

Topic: Rohingya Refugees in Myanmar

Committee: UNHCR

Goals of the Committee

As the UNHCR, our goals are to work to solve the refugee crisis at hand. Solutions should regard the securing of basic necessities for the Rohingya refugees that are leaving Burma and entering into other countries, mostly Bangladesh. Many of these refugees are leaving the country with limited supplies if any at all. As the UNHCR, the committee will need to ensure that the basic needs of said refugees are provided for, including shelter and healthcare, while maintaining the protection of these people. Additionally, as the UNHCR, the committee has the power to advocate for laws and regulations that will help to ensure that those in need have the ability to be protected and receive said protections. What is at stake is not only the fate of the refugees, but the fate of generations to come.

Background

The Rohingya people have been described as “the world’s most persecuted minority.” They are a group of Muslims who live in the country of Myanmar, which is mainly Buddhist. Myanmar has refused to allow the Rohingya to achieve citizenship since 1982 and does not recognize them as an official ethnicity. Many of them live in the Rakhine State which has become a ghetto of epic proportions, with almost no infrastructure. In October of 2016, nine police officers were killed at the border of the Rakhine state and the group now known as the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army took responsibility for the attacks. Burmese military flooded the Rakhine State, causing mass migration of almost 87,000 Rohingya people out of Burma and into Bangladesh. Then in August of last year, eight police officers and an immigration officer were killed in an attack involving twenty police outposts and 150 insurgents. These attacks resulted in the current clearing operation underway by the Burmese military, burning and clearing Rohingya villages. Aung San Suu Kyi, who was formerly celebrated for her fight for democracy has been largely criticized for her inaction on the problem, even making a speech on human rights violations, but failing to mention her own country’s persecution of the Rohingya.

UN Involvement

On August 29th, 2017, the UNHCR urged Bangladesh to maintain open borders in order to ensure that refugees fleeing from the genocide in their country would be able to find safe harbor. Refugee camps in the region prepared themselves for a coming influx of refugees, but were completely overwhelmed as within half a month the number of incoming refugees had climbed to over 250,000 and basic supplies including clothing and shelter were quickly being used up. On September 12, the first of the emergency airlifts makes landfall in Dhaka, carrying over 90 metric tonnes of foreign aid and supplies, relieving some of the pressure. But seven days later,

the UNHCR declared the situation in Bangladesh a “major emergency” and began the rapid deployment of increased staff and scaled up vaccination and clean water initiatives in order to decrease concerns of disease outbreaks. In an address to the United Nations Security Council on September 28th, His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres declared the Rohingya refugee crisis the “the world’s fastest developing refugee emergency and a humanitarian and human rights nightmare.” The crisis continues to grow and expand in size as more Rohingya people flee the violence of their home.

Bloc Positions

- *USA*
- Since the United States of America is located further away from the conflict, it is unable to provide large portions of physical aid, but continues to support the refugee crisis financially
- *ASEAN*
- Nations around Myanmar have established a sort of non-interventionist policy, while still providing assistance to refugees escaping the country.
- *Bangladesh*
- Bangladesh is not completely against the integration of the Rohingya people into their country, but are cautious of doing due to the minimal infrastructure currently present

Questions to Consider

1. Does your country have the means to provide physical aid to the crisis and if not, what can it do or is it doing to contribute?
2. What can be done to prevent disease outbreaks and maintain water security for refugees?

Bibliography

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