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## The rohingya problem

Myanmar's independence has been afflicted with the ongoing ethno-religious conflicts between the central government, minority groups and their adversaries. While there are ample amount of literature on the situation of Rohingya crisis, much of the studies are based on the 2012 violence in west Myanmar specifically in the state of Rakhine. The central government has had its fair share of issues with the ethnic minorities; however the continuous conflicts between the Rohingya Muslims and Rakhine Buddhists have been the most stigmatized in recent times. According to the report of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA, 2017), at least 800,000 Muslims live in Rakhine state of Western Myanmar/Burma, where majority identify themselves as Rohingya (CPD, 2017). The matter caught the eyes of international communities and media groups due to the vastness of the issue on humanitarian and ethical grounds as well as its berserk upheaval. (Kipgen, 2013)

In order to comprehend this particular scenario, it is of paramount importance that one must understand the term Rohingya and its origin, history and profundity. The term 'Rohingya' refers to an ethnic group, consisting people of Islamic faith and also some other religions in small quantities. Although these residents from the Rakhine state identify themselves with the term 'Rohingya', (the term has been widely used by the international community e.g. United Nations, World Health Organisations, etc.), the Myanmar government officially identifies them as illegal Bengali migrants from neighbouring Bangladesh, which also happens to be the general perception of the Myanmar people (Kipgen, 2012a). The fact is that Rohingya is not included among the 135 ethnic races of Myanmar recognized by the government. The origin of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar has been a sensitive and controversial subject. Some claim that the Rohingyas have lived in Myanmar for centuries and they are the descendants of Muslim Arabs, Moors, Persians, Turks, Mughals and Bengalis who came mostly as traders, warriors and saints through overland and sea routes (Chowdhury, 2006). The Arakan Rohingya National

Organisation has said, "Rohingyas have been living in Arakan from time immemorial," referring to the area now known as Rakhine. During the more than 100 years of British rule (1824-1948), there was a significant amount of migration of labourers to what is now known as Myanmar from today's India and Bangladesh. Because the British administered Myanmar as a province of India, such migration was considered internal, according to Human Rights Watch (HRW). After independence, the government viewed the migration that took place during British rule as "illegal, and it is on this basis that they refuse citizenship to the majority of Rohingya," HRW said in a 2000 report. This has led many Buddhists to consider the Rohingya to be Bengali, rejecting the term Rohingya as a recent invention, created for political reasons.