



An Evolution of Rohingya Persecution in Myanmar: From Strategic Embrace to Genocide

By [Alice Cowley](#) and [Maung Zarni](#) | Apr 20, 2017



Rohingya refugees rally - Kuala Lumpur - June 17, 2012

Are religious doctrinal differences primarily responsible for stoking intercommunal fear and hatred? What roles have state, sub-state, and transnational actors played in fomenting sectarian discord? And what could be done to avert sectarian violence, to foster tolerance and peaceful coexistence, and to promote reconciliation? The essays in this series tackle these and other salient questions pertaining to sectarianism in the MENA and Asia Pacific regions. [Read more](#)

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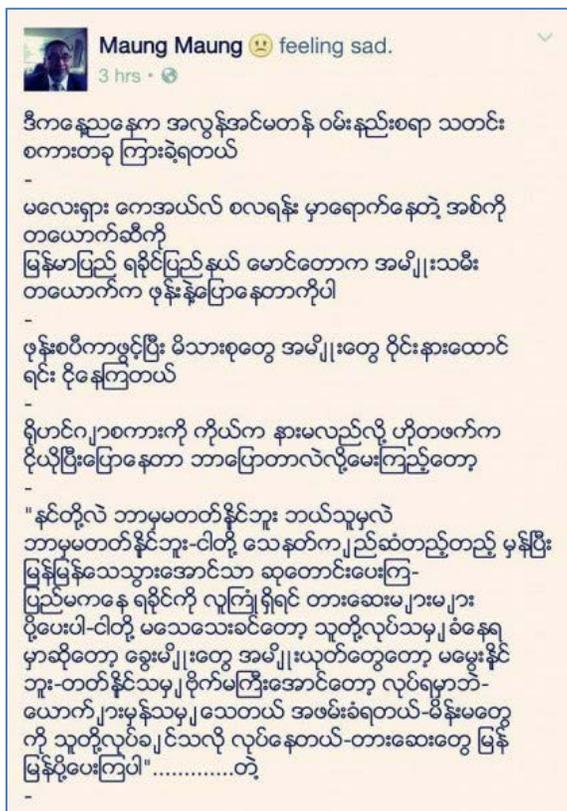
“Send us as many birth control pills as you can. They (Myanmar troops) are gang-raping our women. They are arresting and killing all our men. There is nothing else you can do. Just pray to Allah and to wish us speedy deaths! This is just simply unbearable,” said a Rohingya woman talking from her mobile phone from Myanmar’s predominantly Rohingya region of Northern Rakhine State bordering Bangladesh.^[1] [See Figure below right.] She was talking to her brother, an unregistered refugee living and working in a poor and rough neighborhood called Salayang on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Among the handful of Burmese eager for updates, listening to the phone conversation on speaker phone was U Maung Maung, a respected Muslim leader and activist from Mandalay, also making a living in Malaysia. Maung immediately posted this on his Facebook timeline on November 20, 2016,^[2] hoping to alert people to the shocking events unfolding. Western experts on the region note there is an “information blackhole,”^[3] owing to the Myanmar government’s barred access to humanitarian aid groups and local and international media. This latest lockdown was a result of the killing of nine Myanmar police officers which was believed to have been instigated by Rohingya hoping to form a resistance group lockdown of Northern Rakhine State for its ‘security clearance operations.’ As such, Myanmar authorities have.

However, Maung’s attempt to alert the world via Facebook came to naught. The post was in Burmese language. But more importantly, his alert – like many others conveyed by ‘locals’ – had not been vetted by any Western organizations or international human rights ‘experts,’ who have become the standard bearers of facts or “truth-conveyors” relating to other peoples’ experiences of atrocities. Victims and their accounts need first to be vetted by these mediating agencies – a system understood only too well by the Burmese government with its blanket denials of the allegations coming out of the information black hole it created. Aung San Suu Kyi Government’s Information Committee referred to the atrocities on many occasions, “fake rape”^[4] and “exaggerations” or “fabrications.”^[5]

Following hundreds of similar allegations and coordinated documentation by Rohingya groups of mass killings, mass rape, and destruction of whole villages, the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCR) sent a team to interview Rohingya refugees who had recently fled to Bangladesh – 70,000^[6] of whom had arrived in four months. Based on over 200 interviews, OHCR issued a damning Flash Report (Feb 3) complete with harrowing tales of burning elderly Rohingya men alive and slitting children’s throats.^[7] The U.N. estimates that Myanmar may have killed as many as 1,000 Rohingya men in recent violence alone.^[8] This information, presented at the 34th session of the Human Rights Council,^[9] did not result in the much-hoped-and-lobbied-for U.N. Commission of Inquiry with a view towards the International Criminal Court. The result was a compromise – a ‘Fact Finding Mission’^[10] – which both the military^[11] and the National League for Democracy (NLD)-led government^[12] are determined not to accept or cooperate with.

We have previously argued that far from being a new phenomenon, waves of state-directed violence and communal destruction such as these have been occurring since 1978 and are part of a process of ‘slow-burning genocide.’^[13] Two other independent studies published a year later reinforce our findings.^[14] Over these decades, Rohingya experiences and sufferings have been tossed across multiple discourses that deny the central role of the military such as “communal violence”^[15] or since the Oct. 9 raids, “Muslim insurgency” pregnant with potential for



escalations involving “international terrorism.”^[16] In recent years, these have run concurrently with human rights bodies and organisations framing the situation as ‘ethnic cleansing’^[17] and ‘crimes against humanity’ – U.N. Special Rapporteurs and the OHCHR included.

Despite these shifting narratives, the fundamental nature of the problem has remained constant. The military-controlled state has attempted to ‘cleanse’ the nation of the largest Muslim minority in Myanmar, unique with legitimate claims to Northern Rakhine as their ancestral home. Firstly, this has been attempted through legal, bureaucratic, and administrative means – such as removing their rights to citizenship, destroying and revoking documents in Rohingya possession, refusing to register thousands of Rohingya infants, household checks, as well as subjecting them to a web of criss-crossing security grids by which the freedom of movement of the Rohingya population is severely restricted and monitored.^[18] Secondly, it has been attempted through denial of their history/identity and propaganda campaigns that serve to de-nationalise them.^[19] Where these two attempts have not been achieved, communities have also been subjected to physical destruction through methods such as burning property, evictions, and killings.

However, this has not always been the case. In 1961, the Burmese co-author’s late great uncle, *Zeya Kyaw Htin* Major Ant Kywe, a decorated nationalist soldier, was the Deputy Commander of the administrative district of Mayu in 1961, which was effectively established as a homeland for Rohingya in Rakhine State in order to maintain law and order^[20] in the region where the central government was confronted with rebellions from two different fronts: Muslim Rohingya separatists and Buddhist Rakhine nationalists clamouring for statehood.

Waves of state-directed violence and communal destruction ... have been occurring since 1978 and are part of a process of ‘slow-burning genocide.’

On Myanmar’s Independence Day (January 4, 1948), even as the Union Jack was lowered at the colonial Secretariat in Rangoon, the Burma Army was engaged in ferocious battles against armed Rakhine (Buddhist) rebels^[21] who wanted to reclaim the sovereignty they had lost to the militarily dominant Burmese Buddhist group in 1784.

In the years following Myanmar independence in 1948, the central government, specifically the Ministry of Defense, strategically sought to embrace Rohingyas as a bona fide ethnic minority of the new Union of Burma,^[22] with equal and full citizenship rights, along with multiple other minorities with armed revolts against the ethnically Burmese central government. It is essential to see the root of the Rohingya persecution not simply in the sectarian ethnic conflict between the two main co-habitant communities in Rakhine state of Western Burma, namely Rakhine Buddhist majority and Rohingya Muslim minorities, but in the ethnic triangle involving also the majority Burmese in ultimate control of the state (both the military under General Ne Win and the civilian political coalition headed by PM U Nu).^[23]

Although the Burma Army was fighting battles on two fronts in West Myanmar, it was the Rakhine rebellions that presented a more serious threat to the central government than the simultaneous Muslim/Rohingya armed movements, some of which sought, with no success, to join with the predominantly Muslim nation of Pakistan (East Pakistan). During the Rohingya surrender ceremony of 290 Muslim rebels, held on 4 July 1961 in Northern Rakhine town of Buthidaung, the Commander of the Border Area Administration and Territorial Forces Colonel Saw Myint promised “absolutely no religious or ethnic discrimination” against Rohingyas – vis-à-vis Rakhine Buddhists – and guaranteed “equal protection under Law for all those who abide by the law and live in peace.”^[24] Saw Myint’s superior and the second in command, after General Ne Win of the Burma Army Brigadier Aung Gyi, presided over the ceremony and explained the need for Rohingyas as an ethnic minority group to recognize and accept the primacy of political allegiance to the Union of Burma over their kinship, cultural, and religious ties in exchange for the full citizenship rights and ethnic equality which they were offered.^[25]

In addition, as early as May 1960, the Ministry of Defense agreed to the Rohingyas’ request to carve out the predominantly Rohingya geographic pocket in Northern Rakhine State and establish a new district named after the local river Mayu. The co-founder of Aung San Suu Kyi’s National League for Democracy, the then-young Lt-Colonel Tin

Oo, was tasked with establishing the Mayu District, which was to be administered centrally from the Burmese-controlled Rakhine Military Command.[26] Rohingyas' request was precipitated by the moves made by Prime Minister U Nu's re-elected civilian government in order to fulfil its election pledge of granting Rakhine Buddhists a separate statehood, within the Union of Burma.[27]

Within eight months of the establishment of the May-U District, General Ne Win and his deputies staged a coup against U Nu's government on the pretext that Nu's opportunistic electioneering and weak leadership were emboldening ethnic minorities' demands for devolution of power away from the Burmese centre. While the coup leaders continued to honour the arrangements with Rohingyas, the policy orientation of the military leadership shifted towards racist, isolationist, xenophobic, and socialistically doctrinaire. The more liberal and less radical military leaders such as the Deputy Commander in Chief of Army Brigadier General Aung Gyi and Colonel Chit Myaing were sacked in 1963 and 1964.[28] The remaining military leaders under Ne Win's commandship began to marginalize and eventually cleanse the Armed Forces of Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu officers unless they agreed to convert to Buddhism. Having remade this once-multiethnic, multi-faith national institution of unrivalled power and control over society, the military leadership turned its sights to society at large.[29] Most important, the army leadership initiated, promoted, and sustained the process of radically reimagining ethnic and political histories, national identity, and the society at large along the army's new "purist" Buddhist vision.[30]

In 1978, Ne Win launched a centrally organized, violent operation against Rohingyas of both Southern and Northern Rakhine, under the pretext of surprise immigration checks. Known as Operation King Dragon, the events of 1978 are carved into the consciousness and the inter-generational memories of Rohingya communities. It was conducted as an interagency campaign of terror involving Immigration, Religious Affairs, Police, Courts, Army, Navy, and police intelligence, as well as local administrations made up of anti-Rohingya Rakhine.[32] Myanmar's former chief of military intelligence until 2004, Ex-General Khin Nyunt, who was operationally involved on the ground as a young major from Special Operations Bureau, Ministry of Defense, serving as the Commander of Infantry Regiment No. 20 based in Rakhine, wrote that a total of 277,938 fled, between February 12 and June 3, from Western Burma into the neighboring Bangladesh.[33] Shut off from the outside world by an isolationist military regime, the Burmese public – the Burmese co-author included – was misinformed of this operation as an act of national defense, under the slogan "the (Buddhist) race could be swallowed up by other (alien) race"[34] – an understanding that still resounds today. This was the first of the chronic waves of state-sponsored and state-condoned violence against Rohingyas which have resulted each time in hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas fleeing "unbearable life on land."

Following Ne Win's coup in 1962, the nation's vision fundamentally changed ...

Following Ne Win's coup in 1962, the nation's vision fundamentally changed – from one that sought to establish peace through a unified multiethnic nation based on equality, to one which harnessed and mobilized the Buddhist public's anti-colonial sentiments, and along with this their anti-Indian (subcontinent) and anti-Muslim racisms, which emerged out of the colonial-era

political economy in which locals were subordinated to Indians.[31] It was a vision which sought to 'cleanse' the nation through systematic attempts to subjugate some ethnic minorities whilst removing others (such as Rohingyas) from the national fold.

The now internationally infamous 1982 Citizenship Act was one part of a long process of stripping the Rohingya of their citizenship and the rights of future generations of Rohingya to obtain Myanmar citizenship. It was accompanied by eviction, land confiscation, and disenfranchisement of the Rohingya. Although this controversial law does not mention Rohingyas by name, viewed within the historical context of large scale forced repatriations from Bangladesh, and based on accounts of those involved in drafting the Act, it can be concluded that the primary aim in drafting the Act was to exclude Rohingyas from citizenship.[35] The law – and its application regarding 135 fixed ethnic nationalities excluding Rohingya, on the basis of their absence in the dubious colonial censuses, who in fact existed in Myanmar prior to the first British Annexation of Western Burma in 1826 – has not simply left Rohingya vulnerable to multiple discriminatory policies aimed at non-nationals, it has also fed popular anti-colonial racisms in society that have led to pervasive social ostracism of Rohingya and violence in which Rakhine Buddhists and state security forces have worked hand in glove.

Decades of facts relating to the instrumental role of the central Myanmar State in the abuses of Rohingya are buried alongside very real human corpses.

Despite annual U.N. human rights monitoring in Myanmar since 1992^[36] and the UNHCR having a presence on the ground in northern Rakhine State since the early 1990s, violent persecution of the Rohingya has continued unabated and indeed increased. This persecution was largely perceived as a part of the authoritarian regime's general pattern of rights violations, for the Myanmar

military was notoriously repressive towards ethnically Burmese opposition movement under Aung San Suu Kyi's leadership across the country, as well as other non-Bama ethnic groups in the country's North and North East regions.

Myanmar's rights abuses in Rohingya regions of Western Myanmar weren't seen as something that demanded special attention. Today, while the anti-historical and institutionally amnesiac discourses such as 'humanitarian concern,' 'communal conflict,' 'security and terrorism,' 'lack of development,' and 'livelihood creation' float through the ether world of foreign embassies, development, and U.N. agencies, the decades of facts relating to the instrumental role of the central Myanmar State in the abuses of Rohingya are buried alongside very real human corpses – again – waiting to be verified and validated by the right kind of foreign experts and the right kind of U.N. process. People and processes that never come. As Rohingyas in Northern Rakhine wait and their diasporic relatives post desperate calls for U.N. peacekeepers and intervention on Facebook, 'Never again!' – the foundational myth of the United Nations – must sound bitterly hollow.

Fifty-five years ago, the Myanmar Ministry of Defense and its military leaders officially embraced Rohingya as an ethnic minority, granted them equal rights, and full citizenship while enabling them to make contributions to the country's politics, society, and economy. Today, the military's radical reversal of Rohingya policy created the space in society where Rohingyas are commonly seen as "leaches," their identity and history "a hoax," and their presence a demographic and jihadist threat to the Buddhist nation. Meanwhile, over the same period, under the same national visions, other ethnic communities along the country's strategic, resource-rich borderlands including Kachins, Shan, Karenni, etc., were offered promises, pledges, and agreements by generations of military and civilian leaders, only to have them renege when powerful stakeholders changed their strategic calculations. Under the military regime, those that refused to be co-opted into the military's national vision complete with its Burmese dominance, were and still are subject to persecution, oppression, and war. They are victims of the same ideologies that cleanse the nation of Rohingyas and all those that oppose or live in contradiction to the state's centralized control and organization of Burma's ethnic minorities.

With NLD elected to government and with Aung San Suu Kyi as de facto leader, one would hope for at least a dilution of the military leadership's post-1962 purist ideologies, or at best for a radical re-imagining of the Burmese national community incorporating her late father's (Aung San) vision of post-colonial Burma as a secular, progressive, multi-culturalist, multiethnic nation. Tragically, it is not only the armed forces that have implemented internal cleansing of their institutions. NLD is now also without a single Muslim representative from the population. Every time the government calls rape 'fake' on the military's behalf or refuses to cooperate with U.N. bodies' attempts to unearth and validate atrocities, Aung San's multiethnic vision of Burma is trampled further into the ground.

Endnotes:

^[1] Amartya Sen, the foremost scholar on famines, explains why Burma's intentional measures to deny, severely limit, or block Rohingyas' access to livelihoods, nutritional opportunities, and essential medical services is an act of "institutionalized killing," a slow genocide, not like Khmer Rouge's genocide, Rwanda or the Holocaust. Conference on the Plight of the Rohingya, Harvard University, November 4, 2014, accessed April 5, 2017, <http://tribunalonmyanmar.org/2014/11/15/the-slow-genocide-of-the-rohingya-by-nobel-laureate-amartya-sen/>.

^[2] Ibid.

- [3] International State Crime Initiative (ISCI), Queen Mary University of London, “Genocide of Rohingya in Myanmar may be entering a new and deadly phase, October 17, 2016, April 3, 2017, <http://www.qmul.ac.uk/media/news/items/hss/187983.html>.
- [4] Myanmar State Counsellor Information Committee, “Information Committee Refutes Rumours of Rape,” December 26, 2016, accessed April 3, 2017, <http://www.statecounsellor.gov.mm/en/node/551>. See also “Aung San Suu Kyi is making war time rape easier to commit,” MSN.com, December 26, 2016, accessed April 3, 2017, <http://www.msn.com/en-sg/news/other/aung-san-suu-kyi-is-making-wartime-rape-easier-to-commit/ar-BBxzR6>.
- [5] “Aung San Suu Kyi laughs out loud at Rohingya genocide allegations while in Singapore,” *The Independent*, January 5, 2017, April 3, 2017, <http://www.theindependent.sg/aung-san-suu-kyi-laughs-out-loud-at-rohingya-genocide-allegations-while-in-singapore/>; and Jonah Fisher, “Myanmar’s Rohingya: Truth, lies and Aung San Suu Kyi,” BBC, accessed April 3, 2017, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-38756601> Accessed 3 April 2017.
- [6] “Rohingya flee into Bangladesh as Crisis Deepen,” Getty Images, January 18, 2017, accessed April 3, 2017, http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/album/rohingya-flee-into-bangladesh-as-crisis-deepens-around-70000-rohingya-muslims--fvZ0izTy4ESlzTtE_Kts0Q#people-are-seen-in-kutapalong-unregistered-camp-on-january-18-2017-in-picture-id631975540.
- [7] “Devastating cruelty against Rohingya children, women and men detailed in UN human rights report,” Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), February 3, 2017, accessed April 3, 2017, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21142&L...> <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21142&LangID=E#sthash.ktblvCd.dpuf> Accessed 3 April 2017. See the full report at <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/MM/FlashReport3Feb2017.pdf> Accessed 3 April 2017.
- [8] “Exclusive: More than 1,000 feared killed in Myanmar army crackdown on Rohingya - U.N. officials,” *Reuters*, February 8, 2017, accessed April 3, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-myanmar-rohingya-idUSKBN15N1TJ>.
- [9] U.N. OHCHR, “Statement by Ms. Yanghee LEE, Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar at the 34th session of the Human Rights Council,” March 2017, accessed April 3, 2017, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21355&LangID=E#sthash.au9jPIEw.dpuf>.
- [10] “Rohingya issue: UN to send fact-finding mission to Myanmar,” *ANI News*, March 24, 2017, accessed April 3, 2017, <http://www.aninews.in/newsdetail-MzY/MzA1NzIz/rohingya-issue-un-to-send-fact-finding-mission-to-myanmar.html> Accessed 3 April 2017.
- [11] “Myanmar Military Chief Defends Crackdown Against Rohingya in Rakhine State,” *Radio Free Asia*, March 27, 2017, accessed April 3, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/myanmar-military-chief-defends-crackdown-against-rohingya-in-rakhine-state-03272017154143.html>.
- [12] “Myanmar rejects UN call for rights probe,” *Bangkok Post*, March 25, 2017, accessed April 3, 2017, <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/general/1221134/myanmar-rebuffs-un-rights-probe>.
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- [14] See Penny Green, Thomas MacManus & Alicia de la Cour Venning, “Countdown to Annihilation: Genocide in Myanmar,” International State Crime Initiative Report, Queen Mary University of London, 2015, accessed April 3, 2017, <http://statecrime.org/state-crime-research/isci-report-countdown-to-annihilation-genocide-in-myanmar/>; and “Is Genocide Occurring in Myanmar’s Rakhine State?: A Legal Analysis,” Allard K. Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic, Yale Law School, October 2015, accessed April 3, 2017, http://www.fortifyrights.org/downloads/Yale_Persecution_of_the_Rohingya_October_2015.pdf.
- [15] See, for instance, Jim Della-Giacoma, “A Dangerous Resurgence of Communal Violence in Myanmar,” International Crisis Group, March 28, 2013, accessed April 3, 2017, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/myanmar/dangerous->

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[16] “Myanmar: A New Muslim Insurgency in Rakhine State,” International Crisis Group Report No. 283/Asia, December 15, 2016, accessed April 3, 2017, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/myanmar/283-myanmar-new-muslim-insurgency-rakhine-state>; Tim Johnston and Anagha Neelakantan, “The World’s Newest Muslim Insurgency Is Being Waged in Burma,” TIME, December 13, 2016, accessed April 3, 2017, <http://time.com/4601203/burma-myanmar-muslim-insurgency-rohingya/>.

[17] Human Rights Watch, “Burma: End Ethnic Cleansing of Rohingya Muslims,” April 22, 2013, accessed April 3, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/04/22/burma-end-ethnic-cleansing-rohingya-muslims>. See also Jocelyne Sambira, “Myanmar minorities suffer ‘systemic’ discrimination, abuse: UN,” United Nations Radio, June 20, 2016, accessed April 3, 2017, http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/english/2016/06/myanmar-minorities-suffer-systemic-discrimination-abuse-un/#.WOKL1_nyu5s.

[18] See “The Slow-Burning Genocide.” See also Widney Brown, “Where there is police There is persecution, Physicians for Human Rights,” Physicians for Human Rights, October 2016, accessed April 3, 2017, <http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/library/reports/myanmar-rakhine-state.html?referrer=https://uk.search.yahoo.com/>.

[19] In addition to the state-controlled mass media and official speeches by the generals and ex-generals, Myanmar Military Intelligence Services spread deliberately false historical information through teachers’ refresher courses at the Civil Servant Training School at Hpaung Gyi, which thousands of Burmese state school teachers are required to attend, according to Daw Khin Hla, former Rohingya Middle School Teacher, from Myanmar, who spoke at the conference on Rohingya Persecution, November 4, 2014, accessed April 3, 2017, http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic662843.files/HGEI-Burma_Semin...

[20] “Finally, peace has prevailed in Mayu Borderlands District,” Editorial, Special Issue on Mayu, Current Affairs (or Khit Yay), Ministry of Defense, the Union of Burma, 12, 6 (July 18, 1961): 5. (Burmese Language publication).

[21] Tape-recorded Interview in Virginia, U.S. (July 1994) with retired Colonel Chit Myaing, former member of General Ne Win’s Revolutionary Council (1962). As the Deputy Commander of the Burma Rifle Brigade 5, Chit Myaing led the government’s military campaign against the armed Rakhine rebellion in January 1948.

[22] The full text of the official Burmese language transcript of the speech delivered by Brigadier General Aung Gyi, Vice Chief of Staff (Army), at the Surrender Ceremony of Mujahideen Rohingya troops, Maung Daw Town, Northern Rakhine State, 4 July 1961. See “Special Issue on Mayu”, Current Affairs (or Khit Yay), Ministry of Defense, the Union of Burma, 12, 6 (July 18, 1961): 8-10 & 23-24. (Hereafter Brigadier General Aung Gyi’s speech).

[23] For the detailed records of this triangular politics amongst Rakhine-Burmese-Rohingya see the book-length Burmese language publication, Kyaw Win, Mya Han and Thein Hlaing, “Myanmar Naing Ngan Yay” (Burma’s Politics), Volume 3 (years 1958-1962), (Rangoon: Universities Press, 1991), in particular Chapter 12, pp. 167-250. (Hereafter “Burma’s Politics,” 1991).

[24] The full text of the official Burmese language transcript of the speech by Colonel Saw Myint, Chief of the Border Areas Administration and Commander of the Territorial Forces, “Special Issue on Mayu,” Current Affairs (or Khit Yay), Ministry of Defense, the Union of Burma, 12, 6 (July 18, 1961): 15.

[25] Brigadier General Aung Gyi’s Speech, 1961.

[26] Transcript of the Current Affairs magazine discussions with Prime Minister’s Private Secretary-2 U Khin Nyunt, “Special Issue on Mayu,” Current Affairs (or Khit Yay), Ministry of Defense, the Union of Burma, 12, 6 (July 18, 1961): 16-20.

[27] “Burma’s Politics” (1991), 230.

[28] Interview with retired Colonel Chit Myaing, 1994, op cit.

[29] Within Myanmar Armed Forces – and in the society at large – it is widely known that non-Buddhist military officers no longer get promoted beyond the ranks of Major.

[30] Wa Lone, “Snr Gen Min Aung Hlaing pledges to help safeguard Buddhism,” *Myanmar Times*, June 24, 2016, accessed April 3, 2017, <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/national-news/21035-snr-gen-min-aung-hlaing-pledges-to-help-safeguard-buddhism.html>.

[31] Maung Zarni, “Buddhist Nationalism in Burma

Institutionalized racism against the Rohingya Muslims led Burma to genocide”, Feature, *Tricycle*, Spring 2013, <https://tricycle.org/magazine/buddhist-nationalism-burma/> Accessed 3 April 2017.

[32] Personal Testimony delivered by U Ba Sein, a former Rohingya civil servant – now a refugee in London, UK - who lived through this King Dragon Operation in N. Rakhine, Permanent People’s Tribunal on Myanmar, Queen Mary University of London. March 6-7, 2017, accessed April 3, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9Q11ZhC8qI> (Ba Sein’s testimony begins at 7:55 minutes).

[33] Ex-General Khin Nyunt, *Naing Ngan Ei Ah Nauk Hpet Ta Gar Pauk Ka Pya Tha Na* (or The Crisis from the Western Gate of Burma), (Rangoon: Pan Myo Ta Yar Press, 2016), particularly Chapter 3, pp. 21-43.

[34] Although race/ethnicity and faith are two different “things,” the majority Buddhist Burmese public collapse the two. The Burmese popular saying sums it up: “to be Burmese is to be Buddhist.”

[35] The Burmese co-author and a key drafter, the late Rakhine historian Dr Aye Kyaw, were friends and fellow exiles for years in the United States. A few years before the two bouts of violence against Rohingyas in 2012 Aye Kyaw gave a Burmese language interview to the influential Irrawaddy News Group wherein he explained in details the internal discussions among the Drafting Committee members, that focused on the best ways to de-nationalize Rohingya through the citizenship act. Irrawaddy has since removed Aye Kyaw’s Burmese language interview.

[36] See the mountains of Human Rights Situation Reports on Myanmar for the last 25 years beginning March 3, 1992, United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, accessed April 3, 2017, http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?m=89.

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