Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh Need Assisstance–A Forgotten Genocide!









This Myanmar Buddhist monk, Ashin Wirathu, is the leader of the extremist 969 Movement and the Ma Ba Tha (Committee to Protect Race and Religion). Beginning in 2001, he and other monks gave fiery speeches, preaching hatred and prejudice against the Rohingya Muslims, an ethnic group which had, for generations, suffered discrimination in Rakhine State (a.k.a. Arakan). Their aim was to instill fear among the Buddhist majority that Buddhism was threatened by these "Bengali immigrants." In August 2017, this fear and hatred erupted. The Myanmar military and the Arakan State Army, a Buddhist armed force, launched a pogrom against the Rohingya, burning entire villages, killing thousands, and sexually assaulting the women. Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya fled to Bangladesh. Within a short time, the camp complex in Cox's Bazar swelled to more than one million refugees, creating the largest refugee camp in the world.

These atrocities led the Gambia and other nations to file a lawsuit in the International Court of Justice, accusing the Myanmar Government of genocide. The defense was led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate and once champion of democracy and human rights. In the Hague, in spite of well-documented evidence, she denied the charge of genocide and declared that it was the Buddhists who had suffered in the violence perpetrated by the Muslims.

Now, almost ten years later, the Rohingya are still subsisting under squalid conditions in overcrowded camps where diseases–tuberculosis, measles, dengue, malaria, and more–are rampant. For the first year or two, the media and some organizations visited the camps, revealing the appalling conditions and decrying the humanitarian crisis these refugees were facing. After 2018, however, the silence has been deafening. It seems that the world has forgotten the Rohingya. The UN and international NGOs continue to provide basic assistance, but, recently, funds have been severely cut. Medical care has been reduced, and the food allowance from the UN World Food Program has been decreased to $6 per person per month!

Refugee leaders are well organized and are able to procure much of what the refugees need–such as food, medicine, mosquito nets, and educational material for the schools,–cheaply, but they need the funds for these things. It is almost impossible for any of them to earn money.

Until the United Nations and the governments involved work out a solution, these refugees are completely dependent on relief aid. It is particularly incumbent on Buddhists around the world to step up and to assist the Rohingya, because this genocide is being carried out in the name of Buddhism, which puts us all to shame!



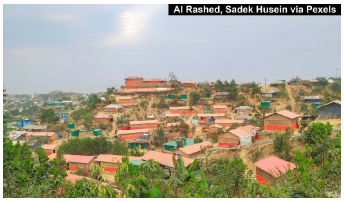














"As the world watches this humanitarian disaster unfold, what can we do to alleviate the suffering of the Rohingya, whom the UN calls one of the most persecuted minorities in the world? An estimated US$1 billion in aid is required. Refugees need food, medicine, and shelter against the monsoon in Bangladesh. Rains turn their camps into a morass of mud. Children need education, almost non-existent in the camps. We encourage each of you to take the Rohingya people into your hearts; to give and act in ways that let them know their cries are heard, that they will no longer be adrift in this sea of suffering, and that we will continue to respond."

–The late Alan Senauke, Clear View Project, USA, 2017













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