakhine State however the delegation of China should also accept such action.

IX- Useful Links

- 1) <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/08/rohingya-muslims-170831065142812.html>
- 2) <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-38168917>
- 3) <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-41566561>
- 4) <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/05/witness-massacre-tula-toli-rohingya-myanmar-soldier-village>
- 5) <https://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2018/feb/03/rohingya-refugees-on-the-bangladesh-myanmar-border-in-pictures>
- 6) <http://theconversation.com/the-history-of-the-persecution-of-myanmars-rohingya-84040>
- 7) <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/rohingya-crisis>
- 8) http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1512593.shtml

X- Works Cited

- “The World Factbook: BURMA.” *Central Intelligence Agency*, Central Intelligence Agency, 25 Jan. 2018, www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bm.html.
- Ratcliffe, Rebecca. “Who are the Rohingya and what is happening in Myanmar?” *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 5 Sept. 2017, www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/sep/06/who-are-the-rohingya-and-what-is-happening-in-myanmar.
- Murphy, W. Patrick. “The Rohingya Crisis: U.S. Response to the Tragedy in Burma.” *U.S. Department of State*, U.S. Department of State, 5 Oct. 2017, www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2017/10/274639.htm.
- “Myanmar: Crimes against humanity terrorize and drive Rohingya out.” *Myanmar: New evidence of systematic campaign of crimes against humanity to terrorize and drive Rohingya out*, www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/10/myanmar-new-evidence-of-systematic-campaign-to-terrorize-and-drive-rohingya-out/.
- “Rohingya Crisis.” *Human Rights Watch*, www.hrw.org/tag/rohingya-crisis.
- “Myanmar/Burma – Situation of the Rohingya.” *France Diplomatie :: Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs*, www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/myanmar/events/article/myanmar-burma-situation-of-the-rohingya.

Please contact us by sending an email if you have any question regarding the issue or the conference;

eerciyes@my.aci.k12.tr - hvasar@my.aci.k12.tr