

## Monday 5th November

Hostility towards the Rohingya has deepened in recent years. The government of Myanmar says Rohingya Muslims are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, as some Rohingya trace their roots to Bengal from where many people migrated during the years of British colonisation. Bengal is a region in the northeastern Indian subcontinent. Today Bengal is divided between the nation of Bangladesh and the state of West Bengal, India.

The government has also said the Muslim Rohingya present a threat to the country's security and Buddhist identity. As a result, the Rohingya have faced decades of discrimination in Myanmar and are denied citizenship.

The military launched a crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine state last year after Rohingya militants carried out deadly attacks on police posts. Hundreds of thousands have since fled to neighbouring Bangladesh and other countries.

There have been widespread allegations of human rights abuses, including arbitrary killing, rape and burning of land over many years. UN investigators said in August that military persecution of the Rohingya revealed "genocidal intent."

As they have fled the violent oppression of the government, some of them find themselves in deadly jungle camps where women are commonly raped and all risk being killed, even the children. Others are trafficked and find themselves as virtual slaves on fishing boats.

For approximately 150,000 Rohingya who are left behind in Myanmar, home is now a series of flimsy constructions separated by mud paths, where children living in squalid conditions go hungry. The vast majority depend on foreign aid brought in by international non-governmental organisations, whose operations run at the mercy of the country's authorities and their strict regulations.

The Rohingya once made up 40% of the population in Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine State, Myanmar, but the shops they ran have been closed down or destroyed. A tourist crossing the city today would see no traces of the Muslim community, were it not for the slowly decaying walled-off mosque in the city centre.

In the Baw Du Pha refugee camp on the outskirts of Sittwe, a row of wooden ships can be seen beached on the fields. Once fishing boats, they now lie as derelict wrecks, forbidden from commercial use. If they are put afloat again it will most likely be to aid a desperate escape to Bangladesh or Malaysia.

An end to the Rohingya crisis is nowhere in sight, but as Christians from various backgrounds work together to meet needs, the Rohingya see God's love and unity in action.

- Let's pray for the Rohingya living in Myanmar to remain safe and to have their basic needs met. May they turn to the One who can provide for all their needs.
- Pray for believers among them to have wisdom and perseverance.
- Pray to see change in the Rohingyas' situation in Myanmar; there must be heart-change in the majority population. Let's cry out to God to do a miraculous work among these people, to soften hearts and to show kindness and mercy.

**Tuesday 6th November**

**Let hope arise**

There were an estimated 1 million Rohingya living in Myanmar before the 2016–17 crisis. Since then more than 800,000 Rohingya people have fled. The stories and images that have accompanied this atrocity and continue to come from the refugee camps are truly heart breaking.



The media paints a bleak and hopeless picture for the future and the international community are seemingly unable to influence the situation. We believe in a God of love, a God of restoration and a God of hope.

Mission Network News reported in September that Joe Handley of Asian Access said thousands of Rohingya have fled to Bangladesh, where they're meeting Christ through local believers. "In the midst of this 'ethnic cleansing' type of situation, the Church is just trying to be the body of Christ and reach out to their neighbours and share the love of Jesus. They've seen hundreds,

maybe even thousands, come to Christ; they've started dozens of churches among the Rohingya."

Let us stand together in hope for the Rohingya, believing God is at work.

Let's pray:

God of love be glorified in the nations.  
Shine your face and make your name known.  
We bring to you the plight of the Rohingya.  
Have mercy, O Lord.

God of grace let your Spirit flow.  
Impart strength to the Rohingya to endure these times of trial.  
We pray heaven's favour for a forgotten people.  
Let grace flow.

God of hope let your truth arise.  
Stir the hearts of the Rohingya to see their future in you.  
We pray for new beginnings for broken hearts.  
Let hope arise.

You are the refuge for the Rohingya,  
their shelter in these times of trouble.  
May they find comfort and peace in your arms of love.  
Have mercy, O Lord.

May your everlasting love know no bounds.  
Reveal yourself in glory.  
Bring new creation in the chaos.  
Bless the Rohingya nation with hope of new beginnings.

We carry hope in our hearts.  
Stir our faith to pray for the unseen, the unknown.  
Have mercy, O Lord.

Amen.

- God commands us to pray for the leaders and governments of this world (1 Timothy 2:1). Please pray for the leaders of those countries where the Rohingya people are scattered. Pray that they will rule and make decisions that reflect the dignity of all mankind and improve the situation of the Rohingya.

Source of most material: <https://www.pray4rohingya.org/let-hope-arise/>

### Wednesday 7th November

#### Hasina – a personal escape story to Bangladesh

My name is Hasina. I lived with my parents and two brothers in Rakhine state. My father was a rickshaw driver. Some days when he made enough money, he brought some sweets home for us children; that was always nice. We lived in a hut made of bamboo, just big enough that we all could sleep in it. Relatives lived nearby.

My elder brother and I went to school, but the teaching was so poor that we did not understand and had to take extra private lessons. That was extremely expensive, so my parents could only afford to pay for my brother. There was not enough money for me. But in my first year at school I was so eager to learn that I was moved up to the next class.

It was on the 25th of August last year that we heard that terrorists had attacked a police station. After that the army attacked many villages and banished the inhabitants. My school was used as refuge for Buddhists who escaped from the villages.

There has been hatred against our people group longer than I have lived, but it had never been as violent as then. In our town we were despised and more and more repressed. As girls we were afraid to go out of the house. My dad did all the shopping, but we got less and less rice.



One day in September last year many other people from our neighbourhood suggested that we flee to Bangladesh to take refuge there. About 100 of us left. For 10 days we had to cross the jungle, because we had to hide from the police and the army who were posted in the Buddhist villages.

Once Buddhists tried to rob us, but we ran as fast as we could. Three people were murdered by bandits.

We had to climb high mountains and cross rivers. In one of the rivers my 2-year old brother slipped out of my mother's arms. He almost drowned in the fast

running water, but luckily one of our neighbours who crossed the river further down rescued him. Praise God.

For the last 3 days of our escape we had no food. On the other side of the big river that is the border between Myanmar and Bangladesh, there were many refugees from our people group who got help. There we got something to eat. That was good! My father and my brother were registered and got cards to receive food.

We were put into a big tent with many other families. Big sheets divided it into separate rooms. We brought nothing, because we had to leave all belongings behind when we got on the boat to cross the big river. We received the most necessary things like pots, rice, lentils, salt, oil and sugar, but no fruit and vegetables.

For my brothers and me life was difficult. We would have liked to go to school.

For drinking water, we had to stand and wait in a line – the water came out of a big truck.

Sometimes children disappeared; their parents sold them to work in cities.

We have heard from other families that very bad things have happened to people at home. They were killed with swords or guns and the houses burnt down. What has happened to us was not nice, but I cannot imagine what others had to go through. I do not want to think about it.

- Among the 800,000 refugees, more than half are children and youths. Please pray that children like Hasina and her brothers attend school and start to rebuild their lives and overcome the trauma they have suffered.
- Pray that the government in Bangladesh will continue to provide refuge and that permanent solutions will be found.
- Pray that the care received in the refugee camps would reach beyond the physical to bless peoples' souls.
- Each area in the refugee camp has an overseer who is often corrupt. Anyone they don't like will not be given anything. Most Rohingya believers never get a voucher. Let's pray that the overseers act justly.

Source: <https://www.pray4rohingya.org/hasina-a-personal-escape-story/>

## **Thursday 8th November**

### **A heart's desire – a refugee's story from Malaysia**

*"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb." (Psalm 139:13)*

Infertility is an issue that transcends cultural difference. Child rearing is of utmost importance in Rohingya culture, so not being able to conceive brings great shame on a woman. Added to the cultural stress, being unable to conceive means missing out on a UNHCR card for Rohingya refugees living in Malaysia. With a high demand for UN protection, the UNHCR only grants cards to pregnant women, minors and the seriously ill.

Each time we visit this Muslim woman she expresses the same desire – for a UNHCR card and a child in her womb. Without this UNHCR card she fears being bribed or arrested if she ventures outside. As a result, she rarely leaves her small room in a shared apartment. Her husband is impatient for her to be pregnant; it is expected after two years of marriage. The onus and pressure is on her, with very little understanding that the issue may not be so simple.

Last month in desperation she sought help from a doctor. Without the UNHCR card she had to pay a premium to access healthcare. After the consultation, she spent almost a week's wages on multivitamins, folic acid and iron tablets that would have cost a fraction of the price from a chemist.

She is always keen to pray together and sees God as being the answer to her problems.

- Pray the giver of life would grant her heart's desire and that through this she would come to know life in its fullness. May she know there is no shame in Jesus.
- Refugees in Malaysia are vulnerable to injustice; police bribes, expensive healthcare and unfair landlords to name but a few. Pray for justice to flow like a river in this land.
- Pray the local community would have compassion on the Rohingya and treat them more fairly.

Source: <https://www.pray4rohingya.org/a-hearts-desire/>

## Friday 9th November

### I want to die peacefully – Ashraf's story from Indonesia

Ashraf and his wife and daughter have been in a detention centre in Indonesia for some months. Ashraf is a calm and quiet man, whose face rarely displays his long journey and his sadness. Recently he shared how he left his home country of Myanmar.

He was reluctant to leave his country, especially as it meant abandoning his mother who had taken care of him and his two brothers all by herself. However his mother insisted he leave the country. "I do not want to see you die here. If you go, we can still talk on the phone. Hearing your voice and knowing that you are alive, even though it is far, would make me feel relieved." Ashraf repeated his mother's words with tears in his eyes. At the age of 23, he had begun his journey.



First he went to Thailand, but did not stay long because he did not know anybody there. He then went to Malaysia, where his elder brother was. There he met and married his wife. Refugees in Malaysia are not permitted to get jobs. Even when he could find illegal work, he would always be on the lookout for inspectors. He was once arrested and imprisoned for four months because he was caught working. This situation got more difficult when his daughter got older, as he needed to pay for her education. Ashraf then heard that Australia would accept and protect them. And most importantly his daughter could go to school when she arrived there.

His first thought was to go ahead of his family, leaving them in Malaysia until provisions could be made for them to follow later. However his wife refused and insisted that they go as a family, as being together was

important to her. She preferred that they die together rather than live separately. Using their savings they paid a smuggler to get them to Australia. They were told that they would travel on a big boat, but instead, the boat they travelled on was only three by eight metres and they were forced to share that space with forty-five other people. "We were all wet and scared and we had to always hide." His wife said their daughter cried along the way. Instead of Australia, they arrived in Indonesia. They were disappointed, but could do nothing. They were turned in to the police and placed in a detention centre.

During their time there, his wife has been very sick. Every month she has had to take at least one type of medicine to ease her pain. She has intense pains in her stomach, her heart beats irregularly, and sometimes it is hard for her to breathe. She said that she has lost around 20kgs since she left Malaysia.

When asked what people could pray for, Ashraf said "All I want is security and protection for my child and my wife. Every day I feel sad, but I cannot show it because I should be strong for them. I want my family to find peace and security and our daughter to have a bright future. If not, we want to die peacefully rather than remain in our current situation and, when we die, to go to heaven. We want an end to fighting so that everyone can live in peace. We hope that our parents are safe and sound and we want them to live long, healthy lives."

- Let's pray, as Ashraf has asked, that he and his family will find the peace and security they desire.
- Let's pray that he and the many other Rohingya refugees in Indonesia will be able to truly call this country home, that the Indonesian authorities and locals will have compassion on them and welcome them.
- Let's join Ashraf and his family in praying for an end to fighting, so that everyone can live in peace.

Source: <https://www.pray4rohingya.org/i-want-to-die-peacefully-ashrafs-refugee-story/>

## **Saturday 10th November**

### **Tragedies and miracles – a story from a Southeast Asian country**

A small path leads to the hut that was built to give shelter to a small family: Faadl and Elmas who are 14 and 16 years old, their mother and little Hasuma who is 3 years old. The house has a big living area and a few smaller rooms for kitchen and sleeping areas, one for mum and the baby, one for the two boys and a third one for the uncle who moved in after their father's death.

Faadl shares what happened on the day his father died. He was on the way to sell chickens. This was the business he set up after he fled from Myanmar with his wife and Faadl as a baby. He worked hard to buy chickens, feed them and sell them to costumers in the surrounding villages and town areas. He did that using his motor bike. He was able to earn a little money – at least enough to provide for his family, always fearing that the police could arrest him anytime. As a refugee in this country he wasn't allowed to work at all.



There were troubles with the local community. They didn't like the business. The chickens were smelly and noisy, especially when preparing them for selling. And some neighbours were jealous. Therefore Faadl's father searched for an area cheap enough to rent or buy something and to use for his chicken business. He couldn't find anything, until he found the swampland in between the railroad and the barbwire wall. The house he built was simple, yet big enough to hold the whole family and guarantee a safe home, at least when it didn't rain much.

The day when the accident happened, Faadl's father had left the house to sell some chickens. He had to stop

at one of the main roads, but needed to cross it in order to deliver a few of his chickens. Nobody exactly knows what happened but a lorry driver didn't see him and the father of three was hit. He died on the spot. With tear-filled eyes and a sense of hopelessness, Faadl ends his story.

Almost a year after this tragedy Faadl and Elmas are struggling to keep up the business and pursue their education in a nearby refugee school. They go to school in the morning and sell chickens in the afternoon. Faadl is at breaking point because of the immense responsibility he has to carry. Being the eldest son, he is eager to provide for his family. But he cannot go as far as his hardworking father could; he cannot use the bike to deliver chicken, since he doesn't own a license. If the police catch him and send him into detention, nobody would be able to provide for the family anymore. Hopeless, abandoned, futureless Faadl and Elmas are devastated. And so is their mum. Following Rohingya culture, her husband used to do every work outside the house for her. Now she has to go shopping, not able to speak the local language, since she didn't have to leave the house before. The uncle (her brother) moved in after the accident and tries his best to support the family wherever possible.

When a flood hit the state, thousands were affected. A lot of Rohingya lost their possessions, among them Faadl and Elmas' family. During the flood, water rose so high inside the house that they could only stay in the highest area on a small platform. The school closed for a few days, because the students weren't able to attend school. Two trees were uprooted during the heavy storm and rain. A third tree that would have hit and destroyed their house did not fall. After the flood the situation improved, with support from the school and other people. They were able to renovate the house a little. Hope arose. They also started seeing a white man walking through their dreams. They haven't understood the significance of this yet. In front of their house one of the trees that was uprooted has started growing again and is now bearing new branches with green leaves as before. They are surrounded by miracles. We thank God for His protection during the flood and for sparing their house from being destroyed.

- Ask God to reveal himself that they might see his glory and ultimately encounter "Isa Al-Masih" as the Rohingya call Jesus.
- Ask God to give strength to bear daily life with all the pain and suffering this family and two boys have to go through.
- Ask God for a revelation of His father heart, that He might become their peace, hope and future.

Source: <https://www.pray4rohingya.org/prayer-story-27-tragedy-and-miracles/>