

# ORIGINS OF CONFLICT, ROOTS OF VIOLENCE: HISTORICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE RAKHINE STATE CRISIS

## Abstract:

The disenfranchisement of the Rohingyas being one of numerous rights violations hurting Muslims in Rakhine State during the last decades has stood at the forefront of discussions of the conundrum of the Rakhine State crisis since 2012. Their persecution, which has recently led to ICC-led accusations of genocide, is closely tied to the border policies of the previous military regime. Moreover, the interpretation of Rohingya marginalization has connected their case to prevalent islamophobia in the country. The presentation will argue that to understand the conflictual origins in Rakhine State, it is important to look beyond state-led violence and the mass flights to Bangladesh since the 1970s. The history of Muslim communities in Myanmar before and after independence, the specific impact of decolonization hastened by the events of WW II in Arakan (Rakhine State) and the state of Buddhist-Muslim relations during the multi-party parliamentary period (1948-62) need to be included in the study of the roots of violence.

## Speaker: Dr Jacques P. Leider

Jacques P. Leider is a historian with the Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient (French Institute of Asian Studies). He has lived for many years in Thailand and Myanmar where he has done research on early modern Myanmar history, including Arakan (Rakhine State). His numerous publications on Arakan/Rakhine history emphasize his ongoing interest in the complexity of Buddhist-Muslim relations in the frontier region of South and Southeast Asia. His latest publications addressing contemporary issues of violence, persecution and identity formation include "*Rohingya: The History of a Muslim Identity in Myanmar.*" In Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History, edited by David Ludden (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), and "*Transmutations of the Rohingya Movement in the Post-2012 Rakhine State Crisis,*" in *Ethnic and Religious Identities and Integration in Southeast Asia*, edited by Ooi Keat Gin and Volker Grabowsky (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2017).

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All are welcome!

