



KING'S ACADEMY MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2025

# HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

## PRESIDENT RESEARCH PACKET

PRESIDENT: Farah Zureikat

**Protecting the Rights of the Rohingya Minority in Myanmar**





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### **President's letter:**

Members of the Human Rights Council,

Our world today is one of forgotten voices and forgotten lives—communities wiped out by persecution, and the most vulnerable oppressed by violence. In Myanmar, the Rohingya minority is still rendered voiceless and stateless, denied their rights and displaced from their homeland. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, women and children are the hardest hit by armed conflict, experiencing unimaginable violence that destroys families and generations. While oceans apart, these crises have one common denominator: the refusal of humanity by those most needing protections.

You, as members of the Human Rights Council, have the sacred task of changing talking into doing. You are asked to meet injustice head-on, hold perpetrators of power abuses accountable, and open doors of hope for those told that there are none. It is not an easy task—it asks for empathy, tenacity, and vision. But it is through your discussions that this council can demonstrate to the world how it is that dignity is defended where it is least protected.

History has shown us that human rights are not saved by speech alone—that rights are saved by dedication, cooperation, and fortitude. You and each one of you has the potential to influence outcomes extending beyond this meeting, outcomes that speak to a potential world in which persecution is opposed, women and children are safeguarded, and every community, however marginalized, is granted a future. Make this session a testimony of your power as leaders and guardians of humanity.

Sincerely,

Farah Zureikat

President of the Human Rights Council



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## Introduction:

Myanmar's Rohingya minority, a Muslim group mainly residing in the Rakhine State, has for a long time suffered from systematic persecution, statelessness, and violence. Even after long habitation in Myanmar for centuries, the Rohingya became stateless by losing their citizenship by virtue of the Myanmar Citizenship Law of 1982. Disqualification from nationality denied them fundamental rights like liberty of movement, access to education, and politics.

Strains between the Buddhist majority and Rohingya Muslims remained high and erupted into large-scale violence, especially in 2012, when communal violence began. In August of 2017, Myanmar's military launched a campaign of wide-scale killings, rape, and scorched-earth burnings of villages after attacks by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA). The UN and international human rights groups described this campaign as "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing" and possibly genocide.

Now more than 900,000 Rohingya refugees are sheltered in Bangladeshi camps, predominantly in Cox's Bazar, one of the world's largest refugee complexes. Life there is squalid—characterized by crowding, sickness, illiteracy, and waning humanitarian support. While accountability for atrocities committed against the Rohingya has yet to materialize, even after proceedings at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) commenced by The Gambia in 2019 under the Genocide Convention, it has yet to arrive.

The Rohingya issue poses serious questions for the Human Rights Council: How can those responsible for mass atrocities be held accountable by the international community? How can a community of statelessness be provided for a future? How can the rights of the Rohingya be safeguarded while it is trapped between displacement, discrimination, and denial of nationality?



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## Definition of key terms:

- **Rohingya:** A Muslim ethnic minority from Myanmar, primarily residing in Rakhine State, denied citizenship and considered stateless by the government.
- **Statelessness:** The condition of not being recognized as a citizen by any state, resulting in lack of legal rights and protections.
- **Ethnic Cleansing:** The deliberate removal of an ethnic group from a territory, often through violence or coercion.
- **Genocide:** As defined by the 1948 Genocide Convention, acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group.
- **Repatriation:** The process of returning refugees or displaced persons to their country of origin.
- **International Court of Justice (ICJ):** The principal judicial organ of the UN, which adjudicates disputes between states and interprets international law.



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## Major parties involved:

- **Myanmar (Military Junta and Government)**
  - Refuses Rohingya citizenship and frequently portrays them as illegal Bangladesh immigrants.
  - It was also involved in atrocities like killings, mass rape, and burning villages.
- **The Rohingya People**
  - Approximately 1.4 had lived in Myanmar before 2017; now over 900,000 are refugees in Bangladesh.
  - Endure system-wide discrimination, statelessness, and denial of fundamental rights.
- **Bangladesh**
  - It hosts the biggest Rohingya refugees community in Cox's Bazar.
  - Struggles with crowding, cost pressure, and reduced foreign aid.
- **ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)**
  - Conflicting reactions—states affirm support for Myanmar's sovereignty while also advocating for humanitarian access.
  - consultative and aid player at a regional level yet faulted for ineffective intervention.
- **United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)**
  - The Human
  - Scrutiny of Myanmar's behavior, setting up the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM).
  - Supports responsibility, humanitarian aid, and protecting rights for minorities.
- **Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)**
  - Strongly advocates for the Rohingya, backing The Gambia's ICJ case.
- **International NGOs (Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Médecins Sans Frontières)**
  - DOCUMENT VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN AID, AND DEM.
- **The Gambia & the ICJ**
  - It has a case pending before the ICJ since 2019, for committing genocide as per the Genocide Convention.



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### Timeline:

- **1948: Myanmar is independent; the Rohingya are initially treated as citizens.**  
When Burma (now Myanmar) gained independence from Britain, Rohingya were legally one of the ethnic peoples in the country and citizens. They were in politics, in government, and acknowledged as belonging to the fabric of the new state.
- **1962: Military coup cements persecution of Rohingya.**  
Following General Ne Win's coup, the military junta targeted the Rohingya in systematic ways, limiting their movements, occupations, as well as political office. This is when systematic marginalization started.
- **1982: Myanmar Citizenship Law renders the Rohingya denational.**  
The disputed law acknowledged 135 "official" ethnic groupings but not the Rohingya, rendering them stateless. From this moment, they lost voting rights, the right to own land, or to enter into higher education, as well as any form of legal recognition as citizens.
- **2012: Ethnic violence in Rakhine State displaces more than 140,000.**  
Riots between Buddhist Rakhine ethnic groups and Muslim Rohingya escalated from small clashes to large riots, killing, and burning. The government pushed the survivors into internally displaced people (IDP) camps, where conditions were dire and movement was extremely controlled.
- **2016: Security posts attacked by ARSA; military counters with brutal insurgency campaign.**  
The small militant organization, Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), launched attacks on police posts along the border. The military retaliated in a disproportional manner with mass arrests, extrajudicial killing, and rape among Rohingya civilians.
- **August 2017: Large-scale violence by Myanmar military compels over 700,000 Rohingya to cross into Bangladesh.**  
In what the UN described as a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing," the Tatmadaw (military of Myanmar) sent in large-scale military campaigns: villages were torched, thousands were murdered, and large-scale rape occurred. The exodus resulted in the world's largest refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.



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- **2019: The Gambia vs. Myanmar in the ICJ for the Genocide Convention.**

Joined by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), The Gambia brought the case in the International Court of Justice, charging Myanmar with genocide.

Myanmar was compelled by the ICJ to adopt provisional measures to safeguard the Rohingya, although enforcement is weak.

- **2021: Myanmar military coup continues to destabilise and freezes repatriation efforts.**

The Tatmadaw coup introduced new volatility as the junta consolidated power as negotiations on repatriation of the Rohingya collapsed. The coup increased global isolation of Myanmar as well.

- **Present-2022: The refugees stay in Bangladesh camps in deteriorating humanitarian conditions, with slow progress in return or accountability.**

More than 900,000 Rohingya are congested in Cox's Bazar camps, struggling with food shortages, mobility restrictions, increased violence, and dwindling aid.

Repatriation attempts are still in deadlock, as is accountability for crimes committed against the Rohingya.



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### Implications:

The crisis currently emanating from and within Myanmar roams into the horizon of humanitarian effects, political influences, and even security implications for the Rohingya in Myanmar. At its discrimination, the absence of the Rohingya protection framework violates universal commitments concerning human rights and exposes international mechanisms designed to prevent ethnic cleansing and genocide as little more than hollow shells. The persecution of the Rohingya has already resulted in mass displacements, and more than a million refugees, mostly bearing the burden towards Bangladesh, have exhausted the resources and stability of host communities. Without any durable solutions, this displacement will probably escalate into a permanent crisis, denying a whole generation access to education, livelihoods, or citizenship.

With all this going on inside Myanmar, it doesn't bode well for the security of Southeast Asia as a region. The problems include trafficking in humans, possible radicalization in refugee camps, and spats with Myanmar and its neighbors, all of which decrease prospects for peace or cooperation regionally. And the peaking of that crisis bears globally on the limitations of international law because, although credible evidence abounds regarding all the atrocities-especially mass killings, sexual violence, and burning of villages-there'll be fallout from lack of accountability mechanisms-most protection awarded Myanmar military is through political divides. Unless much stronger measures are put into place, a worrying precedent will thus be set with regard to the Rohingya issue, where states will find themselves at liberty to persecute minorities without fear of punishment. That will certainly be to the detriment of the UN's credibility and the largely discredited human rights framework.





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## **“Food for thought”**

- What responsibility does the international community have or has in intervening in the scenarios of ethnic cleansing or genocide and where is the border of sovereignty or human rights?
- How would Myanmar's refusal to acknowledge the Rohingya as citizens complicate the search for durable solutions by the Rohingya refugees?
- To what extent, then, is it fair to impose on the neighboring countries the burden of displaced persons? How about richer countries being able to contribute to the burden-sharing partnership?
- Very much so, indeed, because international laws, as adopted by the International Criminal Court or the International Court of Justice, are not effective on rogues committing crimes against the Rohingya race.
- Can ASEAN play a bigger role in brokering a resolution to the crisis or do the principle of non-interference shackle the organization?
- What will the impacts on radicalization and instability be if the Rohingya refugee crisis persists for another decade without resolution?
- How should the UN balance humanitarian assistance with diplomatic leverage in order to make structural changes in Myanmar?
- What lessons from previous humanitarian crises - Rwandan genocide, Balkan wars, etc can be applied to the present condition of the Rohingya refugee situation?



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## Proposed solutions

**1. Calls upon** all member states and relevant international organizations to take immediate and coordinated action to protect the rights of the Rohingya minority in Myanmar through legal accountability, humanitarian support, and long-term solutions;

**a. Recommends** that the United Nations and the International Court of Justice continue to pursue legal accountability for crimes committed against the Rohingya, including support for the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) and backing *The Gambia v. Myanmar* case under the Genocide Convention;

i. **Suggests** targeted sanctions against Myanmar's military leadership to pressure compliance with international human rights standards;

ii. **Encourages** ASEAN and the United Nations to form a joint working group tasked with negotiating voluntary, safe, and dignified repatriation terms for Rohingya refugees while ensuring international monitoring of conditions in Rakhine State.

**b. Requests** that donor nations increase funding for humanitarian relief operations in Rohingya refugee camps, including education, healthcare, and mental health programs, while supporting infrastructure development in host communities such as Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh;

i. **Proposes** the creation of a **Global Rohingya Rights Fund**, jointly financed by member states, NGOs, and international organizations, to support long-term livelihood, education, and vocational training opportunities for displaced Rohingya populations;

ii. **Suggests** humanitarian aid delivery be coupled with public awareness campaigns to combat discrimination against the Rohingya and promote understanding of their rights as equal human beings.



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