

# THE ROHINGYA CRISIS: AN EXAMINATION OF ETHNIC PERSECUTION AND THE FAILURES OF INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

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*“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” – Martin Luther King Jr.*

## Abstract

*The Rohingya genocide exemplifies humanity's failure to prevent mass atrocities, rooted in ethnic tensions, religious discrimination, and political marginalization in Myanmar. This paper explores the historical disenfranchisement of the Rohingya and the escalation of violence culminating in the 2017 crisis. It analyzes the socio-political conditions that enabled systematic persecution, showing how nationalist ideologies and state-backed discrimination rendered the Rohingya vulnerable to dehumanization and brutality.*

*The study critiques international responses, particularly the inadequacies of the United Nations, and assesses how ASEAN's policy of non-interference has hindered effective action. By drawing parallels with other global crises, such as the Israel-Palestine conflict, it underscores the urgent need for a proactive and cohesive international stance against genocide. Through a synthesis of historical narratives, scholarly research, and legal analysis, the paper highlights the limitations of existing global frameworks in addressing crimes against humanity.*

*The research calls for accountability from both national and international actors, emphasizing humanitarian intervention and the promotion of human rights as critical to protecting vulnerable populations. It ultimately seeks to inform policymakers, scholars, and activists of the complexities of the Rohingya crisis while advocating for stronger international cooperation to prevent recurrence. By situating the Rohingya tragedy within broader patterns of ethnic conflict, the paper underscores the imperative of collective action to safeguard human dignity worldwide.*

**Keywords:** *Rohingya genocide, Myanmar, ethnic conflict, human rights, United Nations, ASEAN, humanitarian intervention, genocide prevention, international law, global justice.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of **genocide** emerged in response to the mass atrocities witnessed during the 20th century, particularly the Holocaust. The term itself was coined in 1944 by **Raphael Lemkin**, a Polish-Jewish lawyer, who sought to define and create legal recognition for the systematic destruction of entire groups of people. Lemkin, having fled the Nazi occupation of Poland, was deeply affected by both the mass murder of Armenians during the **Armenian Genocide** (1915-1917) and the ongoing extermination of Jews by the Nazis.

Lemkin derived the word “genocide” from the Greek word *genos* (meaning race or tribe) and the Latin *cide* (meaning killing). He introduced it in his book **“Axis Rule in Occupied Europe”** in 1944 to describe the Nazi policies of extermination that were deliberately aimed at eradicating entire ethnic, national, or religious groups. He argued that this new crime should be recognized as a crime under international law, separate from traditional war crimes, because it involved the intentional destruction of entire communities.<sup>[1][2]</sup>

The 20th century was marked by a series of genocides that claimed millions of lives, each driven by distinct social, political, and historical forces but sharing common themes of hatred, dehumanization, and the systematic annihilation of specific groups.

The concept of genocide, therefore, emerged from a combination of historical precedents of mass violence, Lemkin’s legal scholarship, and the pressing need to address the atrocities of World War II. Today, genocide remains a significant focus of international law and human rights, as the global community works to prevent the recurrence of such crimes and hold perpetrators accountable.

These genocides, among others, underscore a pattern of systematic violence driven by extreme ideologies, nationalist agendas, and ethnic or religious hatred. In each case, international actors either failed to intervene in time or were complicit in their negligence, highlighting the persistent challenge of effective global prevention and response to mass atrocities. As these examples demonstrate, genocides are not isolated incidents of spontaneous violence but rather deliberate, orchestrated actions that can be predicted and prevented if the global community remains vigilant. This historical understanding has motivated international organizations and campaigns, such as the International Campaign to End Genocide (ICEG), to push for better

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<sup>1</sup> <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/raphael-lemkin-and-the-genocide-convention>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide-convention.shtml>

mechanisms of early warning, accountability, and intervention to stop future atrocities before they spiral out of control.

#### A. Literature Review

- ***“Genocide in International Law: The Crimes of Crimes” by William A. Schabas (2000):*** Schabas' book is a foundational text on the legal concept of genocide and its evolution in international law. It discusses the 1948 Genocide Convention, which criminalized genocide, and provides an in-depth analysis of how the definition of genocide has been applied in various international courts.
- ***“The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar’s Hidden Genocide” by Azeem Ibrahim (2016):*** Ibrahim's work is one of the most comprehensive accounts of the historical roots of the Rohingya persecution. The book traces how colonial-era policies laid the foundation for the ethnic tensions between the Muslim Rohingya and Buddhist Rakhine population. Ibrahim explores how the British administration's reliance on Bengali Muslim labourers sowed the seeds of later conflicts, and how post-independence governments in Myanmar further entrenched these divisions.
- ***“Burma: A Nation at the Crossroads” by Benedict Rogers (2012):*** In this book, Rogers provides a broader analysis of Myanmar's socio-political landscape, including its long-standing ethnic conflicts. He discusses how the rise of Burmese nationalism, particularly under military rule, contributed to the marginalization of minority groups like the Rohingya.
- ***“Statelessness and the Rohingya People: From Citizenship Denial to Genocidal Persecution” by Mélanie Vianney-Liaud (2017):*** This article explores the legal of the Rohingya crisis, particularly focusing on the 1982 Myanmar Citizenship Law, which rendered the Rohingya stateless. Vianney-Liaud argues that this legal exclusion laid the groundwork for the subsequent genocidal actions taken by the Myanmar government.
- ***“Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency in International Law: Addressing Genocide” by Alison Dundes Renteln (2018):*** Renteln's work on international law explores how global mechanisms, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) and International Court of Justice (ICJ), have struggled to address the Rohingya crisis due to legal and jurisdictional limitations.
- ***“The Role of International Organizations in Preventing Genocide: Lessons from the Rohingya Crisis” by Human Rights Watch (2019):*** This report by Human Rights Watch analyses the role of international organizations such as the United Nations and

their limited ability to prevent or mitigate the Rohingya genocide. It critiques the lack of effective sanctions, the delayed response, and the inability to hold Myanmar accountable through international legal mechanisms.

## **B. Research Objectives**

Objectives of this research paper are as follows:

- To study about the advent of genocides in the world scenario.
- To study about how UN's initiatives for Genocide Prevention.
- To highlight the key human rights violation and explain the global inaction on it.
- To emphasize how ASEAN's Non-Interference Policy has affected the genocidal atrocities.

## **C. Research Methodology**

This research work employed analytical and descriptive methods to break the issue down into elements and constituents' sections and to classify the issue structure for its examination of Impact of ASEAN's non-interference policy on Rohingya's Genocide. This research paper's methodology is based on secondary data, which implies it is based on some publicly available information, also known as primary data. The numerous data that have been mentioned in the research report are as follows.

- Internet sources: The diverse information that is readily available and cost-free on the Internet gives users a wealth of information.
- Reports and articles: The foundation of a report is a factual and graphical account of an incident, such as an accident's cause. Personal views and broad facts serve as the foundation for article writing.

## **II. UNITED NATIONS INITIATIVES FOR GENOCIDE PREVENTION**

**The United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide**, commonly referred to as the **Genocide Convention** was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on **December 9, 1948**, in the aftermath of the Holocaust, and it entered into force on **January 12, 1951**. This landmark treaty was the **first international legal framework that specifically defined and criminalized genocide**. It defined genocide in the Article II as any of the five acts:

- Killing members of the group

- Causing them serious bodily or mental harm
- Imposing living conditions to destroy the group
- Preventing births
- Forcibly transferring children out of the group

Article I of the Genocide Convention formally acknowledges genocide, whether perpetrated in peacetime or during war, as a crime under international law <sup>[3]</sup>. The **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** has interpreted Article I as imposing a binding duty upon states not only to refrain from committing genocide but also to prevent its occurrence, an obligation that extends beyond national borders. In contrast, Article III delineates the specific acts that shall be subject to punishment under the Convention. These punishable offenses include:

- The act of genocide itself
- Conspiracy to commit genocide
- Direct and public incitement to commit genocide
- Attempt to commit genocide
- Complicity in the perpetration of genocide

This legal framework underscores the gravity of genocide as a universal crime, imposing both moral and legal imperatives on the international community to combat and prevent such atrocities across all temporal and territorial contexts <sup>[4]</sup>.

### **III. ROHINGYA GENOCIDE VS. NATIONAL SECURITY: A COMPLEX DILEMMA**

#### **A. Historical Background:**

The Rohingya, a Muslim ethnic minority, have lived in Myanmar's Rakhine State for generations, yet they have faced systemic discrimination and persecution for decades. The Burmese government has long considered the Rohingya to be illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, despite their historical presence in Myanmar. The Rohingya were effectively rendered stateless by the 1982 Citizenship Law, which excluded them from Myanmar's officially recognized ethnic groups, denying them citizenship and basic rights. Throughout the 20th century, ethnic and religious tensions between the predominantly Buddhist majority and the Muslim Rohingya minority deepened. The Myanmar government and military (Tatmadaw)

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<sup>3</sup> Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide art. I, Dec. 9, 1948, 78 U.N.T.S. 277.

<sup>4</sup> Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide art. III, Dec. 9, 1948, 78 U.N.T.S. 277.

continuously portrayed the Rohingya as outsiders, furthering social and political disenfranchisement. This state-sponsored marginalization fuelled inter-ethnic violence, economic exclusion, and forced displacement over the years.

The genocide began to escalate significantly in August 2017, when the **Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA)**, a Rohingya militant group, carried out attacks on several Myanmar police posts, killing around a dozen officers. ARSA claimed these attacks were in response to the oppression faced by the Rohingya community. The Myanmar military, along with nationalist politicians, seized upon these attacks to justify a massive and brutal crackdown on the entire Rohingya population. In response to the ARSA attacks, Myanmar's military launched a "**clearance operation**", which quickly turned into a campaign of widespread violence against Rohingya civilians. The military, supported by local Buddhist mobs, systematically carried out mass killings, rapes, and the destruction of entire Rohingya villages. Satellite images showed entire Rohingya settlements burned to the ground, and eyewitness accounts detailed horrific atrocities, including the murder of children and sexual violence against women. <sup>[5]</sup>

The United Nations and various human rights organizations reported that the violence had clear genocidal intent, as it was aimed not just at combatting ARSA militants but at eliminating the Rohingya population from Myanmar altogether. **The military's actions led to one of the largest refugee crises in recent history, with over 700,000 Rohingya fleeing to neighbouring Bangladesh to escape the violence on August 25, 2024. Many survivors live in overcrowded refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, where conditions remain dire. The atrocities are staggering, an estimated 18,000 Rohingya women and girls were raped and 36,000 were thrown into blazing fires.** <sup>[6]</sup>

## **B. International Reaction:**

The international community largely condemned Myanmar's actions, with the United Nations and Human Rights Watch labelling the atrocities as ethnic cleansing and potential genocide. In 2018, the UN Human Rights Council called for top military officials in Myanmar to be investigated and prosecuted for genocide. However, **Myanmar's leadership, including then-**

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<sup>5</sup> Myanmar: Who are the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army? (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-41160679>)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/rohingya-emergency.html>

**State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, defended the military's actions, framing them as necessary for national security and counter-terrorism.**<sup>[7]</sup>

Despite global pressure, Myanmar has not fully acknowledged its role in the atrocities, and justice for the Rohingya remains elusive. The ongoing persecution, displacement, and statelessness of the Rohingya people continue to define this crisis as a case of genocide, drawing attention to the failures of international intervention in preventing mass atrocities. In summary, the Rohingya genocide began as part of a long-standing ethnic conflict, but it was the 2017 military crackdown in response to ARSA attacks that escalated the situation into a full-scale campaign of violence aimed at eradicating the Rohingya from Myanmar.

#### **IV. SYSTEMATIC DEPRIVATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS FOR THE ROHINGYA COMMUNITY**

The Rohingya community has faced widespread and systematic violations of their human rights, particularly during the violent military crackdown in Myanmar. These violations have been condemned by international organizations as atrocities that amount to crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and genocide.

- ***Right to Life***

One of the most fundamental human rights, the right to life, has been repeatedly violated in the systematic killings of Rohingya civilians by the Myanmar military. Reports from Amnesty International and the United Nations detail mass executions, where entire villages were attacked, and men, women, and children were indiscriminately murdered. Survivors recount witnessing horrific acts of violence, including the killing of infants and children. These acts have targeted the Rohingya solely based on their ethnic identity.<sup>[8]</sup>

- ***Freedom from Torture and Inhumane Treatment***

Numerous reports, including those from Human Rights Watch, document cases of torture, sexual violence, and other forms of inhumane treatment inflicted on the Rohingya. Rape and other forms of sexual violence have been systematically used as a weapon of war, especially against Rohingya women and girls. Survivors describe brutal gang rapes by military forces,

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<sup>7</sup> The Guardian. "Aung San Suu Kyi Defends Myanmar's Actions at the Hague." [The Guardian Article] (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/dec/11/aung-san-suu-kyi-defends-myanmar-against-genocide-accusations>)

<sup>8</sup> See ICCPR art. 6(1), Dec. 16, 1966, 999 U.N.T.S. 171 ("Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law."); INDIA CONST. art. 21 ("No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.").

often accompanied by beatings and humiliation. These acts are a clear violation of the Convention Against Torture and other international human rights laws <sup>[9]</sup>.

- ***Right to Nationality and Identity***

The 1982 Myanmar Citizenship Law denies the Rohingya citizenship, rendering them stateless. This violation of their right to nationality and identity has had long-term consequences, leaving them without legal protection or access to fundamental rights. Statelessness makes the Rohingya vulnerable to exploitation, displacement, and further abuse, as they are not recognized as citizens by their own country <sup>[10]</sup>.

- ***Freedom of Movement***

The Rohingya in Rakhine State have been subjected to severe restrictions on their movement. They are often confined to their villages or to internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, unable to travel freely or seek better living conditions. These restrictions, enforced by the military and local authorities, limit their access to essential services like healthcare, education, and employment, exacerbating their poverty and vulnerability <sup>[11]</sup>.

- ***Right to Adequate Housing***

The military's destruction of Rohingya villages and homes, as documented by satellite images and eyewitness reports, is a violation of their right to adequate housing. Thousands of homes have been burned to the ground, forcing entire communities to flee. These deliberate attacks have left the Rohingya homeless and displaced, with many forced to seek refuge in overcrowded camps in neighbouring Bangladesh <sup>[12]</sup>.

- ***Right to Health and Education***

Due to their stateless status and movement restrictions, the Rohingya are often denied access to basic healthcare and education. The lack of access to hospitals and schools, exacerbated by the violence and displacement, has severely impacted their well-being and development.

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<sup>9</sup> See Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment art. 1, Dec. 10, 1984, 1465 U.N.T.S. 85; Geneva Convention (IV) Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War art. 3, Aug. 12, 1949, 75 U.N.T.S. 287 [hereinafter Geneva Convention IV].

<sup>10</sup> See G.A. Res. 217 (III) A, Universal Declaration of Human Rights art. 15 (Dec. 10, 1948) ("Everyone has the right to a nationality."); Myanmar Citizenship Law, Pyithu Hluttaw Law No. 4 of 1982.

<sup>11</sup> See ICCPR art. 12, Dec. 16, 1966, 999 U.N.T.S. 171 (recognizing the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose one's residence).

<sup>12</sup> See Int'l Covenant on Econ., Soc. & Cultural Rts. art. 11(1), Dec. 16, 1966, 993 U.N.T.S. 3 (recognizing the right to an adequate standard of living, including housing).

Rohingya children, especially those in refugee camps, face significant challenges in accessing formal education <sup>[13]</sup>.

- ***Freedom from Discrimination***

The Rohingya have been subjected to systemic discrimination based on their ethnicity and religion. As a Muslim minority in a predominantly Buddhist country, they have been targeted by nationalist rhetoric, dehumanizing them as “illegal immigrants” or “terrorists”. This entrenched discrimination, both by the state and by segments of society, has facilitated the widespread acceptance of violence and persecution against them <sup>[14]</sup>.

- ***Right to Seek Asylum***

Fleeing the violence, over 700,000 Rohingya have sought refuge in neighbouring Bangladesh, a right guaranteed under international law to those fleeing persecution. However, their status as refugees remains precarious, and they face numerous challenges in achieving legal recognition and protection. The conditions in refugee camps, such as those in Cox’s Bazar, often fall short of international standards, with inadequate shelter, sanitation, and access to basic services.

The lack of decisive action by the United Nations (UN) and the international community against the Rohingya genocide is a complex issue, influenced by a range of geopolitical, diplomatic, and economic factors. While there has been widespread condemnation and some symbolic actions, such as resolutions and reports, the reasons behind the failure to prevent or stop the atrocities are multifaceted <sup>[15]</sup>.

## **V. GLOBAL INACTION: WHY THE UN AND INTERNATIONAL POWERS REMAIN PASSIVE AMIDST THE ROHINGYA GENOCIDE**

- ***Geopolitical Interests and Strategic Alliances***

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<sup>13</sup> See id. arts. 12, 13 (guaranteeing the right to the highest attainable standard of health and the right to education).

<sup>14</sup> See ICCPR art. 26, Dec. 16, 1966, 999 U.N.T.S. 171 (recognizing equality before the law and protection against discrimination); INDIAN CONST. art. 14 (“The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws...”).

<sup>15</sup> See G.A. Res. 217 (III) A, Universal Declaration of Human Rights art. 14 (Dec. 10, 1948) (“Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.”); Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees art. 33(1), July 28, 1951, 189 U.N.T.S. 150 (non-refoulement principle).

Many countries have economic and strategic interests in maintaining a relationship with Myanmar, particularly due to its strategic location and resources. China and India, for instance, have significant economic investments in Myanmar and are hesitant to jeopardize their geopolitical interests by taking strong action. China, in particular, has shielded Myanmar from international pressure, using its veto power in the UN Security Council to block strong resolutions or sanctions. This support limits the UN's ability to respond effectively, as the Security Council is often paralyzed by the conflicting interests of its permanent members. <sup>[16]</sup>

- ***ASEAN's Policy of Non-Interference***

Myanmar is a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), an organization that adheres to a principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states. This policy has made it difficult for ASEAN nations to take a strong stand against Myanmar's government, even in the face of gross human rights violations. ASEAN's emphasis on consensus-building and diplomatic engagement has often been criticized for allowing impunity in situations like the Rohingya crisis. <sup>[17]</sup>

- ***Diplomatic Hesitation and Inaction***

Many nations, including Western powers like the United States and European Union members, have condemned the violence rhetorically but have been slow to impose significant sanctions or take military action. This hesitation is often due to concerns about destabilizing the region, worsening humanitarian conditions, or undermining Myanmar's fragile democratic transition, particularly given the complex relationship between the civilian government and the powerful military. Moreover, the political transition in Myanmar, including the role of Aung San Suu Kyi, has made some countries hesitant to fully alienate the civilian government, despite her complicity or silence on the issue. <sup>[18]</sup>

- ***Humanitarian Access and Complexity***

The scale and complexity of the crisis, particularly in Rakhine State, have made it difficult for the international community to intervene effectively. Myanmar's government has restricted

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<sup>16</sup> "Why Hasn't the World Stopped Myanmar's Rohingya Crisis?" Al Jazeera Analysis (<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/8/27/why-hasnt-the-world-stopped-myanmars-rohingya-crisis>)

<sup>17</sup> ASEAN and Myanmar: Non-Interference in the Face of Atrocities." HRW Analysis (<https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/06/20/asean-and-myanmar>)

<sup>18</sup> Al Jazeera. "Why Hasn't the World Stopped Myanmar's Rohingya Crisis?" Al Jazeera Analysis (<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/8/27/why-hasnt-the-world-stopped-myanmars-rohingya-crisis>)

humanitarian access, limiting the ability of international organizations to provide relief or gather reliable information. The refusal to allow independent investigators or the press into conflict zones has further obscured the scale of the atrocities and complicated global responses.

- ***Weak International Mechanisms for Accountability***

While there have been calls for accountability, including potential trials at the International Criminal Court (ICC) or the International Court of Justice (ICJ), these processes are slow and often symbolic. Myanmar is not a signatory to the Rome Statute, which established the ICC, limiting the court's jurisdiction over the crimes committed. Additionally, international legal mechanisms are often seen as reactive, addressing crimes after they occur, rather than being able to prevent atrocities in real time. <sup>[19]</sup>

- ***Global Fatigue and Focus on Other Crises***

The global community is often stretched thin, with attention and resources divided among multiple humanitarian crises. Conflicts in Syria, Yemen, and other parts of the world have dominated the international agenda, potentially leading to “crisis fatigue.” With so many competing demands for intervention, the Rohingya crisis has not always received the urgency it deserves, despite the scale of the atrocities. <sup>[20]</sup>

## **VI. ASEAN'S POLICY OF NON-INTERFERENCE: A CATALYST FOR INACTION IN THE ROHINGYA CRISIS**

ASEAN's non-interference policy, established in the **Bangkok Declaration of 1967**, is rooted in the principle of respect for state sovereignty, prohibiting intervention in the domestic affairs of member states. This policy has contributed to regional peace by preventing conflict between member nations, yet scholars argue it has also allowed state-led human rights abuses, including genocide, to occur unchecked. ASEAN's policy of non-interference, which discourages member states from intervening in each other's domestic affairs, has significantly worsened the Rohingya crisis by allowing Myanmar's government to commit atrocities with impunity. This principle, intended to preserve regional stability and sovereignty, has resulted in ASEAN's reluctance to take strong diplomatic or humanitarian action against Myanmar. For example, during the 2017 military crackdown that led to the displacement of nearly 700,000 Rohingya,

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<sup>19</sup> United Nations. “Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar.” UN Report (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/myanmar-ffm/index>)

<sup>20</sup> Human Rights Watch. “Global Response to Rohingya Crisis Fades as Attention Diverts.” HRW Analysis (<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/12/17/attention-fades-rohingya-crisis>)

ASEAN issued only mild statements that failed to condemn the violence outright, effectively enabling Myanmar to continue its persecution. Additionally, the lack of regional pressure has hindered humanitarian access, leaving the Rohingya without crucial aid. <sup>[21]</sup> This situation parallels the Gaza-Israel conflict, where a similar non-interference approach by some Arab states has led to inaction, despite long-standing support for the Palestinian cause. In both crises, regional powers have refrained from taking decisive action due to political alliances, economic interests, and concerns about their own stability. For instance, during the 2014 Gaza conflict, many Arab states remained silent, much like ASEAN during the Rohingya crisis, prioritizing geopolitical considerations over human rights. In both cases, the policy of non-interference has allowed systematic violence to persist, prolonging humanitarian crises and leaving vulnerable populations, such as the Rohingya and the people of Gaza, without sufficient regional or international intervention. <sup>[22]</sup>

## **VII. REFORMING ASEAN'S POLICY OF NON-INTERFERENCE TO PREVENT GENOCIDAL ATROCITIES**

To effectively prevent genocidal violence like that experienced by the Rohingya, ASEAN's policy of non-interference must be re-evaluated and strategically modified. Here are some potential reforms:

- **Conditional Non-Interference:** ASEAN could adopt a **conditional approach**, maintaining non-interference for regular internal matters but allowing intervention when human rights abuses or genocidal acts occur. This would enable the bloc to respond to extreme cases like the Rohingya crisis without compromising national sovereignty in normal circumstances.
- **Collective Responsibility Framework:** ASEAN should develop a **regional human rights mechanism** that prioritizes collective responsibility. This could include setting up a permanent committee or a rapid response task force to investigate and respond to allegations of genocide or crimes against humanity. Such a framework would emphasize that when one state fails to protect its population, other member states have a duty to step in.

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<sup>21</sup> "ASEAN: Don't Whitewash Myanmar's Atrocities Against Rohingya." Human Rights Watch, 2019. (<https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/06/21/asean-dont-whitewash-myanmars-atrocities-against-rohingya>)

<sup>22</sup> The New York Times. "Arab Leaders Silent, but Their People Are Not." The New York Times, July 24, 2014. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/25/world/middleeast/arab-leaders-silent-but-their-people-are-not.html>)

- **Strengthening Diplomatic Engagement:** Rather than direct intervention, ASEAN could focus on **stronger diplomatic pressure** and negotiations aimed at preventing violence. This would include using diplomatic channels to hold offending states accountable and encouraging compliance with international human rights laws.
- **Humanitarian Corridors and Support:** ASEAN could carve out an exception for **humanitarian intervention**, allowing member states to provide aid and support to victims of genocide and displacement without being seen as interfering in domestic matters. This could ensure the safe delivery of aid to vulnerable populations while avoiding direct political confrontation.
- **Enhanced Sanctions and Penalties:** ASEAN could institute **regional sanctions or penalties** for states that violate human rights or perpetrate genocide. This would signal a shift away from passive observation to active deterrence, creating real consequences for states engaged in such atrocities.
- **Incorporating Human Rights Protections in the ASEAN Charter:** ASEAN could **revise its charter** to include explicit commitments to human rights and the prevention of genocide, making it a core principle of regional cooperation. This would legally bind member states to intervene diplomatically or through peaceful means in cases of gross human rights violations.

### **VIII. CONCLUSION**

The Rohingya genocide is a stark reminder of the devastating consequences that arise when ethnic, religious, and political tensions are left unchecked. This study has examined the historical roots of the crisis, revealing how decades of marginalization and systemic persecution culminated in the horrific events of 2017. It is clear that Myanmar's nationalist policies, driven by exclusionary ideologies, have not only dehumanized the Rohingya community but also entrenched a cycle of violence that continues to this day. The crisis highlights the dangerous intersection of ethnic identity and state power, where a targeted minority can be subjected to extreme brutality in the absence of meaningful safeguards and intervention.

Internationally, the response has been alarmingly insufficient. The United Nations and other global actors have failed to act decisively, allowing the genocide to unfold despite the clear warning signs. ASEAN's policy of non-interference has further aggravated the situation, as regional cooperation that could have applied pressure on Myanmar was paralyzed by this

doctrine. The inability of the international community to prevent the atrocities or to hold perpetrators accountable underscores the urgent need for reform in global approaches to human rights crises and genocide prevention.

Drawing parallels to other global conflicts, such as the Israel-Palestine situation, it becomes evident that international inaction in the face of ethnic violence is not unique to the Rohingya crisis. Without a revaluation of principles like non-interference and the establishment of stronger mechanisms for intervention, such crises are bound to repeat themselves.

Moving forward, this research calls for a more proactive international framework that prioritizes the protection of vulnerable populations over political convenience. The Rohingya genocide serves as a powerful case study for the necessity of global solidarity, accountability, and an unwavering commitment to human rights. Only by learning from this tragedy can the world hope to prevent future genocides and safeguard the dignity and safety of all peoples.

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