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**(De)Securitising Rohingya People in the Asian Context:
State, Humanitarian and Contestatory Framings Since 2017**

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Contents

<i>List of Tables</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>List of Diagrams</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>List of Appendices</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>List of Acronyms</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Acknowledgement</i>	<i>vi</i>
<i>Abstract</i>	<i>vii</i>
Chapter 1 Overall Introduction	1
1.1. Becoming a ‘Security Threat’: Eternal Hardship of Rohingya	1
1.2 Significance of This Research	2
1.3 Research Objectives and Question	4
1.4 Background to the Rohingya Crisis and Beyond	5
1.5 Chapter Outline	9
Chapter 2 Theorising and Methods	10
2.1 Introducing Securitisation Theory	10
2.2 Methodology and Methods	13
2.3 Limitation and Positionality	17
Chapter 3 Analysis of Framings	19
3.1 Introduction	19
3.2 Government: Civilian and Military Securitisations	19
3.2.1 Civilian Government	19
3.2.2 Military Securitisation Framings	21
3.3 Contrasting Desecuritisation Among UN Agencies	24
3.3.1 Desecuritising Rohingya and Its Impact	24
3.3.2 Humanitarian and Human Rights Perspectives on Desecuritisation	25
3.4 Countering Securitising of Rohingya: ARNO	28
3.5 A Sharp Turn: NUG Reframing After the Coup	30
3.6 Contesting Framings of Rohingya	31
Chapter 4 Recovering the Term ‘Rohingya’	33
4.1 Introduction	33
4.2 State Level Framings	33
4.3 United Nations Agency Framings	34
4.4 Rohingya Community Level Framings	35
4.5 Post-coup State Level Framings	36
Chapter 5 Conclusion	37
References	39
Appendix	47

List of Tables

Table 1: Vuori's five Strands of Securitization	11
Table 2: List of articles analysed by WPR	16
Table 3: IOM and UNHCR's Rohingya Framing Comparison	26

List of Diagrams

Diagram 1: Actors' decision on (de)securitizing Rohingya	32
Diagram 2: After the coup: Actors and corresponding framing of Rohingya's identity	36

List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Framing Analysis – Myanmar Government	47
Appendix 2: Framing Analysis – Myanmar Military	49
Appendix 3: Framing Analysis – United Nations Agencies	52
Appendix 4: Framing Analysis – Rohingya Organisation	57
Appendix 5: Framing Analysis – NUG	61

List of Acronyms

ARNO	Arakan Rohingya National Organisation
ARSA	Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army
ASEAN	The Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EU	European Union
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IDP	Internally Displaced People
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IO	International Organisation
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NLD	National League for Democracy
NUG	National Unity Government
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USCIRF	U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom
USDP	Union Solidarity and Development Party
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WPR	'What's the Problem Represented to be?' approach

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À la Volonté du Peuple. To people who continue fighting for their freedoms and rights in spite of adversity.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyse different framings around the ‘Rohingya crisis’ that can be dated to August 2017, when an attack by a Rohingya insurgent group, ARSA, on Myanmar security forces in northern Rakhine triggered a military ‘clearance operation’ in Rohingya’s settlements that resembled a genocide. After some 800,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh for safety in late 2017, this became one of the biggest refugee crises in the region. The study finds out and compares how military and civilian state actors in Myanmar frame Rohingya, using securitisation theory. It contrasts ‘securitised’ state framings of Rohingya with ‘desecuritised’ framings of two UN agencies, UNHCR and IOM, and of a Rohingya organisation, selecting the case of Arakan Rohingya National Organisation (ARNO) for framing analysis. This organisation’s framing differs from both state and UN agencies’ framings, since Rohingya explicitly frame themselves as victims of injustices, indigenous to Myanmar and excluded over time by being denied citizenship. Combined with long-standing structural violence and discrimination, state framings have rendered Rohingya stateless. On the one hand, the study found the military securitised the Rohingya as ‘Bengali’, seeking to justify their violent exclusion from Myanmar’s citizenry and nation. On the other hand, the civilian government tended to accept the military’s framing. By contrast, the two UN agencies seek to desecuritize Rohingya refugees, countering Myanmar state framings, and appealing for international awareness and assistance to end Rohingya suffering. Guided by somewhat different humanitarian and human rights perspectives, IOM and UNHCR each have distinct interpretations and solutions to the Rohingya crisis. This research also finds that different actors’ framings closely relate to their respective positions on the term ‘Rohingya’ as an identity marker. Finally, the study briefly considers the turnaround in the civilian opposition’s framing of Rohingya people *as* Rohingya since the coup of February 2021.

Relevance to Development Studies

This research employs securitisation theory to examine how state actors frame Rohingya to justify their past and future actions while studying how UN agencies counter the state framing with humanitarian or human rights perspective. Rohingya are no longer recognised as citizens by the Myanmar government for historical reasons, including discrimination based on differences in religion, language, and appearance. They have suffered from both physical and structural violence imposed by the local communities and the state in Rakhine state since at least 2012. This research also examines how refugees represent themselves in the crisis and how is it different from the UN agencies’ framing that is supposed to fight for their rights. Since development study tries to improve the living conditions of people, by analysing the framings related to Rohingya refugees, this research aims at deepening the understanding of how this minority’s situation came to be so precarious. The research believes the results can inspire future policymakers, researchers and aid workers to find new, more humane framings of Rohingya refugees. This needs to take place alongside meeting their needs, fulfilling their rights and coming up with more inclusive forms of citizenship, both in Myanmar and in South and Southeast Asian countries of refuge like Bangladesh, Indonesia and others.

Keywords

Rohingya, refugees, securitisation, desecuritisation, IOM, UNHCR, Myanmar, humanitarianism, human rights, identity

Chapter 1 Overall Introduction

1.1. Becoming a ‘Security Threat’: Eternal Hardship of Rohingya

The Rohingya are an ethnic group that originated from Rakhine State in the west of Myanmar. For historical reasons, differences in religion, language, and physical appearance, they are no longer recognised as one of the Myanmar ethnic groupings by the Myanmar government. They are officially considered foreign immigrants from Bangladesh and a security threat to Myanmar citizens and the state. This notion worsened since the military junta allowed some democratisation from 2012. Inspired in part by the Western-led war on terror and globalised Islamophobia since at least 2001, Myanmar local communities, and radical Buddhist organisations (such as Ma Ba Tha), the military (also known as Tatmadaw) and government all seek justifications for active persecution of Rohingya and later of other Muslims as well. As a result, the Rohingya community has faced and is still facing, structural and physical violence which forces them to flee to neighbouring countries, including Bangladesh, Indonesia, India, Malaysia and Thailand, where they survive as stateless persons, often without formal refugee status. Rohingya fled in 1978, 1991, 2012 and most dramatically and recently in 2017. Despite the Rohingyas’ plight, most countries in the region are reluctant to receive them. Even Indonesia and Malaysia who follow Sunni Islam like the Rohingya, lack the political will to receive and integrate those who fled. With the growing influx of Rohingya refugees, these countries’ governments start to consider the Rohingya unwanted outsiders. Thus, Rohingya people may eventually be forced to return to Myanmar, and are pushed back onto the high seas when they arrive by boat in some of these Asian countries.

This research intends to reveal why and how Rohingya have been (re)framed as a security threat by Myanmar government actors, and how these framings underpin policies affect the individual and collective rights of Rohingya. The research employs the analytical lens of securitisation theory as developed by Ole Wæver and Barry Buzan, and other scholars associated with the Copenhagen School of Critical Security Studies. This theoretical lens is used to analyse different (re)framings of Rohingya since 2017. The first selected framings are of the Myanmar government, including pronouncements and policies since ‘democratic’ reform from 2012, otherwise focusing on framings in the period 2017 to 2021. The study also looks at the framings of two international organisations, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Whereas the former can be considered to have a ‘humanitarian’ remit, the latter has a stronger human rights remit. Each presents a somewhat different rhetoric to counter the framing of the Myanmar government and accounts for the humanitarian crisis and human rights violations against Rohingya by state agents somewhat differently. Despite their position as both victims and witnesses of atrocities, the voices of Rohingya people tend to be neglected in discussions of these UN agencies around Rohingya needs and rights. This research will also seek to analyse a Rohingya framing, placing their perspective into the overall accounts of how the ‘Rohingya problem’ should be framed and has come about. Therefore, along with Myanmar government and UN humanitarian-human rights framings, the research examines the framing of the Rohingya crisis by one Rohingya representative organisation, the Arakan Rohingya National Organisation (ARNO). This diplomatic and advocacy organisation was established by Rohingya leaders and coordinates different Rohingya organisations in striving to promote the human rights of Rohingya still living in Myanmar as well as in refugee situations in other Southeast Asian countries (ARNO, 2018). ARNO publications can show how Rohingya tend

to frame themselves and frame other actors involved. This turns out to be different from the framings of either state actors, whether democratic or military, and the framings of either UN organisation included in this study.

1.2 Significance of This Research

Extensive research has been conducted on explaining the historical reasons for the non-recognition of Rohingya people as citizens of Myanmar by the government after independence in 1948 (Downman & Ubayasiri, 2017; Ibrahim, 2018; Wade, 2017; Walton, 2008). This non-recognition relates also to the very term ‘Rohingya’, which with some rare exceptions, is officially denied by the Myanmar authorities as an identity label. This group of people is instead referred to as ‘Bengali Muslims’ in official state discourse.

Other studies have shown how nation-building, Buddhist nationalism and the dynamic of domestic politics have served to marginalise the Rohingya minority, progressively depriving them of socio-economic, political and cultural rights. This started during the military junta and then intensified during the quasi-democratic era after 2012 (Chowdhory & Mohanty, 2020; Farzana, 2017; Myint-U, 2020). The loss of the right to citizenship is especially important to an understanding of their present situation. This study also draws on a number of ethnographic studies that have attempted to reveal the predicament of Rohingya in Myanmar internal refugee camps, in Bangladesh and across Southeast Asia (Ahammed, 2018; Downman & Ubayasiri, 2017; Wong & Suan, 2012).

Surprisingly little research has specifically focused on how and why the Myanmar government frame Rohingya people as a security threat in the first place. Before the coup d’état in February 2021, Myanmar went through a slow and partial democratisation from 2012 to 2020. During this period, the civilian government led by Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League of Democracy (NLD), ruled jointly with the military (the former military junta) and the military-backed political party, Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP). They controlled the country and the future of the Rohingya minority. Given their different political ideologies, it could be expected that civilian and military framings toward Rohingya might be different. However, this study will tentatively suggest that despite some differences in their framings, it can be illustrated that the consequences and policies towards the Rohingya of the civilian and military arms of the state largely overlap. The study also looks briefly at some contrasting framings of the Rohingya following the February 2021 military coup, when the National Unity Government of Myanmar (NUG) – the government in exile – changed their framing of the Rohingya minority. The coup took place whilst this research was underway, and this analysis is included separately, in the last chapter before the conclusion. Few known studies have employed securitisation theory to analyse the Rohingya crisis, and so it is hoped that this research can contribute an original perspective on the issue, contributing to a better overall understanding of how the crisis arose, from a critical security and historically embedded perspective, and perhaps informing those who seek longer-term solutions.

Myanmar itself is a country long torn apart by ethno-political conflicts, along lines of language, religion and belonging, and all across the country, not only in Rakhine. Most previous studies focus on the wider societal, economic and political implications of rising Myanmar Buddhist nationalism and the subsequent treatment of Rohingya and other Muslim minorities. However, Rohingya are just one of many minority ethnicities and for a long time lacked their own armed rebel group. Despite this, they were already targeted by central and Rakhine government for a long time and framed as terrorists and as a security threat by the state,

especially after 2012 large-scale communal violence in Rakhine and democratic political reforms (Wade, 2017). When in October 2016, the ‘Harakah al-Yaqin’, later renamed Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), launched an attack on security forces at the Myanmar-Bangladesh border, this was the first time Rohingya could be linked with an armed rebel group. ARSA proclaimed its right to defend Rohingya in light of continuing violence and violations of Rohingyas’ basic rights by locals and the military. ARSA appeared to have little connection or support from other jihadist groups in the Middle East or South Asia (Aljazeera, 2017; International Crisis Group, 2018). Nonetheless, the government had already framed the Rohingya minority as terrorists, and this framing hardened once ARSA launched another wave of attacks on police and other targets in August 2017 (Kironka & Peng, 2021).

As Hansen (2011a) has suggested, securitisation is a distinctly political process in which the issue might not present an actual threat to the valued referent object (in this case Myanmar ‘nationals’), but only a projected (or imagined) one. Using securitisation as a theoretical and methodological tool through which to analyse how various actors, including the Myanmar government, UN organisations with humanitarian and human rights mandates, and Rohingya themselves, frame Rohingya people, can heighten our understanding of how framing is used to justify violence, or to assert the right to protection, care, identity and citizenship. With reference to the Copenhagen School, a securitisation speech act generally needs to be performed by an actor with relative authority to approach the target audience and claim something is a threat and requires emergency measures (Hansen, 2011b; Langenohl, 2019). Whether such securitisation of an issue or group of people is successful or not depends on acceptance by the audience (Balzacq, 2011). The current plight of Rohingya people reflects the relative impact of different framings of security and insecurity. Through identifying Rohingya as an ‘existential threat’ – and non-Rohingya Buddhist civilians as referent objects to be protected – the Burmese state suggests who needs and deserves security and protection from who.

In recent years, scholars have discussed the difficulties both IOM and UNHCR have in performing their mandates, given funding pressures from declining budgets and dependency on western donors of both UN agencies (Cuttitta, 2019; Koch, 2014; Lavenex, 2016). A crisis in funding and questions of legitimacy have also affected UN relief operations in both Myanmar and in Bangladeshi refugee camps hosting the Rohingya. In South Asian and South-East Asian contexts, these agencies additionally suffer the limitations imposed by most regional states not having ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. This non-ratification makes it harder for UNHCR to find legal grounds for protecting the human right to refugee status for Rohingya people in the region. In Bangladesh for example, IOM and not UNHCR is the UN agency with overall responsibility for the Cox’s Bazar camps where Rohingya are now confined. Besides, as Moretti (2021) also noticed, there are conflicts, tensions and competition between these two UN agencies because of their somewhat overlapping mandates. Moretti suggested that the “two organisations...[each] frame the issue in a way that would give [themselves]...a more significant role in the response” (p.43) to the refugee crisis. While the Myanmar state authorities securitise Rohingya, turning them into stateless persons, it is interesting to study whether IOM and UNHCR counter these state framings and follow through on their respective humanitarian and human rights mandates. The IOM and UNHCR framings are compared with the two Myanmar government framings as a central part of the study. It is suggested that the kind of aid and support Rohingya are seen as entitled to, will in part depend on the extent to which IOM and UNHCR framings of Rohingya are rights-based rather than narrowly humanitarian or even security-based.

In academic debates around the Rohingya crisis, the voices of Rohingya people are largely overlooked. By studying their own framings of security and insecurity, in view of their prolonged oppression, this research aims to acknowledge the importance of including a Rohingya perspective into the discussion of security framings. Including Rohingya's voice also illuminates differences between their own self-representation and framings imposed on Rohingya by other actors - whether state actors or UN organisations. The urgency of their self-representation is as a group requiring immediate attention and assistance and entitled to citizenship rights and refugee status. This research selects ARNO, an advocacy organisation established by Rohingya leaders to fight for their rights, and represent the ethnic group, for framing analysis. ARNO (2018) is a broad-based organisation that collaborates with many other Rohingya organisations, and was chosen for this reason. Based in London, ARNO has regular contact with many national and international organisations (e.g., British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the European Parliament, European Union, Euro-Burman Office, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation) as well as with many human rights-focused INGOs. Given its internal and external connections, ARNO is arguably the best example for this research of how Rohingya representatives frame their own position. For this reason, the study includes as an example of Rohingya framing, a number of press releases from this particular organisation.

This research will thus focus on several framings and counter framings, those of the Myanmar government, both military and civilian, of two UN international organisations and of a Rohingya representative organisation. The focus is on the period since the most recent Rohingya 'genocide' crisis of 2017. Finally, the study updates the analysis by considering the changed framings of the Rohingya 'problem' by the Myanmar government in exile, following the military coup of February 2021. Although the 2017 Rohingya crisis can be seen as an extension of communal conflict in 2012, the violence at that time targeted Myanmar Muslims as a whole, and not only Rohingya. Within the selected research timeframe, the intention is to attend on framings related to the Rohingya since 2012, so as to account for the events of 2012, and to look at framings of UN agencies and Rohingya since 2017. Earlier events and framings are considered as part of the background (see Section 1.4).

1.3 Research Objectives and Question

This research intended to find out how both military and civilian government actors in Myanmar have framed Rohingya as a security threat since 2017, and how these framings have resulted in the plight of so many Rohingya fleeing Myanmar since 2017. Meanwhile, the study also examines how two UN agencies, IOM and UNHCR, which attend to migration and refugee issues respectively, (re)frame the Rohingya as a group requiring international attention, assistance, and rights as refugees. The study considers to what extent these two UN agency framings counter those of the Myanmar government. Finally, the study aims to bring in the perspective of Rohingya themselves, given the controversy that has built up around them, so as to understand how their position may frame the crisis differently from either Myanmar state or UN agencies.

There is one main question. In the context of the genocide of 2017 and exodus of Rohingya out of Myanmar, this research asks:

How can we compare the (re)framing of Rohingya by Myanmar government actors, UN agencies, and by Rohingya themselves?

Sub Questions

1. How did Myanmar 'democratic-military' government actors frame Rohingya after 2017?
2. In what way did these (re)framings produce the genocide that forced many Rohingya to flee Myanmar in 2017?
3. How did two UN organisations (IOM and UNHCR) react to Myanmar government framings of Rohingya? How has each agency framed the displaced Rohingya respectively?
4. Since 2017, how have Rohingya in exile framed their own position in relation to the Myanmar state framings?

1.4 Background to the Rohingya Crisis and Beyond

The term 'Rohingya' was first recorded in official documents after Myanmar gained independence in 1948 (Myint-U, 2020). According to Wade (2017), their problems began when the Rohingya were not officially recognised and therefore not documented by the British colonial government. They were instead given the name 'Rakhine Muslims' or 'Chittagong Muslims'. When Ne Win – the Myanmar military junta leader from 1962 to 1988, chose Bamar Buddhists as the favoured national race in the 1960s, this marked the beginnings of 'Burmanisation' in Wade's terms (2017). Ne Win believed all other ethnicities were hindering the unification of Myanmar, and thus employed different tactics to oppress the languages and religions of other non-Buddhist and non-Bamar ethnic groups (Wade, 2017). Since the Rohingyas' language, religion, physical traits and historical loyalties differed from the Bamar in most respects, they became an obvious target for the military junta. Hence, they gradually suffered from more and more systematic discrimination and a hostile policy from the state. It is obvious that Ne Win was already trying to push forward a nation-building policy based on Buddhist-Bamar jingoism.

According to Wade (2017), in the 1960s, Ne Win started to allocate official and army positions in Rakhine State solely to Bamar. He also set up a Sangha network to counterbalance the so called 'Islamic influence' in the Rakhine area. The military junta considered Rohingya a group introduced artificially by the British, and thus refused to acknowledge them as Myanmar nationals, in the region for centuries (Wade, 2017). Rohingya were once recognized as one of the Myanmar national races by the U Nu government in the 1950s, but then they were forced to change their identity cards into foreign registration cards in the 1970s, when Ne Win took power (Wade, 2017). Rohingya were then completely eliminated from the national races list in 1982 (Ibrahim, 2018; Wade, 2017). Worse still, in 1989, they were once again forced to return their registration cards and never received new ones (Wade, 2017). Since then, the Rohingya in Myanmar have become de facto stateless person, and have been deprived of their most basic social, economic, political and cultural human rights.

Other than statelessness, the Rohingya have also faced different kinds of violence since the 1970s, most of which can be regarded as crimes against humanity according to international law. With reference to Wade (2017), Ne Win launched the 'King Dragon Operation' in 1978 to determine who was eligible to be a citizen in Rakhine State. During this operation, many Rohingya were raped and murdered, which led to over 200,000 Rohingya fleeing to Bangladesh in that year alone (Wade, 2017, p.92). This was the first occasion for Rohingya to flee to a neighbouring country. In 1991, Myanmar's military once again deployed in Northern Rakhine, and again around 270,000 Rohingya people were forced to flee to Bangladesh, fearing violence and killings (Wade, 2017, p.93).

2012 was a watershed for Myanmar democratisation after decades of dictatorship under a military junta. However, from 2012 Rohingya's misery continued and intensified, and structural violence evolved into physical violence. In 2012, violence erupted between Buddhist Rakhine civilians and Rohingya after a Buddhist girl was raped by three Muslims (Reuters, 2012). There was evidence that police joined the Buddhist mob or at the minimum did not seek to mediate or mitigate the violence. In these clashes, Rohingya were framed as terrorists by the media, and Rakhine local political parties, community groups, monk organisations all claimed the Rohingya wanted to turn Myanmar – or at least Rakhine - into an Islamic state (Wade, 2017, p.103). According to a spokesperson of Rakhine Ethnic Development Party,

This is a terrorist attack. It cannot be neglected. [Even though]...all the citizens have the rights of religious freedom, Rohingya people are not involved in 135 Myanmar national ethnics...The prevailing attacks mean insulting the hosts by the guests. This is a terrorist attack. (Eleven Media, 2012)

On the other hand, Buddhists were portrayed in the media as naturally peaceful and performing justifiable acts of self-defence (Wade, 2017, p.108). Wade (2017) believes the 2012 violence demonstrated that Rakhine Buddhists were fearful that Muslims might take over Rakhine state. After the violence, Rohingya were forbidden to return to their hometowns and were kept in a kind of apartheid from Buddhists in internal refugee camps set up by the military. Their basic human rights such as health care, mobility and education were denied. Aid organisations also had difficulty providing humanitarian relief, and were blamed for favouring Rohingya, resulting in attacks by Rakhine Buddhist people on the camps and humanitarian actors (OCHA, 2014).

In October 2016, ARSA launched an attack in northern Rakhine and killed several Border Guard Police. According to the International Crisis Group (2018), ARSA was established by the Rohingya diaspora in Saudi Arabia, and it aimed to “stop the persecution of Rohingya and secure their rights and greater autonomy as Myanmar citizens”. In the context of the western-led war on terror and Islamophobic narratives since at least 2001, this attack provided the perfect excuse for the military to directly attack Rohingya civilians in the name of anti-terrorism. Subsequently, Rohingya were killed, raped, and their homes set on fire by the military. According to Human Rights Watch (2020a), in 2017 over 1.2 million Rohingya were forced to flee to Bangladesh and other countries. According to UNHCR (2021a), there are still approximately 980,000 Rohingya refugees or stateless persons in neighbouring countries or stranded at sea, while some 370,000 Rohingya remain internally displaced inside the internal refugee camps set up in Myanmar.

Ever since the conflict between Buddhist and Muslim communities happened in Rakhine in 2012, the state has been shrouded by religious tension and sporadic anti-Muslim violence. The instability and apartheid between Buddhists and Muslims, further impedes development in Rakhine. In an effort to address the instability and poverty of Rakhine, in September 2016, Aung San Suu Kyi requested the Kofi Annan Foundation and the Office of the State Counsellor of Myanmar to establish an *Advisory Commission on Rakhine State*. The Commission was “mandated to examine the complex challenges facing Rakhine State and to propose responses to those challenges” (Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, 2017). The setting up of the Advisory Commission received a mixed response from the international community and human rights organisations. The then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon supported the establishment of the commission, and human rights organisation also considered it is a “positive step to the right direction” (Al Jazeera, 2016). Yet, Amnesty International remained sceptical of the ability of the commission to improve human rights conditions in the Rakhine

region, since it lacked any mandate to investigate alleged human rights violations. Amnesty considered the commission a tactic of the Myanmar government to avoid facing its international legal responsibilities for human rights violations in Rakhine (Amnesty International UK, 2017).

In March 2017, the Advisory Commission on Rakhine published an interim report, followed by a final report in August. The final report provided 88 recommendations on 16 disputed topics, ranging from citizenship, freedom of movement and security to social cohesion. On the very day the final report was published, another round of violent conflict erupted in northern Rakhine between ARSA, Myanmar Border Guard Police, and the military. According to Human Rights Watch (2018), the government did not implement any of the Advisory Commission's recommendations, but "...used them to deflect criticism and calls for genuine action" (p.6). This suggested Amnesty International's scepticism was likely justified.

In 2019 the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar published a report which confirmed that acts of genocide had been carried out by the Myanmar government and military between 2017 and 2018 (OHCHR, 2019). Based on this report, the Gambia filed a lawsuit through the ICJ in November 2019, against Myanmar, for violating The Genocide Convention. Gambia's action is backed by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, representing 47 states. Because of this case, Ms Suu Kyi was summoned to testify in front of the ICJ in The Hague in December 2019, as then Myanmar head of state.

Currently, Bangladesh hosts the largest Rohingya population in Asia, concentrated in the refugee settlements of Kutupalong and Nayapara in Cox's Bazar district (UNHCR, 2021a). The camps are mainly coordinated by IOM. Shelter, WASH, health care and education are all provided to Rohingya refugees by IOM, UNHCR and hundreds of other humanitarian INGOs. IOM claims to operate according to the four humanitarian principles: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence (IOM, 2018). However, a notable lack of human rights protection for Rohingya people in the camp locations, can largely be attributed to IOM's restrictive mandates which focuses mostly on helping states to manage all forms and impacts of migration (IOM, 2021). Compared to UNHCR, IOM is arguably a more 'value free' service provider for the state. Different scholars have criticised IOM for not including human rights protection in its mandate, making it difficult for refugees and stateless persons under IOM control to get the protection they have a right to under law (Guild et al., 2020; Moretti, 2021; Pécoud, 2018).

As a keystone UN agency for handling refugee and IDP situations on a global scale, UNHCR also provides humanitarian protection to people who are fleeing war, persecution or authoritarian regimes (Ilcan & Rygiel, 2015; UNGA, 1950). Moretti (2021) suggests that compared with IOM, UNHCR has "a strong protection mandate by virtue of its own statute as well as on the basis of the Refugee Convention" (p.38). Hence UNHCR tends to protect and advocate for the human rights of refugees. With reference to this mandate of UNHCR and the nature of the crisis, it may seem that UNHCR should be taking the lead in handling the Rohingya refugee crisis. Yet, since IOM's stance favours the state and fits in with a lack of protection directives, this makes IOM an attractive option for regional governments, as in Bangladesh, when it comes to handling the influx of Rohingya. Since the government of Bangladesh has not ratified the Refugee Convention, UNHCR lack the legal basis to exercise its human rights protection mandate in these camps, and so plays a secondary, supporting role to IOM (Moretti, 2021).

On 1 February 2021, after a decade of civilian rule, the military overthrew the civilian government of Myanmar, after the military-backed party was defeated by the NLD in November 2020 general elections. State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, President Win Myint and other NLD leaders were detained by the military. Some former ministers, legislators and officials able to escape the country formed the NUG - a government in exile seeking to rally international support, recognition and to form a military force to fight against the military junta.

Numerous anti-coup protests were organised by pro-democracy activists and civilians in Yangon, Mandalay and Naypyidaw, seeking to end the military rule and restore democracy. As a result, the military junta imposed martial law, night-time curfew, an internet blackout and declared a year-long state of emergency to deter people from organising protests. According to Reuters (2021a), as of August 26, 2021, due to excessive use of force, at least 1,031 people had been killed by the military during protests. The coup triggered another wave of forced displacement in Myanmar. According to the UNHCR Asia Pacific office, around 200,000 people were internally displaced in the first four months of military rule. The majority of IDPs came from ethnic groups in direct conflict with the military (Al Jazeera, 2021).

Many western countries condemned the coup, imposed economic sanctions and pulled out investments from the country, yet the UN failed to put forward any meaningful solutions. Barber (2021) concluded that the veto power of China and Russia paralysed the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), which was unable to impose an arms embargo, sanctions, or refer human rights offenders to the International Criminal Court (ICC). ASEAN, as the most important regional organisation in the region, also appeared to lack the power and political will to resolve the political crisis. ASEAN did, however, ask the military junta to call a cease-fire to allow the distribution of humanitarian aid (Reuters, 2021b).

Facing the threat of the military junta, on 3 June 2021, the NUG made an unprecedented statement – the “Policy Position on the Rohingya in Rakhine State”. For the first time, the civilian government acknowledged prolonged discrimination, human rights violations and violence experienced by Rohingya people, and pledged to follow through on the 2017 recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine, and protect Rohingya people’s human rights, and restore their citizenship. This was in an effort to unite resistance forces from Myanmar to fight against the military junta. Although this is a positive change, many Rohingya refugees, for example, stuck in Cox’s Bazar camps in Bangladesh, remain pessimistic. As one study suggests (Olney and Ahmad, 2021), the military junta is likely to hold onto political power in Myanmar, making it unlikely the NUG will gain political power and end the plight of Rohingya. For the few Rohingya who would like to return to Myanmar, their plans have been delayed as safe repatriation became impossible after the coup.

When this political instability is coupled with COVID-19, Rohingya refugees’ situation becomes even worse. The pandemic has created unprecedented secondary challenges in the world’s largest refugee camps, including a deterioration in community engagement, decreased safety and security, overall health deterioration, increased economic and food insecurity, lack of WASH services, lack of education and increased vulnerability to weather-related hazards (ACAPS, 2021; Oxfam Intl., 2021). The Bangladesh government started a vaccination programme in Cox’s Bazar in early August 2021 to contain the spread of the virus. Rohingya who remain in Rakhine state are less fortunate, as the military junta has no vaccination plans for them at all (Reuters, 2021c). To conclude, most Rohingya people continue to live in despair four years after violence and displacement from northern Rakhine. Both a humanitarian response, involving continuous attention and assistances from the international community, and the restoration of their citizenship and human rights, will be required.

1.5 Chapter Outline

This research is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 has introduced the research, briefly presenting the current background, in Myanmar and explaining the historical, domestic, and regional dynamics of the Rohingyas' plights. Chapter 2 will focus on the conceptual framework of the paper, related to securitisation theory, framing and related analytical tools, for understanding framings of Rohingya vulnerability, security threat and identity. It explains the methodology, selection of texts for analysis and research limitation, and explains how data will be handled and analysed. Chapter 3 analyses the selected texts, discussing how state, UN and Rohingya actors (de)securitise Rohingya as a security threat or victim. It considers such framings in detail, and suggests some implications of these divergent framings. Chapter 4 then examines how (de)securitisation of different actors reflect their stance on Rohingyas' identity and the national identity of Myanmar. Chapter 5 concludes, presenting the main research findings and tentatively suggesting ways the Rohingya crisis might be resolved in future.

Chapter 2 Theorising and Methods

2.1 Introducing Securitisation Theory

This research employs the securitisation approach of the Copenhagen School as its theoretical framework for analysing how Myanmar state, international community and Rohingya actors (re)frame Rohingya as a security threat, or as a group that requires protection, and deserves human rights. This research considers how UN and Rohingya framings counter Myanmar state framings by ‘desecuritising’ Rohingya people and Rohingya identity.

Securitisation theory has been a major theoretical lens used to analyse crises, such as the European migrant crisis of 2015, for example. Such studies focused mainly on why and how the European Union (EU) and its member states framed migrants and refugees, crossing the Mediterranean Sea from North Africa or EU – Turkey border, as a security threat. Often this framing was used to justify the use of extraordinary measures, including forceful policing of sea borders, or the EU-Turkey agreement (Cuttitta, 2020; Cuttitta & Last, 2019; Karanidou, 2015; Mitzen, 2018; Swarts & Karakatsanis, 2013). These studies also examine the role of international organisations (IOs) and non-governmental/civil society organisations (NGOs/CSOs), such as IOM, UNHCR, Red Crescent, and humanitarian initiatives in the Mediterranean for search and rescue. Such studies consider how EU, states, UN agencies and humanitarians react and cooperate, on the basis of their own distinctive framings of the refugee problem (Cuttitta, 2020; Cuttitta & Last, 2019). The present study seeks to carry out a similar exercise, but in relation to the Rohingya genocide and the crisis of displacement that has followed.

Both the European migrant crisis of 2015 and the Rohingya crisis of 2017 share a number of similarities. For example, the Rohingya like most migrants seeking to enter the EU, are treated as a potential security threat by various states, rather than as potential refugees, deserving human rights protection and supported by humanitarian law. In both cases, there are large populations already suffering from well-documented displacement, human rights violations, war and even genocide. To some extent, their problems are caused by national identity formation in the global south – for example in Syria, Iraq or in Myanmar. Some similar regional political structures are involved (EU and ASEAN) and IOs and NGOs/CSOs are also involved in both cases, including those advocating for those displaced and in exile. Despite divergences in the origins of refugees, their political and economic status, and their regional geopolitical context, the similarities mentioned above allow this research to draw on the European ‘migration crisis’ set of studies for a theoretical framework to analyse the specific case of the Rohingya.

According to Wæver (1999), securitisation theory focuses on how different actors manufacture threats and how the actor convinces audiences to believe these narratives. Securitisation is the core process of the theory. Wæver (1999) suggests there are five elements of securitisation, 1) an actor performs a speech act to securitise, 2) claims there is an existential threat, 3) a target audience, 4) a purposed extraordinary measure and 5) the acceptance of the target audience. With reference to Hansen (2011a), it is a political act by which the securitizing actor presents a threat that might not pose any real danger to the chosen ‘referent object’. Balzacq (2005), Hansen (2011b) and Langenohl (2019) stressed that the security speech acts need to perform by actor with relative authority. The speech should be aimed at a specific audience, is context-dependent and power-laden (Balzacq, 2005), the speaker should “tune

his/her language to the audience’s experience” (Balzacq, 2005, p.184), and seeks to convince the audience that extraordinary measures are needed to counter the threat and protect the ‘referent object’. Balzacq (2011) and Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde (1998) argue the acceptance by the audience reflect a successful securitisation act. These studies suggest that the Myanmar democratic government and military can frame Rohingya as a security threat in order to justify exceptional security measures, as well as structural and physical violence. Chapter 3 examines a number of security framings of Rohingya people.

Conventional securitisation theory is developed based on democratic regimes within European countries, but as Vuori (2008) argues, authoritarian regimes generally use securitisation measures to legitimise their use of emergency measures and force. Vuori (2008) considers securitisation to “serve as ‘system maintenance’ in reproducing understandings of the self and other” (p.72). He proposes five strands of securitisation in authoritarian regimes, each with a different speech act element and aim (Vuori, 2008, p.76).

Table 1: Vuori’s five Strands of Securitization

	Strands of Securitisation	Speech Act Elements	Aims
1	Raising an issue on the agenda	Claim – Warn – Suggest	Convincing
2	Legitimizing future acts	Claim – Warn – Request	Legitimacy
3	Deterrence	Claim – Warn – Declare	Intimidation
4	Legitimizing past acts for reproducing the security status of an issue	Claim – Warn – Explain	Legitimacy
5	Control	Claim – Warn – Require	Obedience/ Discipline

Table 1 shows that whether securitisation is used in relation to future, past or on-going events, the process is largely similar. Securitisation starts by claiming something as an existential threat and warning that a valued referent object’s safety is at risk (e.g. the nation, women and children). The decisive factor that distinguishes these five strands is the recommended action, which can be to suggest, request, declare, explain, and require. Vuori (2008) used the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre and Falun Gong cases to illustrate how the Chinese government, an authoritarian regime, has employed five strands of securitisation to justify past, future and on-going actions.

Myanmar experienced significant improvements in terms of democratisation between 2012 and 2020, though this democratic government was dismissed by the February 2021 coup d’état. Yet throughout, the military remained influential in political, economic, and social terms. At most this research can define the government of 2012-2021 as quasi-democratic, during the period the Rohingya crisis took place. Therefore, the theory of Vuori is useful for explaining Myanmar government motivations in framing Rohingya, particularly the military framing.

Desecuritisation is the inverse action of securitisation, seeking to de-escalate an issue back into the ‘normal’ political realm, and “disconnect it from perceptions of security” (Swarts & Karakatsanis, 2013, p.101), so as to allow ‘normal’ debate and discussion. Desecuritisation aims to reverse a politically constructed existential threat. According to Hansen (2011a), to achieve desecuritisation, different strategies are to 1) stabilise the claimed security threats, 2) replace it with another threat, 3) reticulate the threat back into the domain of normal politics and 4) silence the issue in security discourse. Swarts and Karakatsanis (2013) argue that,

desecuritisation appears to be more difficult and problematic than simply reversing the directionality of the securitization equation... it may be significantly more difficult to desecuritize, perhaps requiring more time and significantly more effort to move attitudes 'back' to something like what they were before. (p.108-109)

By studying how the Greek government tried to desecuritize migration, Swarts and Karakatsanis (2013) discovered the process can be hindered by the security bias of the public, the socio-political context of the country, and conflicting national myths. It is to be expected that Rohingya, IOM and UNHCR construct counter-framings to Myanmar state actors, seeking to represent Rohingya people as deprived of their citizenship rights, or at least as innocent civilians who require immediate humanitarian assistance. Longer-term human rights, notably citizenship, might be expected to appear in such framings. This research looks at how these actors framed Rohingya in their official documents. The post-February 2021 framings of the Rohingya 'problem' by the Myanmar government in exile is also briefly addressed, since it took place during the preparation of this research. It shows dramatically how governments can reverse their previous framings when circumstances change.

Phil Cole (2020) argues that in liberal theory, a refugee is considered a person lacking agency, since their political agency is lost along with citizenship. Refugees are framed as passive actors who require "assistance from the international community in order to be reinserted into a national political order" (Cole, 2020, p.36). While refugees tend to be silenced, UN organisations that take the lead, tend to represent refugees in a way that aligns with their own mandates. Cole (2020) concludes that,

[a]ny solution to the refugee question constructed within liberal political theory even in its international form – thus cannot be genuinely inclusive and egalitarian because the negotiation on which that solution is based cannot take place on an equal basis. (p.43)

He proposes that society need to recognise the agency of refugees not only from an ethical standpoint but also from the level of political theory. This research compares two UN organisations, with contrasting humanitarian and human rights mandates, and a Rohingya organisation established by Rohingya leaders to represent the Rohingya in the refugee crisis and restore their rights of citizenship. This research considers whether humanitarian goals – for example of UN agencies like IOM – may undermine not only Rohingya refugees' political agency in the representation process, but also norms of human rights.

The ultimate goal for studying conflict is to understand the root cause and come up with solutions to tackle the causes of conflict and build long-lasting peace. Liberal peace theory has been regarded as the panacea for resolving conflicts and maintaining peace and is widely adopted by UN agencies and think tanks. Mac Ginty (2016) even describes the liberal peace theory have monopolized the peacebuilding sector (p.32). This doctrine is rooted in the 'Perpetual Peace' associated with Immanuel Kant and revived by Michael Doyle in the 1980s. The theory believes democratisation, marketisation and commitment to liberal principles in a post-conflict country or society will help building peace and prevent future conflict as it creates a community of interests. It applies to both inter and intra state conflict. However, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the conflict between Rohingya and the Rakhine Buddhists broke out in 2012, precisely during the heyday of Myanmar's democratisation and marketisation after decades of military rule and a closed economy. The violence and abandonment endured by Rohingya can be classified as structural violence in Johan Galtung's terms. This type of violence is embedded in the social structure and considered normal by the authority and the society; therefore, it is silenced when it happens (Galtung, 1969). This demonstrates that liberal peace cannot always address the root cause of violent conflicts; a different perspective may be needed.

John Paul Lederach (2010) suggests that war and conflict should be understood from the “lived history” of the current generation, “remembered history” of the community and “narratives” around people’s identity. For building lasting peace, he suggests it is crucial to focus on four types of change: personal, relational, structure and cultural (Lederach, 2003). To achieve these changes, actions should be taken at elite, middle class and grassroots levels (Lederach, 1997). This research will examine whether the democratic-military government, international organisations or Rohingya use similar concepts to address the Rohingya conflict and seek to resolve it peacefully.

2.2 Methodology and Methods

According to Vouri (2013), “to study securitisation is to study discourse” (p.134). Since securitisation theory will be the primary analytical lens for this research, and speech act is a key element to consider, and this research will employ framing analysis to analyse the representations and meanings related to Rohingya at three levels: *state, international community, and community levels*. The research examines the grammar, vocabulary, signs, and symbols associated with Rohingya as used in official documents and policy briefs published by the government of Myanmar, UN organisations (UNHCR and IOM) and by a Rohingya organisation (ARNO).

From denial of citizenship to being regarded as a security threat to Myanmar, the historical, political, and socioeconomic context of Myanmar plays a crucial role in the plight of the Rohingya. Therefore, it is important to include the context when this research analyses the framing by state and UN organisations. In this way, the framing analysis will draw upon the features of critical discourse analysis, to include the context when analysis of discourse, instead of purely analysing the text – analyses a ‘linguistic turn’ since language is a form of social practice. One or two key speech and document will be drawn from the above actors, related to Rohingya between 2017-2019 for the framing analysis.

These were the years of the largest Rohingya population displacement in Myanmar history. This was also the largest movement since the quasi-democratic reforms of 2012. It will be beneficial to look at how ‘security’ framing has operated within the dynamic interactions between the democratic government and military in Myanmar, UN agencies, and Rohingya representatives over this period of 4-5 years.

For state level analysis, this research will focus on the key speeches and documents published by 1) *Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi* and 2) *Myanmar Military Senior General Min Aung Hlaing*. The focus in each text will be to show how Rohingya are depicted, represented and to analyse the meanings of these documents. Both are considered the most influential actors in the Myanmar political scene, representing the democratic and more conservative or military camp, respectively. Based on their differences in political ideology and framings, they are expected to have their own version of framing of the Rohingya crisis.

Myanmar State Counsellor - Aung San Suu Kyi

This research selected the *‘Government’s efforts with regard to National Reconciliation and Peace’* a speech delivered by Ms Suu Kyi in Nay Pyi Taw, on 19 September 2017. It is her first public speech after the Rohingya crisis in August 2017. The speech has extensive content regarding the crisis, peacebuilding, and development issues in Rakhine. The speech was delivered in English to government officials and foreign diplomats, which indicates that it was targeted

at the international community. Not only was it widely reported on by local newspapers published in Burmese (The Myanmar Times and Global New Light of Myanmar) it also had considerable international coverage (The New York Times, The Guardian, Al Jazeera and Nikkei Asia). Therefore, this speech is suitable for analysing how Ms Suu Kyi or the quasi-democratic government to frame Rohingya for a wider target audience, including Burmese people and the international community. Ms Suu Kyi also published other statements related to Rohingya and Rakhine later on, which mostly maintained the same discourses as the selected speech, so this research will not include the rest.

Myanmar Military Senior General - Min Aung Hlaing

Since Facebook removed Min Aung Hlaing's Facebook page in mid-2018, his official website (<http://www.seniorgeneralminaughlaing.com.mm>) has become the major outlet for his statements. The website provides bilingual versions of his statements. With the help of a Burmese speaker, this research was able to confirm that both versions were nearly identical, so this research can assert they are not modified for diplomatic purposes during translation. Two statements were selected from the website '*Entire government institutions and people must defend the country with strong patriotism*' and '*Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives US Ambassador*', as they represent how the military perceive issues related to the Rohingya. They were published on 2 September and 12 October 2017 respectively.

For UN organisations, it will examine whether IOM and UNHCR constructed a counter-narrative to the Myanmar government's framings of Rohingya people as a threat, using humanitarian and human rights discourses. Both IOM and UNHCR fall under the UN umbrella but given their differences in history, mandate and financial sources, how does this influence the ways they frame the Rohingya 'problem' in relation to the crisis of displacement?

IOM

After going through a number of statements and press releases published after the crisis broke out, two documents were selected. '*Why We Must Intervene to End the Suffering of Rohingya Refugees in Cox's Bazar*' published on 4 October 2017 and '*UN Migration Director General Commits to Strengthen Relief Efforts for Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh Visit*' published on 18 October 2017. Both documents clearly indicate the position of IOM toward Rohingya.

UNHCR

On 13 February 2018, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - Filippo Grandi - gave a briefing at UNSC on the latest development of the Rohingya refugee crisis and called for international solidarity to end the suffering of the people. Although this speech was delivered six months after the crisis in northern Rakhine, it clearly demonstrates the position of UNHCR and its framing of the Rohingya crisis.

An additional joint statement of IOM, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and UNHCR on the Rohingya refugee crisis is also analysed for the framings it contains. This statement acts as a 'control document' to show that there can be commonality between IOM and UNHCR, when it comes to addressing states, the international community, and donors on the need for action and funding.

ARNO

As already explained, ARNO is a key organisation formed by Rohingya leaders and coordinating various Rohingya representative organisations in support of the rights of Rohingya refugees and those still inside Myanmar. ARNO can be considered a representative body that seeks to give a voice to Rohingya people. A total of three press releases were selected for

analysing framings, ‘*Aung San Suu Kyi’s disingenuous speech fails to address Rohingya genocide*’ on 21 September 2017, ‘*Repatriation proposal is trickery, Myanmar authorities are not trustworthy*’ on 5 October 2017 and ‘*How long you lie to deny Rohingya existence*’ on 15 October 2017. All were rebutting official statements from Ms Suu Kyi and Min Aung Hlaing. These press releases are taken to broadly reflect Rohingya views concerning their own situation and what they consider the main threats to security. By analysing the selected ARNO statements, the study reflects on how Rohingya represent themselves and counter Myanmar state framings that securitise them. This research also consider how such Rohingya-centred framings differ from those of UN agencies.

Last but not least, a statement published on 3 June 2021, by the government in exile – NUG – is analysed. It shows how dramatically representations of Rohingya and related problems can change under the security threat of a military coup.

This research adapts the ‘What’s the Problem Represented to be?’ (WPR) approach introduced by Carol Bacchi, as a way to ‘interview’ the selected texts, as mentioned above, and depict the framings within. Originally designed for inspecting the implicit representation of a problem in public policy, this approach can be adapted to show how texts implicitly represent a ‘security’ problem (Bacchi, 2012, 2017). It makes it possible to critically analyse taken-for-granted problems and examine how these problems are being constructed and represented to the public (Bacchi, 2016). This author has stressed that WPR is not designed to study specific rhetoric used in public statement, rather she sees her approach as providing “‘levers’ to open up reflections on the forms of governing, and associated effects, instituted through a particular way of constituting a ‘problem’” (Bacchi, 2016, p.18).

Bacchi (2016) proposed six questions for analysis, aimed at “‘identifying, reconstructing and interrogating problematizations” (p.19). These questions act as the “checklist to guide the analytic process” (Goodwin, 2011, p.15). To facilitate the analyses of this research, the questions have been modified to better fit the intended texts and the context of the framing analysis, as follows:

1. What is the problem as represented in the statement?
2. What are the assumptions behind this representation of the problem?
3. How has this representation of the problem taken place?
4. What is left unproblematic in this representation?
5. What is the implication of this representation?
6. How and where has this representation of the problem been produced?
7. Why does the text try to represent the subject as a problem?

These questions will allow the framing analysis of this research to be conducted in a more systematic manner. Key texts from different actors will be examined using the same standard, and this will allow for a more objective basis for comparison between discourses.

No.	Level	Actor	Document Title	Document Type	Publishing Date
1		Civilian Government	Speech delivered by Her Excellency Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on Government's efforts with regard to National Reconciliation and Peace	Speech	26/09/2017
2	State	Military	Entire government institutions and people must defend the country with strong patriotism	Press Release	02/09/2017
3			Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives US Ambassador	Press Release	12/10/2017
4	UN Agency	IOM	Why We Must Intervene to End the Suffering of Rohingya Refugees in Cox's Bazar	Press Release	04/10/2017
5			UN Migration Director General Commits to Strengthen Relief Efforts for Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh Visit	Press Release	18/10/2017
6		UNHCR	Briefing on Myanmar at the United Nations Security Council	Speech	13/02/2018
7		OCHA	UN Principals call for solidarity with Rohingya refugees	Statement	17/10/2017
8	Community	ARNO	Aung San Suu Kyi's disingenuous speech fails to address Rohingya genocide	Press Release	21/09/2017
9			Repatriation proposal is trickery, Myanmar authorities are not trustworthy	Press Release	05/10/2017
10			How Long You Lie to Deny Rohingya Existence	Press Release	15/10/2017
11	Other	NUG - Government in exile	Policy Position on the Rohingya in Rakhine State	Statement	03/06/2021

Table 2: List of articles analysed by WPR

2.3 Limitation and Positionality

This research has encountered several limitations and challenges throughout the process of analysis. As mentioned above, text selection is extremely important for discourse analysis. The texts were selected for their relevance to the Rohingya refugee crisis, although it is clear no single document can fully represent the attitudes or positions of specific actors, which will vary somewhat across different documents. Therefore, there is a chance the research overlooks some existing representations and framings even of the selected actors. To address this problem, extra documents were selected for some actors when the researcher deemed it necessary. With the recent coup d'état, the military junta has tightened its control over internet usage, repressing the opposition camp and media. The Myanmar Times and five other independent news agencies are banned by the military junta since March 2021. It is impossible to access their past news coverage even with internet archive website. This has posed considerable challenges for the research process.

The result of the framing analysis will also depend on the accuracy and quality of translation, most notably in the statements from Min Aung Hlaing. It is believed his statements were first written in Burmese and then translated into English. This research sought help from a native Burmese speaker who was able to confirm that the meanings were almost identical between the two language versions. Framing analysis attends to the use of language, and therefore recognises that some important framings and points of representation might be lost in translation. This can affect the reliability of the findings.

According to Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde (1998), successful securitisation moves require acceptance from the audience – in Myanmar, the vast majority of the country's population. However, audiences in authoritarian contexts may not be 'readable' through opinion polls, for example. Also, given the stifling influence of COVID, the coup d'état and control of social media by the military government, it would be next to impossible to interview Myanmar citizens about their views on the Rohingya. Therefore, this research does not cover the important question of how Myanmar citizens framed the Rohingya and security before and following the coup. Instead, the main focus is on discourses of the Myanmar government, UN agencies and Rohingya actors and agencies, within the limited research timeframe.

Particularly in qualitative research, it is unrealistic to proclaim neutrality and objectivity. Different scholars have argued that all social research is guided and affected by the identity of the researcher and of research participants (Bourke, 2014; England, 1994; Jacobson and Mustafa, 2019). Identity or positionality of the researcher, such as beliefs, political stand, ethnicity, influence the choice of research topic, the methodology adopted and the research process itself. To address the researcher's positionality will therefore help the reader understand how the research chose the topic, handled the data and came up with the conclusions reached (Finlay, 2002).

Coming from Hong Kong, the researcher has long been aware of migrants and refugees as subjects of public discussion and political speeches, due to the historical background of the city, built by Chinese migrants. Hong Kong was a 'port of first asylum' for Vietnamese boat refugees from 1978 until the 1990s. This background inspired the researcher to study an issue connected to human and refugee rights. Growing up and doing his international relations degree in Asia, the researcher acquired a better understanding of regional history, the local politics of different countries and diplomatic relations in the region. Therefore, the researcher decided to study an on-going refugee crisis in the region. The positionality of the

researcher affects the process of text selection as well, and his interpretation of framings in selected texts. It is possible that this research has overlooked some documents suitable for analysis and missed out some framings in the text. However, on this account, the findings of this study should not be considered an objective presentation of the realities of the Rohingya crisis. Rather, the researcher seeks to take a step back to get a clearer view of how the crisis was framed and ‘securitised’ by different state and non-state actors.

Chapter 3 Analysis of Framings

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, this research introduced the historical context and proximate reasons for the suffering of Rohingya people in northern Rakhine and their exodus in 2017. It also justified employing securitisation as an analytical lens to understand how different actors frame the Rohingya to legitimise their own positions and actions. The concept and components of securitisation and desecuritisation were briefly explained, and some related theories as the analytical basis for the study's consideration of specific texts.

Following the research design and selected methodology, this chapter is divided into four sections. The first analyses and compares how Myanmar civilian government and military frame the Rohingya. Second, the question of whether IOM and UNHCR put forward different narratives is analysed, and the extent to which they counter Myanmar government framings. Thirdly, how ARNO rebuts Myanmar state framings with their own, and how these differ from the two UN agencies, is considered. Finally, in the fourth section, the framing in a statement by the government in exile helps show how attitude changes toward Rohingya take place after the coup.

3.2 Government: Civilian and Military Securitisations

Based on the result of the framing analysis, slight differences in framing between the civilian government and military can be revealed, where the civilian government adopts a more moderate approach contrasting with the military's more radical approach. The speech of Aung San Suu Kyi does not frame the Rohingya as a security threat to the country or its people. Instead, she tries to juggle between diplomatic and domestic political pressures and evade responsibility for the Rohingya crisis. On the other hand, Min Aung Hlaing explicitly frames Rohingya as a security threat to Myanmar, framing the military as acting in self-defence, in the interest of the country.

3.2.1 Civilian Government

In Suu Kyi's speech, she names ARSA as a terrorist group. Despite ARSA's claim they are fighting to restore Rohingya citizenship, Suu Kyi does not seek to connect ARSA and 'Rakhine Muslims' in general, or claim their support for ARSA. Nor does Suu Kyi frame the 'Rakhine Muslims' as a national security threat. On the contrary, Rohingya are represented as just one of many victims of this terrorist attack.

Without doubt, not being securitised as a threat could be viewed as positive from the perspective of the Rohingya themselves. At the same time, in her statement Suu Kyi silences the Rohingyas' suffering. First, their identity as Rohingya is denied. Second, she stresses Rohingyas are not the only ethnic group affected by the violence, Rakhines, Daing-net, Mro, Thet, Mramagyi and Hindu were also affected. She downplayed the seriousness of the targeted violence. Third, instead of investigating why the crisis erupted, she urged the international community to investigate why crisis did not happen in other parts of Rakhine. It is clear that she was trying to divide international attention away from state responsibility.

To not focus on the suffering of Rohingya is a political choice. Over the years, the majority of Buddhist Burmese have developed anti-Rohingya sentiments, encouraged by the former military junta apparatus. Rohingya have come to be regarded as outsiders by other Burmese. Suu Kyi's speech was targeted at the international community, and would also be reported in local media. If her speech appeared to support the Rohingya, she and NLD might run the risk of losing political support and this could affect future elections. Suu Kyi also needed to align her stand with that of the military on the Rohingya crisis, given the survival of the civilian government was controlled by the military.

It is easy to notice some contradictions in her speech. In a normal situation, if a conflict is branded as a terrorist attack, the authority will apportion all responsibilities to the terrorist and condemn their attack. Aung San Suu Kyi (2017) did not do that,

It is not the intention of the Myanmar government to apportion blame or to abnegate responsibility. We condemn all human rights violations and unlawful violence. (p.3)

Her presentation suggests violence did not happen solely because of ARSA; other actors were also involved. Aung San Suu Kyi (2017) then continues,

security forces have been instructed to adhere strictly to the Code of Conduct in carrying out security operations ... to avoid collateral damage and the harming of innocent civilians. (p.3)

She did not reject the accusation that the military and border guard police also contributed to the humanitarian crisis in northern Rakhine. Different reports had proven the Myanmar security forces violated human rights and committed crimes against humanity during the clearance operations.¹ It is not possible for Suu Kyi to overtly deny these allegations. By acknowledging general wrongdoings, it seems she is trying to ease diplomatic pressure on civilian government.

As mentioned in the background, in many ways the Myanmar military restricted and controlled the civilian government after the 2012 reforms. The coup in 2021 proved that the civilian government survival depended on the military's attitude. Suu Kyi decided to maintain a good relationship with the military in exchange for maintaining 'democracy'. Therefore, her speech was written in a neutral tone and did not reprimand military action despite huge diplomatic pressure on her to do so.

Externally, the military concealed itself behind the civilian government and remained free of international pressure. Internally, military actions were not restrained by any political parties. Under these circumstances, there was no reason for the military to stop its ethnic cleansing operation. No matter what rationales are behind Suu Kyi's decision, her speech had no ameliorating effect on the Rohingya's plight. It only served to prolong their suffering. This may explain why the Rohingya continued to flee Myanmar even after Suu Kyi's conciliatory speech.

Suu Kyi spends half her speech discussing how the civilian government tried to bring peace and stability to Rakhine and to Myanmar over a short period of time, rather than directly discussing the Rohingya crisis. Most of her references to so-called progress or solutions seemed designed to avoid addressing the issues surrounding the Rohingya. She highlighted

¹ Human Rights Watch (2017) - Crimes against Humanity by Burmese Security Forces Against the Rohingya Muslim Population in Northern Rakhine State since August 25, 2017; and Amnesty International (2017) - Myanmar: Scorched-earth campaign fuels ethnic cleansing of Rohingya from Rakhine State

that she invited Kofi Annan to lead the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, and yet her civilian government never adopted any of the Commission's recommendations before or after the violence. Human Rights Watch (2018) pointed out the government may have used the commission "to deflect criticism and calls for genuine action" (p.6).

Suu Kyi claims "all people living in the Rakhine State have access to education and healthcare services without discrimination" (Aung San Suu Kyi, 2017, p.4), but different INGOs and researchers have shown Rohingya have had difficulty accessing these two basic human rights until today (Human Rights Watch, 2020b; MSF, 2019). She also encourages Rohingya to go through the National Verification Process, which is the very system used to deprive them of citizenship. At the end of her speech, Aung San Suu Kyi (2017) concludes

conflicts of ideas can be...removed through discussion and dialogue...enables us to see other people's point of view...It is by cooperating only, that our world can go forward...All conflict arises either out of hate or fear. It is only by removing the sources of hate and fear that we shall be able to remove conflict from our country and from our work! (p.9)

This expression resonates with how Lederach (2010) understands conflict and his peacebuilding approach. The conflict between Rohingya and other ethnic groups are based on the 'lived history' of continuous violence since 2012. Further back in history, the Rohingya were blamed for obstructing Myanmar's independent movement in the 1940s by assisting the British army. These 'national narratives' favoured by the military junta, frame Rohingya as outsiders seeking to destroy Buddhism and the Myanmar nation. To build peace under these conditions, Lederach (2003) suggests a focus on change at four levels: personal, relational, structure and culture. What Suu Kyi's suggestion to remove fear and hate, and rebuild trust between ethnicities by discussion and dialogue, echoes the personal and relational changes in Lederach's theory. However, whilst Suu Kyi may sound like she has abandoned liberal peace for the alternative peacebuilding framework of Lederach, to achieve her vision, she depends on the military and their framing of the Rohingya as the main threat to peace. Without military cooperation, her hopes for dialogue and ending hatred remain a fantasy.

Throughout the speech, Aung San Suu Kyi seeks to ease international pressure while pleasing the military and avoiding any collapse of democracy. Although Rohingya people are not framed as a security threat by the civilian leader, their plight is ignored, extended through domestic and international political interplay. This speech is an obvious example of how human rights can be sacrificed for political ends, especially during conflict.

3.2.2 Military Securitisation Framings

The statements of Min Aung Hlaing demonstrate a very clear securitisation of Rohingya, combining the 'historical' attacks of 2016 and 2017 to represent the group as a national security threat requiring the military to intervene.

With reference to Wæver's (1999) five elements of securitisation, in Min Aung Hlaing's 2 September statement, he first stating that the Rohingya or 'Bengals' have been a threat since 1942 as the "Bengalis attacked, murdered, and coerced [Rakhine ethnics] into leaving their homes" (Min Aung Hlaing, 2017a). He continues in the next paragraph, "extremist Bengali terrorist launched synchronized attacks against an army unit headquarters and 30 police outposts" (Min Aung Hlaing, 2017a) causing casualties among security forces, government officials and local ethnics, and property and infrastructures damage. In tying the historical narratives that Rohingya killed Rakhinese in 1942 with the current conflict involving ARSA, he tries to frame the current attack as nothing more than an elongation of an old conflict, implying continuity between ordinary Rohingya and ARSA, framing both as a perpetual security

threat. In his press release published on 12 October 2017, Min Aung Hlaing stated that “local Bengalis were involved in the attacks under the leadership of ARSA” (Min Aung Hlaing, 2017b). Thus, to Min Aung Hlaing or the military, Rohingya is equal to ARSA. By framing the general Rohingya population as ARSA who are capable of organising deadly attack, it contrasted their victim-like and powerless image, and undermined their appeal for international intervention. It is notable that he used “extremist Bengali terrorists” more often than ARSA, which hints his intention to frame Rohingya.

Both statements focalise the causality and damage created by ARSA and Rohingya, but silence the collateral damage created by military. No details about military operations in northern Rakhine are mentioned, despite evidence of NGOs and international media reports. Even Suu Kyi did not deny that military might violate human rights. By presenting the number of the military personnel, officials and civilians killed and injured by ARSA (and Rohingya), this framing strengthens the claim that the security threat is from Rohingya, not the military, represented as the protective party.

Min Aung Hlaing’s securitisation of Rohingya is claimed as needed to protect Rakhinese civilians and Burmese generally. To specify that “over 20,000 ethnic Rakhine people were slaughtered. Bengalis after murdering ethnic Rakhine people seized their land and villages and lived there” (Min Aung Hlaing, 2017a) and to stress that military will “protect the state sovereignty, the national interest and people of the country” (Min Aung Hlaing, 2017b), shows how Rakhinese and the general Burmese are valued referent objects of military measures, justified in the name of a threat to security. Min Aung Hlaing does not propose any concrete measures to handle the security threat, but states “in addition to the security forces, the entire government institutions and the entire people must defend the country with strong patriotism” (2017a). Yet the evidence shows the military already performed extraordinary measures in response to the ARSA attack in northern Rakhine, including unlawfully killings, rapes, torture, burning Rohingya villages and markets (Amnesty International, 2020), making the call to action appear redundant. It shows how his statement securitises Rohingya in order to “legitimate past acts for reproducing the security status of an issue” (p.76) as suggested by Vuori (2008).

Because of the limited timeframe and effect of COVID-19, this research cannot verify if the target audience accepted Rohingya’s securitisation by the military. Yet, since not many counter-securitisation narratives were published in the media, social media channels and with the large number of supporters who showed up in the Hague when Suu Kyi testified at the ICJ, it can be suggested that the majority of Burmese seemed to accept - or at least did not reject - the military narratives.

Although authoritarian regimes are able to control the state with their coercive political, economic and military power, Vuori (2008) believes they also may need to use securitisation moves to legitimate their extraordinary measure and avoid political instability. Previously, this research discussed why Myanmar is a quasi-democratic regime, and justified the use of Vuori’s approach in this framing analysis. For Min Aung Hlaing, to securitise all Rohingya as a security threat instead of just ARSA, he seems to legitimate past, present and even future military operations against Rohingya (Vuori, 2008). By framing all Rohingya as cooperating with ARSA and attacking security forces in northern Rakhine, the framing in his speech reinforces a historical narrative that Rohingya have threatened Burmese Buddhism and nationalism. This framing serves to justify military operations as self-defence rather than genocide.

Min Aung Hlaing also use securitisation to legitimate the military future actions, when he stated that “in the ongoing incidents, the Tatmadaw had to get involved as the strength of police forces alone could not defend” (Min Aung Hlaing, 2017a). This statement, published seven days after violence erupted in northern Rakhine, securitises Rohingya and ARSA, claiming local security forces cannot handle the level of threat, serving to legitimate higher-level military intervention.

Other than securitisation, Min Aung Hlaing spends considerable space in his speech to refer to ‘historical’ and legal reasons why Rohingya should be categorised as illegal perpetrators, and the military as legal protectors. Both statements stress that Rohingya do not originate from Myanmar, and claim they were “taken into the country as manpower from Bengal region during the colonial time” (Min Aung Hlaing, 2017a). Again, “They are not the natives, and the records prove that they were not even called Rohingya, but just Bengalis during the colonial period” (Min Aung Hlaing, 2017b). The authenticity of this ‘history’ is highly contested between the military, ARNO, policymakers and historians. Military criticises Rohingya for not following the rule of law and neglecting the verification process, the 1982 Citizenship Law and 2008 Constitution. Yet these laws are used by military as an excuse to launch attacks, when these laws also were core to causing Rohingya statelessness, their suffering and plight. This was pointed out by the Advisory Commission in August 2017. For Rohingya to follow these discriminatory laws would further deprive them of any claim to rights as citizens. Nevertheless, the Myanmar military frames itself as a law-abiding security force that follows the law and constitution, since “no action goes beyond the legal framework” (Min Aung Hlaing, 2017b). According to Hall (1997), the state monopoly of the means to control how information is transmitted, affects how society and civilians perceive a particular event. In general, military narratives are regarded by Rohingya as incorrect, and a way to deny them status and citizenship. But with powerful anti-Rohingya sentiments, it is likely many Burmese civilians, especially in Rakhine, will accept the military narratives and act accordingly. This has a real effect on the Rohingya.

In his statement, Min Aung Hlaing presented the military action as following the desire of citizens to be protected. He claims that citizens mandate the military to act on their behalf – “the people’s decision is the decision of the Tatmadaw” (Min Aung Hlaing, 2017b). The military, he suggests, is protecting people that Rohingya want to eliminate from the country. This seems to be a reversal designed to obscure the military role in orchestrating genocidal operations against Rohingya. In reality, Myanmar citizens never mandated the military. They only supported the civilian government, as can be proven by the NLD landslide election victory in 2012. Yet the military claimed to be representing both military and civilian government actors, working in tandem to resolve the issue,

The Bengali problem was a long-standing one which has become an unfinished job...of the previous governments...the government in office is taking great care in solving the problem.
(Min Aung Hlaing, 2017a)

This cooperation was an illusion, as the coup later showed. Ms Suu Kyi did not directly address the military in her speech. They also cannot reconcile their preference in dealing with the issue in northern Rakhine. Suu Kyi tends to accept the recommendations from Advisory Commission, despite she never follow the recommendations in reality; while military silenced their recommendations and prefer the *Central Implementation Committee for Rakhine State peace, Stability and Development*², which they enjoy more influence.

² Central Implementation Committee for Rakhine State peace, Stability and Development is formed by state counsellor and ministers of Myanmar without external party.

To sum up, the military shows a clear securitised framing of Rohingya and ARSA in both statements and seek to justify past and future military actions to reinforce their legitimacy. It also framed Rohingya as a group not to be trusted and which does not deserve international intervention, given their use of ‘false facts’ and their controversial history. The statements reveal their difference with the civilian government on the causes of the crisis. Not only does securitisation of Rohingya serve to legitimise previous military genocidal action, it also is used to justify future military operations to control the ‘threat’, prolonging the suffering of the Rohingya.

3.3 Contrasting Desecuritisation Among UN Agencies

IOM and UNHCR are two UN agencies that have specific mandates to coordinate migration and refugee-related issues. Each does this in somewhat different ways. In view of the crisis, they both try to desecuritize the Rohingya and counter the framings imposed by both civilian and military Myanmar government actors. The following section investigates the IOM and UNHCR framings of Rohingya as desecuritized, comparing their understandings, and reasons why they may differ in their approaches.

3.3.1 Desecuritising Rohingya and Its Impact

As shown in Table 3, the IOM and UNHCR each has a very different approach in framing the 2017 Rohingya crisis. IOM frames Rohingya as a group of people who fled to Bangladesh because of murder, rape and arson in northern Rakhine (IOM, 2017a). IOM also stresses that a considerable number of women and children were affected by the crisis, using an image of their typical powerless to make a stronger case to appeal to its audience for humanitarian support (IOM, 2017b). UNHCR (2018) employs the story of an individual Rohingya refugee to illustrate that this group have been victims of recent violent attacks, subjected to ongoing state persecution. Both emphasise the importance of international attention and immediate assistance to end Rohingya suffering.

It is our responsibility to ensure that the suffering and trauma that they have experienced on the way must end. (IOM, 2017a)

...provide governments from around the world an opportunity to show their solidarity and share the burden and responsibility [to support the refugees]. (IOM, 2017b)

...international support, Mr. President, must be stepped up to avert a catastrophe. (UNHCR, 2018)

This is the responsibility of the Government of the Union of Myanmar. But international engagement and support are key to making it happen. (UNHCR, 2018)

It is evident that both UN agencies’ framings counter with securitisation frames of the Myanmar military in particular. IOM and UNHCR reframe Rohingya as victims and do not see them as perpetrators alongside ARSA. Rohingya are accepted as fleeing not because of food shortages or to return to where they belong but because of persecution and violence.

With reference to Hansen’s (2011a) 4 forms of desecuritisation, reticulation “remove[s] an issue from the securitised by actively offering a political solution to the threats, dangers, and grievances in question.” (p. 542). IOM and UNHCR statements are targeted at UN member states, the international community and donors, and their reframings reticulate Rohingya from being a threat, even reframing the Rohingya minority as a valued ‘referent object’ that requires protection. However, as explained earlier that desecuritisation is inherently more

difficult to achieve than securitisation (Swartz and Karakatsanis, 2013). Rohingyas' desecuritisation by IOM or UNHCR will have little effect on changing perceptions of Rakhinese and general Burmese toward Rohingya. For the military, it is Rakhinese and Burmese generally who are referent objects in their securitisation of Rohingya, which denies any suffering on the part of this 'unwanted minority'.

One thing that stands out is that UNHCR mentioned in its statement the possibilities of Rohingya becoming radicalised in future if the root causes of the crisis are not properly addressed. UNHCR's worries are based on the perception that conflicts worldwide have accelerated radicalisation (Alcorta, Swedlund & Smits, 2020). This seems to be an effort to motivate the international community to react more swiftly to Rohingya suffering with the predominant 'war on terror' concern of the UN and many Western countries. However, when UNHCR portrays them as a potential threat, unintentionally perhaps, this can undermine the overall desecuritisation of Rohingya.

Evidence from Amnesty International (2020) shows the military was responsible for the targeted violence in northern Rakhine in 2017, yet all UN statements analysed remained silent on this matter. They do not mention the ARSA attack that triggered the military to launch their 'clearance operation' in Rakhine state. It is interesting that whilst UNHCR pointed out that the civilian government is responsible for the prolonged suffering of Rohingya before 2017, IOM does not do so. UNHCR points out that Myanmar's government failed to resolve structural violence, referring to a human rights framing.

[W]e have yet to see substantive progress on addressing the exclusion and denial of rights that has deepened over the last decades, rooted in their lack of citizenship. (UNHCR, 2018)

As shown in the above quote, despite referring to rights, UNHCR's wording and tone remains fairly mild. This might lead one to question whether such statements can generate enough international pressure to motivate governments to amend their policies toward Rohingya.

Across all UN statements analysed, the Myanmar civilian and military government are perceived as a single entity. Presumably, this decision was made according to UN principles of non-interference in member states' domestic politics and respect for national sovereignty. Yet the Myanmar military were the main perpetrators in provoking the 2017 crisis. By treating them as a single entity, the UN agencies enable the military to conceal themselves behind the outward-facing civilian government. In this way, the military remains free from international pressure and the civilian government is first in line to take the blame.

3.3.2 Humanitarian and Human Rights Perspectives on Desecuritisation

The mandate and values of these two UN organisations largely affect how they contemplate the Rohingya crisis, and how they approach the problem. This research has shown that IOM and UNHCR have sought to desecuritize the Rohingya's role in the 2017 crisis, but this research also discovered each UN organisation has a different way of understanding the crisis and this affects their respective solutions. Differences in their mandate are the main reason each seeks to desecuritize Rohingya in a different way.

	Comparison Aspect	IOM	UNHCR
1	Official position on Rohingya	Both organisations consider Rohingya as the victim of the crisis which require international attention and humanitarian aids to end their sufferings	
2	Reason for Rohingya fleeing	Recent violence in northern Rakhine	1. Extended structural discrimination 2. Recent violence in northern Rakhine as catalyst
3	Indicate what kind of violence happened in northern Rakhine?	Described the violence happened on Rohingya	Described the structural violence before the 2017 crisis, which is similar to crime against humanity or genocide, it also pinpoints what violence happened in the 2017 crisis.
4	Who is responsible for the violence	Silenced who is responsible for the violence	Criticising the Myanmar government for the structural violence but silenced who is responsible for the 2017 violence.
5	What is the deep-rooted cause of the violence?	Exclusive development strategies	Citizenship
6	Suggested solutions to the refugee crisis	Focus on short term solution to resolve humanitarian crisis	Address immediate humanitarian needs, then long-term solution to citizenship and development problem
7	Are refugees' voice included in the statement?	Both fail to include refugee's voice	
8	Reason for the similarities or differences	Its mandate is to help state to resolve migration problem, guided by humanitarian perspective	Its mandate stress on Human Rights protection
9	Other		Point out the Rohingya might radicalise in the future if the core problem is not addressed
		Both recognise the recommendations of Advisory Commission, chaired by Kofi Annan, as a roadmap	

Table 3: IOM and UNHCR's Rohingya Framing Comparison

IOM views violence in 2017 as causing Rohingya to flee. In the two statements, considerable time is spent describing the devastating living conditions in the refugee camps, and the urgently needed assistance in donations to fulfil needs. Yet only a fraction of the text is dedicated to discuss the core reasons for, and possible solutions to the crisis. The IOM silences human rights violations, stating the “most urgent need is now in Cox’s Bazar on the other side of the border” (IOM, 2017a). This implies the IOM does not seek to get involved in discussions related to human rights violations and genocide in Myanmar. For IOM to acknowledge the crisis was due to deep-rooted structural violence, would imply working on reconciliation, structural reform, and other long-term solutions. Instead, IOM tends to emphasise more short-term, humanitarian responses to the crisis. The measures IOM adopted in the field resemble the classic humanitarian principles, of humanity, neutrality, and impartiality, and of acting without value or moral judgement of either side. IOM’s view and position in dealing with the Rohingya crisis of 2017, demonstrate how the organisation follows its mandate and 12 working principles, and attends to humanitarian response coordination rather than more demanding protection directives. This research confirms the criticism previously made by various scholars that IOM does not take human rights protection into account (Guild et al., 2020; Moretti, 2021; Pécoud, 2018).

Besides, IOM’s mandate and strategies show a strong commitment to assist states in dealing with migration issues (IOM, 2021). IOM-state relations almost resemble a contractor-client relationship. The IOM provides migration management services on-demand, which leads various scholars to criticise the organisation for its heavy relies on project-based funding and dependency on government donations (Geiger & Pécoud, 2014; Hirsch & Doig, 2018). This makes the independence of IOM highly questionable. Bangladesh as the refugee recipient country in the Rohingya crisis, has appointed IOM to coordinate “the humanitarian response to the influx of Rohingya refugees” (IOM, 2017c). With this specific focus, IOM was bound to provide a mainly humanitarian response only, and this is yet another reason why human rights concerns and longer-term solution are wholly absent from IOM statements. With a state-focused mandate, IOM may seek to desecuritize Rohingya for the sake of attracting more international assistance and donations. This is not only to assist Rohingya refugees but also to help Bangladesh deal with the refugee crisis. It has not much to do with long-term redress for refugees’ rights violations or resolving their citizenship status.

UNHCR on the other hand has a somewhat different framing. For the UNHCR, the Rohingya crisis of 2017 was “driven by violence and destruction, following decades of repression and exclusion” (UNHCR, 2018). First, like IOM, UNHCR does address the immediate needs of Rohingya who fled to Bangladesh and live in overcrowded conditions. In contrast to the international community, and IOM, who remain fixated on the situation inside Cox’s Bazar, the UNHCR continues to closely follow the situation inside northern Rakhine where human rights violations are continuously happening and where a considerable number of Rohingya remain in camps. This indicates UNHCR attends to human rights violations and views these as the root cause of the Rohingya exodus. Third, although UNHCR supports the principle of voluntary repatriation of Rohingya (UNHCR, 2021b), the agency was reluctant to start this process so long as Myanmar’s government had not addressed longer term, systematic exclusion, and discrimination. So UNHCR deemed that “conditions are not yet conducive to the voluntary repatriation of Rohingya refugees” (UNHCR, 2018). This demonstrates again that UNHCR tends to place human rights protection high in its list of values. It suggests that unlike IOM, the human rights protection mandate is engrained in UNHCR’s organisation and operations, as Moretti suggests (2021). The content of the UNHCR statement shows a well-rounded approach to the crisis, and how the organisation desecuritises

Rohingya refugees through adopting a human rights protection framing, rather than using refugees as a mean to achieve other organisational goals, such as increased funding. The ‘radicalisation’ framing mentioned earlier was the only exception to this.

Both IOM and UNHCR consider the Advisory Commission recommendation as a roadmap for resolving conflicts in Rakhine. However, each highlights different suggestions from the commission, according to their mandates and different understandings of the causes of the crisis. In IOM’s statements, it repeats “there can be no lasting peace in Rakhine without inclusive development” (2017b). In other words, IOM sees exclusive development in Rakhine as a root cause of the 2017 violence, rather than, say, ongoing human rights violation against Rohingya. IOM seems to follow the predominant liberal peace approach that views economic development as a panacea to end violent conflict. As argued earlier in this paper, liberal peace theory does not appear that relevant to peacebuilding in the Myanmar post-2012 context of communal conflict. For IOM to continue pushing forward this model, may reflect an oversimplified analysis of a very complex crisis. In particular, it downplays how structural discrimination and violence influence Rohingyas’ decision to flee. Liberal peace theory cannot realistically be proposed to build peace in this context.

As mentioned earlier, UNHCR believes the denial of citizenship and human rights are root causes for the extended suffering of Rohingya, and sources of their grievance. Hence UNHCR recognises that the recommendations related to citizenship in the Advisory Commission’s final report should be given higher priority than is presently the case, in line with the organisation’s mandate. In addition, UNHCR acknowledges the role of inclusive development in forging long-lasting peace. However, comparing the two organisations, UNHCR has a more holistic, and longer-term approach to resolving the conflict and building peace.

In this section, this research demonstrates both IOM and UNHCR were trying to desecuritize Rohingya by presenting them as a powerless victim in the crisis to counter the state securitisation. However, the impact of the securitisation is uncertain, as their target audience is different. The reasons for the two organisations to desecuritize Rohingya are also very different. IOM desecuritises Rohingya to get more recourses to resolve the refugee crisis for Bangladesh. It focuses more on short-term humanitarian responses. UNHCR, on the other hand, put Rohingya as rights-bearers at the centre of their work. UNHCR desecuritises them to gain international support, end their suffering and obtain redress for past rights violations. Operating from a human rights perspective, UNHCR unlike IOM includes both long- and short-term solutions in its framing of the refugee crisis and its root causes.

3.4 Countering Securitising of Rohingya: ARNO

Refugees’ voices have always been muted in the storm built around them. It is a common mistake for the public to believe IOM, UNHCR and other humanitarian organisations can fully represent refugees, stateless persons, or asylum seekers. In this section, this research consider how ARNO as a Rohingya organisation, represent the crisis to counter Myanmar state framings of security, and how their self-representation differs from IOM and UNHCR.

All three ARNO statements analysed, were made in response to statements of the Myanmar civilian government and military, and were covered earlier in this chapter (3.2.1 and 3.2.2). ARNO uses these statements to rebut the government framings and claim information put forwarded by the two state actors is incorrect. Through such rebuttals, ARNO attempts to reframe their own position and identity as Rohingya. These statements were aimed at the

international community, human rights INGOs and the news media. ARNO reframe Rohingya as the victim of recent “deadly violence” and as “denied basic rights and freedoms” for long periods of time (ARNO, 2017a). They frame the state as an existential threat to the life and identity of Rohingya people. With reference to ARNO, they say of Aung San Suu Kyi, that: “she is denying the ethnic Rohingya their ‘right to exist’ in Myanmar” (2017a), since they “fled the genocidal brutality of Myanmar troops, Rakhine terrorists and other vigilantes” (2017b).

ARNO also stress that “to protect these helpless and defenceless people weighs on the international community” (ARNO, 2017b). Similar to UN agencies, ARNO treats civilian government and military as one entity, but it considers the civilian government plays a significant role in causing the violence.

During recent weeks more than half a million Rohingya refugees have taken refuge in Bangladesh due to genocide by Suu Kyi-army regime in Myanmar. (ARNO, 2017b)

ARNO’s reframing is somewhat similar to UNHCR, except ARNO was more outspoken in accusing the civilian government, military and Rakhinese of being the main threat to Rohingya civilians, responsible for their suffering. Both desecuritize Rohingya from a human rights perspective, address their current plights and the deep-rooted cause of their suffering. From the desecuritisation aspect, this research can conclude UNHCR compared to IOM has partly moved towards seeking to represent the interest of the Rohingya.

Although IOM sought to desecuritize Rohingya in their statement, they failed to clearly identify which actor was responsible for the exodus, and failed to acknowledge the refugee crisis was at least partly due to the extended and systematic discrimination or even genocide. IOM is in a better position to desecuritize Rohingya given that it is a UN agency with direct connection with states and INGOs. However, guided by its mandate and over-reliance on state donations, IOM lacks the commitment to represent Rohingyas and even undermined the discourse preferred by them. This result resonates with the argument of Phil Cole (2020) that refugees tend to become passive actors, outsiders to the discourses surrounding them and their humanitarian needs.

Even though UNHCR tries to desecuritize Rohingya, it cannot fully reflect the view and interest of refugees when describing their suffering, and in rebutting controversial statements by state actors. By suggesting solutions to end their suffering, ARNO uses the term ‘Rohingya Genocide’ to sum up Rohingya’s extreme suffering, while UNHCR merely described what they were facing as violence and destruction, including murder, rape, and arson in the 2017 crisis. For ARNO to use the stronger term of genocide, demonstrates misalignment between ARNO and UNHCR in terms of how they perceive the seriousness of the crisis.

In the previous section, this research has suggested that how an actor or organisation frames the crisis will influence solutions proposed and actions taken. Since ARNO believe the violence should be classified as genocide, this implies the organisation believe the Myanmar government has violated the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (Genocide Convention). The government as a whole and some government agents’ actions should thus fall under the jurisdiction of the ICC and ICJ. As a result, ARNO’s statement demands that the international community “warrants humanitarian intervention to prevent further death and destruction and to ensure peace and security of the people” (ARNO, 2017b), and underlines the necessity “to try and punish all perpetrators by an international independent tribunal” (ARNO, 2017b). ARNO’s suggested solutions are not included in the IOM or UNHCR statements, probably because they have been ruled out by the UNSC veto

power of China and Russia (Barber, 2021). These solutions are also outside IOM and UNHCR authority, and therefore are not included in the statements of either organisation.

As argued in the previous section, civilian government and military sought to evade their responsibilities for the 2017 crisis and for long-standing structural discrimination, providing incorrect or partial information and denying such problems. In the following quotes, ARNO responds directly to denials in statements from the Myanmar civilian and military government.

It is an absurd excuse to talk of “equal rights to higher education” for the Rohingya people who have just been subjected to genocide, who are denied basic rights and freedoms — freedom of movement, right to education, right to marry, right to vote, right to recognition before the law and as a community. (ARNO, 2017a)

We strongly condemn the remarks of Myanmar Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing to American Ambassador Scot Marciel. (ARNO, 2017c)

ARNO uses a strong tone to directly rebut the state actors’ misleading statements and denounce both the civilian and military government. In contrast, UN agencies employed a neutral and non-demanding tone, and did not directly counter misleading state-provided information. At most they ask the government to allow “access to affected areas of the northern part of Rakhine State” (UNHCR, 2018) and adopt the Advisory Commission’s recommendations to resolve the root causes of the crisis.

The historical evidence around the origin of the Rohingya has long been important to the state and to Rohingya in denying and claiming the right to Myanmar citizenship. Min Aung Hlaing and ARNO both made a statement that expressed their respective ‘historical’ reasons why Rohingya should or should not have citizenship rights restored in Myanmar. However, this historical debate is completely absent from all UN statements analysed.

Although the two UN agencies and ARNO share some similarities in terms of reframing and desecuritisising Rohingya people, UN agencies cannot fully represent the views and interests of refugees, whether based on humanitarian or human rights principles. This is reinforced by the organisation’s internal decision-making, diplomatic considerations, and political pressures within and on the UN. They seem to fail to reflect what refugees really are entitled to, and need. This brings out again how important it is to include refugee representatives, as stateless persons, asylum seekers or refugees, when formulating any solutions directly or indirectly affecting their destiny.

3.5 A Sharp Turn: NUG Reframing After the Coup

After the coup in February 2021, NUG, the government in exile, published the ‘Policy Position on the Rohingya in Rakhine State’ on 3 June to explain its position on Rohingya issue. This section examines how the exiled government’s position and framing of the Rohingya changed after the coup. It asks why such changes happened and teases out some implications.

The statement of NUG shows the civilian government made a complete U-turn in how it framed the Rohingya after the coup. After years of denial, oppression, and neglect, NUG finally explicitly recognised Rohingya as one of Myanmar’s native ethnic groups and declared that they should “have full enjoyment of citizens’ rights” (NUG, 2021). NUG vowed “to find shared solutions in a way that respects the human rights of all persons” (NUG, 2021) in Rakhine State.

Besides reframing Rohingya as a native ethnic group, NUG demonstrated an almost textbook example of desecuritisation in this statement, using what Hansen (2011a) termed ‘replace it with another threat’. When the military overthrew the civilian government of Aung San Suu Kyi, it destroyed the democratic system Burmese had been demanding for decades. The political reality forced the NUG to realise that the single biggest threat to Burmese came not from Rohingya, but from the military. The NUG statement appeals to the Burmese as referent object, but now the military has replaced Rohingya as an existential threat to Burmese civilians. NUG claims the “elimination of the military dictatorship has become the common goal of the entire people because of the violence committed by the illegitimate military council” (NUG, 2021).

For NUG to reframe and desecuritize Rohingya is a highly practical decision. The NUG need all the available forces in the country to unite and oppose the military dictatorship. Rohingya can strengthen the anti-military alliances, and the same inclusive approach applies to other insurgent groups in Myanmar, such as the Northern Alliance and the Arakan Army. Since the international community always closely follows the Rohingya crisis, for NUG to take the initiative to reconcile with Rohingya, might help NUG obtain more international recognition and support. It might encourage other countries to impose sanctions on the military junta.

In its statement, NUG responds to recommendations and criticisms previously made by different actors of neglect of the Rohingya issue by civil society. NUG, for example, promises to grant ICC “jurisdiction over crimes committed within Myanmar against the Rohingyas and other communities” (NUG, 2021), and to adopt recommendations of the Advisory Commission, including abolishing the 1982 Citizenship Law and National Verification Card. These promises cannot alter the current plights of Rohingya people. To realise these promises, NUG first would need to regain political power from the military. And given the poor track record of former civilian governments, the chances are that NUG might fail to fulfil its promises, after regaining power.

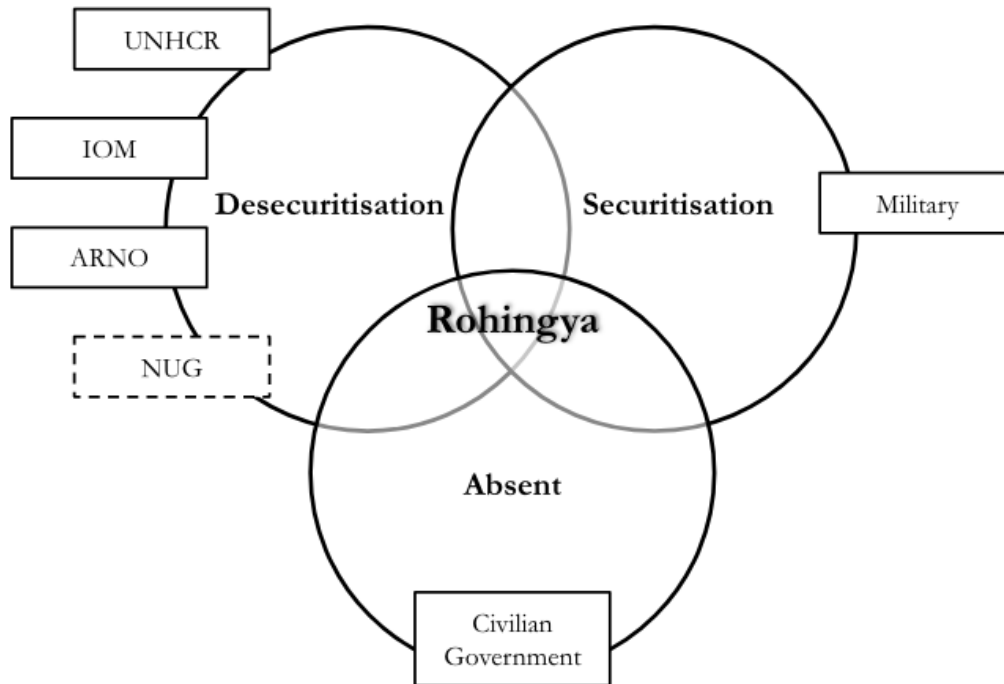
According to Lederach (1997), to fully rebuild the relationship between conflict parties and achieve sustainable peace, actions should be taken at elite, middle, and grassroots levels. This NUG statement only represents the position of the elite to recognise Rohingya status and rebuild relationship. The middle and grassroots level as the target audience of the statement, would also need to accept the NUG’s desecuritisation of Rohingya before it was possible to rebuild connections with Rohingya. It seems this will be difficult, as years of securitisation imposed by the military have constructed a security bias in Burmese minds (Swarts and Karakatsanis, 2013). More would need to be done at the middle and grassroots level by the NUG before the conditions for future sustainable peace can be nourished in Myanmar.

3.6 Contesting Framings of Rohingya

In conclusion, actors analysed by this research can be categorised into three divisions based on their different framings of Rohingya people: securitised, desecuritized and absent. As shown in diagram 1, only the military securitise Rohingya as a threat to Myanmar and Burmese people, is in line with discriminatory policies imposed on Rohingya since the 1970s under military rule. IOM, UNHCR and ARNO attempt to desecuritize Rohingya and thus counter military framing, claiming Rohingya as victims of violence and a refugee crisis. However, each has a different reason to desecuritize Rohingya, related to their mandate and the organisation’s position. Civilian government is the only actor that does not explicitly frame Rohingya in its statement, due to political considerations. As suggested by Harari (2018)

“silence isn't neutrality; it is supporting the status-quo” (p.183), and the silence and inaction of the civilian government supported securitisation by the military and military past and future operations in Rakhine. Finally, the NUG statement shows a clear attitude change after the coup in early 2021. This is in one step, both desecuritized Rohingya and recognised their extended suffering as caused by the military. With this additional actor added to the desecuritising actors, the Rohingya stand a somewhat better chance of being able to recover their citizenship in future.

Diagram 1: Actors' decision on (de)securitizing Rohingya



Chapter 4 Recovering the Term ‘Rohingya’

4.1 Introduction

In the discussion about the securitisation and desecuritisation of Rohingya between state, UN organisations and Rohingya, it shows these actors’ framings are all attempting to deprive or endow the identity of Rohingya and determine whether Rohingya is a native ethnic minority group in Myanmar, or not. This section compares how selected actors address the question of Rohingya identity in their texts. Their word choices have a political effect which is aligned with their framings, and whether they depict Rohingya as a security threat, as powerless victims needing help, or as bearers of human rights.

4.2 State Level Framings

For Hall (1997), language is a tool that gives meaning and fabricates reality. To be able to label, the actor must have social, political, and economic power. Usually, labelling aims to maintain existing power relations in society. In Suu Kyi’s speech, she did not use the term ‘Rohingya’ to refer to those affected by conflict and who fled Bangladesh. Instead, Aung San Suu Kyi (2017) uses ‘Muslim’ as a generalised term to address them, as in:

“Many Muslims fled to Bangladesh” (p.2) “...who have had to flee their homes are many – not just Muslims and Rakhines” (p.3) “...we are concerned to hear that number of Muslims are fleeing across the border” (p.4).

Her speech act around ‘Muslim in Rakhine state’ includes different ethnicities. However, it is quite obvious that Muslims in Rakhine is an expression she uses to refer to Rohingya, since they are the majority of the Muslim population in the state and are those who mainly fled. The decision not to use the term ‘Rohingya’ is a common practice for Myanmar government actors. This represents an effort to deny recognition to the group and thus deny their status as an official Myanmar minority. However, unlike the military, Ms Suu Kyi does not use the term ‘Bengali Muslims’ - a framing places them squarely outside Myanmar. Comparatively, the term ‘Bengali Muslims’ produces a greater sense of difference and frames the group as from outside Myanmar, emphasising religious and cultural differences from the Buddhist Bamar majority. Ms Suu Kyi used this milder term perhaps because it is a briefing targeted at the international community. In light of international pressures to respect human rights in northern Rakhine, she uses a milder term, perhaps based on political consideration. On the other hand, by not using ‘Bengali Muslims’, she might imply that the civilian government could eventually accept that Rohingya originate from Myanmar rather than from Bangladesh.

The military refuse to use the term ‘Rohingya’ when talking of the group. In both statements, Min Aung Hlaing pointedly uses the term ‘Bengali’ to refer to them.

“Rakhine ethnics lost their land in the Alethankyaw crisis that broke out in Rakhine State in 1942 in which Bengalis attacked” (Min Aung Hlaing, 2017a).

“Bengalis from those regions were taken into the country as manpower from Bengal region during the colonial era” (Min Aung Hlaing, 2017b).

What can also be noticed in this military discourse is a different term used for the 2017 crisis. It tries to separate Muslims from Rohingya, and put forward the notion that the problem is only related to Rohingya and does not relate to other Muslims in the country.

[Christians and Islam] have been living peacefully in the country since years ago. There were Muslims but there was no problem. But the situation in Buthidaung and Maungtaung regions is different (Min Aung Hlaing, 2017a)

The fault line between Buddhists and Muslims created by military junta's acquiescence to extremist Buddhist organisations, notably Ma Ba Tha, propagating religious hatred is what led to the 2012 religious conflict. This marked a notable change in the military's official attitude toward Muslims. It is difficult to interpret the reason for this shift, and it seems to represent a more positive attitude to the rest of the Muslim community.

According to Hall (1997), representations aim at creating differences. When the civilian government and military frame Rohingya as 'Muslim in Rakhine' or 'Bengali', they also define who is 'insider' and 'outsider'. The presence of the 'outsider' helps build and reinforce the 'insider' identity of 'Burmese'. Besides framing the identity of the Rohingya, as suggested by Vuori (2008), the military's securitisation also maintains the notion of self and other for Burmese. These are important tools for the Myanmar government to maintain the idea of a unified national identity when the country is in reality highly segmented by diverse ethnicities and numerous insurgent groups.

The way civilian government and military securitise Rohingya is also related to how they frame the identity of the group. Military's securitisation of Rohingya strengthens its 'Bengali' framing – as 'outsiders' to Myanmar. Civilian government does not frame Rohingya as a threat nor as a victim and shows similar ambiguity in framing Rohingya identity. The civilian framing does not rule out a connection with Myanmar, yet does not address Rohingya according to the group's self-identification. As argued in the previous chapter, the civilian government takes an ambiguous stand, and ends up supporting the status quo, in the form of a dominant discourse that Rohingya do not really belong to Myanmar.

According to OHCHR (2010), *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) aims to promote and protect the identity of minorities, with reference to the definition of minorities³ of Francesco Capotorti⁴, Rohingya are categorised as a minority. As mentioned before, Rohingya were once recognised as an official ethnic minority by the first Myanmar Prime Minister U Nu, shortly after Burmese independence. For both state actors to now deny the identity of this ethnic group as nationals is a violation of the principle of the UNDRIP. However, neither civilian nor military actors bear direct legal consequences since this is a non-binding declaration. Since the Genocide Convention excluded identity and culture genocide, therefore the ongoing *Gambia v. Myanmar* case in ICJ cannot address the above problem.

4.3 United Nations Agency Framings

Both UNHCR and the UN joint statement use the term 'Rohingya' to represent the group. Their recognition counters narratives put forward by both civilian and military government

³ Minority define as a "group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in a non-dominant position, whose members—being nationals of the State—possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language" (OHCHR, 2010).

⁴ Francesco Capotorti is the former Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

actors in Myanmar and other organisations that try to frame Rohingya as ‘outsiders’ in the country.

“...the first focused on access to citizenship and the restoration of rights for the Rohingya” (UNHCR, 2018).

“After violence broke out in Myanmar’s Rakhine state on 25 August, more than 500,000 Rohingya refugees crossed into neighbouring Bangladesh in less than five weeks” (OCHA, 2017).

Without their counter-framing, the Myanmar government discourses would dominate ‘reality’, not only in Myanmar but across the world for audiences. Rohingya organisations for sure always try to counter the framings of the state, but given their lack of social, economic, and political power they can hardly compete with the Myanmar state actors for audiences. UN agencies on the other hand are in a better position to do just that.

Although IOM is one of the signatories of the joint statement, there is some inconsistency between this document and IOM’s own selected statement. According to the 4 October 2017 IOM statement, “for decades the Muslims of Rakhine State, who self-identify as Rohingya, have faced persecution and abuse” (IOM, 2017a). This representation is very similar to the one presented by Ms Suu Kyi earlier on. Even this muted expression of the term ‘Rohingya’ only appears once in the analysed documents of IOM. It is quite surprising to see IOM, as a UN agency, not acting according to the UNDRIP. Guild, Grant and Groenendijk (2017) suggest IOM enjoys relative more autonomy with less intervention from the UN General Assembly and has fewer reporting obligations compared to UNHCR and other more long-standing UN agencies. IOM has the flexibility to act according to its mandate and government agendas, and this might be the reason why its stand does not seem to be fully aligned with OCHA, UNHCR and UN human rights ‘core principles’.

In chapter 3.3, this research discussed how both IOM and UNHCR attempt to desecuritize Rohingya in their statements, each drawing on different values and mandates. UNHCR see citizenship as the core reason for Rohingya’s eternal suffering. Using ‘Rohingya’ in the statement strengthens the organisation’s call to restore citizenship, while showing they are acting according to the UNDRIP principles and supporting the self-identification of Rohingya. On the contrary, IOM does not consider identity the core reason for the 2017 crisis and exodus. The extended suffering of the Rohingya is viewed by IOM through a classic humanitarian lens, and the solution is to provide humanitarian aid. Hence, IOM has little interest in engaging in value-laden or moral arguments around rights and responsibilities for the crisis. IOM pays less attention to the question of how to address Rohingya.

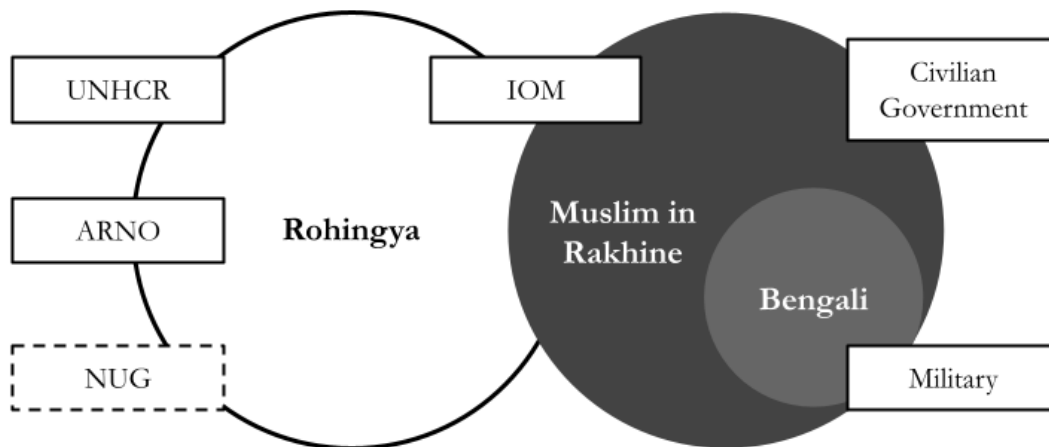
4.4 Rohingya Community Level Framings

At community level, ARNO obviously uses the term Rohingya to self-identify in all its documents. It rebuts what it claims are fictitious framings imposed by state actors, revising history to show that Rohingya are just Muslims of Rakhine, or even ‘Bengali’. ARNO uses the principle of UNDRIP to denounce both Ms Suu Kyi and Min Aung Hlaing as “[denying] the ethnic Rohingya their “right to exist” in Myanmar” (ARNO, 2017a). Whilst UN agencies support the self-identification of Rohingya, they never go further to explicitly reject the problematic framings imposed on Rohingya by military and civilian government actors. This shows UN agencies cannot fully represent refugees, or stand for their concerns, whether due to diplomatic reasons, or because UN organisations continue to mostly ignore the direct voices and views of the refugees and migrants they work ‘for’.

4.5 Post-coup State Level Framings

The NUG statement shows the dramatic changes in framing, in line with changing attitudes in the civilian Myanmar government toward Rohingya. After the coup in 2021, NUG, the civilian government in exile, not only desecuritized Rohingya and securitized the military as the main threat to Myanmar people, in its statement. It also completely changed its framing toward Rohingya, for the first time in recent years referring to them explicitly as ‘Rohingya’. Throughout the whole statement, this term is used to address the group. The statement also explicitly declared Rohingya “are entitled to citizenship by laws that will accord with fundamental human rights norms and democratic federal principles” (NUG, 2021, p.3). This means Rohingya have finally been recognised by the democratic opposition as Burmese, in light of the threat from the military coup. The civilian government no longer needs to ‘attack the straw man’ to consolidate its legitimacy or frame national identity. The coup has successfully established a common national identity across ethnic and religious fault lines, for the democratic opposition, at least according to the NUG statement (2021). This statement continues: “It is also the period of national resistance against the military dictatorship. The solidarity of the entire people is now at its best” (p.2). As suggested in the previous chapter, the road for Rohingya to regain citizenship status remains full of challenges. If NUG can restore democratic political control, it would need to act according to promises made in this statement and other ethnic and religious groups in Myanmar would need to accept that Rohingya share the same nationality.

Diagram 2: After the coup: Actors and corresponding framing of Rohingya’s identity



To sum up, this discussion of framings of Rohingya’s identity distinguishes two major rival categories, as shown in diagram 2. First, ‘Muslim in Rakhine’ – involving non-recognition and denial from the state perspective, which aligns with a distinctively military framing of Rohingya as, ‘Bengali’, a more exclusionary term compared to the one employed by the civilian government. The second framing is ‘Rohingya’, where the minority group has the legal right to self-identify from an international and national perspective. This framing is broadly shared by UNHCR, ARNO and later by the NUG. IOM adopted a more ‘detached’ stand, however, only loosely aligned with this overall framing, without endorsing the ‘outsider’ framing by the military and civilian state actors. Both framings reinforce calls for securitisation and desecuritisation of Rohingya.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

This research has discovered that since the 2017 Rohingya crisis, the civilian government of Myanmar did not explicitly frame Rohingya as a security threat in its statements. Instead, it sought to respond to international pressure while maintaining its delicate relationship with the military to avoid the collapse of democracy. However, this implied acquiescence to the military's framing of the Rohingya as non-Burmese. The status quo was thus extended and the suffering of Rohingya prolonged. Military securitised Rohingya as an explicit threat as predicted, and with reference to "The Five Strands of Securitization" theory of Vouri (2008), the military's statements sought to justify past and future armed attacks in northern Rakhine, reinforce the army's legitimacy as the defender of Myanmar civilians. Comparing state actors' statements, they differ and cannot be considered as entirely one framing. The silence of the civilian government contrasts with active securitisation by the military of Rohingya, who are seen as responsible for their own flight, and their own suffering.

Regarding the identity of Rohingya, the civilian government and military frame Rohingya as 'Muslim in Rakhine' or 'Bengali', an 'outsider' of Myanmar. The securitisation of the military and inaction of the civilian government reinforce or at least maintain this 'outsider' framing. Representing Rohingya as 'outsiders' and a security threat, can help unify a divided country and build a national identity, since Myanmar is divided by diverse ethnicities and many insurgencies.

IOM and UNHCR, two critical organisations handling issues related to Rohingya refugees and migrants, each counter state framings in that they desecuritize the Rohingya. They re-frame Rohingya as a group affected by violence that requires immediate assistance. Given their different mandates, their reasons for desecuritisation are different. IOM focuses on fulfilling its mandate to help Bangladesh resolve the Rohingya crisis, and its perspective is mostly on short term, immediate humanitarian assistance. This resembles a classic humanitarian perspective. UNHCR's strong human rights protection mandate means it addresses not only Rohingyas' immediate needs but also longer-term and more deep-rooted causes of the crisis – especially in lack of citizenship. Different mandates and understandings of root causes of crisis affect how each agency frames the identity of the group. IOM lacks a clear stand on Rohingya identity, failing to align with the general UN position of protecting minority self-identification. The UNHCR consistently refers to 'Rohingya' when addressing the group, and places self-identification of Rohingya and their human rights, central, seeking to restore their citizenship in Myanmar.

By bringing in the voice of Rohingya, this research shows that UN organisations cannot fully represent their voices and demands. ARNO, IOM and UNHCR all seek to desecuritize Rohingya in their statements. However, ARNO, an organisation established by Rohingya leaders to fight for their rights, employs stronger and more direct framing that counters the Myanmar state's framings. Making reference to international law and treaties, ARNO call for restoring full citizenship and bringing perpetrators to justice under international criminal law. This has not been seen in any UN statements. UN agencies failed to explicitly reject state framings imposed on Rohingya. These differences suggest UN agencies are unable to fully represent the refugees. In future, UN agencies may need to find better ways to incorporate the framings of refugee representative organisations in their statement, work plans and operations, if they are to answer the needs of refugees and promote their rights.

The statement of NUG shows how an organisation's framing can alter dramatically when political circumstances demand or permit. After the February 2021 coup, military replaced Rohingya and was framed as an existential threat to Myanmar and its people. In this way Rohingya were desecuritized. Although based on the collapse of Myanmar democracy, this shift represents a positive change for Rohingya people. NUG promised they would restore Rohingya's citizenship, and implement Advisory Commission recommendations, and grant an international tribunal the right to investigate human rights violations in Myanmar. However, all these promises depend on whether NUG regains political power. As the anti-coup movement dies down and attracts less international attention, NUG may be able to realise these promises in the foreseeable future. Besides, NUG can only represent the view of the political elite, and to reintegrate Rohingya and build sustainable peace, requires a change in attitude from the middle and grassroots levels. This implies more needs to be done in future.

This research recognises the importance of including what Philo (2012) terms small 's' security in how people react and experience the impact of national and global security moves, as well as big 'S' security (Philo, 2012). As other scholars have also argued, these dimensions of security are closely intertwined (Anderson, 2008). Due to COVID-19 and the recent coup, this research was limited mainly to big 'S' security, since the voices of ordinary Burmese could not realistically be included. This research tried to use ARNO's statements and news coverage to reflect popular reactions to (de)securitisation of Rohingya, but civilians' true voices remain mostly 'lost in translation'. This research deems it important in future to observe and interview Rohingya and Burmese in the field to better understand how (de)securitisation is responded to at community level. Including ordinary civilians could also help genuinely empower and restore some political agency to Rohingya.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Framing Analysis – Myanmar Government

Actor	Myanmar Government
Article	Speech delivered by Her Excellency Daw Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK), State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on Government' s efforts with regard to National Reconciliation and Peace
Background	- the first speech delivery by ASSK 25 days after the Northern Rakhine turmoil, she decided not to attend the UN general assembly in NYC and stay in Myanmar to deal with the situation
Publish Medium/Venue	- diplomate briefing in Nay Pyi Taw
Target Audience	- diplomate, government officials and politicians
1. What is the problem represented in the statement?	- The ASSK government isn't able to build peace and maintain security in Myanmar in a short period of time which hunted the country since independent. The government has tried their best to avoid the tragedy from happening in northern Rakhine. They are the first democratically elected government in Myanmar history, yet they haven't consolidate the power to be able to prevent the accident from happening. - They need more time to deal with the internal conflict. - She invites the international community to assist the country to build peace follow the government's priorities.
2. What are the assumptions behind this representation of the problem?	- internal conflict is nothing new in Myanmar, this is another terrorist attack by an insurgent group; - The government only brand the ARSA as terrorist group but not the other insurgent groups (AA or northern alliance). - blame the international community for not understanding how complicated are the internal conflicts in Myanmar. They only focus on one region and overlooked the whole picture; - the government has try their best to maintain peace and solve the counties' problems in only 18 months. It is nearly impossible. - ARSA initiated the attack, the government or military should not bear the responsibilities. the government doesn't know why the Muslim fled to Bangladesh, they need to investigate. - They are not aware of the plights Muslims people are facing or they have improved the situation in northern Rakhine; - The government has improve the socio-economic conditions in the state, it is the ARSA who neglect the improvement and initiate the attack;
3. How has this representation of the problem taken place?	- The ARSA first attacked the military and government in 2016 and the launch another attack in August 25, 2017; - They had commissioned Dr Kofi Annan to research and proved suggestions/ solutions to resolve the tension in Rakhine after they are in power, yet it fails to prevent and alter the situation in Rakhine; - the accident happen just after the final report has been released; - Although ARSA attacked military and police first, yet ASSK doesn't want to blame any party for human rights violation. This implies the ARSA is not the only party who violate human rights. - She doesn't reject the accusation toward the military clearly, implies the military might also violate human rights. It can also perform by the local community or radical Buddhist; - The government has send humanitarian aid to the region and asked the security forces to follow code of conduct.

4. What is left unproblematic in this representation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ASSK doesn't use the word "Bengali" nor "Rohingya", she use a general term "Muslims" in Rakhine to represent the affected people; - Muslims are not being recognize as citizen by law but ASSK still ask them to go through the national identification process; - their identity card have been taken away by the military from the last identification process; ask the international community to focus on studying why conflict does not happen in other region, yet does not invite them to investigate why conflict happen in those region (same suggest also appear in Advisory Commission report; this is not related to the current event, so ASSK and the government is not trying to investigate this incident). - ASSK doesn't explain why the Muslim only fled to Bangladesh. - ASSK emphasis the local people in the Rakhine state have better job opportunity and access to education and healthcare, yet Rohingya are not regarded as the citizen by law, are they count as the "local people"? can they enjoy the improvement? Rakhine remains the poorest state in Myanmar. - ASSK doesn't mention the military has huge influence toward the country's political, socio-economic development; - At the end of the speech, ASSK put forward concept which is similar to Lederach peace building concept which focus on building connections/ relationships thus peace, however in reality this only applies to insurgent groups that are included in the peace talks. The deep situated problem for Rohingya people is about identity, that is the reason why they are enduring the discrimination and plights and force people to establish ARSA. Without tackling this problem the tension can't be solve. Besides, without mutual recognition, relationship cannot be built, any discuss will be based on hegemony. Rohingya will remain oppressed by the government/ military/ Burmese in general even they are willing to talk. Of cause in reality, the government has no intention to communicate with the Rohingya.
5. What is the implication of this representation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ASSK doesn't want to present herself or the government to accept the discourse of the military or the Rohingya. She deliberately distant herself from both parties and portray herself as a mediator. therefore she try to avoid to use any disputing term to present the affected people in the area. - By not recognize the Rohingya identity, she is still deprived the Rohingya's human rights. - As the general Myanmar citizen doesn't recognize Rohingya as citizen or even anti Rohingya, by not addressing them as "Rohingya", she will not run the risk to lose her political support. - Not condemning the action of the military, allow the military to continue their "genocide" operation and to maintain her delicate relationship with the military. The military can overthrow the government at any time given it military power and support from religious group - She want to address the overall problem of the country instead of focusing on Northern Rakhine, this will prolong the suffering of the people. - ASSK doesn't reject the military might violate the human rights is an attempt to respond to international pressure in a subtle way
6. How and where has this representation of the problem been produced?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - this representation first appear in 2016 UN General assembly, ASSK put forward a road map for building peace and stability.
7. Why does the text try to represent the subject as a problem?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ASSK try to ease the international pressure casted on her government by saying that they have done a lot and it is their internal affairs to deal with the problem. They don't afraid international sanction. - Highly related to the domestic politics dynamic. Democratic transition only happened for 18 months, military remains powerful in all aspect, therefore her speech is trying to answer the international demand while not upsetting the military. She tries not to make any judgement in the text.
8. How can the representation be replaced?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - regarding the ARSA 2016 attack, ASSK doesn't use terrorist to frame the group which is different from the 2017 attack; - to present there is no problem (verification process between Bangladesh and Myanmar) or they have solved the problem (healthcare, education, econ development, no IDP camp, media allow to enter) or they have try to solve the problem but the Muslim doesn't cooperate (verification process). - little context related to the aid/ help given to the people who affected by the violence in August.

Appendix 2: Framing Analysis – Myanmar Military

Actor	Myanmar Military
Article	Entire government institutions and people must defend the country with strong patriotism
Background	- A speech from Min Aung Hlaing's (MAH) at the ceremony to make cash donations for security personnel, state service personnel in Rakhine and ethnic natives.
Publish Medium/Venue	- Senior general Min Aung Hlaing's website
Target Audience	- general public of Myanmar
1. What is the problem represented in the statement?	- Bengali is a security threat to Myanmar. They occupy the land of Rakhine in the past and launch well organized terrorist attack now. - The military will defend the sovereignty and maintain the security of the country;
2. What are the assumptions behind this representation of the problem?	- Rohingya is regarded as the public enemies of the country (from the title); - Rohingya are seen as not originated from the area and introduced by the British, therefore their present is a threat to the rest of the ethnicities. - They have been branded Bengali all along since colonial rule; - The Rohingya use force to grab Rakhine ethnics' land; - The attack is a well-organised operation; - If people or the ASSK government don't share the military aspiration to defend the country from the Rohingya they are not patriot; - only the ASRA create damage to the region; - the military is acting according to the law
3. How has this representation of the problem taken place?	-
4. What is left unproblematic in this representation?	- the military's operation is not mention in the article, nor the colleterial damage brought by the its operation in the region; - the military doesn't mention their discrimination is not only against religion it is also about ethnicity (only prefer Burmese); - the military doesn't mention there are religious confrontation outside Rakhine; - People has religious freedom, but they will be systematically discriminated in the society as the military junta has chosen the Buddhism is the national religion; - The 2012 crash between Buddhist and Muslim is not mention in the text but mention the "crisis" in 1942 which happen Myanmar independent. - the military action in October 2016 also caused refugee crisis in the northern Rakhine, but the article doesn't mention.
5. What is the implication of this representation?	- MAH differentiate Rohingya with other Muslims in the country, saying that the other Muslims are living peacefully, as a way to prove that they don't reject the Rohingya because of their religion, it is solely because they are not originated from the Northern Rakhine. It also try to delegitimize the ARSA's reasons for waging the attack. - military doesn't consider anyone in the country are limiting their religious rights. However, it is well known that the military support Buddhist group to harass Muslim and construct religious hatred between Buddhist and Muslim across the country. - Reenforce the discourse that Rohingya don't belong to the country; - Legitimate military future involvement in the region, police is not sufficient to maintain the stability of the region (since the article is published 10 days after the attack, legitimate the military action after this statement); - Showing that the Rohingya are not innocent, they can organize terrorist attack, to contrast their international image, delegitimize Rohingya's appeal toward the international community.
6. How and where has this representation of the problem been produced?	-
7. Why does the text try to represent the subject as a problem?	- The military will act to prevent 1942 crisis from happening again. - Try to frame the Rohingya waged the war because of false claim for being oppressed because of their religion, they are the one who doesn't follow the law (1982 citizenship verification process); - ARSA's attack try fight against the 1982 citizenship law; - The ASSK government and the military share the same view and approach toward the attack. - The government and the military will solve this prolong problem together. - Military involvements is important for the regional stability, without the military the situation will be worsen, the Rohingya will occupy the land; - The military condemn ARSA or the Bengalis for affecting the regional development of Rakhine.
8. How can the representation be replaced?	-

Other	- the military present itself and its personnel are risking their life for national defence and security (positive adj.), ARSA organize brutal attack and butchering the victims (negative adj)
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Actor	Myanmar Military
Article	Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives US Ambassador
Background	- A meeting summary between MAH and US Ambassador Mr. Scot Alan Marciel
Publish Medium/Venue	- Senior general Min Aung Hlaing's website
Target Audience	- international community and general public of Myanmar
1. What is the problem represented in the statement?	- The military is working according to the mandate of the people to fight against the "Bengali" terrorist group in Rakhine; - The military's operation complies with the law, it is the terrorist cause causality and economic damage; - Military should not bear the responsibilities; - The Bengali is the problem who launch the attack causing casualties, economic lost, and they avoid the verification process. - Other country deny fact and continue to call them as Rohingya.
2. What are the assumptions behind this representation of the problem?	- the Rohingya is not originated from Northern Rakhine, they are introduced by the British from Bengal during colonial time; - all Rohingya belongs to ARSA, therefore they are all terrorist; - the Rohingya is oppressing the local communities in northern Rakhine; - Military is protecting the interest of Myanmar and they are the military has the mandate or support from the people, therefore they have the legitimate right to use their power; - ARSA's attack is a well-planned operation, therefore they are not innocent; - people fleeing is not only because of the attack, food storage, instability and torching of home (but later in the article, it stated that the state have enough food supply); - those who fled are afraid of the military;
3. How has this representation of the problem taken place?	-
4. What is left unproblematic in this representation?	- It focalized the damages caused by the attack, and silence the effect of the military action. the military doesn't mention anything about their operation in the region which is highly contested by NGO and international media's report, even ASSK doesn't deny the military might violate human rights during their operations. by presenting the statistics of the people who are being killed and injured by the ARSA, giving the impression that the military didn't perform any wrong killing during their operation; - MAH emphasis the verification process is based on the constitution and the citizenship law which apply to all ethnicity. It shows the government and the military are acting according to the law and impartial. Of cause whether or not the authorities is abiding the law is important, but the law itself can also be problematic. Both law are being regarded as discriminating toward Rohingya. - the military present themselves as supported by the people; - their information regarding the situation in northern Rakhine is the correct one and those from international media has political agenda behind;
5. What is the implication of this representation?	- reenforce the notion that Rohingya doesn't exists, they are Bengali and they came from Bengal. - All the Bengalis are part of the terrorist group, people who fled to Bangladesh are afraid of the military. - The Rohingya violate the law in the first place, they refuse to go through the verification process which is based on constitution and 1982 citizenship law. - categories the military as the legal protector., while the ARSA and Bengalis are illegal perpetrator; - the military will continue their military operation in northern Rakhine without changing their approach as they consider they are following the law and people's wills. As a result, Rohingya continue to fled to Bangladesh till December 2017
6. How and where has this representation of the problem been produced?	- the representation has always exist in the military policy and approach.
7. Why does the text try to represent the subject as a problem?	- to get away from the responsibilities for violating human rights, causing the exodus of the people; - To create a negative image for the ARSA and frame the normal Rohingya with the insurgent group to delegitimize their moral ground to claim themselves as the victim in the international arena. - For a long time, Rohingya has been constructed to be an outsider or illegal immigrants of Myanmar, especially in the 2012 incident. The representation is based on the existing framing and at the same time reenforcing it. - To downplay the seriousness of the situation, rebuttal international criticism

8. How can the representation be replaced?	-
Other	- the military present itself as an organization that listen to people's opinion and have people mandate. If they have the mandate, ASSK/NLD will not be able to control the civil government or people support democratisation.

Appendix 3: Framing Analysis – United Nations Agencies

Actor	UNHCR
Article	Briefing on Myanmar @ UNSC
Background	- About 6 month after the crisis happened in Northern Rakhine, Filippo Grandi - 11th United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees present a briefing at the UNSC (member: 5 permanent + Ivory Coast, Equatorial Guinea, Peru, Kuwait, Poland and Netherlands)
Publish Medium/Venue	- UNSC
Target Audience	- International community and public
1. What is the problem represented in the statement?	- Rohingya lives in Rakhine fled to Bangladesh because of recent violence, destruction and long term repression of human rights and exclusion. - And Rohingya fledging is not a single event, it constantly happen. - international support is required to fulfil the refugees' needs and to establish a conditional that allow Rohingya to voluntary return to Myanmar with dignity and safety.
2. What are the assumptions behind this representation of the problem?	- The core problem is created in Myanmar thus we should find the solutions in Myanmar; - UNHCR recognize Rohingya as an ethnicity which counter the ASSK (Rakhine Muslim) and military (Bengalis) framing;(both of them deny the existent of such ethnicity). - UNHCR consider Rohingya is an ethnicity belongs to Myanmar; - Rohingya is forced to fled their country not by their own choice; - Rohingya's rights are being deprived by the government, due to lack of citizenship; - Rohingya should recognize by the government and have the citizenship; - the international community / UNSC needs to interevent to help the refugee in Bangladesh and help them to voluntarily return to Myanmar; - International assistant is needed but long term solution to the problem is the paramount. - not resolving the problem will result in radicalization; terrorist group are former by refugee (in general, people consider Rohingya refugee is not connected with ARSA) economic development can sustain peace and prevent radicalization (similar with UNDP and the recommendations of Advisory committee).
3. How has this representation of the problem taken place?	- 6 months after the crisis in Northern Rakhine, Rohingya are still fleeing to Bangladesh for refuge. They require urgent humanitarian aids, the receiving community also require assistant to cope with the pressure brought by the influx of refugee. - As this is not the first refugee crisis happened in the region, UNHCR urge the international community to interevent and find localised solution to solve the root cause of such refugees crisis with Myanmar's government.
4. What is left unproblematic in this representation?	- the speech doesn't question the creditability of the recommendations suggested by the Advisory commission when it is being criticise the commission is controlled by the military personnel. - The difference between ASSK and military, the report treat them as the same entity, which they are not. Military have de facto power with domestic affairs because of its military power and control over religious group and media. - when it mentions violence force people to fled, it doesn't specific who are the perpetrator to burn the house and kill Rohingya, yet UNHCR specifically say the general oppression come from the government; - it assume all the Rohingya would like to go back to Myanmar. The story included at the beginning of the speech cannot represent all the Rohingya. Not all the people feel safe to go back. - UNHCR emphasise the importance of development, yet some of the news coverage also find out economic development in the region is actually grabbing the land from people not only from Rohingya also apply to Rakhine; one of the reason why AA is formed in Rakhine, it is because the government neglect their needs. They feel neglected when the region has many foreign direct investment;
5. What is the implication of this representation?	- Myanmar government (ASSK & military) create the plights of the Rohingya, their policy and attitude is the reason why people fled to Bangladesh even more influential than the violence happen in 08/2017; - Rohingya is powerless that require the international community to voice out for them; - more attention will be given to development lead peacebuilding when it is the mainstream peacebuilding discourse; - Myanmar government violate human rights of the Rohingya; - In previous voluntary return, the temporary arrangement of the Myanmar government become permanent, so the Myanmar government cannot be trust completely, it require constant monitoring. - UNHCR in this speech become the representative of the Rohingya, refugee's capacity are being undermined; the voice are being picked used to support UNHCR to fulfil its mandate. - Other needs of the Rohingya will be undermined;
6. How and where has this representation of the problem been produced?	- this problem has been suggested by many NGO and journalist in various reports, books and news coverages. UNHCR itself also released similar statement as early as 1993 about the oppression of Rohingya people; also in 2016

7. Why does the text try to represent the subject as a problem?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it is the mandate of the UNHCR to help ethnic group like Rohingya; - because the people is living in desperate situation again which they are subjected to disease and crime with the poor refugee camp environment. The local communities also affected by the influx of people. They cannot resolve the problem by themselves, require the UN, international community to help. - this is not the first time such crisis happen in the region; - The root cause lies on Myanmar's government, since they deny Rohingya's right. - Without addressing this problem the crisis will happen again in the future. Refugee might even turn into terrorist that further hamper the regional security and stability.
8. How can the representation be replaced?	- the voice of the Rohingya should be valued, they know best what oppression and difficulties they are facing. At the same time, they know best of what kind of treatment they want. UNHCR for sure can represent them but nothing better than they represent themselves.
Other	-

Actor	IOM
Article	Why We Must Intervene to End the Suffering of Rohingya Refugees in Cox's Bazar
Background	- A press release by IOM Director General William Lacy Swing response to the refugee crisis happen in Rakhine in late August/2017
Publish Medium/Venue	- IOM press release published on IOM website
Target Audience	- donor country, private donor, public
1. What is the problem represented in the statement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rohingya are forced to fled to Bangladesh because of violence (murder, rape, arson and burred house) - after years of oppression, Rohingya flight back which caused the violence in Northern Rakhine. - it is the responsibilities for the international community to react and help the refugee to end their suffering by donation. - Rohingya is being oppress because exclusive/ unparalleled development strategy;
2. What are the assumptions behind this representation of the problem?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rohingya fight because of year of repression, it generalized the connection between - Rohingya = ARSA or general Rohingya support the insurgent group. - exclusive or unfair development Is persecution and abuse, and it is the root cause why the ARSA fight and Rohingya fled the country. - the recommendation suggested by the advisory commission will bring significant change to the situation, co-existence in Rakhine (blind faith, and over simplify the commission's recommendation, it has a lot of content related to inter communities tension and other aspect) - international intervention is needed to stabilize the region, help Rohingya to return home and end the crisis; - "co-existence" implies the conflict is between ethnicity or religion, yet the oppression faced by the Rohingya mainly come from the government.
3. How has this representation of the problem taken place?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refugees enter Bangladesh causing the Bangladesh to seek assistant form IOM. - IOM is coordinating the humanitarian work on behalf of Bangladesh government. The intervention IOM is trying get is to help the Bangladesh as well as the refugee. They are struggling to provide service to the large number of refugee due to the limited fund.
4. What is left unproblematic in this representation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IOM consider Rohingya fled only because the fight between ARSA and military, it doesn't suggest the fact that people were being kill, women were raped and house were burned down. - IOM doesn't ask Myanmar to stop the violence, it only ask Myanmar government allow IOM and other UN agencies to enter the region. - IOM neglected the fact that the commission report is being critics by different NGO for helping the government to avoid its responsibilities or deny their violation or wrong doing. - To recognize advisory commission's suggestions as the best solution somehow align with ASSK's speech. - IOM remains silent toward military in the release whether they have violated human right during their operation. - IOM mention there was a similar violence outbreak in 2016, yet there were other cases in 80s and 90s; - Refugee's voice are missing in the release; - it doesn't mention the lack of welfare, oppression and neglect is due to citizenship problem. Government and military together exploit Rohingya.

5. What is the implication of this representation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rohingya men are being left out in the whole press release (it mention women and child are in great danger); - Rohingya equal to or at least support ARSA; - Rohingya people become a group of people cannot speak for themselves, their demand or voice are being silenced. - reaffirm the commission's recommendation's importance in building peace or stabilise the region; - citizenship as the root cause of the extended crisis is being side-lined; - IOM stress that the international communities need to focus on the refugees' need before tackling the root cause for conflict(in my opinion it needs to be address at the same time otherwise more people will become refugee); - Myanmar government and the terrorist are not being condemned, act if they are not important in the crisis (only focus on the need of the refugee and their mandate to help the country - to end the crisis as soon as possible);
6. How and where has this representation of the problem been produced?	-
7. Why does the text try to represent the subject as a problem?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ask for donation to provide necessities to the refugee in Cox's Bazar. - It is a crisis requires the cooperation of the international community to resolve - It represent it as a problem because it falls into the organization mandate and IOM has been commissioned by the Bangladesh government to handle the crisis. With IOM own resources, it cannot cope with the crisis.
8. How can the representation be replaced?	- although Rohingya is dependent on international assistant, their voice should be included in the release.
Other	-

Actor	IOM
Article	UN Migration Director General Commits to Strengthen Relief Eff orts for Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh Visit
Background	- A press release published after IOM director General William Lacy visited the refugee camp in Cox's Bazar in 18/10
Publish Medium/Venue	- IOM press release published on IOM website
Target Audience	donor country, private donor, public
1. What is the problem represented in the statement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are not enough support for the people who live in the refugee camp, they are forced to leave their country because of violence. international cooperation and resources are needed. - IOM, its partner are supporting the Bangladesh government to accommodate the refugee - besides emergence assistant, a peaceful solution to the conflict in the northern Rakhine is needed to prevent crisis from happening again
2. What are the assumptions behind this representation of the problem?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - people leave their country because the violence only, not due to other reason (systematically discrimination, lack of citizenship, violating human rights) - IOM consider the recommendation of the advisory commission can address the causes of the crisis (because development is not inclusive in the state that caused the conflict). By following the recommendation will effectively solve the root causes of the crisis and led to lasting peace. - women and children are the most vulnerable
3. How has this representation of the problem taken place?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IOM commissioned by the Bangladesh government to assist in handling the influx of the refugee. IOM, UNHCR, other NGO and Bangladesh government cannot cope with the refugee's needs with it limited resources, therefore they are appealing the international community to donate. - At the same time the organize recognizes if the situation in Myanmar doesn't improve, refugee will continue to enter Bangladesh, IOM and the rest of the actor will not be able to handle the crisis.
4. What is left unproblematic in this representation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IOM doesn't mention who caused the violence in northern Rakhine, not government nor the ARSA. It take a "neutral" stand by only stating part of the fact. - IOM doesn't clearly mention what kind of violence the Rohingya faced when they are in Northern Rakhine. it only briefly mention they suffer from mental trauma caused by violence, while women suffer from sexual violence. - IOM also silenced the fact that, there were other refugee crisis in the past. - IOM silence about the other reasons that push the Rohingya to leave their home (systematic discrimination, oppression, internal refugee camp) - men are also suffer from violence but IOM ignored in the press release. - IOM doesn't critics the Myanmar government; - but in the text it mention UN is not allowed to enter the Northern Rakhine region. This also mean the people who are staying in the Northern Rakhine also require attention, but the whole press release left them out.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human rights violation was a heated topic in 2017 refugee crisis, but it is silenced in this press release; -voice of the refugee are being silenced.
5. What is the implication of this representation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - public only focus to refugee located in the Bangladesh and neglect Rohingya who remain in Myanmar. - It tries to solve the immediate problem instead of the deep rooted cause, even IOM suggest to follow the advisory commission suggestion, it merely try to stop the refugee from entering Bangladesh. It concerns how to help the country to resolve the refugee problem, not so much on building peace or ending the suffering of the refugee (Bangladesh government has been mentioned multiple times in the release); - Throughout the whole release the focus is on fulfilling the urgent needs of the refugee, tackling the root cause only account for 1 short paragraph. - from the amount of time the release mentions Bangladesh government, it shows IOM is operating from the state perspective. - it doesn't condemn the violence no matter it is done by the government or the ARSA, seem like justice doesn't matter, only focus on the technical aspect for resolving the refugee crisis.
6. How and where has this representation of the problem been produced?	-
7. Why does the text try to represent the subject as a problem?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it is IOM's mandate to cooperate international migration. To present the Rohingya refugee in Bangladesh as a crisis helps them to raise sufficient fund to perform their mandate. It helps Bangladesh to cope with the massive influx of refugee. - IOM focuses on the technical level on how to deliver services to refugees and de-escalate the crisis, it doesn't have a strong stand on human rights violation happened in Myanmar. - it is the international community responsibilities to help the refugee not only Bangladesh. - IOM does not blame the Myanmar government causing the crisis, rather it suggests the government should start implementing the suggestions from the Advisory Commission.
8. How can the representation be replaced?	-
Other	- Myanmar government don't let UN agencies to enter the northern Rakhine to prove help it use the word Rohingya, counter Myanmar government and military framing

Actor	OCHA
Article	Joint Statement on the Rohingya Refugee Crisis
Background	- 3 UN agencies whose mandate are related to the crisis published a joint release to support Rohingya, 7 weeks after the crisis happened in Northern Rakhine.
Publish Medium/Venue	- published on UNHCR, IOM and OCHA- IASC website
Target Audience	- international community, public
1. What is the problem represented in the statement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rohingya fled to Bangladesh because of the recent violence, discrimination, isolation and fear (the sequence reflect the importance of the reason). -It becomes a major humanitarian emergency that require immediate international intervention to help the refugee. - find the solution to end the plight and exodus of Rohingya in Myanmar.
2. What are the assumptions behind this representation of the problem?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it is the responsibilities for the international community to interevent. - The violence is not the only push factor for Rohingya to fled their countries, it is accumulated from the past. - Myanmar government is (partly) responsible for the exodus; - after 7 weeks the situation in Myanmar remain similar as people is still crossing the border;
3. How has this representation of the problem taken place?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it is the mandate for OCHA, IOM and UNHCR to react to this humanitarian crisis. - Base on classical humanitarianism, it is the international community's responsibilities to end human suffering by intervention.
4. What is left unproblematic in this representation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the statement doesn't point out who should be blamed for causing the violence (ASSK/ military /ARSA); - it doesn't condemn the violence, nor does it condemn the discrimination, persecution, isolation or fear created by the preparator; - it doesn't mention this is not the first exodus for the Rohingya in recent year; - Compare to the other statement made by the IOM and UNHCR, it doesn't mention the recommendation by the committee; - human rights violation is not mention in the statement; - ARSA is not mention in the statement at all; - "Rohingya" is accepted by the 3 agencies as an ethnicity; - Rohingya are not being recognize by the Myanmar government, it has been regarded as the root cause of the prolonged discrimination and oppression toward Rohingya. It is not include in the statement.

5. What is the implication of this representation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - refugee is fully dependent on humanitarian aid - Myanmar government, military or ARSA are not condemn by the UN agencies, they don't bear the responsibilities of their act; - Rohingya is accepted by the UN as an ethnic group originated from Myanmar; - Confirmed the Rohingya is being oppressed by the Myanmar government; - create pressure to the UN member state to help or donate;
6. How and where has this representation of the problem been produced?	-
7. Why does the text try to represent the subject as a problem?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it is their mandate to help refugee or react to humanitarian crisis. - With the limited resources, they have no choice but to appeal to the international community for help and donation. - 'To present the crisis as something that should be our concern. Rohingya will die if we neglect them. - refugee influx create burden to Bangladesh, the responsibilities should not bear by a single country. - not only the international community can save refugees' life, they can also help the refugee to return home in safety and dignity by suggesting a peaceful solution to the Myanmar government
8. How can the representation be replaced?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the statement should condemn the violence (ASSK, military and ARSA)and the long term discrimination and oppression; - should stress that this is a repeated event; - it should point out the root cause of oppression and violence - citizenship
Other	-

Appendix 4: Framing Analysis – Rohingya Organisation

Actor	ARNO
Article	Aung San Suu Kyi's disingenuous speech fails to address Rohingya genocide
Background	- ARNO react to ASSK's speech on 19/9 and rebuttal the false information in her speech.
Publish Medium/Venue	- ARNO website
Target Audience	- international community
1. What is the problem represented in the statement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ASSK's speech is "contentious and ambiguous", the reasoning presented by ASSK is dishonest and should not be trusted; - those excuses cannot justify why ASSK's government failed to avoid the suffering of the Rohingya; - ASSK decline to use the word Rohingya in the speech --> a way to deny Rohingya "right to exist" - Rohingya problem is a matter of human rights, justice and equality;
2. What are the assumptions behind this representation of the problem?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ASSK know why Rohingya are fleeing to Bangladesh, the suffer they bear and why they need to bear the suffering; - ASSK has the power to improve the treatment of the Rohingya (which is not true, military is not control by her) - ASSK have enough time to achieve a lot in the 18 months she is in power related to Rohingya, but she decided not to (she speaks for other communities and doesn't visit the northern Rakhine after the crisis); - ASSK and the military are portrayed as two separate actor according to the statement; - base on international norms and standard, Rohingya should be recognized as one of the ethnicity of Myanmar; - military and its collaborators are the one who attack the Rohingya;
3. How has this representation of the problem taken place?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Because ASSK's speech has a lot of incorrect information, denial of problem/ wrong doing, evade responsibilities and divert international attention. This statement is an attempt to rebuttal ASSK discourse and condemn her/ her government way of presenting the situation. - ARNO believes she is always avoiding to address the Rohingya issues (using the word unsurprisingly); - ARNO see the treatment differences between Rohingya and other ethnicity who also has war or dispute with the government, force them to voice out.
4. What is left unproblematic in this representation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - although the military and its collaborators are the one who committed the crime, but the statement doesn't spend time to describe their act; - ARSA attack as the trigger of the 2017 crisis, it is not included in the statement (showing that ARNO doesn't see ARSA contribute to their suffering in this crisis); - they also doesn't deny their connection with ARSA; - The fact that ASSK's government is largely constrained by the military which is not mentioned in the statement; - the statement also doesn't mention about the recommendation suggested by the commission, whether they think those suggestions will help to ease the problem and tension; - ARNO said ASSK doesn't condemn the perpetrators which is not true, she did condemn all the violence in her speech (maybe because it is not specific, thus ARNO considers she didn't condemn at all); - other Muslims in the country also being oppressed, but it isn't mention in the statement
5. What is the implication of this representation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discredit ASSK and its government; - Present the plights they are facing since military junta till now from their perspective; - Military position in the atrocity is undermined in the statement, ASSK become the reason for Rohingya's prolonged suffering; - ARNO portray themselves as the most vulnerable and hated minority in Myanmar. - ARNO as an organization that represent the ethnicity, it helps the powerless or often neglected Rohingya to voice out. UNHCR or IOM is helping them, yet these organization often neglected their voice and focus on performing their mandate more. Their stand cannot represent the Rohingya. - the demand or rebuttal in ARNO's statement is far more comprehensive than UNHCR or IOM. The UN agencies' statements are restrained by diplomatic reason, they seldom use strong adjectives to condemn the government. They pay a lot of attention to resolve the urgent situation in the refugee camp rather than the root causes (especially the IOM).
6. How and where has this representation of the problem been produced?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - this statement is the defence of the ARNO to ASSK's official discourse. ARNO aims at countering these false statement toward Rohingya. Fight for restoring their citizenship, rights and justice.
7. Why does the text try to represent the subject as a problem?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - critics ASSK speech for lying or diverting the attention of the international community; - to show what kind of oppression they are facing; - To show ASSK is avoiding to solve the biggest problem in Myanmar; - To show why ASSK should restore their rights because they are originated from Arakine/Myanmar; - ASSK maybe a Nobel Peace Prize recipient, but her speech shows she is a dishonest

	<p>person, the international communities should not believe her discourse;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appeal to the international community to ask for help; - it is ASSK responsibilities to address their plights, but she fail; - to present Rohingya as an indigenous ethnicity of Myanmar according to the international norms and standards; - Rohingya should be the first priority for Myanmar government to restore their rights;
8. How can the representation be replaced?	-
Other	- other UN organizations don't rebuttal the ASSK speech, they follow the Myanmar suggestion to focus on the recommendation.

Actor	ARNO
Article	Repatriation proposal is trickery, Myanmar authorities are not trustworthy
Background	- a new statement to respond to the repatriation plan between the Myanmar and Bangladesh government
Publish Medium/Venue	- ARNO website
Target Audience	- international community
1. What is the problem represented in the statement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - violence is still happening in Northern Rakhine, the situation is not safe for Rohingya to return; - Rohingya is traumatized so they are not suitable to go back; - in term of repatriation plan, Myanmar government cannot be trusted base on its past record - it disregarded the repatriation agreement with Bangladesh; - without document (because it has been destroyed by the government or lost during the exodus) repatriation will be difficult for Rohingya to be verify and resettle; - previously the verification process become a way to officially deny Rohingya citizenship;
2. What are the assumptions behind this representation of the problem?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Myanmar government will use the same method to exploit the Rohingya to take away their identity (by the repatriation process -"instrument of persecution"); - Myanmar government is not genuinely want Rohingya to return Myanmar; - ASSK and military are cooperating to oppress the Rohingya, committed crime against humanity / genocide.
3. How has this representation of the problem taken place?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Myanmar and Bangladesh have signed repatriation agreement in 1978 and 1992. In the agreement, Rohingya was described as Burmese residents. Yet, when they return to the country they become illegal Bangladesh immigrants thus facing oppression. This time the military said it will follow the previous repatriation agreement, it implies that Rohingya will continue to face the same problem as in 1978 and 1992 - their rights will be deprived further. - "The repatriation proposal is a tactical move by the regime, in the face of international condemnations and pressures, whose ultimate strategic scheme is to destroy the Rohingyas' existence, history, identity and legality"
4. What is left unproblematic in this representation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the role of the ARSA is left out in the statement, it focus on ASSK's government, military, the community and Buddhist group; - ASSK and military are view as an accomplice to oppress the Rohingya and committee crime against humanity/ genocide; - Refugees live in Bangladesh are not included in this statement; - the role of the Bangladesh government is left out, as one of the key actor in drafting and executing the repatriation plan, it has power to set the requirements and agenda and monitor. - The role of IOM is also left out (maybe ARNO think they are not representing their rights/voice), but IOM is a major actor in handling the refugee crisis;
5. What is the implication of this representation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Myanmar government cannot be trusted; - Rohingya representatives should be included in the process of the repatriation process; - International community need to constantly monitor the process; - Bangladesh government becomes unrelated to the process; - ARSA also become unrelated to the crisis (it will make people wonder if Rohingya is related to the attack?); - IOM and UNHCR both pay more attention to the horrible living conditions in Bangladesh refugee camp, ARNO provides a different perspectives to focus on the repatriation process;
6. How and where has this representation of the problem been produced?	- ARNO and UNHCR share similar concern on the repatriation process and agreement. Both argue the Myanmar government have poor track record on the repatriation process which should be monitor by the international community throughout the process.
7. Why does the text try to represent the subject as a problem?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - repatriation process can be a trick of the Myanmar government; - it is the responsibilities for the international community to help and protect Rohingya, without intervention Rohingya in Rakhine will continue to face death and destruction; - Myanmar need to accept all refuge unconditionally; - ARNO stress that even the repatriation is successful (Rohingya rights are protected), the military and ASSK government need to endure legal consequences;

	- ARNO listed out 13 requirements for the repatriation process, many of them also share by UNHCR (in a way UNHCR can represent the refugee)
8. How can the representation be replaced?	-
Other	- stress that refugee representatives should be included in the negotiation of the repatriation process together with other UN agencies - the article focus more on the conditions of the Rohingya who still stay in Rakhine;

Actor	ARNO
Article	How Long You Lie To Deny Rohingya Existence
Background	- A statement to rebuttal the remark MAH made during his meeting with the American Ambassador Scot Marciel
Publish Medium/Venue	- ARNO website
Target Audience	- international community
1. What is the problem represented in the statement?	- MAH's speech on the origin of Bengali is incorrect, Rohingya is not Bengali, they are originated from Myanmar. - These incorrect statements try to deny Rohingya existence and their rights to citizenship and other rights. - MAH and civil government statements are based on incorrect history.
2. What are the assumptions behind this representation of the problem?	- Rohingya is the indigenous people in Arakan, not introduced by the British colonizer. - Burmese annexed Arakan, they are the one not originated from the area. - The government and military try to use incorrect history to deny their rights to citizenship and justify their oppression toward Rohingya; - The Rohingya or Muslim have been living in Arakan or Rakhine from Mrauk-U dynasty (1430-1784), Burma invade their land.--> so they are the original inhabitant. Muslim/ Rohingya made considerable contribution to Rakhine's development;
3. How has this representation of the problem taken place?	- different scholar has been stating that Rohingya is originated from the Arakan region. This ARNO statement highlights their findings or article to rebuttal the official discourse try to deny their existent. - Some of the sources ARNO used are from the government to prove that the government use to recognize their status and existent in the region.
4. What is left unproblematic in this representation?	- the history during the colonial period has been omitted by the statement, where the British government did introduce Indian and Bengali people to Myanmar as work force because it is cheaper to hire them and they are loyal to the British. They cannot deny the fact that some of these work force stay behind after Myanmar got independent. - ARSA is left out from the statement. MHA speech had consider amount of context related to ARSA, but this rebuttal statement didn't address the terrorist group at all (not deny or admit they have connection or not). - ARNO didn't deny if the Rohingya is related to the attack. - Not mention Rohingya situation in Bangladesh and Northern Rakhine remain desperate. - ARNO doesn't condemn the military operation which is violating human rights.
5. What is the implication of this representation?	- Rohingya is presented to be originated from Rakhine or Arakan, they have substantial contribution to the regional development before British colonial rule and Myanmar independent; - before the Burmese ruling, this area has their own culture, economic and political activities; - when Rohingya rule the area, Muslims and Buddhism coexist without conflict, which contrast to the current confrontation; - Burma's language, culture and life style only come after; - it discredit the military and civil government discourse (the military focus on the history during the colonial period, ARNO way back to 15 century;
6. How and where has this representation of the problem been produced?	- the historical event mentioned in the statement has been quote or referenced by other writer, reporter or scholars, ARNO consolidated all those favourable evidence and included in this statement.
7. Why does the text try to represent the subject as a problem?	- if they accept the military discourse, it basically mean they accept they are not part of the country, they are immigrants introduced by the British, it will largely weaken their appeal to restore their rights and citizenship; - by presenting these history it help to build their case to restore their rights and status; discredit military and the civil government
8. How can the representation be replaced?	-
Other	- ARNO usually publish statement to respond to Myanmar's official discourse

Appendix 5: Framing Analysis – NUG

Actor	NUG
Article	Policy Position on the Rohingya in Rakhine State
Background	- So as to unify the anti-military force in Myanmar after the coup in 2021, the civil government in exile announce a statement in June to restore the rights and citizenship of Rohingya
Publish Medium/Venue	- Myanmar National Unity Government's website
Target Audience	- Rohingya, Myanmar citizen and international community
1. What is the problem represented in the statement?	- Rohingya is native to the country; - Rohingya rights and citizenship will be restored in view of the military dictatorship; - solidarity of all people is needed to resist the military dictatorship; - to build a peace, prosperous and federal democratic country after overflow the military dictatorship;
2. What are the assumptions behind this representation of the problem?	- the atrocity faced by the Rohingya is mainly created by the military, the civil government is not involved in the process; - the government needs the mandate from all ethnicities and state in order to fight the military; - their previous treatment toward the Rohingya is wrong, their policy violated Rohingya's rights. (ASSK previously deny this allegation); - human rights and human dignity have been oppressed or violated in the past and these violation is the root cause of conflict (ARSA's attack); - The NUG respect human rights, dignity and don't tolerate discrimination;
3. How has this representation of the problem taken place?	- when the military overflow the civil government in February 2021, the civil government, pro-democratic citizen align together to fight the military. Insurgent group (Northern alliance and AA) also publish statement that they will stand with the people and the civil government to fight against the military. In order to gather more support and appeal to the international community, to include the Rohingya become a logical move. Epically Rohingya issues has damage the Myanmar civil government and ASSK reputation since 2017, to promise to restore their rights in the future send a clear message to the international community that the government is changing and worth the international community's assistant; - the civil government in the past never draw a clear distinction between itself and the military (ASSK in ICJ is a clear example that the civil government is covering up for the military), this time the government draw a clear line with the military (when there is no political value to keep the cooperation) and shirk its responsibilities in oppressing the Rohingya in the past; - the government has always been ambiguous whether Rohingya is native to Myanmar, they only said it will follow the national verification process and the citizenship law. Now they acknowledge Rohingya is native to the country and stated that the process and the law are both problematic;
4. What is left unproblematic in this representation?	- the role of the civil government in violating the human right of the Rohingya has been silenced, military take all the blame (not reviewing the verification process, 1982 citizenship, lying there is no human rights issues in northern Rakhine, economic has improved, education and health care for all); - the relationship between civil government and military before the coup is silenced; - is it true that all the people in Rakhine agree to the NUG plan to restore Rohingya rights and citizenship? especially there are a lot of conflict between communities and religion group; - the will seek justice for Rohingya in the ICC but what about the role of the civil government they should take the blame as well;
5. What is the implication of this representation?	- finally recognize the status of the Rohingya after years of denial and oppression; - the government is going to eradicate all the discriminating law and process, as well amend the constitution; - In general, people consider ASSK's government didn't condemn the military's operation is because they don't have the political power to oppose military's preferred policy. To sustain the fragile democratic system after a long military junta ruling, the ASSK government decided to remain silent. At the same time, most of the citizen has accepted the military discourse that the Rohingya is not originated from Myanmar and they were an obstacle during the independent war. In order to win the election, ASSK choose to take an ambiguous stand in the Rohingya problem. - this is the first time for Myanmar civil government to have an official announcement on the status of the Rohingya; - the civil government can gain the support from the international community (CSO, NGO and IO); - the recognition will not make any immediate changes to Rohingya's life, we should remain sceptical on whether the civil government will keep its promise after they overthrow the military.

6. How and where has this representation of the problem been produced?	- this is the first time for the civil government to make a clear statement
7. Why does the text try to represent the subject as a problem?	- ASSK and Myanmar military have been criticised by different states and NGOs for their denial of citizenship, oppression and crime against humans toward Rohingya. This statement tries to address these allegations and show that they are ready to make a change to gain international support and recognition to the government in exile. - pointing out the military is the real perpetrator; - they consider a truly democratic regime where Rohingya or any ethnicities' rights should be respected
8. How can the representation be replaced?	-
Other	-