



- Security Beyond Borders -

Dear Readers,

Its been just over a year since the Inaugural Meeting of the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security Studies in Asia (NTS-Asia). Much has happened since then. During this period, we have had a number of significant activities including: the series of Dissemination Seminars in the US, the launch of the NTS-Asia research fellowship programme, the holding of the first Sub-Regional Workshop on Humanitarian Emergencies and Human Security in Aceh, and the first NTS-Asia Annual Convention in Colombo. Our NTS network members have also been quite active in launching a number of initiatives including the establishment of the Centre for Non-Traditional Security and Peace Development (NTS-PD) in Zhejiang University, China and the Bangladesh Human Security Assessment currently undertaken by the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies.

NTS-Asia publications have also been widely-circulated and drawn much interest from within the region and beyond. Our fortnightly NTS Alert has provided timely coverage of various NTS issues, while our bimonthly NTS-Asia newsletter (such as this) provides a glimpse of the various NTS activities and publications within the network, with occasional short articles by NTS scholars.

It is also with great pleasure to announce that the NTS programme in RSIS will officially be upgraded to a Centre by mid-2008. Such an achievement only serves to strengthen the Consortium’s capacity in further mainstreaming the study of NTS. On behalf of NTS-Asia, thank you very much for your support and continuing interest in the Consortium’s work. I wish you well for the year ahead.

Kind Regards,
Mely Caballero Anthony
Secretary-General, NTS-Asia

NTS-Asia invites applications for its

2008 Research Fellowship.

See page 2 or visit the [NTS-Asia website](#) for more details.

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Rohingya Muslims: Myanmar's Forgotten People

*By Nyi Nyi Kyaw**

The Rohingya Muslims from northern Rakhine (originally 'Arakan') state in Myanmar, number about two million, including a substantial diaspora community. They are among Myanmar's largest ethno-religious minority groups. But the military regime still does not recognise the Rohingyas as a distinct ethnic group. According to Medicins Sans Frontieres, an international NGO which has been involved in humanitarian assistance projects in Bangladesh, the human rights violations of the Myanmar military government towards the Rohingyas are among the world's top ten most underreported stories of 2007.

The Rohingyas have a history which dates back to the beginning of 7th century when Arab Muslim traders settled in Arakan. The vast majority of Rohingyas

live in the Rakhine State, a geographically-isolated area in western Myanmar consisting of coastal plains and a network of streams and rivers. The area is separated from central Myanmar by a mountain range. The Naaf River marks part of the border between Bangladesh and Myanmar. An estimated 200,000 Rohingyas also live across the border in Bangladesh, where they mostly live in abject poverty. A small number of around 26,000 reside in refugee camps scattered along the Myanmar-Bangladesh border.

Origin of status problem

They were recognized as an indigenous ethnic group by the then-U Nu government during the parliamentary era in the 1950s. But the community

Call for Applications for NTS-Asia Research Fellowship 2008

NTS-Asia invites applications for a 3-month Research Fellowship Programme to commence in July 2008. Research fellowship comes with a stipend of US\$ 8,000 (all inclusive for the duration of the fellowship). Three positions are available for 2008-2009. The positions are intended for outstanding active researchers working on a wide range of non-traditional security issues (NTS) in Asia. Young scholars are encouraged to apply. Successful candidates can choose to conduct their research at any of the NTS-Asia member institutes located in Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia and South Asia.

NTS-Asia Research Fellows are expected to produce at least one publication at the end of the fellowship period. Interested applicants are invited to send their applications via e-mail **by 31st March 2008 (Monday)**, with the following information:

- (i) A research proposal of about 2000 words which should include a statement of the aims and objectives of the project, the time period for the project, the Institute of choice and reason why it is the most suitable place for such research, and the output;
- (ii) Information on his/her expertise in relation to the research that is to be carried out;
- (iii) Two (2) recommendation letters, including one from the applicant's organization; and
- (iv) A curriculum vitae and a copy of his/her highest level of education reached.

Applications can be sent via email to:

NTS-Asia Secretariat
S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)
Nanyang Technological University
E-mail: jssofiah@ntu.edu.sg
webmaster@rsis-ntsasia.org
Ref: Research Fellowship-08

lost their political and constitutional identity when the military government of General Ne Win promulgated the Citizenship Act of Burma (Myanmar's previous name) in 1983, which effectively denied the Rohingyas recognition of their status as an ethnic minority group. Harsh discrimination against the Rohingyas soon followed.

Their lack of citizenship status has severely curtailed economic opportunities and access to health and educational facilities. The plight of the Rohingya has been compounded by social customs which forbid females to work, thereby contributing to the problems of sustainable livelihood. Not surprisingly, such conditions have sparked massive outflows of people in search for a better life overseas.

Aside from Bangladesh, Rohingyas have fled to Thailand and Malaysia, at times through precarious channels such as overcrowded boats. According to some sources, about 15,000 Rohingyas entered Thailand via these channels in 2007 alone. In many instances however, they are often arrested upon arrival as illegal immigrants and repatriated back to Myanmar. While a large number of those refugees were repatriated to Myanmar over time, the outflow of Rohingyas from Northern Rakhine state fleeing persecution continues today.

Government Policy

The military junta maintains a clearly articulated stance on the Rohingya people. In a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar on 26 February 1992, the government declared: "In actual fact, although there are (135) national races living in Myanmar today, the so-called Rohingya people is not one of them. Historically, there has never been a 'Rohingya' race in Myanmar."

However, in response to criticisms from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child in April 2004, the junta replied that it had granted full and equal treatment to the Rohingyas, as with other races, in matters relating to birth and death registration, education, health and social affairs. Moreover, the junta also mentioned that the Rohingyas are listed as a Bengali racial group of the Bengali race and recognized as permanent residents of Myanmar.

However, in practice the rights of the Rohingya population remained greatly restricted. The presence of the UNHCR and some other international NGOs in northern Rakhine State can only ameliorate the current plight of the Rohingyas. Without political will from within the Myanmar military junta, the plight of the Rohingya cannot be resolved.

The military junta continues to deny full citizenship to the Rohingyas, restrict their movements, and control the growth of the Rohingya population through restrictions in birth, death, and marriage registration. Many Rohingya communities have been used as forced labour to build "model" villages in northern Rakhine State as part of resettlement initiatives targeted at increasing the non-Rohingya population in traditional Rohingya lands.

Rohingyas and the temptation of militancy

The plight of the Rohingyas has spawned several armed groups since the advent of military rule in 1962. These include the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO), and the Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front (ARIF), both of which in 1996 jointly formed the Rohingya National Alliance (RNA). In 1998 two RSO factions and ARIF merged into the Arakan Rohingya National Organisation (ARNO).

After the arrival of Rohingya Muslim refugees during 1991-92 in Bangladesh, some of the Rohingya armed groups became active in the refugee camps there, where they reportedly attempted to recruit refugees. According to Amnesty International, these groups have split into several smaller factions in recent years as a result of internal differences. They are reportedly operating from small bases in the Bangladesh-Myanmar border area, and do not appear to command a large following.

Against the current international security climate, there remains an abiding concern for the potential links between Rohingya resistance groups and foreign extremist organisations. Several reports have surfaced regarding the activities of foreign extremists among Rohingya populations, though the evidence marshalled is sketchy and hypothetical at best. That said, there are several points of concern. For one, some 350,000 Rohingyas are purportedly now living in Pakistan, where a climate of sectarianism and religious extremism looms large.





Time for international assistance?

While it is difficult to see light at the end of the tunnel, there have been some developments that have worked towards ameliorating the plight of the Rohingyas. For example, Bangladeshi authorities have softened their position on Rohingya refugees on their soil, and humanitarian support has been permitted to trickle through to the camps.

The European Union donated US\$15 million in December 2007 to assist the relocation of thousands of Rohingya refugees from their over-crowded refugee camps in Bangladesh to new shelters. These efforts notwithstanding, there is much more that the international community can and should do in order to improve living and educational standards of Myanmar's forgotten Rohingya minorities, and well as pressing for their political recognition.

Indeed, these considerations are of great significance if the increasingly marginalised Rohingya community of Myanmar is to be insulated from the forces of extremism and jihadism that is ever on the lookout for new and fertile soil to spawn.

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Upcoming Events

Workshop on International Instruments for the Protection of Migrant Workers in South Asia with Special Focus on the ILO Multilateral Framework (MLF) on Labour Migration **29 – 30 January 2008, BRAC Inn, Dhaka**

This regional workshop seeks to highlight the need for ratification of international instruments for the protection of migrant workers in South Asia and the recently developed ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration. The 2-day workshop is organised by the South Asia Migration Resource Network (SAMReN).

Human Security + 10: Emerging Issues for the Coming Decade in South Asia **22-23 January 2008, Colombo, Sri Lanka**

RCSS in collaboration with Saferworld, UK is hosting a conference for think tanks from the South Asian region to examine selected core threats to human security in the region. The conference entitled "Human Security + 10: Emerging Issues for the coming Decade in South Asia" seeks to develop a nuanced analysis of the human security issues that will determine the welfare of South Asian peoples in the coming 10 years, and to develop an agenda for research and policy engagement. The conference included sessions on the following themes:

- Democratic governance
- Ideologies and extremism
- Law and justice
- Livelihoods, poverty and exclusion
- Disasters and insecurity

Forum on HIV/AIDS, Gender and Security **22-23 February 2008, Chennai**

In collaboration with Chaitanya (Chennai), the objective of this WISCOMP Forum is to define the security crisis (if any) caused by HIV/AIDS in India, highlighting the experience of women as part of that definition. The forum will bring together Indian practitioners in the area of HIV/AIDS care and policy and scholars with an interest in security studies for discussions on:

- The nature of the latent human security problem in the gender-HIV/AIDS interface in India;
- The ways in which violence, conflict and security exacerbate the HIV/AIDS epidemic, increasing the vulnerability of women and girls.

The sessions at the forum will be structured around the following themes:

- The development, security and HIV/AIDS interface;
- HIV/AIDS and food and livelihood security;
- The HIV/AIDS Public Health Crisis, gender and security;
- Violence against women
- Conflict, HIV/AIDS and gender

**Troubled Diversity: The Political Process in
North East India.**
29 Feb - 2 March 2008, Gauhati, India

Diversity as a social fact always existed in the world at large but it becomes a problem mainly when it exists within the territory of a state. Diversity within territory becomes a problem when the cultural or racial differences become the basis of group inequality or when the different groups perceive one another as threat to their identity or a challenge to their livelihood. The nature of diversity in North-East India is unique. It represents a bewildering mosaic of different collective identities-religious, linguistic ,ethnic which overlap and cut across one another in innumerable ways. However , the nuances and implications of this diversity in this region needs to be adequately understood ,questioned and debated in academic discourse.

The north-East consists of eight states , namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur ,Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. With a total population of 39 million (2001 census) and covering an area of 262,179 square Km, the Northeast is relatively sparsely populated, considering the Indian context. Northeast India is a land with a plethora of races, religions, cultures, and dialects. It is home to around 200 indigenous communities, each with distinct history, jurisdiction and culture.

The intensification of identity politics centering around ethnicity is one of the distinguishing feature of recent political history of North East India .For creating and consolidating its respective identities every ethnic group makes effort to construct its 'other'. As the number of identities increase list of

others also multiplies. The logic of the 'other' is always seen in relation to the community to which she /he belongs. 'The other' is one who has come to dominate and exploit. The ideology of 'the other' motivates and guides identity politics in North East India. The atmosphere of mistrust generated by fears of domination and vengeance over one group by another has been heightened in the wake of various ethnic conflicts in North East India in past few years .Moreover, the cultural processes, values ,and practices of ethnic groups are increasingly becoming political resources for elites in competition for political power or economic advantage. They become symbols and referents for the identification of members of the group which are called up in order to create a political identity more easily .

Most of the ethnic problems and confusion arise in North East due to intensive political mobilization and competition between the state and the non state actors. Competitive electoral politics ,in the process of mobilizing for votes, tends to foreground the identity terrain and cultural concerns of communities. The growing inter community hatred and violence in various regions in North-East India invites us to rethink the impact on the political process that diversity produces, the link between of democratic politics and social conflict.The objective of this seminar is, to develop new ways of thinking about diversity and the construction of the nation state. Some possible themes for discussions are:

- Troubled Diversity as a colonial Baggage: Is colonial policy and the homogenizing tendency of nationalism and state formation responsible for community conflicts?
- Accommodating Diversity. Do the boundaries of majority and minority help in dealing with social diversity?
- Diversity and Development: What are possible patterns of diversity-development nexus ?
- Diversity and Conflicts .Is diversity responsible for community conflict? How does the state influence community conflicts?





- **Autonomy and Diversity :** Is Autonomy a tool to accommodate diversities or does it lead to secession?
- **Democracy and Diversity:** Is Diversity a threat or resource to Democracy in North-East India?

The seminar is organized by the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla, at Gauhati in collaboration with Gauhati-University. The tentative dates are 29 Feb - 2 March 2008. We invite about 10-14 papers on any of the above issues and expect that the seminar will result in an edited volume of articles to be published by the IIAS, Simla.

**International Symposium on Dialogue
Processes**
15 - 17 March 2008, New Delhi

The symposium will bring together scholars and practitioners from different parts of the world to reflect upon the possibilities and limits of dialogue as an integral element of democratic practice. The symposium, it is hoped, will engage with the spaces for dialogue in the context of ethnic political conflict, and more especially as an approach to augment practices of coexistence in multicultural societies. This will also be an attempt to examine why and to what extent dialogue is increasingly being replaced in the public and civic space by stridency, discord and sectarianism. With conventional practices of consensus building increasingly under strain, the limits and possibilities of dialogue as a philosophy, methodology, process, strategy, and/or tool will be explored.

The symposium will also focus on the lessons to be learnt from successful or thwarted dialogue processes from across the world. The aim will be to squarely locate it within the possibilities of the democratic and participatory framework, and explore how policy and practice can be optimally impacted by according priority and public legitimacy to dialogue processes. This would be relevant both for conflict transformation and peacebuilding and, more importantly, conflict prevention in the South Asian region that is increasingly perceived as conflict prone.

**Training Workshop on Migration,
Globalisation, Security and Development**
10-16 March 2008 - Godvari Village Resort, Nepal

SAMReN is organizing a training workshop from 9-16 March 2008 at the Godavari Village Resort of Kathmandu, Nepal. The Nepal Institute of Development Studies (NIDS) and the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) are co-hosts of the workshop while the Development Research Centre (DRC) on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty based at Sussex is providing the fund support under a grant from DFID.

This workshop is designed to enhance understanding of migration processes in South Asian and international frameworks, and to equip young academics and professionals in migration research and management. It will examine migration dynamics in the context of globalisation, security and development. Furthermore, it will highlight recent issues facing the international migration regime, impact of globalisation on migration, and migration challenges faced by sending and receiving countries.

Teaching will take the form of lectures, seminars, small work groups, and panel discussions. The teaching staff will comprise of:

- Migration experts from five South Asian countries
- Faculty of RMMRU, University of Dhaka and Nepal Institute of Development Studies
- Faculty of the DRC on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty, Sussex University, UK
- Faculty of the Asia Pacific Migration Research Network (APMRN)
- Experts from International Labour Office (ILO) and other international agencies working on migration

Recent Events

Series on "Non-traditional Security and China's reality" officially published 24 Dec 2007, Zhejiang University Press

Zhejiang University Press has officially launched the first 5 books in its series of 10 books on "Non-Traditional Security and China's Reality" (in Mandarin). According to the Non-Traditional Security and Peace Development Research Centre

(NTS-PD) in Zhejiang University, this series is a first, not only in China, but also the Asian region and possibly the world. The series serves to further mainstream the study of NTS and increase awareness on measures needed in order to sustain China's socio-economic development.

With the consultation of government officials, the series provides easy reading and serves to inform

Recent Publications

Virtual and Not-So-Virtual Issues of Security

Jean Michel Montsion, NTS-Asia Commentary, 12 February 2008

Rohingya Muslims: Myanmar's Forgotten People

Nyi Nyi Kyaw, RSIS Commentaries, 6 February 2008

Series on "Non-traditional Security and Chinese Reality"

NTS-PD Center & Zhejiang University Press, October 2007

The Kyoto Protocol and the Logic of Collective Action

Chen Gang, Chinese Journal of International Politics, 2007, Vol. 1

A REDD Herring in the Post Kyoto Scenario?

NTS-Alert Jan 2008/2

Global Unity in Bali? - A Post-Mortem of the UNFCCC Meeting on Climate Change

NTS-Alert Jan 2008/1

Rights and Realities: Monitoring Reports on the Status of Indonesian Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Eds. Sivananthi Thanenthiran & Ayesha Khan, Asian-Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women (ARROW), 2007

Marginalisation and the Indian Community in Malaysia

Mohamed Nawab Mohamed Osman, RSIS Commentaries, 3 December 2007

The Case for Ratification: 1990 UN Convention on the Protection of Migrant Workers' Rights

RMMRU Policy Brief #3, December 2007

Policy Brief 2: Accessing Rights as Citizens: The Camp-based Urdu Speaking Community in Bangladesh

RMMRU Policy Brief #2, September 2007

Human Security as a Policy Framework for New Cooperation in Asia

Surin Pitsuwan, "Health and Human Security: Moving from Concept to Action", Fourth Intellectual Dialogue on Building Asia's Tomorrow, Kisarazu, Japan March 2002

To view these publications and more, please visit the [NTS-Asia website](#)





policy-makers and civil servants working on public affairs regarding the reality of China's pressing non-traditional security issues for the target. This is done by applying relevant non-traditional security theories to various contexts and putting forth proposals to manage the issues and sensitize government officials to a more holistic view of national security. Authors of the series include scholars from prominent colleges universities and research institutes.

Each book is divided into five parts, namely – the status quo and problems, theoretical analysis, countermeasures and model, international comparisons and appendix, which covers China's domestic and international security regulations.

Seminar on "Compelled to Exile: Women's Lives In-Between"
3 Dec 2007, CAS Hong Kong University

In this seminar jointly organized by the Centre of Asian Studies and Women's Studies Research Centre, Dr. He Ming Fang, Visiting Scholar and Research Consultant from the Department of Educational Psychology, Counseling and Learning Needs at the Hong Kong Institute of Education explored a form of inquiry into women's lives in-between cross-cultural narrative inquiry. The women participants in her inquiry, who were and continue to be compelled to exile intellectually, politically, linguistically, and culturally, compose their lives in-between languages, cultures, and powers in the midst of changing, often contested, multicultural and multilingual world. She traced the historical origins of cross-cultural narrative inquiry in the social sciences and its evolving development in education. She called for a form of inquiry with explicit agendas that focus on race, gender, and class; with specific methodologies that foster a participatory, humanistic, and critical process of the inquiries; and with focal outcomes that foster equity, equality, human rights, and social justice, and enact social and educational change. A life based

research is presented to demonstrate specific qualities of this form of inquiry. Various forms of cross-cultural narrative inquiry are briefly mentioned (e.g., critical race narrative, autobiography, memoir, novel, oral history, documentary film, painting, and poetry) with a particular focus on the exile quality of lives in-between. Contributions, potentials, and challenges of cross-cultural narrative inquiry are also explored. This seminar was intended to search ways to ground research and scholarly activities in teaching, learning, research, and life. The speaker also called for women educational researchers in Hong Kong to work together with other researchers, teachers, educators, administrators, policy-makers, students, parents, and community members, to take to heart the concerns of underrepresented, disfranchised, and invisible groups and individuals, to exile themselves intellectually, and to invent spaces where all members of the societies develop human capacities more fully in an increasingly changing and diversifying world.

Book Launch: ASEAN's Quest for a Full-fledged Community
20 Sept 2007, CSIS Indonesia

On September 20th, 2007, CSIS launched "ASEAN's Quest for a Full-Fledged Community," a new book examining ongoing efforts to expand ASEAN's cooperation into the security realm. Written by the research staff of CSIS's Department of International Relations, the book's topics range from the theoretical basis for a security community within ASEAN, to analysis of the historical development of the idea of an ASEAN security community, to the practical challenges to establishing such a community. This assessment meets a critical need for comprehensive analysis of ASEAN as it meets new challenges and adopts a new charter at the dawn of its fifth decade. In conjunction with the book release, CSIS held a seminar and discussion on the ASEAN security community. Some of the book's contributors discussed its main themes and arguments with outside experts, students, and government officials.

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