

### Who are the Rohingya?

The Rohingya, or Roh, are the largest Muslim people group in Myanmar. Over 1 million live in Myanmar's northern Rakhine (Arakan) State, along the border with Bangladesh and the Bay of Bengal. Roh can also be found in Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Thailand and Malaysia. In Myanmar, a majority Buddhist nation, the Roh are more likely to say they are "Muslim" than to identify themselves with a particular ethnicity. There is evidence that Muslims have had a presence in Rakhine State for over 1000 years.

### Languages

The Roh usually speak Burmese. Speaking the majority Burmese language is an important statement for the Roh, who are often persecuted, and are not considered citizens by the Myanmar government. The Roh also use Urdu and Arabic in religious contexts.

### Culture



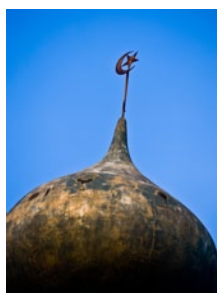
The Roh have experienced great persecution from the Myanmar government. In 1978 and 1992, many Roh fled as refugees to Bangladesh. Although most refugees have

since returned, the issues spurring their flight have yet to be resolved. At the present time, the Union of Myanmar considers the Roh to be stateless, and will not grant them identity papers. According to a press release from the Myanmar Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1992), "Historically, there has never been a Rohingya race in Myanmar." Despite their long history in Myanmar, the Roh are considered illegal immigrants.

The Roh in Myanmar face strict laws. They are not allowed to travel freely from village to village without permission from the authorities. They may only marry other Rohingya. The government also restricts their educational options. In 2005, students at Sittwe University, Rakhine State's primary institution, were forced to discontinue their studies. Similar restrictions have now spread throughout Rakhine State. The Roh also face random taxation, confiscation of land and cattle and forced labor. Added to these miseries are economic insecurity and extreme poverty.

### Beliefs


Islam is an important part of Rohingya ethnic identity. The Roh practice Sunni Islam with elements of Sufi worship. Because the government restricts educational opportunities for the Roh, many pursue fundamental Islamic studies as their only educational option.



Partly due to cultural differences, the Roh rarely interact with followers of Jesus. The Roh are neglected and even ignored by followers of Jesus from other ethnic groups in Myanmar. A few Roh follow Jesus, but there are no known fellowships.

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For more information about the Rohingya, visit:  
[www.apeopleloved.com/myanmar](http://www.apeopleloved.com/myanmar)



Population:	1.5 million
Location:	Northern Myanmar
Languages:	Burmese

### Prayer Points

**Pray** that followers of Jesus from other ethnic groups in Myanmar would initiate Christ-like relationships with the Roh, demonstrating God's love through words and actions.

**Pray** for expatriates who work among the Roh, for wisdom, protection and perseverance as they reach out in love and share the Good News. Pray for more followers of Jesus to find ways to serve the Roh.

**Pray** that the Roh, who have been denied an identity by the Myanmar government, will find their identity in Christ.

**Pray** that the leaders of the Myanmar government will come to faith in Jesus and have mercy on people like the Roh.

**Pray** that literature produced for the Roh would be used fruitfully. Pray for those involved in translating and publishing further resources.

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