

Muslim Nations Take on Myanmar Over Rohingyas Shibani Mahtani Wall Street Journal 7 August 2012

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(...) Since violence between Buddhists and Muslim Rohingyas erupted in Myanmar's Rakhine state in June, leaving at least 78 dead, governments and rights groups have been critical of Myanmar authorities' actions, which they say have not afforded enough protections to the minority group. New York-based Human Rights Watch released a 56-page report last week asserting that authorities failed to prevent initial unrest, and that security forces in some cases killed and raped Rohingyas.

Myanmar officials have defended their treatment of the group and say they have helped re-establish order and cooperated with international aid organizations to bring relief to the area. (...)

Either way, some of the most vocal critics in the past couple of weeks have come from countries that have in the past been more welcoming to Myanmar than the West, including Indonesia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Malaysia. Many are concerned that Rohingya Muslims are being discriminated against at least in part because of their religious beliefs—an issue that hits home in their own countries with large Muslim populations. (...)

Diplomats and human-rights organizations have also criticized Bangladesh for their unwillingness to accept more Rohingya refugees to the country, which already houses thousands of Rohingya refugees. (...)

The Rohingya problem remains one of the most challenging for Myanmar at a time when its government is expanding freedoms for most residents, including releasing political prisoners and easing restraints on the Internet after the country's military regime stepped down last year. The Rohingya are widely seen in Myanmar as the country's most unwanted ethnic group, and they are excluded from citizenship laws and restricted in their movements and activities, including marriage and reproduction. (...)

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