

**Tufts Seminar 2020**  
Myanmar and the Rakhine State

**National League for Democracy**  
**Briefing Paper**

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## **Introduction**

### **Representative: Tessa Wayne**

Every day, we represent the golden fighting peacock waving on our party's proud flag. That fighting peacock represents the decades of fighting endured against the military dictatorship in our Myanmar. It represents the democratic struggle that we fight for every single day. The National League for Democracy (NLD), as the current serving government party of our proud country Myanmar, is a party fighting for a strong democratic foundation for future generations that will never put human rights at risk. We advocate for a multi-party democracy, human rights, rule of law, and national reconciliation. Governing a country that has had a conflict-filled past—including about fifty years of military rule—is something we do proudly. Our leader, Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi, became the first non-military president our nation has seen in 54 years when she was elected in 2015. We are doing everything we can to fight for democracy in Myanmar and are being accused of genocidal actions when we are just fulfilling our duty of protecting the citizens of Myanmar. The Rakhine Muslims who illegally immigrated to our nation are a threat to our people. The clearance operations our military is implementing are our response to their terrorist attacks and our way of protecting our sovereignty. How could Aung San Suu Kyi, a woman who has been called “a shining light for democracy” and “a global beacon of hope for human rights” be accused of such heinous crimes against human rights? The NLD will take action against anyone who violates any human rights but these Muslim people are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh who are a danger to our democratic nation. We are willing to help find a solution to this issue in any way we can without putting our own people at risk. We strive to establish unity among Myanmar's 135 ethnic groups but the illegal Muslim immigrants from Bangladesh that have settled in the Rakhine State are not citizens of our nation nor are they

one of our 135 ethnic groups. We are here to represent the citizens of Myanmar and protect them and their rights at all costs.

**Key Points:**

- The Muslims of the Rakhine State are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, not citizens of Myanmar. We cannot allow them to roam freely given that they have entered our country illegally, which is why they must remain in camps in Rakhine. We want them to remain safe as we respect them as humans and will do anything in our power to never violate human rights. We believe the safest option is for the Muslim refugees to return to Rakhine State where they will have access to education, health, and citizenship.
- The Rakhine state is one of the poorest regions in Myanmar, with more than 50% of the population below the poverty line. Every since Muslim violence erupted, foreign investors have disengaged their business from the region. This has halted our aims of development from continuing, even though we believe development of the region would bring greater wealth to all citizens of Myanmar. The conflicts that the Muslim immigrants are causing are disruptive to our citizens' wellbeing and need to be addressed accordingly.
- The International Criminal Court and other members of the international community have introduced several charges against us including the destruction of the Muslims residing in the Rakhine State. These accusations are extremely heinous and not supported by fact. The illegal immigrants from Bangladesh are violating our sovereignty. The attack they launched on our military base that killed 71 of our people is a prime example of the danger they bring to our nation. Many terrorist groups, such as the Arakan Rohingya

Salvation Army, also threaten the long term stability of Myanmar and create more casualties. The citizens of Myanmar are not the cause of this conflict, nor can we be found guilty of any violation of human rights.

- These false claims have caused serious damage to our economy as Western nations have instituted economic sanctions against Myanmar and the European Union (EU) has threatened to abolish our tariff-free access to the Common Market, devastating our textile industry and other businesses. In 2018 alone, we exported \$2.5 billion in goods to the EU and the notion of these human rights violations is causing our economy great distress. Without these charges, our citizens and economy would be given the opportunity to thrive.
- We, as the acting government in Myanmar, have already begun implementing a plan to inspire national reconciliation and peace. This peace process requires a dialogue between feuding parties and the formation of unity and stability among the ethnic groups of Myanmar. This peace cannot be attained with the interference of international organizations such as the International Court of Justice. Our Constitution promises tranquility and security of lives of all Myanmar citizens and the NLD's primary goal is to construct internal peace, and thus our priority is to resolve this issue within our nation and the international community is impeding on that goal.

**Background Information:**

The NLD party was formed after the 8888 Uprising in present day Myanmar in 1988 that was a series of protests fighting for democracy. In 1990, during Myanmar's first multi-party elections since 1960, the NLD won 59% of the vote. However, the military junta, called the State

Peace and Development Council (SPDC), which was a government made up of military leaders that led Myanmar did not let us form a government. After this took place, our leader, Aung San Suu Kyi was placed under house arrest for the next fifteen years. For years the NLD was banned from participating in any political activity by the government. Finally, after years of political and military pressure the NLD's hard earned work paid off as the 2015 elections were a tremendous success and made Aung San Suu Kyi the first non-military president in Myanmar since 1961.

The Rakhine State, previously known as Arakan, is a state of Myanmar on the west coast. 88% of the Myanmar population practices Theravada Buddhism, but a majority of the immigrants living in the Rakhine State are originally coming from Bangladesh, a primarily Muslim nation. During World War II when the Japanese invaded Burma in 1942, many Muslims fled to the modern-day Rakhine, fueling the already existing tensions that the Bengali Muslims were causing amongst the native Buddhist Rakhines. These new Muslims immigrated illegally to Myanmar during World War II.

Myanmar has not recognized these illegal immigrants as citizens due to their illegal entry into the country when Myanmar was under British rule and were not included in the ethnicities that qualify for citizenship in the Union Citizenship Act. We have recently implemented a new Child Rights Laws that “guarantees the right to register at birth for all children regardless of race, religion, and gender” so that any Muslim child born can now be raised as a citizen of Myanmar, but those who are already here are still here illegally. In June of 2012, the Muslims committed various atrocities against the citizens of Myanmar. On June 8th, five people were killed as three villages in southern Maungdaw Township were burned. By June 10th, a State of Emergency was issued because the situation had become dangerously widespread.

In 2017, these Muslims living in the Rakhine state launched an attack on a Myanmar military base, killing at least 71 of our own insurgents and security forces. This is a danger to our country, and these immigrants, who are not citizens of our nation, are infringing on our sovereignty and putting our people at risk. Though the NLD has a strained relationship with our military due to our history of military rule, and the severe treatment they showed towards Aung San Suu Kyi and her house arrest, we stick by the military when it comes to protecting our country. Nyan Win, a top official of the NLD says “We don’t love the military, but we are together on this one. Our sovereignty can’t be violated and that is why we are united.”

In 2019, Aung San Suu Kyi faced the International Court of Justice to defend our military against the shameful genocide accusations. Aung San Suu Kyi explained that the NLD and Myanmar are open to having Muslims who fled back to Bangladesh return to the Rakhine state. She told the court that Gambia, who brought this inaccurate information to the International Courts has “an incomplete and misleading factual picture.” They do not understand that our sovereignty is at risk and that because they are not legal citizens, the Muslims of the Rakhine State cannot travel beyond the Rakhine State thus we are keeping them as safe as possible and helping them retain human rights by allowing them to stay in our country.

## **Representation and Government**

### **Representatives: Tessa Wayne & Dakota Feldman**

#### **Representation:**

- Within Myanmar, the government consists of an executive branch, national legislative, head of state, and national government. Our executive branch is headed by Myanmar's first civilian president in more than five decades, finally allowing for more representation

of the people. The national legislature has two legislative chambers, the 440-seat Pyithu Hluttaw (People's Assembly, the lower house) and the 224-seat Amyotha Hluttaw (Nationalities Assembly, the upper house). In both houses, 25% of seats are reserved for the army, while the rest are directly elected. The head of state is our president who is chosen by an electoral college, which is comprised of three committees—two forms of members of the upper and lower house and one consisting of military appointees. Finally, the national government is a cabinet appointed by the president and is subject to approval by parliament.

- The main political parties in Myanmar are the NLD, USDP, Shan Nationalities League for Democracy and the Arakan National Party.
- When new positions arise in the government, Myanmar holds national elections.
- In the 2015 elections, the most recent elections in Myanmar, the National League for Democracy (NLD) won 254 seats in the 440-seat lower house, while the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) received 30.
- Out of the 440 seats available in the lower house, 110 seats (25%) are reserved for the military.
- Out of those available seats that remain, minority ethnic-based parties and independents hold them. However, the Muslims in the Rakhine state are not recognized by the Myanmar government as citizens and therefore receive no representation within the governing structures that persist in Myanmar.
- The model of representation of the Myanmar government tends toward majoritarian rule.

**Politics and Government Structures:**

- Indonesia and Myanmar participate in a tripartite regulator arrangement called the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. This arrangement brings together states, corporations and civil society/NGOs as formally equal partners to reduce corruption in the mining sector by enhancing transparency over the revenues and payments received by governments from mining companies awarded concessions.
- Although we have this arrangement, Myanmar doesn't interact heavily with non-state actors and governments, but rather receives aid and supplies from other countries, such as China.
- Before this crisis in the Rakhine state, our government consisted of one party and Myanmar was predominantly a military led-state where Buddhism was heavily emphasized and represented. Although it was questionable who was in office at the time, elections had still been occurring.
- During Myanmar's current crisis, the main actors within our state are the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), Aung San Suu Kyi, and the military.
- In 1989, SLORC declared martial law, arrested thousands of people—including advocates of democracy and human rights—renamed Burma to 'Myanmar' and renamed the capital Rangoon to Yangon. Additionally during this, our NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi, the daughter of Aung San, was put under house arrest.
- In August of 2009, opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi was convicted of breaching conditions of her house arrest; the initial sentence was three years' imprisonment, but got changed to 19 months' house arrest.



- Most recently in August of 2018, a UN report accused Myanmar's military leaders of carrying out genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity against the Muslims of the Rakhine state, calling for six generals to face trial at the International Criminal Court and accused Aung San Suu Kyi of failing to prevent the violence. However, Myanmar rejected the findings.
- Myanmar still needs to utilize a democracy and keep its current government structure, but is looking to give the military fewer seats to ensure that there is more of an opportunity for the minority groups to feel represented, ensuring that all voices are heard on panels.

**Religious Nationalism:**

- In Myanmar, religious nationalism has played a critical and pivotal role in our Rakhine state situation.
- Due to Myanmar being a predominantly Buddhist country, the Muslim Bengali immigrants are a minority.

**Ethnic Policies and Territories:**

- Bangladesh, one of Myanmar's bordering countries, is where the illegal immigrants originally came from.
- Myanmar wishes to pursue this issue within our nation, rather than have international third parties intervene. If larger powers, such as the United States for example, were to deploy troops or integrate personnel into our government, tensions would increase both internally and externally. We are not in need of humanitarian aid given that no human rights have been violated but economic aid is welcomed to help support the citizens of Myanmar.

- If the United States intervened, they would attempt to reshape Myanmar into a model they find respectable and desirable, not having much care for those living here. Instead, they would want to shape the government into one that reflects major components of their country, but would not be successful or welcomed within our preexisting Myanmar government.

## **Security**

**Representative: Kurt Fischer**

### **Threat of Muslim Immigrants to National Security:**

- We, the National League for Democracy, believe that the illegal Muslim immigrants who entered the country of Myanmar are a major threat to national security.
- It does not matter when these people entered the country, whether in the early 1400s or during British Colonial Rule of Burma from 1824-1948; these people are not considered citizens under the 1982 Citizenship Law, and thus cannot be treated as such (i.e. given the privileges of other citizens).
- Despite there being numerous other illegal immigrant groups existing in Myanmar, this particular people poses the greatest threat as shown by their countless acts of violence against our Buddhist majority.
- Important surrounding nations are in consensus that these people are dangerous from a national security standpoint due to their violent tendencies.

### **2012 Rakhine State Riots**

- Rakhine State is situated on the western coast of Myanmar, bordered by various regions such as Chin State, Magway Region, Bago Region, Ayeyarwady Region, Bay of Bengal, and the Chittagong Division of Bangladesh.

- As this region is clearly a hub of activity, and thus important to international affairs in general, we would like to place emphasis on the riots that took place in that location in 2012 as a key example of the violent tendencies of the illegal Muslim immigrants.
- We would like to note, however, that although these 2012 riots and the events involving these people in Myanmar that follow up until the present are noted in detail throughout this section because of the international attention these people have gotten in this short, recent period of time, they have been committing acts of violence throughout their presence in Myanmar: it is just not as documented as their recent acts of violence.
- Throughout June of 2012, the Muslims committed various atrocities against the rightful citizens of Myanmar. On June 8, three villages in southern Maungdaw Township were burned, the start of a broader siege across Maungdaw. Already by the end of that day, 5 people were killed.
- The Muslims claim that Buddhist Rakhines initiated attacks that prompted a response, but this is absolutely not the case. Even if the Rakhines did engage in some violence, it was both necessary and not to the extent of the acts committed by the Muslims.
- By June 9, the violence continued to spread despite an increased presence of Myanmar military forces. More and more houses were burned to the ground in various villages.
- On June 10, a State of Emergency was issued because the situation had become dangerously widespread.
- Throughout the rest of June, catalyzed by the State of Emergency, the violence was settled as many of the illegal immigrants situated in Rakhine were forced to relocate as the situation had gotten so out of hand.

- The UN backed our decisions, approving the resettlement programs and stating that it brought more security to the region. The UN also urged Bangladesh to open up its borders to these illegal immigrants, fleeing from “persecution” that only came as a result of their excessively violent actions (that word they use is far too strong of a term for our resettlement programs).
- Despite tensions seeming to have been settled, violence broke out again in October 2012, initiated by the Muslims, eventually spreading across the entire Rakhine State again, showing that even our efforts were not enough to suppress the violent tendencies of the illegal Muslim immigrants.

**Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army:**

- Since the 2012 Riots, a large source of the violence committed by the Muslims (so-called Rohingya) can be attributed to the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), founded under the name *Harakah al-Yaqin* (ironically translated as “Faith Movement”) and led by Ataullah abu Ammar Jununi.
- The ARSA’s goal is to free the illegal immigrants from the “oppression” of our government, claiming to be an ethno-nationalist insurgent group with no ties to Islamic religious beliefs.
- The ARSA, however, has caused great violence in the country of Myanmar since its founding, and especially in recent years. Some examples include:
  - 2016: The killing of four soldiers and nine border officers at the Bangladesh-Myanmar border

- 2017: The murder of about 40 civilians associated with the government; attacks on police posts as well as army bases
- 2018: A coordinated attack on the village of Turaing
- The ARSA claims that the “Rohingya” are “the most persecuted ethnic minority on earth,” yet we, the political party of the Myanmar government, are simply interested in promoting an environment of security that the illegal Muslim immigrants constantly disrupt.

**Close-By International Response to Muslim Violence:**

- China has used its veto power at the United Nations Security Council to support Myanmar, understanding that the treatment of the Muslim immigrants is justified.
- India, another key power in the region, has allied with us more closely at the military level recently and has expressed disapproval of the Muslim immigrants, constantly threatening and implementing deportation.
- Bangladesh, too, receiving an influx of these fleeing Muslim immigrants, is not eager to keep them there, fearing their violent nature like us.
- Since there is a consensus that the Muslim immigrants are indeed a threat to national security, we will attempt to continue to bring stability to the region through nonviolent means such as resettlement. One of our goals is to break up dangerous groups such as the ARSA, which unfortunately sometimes requires the use of violence.

**Development**

**Representative: Matthew Riedman**

**Important Economic Sectors:**

- The largest economic sector of Myanmar by total export value is petroleum, sitting at roughly \$3 billion USD in 2018. Most of our petroleum is exported to China and Thailand.
- Before we rose to power, the military government made some questionable decisions and now Myanmar lacks the broad capability to refine petroleum products within our borders, so our exports are largely unrefined.
- Other large economic sectors include textiles, vegetable products, and mined metals (mainly copper and iron alloys).
- Roughly 16% of people in Myanmar are employed in industry, which is well below the percentage of other countries in the region. For example, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Thailand all sit at above 25% employed in industry.
- One source of potential economic growth is newly discovered offshore drilling sites for oil. Currently, our offshore drilling capability is at just under 2 million cubic feet per day.

**Control of Petroleum Extraction:**

- Myanmar's petroleum extraction is conducted by the state-run Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE).
- MOGE was established in 1964 under military rule, although we plan to continue keeping it under government control. Overall, state-owned enterprises (SOEs) provide the government with half of our revenue, so privatizing could lead to a lack of funds which would result in a profound negative effect on our ability to govern, given we already spend significantly less per capita than our neighbors.

- Refineries and other petroleum processing plants are run by the Myanmar Petrochemical Enterprise (MPE), which is also state-run. Due to our limited refining ability, the MPE holds comparatively less importance than the MOGE.
- In support of our national interest and to protect from interference, we have strict protocols in place for any potential foreign investment and maintain tight control over our operations.

**Summary of Foreign Investment:**

- Because of our economic limitations, in order to successfully maximize our extraction rate, we will need outside funds for the foreseeable future to construct and operate oil pipelines.
- Past investors have included Chevron and Total S.A., which represent two of the seven largest oil companies in the world, as well as the Essar Group, CNOOC, Petronas and Sinopec.
- In order to operate in Myanmar, a prospective foreign investor must enter into a production sharing contract (PSC) with the MOGE. This contract will be reviewed by many government agencies before taking effect, and will describe the investor's rights and obligations.
- Typically, after a bidding round, blocks will be awarded to investors for future development and production, with each PSC lasting 20 years from the date the investor notifies the MOGE of commercial discovery.
- This investment model allows for an ideal blend of improving oil infrastructure while maximizing economic returns for our government and people.

**Impact of Alleged Human Rights Violations:**

- Due to allegations of human rights violations taking place in Rakhine State, Western nations have leveled economic sanctions against Myanmar, which we believe are misplaced.
- The European Union has threatened to revoke our tariff-free access to the Common Market, which would devastate our textile industry. In 2018, we exported \$2.5 billion in goods to the EU. Without access, our economy would likely suffer steep decline. Additionally, this would force us into stronger economic ties with China.
- Individual companies have been pressured over involvement in Myanmar, as well. Recent petroleum investments have been met with detractors making baseless accusations of human rights violations in a bid to stop business with Myanmar.
- Without the stigma generated by these false allegations, the possibility of economic improvement would be of great benefit to our impoverished populace. We feel it is in the best interest of the West to aid Myanmar and encourage our further economic development.

**Economic Situation of Rakhine State:**

- Rakhine State is one of the poorest in Myanmar, with well over half the population below the poverty line.
- Main industries include farming and fishing. With fertile soil and plentiful fish, Rakhine State has high economic potential in these sectors. However, lack of infrastructure and investment keeps yields low.
- Since the outbreak of violence by Muslims in Rakhine State, most foreign investors have withdrawn from the region. This has prevented our plans for development from



continuing, even though we believe development of the region would bring greater wealth to all citizens of Myanmar.

- We feel the best route forward is for a swift end to the violence through plans outlined in this document, allowing for foreign investment to resume, which we believe is a critical step in creating a more equitable distribution of wealth.

## **Reconciliation**

**Representative: Sammie Marks**

### **National Reconciliation:**

- We have strived to represent all peoples of Myanmar for over twenty-seven years through promoting the establishment of a democracy, human rights, and a federal union.
- As the primary goals of our government include the formulation and maintenance of internal peace, a Constitution that ensures the tranquility and security of lives of all Myanmar citizens, and a system of government that fairly and justly defends the people, we are constantly working towards the creation of unity among all of the 135 ethnic groups of Myanmar.
- Particularly through the establishment of a democratic federal union through which all peoples of Myanmar are represented, like the one we are in the process of implementing, we achieve national reconciliation in a timely and efficient manner.
- National reconciliation and peace will be accomplished in the most efficient and just way possible through domestic handling of the government of Myanmar. We, as the current government of Myanmar, are best equipped to handle the ongoing situation through having the experience and knowledge of past Myanmar ethnic conflicts as well as proven methods for dealing with such issues.

- We have created and are currently implementing a plan to bring about national reconciliation and peace. This peace process is comprised of the opening of a dialogue among feuding parties and the formation of unity and stability among the ethnic of Myanmar. Interference from international parties could obstruct with our efforts, exacerbate current tensions, and, ultimately, be counterintuitive to resolving the conflict at hand.
- National reconciliation is best accomplished through political dialogue based on mutual respect the Panglong spirit of solidarity and persistence. This proven method addresses the roots of internal armed conflict and enables the Myanmar people to live in security and tranquility. In this spirit, we have begun to facilitate negotiation talks among all parties involved as part of our ongoing peace process.
- The formation of unity and stability among the ethnic groups of Myanmar is also vital to national reconciliation. The large amount of ethnic groups in our country combined with a lack of attention from previous governments has made it very difficult for this to be achieved in the past. However, the combination of the ongoing peace talks and our prioritization of this objective will guarantee a positive outcome of eventual peace.

**History and Narrative:**

- The Muslims of the Rakhine State initially entered Myanmar through illegal migration when the nation was under British rule from 1824 to 1948.

- Because of the illegal nature of their entry into the nation, the ethnic group was not included in the ethnicities that qualify for citizenship in the Union Citizenship Act, and, as a result, unable to become citizens of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
- The same ethnic group has also been slipping over the border from Bangladesh into the Rakhine states and settling on Rakhine land for decades. Their population is growing exponentially and diluting the Buddhist and Bamar majority population of Rakhine.
- The current standard for citizenship as established by the Myanmar Nationality Law recognizes three standards of citizenship. Requirements for the qualification for naturalized citizenship—the most basic level of citizenship—include proof of a family's residence in Myanmar before 1948 and fluency in one of the national languages. Most of the Muslims of the Rakhine state fail to meet such requirements and are therefore unable to qualify for citizenship in Myanmar.

**De-Linking the Military and Economic Projects:**

- One of the primary goals of the NLD is to rehabilitate the economy of Myanmar in such a manner that will more evenly distribute socioeconomic opportunity to all citizens of the nation.
- As a first step in achieving this objective, we have made significant efforts to reduce military involvement in Myanmar businesses and infrastructure projects and increase foreign investment.
- Through this line of action, we will obtain the freedom and resources to improve our there will be a greater amount of funds to improve public infrastructure. These

developments will not only increase employment opportunities but also help to distribute the economic resources throughout Myanmar in a more even manner.

- Stability and unity among the ethnic groups of Myanmar is vital for attracting the foreign investment necessary for these objectives.

### **Equitable Growth:**

- Myanmar is currently experiencing an era of unprecedented economic expansion due to the government's institution of our political reforms.
- To ensure that this economic growth proliferates into Myanmar society in an equitable manner that is in tandem with our objectives of peaceful, democratic federal union inclusive of all Myanmar citizens, we will continue our reformation of economic policy.
- An ethnically stable and unified Myanmar is vital for the continuance of the success of these economic reforms.

### **Displacement**

**Representative: Hoang Vo**

### **Citizenship:**

- We grant citizenship to persons who are: (a) person born of parents both of whom are nationals of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar; (b) person who is already a citizen according to law on the day the Constitution comes into operation.
- Based on the Constitution, citizens of Myanmar enjoy equal rights before the law; there is no discrimination race, birth, religion, official position, status, culture, sex and wealth.
- We assist in the promotion of socio-economic development including education, health, economy, transport and communication, so forth, of less-developed National races.

- Every citizen, in accord with the law, has the right to freely develop literature, culture, arts, customs and traditions they cherish.
- We punish any act intended to promote feelings of hatred, enmity or discord between racial or religious communities or sects.
- We do not consider the Muslim immigrants from Bangladesh as part of our 135 ethnic communities. Under Myanmar's 1982 Citizenship Law, they are not citizens of Myanmar, and therefore, now are also not citizens of Myanmar.

**Repatriation:**

- We wish to expedite the repatriation process for the return of the Muslim minority to a more conducive environment than the one they left to which we have created a safe environment.
- We will provide verified returnees (we must verify that those returning are not affiliated with Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA)) with citizenship cards or national verification cards.
- In August 2019, we approved the return of more than 3,000 Muslim individuals from Bangladesh, but no person showed up to return to Myanmar. This was the second attempt that has been turned down.
- As of now, only approximately 200 people have returned to Myanmar.

- We believe the lack of returnees is a direct result of international non-governmental organizations (INGO) deliberately discouraging refugees from returning because of INGO's own business interests.
- We believe that Bangladesh has tried to stall repatriation efforts. The Bangladeshi foreign minister made promises before the Chinese minister and set a date for repatriation but the repatriation never started. They must cooperate for successful repatriation.

**Relocation:**

- Every citizen has a right to settle and reside in any place within Myanmar.
- We will grant citizenship to those who can prove that they have lived in Myanmar for 60 years.
- A foreigner can be granted citizenship if they had been living no less than five years in Burma, spoke an indigenous language and respected the law of the land.
- As non-citizens, the Muslim immigrants from Bangladesh will be provided with national verification cards that identify them as "Bengali." This will help them relocate elsewhere in Myanmar if they choose to.
- We have provided those who have returned with humanitarian and rehabilitation support as outlined by the Office of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine (UEHRD).

**Rights of Displaced Nationally and Internationally:**

- Under international law, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are protected and have the right to return to one's own country.
- We have recognized individuals' right to return by approving the return of thousands of Muslim refugees. However, it is their choice of whether or not to return, to which they have chosen not to.
- The responsibility for those internally displaced lies in the hands of the government. In the past, we have provided food supplies upon request to those who were internally displaced. We also currently provide Rakhine IDP with money and many IDPs have been relocated to camps where they have better access to schools.
- We will provide repatriated individuals will receive ID cards that equate to holding an associate citizenship. Associate citizens are entitled to enjoy the rights of a citizen under the laws of the State, with the exception of the rights stipulated from time to time by, the Council of State.

## **Law**

**Representative: Nick Martin**

### **On the Legal Rights of Minorities:**

- We maintain our position that these so-called "Rohingya" are in fact illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, contrary to the falsified narrative pushed by many, and we are therefore not legally obligated to provide them with citizenship.

- The 1982 Citizenship Law reflects this; it features a thorough and comprehensive listing of the 135 different ethnicities of Myanmar, whose members are legal citizens of Myanmar.
- The population records that serve as the foundation for this law date to the early 19th century, yet the fictitious “Rohingya” are not present, despite their claims of living in the Rakhine area for more than a millenium.
- Since 1995, these Muslim minorities have also recieved identification cards, in an effort by our nation to cooperate with the international community.
- The National League for Democracy has made significant efforts to repatriate Muslim minorities, and has entertained talks with Bangladesh on how to conduct this process in the best way possible.

**Fictitious Allegations of Genocide:**

- The International Criminal Court has brought several charges against us, which are similar to those brought by other members of the international community. The claims suggest our military intentionally caused the destruction of the so-called “Rohingya” people through deportation, murder, and destruction of their villages.
- These claims are grossly fraudulent and evidence of the inherent bias of the existing international legal organizations. There are many terrorist groups, such as the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, who threaten the long term stability of the region and inflate the casualties of this conflict.



- In addition, violence is perpetrated by *both* the Buddhist Rakhines and the illegal Muslim immigrants; in fact, the 2012 riots in the Rakhine state were started by the Muslims, who brutally robbed, raped, and murdered a defenseless Rakhine woman.
- The relentless outcry from the international community suggesting the military violates international law by attempting to maintain order and peace in the region is outlandish. It is without question that the Tatmadaw needed to use some level of force to quell the dangerous situation, and it is inevitable that when using force, casualties will occur.
- The alternative would be to let the conflicts within the Rakhine state grow out of control and claim many more lives. The necessary use of military force did cause some illegal Bengalis to leave the area, but it is absurd for the ICC to suggest that this action constitutes genocide, or that the conditions they endure in Bangladesh now are somehow the fault of the NLD.

#### **International Law and the Rakhine State Case:**

- First and foremost, Myanmar is an independent country whose sovereignty must be recognized. The military government that preceded the National League for Democracy was not a signatory to the 2002 Rome Statute; the same goes for our government.
- Despite this fact, the International Criminal Court (ICC), which was born from the Rome Statute, insists on continuing its unnecessary investigation on blatantly exaggerated claims of genocide towards Muslim immigrants in the Rakhine state.
- In addition to the motions of the independent ICC, the United Nations (UN) and its International Court of Justice (ICJ) are attempting to slander our government and military

by procuring feeble evidence towards a genocide. The Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar has been established to further this goal.

- These pushes for futile investigations are made irrelevant by our commitment to self-inquiry. The Tatmadaw, our military, has already established a Court of Inquiry, in an effort to stay in line with international law. At its heart, the Rakhine issue is a domestic one, and certainly one that our government is capable of processing.
- The actions of the ICC, as well as those of the UN in conjunction with their ICJ, are warning signs of continual Western interference in sovereign nations via international legal mechanisms.
- When looking at the American policy towards our nation, their motives are clear. Consider the statement from their Department of the Treasury in regards to the alleged genocide: *“The United States prioritizes the protection of fundamental freedoms and human rights as a key part of our vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific, recognizing them as integral to U.S. foreign policy and national security interests and in line with U.S. values.”*
- It is not the place of the United States and its Western allies to shape the world to fit their own values and to satisfy their security interests. Their dominance over the UN and other international legal bodies is apparent. Indeed, even the head of the aforementioned “Independent” Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar is Nicholas Koumjian, an American.

### **On the Validity and Hypocrisy of International Law:**

- As previously stated, the International Criminal Court must refrain from violating our sovereignty by continuing its allegations of genocide, as we are not signatories of the Rome Statute that created it.
- The United Nations and its International Court of Justice must also avoid meddling in our domestic affairs, due to its aforementioned dominance by Western powers. For instance, 4 of the 5 permanent Security Council members, who wield incredible power, are Western powers.
- This dominance of the international legal mechanisms is evident when considering how the major Security Council powers are not held accountable for their misdeeds. Major Western powers, particularly the US and the UK, militarily intervene around the world – Iraq, Syria, Libya, Afghanistan, and more – for morally questionable reasons, yet barely face any legal repercussions.
- When considering trials for war criminals, the international community has a poor record.
  - In post-war Japan, the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal featured just one prosecution team, which was American-led. The tribunal was an abject failure, with Emperor Hirohito being defended by General MacArthur, as the Americans wished to use him as a tool to legitimize their reforms. On top of this, the commander of Unit 731, a human experimentation which butchered thousands, was given immunity in exchange for his scientific data. The Japanese area bombing of large civilian targets was left unaddressed due to the Americans doing the same.
  - After the breakup of Yugoslavia and the violence that ensued, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia was created as a legal apparatus of

the United Nations. Existing from 1993 to 2017, its 24-year lifespan highlights the massive inefficiencies of the international community. On top of this egregious wasting of time, the tribunal gave many criminals light sentences.

- Pavle Strugar, a general of the Yugoslav People's Army, received only eight years in prison for his siege of Dubrovnik, which included direct attacks on civilians and destroyed a UNESCO World Heritage site. His sentence was further reduced due to old age.
- Veselin Šljivančanin, an officer of the Yugoslav People's Army, who helped organize the execution and torture of hundreds of non-Serbs during the Battle of Vukovar, received a five-year prison sentence. While the sentence was increased to seventeen years after outrage, it was later lowered to ten years, and then to even less, as he was released early for good behavior.
- The absence of accountability for major world powers, and the utter incompetence displayed by the international legal community when conducting war tribunals, demonstrates that the United Nations, or any other international coalition, is unfit to intervene in our domestic affairs.

## **Human Rights**

**Representative: Abby Kantor**

### **Advocacy:**

- Our government does not tolerate and has never allowed human rights violations in the Rakhine, or elsewhere in Myanmar.

- Our government is committed to nourishing a mindset of spiritual unity. To achieve unity among the diverse parties and peoples of our country, we must emphasize our shared heritage as planetary citizens.

**Religion and Ethnicity:**

- The 1961 State Religion Promotion Act makes our country constitutionally committed to the furtherance of Buddhism as the state religion.
- 88% of our population practice Theravada Buddhism, 6% practice Christianity, 4% practice Islam, and .8% are animists.
- Myanmar is a multi-ethnic state; however, since our nation's beginning, close to 90% of the population have been Buddhists.
- The majority of Muslim immigrants who live in Rakhine State have origins that trace back to Bangladesh—a predominately Muslim nation.
- Between 1931 and 1983, as many as half a million Muslim war refugees fled into Myanmar from Bangladesh to escape the violence of the Bangladeshi Liberation War, causing the demographic growth of the Muslim population to increase by 128%.

**Humanitarian Assistance:**

- As a result of the November 2017 repatriation deal achieved with Bangladesh, the Bangladeshi government agreed to protect Muslim refugees remaining in camps, facilitate their dignified repatriation to Myanmar, and encourage self-sufficiency activities to promote their self-reliance.

- After examining the state of refugee camps in Bangladesh, our government strongly believes that the safest option for Muslim refugees would be for them to return to Rakhine State where they will have access to education, health, and citizenship.
- Bangladesh encourages the voluntary repatriation of Muslims into Myanmar, as they agree that Rakhine State serves as the most secure location for the refugee populous.
- Refugees who choose to stay in Bangladesh will continue to receive support from non-governmental organizations such as the International Rescue Committee, UNHCR, Save the Children, Doctors without Borders, Unicef, Action Against Hunger, and the International Organization for Migration; however, this form of support will be limited to encourage repatriation into Myanmar.
- Bangladesh hopes to promote independence and income-generating opportunities that will reduce the Muslim refugee's reliance on external support and equip them the agency needed to thrive outside of camps.

**Preventive Measures:**

- Our government is dedicated to finding sustainable solutions to ensure the peace, stability, and prosperity of Muslims residing in Rakhine State:
  - In 2017, we formed the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement, and Development of Rakhine State (UEHRD). This organization is committed to aiding Muslim refugees in Bangladesh, returning willful individuals to Myanmar, and rebuilding and developing neglected regions in Rakhine State.
  - Lead by Dr. Win Myat Aye—the Minister for Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement—our government is building villages on empty plots of land in parts

of northern Rakhine. These villages will include religious buildings, schools, clinics, and other public infrastructure.

- Muslim individuals whose houses were destroyed due to civil unrest will be supplied with materials and paid commission to build updated homes in secure regions of Rakhine State. If an individual is unable or does not wish to develop their own home, the government will construct one on their behalf.
- To ensure the ethnic and religious freedom of the Muslim population in Rakhine, we have implemented a new Child Rights Laws that “guarantees the right to register at birth for all children regardless of race, religion, and gender.” Birth registration is conducted nationwide free of charge to guarantee that ‘no child is left behind.’ Under this law, all Muslim children will be raised as citizens of Myanmar.
- All displaced persons living in Cox’s Bazar—the largest refugee camp in Bangladesh—who had been official residents of Rakhine are now considered citizens of Myanmar.
- Any Muslim individual who descends from Myanmar and does not hold an identity card will be issued a National Verification Card (NVC) that serves an immediate gateway to citizenship. We promise to process 150 NVC a day.
- Across the country, we have constructed 225 Youth Development Shelters; 12 Disabled Shelters; 80 Homes for the Aged; 13 Women’s Shelters; 1025 units of Self-help Pre-Primary School.

- Our government, with support from other agencies, is working on expanding the Dream University Project to create a nation-wide integrated education program that “nurtures the youth into becoming more socially inclusive, inter-culturally engaged, and progressively driven leaders of Rakhine State.”
- With the support of international and local partners, scholarships will be made available to students from every community in Rakhine, granting them access to universities around Myanmar. This movement will help equalize education standards and promote job opportunities for the Muslim population.
- Employment opportunities have been provided to Muslim individuals in Rakhine State due to our government’s investment in the Smart Garment Industry, the Khine Pyi Soe Garment Industry, the Shwe Kyar Traditional Weaving Industry.