

Resolution Condemning the Genocide of the Rohingya People

Adopted by the 2019 JCPA Delegates Assembly

Since August 2017, the Burmese military has engaged in a brutal genocide against the Rohingya people of Burma (Myanmar). Soldiers have razed entire Rohingya villages; indiscriminately massacred thousands of Rohingya men, women, and children; and forced over 700,000 others to flee their homes and make the perilous journey to Bangladesh's refugee camps. Burmese government officials have shielded military officials from accountability by denying or downplaying these atrocities, and by accusing the Rohingya of burning their own homes. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has called the attacks "a textbook case of ethnic cleansing."

In 2017, a coalition of Jewish organizations came together to create the Jewish Rohingya Justice Network, a consortium of Jewish nonprofits advocating for the rights of the Rohingya people.¹ Despite calls for a swift response, the United States and the international community have done tragically little to bring an end to these atrocities. For the Jewish community, "never again" is not a slogan, but a firm, moral commitment not to remain inactive in the face of unspeakable atrocities. The Jewish community is a strong ally of the Rohingya people and must speak up in the face of these atrocities.

The Rohingya people, an ethnic minority group from the Rakhine State of Burma, have a unique language and culture, and while they live in a predominantly Buddhist country, the majority of Rohingya people are Muslim. Despite living in Burma for centuries, they are often reviled as outsiders, accused of being illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. In 1982, the Burmese government stripped Rohingya residents of their citizenship, and through subsequent waves of violence destroyed their communities and severely restricted their rights, including the right to work, travel, marry, and access health services.

Those fortunate enough to escape to Bangladesh lack food, proper shelter, and medical care in the camps, and children are prohibited from attending school. According to UNICEF, the refugee settlements of Kutapalong and Balukhal in Bangladesh, which now comprise the largest refugee camp in the world, are home to nearly 600,000 people alone. Many refugees are malnourished and in need of psychosocial support for their trauma, including the sixty percent of the refugee population who are women and girls

¹ Members include American Jewish World Service, Jewish Council for Public Affairs, American Jewish Committee, Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, Union for Reform Judaism, HIAS, Anti-Defamation League, Jewish World Watch, JACOB, T'ruah, Reconstructing Judaism, Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, Rabbinical Assembly. Allies: Hebrew College, The New York Board of Rabbis, Uri L'Tzedek, Foundation for Ethnic Understanding, The Shalom Center

and are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence. The camps currently offer only one hospital facility per 130,000 people.

As Jews living with the legacy of the Holocaust, we know all too well the peril and horror of global indifference, when people turn their backs on those persecuted for their race, religion, ethnicity, or other distinction that degrades the value of human life.²

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs believes that:

- There is compelling evidence that the Burmese military committed genocide against Rohingya people—the deliberate and intentional destruction of their community based on their ethnicity and religion.³
- It is incumbent upon the Jewish community raise awareness about and advocate against the slaughter, persecution, and displacement of the Rohingya people at the hands of the Burmese military.
- The Jewish community, for whom the words “Never Again” is a rallying cry against genocide and other atrocities, cannot remain silent.
- Congress and the Administration should condemn the genocide and mandate strong economic sanctions and humanitarian assistance, as crucial steps in stopping the violence.

The Jewish community relations field should:

- Urge the United States government and the international community to immediately:
 - Impose targeted sanctions on Burmese military officials and others involved in the ongoing atrocities;
 - Provide humanitarian aid to Rohingya refugees;

² JCPA 2005 Resolution on Stopping Genocide in Sudan; JCPA 2011 Resolution on Genocide and Other Mass Atrocities

³ The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has concluded that there is compelling evidence based on its own on-the-ground research, which resulted in a joint 2017 report with Fortify Rights, as well as recent State Department and United Nations reports. American Jewish World Service also believes that the atrocities constitute genocide.

- Explore international justice mechanisms, such as the International Criminal Court, to adjudicate the crimes committed by the Burmese military against civilians, including the Rohingya people; and
 - Urge all nations to cease arms sales to the Burmese military.
- Educate the community and raise awareness about the genocide of the Rohingya people to build support for United States action.
- Call on international bodies to ensure that any repatriation planning process include Rohingya decision-makers, and restore full citizenship to the Rohingya people with human rights and safety guarantees.
- Work within local communities to build interfaith, intercommunity coalitions to advocate for the rights of the Rohingya people.