

My name is Mansur, and I am one of the Rohingya member living in Brisbane and a student here at The UQ. Before I speak for the motion, let me share a little bit of our background and myself, and how much we have suffered systematically and periodically for being and living as ROHINGYA in Myanmar. We went through the tragedy in 1962, Dargon Operation of 1978, stripped of our rights as citizen of the country, despite Our great, great grandparent, my parent and myself being born in Myanmar. We were never recognised as its people, lived without recognition, subsequently became refugees and fled to Bangladesh refugee camp where were were kept for more than 18 years and I spent my entire childhood, along with my sibling and parent and community members in despair and restrictive Refugee camp with not much of fundamental human rights.

Presently, according to HRW's report, 23 feb-2018, "326 villages have been partially or completely burnt down" since the latest military operation which started since August 2017, supported by the NLD government which de-fec-to leader is Ms Aung San Suu Kyi, a figure who is so much admired across the globe, including here at UQ, for everything she once stood for, in her own words 'freedom and democracy for all that live in Myanmar'. In August-17 alone 'At least 6700 thousands Rohingya people were killed and 730 of them were the children below the age of five' according to the report of 14th Dec-2017, channel 4, france 24, BBC, CNN, The guardian and many other MSM. The reports of gang-raping of women and children, beating people to deaths, burning people alive, slaughtering, and the recent report of bulldozing of remaining properties houses, places of worships are just to mention a few of the these cruelties committed by the burmese militaries in the last few months. It is very disheartening to learn that "The government of Bangladesh counted more than 33, 673 orphans in Bangladesh refugee who took shelter" in a report released by Dhaka Tribune, Nov-09-2017

This latest brutal military operation had driven out by far the largest numbers of people than any other time, amounting to more than 700 thousands Rohingya to Bangladesh camp, at a time when we put our undivided trust and hope in Ms Suu Kyi, that she would at least speak up to intervene in this unspeakable crimes, to which the UN describes as 'textbook example of ethnic cleansing and crime against humanity, or may be even genocide'. ABC reported,

Sadly, Ms Suu Kyi is no longer silent. she has spoken up and denied all of these brutal crimes committed by military. She took a side and it is for her government and the military. She no longer believes what she used to stand for earlier. As results, many world leaders such as Boris Johnson, Obama, and spiritual figure such as Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu, Noble laureate Malala have spoken out against this suffering. Three other noble laureates such as Mairead Maguire, Shirin Ibadil, and Tawakkol Korman who have visited in Bangladesh refugee camp two days ago, heard these horrific stories from the victims, and said, and I quote from the daily star newspaper, "we refuses this genocide policy of the burmese government. They will be taken to ICC and those who are committing genocide will be held responsible". Many cities and universities across the world have so far withdrawn the honours and awards from her that were given to her such as Oxford, New castle, city of Dublin. We speak for the motion here today that a prestigious academic institution like this stand for what is right and raise its powerful voices, sending a clear message that we do not award people who are complicit in crime against humanity. As a student here, it hurts our feeling mentally and psychologically, and make us feel vulnerable to see her name honoured at one of our building. By seeing her names, it redirect our memories to the aggressors who persecuted us, makes us homeless, and stateless.

In the end, I would rather strongly suggest that this Council rename this building to the name 'Rohingya' to showcase an exemplary lesson to the world that, Rohingya minority despite constantly living in the face of military's brutalities for many decades, yet they have demonstrated high resilience and perseverance and have been living with so much peace and harmony. It is known that Rohingya lives under unimaginable hardship just to survive, something we so take for granted, running borders to borders seeking for protection, and they are continuing to live on in muds, jungles, forest or ocean. We, as people of free society, in a prestigious academic institution like this one, can exercise our freedom to stand with the vulnerable people with some hope and light. We can encourage them not to give up. We stand in solidarity with the victims for justice. It's shame to humanity to name anything after her in spite of all of these tragedy.

I think changing the name of the Aung Sang Suu Kyi building is vital because very simply – Myanmar, our regional neighbour, has literally eliminated an entire population due to their religion and ethnicity. Aung Sang Suu Kyi, as the leader/figurehead of the Burmese government has consistently denied, downplayed and justified this ethnic cleansing. In hindsight, we mourn past catastrophes such as the Rwandan genocide or Srebrenica massacre with great moral clarity. But it is our response amid a present humanitarian catastrophe which really defines our moral worth. While changing the name of this building is but a step of symbolic significance, it is what we can do with the power we have. It sends a message that our university will not tolerate intolerance, that our actions live up to our values.

I note also that the removal of Suu Kyi's name is an action that has precedence. Institutions and cities in the UK like Oxford and Newcastle have rescinded honours granted in Suu Kyi's name. In following suit, the Council would be on the right side of history.

I recommend also that the Council consider the new name for this building with wisdom and clarity. Perhaps the name could be the 'Rohingya' conference centre. I note here that in Myanmar, in addition to the physical extermination of the Rohingya people, to even mention the term 'Rohingya' is a proscribed offense. This could be a powerful act of solidarity with the powerless.