

THE ETHNIC CLEANSING CASE OF MYANMAR'S ROHINGYA FROM THREE  
LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

SITI NUR AISHAH BINTI ABD RAHMAN

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES  
UNIVERSITI KEBANGSAAN MALAYSIA  
BANGI

2018

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this dissertation is my own except for quotations and summaries which have been duly acknowledged.



24 August 2018

SITI NUR AISHAH BINTI ABD RAHMAN  
P92917

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would first like to thank my supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nor Azizan Idris, for the patient guidance, encouragement and advice he has provided throughout my time as his student. He consistently allowed this thesis to be my own work, but steered me in the right direction whenever he thought I needed it. I would also like to thank all the members of staff at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, mainly En Khalip, who has been very helpful. I would also like to thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zarina Othman for the suggestions she has made as my examiner.

Also, I would like to thank the experts who were involved in the interview for this research project: Prof. Kamarulzaman Askandar, Dr. Mikio Oishi, Mr. Adlan Mohd Syaffieq and Ms. Syuhada Adnan. Without their passionate participation and input, the interview could not have been successfully conducted. I greatly appreciate their time in providing answers and opinions to all my questions.

Most importantly, I must express my gratitude to my parents for their continued support and encouragement. Nobody has been more important to me in the pursuit of this research than the members of my family. I would like to thank my parents, whose love and guidance are with me in whatever I pursue. They are the ultimate role models. I was continually amazed by the patience of my mother, father and sisters who experienced all of the ups and downs of my research. Besides that, completing this research would have been all the more difficult were it not for the support and friendship provided by my classmates. I am indebted to them for their help.

Finally, I wish to thank my loving and supportive friends, Mimi Nur Atifah Ahmad Daud and Nuril Fathihah Mazlan, who have become a part of my support system and provided unending inspiration. They will forever hold a special place in my heart.

## ABSTRACT

The study examines the on-going persecution of the ethnic Rohingyas in Myanmar. It argues that the argument as to whether the Rohingya are native to Rakhine state is being used as a pretext to persecute them. This qualitative study is guided by three objectives; firstly, to examine critical individuals who are crucial pertaining to the persecution of the Rohingya. Secondly, the study analyse the role of state and military pertaining to the case of Rohingya's ethnic cleansing. Thirdly, the study assesses the response of the international community towards the persecution of the Rohingya. All the objective is based on the framework of Waltz three levels of analysis as well as the concept of ethnic cleansing. Primary sources of research data derived from the interviews conducted with four people who are experts and knowledgable in the field. Methodologically, this study analyses documents used from the United Nations and its agencies, ASEAN as well as writings from scholars like Kenneth Waltz and Benjamin Lieberman. The analysis is complemented by data from secondary sources namely reports of investigations done by human rights' NGOs and other relevant international agencies. The analysis reveals that Myanmar has indeed conduct countless violations and abuses towards the Rohingyas, who are indigenous to that region, mistakenly identified as recent Bengali arrivals. The study's findings also suggest a worrying trend of the persecution of Rohingyas resembling textbook ethnic cleansing. Also, the escalating intensity of the persecution has attracted international outcry along with numerous diplomatic and economic sanctions that have been initiated over the years without any significant success. Moreover, the findings highlight that the State level is the most significant level of analysis due to the complexity of Myanmar's political structure. Finally, the study suggests that future studies to be conducted using deeper methods of analysis.

## TABLE OF CONTENT

	Page
<b>DECLARATION</b>	ii
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	iii
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	iv
<b>ABSTRAK</b>	v
<b>TABLE OF CONTENT</b>	vi
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	ix
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	x
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</b>	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Problem Statement	4
1.3 Research Questions	4
1.4 Research Objectives	5
1.5 Research Variables	5
1.6 Assumptions	6
1.7 Literature Review	6
1.7.1 History of the Rohingya in Myanmar	7
1.7.2 The Myanmar Government's Persecution of the Rohingya	11
1.7.3 International Response to the Persecution of the Rohingya	14
1.8 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework	15
1.8.1 Ethnic Cleansing	15
1.8.1.1 The Distinction between Ethnic Cleansing and Genocide	18
1.8.1.2 The Model Case of Ethnic Cleansing	19
1.8.2 Three Levels of Analysis	21
1.8.2.1 The Individual Level	22
1.8.2.2 The State/Domestic Level	23
1.8.2.3 The International/Systemic Level	24
1.9 Methodology	25
1.10 Scope of Study	27
1.11 Significance of Study	27
1.12 Limitations of Study	28
1.13 Organisation of Chapters	29

<b>CHAPTER 2 ETHNIC CLEANSING CASE OF MYANMAR'S ROHINGYA: INDIVIDUAL LEVEL</b>	<b>30</b>
2.1 Introduction	30
2.2 U Nu	31
2.3 General Ne Win	35
2.4 Thein Sein	39
2.5 Aung San Suu Kyi	43
2.6 Conclusion	48
<b>CHAPTER 3 ETHNIC CLEANSING CASE OF MYANMAR'S ROHINGYA: STATE/DOMESTIC LEVEL</b>	<b>50</b>
3.1 Introduction	50
3.2 Myanmar's Political Structure	51
3.2.1 Military Takeover	52
3.2.2 SLORC Administration	53
3.2.3 Na-Sa-Ka	54
3.3 Myanmar's State Policies towards the Rohingya	55
3.3.1 Violent Treatment	56
3.3.2 Marriage Restrictions	57
3.3.3 Pregnancy Test	57
3.3.4 Two-Child Policy	58
3.3.5 Restrictions on Repairing Homes and Religious/Cultural Buildings	60
3.3.6 Forced Displacements	60
3.3.7 Family Registry, Family Pictures, Observe Breastfeeding Infants	61
3.3.8 Restriction on Movement	62
3.3.9 Education and Health Care	62
3.3.10 Forced Labour	63
3.3.11 Land Confiscation	63
3.4 The 1982 Citizenship Act	64
3.5 From Military to Civilian Government	67
3.6 Conclusion	69

<b>CHAPTER 4 ETHNIC CLEANSING CASE OF MYANMAR'S ROHINGYA: INTERNATIONAL/SYSTEMIC LEVEL</b>	72
4.1 Introduction	72
4.2 The United Nations (UN)	72
4.3 The Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN)	76
4.4 The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)	79
4.5 Bangladesh	81
4.6 Thailand	84
4.7 Malaysia	87
4.8 The United States (US)	90
4.9 China	91
4.10 International Non-Governmental Organisations	95
4.11 Responsibility to Protect (RtoP)	97
4.12 Conclusion	100
<b>CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION</b>	102
5.1 Introduction	102
5.2 Findings	103
5.2.1 Individual Level	103
5.2.2 State/Domestic Level	105
5.2.3 International/Systemic Level	107
5.3 Recommendations	108
<b>REFERENCES</b>	110