

Population growth by religion in Burma and Arakan (1931-2014)

	1931 ¹	1941	1973	1983 ²	2014 ³	Growth rates (1931-1983)	Growth rates (1983-2014)
Muslims in Arakan	255,361 25.87% (Arakan) 1.74% (Burma)			582,984 28.5% (Arakan) 1.65% (Burma)	1,118,731 ⁴ 35.08% (Arakan) 2.17% (Burma)	128.30% (2.47% per year)	91.90% (2.96% per year)
Non-Muslims in Arakan	731,756 74.13% (Arakan) 5.00% (Burma)			1,462,575 71.5% (Arakan) 4.63% (Burma)	2,070,076 64.92% (Arakan) 4.02% (Burma)	99.87% (1.92% per year)	41.54% (1.34% per year)
Non-Muslims in Arakan (except Hindus)	713,186 72.25% (Arakan)			1,458,482 71.30% (Arakan)	2,060,285 64.60% (Arakan)	104.50% (2.01% per year)	41.26% (1.33% per year)
Buddhists in Arakan	651,135 65.96% (Arakan) 4.45 (Burma)			1,425,754 69.7% (Arakan) 4.04% (Burma)	2,019,370 63.33% (Arakan) 3.92% (Burma)	118.96% (2.29% per year)	41.63% (1.34% per year)
Christians in Arakan	1,868 0.19% (Arakan) 0.01% (Burma)			8,182 0.4% (Arakan) 0.02% (Burma)	36,791 1.15% (Arakan) 0.07% (Burma)	338.01% ⁵ (6.50% per year)	349.66% ⁶ (11.28% per year)
Animists in Arakan	60,183 6.10% (Arakan) 0.41% (Burma)			24,546 1.2% (Arakan) 0.07% (Burma)	2,711 0.09% (Arakan) 0.01% (Burma)	-59.21% ⁷ (-1.14% per year)	-88.96% ⁸ (-2.87% per year)
Christians & Animists in Arakan	62,051 6.29% (Arakan) 0.42% (Burma)			32,728 1.60% (Arakan) 0.90% (Burma)	39,502 1.24% (Arakan) 0.08% (Burma)	-47.26% ⁹ (-0.91% per year)	20.70% (0.67% per year)
Hindus in Arakan	18,149 1.84% (Arakan)			4,091 0.2% (Arakan)	9,791 0.30% (Arakan)	-77.46% ¹⁰ (-1.49% per year)	139.33% (4.49% per year)
Total Arakan	987,117 6.74%	1,186,738¹¹ 7.05% 17.67% >	1,712,838¹³ 5.92% 73.52% > 1931	2,045,559 5.79% 19.43% g. 1973	3,188,807 6.19%	107.23% (2.06% per year)	55.89% (1.80% per year)

		1931 ¹² (1.77% per year)	(1.74% per year)	(1.94% per year)			
Muslims in Burma	584,839 3.99%			1,377,008 3.9%	2,237,495 4.35%	135.45% (2.60% per year)	62.49% (2.02% per year)
Muslims in Burma (except Arakan)	329,478 2.25%			794,024 2.25%	1,118,764 2.17%	140.99% (2.71% per year)	40.90% (1.31% per year)
Non-Muslims in Burma	14,062,308 96.01%			33,930,905 96.1%	49,248,758 95.65%	140.95% (2.71% per year)	45.14% (1.45% per year)
Non-Muslims in Burma (except Arakan)	13,330,552 91.01%			32,468,330 91.96%	47,178,682 91.63%	143.56% (2.76% per year)	45.31% (1.46% per year)
Buddhists in Burma	12,348,037 84.30%			31,565,274 89.4%	45,185,449 87.76%	155.63% (2.99% per year)	43.15% (1.39% per year)
Buddhists in Burma (except Arakan)	11,696,902 79.86%			30,139,520 85.36%	43,166,079 83.84%	157.67% (3.03% per year)	43.22% (1.39% per year)
Christians in Burma	331,106 2.26%			1,659,472 4.7%	3,172,479 ¹⁴ 6.16%	401.19% ¹⁵ (7.72% per year)	91.17% ¹⁶ (2.96% per year)
Animists in Burma	763,243 5.21%			423,695 1.2%	408,045 0.79%	-44.49% ¹⁷ (-0.86% per year)	-3.69% ¹⁸ (-0.12% per year)
Christians & Animists in Burma	1,094,349 7.47%			2,083,167 5.90%	3,580,524 6.95%	90.36% (1.74% per year)	71.88% (2.32% per year)
Christians & Animists in Burma (except Arakan)	1,032,298 7.05%			2,050,439 5.81%	3,541,022 6.88%	98.63% (1.90% per year)	72.70% (2.35% per year)
Hindus in Burma	570,953			176,539	252,763	-69.08% ¹⁹	43.18%

Hindus in Burma (except Arakan)	3.90% 552804 3.77%			0.5% 172448 0.49%	0.49% 242972 0.47%	(-1.33 % per year) -68.80% (-1.32% per year)	(1.39% per year) 40.90% (1.32% per year)
Total Burma	14,647,147	16,823,798 ²⁰ 14.86% g. 1931 (1.49% per year)	28,921,226 ²¹ 71.91% g. 1941 (2.25% per year) 97.45% g. 1931 (2.32% per year)	35,307,913 22.08% g. 1973 (2.21% per year)	51,486,253 ²²	141.06% (2.71% per year)	45.82% (1.48% per year)

¹ See *Census of Burma, 1931*, pp. 238-9. Most of them (197,560) were classified as “Indian Muslims”, see *ibid.*, p. 274. The rest were classified as “Arakan Mahomedan” (51,615), “Arakan Kaman” (2,677), under the rubric “Indo-Burman races”, 76 “Arakanese Muslim” (76), and other “Indo-Burman races”, see *ibid.*, p. 242, 245. We don’t include the Arakan Hill Tracts, which were part of Arakan under the British, and part of Chin Special Division/State after independence. The 1931 census is available online: <http://www.networkmyanmar.org/ESW/Files/1931-Census-Tables.pdf>

² For data on Arakan, see *1983 Population Census: Rakhine State*, p. 16. Available online: http://www.networkmyanmar.org/ESW/Files/1983_Rakhine_Census_Report_.pdf For data on the whole of Burma, see *1983 Population Census: Burma*, p. 22. Available online: <http://www.networkmyanmar.org/ESW/Files/1983-Census-Book.pdf>

³ According to the government, 50,279,900 people were enumerated in the census. 1,206,353 were not enumerated. An estimate 1,090,000 were not enumerated because they were Rohingya in Arakan who refused to be classified as Bengali. 46,600 were not enumerated in territories in conflict in Kachin State where the census was not conducted. Same goes for 69,753 in Karen State.

⁴ This figure includes an estimation of 1,090,000 non-enumerated people. The non-enumerated were Rohingya who refused to be classified as “Bengalis”. 28,731 Muslims were enumerated, most were probably Kaman, and some may be Rohingya who accepted to be classified to be enumerated as “Bengalis”; it is impossible to know exactly how many were Kaman, as the government has not released the classification by ethnicity. By comparing UN figures of refugees who have left Burma between 2012 and late 2017 with GAD figures of population in Arakan by township in June 2017 to which I have had access, I think 1,090,00 Rohingya is not too off the mark, albeit it’s possibly a slight underestimation.

⁵ Mostly due to conversions, particularly of animists.

⁶ *Idem.*

⁷ Probably mostly due to conversions to other religions, given that conversions to Christianity were not numerous, probably Buddhism and Islam through inter-marriage.

⁸ *Idem.*

⁹ Likely conversions to Buddhism and Islam, possibly emigration too.

¹⁰ Due to the Indian exoduses in World War II and nationalization in the sixties. Some conversions to other religions cannot be discounted.

¹¹ There was a census carried out in 1941, but complete results by ethnicity or religion were lost as a result of World War II. Only the total population is preserved. Total population appears on 1983 Population Census, p. 1. Figure for Arakan can be found in Peter Murray, *The British Military Administration of North Arakan: 1942-1943*. Available online: http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs21/NM-1943-The_British_Military_Administration_of_North_Arakan-en.pdf

¹² Growth has been calculated from the total population of the British province of Arakan (1,008,535), which included Arakan Hill Tracts, an area that was excluded from Arakan after independence. As we lack information on how many people lived in that area in 1941, comparisons between results in the 1941 census and 1973 census for Arakan have not been made.

¹³ See *1983 Population Census: Rakhine State*, p. 9.

¹⁴ Figure does not include non-enumerated population in Kachin and Karen States. It's likely that many of them are Christian.

¹⁵ This extremely high growth of the Christian population is mostly due to the high rates of conversion during the period.

¹⁶ A great part of it probably due to conversions.

¹⁷ Most animist converted to Christianity during the period.

¹⁸ Idem in this period.

¹⁹ The Indian exodus in World War II and the wave of nationalizations in the sixties account for most of the shrinkage of Hindu population.

²⁰ See *1983 Population Census: Burma*, p. 1.

²¹ See *1983 Population Census: Burma*, p. 14.

²² Including non-enumerated population.