WHAT CAN THE ROHINGYA GENOCIDE RULING TEACH US ABOUT JUSTICE?



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

The International Court of Justice, the United Nations' highest court, has ruled that Myanmar committed genocide against the Rohingya people during military attacks in 2016 and 2017. More than 700,000 Rohingya were forced to flee into neighbouring Bangladesh, where many still live in huge refugee camps. Survivors described killings, sexual violence and villages being burned. The court said Myanmar's military had intended to destroy a substantial part of the Rohingya population. The case was brought by Gambia, a small country in West Africa, on behalf of the Rohingya. The ruling is important because the court had never before found a country responsible for genocide. It has ordered Myanmar to provide reparations and help make a safe return possible. However, the court cannot enforce its decisions on its own, so the next step depends on governments choosing whether to apply diplomatic pressure or sanctions.

WHY IS THIS INTERESTING?

The word genocide was created after the Holocaust to describe attempts to destroy a national, ethnic, racial or religious group. This case shows how difficult it is to prove that crime in court. It also shows that justice may take many years, and that a legal victory does not immediately make refugees safe or return them to their homes.

THINK LIKE A HISTORIAN

"Why did the Rohingya case take so long to reach a court ruling?"

Source: The Guardian

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/nov/19/genocide-rohingya-international-court-of-justice-ruling-myanmar