



# BratMUN 2019 Study Guide

Security Council

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## FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRS

Dear delegates,

It is our pleasure to welcome you to BratMUN 2019! We are Chandani Mittal and Samuel Slovjak and we will be the chairpersons of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The topic we have chosen is Addressing the situation in Myanmar. This topic is a complex long-term issue that the world faces in the present day. Therefore, we are very excited to see the debate in our committee and the solutions that will emerge from it. We hope that this experience will be beneficial for you not only in terms of your public speaking and diplomatic skills but also to your personal development as a whole.

Now we would like to briefly introduce ourselves. The first chairperson of this committee is Chandani Mittal: I will be chairing the committee of SC at BratMUN 2019. I started off my MUN journey about 2 years ago and I have had the pleasure to participate in many MUNs and also MEPs. This is my first time chairing but I look forward to seeing all of you and discussing the pressing matters in Myanmar.

The second chairperson of the committee is Samuel Slovjak I will be chairing this committee alongside Chandani. My MUN experience started with BratMUN 2017, and since then I have been very passionate about attending foreign MUNs. This will be my first experience chairing a MUN assembly, but I look forward to sharing this experience with the committee.

Conferences of this kind have helped us grow into more confident and well-rounded individuals with skills that can be applied in a variety of areas. They have also given us many memories that we will always look back on fondly. We hope you will have a similarly positive experience at this conference and all the conferences you will attend in the future.

Hopefully, this study guide will provide you with a brief and helpful overview of the complex topic we will be dealing with in our committee.

*Best Regards,*

*Chandani Mittal & Samuel Slovjak*

*Chairpersons of the United Nations Security Council*

## ABOUT THE COMMITTEE

The Security Council is one of the six main bodies of the United Nations, established by the UN charter. Its primary concerns revolve around maintaining global peace and security. Security Council meetings take place whenever threats to peace are presented. Within the committee, most powerful countries with veto power, also known as the P5 countries by their permanent residence in the Security Council, are United States of America, Russia, China, France and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

### Functions and Powers

Some of the functions and powers of the Security Council are:

- to preserve international peace and security in accordance with the principles of the United Nations
- to investigate any disputes or circumstances, which might lead to international discord
- to advocate arrangements of adjusting such frictions or the terms of agreement
- to take military action against an aggressor

*For more information about the mandate, powers and functions of SC, visit the council's website which is listed in the recommended reading section.*

# INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

## Addressing the Situation in Myanmar

Myanmar, also known as Burma, was long considered an outsider state while under the rule of an oppressive military government from 1962 to 2011.

The generals who ran the country suppressed almost all opposition and stood accused of gross human rights violations, prompting international condemnation and sanctions.

A gradual liberalization began in 2010, leading to free elections in 2015 and the election of a government led by veteran opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi the following year.

However, an army operation against alleged terrorists in Rakhine State since August 2017 has driven more than half a million Muslim Rohingyas to flee to neighboring Bangladesh, in what the United Nations called a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing".

The UN panel is barred from entering Myanmar, but met with government and regional officials, UN agencies and humanitarian representatives in the region. From January to March 2018, at least 34 villages in Myanmar were completely or partially destroyed. More than 128,000 Muslims remain in detention camps in central Rakhine State, where they have been confined since 2012, arbitrarily deprived of their liberty. Council of BratMUN 2019 will aspire to make progress on this complex issue and strive to improve the lives of people living in Myanmar.

## **KEY ACTORS**

### **Myanmar**

The Republic of Myanmar is the country of concern. The conflict between the Rohingya Muslims and the government has been ongoing for a long time. The Myanmar government denies the killing of innocent people, as they see the Rohingians as insurgents, and is retaliating using the military and the police. This is further escalating the conflict in Rakhine state. Since 2017, over 730 thousand Rohingyas fled for the Bangladeshi border in search of safety. Recently, however, the Rohingians started fighting back against the government, resulting in an escalation of the conflict.

### **Bangladesh**

Bangladesh has been very supportive of the problem. They accepted the fleeing migrants, they have provided them with temporary shelter and generally tried to maintain peace. This stance, however, has recently changed. Bangladesh can no longer accept the masses crossing the borders and are threatening to shut them down.

### **China**

China is a strong ally of Myanmar. They have supported the government, and believe that the Myanmar government is simply retaliating back against the insurgent Islamic groups occupying the Rakhine state.

## USA

The United States of America consider the actions of the Myanmar government as “genocide” and “prevention of the further development of democracy in Myanmar”. They back these opinions by financing humanitarian efforts in Myanmar and are trying to solve the situation accordingly.

## Russia

Russia is Myanmar’s second most influential ally. They cooperate with China and Myanmar to help the government neutralise the insurgent groups, by actions such as sending weapons and volunteer soldiers.

## A BRIEF HISTORY

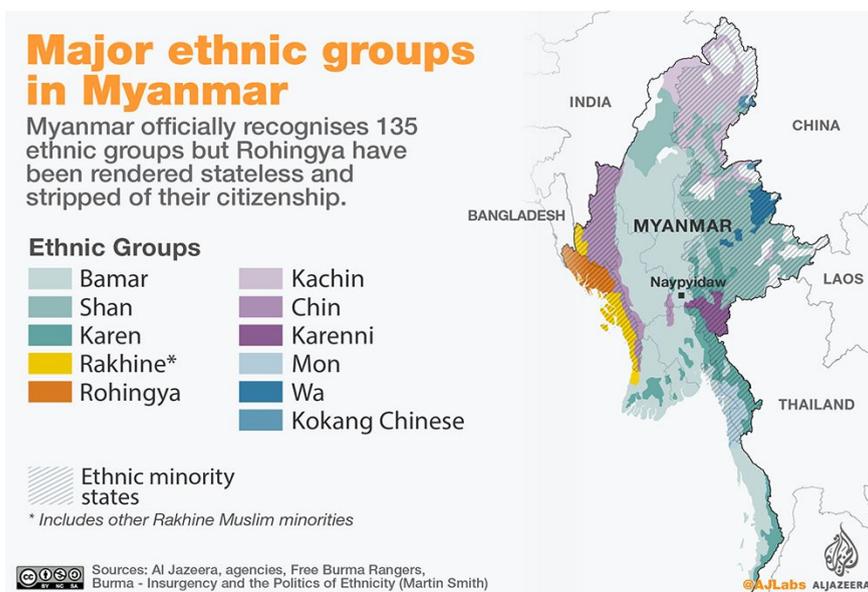
Myanmar is majorly a Buddhist country, with a significant Muslim minority. The conflict is caused primarily by the social differences between the Rakhine Buddhists, and the Rohingya Muslims. During World War 2, the Rohingya Muslims were allied with the British, and they were promised a private Muslim state in return. This caused them to fight against the Rakhine Buddhists, who were local and allied with the Japanese. While Muslims served in the government of Prime Minister U Nu (1948–63), the situation changed during the 1962 Burmese coup d’état. Most Muslims were excluded from positions within the government and the army. In 1982, the government introduced regulations that denied citizenship to anyone who could not prove Burmese ancestry from before 1823. This targeted primarily Muslims, as even though they lived in Burma for many generations, it wasn't long enough.



*Myanmar police patrolling the border between Myanmar and Bangladesh.*

Since 1948, successive governments have carried out 13 military operations against the Rohingya.

During the operations, Myanmar security forces have driven the Rohingyas off their land, burned down their mosques and committed widespread looting, arson and rape of Rohingya Muslims. Outside of these military raids, Rohingyas are subjected to frequent theft and extortion from the authorities and many are subjected to forced labor. In some cases, land occupied by Rohingya Muslims has been confiscated and reallocated to local Buddhists.

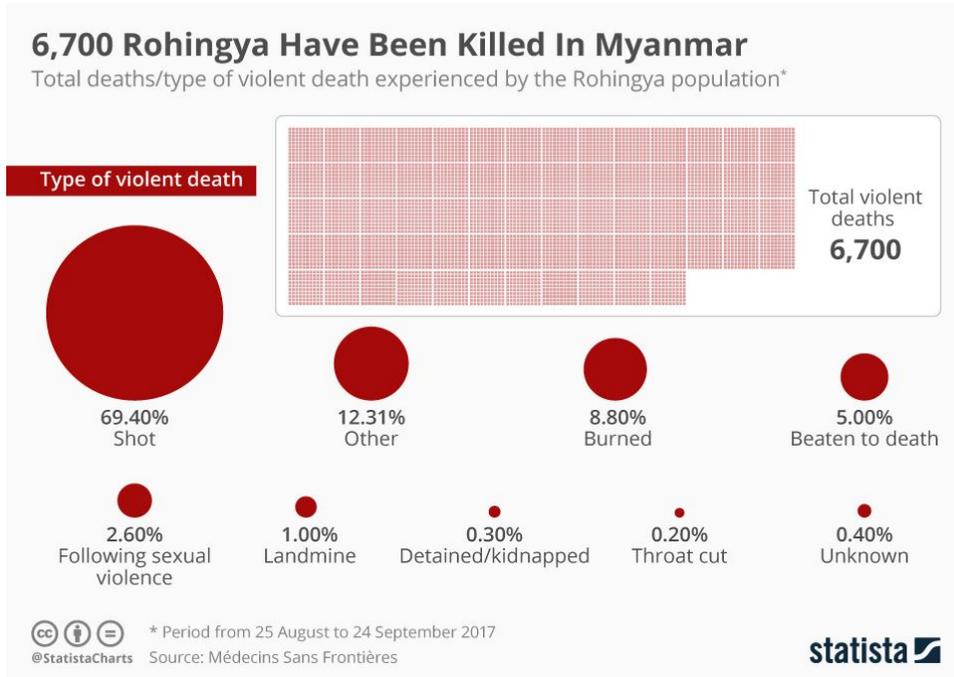


*Ethnic groups map of Myanmar*

The elections in 2010 supposedly marked a significant step towards the democratisation of the military-led government in Burma, but there is still a long way before those reforms are translated into real changes for the ordinary people. The “independent” Election Commission approached the situation very bureaucratically, especially for smaller, non-government parties. The procedures for applying were costly, difficult, and generated very high frustration. Then, there were exclusions of sensitive areas around the borders, especially around the Bangladeshi border.

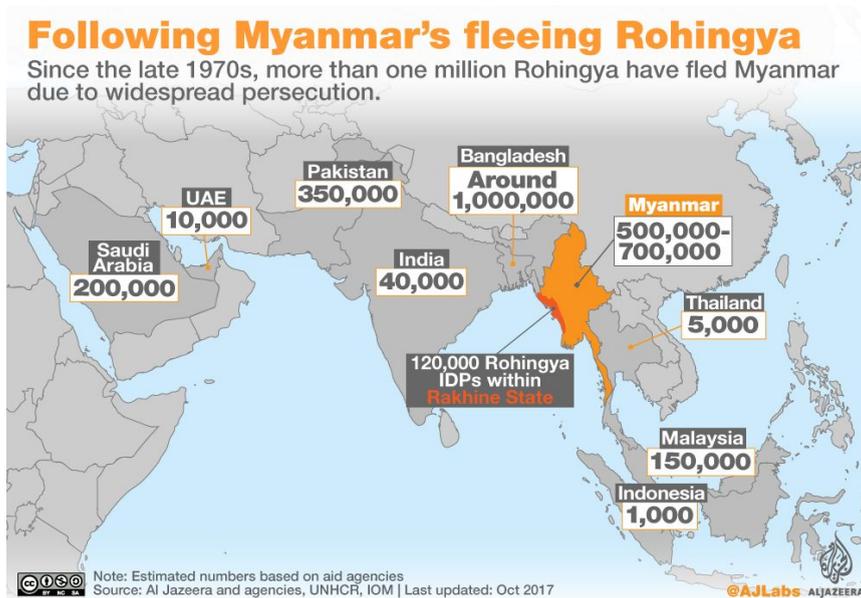
As of late 2016, an active Islamist insurgent group called the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (or ARSA) has emerged. These militants attacked border patrols, looting them for guns, munitions, bayonets, and magazines. A police document in March 2017 revealed that nearly 500 Rohingians were detained by the police within the first half of the year, of which 13 were children, with the youngest one being ten years old. When asked to prove or disprove this, the police stated that they arrest people linked to crimes regardless of their age, and have deemed the government responsible for judging them accordingly.

The situation has reached a seeming standstill, to the point where no media seems to be overly interested. This, however, doesn't mean that the violence and oppression happening has stopped. Over a period of one month between August and September of 2017, a bit over 6,700 deaths occurred to Rohingya people in Myanmar. These were mainly due to gunshot wounds, but there were cases of beatings to death, incineration of live people, and landmine trippings.



Statistics chart showing the number of deaths that happened in the span of one month in Myanmar.

At the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2018, the Bangladeshi Prime Minister stated that her country was hosting at least 1.1 million Rohingya refugees, and asked the United Nations to help support an “early, peaceful solution” to the humanitarian crisis.



Myanmar's immigration map, showing the extent of people migrating out due to the conflict

## Previous actions by the Security Council

The situation in Myanmar is relatively recent to the United Nations. While they have been observing new happenings since the year 2008, when the Human Rights Council has decided to investigate offences towards human rights, the Security Council remained reasonably disinterested. This was mainly due to the fact that until then, the concerns were mainly humanitarian.

There was an effort to bring this to the attention of the Security Council by Special Rapporteurs on the situation of human rights in Myanmar. This was attempted a few times: once in 2004, and again in 2005 and 2006. Then, there was a gap, and the Special Rapporteur visited again in 2010. These Special Rapporteurs managed to consecutively report on grievous abuses of human rights in Myanmar, especially against the Rakhine Muslims and women.

Recently, however, the rhetoric has escalated to international levels. The threats posed by a potential nest of terrorist activities establishing itself in Myanmar has tipped the scales. The beginning was in a Press Statement released by the Security Council in 2007. The Security Council has stressed the need for Myanmar to create conditions for dialogue in order to release political prisoners and detainees.

On the 28th of September 2017, on the request of Egypt, France, Kazakhstan, Senegal, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States, the UN Secretary-General has briefed the Council on the crisis happening in Myanmar, and this officially started the active involvement of the Security Council in the matter of the Myanmar crisis. At this meeting, the Secretary-General has suggested on Myanmar authorities to take three immediate steps: first, to end the military operations; secondly, to allow unfettered access for humanitarian support; and third, to ensure the safe, voluntary, dignified, and sustainable return of the refugees to their areas of origin. The Secretary-General also proceeded to condemn the use of landmines and sexual violence against the Rohingya people.

In early November of 2017, the Security Council issued a unanimous statement condemning the “widespread violence that has taken place in the Rakhine State” and called on the government of Myanmar to “ensure no further excessive use

of military force in the Rakhine State". They proceeded to reaffirm the "strong commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, unity and integrity of Myanmar". They haven't, however, adopted any legal resolution regarding the conflict.

## CURRENT SITUATION

Currently, negotiations are happening about sending the Rohingya Muslim community back to Myanmar. Bangladesh has assembled a fleet of buses for transport people from cities all around the country to Myanmar. Almost all of the Muslims, however, failed to show up due to two reasons:

First, they claimed that they still fear human rights violations. This is to be expected, as there is no apparent change in the behaviour of the Burmese military towards current Muslims that are further residing in Myanmar.

Finally, the cities and towns specified for reinstatement of the estranged Muslims lack preparation for their welcoming.

Furthermore, the situation is getting more serious day by day. As the days go on, more babies are born to refugee Rohingya Muslims in Bangladesh. According to medical staff working at refugee camps in Bangladesh, roughly 100 babies are born every day. They, however, lack birth certificates due to the situation of their parents and lack medical help due to the fact that they are born in temporary camps and large quantities.

There are further actions being taken against NGOs, who are being chased out of Myanmar under claims of distributing sharp weeding tools to be used as weapons amongst the Muslims. So far roughly 41 NGOs were withdrawn from the Muslim camps under such pretenses.

Finally, China, with its' newly appointed ambassador to Bangladesh, has promised to try and speed up efforts of reinstating estranged citizens of Myanmar back to their homes in the Rakhine state. They have started organising trilateral talks with Myanmar and Bangladesh in order to further arrange transport processes. It was also the Chinese idea to arrange transport of confirmed Burmese citizens back to their homes.

UN Resident Coordinator in Dhaka Mia Seppo on Tuesday said it is now up to the world to help keep it that way by making sure Bangladesh does not shoulder this burden alone as Bangladesh has "certainly done its part" when it comes to the Rohingya crisis.

She said Bangladesh responded with empathy to a group of people who fell victim to hatred, and now the global leadership needs to act.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Who is to blame for this conflict?
- What is the history of the conflict?
- What are the reasons for the recent conflicts?
- To what extent is the oppression just?
- Is a peaceful solution to the conflict possible?
- Why is this issue recognised by the Security Council?
- How would the resolution of this conflict affect the surrounding countries?
- Is peace in Asia a viable target?

## RECOMMENDED READING

<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/chronology/myanmar.php>

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sc13055.doc.htm>

<http://bestdelegate.com/researchmap/>

<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/burma>

<https://apnews.com/547ffef101804bba8170cf044d122e51>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jan/19/myanmar-army-kills-13-in-attack-on-rakhine-rebels>

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/05/1038501>

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-myanmar-rohingya-idUKKCN1RG188>

[http://www.globalr2p.org/about\\_r2p](http://www.globalr2p.org/about_r2p)

<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/MM/FlashReport3Feb2017.pdf>

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sc13055.doc.htm>

<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/MM/CXBMissionSummaryFindingsOctober2017.pdf>

<https://www.statecounsellor.gov.mm/en/node/228>

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22041>

<https://thediplomat.com/2019/02/latest-violence-in-myanmar-confirms-worst-suspicions/>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-45743951>

<https://blog.education.nationalgeographic.org/2017/10/02/rohingya-crisis-what-you-need-to-know/>

<https://www.msf.org/myanmarbangladesh-msf-surveys-estimate-least-6700-rohingya-were-killed-during-attacks-myanmar>

<https://www.statista.com/chart/11041/rohingya-ethnic-cleansing-leads-to-refugee-crisis/>

<https://www.mercycorps.org/articles/bangladesh/rohingya-refugee-crisis-quick-facts>

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## CLOSING REMARKS

This study guide is meant to provide a brief overview of the topic. We expect you to take advantage of the recommended reading section, conduct further research into your country's policy and start brainstorming possible solutions to the issue discussed. The chairpersons are aware that this isn't an easy task, however, the time you put into your research will be reflected in your performance in the committee. This will also ensure that all of us have the best time possible at BratMUN 2019.

**In addition, you are expected to send a position paper approximately in the length of one A4 no later than 25.10.2019 to the email address [scbratmun2019@gmail.com](mailto:scbratmun2019@gmail.com). It should typically contain four sections: Background of Topic, Past International Actions, Country Policy, and Possible Solutions.**

We are looking forward to seeing you and cooperating with you at the conference and wish you the best of luck with your preparation.

In case of any questions about the topic, position paper, Rules of Procedure or anything else, do not hesitate to contact us on the above-mentioned email address.

*Best regards,*

*Chandani Mittal and Samuel Slovjak*

*Chairpersons of the United Nations Security Council*