

# Understanding the Rohingya Crisis: Race, Religion, and Violence in Burma

Francis Wade



The Rohingya, a Muslim minority of Burma of approximately one million people, are enduring a protracted and ongoing ethnic cleansing campaign. In September alone the Myanmar military burned hundreds of villages and forced nearly half a million to flee to Bangladesh. Journalist Francis Wade, the author of *Myanmar's Enemy Within: Buddhist Violence and the Making of a Muslim 'Other'* (2017), joins a panel of scholars and activists to explore the deep roots of these events, examining how violent prejudices were nurtured by the military and activated during the democratic transition, and what potential there is for peace and security in Burma not only for the Rohingya but for the country's other minorities.

**Francis Wade** is a journalist specializing in Myanmar and Southeast Asia. He began reporting on Myanmar in 2009 with the exiled Democratic Voice of Burma news organization, based in Northern Thailand, before going on to cover in-depth the transition from military rule and the violence that accompanied it. He has reported from across South and Southeast Asia for The Guardian, TIME, Washington Post, The Nation, Foreign Policy Magazine, and others. His writing and research has focused on ethnic and religious violence, political transitions and refugee movements. In August 2017 he published his first book, *Myanmar's Enemy Within: Buddhist Violence and the Making of a Muslim 'Other'* (Zed Books). He is now based in London.

## Panelists:

**James Scott** is a political scientist and anthropologist. He is a comparative scholar of agrarian and non-state societies, subaltern politics, and anarchism with a particular focus on Burma.

**Kyaw Hsan Hlaing**, an ethnic Rakhine, is a Burmese activist working in Arakan state. His organization, the Kintha Peace and Development Initiative (<https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=akyab%20institute%20of%20social%20studies>) is one of the only local organizations working to foster dialogue between Rohingya and Rakhine people. Currently he is an Alliance for Historical Dialogue and Accountability (AHDA) Fellow at Columbia University, working on a project documenting stories of the victims of the communal violence in the region.

**U Myo Win\*** is the Director of Smile Education and Development Foundation in Rangoon founded in 2007 in response to rising intolerance and discrimination in Burma. Smile promotes interfaith harmony, religious freedom, peace building and conflict resolution and advocated for legal reform including the Inter-Faith Harmony Bill focused on religious freedom, and combating hate speech and hate crime. U Myo Win is trained in psychological first aid, and has worked extensively on trauma healing and mental health post-disaster. U Myo Win received a degree in Islamic theology and in 2004 completed a graduate degree in psychology from the University of East Yangon.

**Elliott Prasse-Freeman** will chair the event. He is a graduate candidate in Anthropology at Yale who has worked on Burma since 2002.

*\*Panel discussion will be followed by a screening of **Sittwe**, a short documentary film about youth in the Rakhine State – produced by U Myo Win*

## Sponsored by:

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**Friday, November 10, 2017 – 4:00–6:00 PM**  
**Luce Hall Auditorium, 34 Hillhouse Avenue**