

Statutory Erasure and Discursive Legitimation

A Theory-Generating Framework and Pilot Study of Rohingya Statelessness in Myanmar

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Abstract

Myanmar's Rohingya have experienced legal and institutional exclusion across successive political regimes, despite proceedings before the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. This theory-generating socio-legal study asks how citizenship law and institutional discourse may interact to reproduce statelessness. It develops the concept of a discursive–legal infrastructure, in which institutional discourse normalises exclusion while legal institutions codify it and limit accountability, and operationalizes the concept through a codebook adapting the 5Ds typology of delegitimization, demonization, dehumanization, disinformation, and denial. Its application is illustrated through a seven-document pilot drawn from an 87-record source inventory of legal texts, state media, school textbooks, and Buddhist nationalist sermons. The pilot covers six legal texts and one state-media issue, yielding 46 text units, of which 35 carried at least one code (39 code assignments). Delegitimation accounted for 26 assignments, concentrated in the 1982 Citizenship Law and the speech that publicly justified it; demonization accounted for 10, including a disloyalty frame that required a new subcode; disinformation and denial appeared only in state media; and no selected unit met the dehumanization criteria. Intercoder reliability for the dominant code was Krippendorff's $\alpha = .673$ (95% bootstrap CI [.509, .836]; 46 units, two coders), which supports tentative conclusions only. The pilot therefore illustrates how the instrument applies to the categories observed; it does not establish corpus-wide distributions. The article contributes a specified mechanism, three propositions, and a documented instrument for testing them.

Keywords: Rohingya; statelessness; 1982 Citizenship Law; discursive–legal infrastructure; critical discourse analysis; 5Ds typology; intercoder reliability; Myanmar

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Problem

How have the legal exclusion and statutory statelessness of the Rohingya been institutionalized and carried from one political regime to another in Myanmar, and what does that continuity suggest about the persistence of exclusion despite growing international judicial attention? The 2017 mass displacement is often treated as a sudden humanitarian emergency. This article argues that it is better understood as an acute episode within a longer, structurally embedded legal process (Zarni & Cowley, 2014). The 1982 Citizenship Law created a tiered citizenship regime that severely restricted Rohingya access to full citizenship, contributed to widespread statelessness, and established administrative machinery that this article conceptualizes as civic death (Noor, 2025). Recent scholarship sharpens the point: Rohingya exclusion has been accomplished less through spectacular expulsion than through routine refusals to count and record, carried out by ordinary administrative procedure (Cheong, 2025).

Myanmar has rejected allegations of genocide and has defended the military's "clearance operations" as counter-terrorism responses to insurgent attacks (Bakali, 2021). That defense draws on a vocabulary with a long institutional history, in which a stateless minority is represented as a threat to the nation. The pattern suggests that the

military regime, the partly civilian administration led by the National League for Democracy (NLD), and the post-2021 military administration may have sustained overlapping forms of exclusion and impunity rather than breaking with one another.

Such structural persistence is difficult to explain within two established literatures. First, international criminal law and atrocity scholarship have concentrated on episodic, high-casualty violence and on individual criminal responsibility. Comparative work on slow genocide shows that destruction accomplished over time through exclusion and withheld protection is harder to recognize than destruction concentrated in a single killing event (Ntanyoma, 2025), and domestic citizenship law, where such exclusion is codified, has received comparatively little attention in that literature.

Second, the democratization literature has often assumed that transitions away from direct military rule enhance minority legal protection. Myanmar's post-2011 trajectory contradicts that assumption: electoral competition unfolded in an environment where majoritarian nationalism was politically advantageous and discriminatory statutory structures remained intact (O'Brien & Hoffstaedter, 2020). Exclusion persisted across the military and quasi-democratic phases, suggesting that regime type is not the variable governing Rohingya legal status (Alam, Khan, Choudhury, & Sharif, 2026).

1.2 Contributions and Structure

To address these gaps, this article introduces the concept of a discursive–legal infrastructure: an integrated socio-legal arrangement in which upstream institutional discourse contributes to the intergenerational normalization of exclusion, while downstream legal and political institutions formalize that exclusion and weaken accountability. The article makes two kinds of contribution. The primary contribution is conceptual: the framework, together with an operational codebook that makes it applicable to institutional texts. The second is empirical and illustrative. The study has assembled an 87-record source inventory of state media, Ministry-approved textbooks, Buddhist nationalist sermons and speeches, and legal texts; this article reports a seven-document pilot drawn from that inventory. The pilot illustrates how the codebook applies to the categories observed in the selected units and shows where the instrument required revision. It does not show that the instrument discriminates among all five strategies, because no dehumanization was observed, and it does not establish corpus-wide distributions.

Existing studies have examined hate speech, legal exclusion, democratic backsliding, and refugee outcomes separately (Gravers, 2015). A parallel strand reframes citizenship in South Asia as a regionally produced category (Das, 2026; Sengupta, 2025) and reads statelessness as a technology for producing disposable populations rather than as a gap that law has failed to close (Santos, 2025). This study treats these elements as components of an integrated institutional mechanism. Its originality lies in the mechanism specified, not in the Rohingya case, which existing scholarship has examined extensively. Its focus is also limited: it does not review the Rohingya crisis, refugee policy, ASEAN diplomacy, or international litigation as such, but examines the interplay of institutional discourse and legal exclusion.

The article contributes to socio-legal studies, citizenship studies, and international human rights law in three ways. First, it re-reads Rohingya exclusion as a structurally persistent legal process anchored in the 1982 Citizenship Law, which formed part of the institutional conditions that preceded and enabled mass physical violence (Maung, 1990). Second, it links critical discourse analysis to socio-legal analysis through a modified 5Ds typology, so that the relationship between exclusionary discourse, legal codification, and the reproduction of statelessness can be traced. Third, it highlights a structural limit of international accountability: the International Criminal Court addresses individual criminal responsibility and the International Court of Justice addresses state responsibility, but neither proceeding directly alters the domestic statutory structures that sustain statelessness across regime change.

The framework is advanced in a theory-generating rather than a hypothesis-testing mode. Section 2 presents the statutory and historical background; Section 3 reviews the relevant literature; Section 4 sets out the framework and its propositions; Section 5 describes the inventory, codebook, reliability procedure, and pilot coverage; Section 6 reports the pilot coding and close readings; Section 7 discusses implications; and Section 8 concludes.

2. Background: Statutory Exclusion and the Discursive–Legal Infrastructure

The 1982 Citizenship Law does not recognize the Rohingya as one of Myanmar's national races (*taingyintha*), and national-race membership is the principal route to full citizenship under the Law (Burma Citizenship Law, 1982). The Law does not make citizenship formally impossible to obtain it preserves existing citizenship and provides associate and naturalized pathways. Access is nonetheless severely restricted by the interaction of statutory categories, documentary requirements that many Rohingya could not meet, and discretionary implementation (Cheesman, 2017; Pugh, 2013). This article theorizes the resulting condition as civic death. The restricted status helped create the conditions for further restrictions, displacement, confinement, and coercive violence. The institutional framework remains largely intact, although in January 2020 the International Court of Justice indicated provisional measures

requiring Myanmar to prevent genocidal acts against the Rohingya (International Court of Justice [ICJ], 2020).

2.1 The Statutory Framework of Civic Death

The Citizenship Law of 1982, enacted under the Ne Win government, is the foundation of the statutory regime examined here (Burma Citizenship Law, 1982; Pugh, 2013). It creates three statuses, each with a distinct pathway. Full citizenship is defined in section 3 by membership of the national races—the Kachin, Kayah, Karen, Chin, Burman, Mon, Rakhine or Shan, and "ethnic groups as have settled" in the territory "from a period anterior to 1185 B.E., 1823 A.D."—and section 6 preserves the citizenship of persons who were already citizens when the Law came into force. Associate citizenship (Chapter III) is available to persons who had applied for citizenship under the Union Citizenship Act 1948 and are determined eligible, and naturalized citizenship (Chapter IV) to persons who entered and resided in the country before 4 January 1948, and their offspring, who furnish "conclusive evidence" (s. 42; see also s. 23). Full citizenship rests on the national-race criterion of section 3, either directly or through descent from citizens (ss. 5, 7); the other two statuses depend on documentary proof of earlier residence or application, and both remain revocable.

A distinction often blurred in the literature should also be drawn. The statute does not list 135 groups. It names eight and an open residual class, and section 4 reserves the Council of State the decision "whether any ethnic group is national or not." The figure of 135 is an administrative classification used subsequently by the government, not a statutory schedule. Rohingya exclusion therefore operates through an open category, an executive power to populate it, and an evidential burden placed on those left outside it. Although Rohingya presence in Rakhine State has a long-documented history, the effect was to treat many Rohingya as foreigners or resident aliens in domestic law (Leider, 2015).

The 1982 Law consolidated rather than initiated exclusion. Under the Emergency Immigration Act of 1974, citizens were issued National Registration Cards, whereas many Rohingya received only Foreign Registration Cards, an administrative designation that the 1982 Law later translated into statutory categories (Zarni & Cowley, 2014). Comparative research treats a law of this kind as one moment in a longer sequence of citizenship stripping rather than as its end point (Brinham, 2025; van der Baaren, Gerdes, & Vink, 2025).

The statutory exclusion had wide socio-legal consequences. Restrictions on movement, exclusion from state education and healthcare, and arbitrary confiscation of property were imposed on Rohingya communities without justiciable remedies (Belton, 2013). The lack of documentation compounded these restrictions: birth certificates have not been issued to Rohingya children since 1994, and the temporary registration cards issued from the 1990s were invalidated in 2015, removing documentation on which claims to status might have been based (Lee, 2016; O'Brien & Hoffstaedter, 2020). In 2015, four Race and Religion Protection Laws—the Population Control and Health Care Law, the Buddhist Women's Special Marriage Law, the Monogamy Law, and the Religious Conversion Law—introduced further discriminatory criteria into civil administration (Gravers, 2015; Law Library of Congress, 2015).

2.2 Transnational Legal Gridlock and International Proceedings

State violence against the Rohingya predates the 2017 crisis. Operation Nagamin in 1978 and military operations in 1991–1992 each drove hundreds of thousands of Rohingya into Bangladesh, and in both cases, most were subsequently returned without secure status (Médecins Sans Frontières [MSF], 2025; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2020; Zarni & Cowley, 2014). The largest displacement followed the attacks by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) on police outposts on 25 August 2017 (Romaniuk & Roul, 2024). The ensuing military operations involved the systematic destruction of villages, mass killings, and organized sexual violence (Messner et al., 2019). In 2018, the United Nations Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar found sufficient information to infer genocidal intent and called for senior military officials to be investigated and prosecuted (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR], 2018).

Displacement moved the problem across borders without resolving it. Citizenship exclusion is produced in Myanmar; refugee protection, or its absence, is determined in receiving states. Bangladesh and Malaysia are not parties to the 1951 Refugee Convention and have no domestic refugee legislation, so the position of Rohingya in both countries is governed by administrative decision rather than by justiciable refugee law (Abd Jalil, 2026; Janmyr, 2021; Ridwan & Dev, 2025). In the Bangladesh camps, administrative discretion has become a mode of governance organized around temporariness (Rafa, 2026), and encampment policy shapes host-community responses (Keeni & Takashino, 2025). The result is prolonged liminality: statelessness in the country of origin and insecure status in the country of refuge.

Two distinct international proceedings followed. On 11 November 2019, The Gambia instituted proceedings against Myanmar before the International Court of Justice under the Genocide Convention, a case concerning state responsibility. On 23 January 2020, the Court unanimously indicated provisional measures requiring Myanmar to prevent acts within the scope of Article II of the Convention, to ensure that its military did not commit such acts, to

preserve evidence, and to report on compliance (Alcici & Pipia, 2021; ICJ, 2020). Separately, on 14 November 2019, Pre-Trial Chamber III of the International Criminal Court authorized an investigation into alleged crimes within the Court's jurisdiction in the situation in Bangladesh/Myanmar, including the crime against humanity of deportation—proceedings concerned with individual criminal responsibility (International Criminal Court [ICC], 2019; Palmer, 2024). Myanmar rejected the ICC's jurisdiction and, before the ICJ, characterized its operations as lawful counter-insurgency (Takemura, 2023). The ICJ case has since proceeded to the merits, with hearings in January 2026 (Human Rights Watch, 2026; Whiting, 2026). Neither proceeding has altered the domestic legal framework of exclusion. Bangladesh continues to host close to one million Rohingya refugees (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2026), and exclusionary governance in Rakhine State has persisted as territorial control has shifted between the military and the Arakan Army (Weigand, Anwar, Neil, & Wardani, 2025).

3. Literature Review

Three bodies of scholarship converge on the questions this article addresses, yet none individually provides the vocabulary needed to account for the persistence of Rohingya exclusion across Myanmar's successive political configurations. The first concerns the legal mechanisms through which statelessness is produced and sustained; the second, the relationship between democratic transition and minority rights in hybrid systems; and the third, the role of state-sponsored discourse in normalizing ethnic exclusion.

3.1 *Genocide: Event versus Structural Process*

A growing body of scholarship treats the Rohingya crisis not as a product of military excess or communal hatred alone but as a structural, protracted genocide anchored in a multi-decade architecture of legal marginalization (Kader & Choudhury, 2019). By classifying the Rohingya as foreign Bengali residents despite a long-documented presence in Rakhine, Myanmar's citizenship regime functioned as a mechanism through which ethnic exclusion was formalized, with consequences for employment, education, marriage registration, and movement that amount to civic death (Belton, 2013; Leider, 2015).

Two recent developments have sharpened the analytical problem. The first is the recognition that exclusion need not be enacted in a single decision: it can be accomplished through non-enumeration, a routine refusal to count, register, and document that is difficult to locate in any one act (Cheong, 2025). The second is the recognition that routine administrative actions, carried out at scale over an extended period, can amount to complicity in cultural destruction, so that slow violence becomes a policy outcome rather than a policy failure (Schmidt & Rivas-Aceves, 2026). Both developments inform this study's choice of statute and administration, rather than episodes of killing, as its primary objects of analysis. The regional legal environment compounds the problem by limiting routes of exit and protection and thereby extending containment (Janmyr, 2021; Ware & Laoutides, 2024).

3.2 *Illiberal Democracy and Minority Exclusion*

Expectations that Myanmar's post-2011 opening would improve protection for minorities were not fulfilled. Illiberal democracy, in F. Zakaria's (1997) usage, denotes a system that holds elections but lacks liberal constraints such as judicial independence, press freedom, and enforceable minority rights. Myanmar's transition fits this description: the 2008 Constitution reserved a quarter of legislative seats for the military and placed several institutions beyond ordinary control, so that electoral competition took place within a system largely shielded from it (Stokke & Aung, 2020).

Under such conditions, majoritarian nationalism became electorally rational rather than aberrant: the exclusion of the NLD period reflected incentives the system provided rather than a departure from an otherwise viable democratic project (Brenner, 2024; F. B. Zakaria, 2019). Organized religious constituencies translated majority sentiment into law, as the Buddhist nationalist mobilisation that secured the 2015 legislative package illustrates (Frydenlund & Wai, 2024; Hayward, 2015; Saiya & Manchanda, 2025). The 2021 coup ended the electoral arrangement but left the statutory citizenship framework in place, and resistance since the coup has been directed against a move towards full autocratic government (Stokke & Kyaw, 2024).

3.3 *Indoctrination, Hate Speech, and Institutional Discourse*

Existing scholarship provides good descriptive coverage of hate speech and propaganda against the Rohingya (Buerger & Benesch, 2024; Khatun, 2024). Much of this work, however, does not link that discourse to the legal and administrative devices through which exclusion is made enforceable. Re-examination of the platform-centered account of the Rohingya case has shown that social media circulation was not the only discursive work: institutional actors—state media, official curricula, and organized religious authority—also played a decisive role (George, 2016; Schissler, 2025). Comparable research on state-aligned news in other post-conflict settings shows how institutional outlets sustain hostile out-group framing over time (Shi, Ning, & Grigoryan, 2026). This is the starting point for the present study, which treats institutional registers as a corpus and treats the relationship between discourse and statute as

something to be specified rather than assumed.

3.4 Gaps and Socio-Legal Novelty

Three gaps shape this study's design. The first is temporal: genocide scholarship concentrates on acute episodes, leaving the intervening decades of statutory maintenance comparatively unexamined. The second is architectural: discourse and law are studied separately, so the mechanism connecting them remains unspecified. The third is instrumental: where the 5Ds typology has been invoked, it has rarely been operationalized to a standard permitting independent application. This article addresses the third gap directly by supplying an operational codebook with inclusion and exclusion criteria, boundary rules, and decision rules for adjacent categories, together with a pilot reliability estimate. Whether the framework explains the distribution of these strategies across the full inventory is a separate question, which this article does not yet answer.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1 Discursive–Legal Infrastructure

This article proposes the concept of a discursive–legal infrastructure: a set of mutually reinforcing institutional practices through which a target population is represented, in institutional discourse, as illegitimate, dangerous, or less than fully human, and through which that representation is given durable legal form. The relationship is proposed to be recursive rather than linear. Discourse supplies categories that law adopts, such as "guest", "foreigner", or "Bengali"; law, in turn, lends those categories official authority, so that they come to read as descriptions of fact rather than as political decisions.

The analytical value of the framework lies in its account of institutional labor. Upstream registers (curricula, sermons, and state media) perform normalization; downstream registers (statutes, administrative rules, and official legal argument) perform codification and defense. On this account, the infrastructure remains stable across regime change because it is distributed across institutions that need not change together. An electoral opening can change who speaks in the upstream registers without touching the statutory layer.

4.2 Indoctrination and the 5Ds Framework

The 5Ds framework is adapted from genocide studies and propaganda research and operationalized here for the Myanmar institutional context, with definitional boundaries sharpened so that independent coders can distinguish adjacent categories. It sits within critical discourse analysis as formulated by van Dijk (1993) and draws on the discourse-historical approach's attention to nomination and predication strategies (Reisigl & Wodak, 2015). Delegitimation denies membership. Demonization attributes threat: terrorist, sexual, religious, or demographic threat, and—following the pilot reported in Section 6.3—disloyalty and betrayal threat, in which the group is represented as untrustworthy towards the state and therefore unfit for office or full membership. Dehumanization denies humanity through animal, disease, or reproductive-threat metaphors, a form of discourse associated with support for intergroup violence (Landry et al., 2026). Disinformation asserts what identifiable evidence contradicts. Denial rejects, minimizes, or justifies harm, a strategy that also shapes the prospects of post-atrocity accountability (Hossain, 2024). The theoretical anchors are stated in the codebook: delegitimization follows Bar-Tal (1989), dehumanization follows Haslam (2006), and denial follows Cohen's (2001) distinction among literal, interpretive, and implicatory forms. Table 1 maps each dimension to illustrative forms and to the institutions through which it is proposed to operate.

Table 1. The 5Ds framework: discourse dimensions, illustrative forms, and linked institutions

Discourse dimension	Illustrative forms (schematic)	Linked institutions
Delegitimation (D1)	"Bengalis", no history, illegal presence	1982 Citizenship Law; national-race category and executive power to recognize national groups
Demonization (D2)	Terrorists, sexual threat, threat to Buddhism, demographic threat, disloyalty and betrayal	Clearance operations; counter-terrorism framing; exclusion from office
Dehumanization (D3)	Animal, infestation, or "breeding" metaphors	Movement restrictions; camps
Disinformation (D4)	Fabricated atrocities; population-takeover claims	State media; textbooks
Denial (D5)	"No genocide"; intercommunal-violence framing	Domestic structural impunity; rejection of international jurisdiction

Note. Illustrative forms are schematic descriptions of each category, not quotations from the corpus. Corpus quotations appear only in Table 8 and Supplementary Table S3.

4.3 Illiberal Democracy as an Incentive Structure

The second mechanism is illiberal democracy, defined here as an incentive structure rather than as an imperfect form of democracy. Where elections are competitive and liberal constraints on legislation are weak, the institutional cost of exclusionary legislation falls and the political benefit of majoritarian appeals rises. Table 2 sets out the concepts and their observable indicators.

Table 2. Illiberal democracy: concepts and observable indicators

Concept	Observable indicator
Illiberal democracy	Elections without liberal minority protection
Majoritarian nationalism	Political reward for anti-Rohingya positioning
Structural impunity	Military or state actors shielded from accountability
Institutional adoption	State and legal texts reproduce exclusionary scripts

4.4 Process Mechanism and Propositions

The proposed interaction of these components is the framework's central theoretical contribution and generates three propositions for subsequent investigation.

P1. Where the 5Ds recur across institutional registers, the texts should represent Rohingya exclusion as normal, legitimate, or necessary rather than as exceptional.

P2. In periods of majoritarian competition and weak institutional accountability, exclusionary discourse should co-occur with representations of coercion as lawful and proportionate.

P3. The texts should represent exclusionary discourse, weak accountability, and legal confinement as mutually reinforcing conditions rather than as separate problems.

Table 3 summarizes the infrastructure as a layered mechanism. The propositions are stated for testing on the full inventory; they are not established by the pilot. The pilot bears illustratively on P1 within the registers it covers. It does not assess P3 or bear on P2, which requires crisis-period state-media and sermon material that has not yet been coded.

Table 3. The discursive–legal infrastructure as a proposed layered analytical framework

Layer	Proposed function	Institutions
Discourse	Contributes to the normalization of exclusion	State media, textbooks, sermons
Law	Formalizes and enforces exclusion	1982 Citizenship Law; 2015 Race and Religion Protection Laws
Politics	May create incentives for exclusionary positioning	Illiberal democracy
Accountability	May limit institutional consequences for exclusion	Domestic judicial deference; structural impunity

5. Materials and Methods

5.1 Research Design and Case Selection

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretive design combining critical discourse analysis with legal-institutional analysis. The aim is not to measure public attitudes or audience effects, but to reconstruct the recurring discursive and institutional patterns through which Rohingya exclusion is represented, formalized, and maintained. Myanmar is selected as a critical case: a hybrid system in which military authority, electoral competition, and religious nationalism have coexisted, and in which a single statutory instrument has survived three distinct political configurations.

5.2 Source Inventory and Sampling

The study has assembled an 87-record source inventory across four source types (Supplementary Table S1). State media contributes 42 issues of *The New Light of Myanmar* and its successor, *The Global New Light of Myanmar*; Ministry-approved educational materials contribute 12 chapters; and Buddhist nationalist sermons and speeches contribute 21 records. The 12 legal records comprise 11 documents—the 1947 Constitution, the two citizenship Acts of 1948, the 1982 Citizenship Law, the speech in which the 1982 Law was publicly explained, the 2008 Constitution, the 2014 Counter-Terrorism Law, and the four 2015 Race and Religion Protection Laws—and one contextual record (DOC087), a legal-monitor report confirming the adoption of the 2015 laws (Law Library of Congress, 2015). DOC087

is retained in the inventory for provenance and is not coded. Several sermon and speech records are news reports or documentaries about a speaker rather than the speech itself; under the codebook, only the speaker's reported words in these records are to be coded (Supplementary Table S2).

The state-media issues were drawn from a screening frame of issues indexed in the Online Burma/Myanmar Library, scored on membership and status terms, under a three-stratum design: a census of the 19 issues scoring at or above the screening threshold (targeted stratum); a systematic draw of 21 flagged issues within political period (stratified stratum); and a baseline stratum of two issues with no screening match. The baseline stratum was a two-stage selection: 15 candidate issues were drawn at random from the unscreened pool, and one issue was retained for each of two anchor periods. The 13 candidates not retained are listed in Supplementary Table S1 so that the reduction from 55 to 42 issues can be audited. The draw rules and the stratum of each record are reported there. Because the baseline stratum is small, no claim about what state media did not say is advanced. Textbooks, sermon, and legal records were selected purposively, and the inclusion rationale for each is recorded in Supplementary Table S1.

Table 4 presents the inventory composition. The date spans are those of the documents held, and they are narrower than the study's nominal 1978–2024 frame: the state-media records run from June 2003 to December 2018, the analytical legal texts end in August 2015, and the sermon records begin in October 2012. Archive availability, not analytical preference, produced these boundaries: no digital route exists for Burmese state media between 1978 and 1986, and the 1993–2002 run survives only on microfilm. The sampling strategy over-represents crisis periods, especially the 2012 violence in Rakhine State and the 2016–2017 military operations, to capture discourse when institutional mobilisation of exclusionary rhetoric is most visible; routine, non-crisis texts are included to address longitudinal stability. Findings are therefore to be interpreted as evidence of institutional discourse during heightened mobilisation rather than as a neutral measure of everyday frequency.

Table 4. Source inventory composition by source type

Source type	Records	Date span of records held	Purpose in analysis
State media	42 issues	17 Jun 2003 – 23 Dec 2018	Crisis framing, denial, securitization
Textbooks	12 chapters	30 May 1979 – 2022	Generational indoctrination
Sermons and speeches	21 records	30 Oct 2012 – 11 Jun 2019	Religious-nationalist legitimation
Legal texts	12 records (11 documents + 1 contextual record)	24 Sep 1947 – 14 Sep 2015	Statutory codification of civic exclusion
Total	87 records	1947 – 2022	—

Note. Date spans are those of the records listed in Supplementary Table S1. The legal-text span includes the contextual record DOC087 (14 September 2015); the latest analytical legal text is dated 31 August 2015. No claim is made about state-media discourse before 2003 or after 2018.

5.3 Translation and Archiving

Texts were included where institutional or quasi-institutional provenance could be established through a retrievable publication or archive record. Non-English materials are translated by bilingual Burmese–English speakers with academic training in political science or Myanmar studies, with spot-checking of culturally loaded terminology, including the slur *kalar* and the citizenship-negating use of "Bengali". The codebook requires coding on the source-language text, with translation used for reporting. In the pilot, the 1947 and 1948 instruments were enacted in English and the state-media issue was published in English, but the 1982 Law, the 1982 speech, the 2008 Constitution, and the 2014 Law were coded from published English translations or versions: an unofficial translation for the 1982 Law, the translation published in *The Working People's Daily* for the speech, and published English versions for the 2008 Constitution and the 2014 Law. This departure from the source-language rule is a limitation, and it matters most for dehumanization, where a metaphor introduced or lost in translation would affect the code.

5.4 Coding Protocol

The unit of analysis is a text unit: a sentence, or a short paragraph where a claim spans sentences that cannot be read independently. Unitization precedes coding and is recorded before any code is assigned, so that unit boundaries cannot be adjusted to suit a code. In legal texts the unit is the numbered section or sub-section as printed. A unit containing no exclusionary discourse is recorded with code D0 rather than dropped, so that the number of units read is known. This article therefore reports two measures and names the denominator each time: the share of code assignments, and the share of units read in which a code appears.

Because the five strategies co-occur, the protocol permits multiple codes per unit and records the distinction between coded units and code assignments. Each primary code is specified by subcodes with explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria and boundary rules for adjacent categories. Two exclusion rules carry weight. Denial requires an allegation already in circulation for the text to answer, so a statute enacted before an allegation cannot be coded as denying it. Disinformation requires the coder to name, in the unit record, the external source against which the claim is judged false. The complete instrument—five primary codes and nineteen subcodes, with the code index, unitization and scope rules, source-type notes, and change log—is reproduced in Supplementary Table S2 (version 2.1). Table 5 summarizes it.

Table 5. The 5Ds codebook: definitions, schematic examples, and exclusion criteria

Code	Definition	Schematic example	Does not count
Delegitimation (D1)	Denial or undermining of Rohingya claims to membership: citizenship, belonging, recognition, or territory	"The so-called Rohingya are illegal Bengali immigrants."	Neutral migration history; technical references to documentation
Demonization (D2)	Construction as a terrorist, sexual, religious, demographic, or disloyalty and betrayal threat (D2.1–D2.5)	"They cannot be trusted with the affairs of the state; they will betray us."	Procedural references to a named armed organization; crime reports without group attribution
Dehumanization (D3)	Animal, disease, or reproductive-threat metaphors applied to Rohingya	"These people are like insects swarming over our land."	Neutral health or demographic language
Disinformation (D4)	Claims contradicted by an identified external source and used to support exclusion	"Some displaced residents burned their own homes for sympathy."	Genuinely contested facts; claims not documented as false
Denial (D5)	Rejection, minimization, justification, or externalization of harm, where an allegation is already in circulation	"There is no evidence of atrocities; operations were standard rule of law."	Texts predating the allegation; neutral references to investigations

Note. Examples are schematic constructions written to illustrate each rule; they are not quotations from the corpus and are not evidence. Corpus quotations appear only in Table 8 and Supplementary Table S3.

5.5 Pilot Coverage

This article reports a pilot application to seven documents: six legal texts whose wording could be checked against published sources (DOC076, DOC077, DOC079, DOC080, DOC081, and DOC082) and one state-media issue (DOC012). Together these yield 46 text units. The codebook defines the analytical scope of a statutory instrument as the provisions bearing on membership, status, recognition, or the designation of people. The pilot did not apply that rule exhaustively. In each legal text, the units are selected provisions within that scope rather than every qualifying provision: for example, the 1982 Law pass (eight units) omits sections 6 and 7, which preserve existing citizenship and define citizenship by birth through parentage, and the 2008 Constitution pass covers sections 345 and 347 only. The 1982 speech yields 21 units drawn from paragraphs 3 to 39, and the record does not show that every sentence was unitized. The state-media pass covers the Rakhine-related articles on pages 1 and 3. All seven passes are therefore reported as selected rather than complete, and no unit-read figure is treated as a document-level denominator. Because some omitted provisions, such as section 6 of the 1982 Law, preserve rather than restrict status, the selection may overstate the share of delegitimizing units in the legal texts. The scope record for each document is given in Supplementary Table S4. The remaining 80 records—41 state-media issues, 12 textbook chapters, 21 sermon and speech records, and five legal documents plus the contextual record—have not yet been coded.

5.6 Reliability, Validity, and Limitations

Intercoder reliability was assessed in all 46 pilot units. Subcode D2.5 was added, producing codebook version 2.1, after an initial development pass and before the independent double-coding round (Section 6.3). Both coders then rated all 46 units independently under version 2.1 in a single round, and disagreements were resolved by consensus only after the coefficient had been calculated. The reliability set and the coded set are therefore the same, and they cover two source types: legal texts and state media. Because DOC080 had already been read in the development pass, the coders were not naive to that document in the reliability round, which may inflate agreement on it. Krippendorff's alpha for nominal data requires one value per unit per coder (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007; Krippendorff, 2018). Where a coder assigned two primary codes to a unit, the code listed first—the discursively dominant code—was used; four units in the consensus

register carry two primary codes. The coefficient therefore assesses agreement on the reduced dominant label only, not agreement on every code in multi-coded units or on subcodes. D3 is absent from the calculation because neither coder assigned it. The estimate is $\alpha = .673$ (bootstrap 95% CI [.509, .836], 1,000 resamples; 46 units, two coders, no missing data), with 36 units of agreement and 10 of disagreement.

A coefficient of .673 lies at the conventional lower bound for tentative conclusions and below the .800 usually expected for firm ones (Krippendorff, 2018). About one bootstrap resample in ten reached .800; this describes the resampling distribution and is not a probability that the population coefficient exceeds .800. The interval is wide, reflecting both the small number of units and the concentration of disagreement at three category boundaries (D0/D1, D1/D2, and D1/D4). Because consensus followed the calculation, the distribution of final codes in Table 6 differs from the marginal distribution of the independent ratings; for example, the coincidence matrix records two units to which both coders assigned D5, whereas one unit retains D5 after consensus. Supplementary Table S5 reports both distributions. Distributional claims are therefore provisional, and the interpretive argument rests on close readings that quote each passage with its locator so that readers can assess the coding decisions.

The planned design triangulates across four institutionally distinct source types, each occupying a different position in the proposed infrastructure. The pilot covers two of these types, so four-source triangulation has not yet been undertaken. On the pilot scale, validity rests on linking textual patterns to documented institutional outcomes (Becker, Mukand, & Yotzov, 2022), on retaining negative cases, and on reporting each coding decision with its evidence.

This method has further limitations. It draws only on public sources, with no access to internal state documents; it analyses elite and institutional discourse rather than mass attitudes; it does not measure audience effects; it over-represents crisis periods; and it is constrained by translation. The limitation that most directly governs the empirical claims is coverage: seven of 87 records are coded, the coded set is weighted towards legal texts, and no textbook or sermon material has yet been coded. Any distribution reported in Section 6 is a property of the pilot, not of the inventory.

5.7 Analytic Strategy

The analysis has two components. Descriptive counts show where codes occur across source types and periods in the pilot units; they describe the pilot and support no causal or corpus-wide inference. Interpretive critical discourse analysis then examines the same units, asking how each register constructs the Rohingya as outsiders or as a threat and how that construction relates to the legal mechanisms of exclusion.

6. Results: Pilot Application of the Framework

This section reports the pilot coding described in Section 5.5 and the close readings it supports. The descriptive counts in Tables 6 and 7 are reported so that the application of the instrument can be inspected; they describe 46 selected units in seven documents and are not estimates of corpus-wide distributions. The close readings in Sections 6.2 to 6.5 carry the interpretive argument.

The source types differ in evidentiary capacity. Legal texts provide evidence of legal codification; state media provide evidence of official framing; sermons provide evidence of religious-nationalist discourse; and textbooks provide evidence of authorized educational discourse. None of these sources is itself an objective record of events, and identifying disinformation depends on external evidence of falsity.

6.1 Pilot Coding Output

Forty-six units were read across the seven documents. Eleven units contained no qualifying 5D content and were coded D0; 35 carried at least one code, with 39 code assignments (a mean of 1.11 per coded unit). Four units carried two primary codes. Table 6 reports the distribution by source type and Table 7 by political period.

Table 6. Pilot coding output by source type (46 units read; 39 code assignments)

Source type	Records coded	Units read	Coded units	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5
Legal texts	6 of 12	38	28	24	6	0	0	0
State media	1 of 42	8	7	2	4	0	2	1
Textbooks	0 of 12	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sermons and speeches	0 of 21	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	7 of 87	46	35	26	10	0	2	1

Note. D1 = delegitimization; D2 = demonization; D3 = dehumanization; D4 = disinformation; D5 = denial. Code columns report code assignments; a unit carrying two primary codes contributes one coded unit and two assignments, so assignments (39) exceed coded units (35). Eleven units were read and coded D0. All passes are selected rather than complete (Section 5.5). Figures correspond to Supplementary Table S4.

Three features of the pilot distribution are worth noting. First, delegitimization accounts for 26 of the 39 assignments (66.7 per cent) and appears in 26 of the 46 units read (56.5 per cent); apart from six demonization assignments drawn from the 1982 speech, it is the only code present in the legal texts. Second, denial returns zero across the six legal texts. This is a consequence of the exclusion rule in Section 5.4: denial requires an allegation already in circulation, and none of the coded legal provisions answers one; five of the twelve legal records predate 1983. Third, no qualifying dehumanization instances were identified in the selected pilot units: the legal texts and the single state-media issue contain no animal metaphor, disease metaphor, or reproductive-threat rhetoric. This zero describes the selected units only. The sermon and speech material, in which dehumanizing metaphor is most expected, has not yet been coded, and the result will be revisited when it is.

The political-period distribution in Table 7 describes coverage rather than the inventory. Twenty-nine of the 46 units fall in the 1978–1982 band, because that band contains the Citizenship Law and the speech explaining it, and the speech alone yields 21 units. No comparison across periods can be made at this coverage.

Table 7. Pilot coding output by political period

Political period	Records in S1	Records coded	Units read	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5
Pre-1978 historical context	3	2	5	1	0	0	0	0
1978–1982	3	2	29	22	6	0	0	0
1983–2011	25	1	2	1	0	0	0	0
2012–2015	26	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
2016	1	0	—	—	—	—	—	—
2017	12	1	8	2	4	0	2	1
2018–2024	17	0	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	87	7	46	26	10	0	2	1

Note. Seven period bands cover all 87 inventory records. The 2016 band contains a single record falling between the 2012–2015 and 2017 bands and is reported separately. The 2012–2015 band includes the contextual record DOC087. No comparison across bands is drawn at this coverage.

6.2 Delegitimisation in Statute and Its Public Justification

The clearest illustration concerns P1 in the register in which the framework locates codification rather than normalization. Section 3 of the 1982 Law (DOC079) provides that "Nationals such as the Kachin, Kayah, Karen, Chin, Burman, Mon, Rakhine or Shan and ethnic groups as have settled in any of the territories included within the State as their permanent home from a period anterior to 1185 B.E., 1823 A.D. are Burma citizens." Two mechanisms operate in one sentence: full citizenship is aligned with national-race membership, and the 1823 threshold supplies its historical warrant. No group needs to be named; exclusion operates through the category of *taingyintha* rather than through individual designation (Cheesman, 2017).

The statute then places the category under executive control. Section 4 provides that "The Council of State may decide whether any ethnic group is national or not." Section 8(b) provides that the Council of State "may, in the interest of the State revoke the citizenship or associate citizenship or naturalized citizenship of any person except a citizen by birth" a discretionary power of revocation on an undefined ground, not an automatic loss of status. Section 70(a) allows a person dissatisfied with a decision of the Central Body to appeal to the Council of Ministers, and section 70(b) makes the Council's decision final, so review is confined to a single administrative appeal. Read together, these provisions establish a category, a discretionary power to populate it, revocable derived statuses, and closed administrative review. The pilot units do not include section 6, which preserves the citizenship of persons already citizens in 1982 (Section 5.5); the reading here concerns access for those outside that group. The 2008 Constitution (DOC081) incorporates the result without restating it, conferring citizenship on a "person who is already a citizen according to law on the day this Constitution comes into operation" (s. 345).

The speech in which Ne Win explained the Law (DOC080), delivered on 8 October 1982, supplies what the statute leaves implicit and is the most productive single document in the pilot (21 units, 18 coded). It is explicitly taxonomic, dividing the population into "true nationals", "guests", and "mixed bloods" (paras 5–6). It states the racial principle directly: "Racially, only pure-blooded nationals will be called citizens" (para. 30). And it states the limit of inclusion: "We will therefore not give them full citizenship and full rights" (para. 28). The statute establishes the categories; the

speech justifies them, supplying a history in which the statutory boundary reads as a description of the past rather than as a decision taken in 1982.

6.3 A Threat Frame the Typology Did Not Anticipate

The pilot produced one finding that bears on the instrument rather than on the inventory. During the initial development pass, six units in the explanatory speech met the inclusion criteria for demonization—the group is presented as a danger to the state—but fitted none of the four subcodes inherited from the literature. The threat asserted is neither terrorist, sexual, religious, nor demographic; it is disloyalty: "how could we trust them in our organizations that decide the destiny of our country?" (para. 28); "if they were to betray us we would be in trouble" (para. 27); "We cannot trust them fully. That is why one is called eh-naing-ngan-tha" (para. 34).

The finding matters analytically. The disloyalty frame is the threat on which the head of state publicly justified the founding statute, and a typology that cannot record it would represent the founding period as carrying only delegitimization—that is, as enacting exclusion without arguing for it. A fifth subcode, D2.5 (disloyalty and betrayal threat), was therefore added, revising the codebook from version 2.0 to version 2.1, before the independent double-coding round on which the reliability estimate is based. The instrument thus changed during development, not during the reliability round. The change and its evidential basis are recorded in the change log of Supplementary Table S2, and D2.5 is now part of the definition of demonization in Section 4.2 and Tables 1 and 5. In two units, the disloyalty claim is the express warrant for exclusion from office; these are the pilot's only co-occurrences of delegitimization and demonization in a single unit.

6.4 Disinformation and Denial in the State-Media Register

The single state-media issue coded (DOC012, *The Global New Light of Myanmar*, 26 August 2017) supplies the pilot's only disinformation and denial assignments. The issue reports, on the authority of an unnamed military source, that "villagers in Chanekali Bengali village, Yathedaung Township burnt down their own homes around noon and fled into the Mayu Mountain range", and repeats the claim for a second village, Zedipyin. Each unit carries two codes: disinformation, for attributing the burning to the residents, and delegitimization, for nominating the settlement as a "Bengali village". The disinformation code requires a named external source (Section 5.4). The source relied on is Human Rights Watch's (2017) satellite analysis, which recorded the near-total destruction of 214 villages, including in Rathedaung (Yathedaung) Township, and found the scale, scope, and timing of the burnings inconsistent with the military's claim that residents had burned their own homes, a claim for which no evidence was offered. That evidence contradicts the general claim of which these two reports are instances; it does not identify the two villages or the incidents described. The D4 assignments therefore rest on a pattern-level contradiction, which the codebook admits but which is weaker than incident-specific evidence. Under an incident-specific standard, both units would be coded D1.1 only and the pilot would contain no disinformation. The decision is reported so that it can be contested.

Denial is coded once, in the sentence "Clearance operations in May Yu Mountain have also uncovered multiple terrorist training camps." The phrase "clearance operations" alone does not establish denial. The code (D5.3, counter-terror reframing) rests on the sentence's function: it presents the operation as counter-terrorism that produces evidence of the threat, and thereby justifies it, at a time when the same category of operation was already the subject of documented allegations. OHCHR's (2017) flash report of 3 February 2017 had recorded mass killings, sexual violence, and the systematic burning of Rohingya homes during the clearance operations that followed 9 October 2016. The sentence does not answer that allegation explicitly; it is coded as interpretive denial in Cohen's (2001) sense and is reported as a contestable judgement. By contrast, the declaration in the same issue designating ARSA a terrorist group under the Counter-Terrorism Law was coded D0: it names an organization, and the exclusion criteria withhold demonization from designations of armed organizations that are not extended to a population. The extension of that vocabulary to civilians is coded where it occurs.

Table 8. Coded excerpts from the pilot

Corpus ID	Source type	Locator	Wording in the source	Code
DOC079	Legal text	s. 3	"...ethnic groups as have settled ... from a period anterior to 1185 B.E., 1823 A.D. are Burma citizens."	D1.2 + D1.3
DOC079	Legal text	s. 4	"The Council of State may decide whether any ethnic group is national or not."	D1.2
DOC079	Legal text	s. 70(b)	"The decision of the Council of Ministers is final."	D1.2
DOC080	Legal-political speech	para. 30	"Racially, only pure-blooded nationals will be called citizens."	D1.2
DOC080	Legal-political speech	para. 28	"We are aware of their penchant for making money by all means and knowing this, how could we trust them in our organizations that decide the destiny of our country?"	D2.5 + D1.2
DOC081	Legal text	s. 345	"...person who is already a citizen according to law on the day this Constitution comes into operation."	D1.2
DOC081	Legal text	s. 347	"The Union shall guarantee any person to enjoy equal rights before the law and shall equally provide legal protection."	D0
DOC012	State media	p. 3, col. 4	"...villagers in Chanekali Bengali village, Yathedaung Township burnt down their own homes..."	D4.1 + D4.3 + D1.1
DOC012	State media	p. 3, col. 1	"Clearance operations in May Yu Mountain have also uncovered multiple terrorist training camps."	D5.3

Note. Excerpts correspond to entries in Supplementary Table S3, and corpus IDs link to Supplementary Table S1. DOC079 is quoted from the unofficial English translation published by Refworld; DOC080 from the translation published in *The Working People's Daily*, 9 October 1982; DOC081 from the published English version; and DOC012 as published in English. DOC081 s. 347 is coded D0 and remains a negative case.

6.5 Negative Cases

Eleven units were coded D0; two are discussed here as selected examples. Section 347 of the 2008 Constitution provides that "The Union shall guarantee any person to enjoy equal rights before the law", extending the guarantee to any person rather than to citizens; it appears in a document from which one other unit (s. 345) was coded as delegitimization. The definitional sections of the 2014 Counter-Terrorism Law are conduct-based and group-neutral. Both cases indicate that the exclusion identified here operates through status categories rather than through the withdrawal of formal guarantees, which is a more precise claim. They also show that the exclusion criteria were applied, which a table of positive instances alone cannot show. Table 9 reports code co-occurrence in the pilot units.

Table 9. Code co-occurrence in the pilot units (units carrying both codes)

Code	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5
D1 Delegitimation	26	2	0	2	0
D2 Demonization	2	10	0	0	0
D3 Dehumanization	0	0	0	0	0
D4 Disinformation	2	0	0	2	0
D5 Denial	0	0	0	0	1

Note. The matrix is symmetric; the diagonal gives the number of units carrying each code. Both off-diagonal pairings are permitted by the codebook's multi-coding rules. D1 with D2, in which a disloyalty claim is the express warrant for exclusion from office, is among the pairings the framework anticipates (Supplementary Table S2); D1 with D4, in which the self-burning claim is attached to a settlement designated as "Bengali", was not listed among the anticipated pairings.

7. Discussion

The pilot is consistent with interpreting the Rohingya case not only as a series of discrete atrocities but also as the

operation of a durable institutional arrangement. It is an illustration within clear limits, and the limits are as informative as the findings.

7.1 Theoretical Implications

The main contribution is the discursive–legal infrastructure framework, which offers an interpretive account of why exclusion persists across regime change. The pilot illustrates one element of that account: the division of labor between registers. In the 1982 material, the statute defines the category of national races, reserves to the executive the power to decide who belongs to it, and confines review to a final administrative decision; the explanatory speech, delivered a week before the Law was enacted, supplies the racial principle and the disloyalty frame that justify those arrangements. The two documents come from the same government, in different registers and for different audiences, within a single week. They are the clearest instance in the pilot of the complementary work the framework proposes, although a single pair of documents cannot show that the pattern recurs.

This suggests a modest re-specification of socio-legal accounts of protracted genocide. Institutional discourse matters not only during episodes of intense violence but also at moments of codification, when it performs justificatory work that a statute cannot perform for itself. Whether that relationship holds across the inventory, including in periods when no statute is being enacted or defended, remains a question for the full coding.

7.2 Alternative Explanations

Several alternative explanations deserve consideration, and the pilot does not rule them out. A security-centered account that emphasizes the ARSA attacks of 2016 and 2017 cannot by itself explain decades of statutory exclusion before those attacks, or the fact that categories used in 2017 state media, such as "Bengali", had already been given legal effect through the 1982 instrument. A political-economy account that links coercion to the military's territorial interests and to competition over land and resources may explain the timing of operations, but it does not explain why this population could be targeted with little legal consequence when others were not. The framework's answer is that the statutory structure had already made the population legally excludable. These accounts are complementary rather than mutually exclusive, and the full coding cannot adjudicate among them on its own.

7.3 Scope Conditions

The study rests on a single-case, qualitative interpretive design and generates theory rather than testing it across cases. It does not measure audience reception, establish causal effects on public opinion, or claim that discourse produces violence directly. At current coverage, two further conditions apply. The distributional findings describe selected units in seven documents, weighted heavily towards statutory material, and should not be generalized to the inventory. The reliability estimate of $\alpha = .673$ supports only tentative conclusions and will need to be re-estimated as coding expands to all four source types.

7.4 Policy Implications

The framework suggests a diagnosis of the structural limits of current accountability mechanisms. The ICJ proceedings address state responsibility under the Genocide Convention, and the ICC investigation addresses individual criminal responsibility; neither directly amends the 1982 Citizenship Law or the 2015 Race and Religion Protection Laws (Alcici & Pipia, 2021; Hossain, 2024). Three theoretically motivated proposals follow. The first is statutory reform of membership law, since provisional measures do not reach the instrument that sustains statelessness. The second is review of curricula and administrative practice; because no textbook material has yet been coded, this is a proposal derived from the framework rather than a finding of the pilot. The third is domestic refugee legislation in neighbouring non-signatory states, which would convert administrative discretion into justiciable protection for those already displaced (Janmyr, 2021; Ware & Laoutides, 2024).

8. Conclusions

This article has developed the discursive–legal infrastructure as a framework for understanding how Rohingya exclusion has persisted across three political configurations and has operationalized it in a codebook that can be applied independently. The framework proposes that exclusion endures because it is distributed across institutions that do not change together: an electoral opening may alter who speaks in the upstream registers while leaving the statutory layer untouched.

The pilot reported here illustrates three things and leaves a fourth open. It illustrates how the instrument applies to authentic source material in the categories observed, including by withholding codes where exclusion criteria apply; it does not show discrimination among all five strategies, because no dehumanization was observed. It provides a provisional reading of the founding period in which the 1982 statute and the speech that justified it performed complementary work. And it shows, through the disloyalty frame that the inherited typology could not record, that the

instrument needed extension before full coding. The distributional question—whether the five strategies recur across registers and periods as the framework proposes—requires the completed coding, with reliability re-estimated as coding expands.

The wider implication concerns how accountability is conceived. International mechanisms address episodes, state conduct, and individual responsibility, while the statutory architecture that sustains statelessness remains in force. The framework proposes that, unless that architecture is itself addressed, the conditions of exclusion described here may outlast the proceedings brought against their effects.

Supplementary Materials

The following supplementary materials accompany this article. Supplementary Table S1 (Excel workbook): the 87-record source inventory, with corpus identifier, source record identifier, stratum, date, political period, title, institution, language, inclusion rationale, link, coding status, and verification flags, together with the state-media sampling rules and the list of baseline candidates not retained. Supplementary Table S2 (Word document): the operational codebook, version 2.1. Supplementary Table S3 (Word document): sixteen excerpt records, fifteen from the seven pilot documents and one from the contextual record DOC087, with locators, wording, codes, and rationales, including negative and boundary cases. Supplementary Table S4 (sheets of the combined S4/S5 Excel workbook): the unit-level coding register for all 46 pilot units, the analytical-scope record, the coding outputs, and the co-occurrence matrix. Supplementary Table S5 (Word document, with data sheets S5a–S5c in the same workbook): the intercoder reliability report, including the procedure, the coincidence matrices, the computation of the coefficient, and the reconciliation of independent and consensus codes.

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full form
5Ds	Delegitimisation, demonization, dehumanization, disinformation, and denial
ARSA	Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICJ	International Court of Justice
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NLD	National League for Democracy
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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Author contributions

Aila Sajid Bhango: conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, writing – original draft. Zoya Shaffay: data curation, coding, writing – review and editing. Ryeoheun Lee: investigation, data curation, validation, and writing – review and editing. Asma Hamid Awan: supervision and editing final draft. All authors have read and approved of the final manuscript.

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Ethics approval

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Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author and have been shared with journal as well.

Data sharing statement

No additional data is available.

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