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The cries of the Rohingya wail, “Please, I have no place to call home and nowhere to go. I am only a displaced person denied an identity by refugee countries and Myanmar.” As the Rohingya are repatriated, there is an increasingly urgent need to listen to their voices. In 2018, the number of refugees in Bangladesh rose to over 1.1 million people.¹ The international community sought to resolve this violation of human rights, but Myanmar has yet to enforce stability through demilitarization, representation of the Rohingya in the government for equal rights, and the use of UN peacekeepers for facilitation.

In August 2017, militant action from the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army initiated the ethnic cleansing campaign, opening fire on civilians and destroying Rohingya villages.¹ This brutal violence has forced the Rohingya to flee to neighboring countries like Bangladesh. The first step Myanmar should take is demilitarization of the country because the Rohingya should no longer fear for their lives. According to an analysis of satellite imagery, at least 288 villages were partially or totally destroyed by fire.² Too many violations have been committed by the military, including rape, murder, and arson. Without the hostile presence of arms, the Burmese would work towards a more peaceful coexistence with the Rohingya. In 1948, Costa Rica dissolved its army, preventing a civil war and a coup d’état; other countries like Panama and Haiti have followed suit and lack a standing army.³ Costa Rica invested in education and eco-tourism, and similarly, Myanmar’s military budget can be utilized to support the Rohingya.

¹ Albert, Eleanor, and Andrew Chatzky. “The Rohingya Crisis.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, 5 Dec. 2AD, www.cfr.org/backgrounder/rohingya-crisis.

² “Burma: New Satellite Images Confirm Mass Destruction.” *Human Rights Watch*, 28 Oct. 2017, www.hrw.org/news/2017/10/17/burma-new-satellite-images-confirm-mass-destruction.

³ Bhatia, Pooja. “Costa Rica: We Don’t Need No Stinking Army.” *OZY*, 25 Apr. 2014, www.ozy.com/flashback/costa-rica-we-dont-need-no-stinking-army/31153.

Myanmar should not only recognize the Rohingya as an ethnic group, but represent them equally in their government. Currently, the Rohingya are considered “illegal immigrants from Bangladesh,” but their input needs to be considered for significant decisions.¹ Additionally, the Rohingya are denied citizenship due to their conflicting religious beliefs under the 1982 Citizenship Law.⁴ However, “no state can render stateless, as a matter of policy, people born in its territory” according to the UN Charter.⁵ The Rohingya are restricted from easy access to health care, job employment opportunities, and travel. They need to rebuild their lives in a safe and secure place, and passing effective laws would provide them their rightful and equal opportunities.

Without purchasing weapons and maintaining a military, Myanmar would benefit from increased education and healthcare. A tribunal of people from the Rohingya and neutral countries would ensure funds are invested in important areas. As Kwame Anthony Appiah said, the Rohingya “have as much right to live in Myanmar as anybody else” and their opinions should be acknowledged to combat discrimination.⁶ Finally, UN peacekeepers should facilitate the transition of the Rohingya to their home countries and alleviate tension in the community. They would check and ensure the safety and wellbeing of the Rohingya.

In closing, the world can not ignore the Rohingya’s desperate cries any further. Peace begins with the mutual understanding of human identity, and together, Myanmar and the Rohingya will work towards a better future.

⁴ Calamur, Krishnadev. “The Misunderstood Roots of Burma's Rohingya Crisis.” *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 25 Sept. 2017, www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/09/rohingyas-burma/540513/.

⁵ “The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Hidden Genocide.” *The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Hidden Genocide*, by Azeem Ibrahim, Hurst & Company, 2016, pp. 33.

⁶ Berntson, Kedar, director. *Kwame Anthony Appiah on the Rohingya Crisis*. YouTube, YouTube, 10 Nov. 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GW6b_ATfyc.

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