

“ROHINGYA” CHOSEN “2017 NAME OF THE YEAR”

“Rohingya” was chosen the Name of the Year for 2017 by the American Name Society at its annual meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah on January 5, 2018.

The Myanmar army has targeted the Rohingya, an Islamic group, and has perpetrated massacres that have the earmarks of genocide. Myanmar’s government has tried to prevent people, including Pope Francis, from using the name Rohingya. The UN’s Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein has said "To strip their name from them is dehumanising to the point where you begin to believe that anything is possible."

Maria was chosen ANS’s Personal Name of the Year. Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands in September. The irony of a name associated by many in Puerto Rico with the Virgin Mary’s compassion being given to a storm whose aftermath has led to questioning the compassion of the federal government was cited by ANS members as a reason for the choice before the vote.

#MeToo was chosen as the Miscellaneous Name of the Year. This is the name of a movement encouraging those who have been sexually assaulted or harassed to share their experiences by using the #MeToo hashtag on various social media platforms.

Charlottesville was chosen as the Place Name of the Year. This Virginia college town became a symbol of racism and resistance to it when an alt-right/Neo-Nazi march there on August 12 resulted in the death of counterprotestor Heather Heyer, and Donald Trump later referred to some of the white nationalist protestors as “good people.”

Nambia was chosen as Fictional Name of the Year. In September, President Trump lavished praise on the health care system of Nambia during a speech at the United Nations. Just one little problem: There is no such country. (Trump may have meant *Namibia*, an actual African country.) Trump mentioned “Nambia” twice in the speech.

The American Name Society is a scholarly organization founded in 1951 devoted to studying all aspects of names and naming. The Name of the Year vote has been held since 2004.

“Aleppo” was the 2016 Name of the Year. “Caitlyn Jenner” won for 2015, “Ferguson” for 2014, “Francis” for 2013, and “Sandy” for 2012.

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