

A close-up portrait of a Rohingya woman. She has a pink headscarf and her face and arms show significant skin lesions, likely leishmaniasis. She is looking directly at the camera with a somber expression. A yellow banner with the title is overlaid on the left side of the image.

ANSWERING THE ATROCITIES

TAKING ACTION ON BEHALF OF THE
ROHINGYA PEOPLE OF MYANMAR

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



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GET THE FACTS

60

percent of the Rohingya who
have taken refuge in Bangladesh
are children

650,000

People have fled their homes



IDEA 1

Make origami doves for the February 23rd demonstration in Bethesda, MD.

We're planning a visual demonstration during the Annual General Meeting to honor the Rohingya who have had to flee for their lives. We're asking YOU to produce origami doves that we will use in both our AGM action and for lobbying purposes.

At AGM, the idea is to create a stunning visual that will make people take note of what has been happening in Myanmar. We want the doves to offer a contrast with horrific nature of this military campaign of ethnic cleansing being undertaken by the military.

Origami Instructional Videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MHujwo6aCzU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-V8igey1k>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kg2e5VlpH5E>

Once completed, please send the doves to:

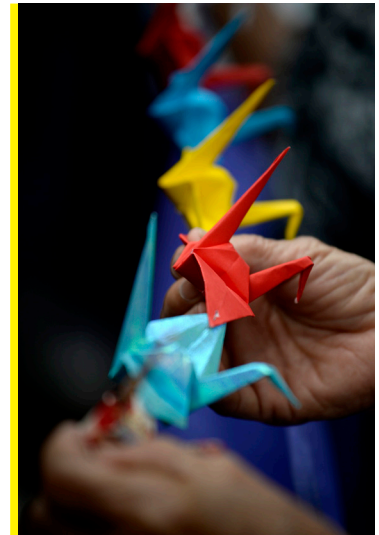
AIUSA Campaigns

Amnesty International USA

600 Pennsylvania Ave SE

Washington, DC 20003

If you have any issues, please feel free to contact us at crisisintern@aiusa.org. Also, if you can't make the doves happen by February 20, 2018, don't worry, just send them anyways and we'll use the doves in our lobbying efforts after AGM.



WHAT

Produce as many origami doves as you can and send them to AIUSA by February 20, 2018.

HOW

Follow instructional videos that should help get your group started.

OUR GOAL

Our goal is to make as many doves as possible— let us know how many you and your fellow activists pledge to contribute, email crisisintern@aiusa.org.



IDEA 2

Photo Exhibit/ Art Gallery Presentation on Images of Apartheid & Ethnic Cleansing

The backdrop for this brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing is decades of discrimination against Rohingya Muslims and other minority populations in Myanmar's Rakhine State. In the case of the Rohingya, Amnesty has said it legally constitutes apartheid. It's a pernicious trend of state-based discrimination that is gaining steam day by day-- in Myanmar and many other places.

We cannot let this keep happening on our watch. Previous generations have responded to ethnic cleansing and apartheid with demonstrations, by speaking out to their elected leaders, and by declaring in no uncertain terms that they will not stand by and let these campaigns of horror continue. We must do the same for the Rohingya.

One of Amnesty International's strengths is documentation and research. In that vein, Amnesty researchers have been on the ground, documenting the situation in Myanmar since late summer 2017. We urge you to share these images within your community and tell the story of the Rohingya.

Approach a local art gallery, photo exhibition space, or community center and see if they will host a photo exhibit that displays some of the images that our staff have captured while on the ground.

Some of the photos are graphic in nature but all of them have a story to tell. The more people know what is going on and can visualize it, the more likely they are to act in service of ending the atrocities that are happening. Please note, we strongly feel that photography should never

be sensationalized; it should be clear and balanced.

The quality of the images matters, as does the presentation. When using images of recognizable individuals, you should aim to show them as individuals with their own stories to tell, not as victims. If you are able to secure a location for this photo exhibition, contact us at crisisintern@aiusa.org and we will help you sort through finding appropriate images.

If you can't make a photo exhibit happen, set up a table at your local farmer's market, library or university, and use it to engage your community on the journey of the Rohingya. Use the handouts as the appendix in this toolkit. You could even invite 5 friends to watch the [virtual reality experience](#) of the Rohingya.

IDEA 3



Lobby Your Congressional Delegation on the Rohingya

Since August 25, 2017, more than 650,000 Rohingya have fled Myanmar's Rakhine State and entered neighboring Bangladesh. This exodus represents nearly one half of the entire Rohingya population, after successive waves of violence against Rohingya by the Myanmar military over many years.

Our experts have captured [high-resolution satellite imagery](#) of Rohingya villages burned to the ground and utterly destroyed. We have interviewed Rohingya refugees who describe how the Myanmar military has engaged in open shootings of children and wholesale burnings of Rohingya villages. We have also interviewed victims of [landmines](#) which we believe have been intentionally planted along the routes used by fleeing Rohingya.

The situation on the ground is dire and the need to act is immediate and imperative. The majority of Rohingya refugees are children, women, and elderly. While some in Congress have already been taking a lead, there is legislation that if passed could help bring about end to this crisis - and YOU can help make that happen.

Approach your Congressional delegation (both your Senators, and your House Member) and lobby on behalf of the Rohingya. We have a simple ask for all Members of Congress, which you can call, email or drop off at their office, and we'll provide you all the materials you need to be successful.

People interested in lobbying should email grassroots@aiusa.org to be connected with their state legislative coordinator and we will send you everything you need to make this happen including an updated issue brief to send to the legislator, sample call or meeting script, and a synopsis document that will tell you everything you need to know to appropriately respond to any questions a Congressional staffer or Member may have. Remember, this is whatever you feel comfortable doing, any action will help!

Be sure to let us know about all the good work you're doing! Track your lobby visit by filling out [this form](#).

IDEA 4

Get a local business leader to write an op-ed in favor of welcoming refugees, particularly the Rohingya, into the United States.

THE IDEA

We live in a society where money matters and can move issues. When business leaders speak out on an issue, politicians take note. The idea here is to get your local Chamber of Commerce or a prominent person within the business community to speak out on the issue of welcoming refugees to the United States, with a special focus on the Rohingya. The idea can be that they're proud to serve everyone in your area, including refugees – who are customers, neighbors, friends and co-workers.

WHAT: Approach a local business leader and ask them to write an op-ed or letter to the editor that supports welcoming refugees, particularly the Rohingya, into the U.S. in 2018. If you can't make that happen, write one yourself. Also, you can always check out [AIUSA's blog](#) for ideas.

HOW

- Letter to the Editor – Has there been a story published recently on the refugee crisis? Use it as the basis for a letter on the importance of addressing the Rohingya refugee crisis. Check the newspaper's submission guidelines for word limits. You can use relevant information, as well, such as current events, anniversaries, etc. as the "hook" for your letter to the editor (LTE). If possible, include Amnesty International in your letter and notify the regional and/or national office of your submission.
- Op-Ed – A good opinion editorial is timely, factual, and contains powerful language to convey a larger point. It should be 600-800 words. Focus on one idea, briefly express your opinion in the first paragraph, then use the following paragraphs to back up your viewpoint with facts and statistics. It also helps to identify the counter argument and refute with facts. When submitting, make sure to include a brief bio, along with your phone number and email address. Pitch one outlet at a time. Remember, most places won't run something that has appeared elsewhere.

WE'VE INCLUDED

included links below to a couple resources that can guide you through the process. As always, if you need further assistance, just write us an email at crisisintern@aiusa.org and we can set up a time to talk you through and to send you more resources. We have several media experts on staff who are available to help with this work.

- AIUSA's Tips for Writing Letters to the Editor: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/files/pdfs/howtowritelettertotheeditor.pdf>
- Shorenstein Center at Harvard's Kennedy School Advice on How to Write an Op-Ed: https://shorensteincenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/HO_NEW_HOW-TO-WRITE-AN-OPED-OR-COLUMN.pdf
- Tips from the New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/25/opinion/tips-for-aspiring-op-ed-writers.html>

IDEA 5

THE IDEA: All people, young and old, are empowered by information. The press is powerful and the more people know about what is going on with the Rohingya, the better. Apartheid in South Africa was halted as a result of widespread public pressure, and we're hoping the same logic will apply to the plight of the Rohingya.

Basically, we want to get the message out- we want people to know the details of what is happening and we need them to react and speak out. A key part of this is local press and local papers covering the story. They can write stories covering what's happening in Myanmar – and what local people like you are doing to campaign against it.

Resources

- The latest Amnesty International reports and press releases on the Rohingya: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/rohingya/>
- Backgrounder on Rohingya and the crisis: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/why-are-the-rohingya-fleeing-myanmar/>
- Urgent Action for Reuters Journalists in Myanmar: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent-actions/urgent-action-two-journalists-face-up-to-14-years-in-prison-myanmar-ua-4-18/>

Convince a local paper to report on the ethnic cleansing and apartheid in Myanmar

WHAT: Get a local paper to cover the story, citing Amnesty International's reporting including [Caged Without a Roof: Apartheid in Myanmar's Rakhine State](#).

HOW: Find a local journalist who is interested in these issues or covers human rights; or ask for a meeting with your local paper's editorial board. Suggest covering the story of the Rohingya and what you as an Amnesty activist/group are doing about it. As a member of Amnesty International, you are an advocate for social change. Use your voice, engage with journalists, create a rapport, and pitch them the story!

Contact reporters through email first and follow up by phone. When crafting your pitch, use the most engaging and crucial information to convey your story idea. Take note that many reporters are on deadline, and if they are interested in your story, may pursue it very quickly or not at all. If you don't hear back, don't get discouraged!

Also, letters to the editor can work in this context as well. Refer to the section above for details!

If you have any questions at all, you can always email us at crisisintern@aiusa.org

STAND WITH MYANMAR'S ROHINGYA PEOPLE

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Since late August 2017, the Myanmar military has waged a devastating campaign of ethnic cleansing and violence against the Rohingya minority. An unknown number have been killed in mass shootings, women and girls have been raped, at times in front of their families, and entire Rohingya villages have been burned to the ground. These crimes against humanity have been documented by Amnesty International.

In little over three months, over 650,000 Rohingya refugees – about the population of Washington, DC – have fled to neighboring countries like Bangladesh, and up to 2,000 arrive every day. They are stuck in a perilous limbo, however, as Bangladesh denies them refugee status and calls them Myanmar nationals, while Myanmar calls the Rohingya undocumented Bangladeshis.

WHO ARE THE ROHINGYA?

The Rohingya are a predominantly Muslim ethnic minority in the Rakhine State of Myanmar. For decades, they have been oppressed by state-sponsored, institutionalized discrimination and persecution.

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THE ROHINGYA REFUGEES?

These deeply traumatized refugees are subsisting in extremely difficult conditions, with no prospect of being able to return home safely and with dignity as long as the system of apartheid in Myanmar remains. Despite this, Bangladesh signed an agreement to repatriate 700,000 Rohingya refugees back to Myanmar. Bangladesh is also planning to relocate more than 100,000 Rohingya refugees to Thengar Char, an uninhabitable and remote island that emerged merely eleven years ago. This island is highly vulnerable to flooding during monsoon season, and is nearly inaccessible for humanitarian assistance.

The Rohingya deserve refugee protections during their displacement and the right to return to their homes in safety and dignity. Over the last few months, the world has watched the exodus of the Rohingya, but has been slow to act. The time for outrage and condemnation has passed. It is now time for action.

THE ROHINGYA CRISIS: 10 FACTS THAT WILL SHOCK YOU

- The humanitarian crisis in Myanmar has resulted in the [swiftest exodus from a country since the Rwanda genocide in 1994](#).
- The number of those fleeing – 650,000 – is akin to the entire population of the city of Washington DC having to leave their homes
- Sadly, children make up 60% of the Rohingya who have found asylum in Bangladesh since the scorched-earth campaign began on August 25, 2017
- The military has run a scorched-earth campaign: Myanmar security forces, police and vigilantes encircle a village and fire into the air before entering, they storm in and start firing in all directions, torch whole Rohingya villages, and shoot people attempting to flee
- For refugees trying to flee, it can be a dangerous journey as Myanmar officials have placed landmines close to highly trafficked areas along the Myanmar-Bangladesh border. Myanmar army is one of only a handful of state forces worldwide, including North Korea and Syria, to openly use antipersonnel landmines
- However, escaping to Bangladesh does not always mean safety: the camps are too small, overcrowding leads to a faster spread of disease. Myanmar has imposed severe restrictions on international aid groups which has led to starvation and accused the international humanitarian organizations of supporting armed Rohingya groups
- Amnesty has recorded multiple eyewitness accounts of extrajudicial killings, rape, and arbitrary arrest. Myanmar authorities have denied the role of its security forces in the burnings, and have, without credibility or proof, that the Rohingya are the ones setting fire to their own homes
- To boot, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi called the accusations “fake news” and cancelled her visit to UN General Assembly. Despite this, the United Nations’ top human rights official accused Myanmar of carrying out “a textbook example of ethnic cleansing”
- The Rohingya are denied citizenship in Myanmar, despite many Rohingya being in Myanmar for generations. Their ability to study, work, marry, and practice their religion has been curtailed. Their access to healthcare has been severely restricted. Amnesty International has said that it legally constitutes apartheid, a crime against humanity under international law
- Two Reuters journalists are facing up to fourteen years in prison for reporting on the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar’s Rakhine state. Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo were arrested in December, and held without access to lawyers, family members or the outside world for weeks



TALKING POINTS

BACKGROUND ON CRISIS

- Since late August the Myanmar military has pursued a systematic ethnic cleansing campaign against the Rohingya in northern Rakhine State.
 - Over 650,000 Rohingya refugees – about the size of the population of Washington, DC -- have fled to neighboring Bangladesh, fleeing mass shootings, rape, and burnings of villages. These crimes against humanity have been documented in a recent report by Amnesty International.
 - Bangladesh is denying the Rohingya refugee status, calling them undocumented Myanmar nationals; meanwhile Myanmar calls them undocumented Bangladeshis. They are stuck in a perilous limbo.
 - While this latest wave of mass atrocities began in late August, the oppression against the Rohingya community in Myanmar goes back decades.
 - Over the last few months the world has watched the exodus of the Rohingya, but has been slow to act. The time for outrage and condemnation has passed. It is now time for action.
 - The Rohingya deserve refugee protections during their displacement and the right to return to their homes in safety and dignity.
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ACTION NEEDED

- Humanitarian aid is desperately needed by those who have fled into Bangladesh as well as those who are displaced within Myanmar. Gen. Hlaing must order the military to stop the violence to allow this aid to come through.
- The Myanmar government must allow a UN fact-finding mission into the area to document the atrocities that have taken place and investigate who is responsible.
- Rohingya refugees are entitled to continue to seek asylum in Bangladesh and the Bangladeshi government should focus on exploring all options to ensure continued international protection for this community. Returns cannot be safe or dignified until there is a fundamental change in Myanmar, including accountability for crimes against humanity and an end to the apartheid system.

TALKING POINTS

U.S. OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

- At this pivotal moment our leaders have a choice: respond decisively to one of the most pressing humanitarian crises in the world today by standing with those fleeing persecution and violence; or turn their backs and be judged by history.
- Both the House and the Senate have introduced bipartisan legislation that will hold Myanmar to account by requiring cooperation with the U.N. fact-finding mission, granting access to humanitarian aid groups, and extending human rights - - including citizenship -- to the Rohingya.
- We welcomed the U.S. government's initial aid contribution in September. However, given the enormity of the crisis it is essential for the U.S. to step up support both for refugees in Bangladesh and the internally displaced in Myanmar.
- During his visit to the country next week, Secretary Tillerson has an opportunity to seize a global leadership role where the rest of the world has been meek in their response.
- Tillerson must send a powerful signal to General Hlaing and the military leadership that ethnic cleansing will not go unchecked.
- U.S. cuts in aid to agencies like the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) mean that there are less resources available for the 190,000 women and girls in camps that lack access to gender-based services. Many of these women were sexually assaulted in attacks on their villages.

GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

- The international community should impose a comprehensive arms embargo and targeted financial sanctions against General Hlaing and senior Myanmar military officials responsible for crimes against humanity.

ROLE OF AUNG SAN SUU KYI

- Aung San Suu Kyi can and should do much more. She has not only failed to exercise her moral and political responsibility to speak out, her administration is also spreading inflammatory and derogatory information against the Rohingya population and international humanitarian workers.
- She must provide unfettered access to northern Rakhine State for the U.N. fact-finding mission on Burma and humanitarian aid groups.
- At the same time, Aung San Suu Kyi is not in charge of the military. General Hlaing is the one that can put an immediate stop to the violence.