THE ROHINGYA IN BURMA

“They destroyed our religion by killing our religious scholars; our education by killing our teachers; and our economy by killing our businessmen and traders. They destroyed every aspect of our lives.”

THE ROHINGYA ARE A MUSLIM MINORITY GROUP in the southeast Asian country of Burma (also known as Myanmar). Their government treats the Rohingya as outsiders and for decades has stripped them of citizenship as well as other basic rights and has subjected them to extreme violence.

The Museum has warned for many years about the risk of genocide and mass atrocities being perpetrated against the Rohingya. These warnings were largely ignored, leading to indescribable human suffering. **In December 2018, the Museum determined that genocide had been committed against the Rohingya.**

The Rohingya have also experienced widespread anti-Muslim hate speech and decades of restrictions that exclude them from the political and cultural life of the country. Rohingya have been denied the right to vote, to run as candidates, and to work in government positions. Local authorities have imposed restrictions on marriage and childbirth, prevented freedom of movement, blocked access to basic needs such as health care and higher education, and subjected Rohingya to forced labor.

The Rohingya have few laws within Burma to protect them and often have no practical way to seek justice, as they may be arrested and detained without cause.

Burma’s leaders have denied that mass atrocities have been committed against Rohingya victims, contradicting evidence collected by United Nations officials and numerous human rights organizations. There is currently a case before the International Court of Justice to determine whether Burma has violated its obligation to prevent and punish genocide as required by the UN Genocide Convention.
The Museum’s Simon-Skjodt Center is concerned about the potential for future atrocities against those Rohingya remaining in Burma and the plight of those displaced. More than one million Rohingya have fled from Burma to Bangladesh, where they now live in overcrowded camps with poor living conditions. We believe they will again face the threat of genocide if they return to Burma.

To advance justice and accountability for the Rohingya, the Burmese government must:
- Restore citizenship rights
- Lift movement restrictions
- Provide access to healthcare and educational opportunities
- Put an end to the culture of impunity by undertaking credible investigations and prosecutions against perpetrators

LEARN MORE AT ushmm.org/burma

A man looks through a gate of a mosque in an internment camp outside of Sittwe. Paula Bronstein Getty Images Reportage for the US Holocaust Memorial Museum

Previous page: In September 2017, the north-south highway between Cox’s Bazar and Tenaf had a steady flow of Rohingya refugees. Greg Constantine for the US Holocaust Memorial Museum

WHAT YOU DO MATTERS. We can all play a role in helping prevent genocide. Action takes many forms, and every action counts. You can:

Stay informed. Follow the news; visit our website to learn more about places at risk of genocide and other violence, ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/countries

Join the Museum community. Sign up to receive email updates and follow us on Twitter @CPG_USHMM and Facebook @CenterForThePreventionOfGenocide

Engage with your community. Spread the word about what you’ve learned with friends, family, and colleagues

Support education and relief efforts. Find out more about humanitarian organizations, what they are doing in response to mass atrocities, and how you can help

Contact the media. Tell television, radio, newspaper, and online journalists that you want better coverage of places at risk of genocide and other violence; visit their websites, tag them on social media, call them, and send emails that provide feedback on their coverage

Contact your elected representatives. Alert them to the need to provide humanitarian assistance, protect civilians, stop the violence, and promote solutions to crises