Statement of the Embassy of Myanmar in Singapore Regarding the Broadcast of Channel News Asia (CNA)'s Insight 2026/2027 Documentary Entitled "Malaysia's Rohingya Riddle"

Singapore-based Channel News Asia (CNA) broadcast a documentary entitled "Insight 2026/2027 – Malaysia's Rohingya Riddle" on 15 and 16 October 2026. The documentary was reportedly produced and broadcast by Mr. Nicholas Deroose, Senior Producer, and Mr. Daniel Heng, Executive Producer, of CNA.

It was observed that the documentary contained information concerning Bengalis in Malaysia and certain matters related to Myanmar that are unsubstantiated by historical evidence and, it also included fabricated allegations that could mislead the viewers and undermine the image of Myanmar.

Myanmar categorically rejects the nomenclature that falsely claims the so-called "Rohingya" as an ethnic identity which has never existed in Myanmar. The term "Bengali" has existed in Myanmar as proven by historical official records, including the censuses during the British colonial administration. Therefore, the remarks using such terminology are unacceptable.

REPORT

THE CENSUS OF BRITISH BURMA.

Taken on the 17th February 1881.

Accompanied by Map.

RANGOON:
PRINTED AT THE GOVERNMENT PRESS.
1881.

Name of chief races.	1872.	1881.	Increase or decrease per 1,000.	Number of each race to 1,000 of all races.
Burmese	1,930,319	2,612,274	353	699
Talaing	181,602	154,553	—149	41
Karen	331,766	581,294	562	139
Chin	51,117	55,015	76	15
Toungthoo	24,923	35,554	426	9
Kwaymee	18,969	13,773	—279	4
Mro	7,875	11,020	399	3
Shan	36,029	59,723	658	16
Chinese	12,109	12,962	70	3
Bengali*	.....	99,686	.....	27
Hindustani	.....	72,990	.....	20
Tamil	.....	35,058	.....	9
Telugu	.....	33,715	.....	9
All races from India ...	137,014	246,289	797	66
Europeans and Americans ...	9,177	11,866	292	.....

The 1881 Census Report of Myanmar, published during the British colonial period, listed only as "Bengali".

CENSUS OF INDIA, 1921

Volume X

BURMA

PART II:—TABLES

BY

S. G. GRANTHAM, I.C.S.

RANGOON
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT, GOVERNMENT PRINTING, BURMA
1923

X	Indian Races	.....	658,980	288,097
X1	Arab ...	.....	80	26
X2	Assamese ...	.....	283	123
X3	Bengali ...	Total ...	60,187	17,871
		Hindu and Animist.	12,372	3,002
		Mahomedan ...	46,651	14,632
		Others ...	1,294	237
X4	Bhotya ...	.....	348	16
X5	Bihari ...	.....	3,264	2,301
X6	Bondili ...	.....	53	5
X7	Bora ...	.....	141	32
X8	Chittagonian	Total ...	129,854	76,534
		Hindu and Animist.	5,110	286
		Mahomedan	122,872	75,682
		Others ...	1,872	566
X9	Deccani † ...	.....	1,866	787
X10	Dogra ...	.....	198	64
X11	Garhwali ...	.....	1,484	278
X12	Goanese ...	.....	503	89
X13	Gujarati ...	.....	3,810	1,330
X14	Gurkha ...	.....	15,606	6,745

The 1921 Census Report of Myanmar, published during the British colonial period, listed only as "Bengali".

CENSUS OF INDIA, 1931

VOLUME XI

BURMA

PART I.—REPORT

BY

J. J. BENNISON, I.C.S.

SUPERINTENDENT OF CENSUS OPERATIONS, BURMA

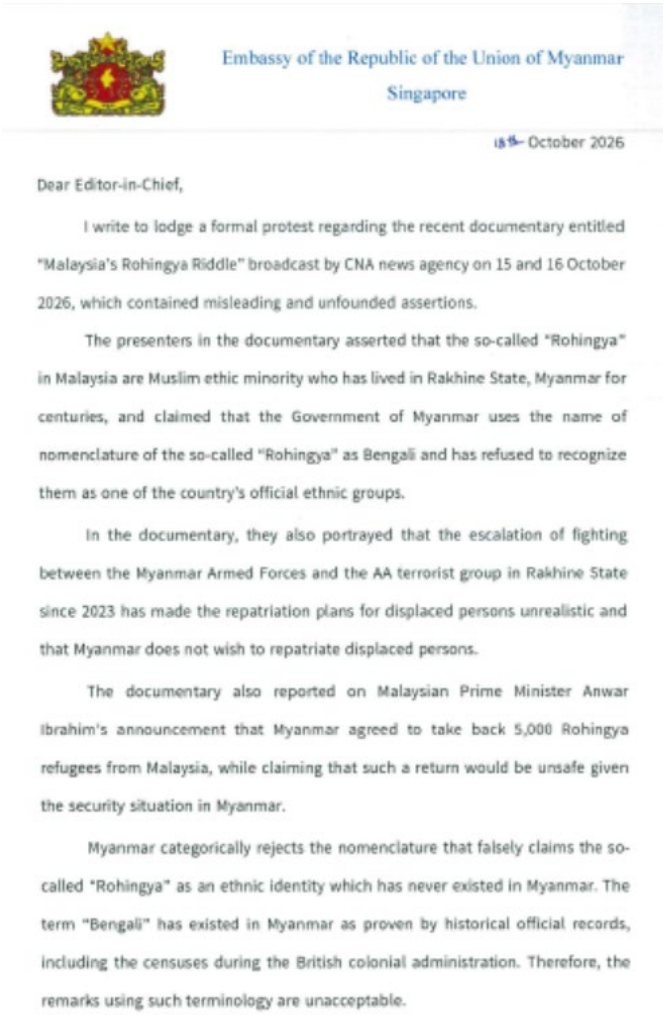
5. Indians classified by race.

Race.	Actual population.			Per 1,000 persons.
	Persons.	Males.	Females.	
Bengali	65,211	48,682	16,529	64
Chittagonian ...	252,152	163,912	88,240	248
Hindustani	174,967	132,842	42,125	172
Tamil	149,888	93,435	56,453	147
Telugu	159,759	123,940	35,819	157
Oriya	62,585	58,905	3,680	61
Others	153,263	112,195	41,068	151
Total ...	1,017,825	733,911	283,914	1,000

The 1931 Census Report of Myanmar, published during the British colonial period, listed only as "Bengali".

The Government of Myanmar prioritizes provision of necessary assistance to Myanmar citizens facing difficulties abroad. Recently, following the verification process, 8,041 Myanmar nationals were repatriated to Myanmar by air on a weekly basis. Moreover, 1,476 verified Myanmar nationals who could not afford airfare were repatriated by Myanmar Navy vessels.

Myanmar firmly rejects politically motivated broadcasts intended to exert international pressure on the country. Such broadcasts must not link the repatriation of Myanmar nationals from Malaysia with the separate issue of Bengalis who have illegally entered Malaysia. These statements constitute fabricated propaganda aimed at inciting hatred against Myanmar and its people. Myanmar is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country where people of different faiths have lived side by side in harmony.



Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Singapore

15th October 2026

Dear Editor-in-Chief,

I write to lodge a formal protest regarding the recent documentary entitled "Malaysia's Rohingya Riddle" broadcast by CNA news agency on 15 and 16 October 2026, which contained misleading and unfounded assertions.

The presenters in the documentary asserted that the so-called "Rohingya" in Malaysia are Muslim ethic minority who has lived in Rakhine State, Myanmar for centuries, and claimed that the Government of Myanmar uses the name of nomenclature of the so-called "Rohingya" as Bengali and has refused to recognize them as one of the country's official ethnic groups.

In the documentary, they also portrayed that the escalation of fighting between the Myanmar Armed Forces and the AA terrorist group in Rakhine State since 2023 has made the repatriation plans for displaced persons unrealistic and that Myanmar does not wish to repatriate displaced persons.

The documentary also reported on Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's announcement that Myanmar agreed to take back 5,000 Rohingya refugees from Malaysia, while claiming that such a return would be unsafe given the security situation in Myanmar.

Myanmar categorically rejects the nomenclature that falsely claims the so-called "Rohingya" as an ethnic identity which has never existed in Myanmar. The term "Bengali" has existed in Myanmar as proven by historical official records, including the censuses during the British colonial administration. Therefore, the remarks using such terminology are unacceptable.

The information contained in the documentary are unsubstantiated by historical evidence and constitute fabricated allegations that could mislead the viewers and undermine the image of Myanmar.

The Government of Myanmar prioritizes provision of necessary assistance to Myanmar citizens facing difficulties abroad. Recently, following the verification process, 8,041 Myanmar nationals were repatriated to Myanmar by air on a weekly basis. Moreover, 1,476 verified Myanmar nationals who could not afford airfare were repatriated by Myanmar Navy vessels.

Myanmar firmly rejects politically motivated broadcasts that seek to exert international pressure. Such broadcasts must not link the repatriation of Myanmar nationals from Malaysia with the separate issue of Bengalis who illegally entered Malaysia. These statements constitute fabricated propaganda aimed at inciting hatred against Myanmar and its people. Myanmar is a multi-racial and multi-religious country. People of different faiths have lived side by side in harmony.

Therefore, Myanmar strongly objects CNA's unverified information contained in the said documentary that does not accurately reflect the situation on the ground.

Yours Sincerely,

18.10.2026

Dr. Zaw Minn Aung

Chargé d' Affaires

Therefore, the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Embassy of Myanmar in Singapore has sent a letter of protest to the Editor-in-Chief of Channel News Asia (CNA), expressing strong objection to the unverified information contained in the documentary that fails to accurately reflect the situation on the ground.

Embassy of Myanmar, Singapore

22 October 2026

****