

Former U.S. President Barack Obama once said in an interview, “When you see a genocide, whether it's in Rwanda or Bosnia or in Darfur, that's a stain on all of us. That's a stain on our souls.”¹ Undoubtedly, the murder, displacement, and torture of the hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar will leave a profound stain on humanity.² Learning from past genocides and identifying patterns within those genocides can help the international community stop the ongoing Rohingya genocide and help the Rohingya people return to their homes.

During the Cambodian genocide from 1975-1979, a brutal dictatorship had killed around 1.5 to 3 million Cambodian citizens. Vietnam intervened and dismantled the autocracy, thus putting an end to the genocide.³ In March 1970, West Pakistan launched an operation to kill Bengalis and suppress Bengali nationalism in East Pakistan. This operation, which was labeled as a genocide by India and many others, killed around 3 million Bengalis and displaced as many as 10 million more but ended when India intervened and forced West Pakistan to surrender.⁴ During the Holocaust, as many as 17 million people got exterminated under the Nazi Regime.⁵ It wasn't until many other nations, such as the Soviet Union, decided to intervene and end the Holocaust.

These were some examples of how beneficial international intervention can be in stopping genocides, but there are also examples of what a genocide can become without international intervention. The Tutsis that were being killed in the Rwandan genocide had little

¹ “Barack Obama on Darfur”, *YouTube*, United to End Genocide, 26 Nov. 2007

² “Myanmar Rohingya: What you need to know about the crisis.” *BBC*, 23 Jan 2020

³ University of Minnesota College of Liberal Arts, “Cambodia”, *University of Minnesota*, University of Minnesota College of Liberal Arts, Holocaust and Genocide Studies

⁴ Boissoneault, Lorraine. “The Genocide the U.S. Can't Remember, But Bangladesh Can't Forget”, *Smithsonian Magazine*, Smithsonian, 16 Dec. 2016

⁵ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC. “DOCUMENTING NUMBERS OF VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST AND NAZI PERSECUTION”, *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, USHMM, 8 Dec. 2020

to no backing from other countries and relied on their self-formed rebel group to liberate them.

This genocide then resulted in up to 77% of the ethnic Tutsis in Rwanda being killed in a span of 100 days.⁶ In the Bosnian genocide, other nations did little to help the Bosniaks fight against the Army of Republika Srpska resulting in 100,000 innocent lives lost.⁷

Throughout history, international condemnation and intervention have been proven to end mass murders, and the same can be applied in the case of the Rohingya Muslims. The military dictatorship that has been ethnically cleansing the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar needs to be condemned. Members of the international community, whether neighboring countries or countries overseas, need to intervene as that might be the only practical and historically proven solution to ending this atrocious genocide. The Bengali genocide, Cambodian genocide, and the Holocaust are only a few examples of genocides that got stopped due to intervention from other countries. The Rwandan and Bosnian genocides are examples of what can happen to a population, such as the Rohingya, if intervention is not applied and shows the urgency in an intervention.

⁶ Verpoorten, Marijke. "The Death Toll of the Rwandan Genocide: A Detailed Analysis for Gikongoro Province", *Population*, vol. 60, no. 4, 2005, pp. 331-367

⁷ History.com Editors. "Bosnian Genocide", *HISTORY*, A&E Television Networks, 30 Oct. 2019

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