

**PRAMUN X, January 10–14, 2018**  
Gymnázium Jana Nerudy, Prague

# HUMANITARIAN AID

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Topic I:

Humanitarian crisis in Myanmar and Bangladesh

## **I. Background Information**

Rohingya are the Muslim minority ethnically from the Rakhine State in Myanmar which is currently escaping the country and seeking refuge in Bangladesh. The base of the conflict can be found back in 1948, when Myanmar declared independence on the United Kingdom. Shortly after, the Union Citizenship Act was passed. The main aim of this treaty was specifying which ethnical minority could gain citizenship, however, Rohingya were not included. Nevertheless, those who lived in Myanmar for at least two generations were allowed to apply for identity cards.<sup>1</sup>

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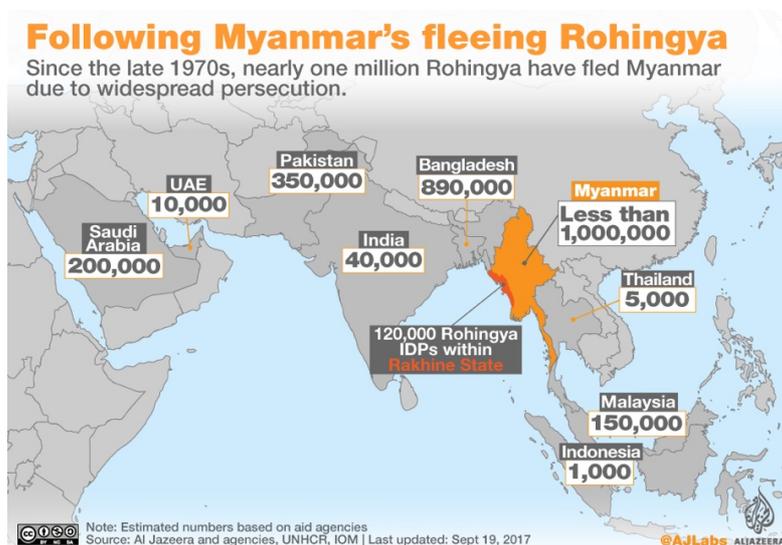
<sup>1</sup> Staff, A. (2017). Myanmar: Who are the Rohingya? [online] Aljazeera.com. Available at: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/08/rohingya-muslims-170831065142812.html#persecution> [Accessed 24 Nov. 2017].

After the military coup in 1962 Rohingya's situation got worse. All citizens needed to obtain national registration cards. However, as mentioned above, Rohingya were not allowed to have them and having only identity cards resulted into job and education limitations.<sup>2</sup>

Twenty years later, in 1982 a new citizenship law was passed. This law recognised three levels of citizenship and in order to obtain the most 'basic' level a proof of family living in Myanmar prior to 1948 and a fluency in one of the national languages were required. As a result, the restriction remained the way they were after 1962. Ever since then, several crackdowns on the Rohingya forced many of them to flee to Bangladesh, Malaysia, Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries. During those crackdowns, rape, torture and murder was often reported by refugees.<sup>3</sup>

In October 2016, when nine border police members were killed, troops started to attack villages in Rakhine State. Government officially blamed it on fighters from an armed Rohingya group. Following these events, security crackdown on villages happened again.<sup>4</sup>

By November 2016, United Nations officially accused the Myanmar's government of supporting an 'ethnic cleansing', nevertheless, it was not a first time for accusation like this to occur. Since last October, when the violence started, more than half a million of people reportedly fled Myanmar and started seeking asylum in neighbouring states. However, the UN is aware of the fact that several hundred of refugees were pushed back from Bangladesh by force.<sup>5</sup>



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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

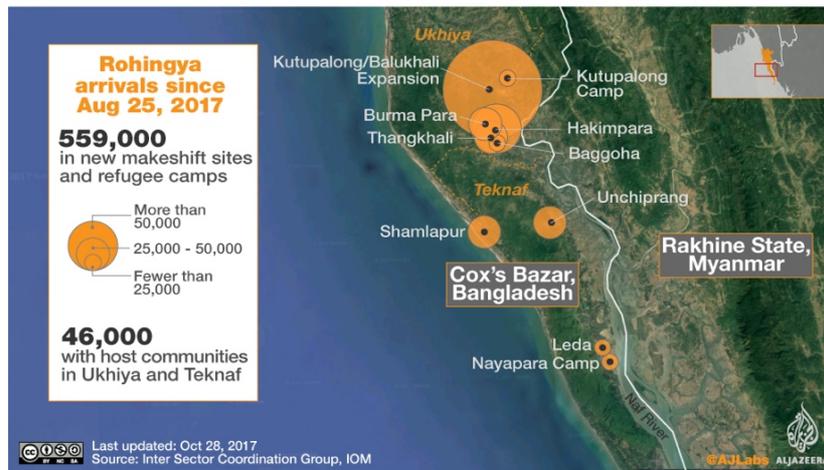
<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

## Refugee settlements in Cox's Bazar

Around **605,000** Rohingya have fled to Bangladesh since August 25, 2017, mostly residing in temporary makeshift settlements.



## II. UN Involvement

Secretary General of the United Nations, António Guterres stated at a Security Council meeting the following: *“The situation has spiralled into the world’s fastest developing refugee emergency and a humanitarian and human rights nightmare.”* He is further proclaiming the conflict unacceptable with a need to end it immediately. Moreover, he emphasises the importance of UN agencies and their non-governmental partners being granted immediate and safe access to all affected communities.<sup>6</sup>

The president of Security Council, Sebastiano Cardi, stressed the responsibility of government of Myanmar to protect its citizens. Security Council emphasises the importance of Myanmar’s transition to democracy, urging the government to work with Bangladesh and the United Nations in order to allow return of some of the refugees in safety.

The statement further concentrates on the importance of providing humanitarian aid for Rakhine State individuals and allowing the *“access for UN agencies as well as other domestic and*

<sup>6</sup> UN News Service Section. (2017). UN News - Rohingya refugee crisis a ‘human rights nightmare,’ UN chief tells Security Council. [online] Available at: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=57770#.Whsgb7RYDBK> [Accessed 24 Nov. 2017].

*international non-governmental organisations, to provide humanitarian assistance in Rakhine state, as well as to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel.”<sup>7</sup>*

The last two paragraphs of the statement show a following suggestion: *“The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide his good offices and to pursue his discussions with the Government of Myanmar, involving all relevant stakeholders, to offer assistance to the Government of Myanmar in this regard and encourages him to consider, as appropriate, appointing a Special Adviser on Myanmar.”* And *“The Security Council remains determined to continue to closely follow the situation in Myanmar and requests the Secretary-General to brief the Security Council on developments on the situation in Rakhine after 30 days from the adoption of this statement.”<sup>8</sup>*

### **III. Questions to Consider**

- Would your country support the rights of Rohingya as a minority?
- Is your country involved in any kind of oppression based on religion/ethnic group?
- Is your country willing to help in the affected area by any means?
- Does your country have any encounters with refugee crisis of similar size?

### **IV. Works Cited and Useful Links**

- <https://acfid.asn.au/content/myanmar-humanitarian-crisis>
- [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/10/12/theres-a-massive-humanitarian-crisis-in-bangladeshs-rohingya-refugee-camps/?utm\\_term=.c8d7a99a8c41](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/10/12/theres-a-massive-humanitarian-crisis-in-bangladeshs-rohingya-refugee-camps/?utm_term=.c8d7a99a8c41)
- <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/08/rohingya-muslims-170831065142812.html#persecution>
- <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2017/09/rohingya-crisis-explained-maps-170910140906580.html>
- <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=57770#.Whsgb7RYDBK>
- <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=57764#.WhsglrRYDBI>
- <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=58040#.Whsgu7RYDBI>
- <http://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sc13055.doc.htm>

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<sup>7</sup> UN.org. (2017). Security Council Presidential Statement Calls on Myanmar to End Excessive Military Force, Intercommunal Violence in Rakhine State | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases. [online] Available at: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sc13055.doc.htm> [Accessed 24 Nov. 2017].

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

- <http://edition.cnn.com/specials/asia/rohingya>

Topic II:

Humanitarian organizations and their role in smuggling people from Libya

## **I. Background Information**

Migrants from all across Africa are attempting to seek refuge in Europe, and their last stop on their trip is Libya. Coming from the east, they are trying to escape a life of military servitude and violent conflict. From the west, they evade governments that arbitrarily jail any citizen's they wish to. And from the south, migrants are fleeing the wars that have left several other countries in ruins. Libya is the last stopping point before the migrants have to cross the Mediterranean Sea. The 1,100-mile coastline is almost an open border with no government forces guarding the border. Libya has become so penetrable after their dictator was toppled and rivaling factions are attempting to take his place. Smuggling networks are a thriving market that profits off of trading humans as if they were any other export. Most of these migrants are arriving by choice but some are being forced to make this journey.

Since Qaddafi's death in 2011, attention has been drawn to the migration flood but mainly due to the fact that, estimated by the International Organization for Migration, 182,000 migrants have landed in Libya in the last year and 3,000 have died crossing the sea to reach Italy and surrounding islands. But Great Britain and other countries of Europe have begun to turn a blind eye to the growing problem after once promising help, while these same European countries are claiming that Libya is a threat to Europe.

Two indigenous Saharan tribes, the Tuareg and Tebu, have fought for control and legitimacy ever since the Libyan government collapsed in 2014. Migrants are often caught in the middle of the power struggle, with many facing arbitrary and indefinite detention. Military commanders in the south of the Tebu insist that they could help secure the fractured border. A smuggler stated, "Controlling this border is the way to stop illegal immigration towards Europe because if this point is closed, they cannot reach the sea. We know which day smugglers pass and where, so we could easily control it. We are from the desert and know this terrain and how to control it. If we had all the equipment we needed, we could start to secure the border within 48 hours."

A complex, criminal and tribal network is behind the smuggling empire and almost nothing is being done to stop it. Those who are unable to pay the smugglers for the rest of their voyage are held in detention centers or forced into slavery. The EU is encouraging the international

community to help make detention centers what they sound be, an area where migrants can have screenings done to determine what kind of migrant they are (a bona fide refugee or economic migrant, etc.).

## **II. UN Involvement**

With assistance from all relevant United Nations entities, offices and specialized agencies are able to provide humanitarian assistance while promoting political settlement and national reconciliation. Such assistance should include economic relief and rehabilitation, the repatriation of refugees and displaced persons, the re-establishment of national and regional institutions and civil administration in the entire country, as well as the re-establishment of police.

Non-Government Organizations have become a huge part in the aid to the migrants. They have helped in the Mediterranean to ensure safe transportation across the sea. But some countries are arguing that the NGO's are entering a grey area. If the NGO's are receiving people to transport from the smugglers, are they involved in the smuggling process? Libya's Coast Guard does not like the NGO's to enter into Libya's territorial waters so there is friction. But the issue of non-refoulement, which is the issue of returning a migrant to their country of origin is a large question, especially if that country is in a dangerous state.

The southern states of Europe, Spain, France, Malta, Greece, and Italy, have been asking for burden sharing, under the Dublin Agreement, which states when a migrant lands in an EU member state, the country they land in is responsible for the migrant (screening, determining status).

IOM (International Organization for Migration) in April launched a three-year Action Plan for Libya with two key objectives. The first is to provide evidence based humanitarian assistance and protection to both displaced Libyans and migrants. The second objective is to stabilize Libyan communities, as well as to build Libyan capacities in migration management. That appeal is for in excess of \$180 million, lasting for a total of 36 months.

## **III. Questions to Consider**

- What is my country's official position/stance when it comes to providing aid to Libya and other African countries?
- Does my country have affiliations to African countries? If yes, what are they?
- How do other countries positions affect your country's position on the residing issue?
- Which aspects of the issue are most important to your country?
- Is there evidence or statistics that help back your country's position?

- How does your country treat migrants?

## IV. Bloc Positions

*European Bloc:* The EU is encouraging the international community to help make detention centers what they sound be, an area where migrants can have screenings done to determine what kind of migrant they are. They have been asking for burden sharing, the country they land in is responsible for the migrant (screening, determining status).

*African Bloc:* Issues among specific countries are causing people to flee and head toward Europe, whether it be to avoid persecution, servitude, or a dangerous life. Most migrants in this situation are in fact not from Libya, they come from several other countries (<http://www.msnbc.com/specials/migrant-crisis/libya> is a very helpful map to look at the migrant's country of origin).

*Western / Northern Bloc:* The United States has been involved with Europe in trying to help this situation, EUNAVFOR MED's operation SOPHIA is a large effort that has joined several countries in attempting to help. ([https://eeas.europa.eu/csdp-missions-operations/eunavfor-med\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/csdp-missions-operations/eunavfor-med_en))

## V. Sources

Introduction to the Issue

- <http://www.msnbc.com/specials/migrant-crisis/libya>

About Libya

- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ly.html>
- <https://www.britannica.com/place/Libya>

The Smugglers

- <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/sahara-people-smuggling-989683200>

EUNAVFOR MED SOPHIA

- [https://eeas.europa.eu/csdp-missions-operations/eunavfor-med\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/csdp-missions-operations/eunavfor-med_en)

European Involvement

- <http://nationalpost.com/pmn/news-pmn/europeans-vow-more-help-to-stem-libya-italy-migrant-flow>

## Libya as a Gateway

Migrants from Africa and the Middle East surge through Libya, which serves as a portal to the Mediterranean and safe haven in Europe.



- <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/italy-migrant-crisis-europe-1.4294155>
- Italy: <https://www.thelocal.it/20170913/exclusive-libyan-smuggler-says-human-trafficking-will-continue-despite-italian-deal>
- Italy & France: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/08/italy-france-playing-dangerous-game-libya-170815105230759.html>

### Inside the Smuggling

- <http://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-middle-east-32524737/inside-libya-s-people-smuggling-trade>
- <http://nationalpost.com/news/world/they-are-not-treated-like-humans-inside-libyas-thriving-migrant-trade>