

**Executive Board**

**2021-23**

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PEN America and International Publisher's Association [have issued a statement that:](#)

"The license of [Myanmar-based] Lwin Oo Sarpay Publishing House was withdrawn on May 28 [2022] for importing and distributing a foreign-published book on Facebook. The [Myanmar military] junta charged the publisher with an alleged violation of a 1962 law prohibiting the import and distribution of foreign publications containing banned content—in this case, content that caused harm to an ethnic group or among ethnic groups. The book in question [is] *Myanmar's Rohingya Genocide: Identity, History and Hate Speech* by [Dr] Ronan Lee." Dr Lee's book has also been banned by the Tatmadaw, the armed forces of Myanmar, which staged a military coup in Myanmar in 2021.

These actions by the Tatmadaw demonstrate a continuation of the genocide against the Rohingya (recognised in an [IAGS Resolution in April 2020](#)). A crucial component of genocide is the violation of the human rights of freedom of expression and freedom of opinion. [In violating these human rights](#), genocidal regimes control the narrative of media, social media and other sources of information available to the majority population about the targeted minority group. Through this control, genocidal regimes proliferate propaganda and hate speech that dehumanises the target group, presenting them as a risk to national and social security and ultimately a threat and disease that must be eliminated.

In this case, the Tatmadaw has a well documented history, including in Dr Lee's book, of controlling content published in the Myanmar media, on social media (particularly Facebook), and in other sources. The very premise of Dr Lee's research is that the Tatmadaw has used hate speech, disseminated through traditional media and social media, to demonise the Rohingya - a fundamental part of the genocide process. In banning Dr Lee's book, it is clear that the Tatmadaw still does not want Myanmar citizens reading about the Rohingya or the genocidal violence committed against them.

Dr Lee is a member of the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) and was awarded the IAGS Emerging Scholar Prize in 2021 for his scholarship, including the book in question, *Myanmar's Rohingya Genocide: Identity, History and Hate Speech*.

The International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) Executive Board expresses its concern about and condemns the withdrawal of the license of Lwin Oo Sarpay Publishing House and the charges against Lwin Oo Sarpay Publishing House for importing and distributing IAGS member Dr Ronan Lee's book, [Myanmar's Rohingya Genocide: Identity, History and Hate Speech](#) (I.B. Taurus, 2021). The IAGS Executive Board condemns the banning of IAGS member Dr Ronan Lee's book, *Myanmar's Rohingya Genocide: Identity, History and Hate Speech*, in Myanmar. The IAGS Executive Board condemns this violation of freedom of expression and freedom of opinion in Myanmar, clearly designed to prohibit Burmese citizens from accessing truthful narratives based on extensive academic research about the Rohingya.

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The IAGS Executive Board urges the Tatmadaw to:

- restore all human rights in Myanmar, including freedoms of expression and opinion, allowing all citizens of Myanmar open access to information about the Rohingya;
- withdraw charges against Lwin Oo Sarpay Publishing House relating to the import and distribution of Dr Ronan Lee's book, *Myanmar's Rohingya Genocide: Identity, History and Hate Speech*;
- restore Lwin Oo Sarpay Publishing House's licence;
- revoke the banning of Dr Ronan Lee's book, *Myanmar's Rohingya Genocide: Identity, History and Hate Speech*; and
- cease all genocidal actions against the Rohingya, including the dissemination of hate speech and propaganda about the Rohingya.

14 June 2022