

Beat: News

‘Slow death’: ten years confined to camps for 130,000 Rohingya in Myanmar

Genocidal acts continue

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ARAC International Global Media Partners - New Briefing from Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK
23 May 2022

"Genocidal acts continue as military junta defies provisional measures ordered by International Court of Justice

June 2022 marks a decade since the State-orchestrated violence of 2012 that expelled tens of thousands of Rohingya from their homes in central Rakhine State, Myanmar. The violence against the Rohingya was planned and instigated by government officials and state security forces. It included indiscriminate extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, mass arbitrary arrests of Rohingya and torture at detention sites, the burning of homes, destruction of mosques and looting of shops.

The false narrative of ‘intercommunal violence’ constructed by the military authorities was then used as a pretext to introduce draconian restrictions on freedom of movement for the Rohingya across Rakhine State. Rohingya displaced by the violence in central Rakhine State were segregated and confined to camps, in violation of international law. The enduring impact of the violence of 2012-2013 is often overlooked in the wake of the mass killings and other atrocity crimes that took place in 2016-2017. In fact, the State-orchestrated violence in 2012-2013 laid the groundwork for the brutal ‘clearance operations’ that were to follow. The 2012-2013 violence and its aftermath are an integral part of the ongoing genocide taking place today against the Rohingya.

More than 130,000 members of the Rohingya group, over half of whom are children, continue to be confined indefinitely in camps under squalid conditions. They have been subjected to the deliberate deprivation of resources indispensable for survival – namely adequate food, water, shelter, sanitation and medical care - by the military authorities. They have endured a decade of such ‘slow death’ treatment and for a generation of Rohingya children it is the only life they have ever known.

More than two years have passed since the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered Myanmar to ‘take all measures within its power’ to prevent irreparable harm against the Rohingya in its provisional measures order. The purpose of the order is to protect the Rohingya, a group described by the Court as ‘extremely vulnerable’. Since the ICJ’s order, the military junta in Myanmar has progressively tightened restrictions on those confined to the camps rather than easing them. Restrictions on freedom of movement and access to healthcare also remain in place for Rohingya in northern Rakhine State. When Rohingya men, women and children have sought to flee the appalling conditions of life imposed on them by the military junta in Rakhine State, they have been arrested, detained and treated as criminals, further dehumanising them.

Acts of genocide, when committed with the intent to destroy a group in whole or in part, are not limited to mass killings. They include creating circumstances that would lead to a ‘slow death’. With this briefing, BROUK demonstrates that the genocidal act of deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction in whole or in part of the Rohingya group continues to be perpetrated by the military junta. As documented by BROUK, such conditions of life have in fact led to the preventable deaths of women and children in the past two years since the provisional measures were ordered.

At the same time, the world continues to bear witness to the gross human rights violations amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated by the military regime against the wider population of Myanmar. The junta is undoubtedly emboldened by the international community’s failure to hold it

accountable for its atrocity crimes.

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The junta's abject failure to comply with the ICJ's provisional measures and the lack of transparency around reporting on its compliance with the order call into question the effectiveness of the measures. Until the ICJ case reaches its conclusion, the State of Myanmar is obliged to report to the Court every six months, with the latest report due by 23 May 2022. The Court must act decisively and without further delay to strengthen the provisional measures order by compelling reporting to be made public. Public scrutiny of the junta's compliance with the order can in turn exert pressure on the UN Security Council to adopt a resolution on Myanmar rather than issuing yet another statement of 'deep concern'. " (ref: <https://www.brouk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/ICJ-Briefing-May-2022.pdf>)

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