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Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh: Exploitations and Challenges for Host Community

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Abstract- Bangladesh has been facing a new crisis to provide shelter to the Rohingyas who were forcibly repatriated from Myanmar. Though Rohingyas taking shelter in Bangladesh started in 1978, the last massive influx of the Rohingyas occurred on 25 August 2017, when more than 7,00,000 Rohingya refugees fled to Bangladesh due to massive crime against humanity in Myanmar. More than a million Rohingya refugees live in Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar, wherein, in most cases, the Rohingyas are exploited in many ways for many reasons, and the personal security of the Rohingya in the camps are under threat in many ways. Therefore, this paper explores two issues. First, the paper argues that the overall fundamental human rights of the Rohingya in the camps are undermined; and second, in other ways, Rohingya also creates challenges for Bangladesh as the host country.

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Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh: Exploitations and Challenges for Host Community

Md. Shah Alam

Abstract- **Bangladesh has been facing a new crisis to provide shelter to the Rohingyas who were forcibly repatriated from Myanmar. Though Rohingyas taking shelter in Bangladesh started in 1978, the last massive influx of the Rohingyas occurred on 25 August 2017, when more than 7,00,000 Rohingya refugees fled to Bangladesh due to massive crime against humanity in Myanmar. More than a million Rohingya refugees live in Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar, wherein, in most cases, the Rohingyas are exploited in many ways for many reasons, and the personal security of the Rohingya in the camps are under threat in many ways. Therefore, this paper explores two issues. First, the paper argues that the overall fundamental human rights of the Rohingya in the camps are undermined; and second, in other ways, Rohingya also creates challenges for Bangladesh as the host country.**

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I. Introduction

The Rohingya group in Myanmar's Rakhine State has a long history of social and economic isolation that ended in horrendous violence, culminating in a significant movement of up to 900,000 refugees to date (WHO, 2019). Villages were burnt down, individuals were detained, tortured, sexually assaulted, and their families and livelihoods were destroyed in Rakhine State (Riley et al., 2017). Bangladesh is now hosting 11 Lakh Rohingya refugees whom the Myanmar government forcefully displaced through massive genocidal attacks. Bangladesh is also experiencing different non-customary security concerns like environmental change, energy emergency, food and security issues, and water shortage due to hosting these Rohingya refugees. The human security and human rights of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh are also significant concerns (Uddin, 2021). Mental health, poor sanitation, a rise in sexually transmitted illnesses, hunger, reproductive health, and a lack of educational opportunities are all significant concerns. The Rohingya are in danger because of poor living conditions in refugee camps. In Bangladesh's Rohingya refugee camps, 37 people share one toilet (Mahmood et al., 2017). For the Rohingya refugees, clean water is also in short supply. However, many individuals drink from adjacent waterways, which are also used for bathing and open defecation, particularly in illegal Rohingya settlements (Chan et al., 2018). Poor sanitation and hygiene conditions in Rohingya refugee camps have increased the risk of diarrheal disease transmission among the population. In addition to inadequate sanitation, low water quality, limited living quarters, and high levels of drug trafficking and sexual exploitation, infectious disease outbreaks in Rohingya refugee camps are a big concern (Hossain et al., 2018). Food security is also a significant worry since just six of the refugees' food consumption ratings meet the minimum requirements (UNICEF, 2019). Sexual abuse and exploitation are rampant in Rohingya camps right now. Approximately 67 of the refugees had been sexually abused or exploited (Hutchinson, 2018). Thus, the Rohingya people have become a victim again in the camps in Bangladesh. On the other hand, the present Rohingya refugee crisis adds more challenges for Bangladesh and creates new security threats and challenges for the country. It includes human or nontraditional security, transnational security, internal security, militancy and terrorism, border security, political oppression, human rights violations, and economic and social injustice. Therefore, it is necessary to address it in research to explore the phenomena further.

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II. Rohingya Refugee take Shelter in Bangladesh: A Legal Framework

Human migration may be defined in two ways. The term dislocates migrants refers to people who have made a permanent or semi-permanent shift of domicile. The second meaning of the word migration is simply a movement of people across space. In contrast to the previous definition, it is acknowledged that the new dwelling resulting from the relocation is typically very transient and that the movement itself is an inherent part of the group's lifestyle. In the broadest sense, a marginal or inferior group might be described in terms of race or ethnicity or by some other trait. In this respect, minorities are not always numerical migrants. Because the minor criteria are established by marginal or subordinate states rather than numbers. According to the United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugees, anyone who is outside his or her country of nationality because of a well-founded fear of persecution on the grounds of race, religion or nationality or membership in a particular social group or political opinion, and who is unable or unwilling to seek refuge in the country of his or her former habitual residence as a result of such events, is referred to as a refugee under international law. The

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1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees (The 1951 Refugee Convention). According to the 1951 Refugee Convention, a refugee is defined as a person who has a well-founded fear of persecution due to one or more of the following five factors: race, religion, nationality, social group membership, political opinion, or political affiliation. A refugee must satisfy four essential requirements (The 1951 Refugee Convention). First, they must be outside their country of origin or birth nationality. Second, the person is unable or unwilling to take advantage of that country's protection or return to that country. Third, the inability or unwillingness is due to a well-founded fear of persecution. Fourth, fear is justified based on the person's race, religion, nationality, or membership in a particular social or political group. (The 1951 Refugee Convention). As a result of the Cartagena Declaration, adopted in 1984 by Central American nations, a refugee is defined broadly to encompass individuals who escape their country because of widespread violence or international wars.

Refugee law is founded on international human rights law. Every individual has a right to seek and receive protection from persecution in other countries, according to Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted on December 10, 1948. (Universal Declaration of Human Rights of December 10, 1948). The Universal Document of Human Rights is a non-binding declaration that does not apply to any specific country (Constantin, 2018). However, certain of its principles have become customary international law binding on all governments over time. Many elements have been enshrined in international and regional human rights treaties and national laws and constitutions. All people, including those who are uprooted in their own country and those who are uprooted in another country, are entitled to international human rights (Abdelaaty, 2021). They have the right to be treated under international human rights standards to guarantee that they are protected from physical harm and have access to medical care and education while displaced (Wali at. al., 2018). The four Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949, and the two Additional Protocols of June 8, 1977, are the most fundamental sources of modern International Humanitarian Law (IHL). IHL strives to protect all civilians caught up in armed conflict, including refugees and internally displaced people (Storey, 2012). It assures, among other things, that refugees are neither discriminated against nor forced to return to their home countries against their choice (Quinn, 2014). It also makes it illegal for warring sides to evict people forcefully. Customary international law serves as the main underpinning for this sub-branch of international refugee law. Non-refoulement, on the one hand, safeguards refugees from being deported. However, international agreements like the 1951 Convention are solely enforceable on the signatory governments. Even if a state is not a signatory to a convention, it must adhere to some universally acknowledged and recognized norm, referred to as customary international law. Similarly, while not being a party to the 1951 Convention, Bangladesh has housed the Rohingya Community in their country on the principle of nonrefoulement and wishes to repatriate them freely under Customary International Law.

III. Exploitation and Insecurity Issues of Rohingya in the Camps in Bangladesh

The Rohingya hosting is not new for Bangladesh. However, the Rohingya rehabilitation in Cox's Bazar District due to more than 900000 Rohingya fleeing from Myanmar in 2017 for genocidal killing of Rohingyas by Myanmar authority has become a challenge for the Bangladeshi government (Hossain et al., 2020). The registrar Rohingyas are sheltered in 34 refugee camps in Cox's Bazar District in Bangladesh. Though the shelter has ensured the security of vulnerable Rohingya in the refugee camps in Bangladesh, the different kinds of insecurity and exploitations of Rohingya have been noticed in the Rohingya camps. This section discusses how Rohingyas are exploited and how their security is under threat in the refugee camps.

Sexual harassment and gender-based violence are common in the Rohingya camps. Many Rohingya girls and women are forcefully involved in prostitution (Center, 2018). The Rohingya women and girls are very vulnerable in the camps. They live in extreme poverty. Many women have been compelled to prostitution to save their families from hunger. The vulnerable Rohingya girls are forcefully involved in prostitution by the local middleman. The local middleman benefits by selling the Rohingya girls, and the Rohingya girls and women are abused by the syndicate of local and Rohingya leaders. This syndicate earns substantial financial benefits by exploiting Rohingya women and girls.

Local syndicate of drugs business also involves vulnerable Rohingya in Yaba business. Vulnerable Rohingya people are easy carriers of Yaba fills. Yaba business is witnessed and heard to go back to Myanmar. Even professional yaba business people cannot bring yaba directly now into Bangladesh. According to Hossain et al. (2020, pp. 28-29), "a large number of Rohingyas are trafficking Yaba (an illegal narcotic) pill to gain money by selling it [26]." The Yaba underground market is thriving in South Asian nations, and Bangladesh is no exception. Carrying more than a hundred tablets in a single cigarette package is incredibly tiny and handy. The Rohingyas carry about 92 percent of Yaba tablets, and more than 96 percent of Yaba pills enter Bangladesh through the Taknaf route. At

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the Kutupalong and Balukhali Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar, over 200 Yaba hats (small shops) are open." In the Yaba industry, drug dealers employ vulnerable Rohingya individuals, and the bulk of Yaba smugglers are now female Rohingyas. Many news outlets have previously reported on the Rohingya's participation in the illicit yaba trade (Minar, 2021). Minar (2021, p. 11) also claimed that "Rohingya yaba carrier Motaleb Mia (pseudonym) said he knows 20-22 Rohingyas who are involved in yaba smuggling and explained that "the smugglers hand ya ba pills to the mules in the deeper parts of the camps, who carry them to Cox's Bazar". According to an article published in October 2017, "law enforcement have confiscated yaba pills worth over Tk13 crore in the two Upazilas, and have detained numerous Rohingya for alleged smuggling" (See also, Mahmud 2017a). Also, the vulnerable Rohingyas have been used by several terrorist groups, and the vulnerable Rohingyas have become a target of militant groups (Minar, 2021; Mahmud 2017b). Minar, 2021 (p. 11) mentioned that another news reveals that a top Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) official said the JMB (a terrorist organization in Bangladesh) men been working in the Rohingya refugee camps since 2016 and were recruiting members behind the relief and funding aid to the Rohingya camp. They recruited at least 40 militant members (See also, Rabbi 2018).

Besides drug trafficking, arms dealers use and involve vulnerable Rohingyas in arms dealing and smuggling. Unemployment and poor wages are significant problems that make Rohingya people idle and vulnerable. Vulnerabilities and idleness make them involved in many criminal activities. It has also been argued that "the unemployed and idle Rohingyas are being drawn into criminal activities for money though they do not have to think about their food and accommodation as the aid agencies provide them with everything they need. So, a big portion of Rohingya youths remain idle and become engaged in domestic violence, internal feuds, and gender-based violence" (Minar, 2021, p. 11; Mahmud 2018b). Also, if the venerable Rohingyas wanted to work for lower wages, it created tensions of local labor. Rohingya refugees have many challenges inside the refugee camps as well.

IV. Host Community Challenges

The experience of dealing with the refugee crisis is not pleasant for any community, particularly when it becomes the source of further deterioration in the socio-economic conditions of the host country. In this aspect, the Rohingya refugee crisis is unusual. The location in Bangladesh where they are taking refuge following their arrival is one of the most impoverished in the country. Because of the steep terrain and scarcity of cultivable land, most of the population relies on day labor to supplement their income. Consequently, there is increased strain on the employment market, while the ecology becomes more susceptible (Hammer, and Ahmed, 2020). Earlier in the year, Quader and colleagues (2021, p. 4636) said that "Before the 2017 migration, Rohingyans had encroached over more than 695 acres of Forest Department territory near Cox's Bazar." "An additional 4300 acres (about 2000 hectares) of slopes were subsequently leveled and forests removed in order to provide Rohingya residents in the Ukhiya and Teknaf sub-districts of Cox's Bazar with temporary shelters, options, and roads." Concerns have also been raised about the worsening of the law and order situation, which has primarily been attributed to illegal Rohingya immigration (Arafat & Khanam, 2019). The Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioners RRRC Office at Coxs Bazar reported in their letter to the Ministry of Home and the Ministry of Foreign affairs that the illegal Rohingyas are creating various social problems in Coxs Bazar and Bangladesh. A Police officer claimed that aggressive Rohingyas had destroyed the peaceful city, Coxs Bazar. They are illegally capturing the trees and land and degrading the law order situation. Security means the assurance of all the fundamental human rights. On the other hand, securing the sovereign from opposing forces is the state's prime duty. Security is a significant issue in all countries. Every state will try to protect its country, but Bangladesh has faced many problems for Rohingya refugees (Minar, 2021; Kudrat-E-Khuda, 2020). Existing studies, for example, (Minar, 2021; Kudrat-E-Khuda, 2020; Imtiaz, 2018; Ullah et al., 2021) Many Rohingyas involved many illegal works, such as drugs, drug trafficking, smuggling, deforestation, environmental pollution, gender discrimination, communication with Islamic extremism, terrorism, and insurgency. In addition, the flight is a cause of national instability for Bangladesh and a significant economic and administrative strain on the country. Security is often seen as the most critical issue impacting the full resolution of the Rohingya refugee crisis, particularly in the United States. As a result of the rise of new conceptions of human security and adequate protection, the field of security has been expanded and developed, and duties have been devolved to international organizations on an operational level. With the insurgent components complicating the Rohingya refugee crisis, the security challenge is exacerbated even more. Refugees living in camps are often exposed to intimidation, violence, and harassment from a number of organizations and people while in the camp (Minar, 2021). Aside from conflicts inside the camp, conflicts between refugees and locals may arise outside the camp as well, and are particularly common when locals harbor hatred against immigrants for alleged wrong doings such as stealing or immoral behavior.

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We are aware that Rohingya refugees are engaged in terrorism, extremism, smuggling, trafficking, and insurgency, amongst other activities. These are the most severe dangers to national security, whereas law and order, protection measures, counter-terrorism mechanisms, and other measures address local and state concerns. A tragic situation exists for Rohingyas who are stateless. Insurgency is becoming a more serious security threat, including Rohingya refugees, Bangladesh, and Myanmar, and is growing more widespread. Historically, two main actions by the Myanmar military government have led to the departure of Rohingyas and the ensuing challenges of insurgency and terrorism. The social security issue is one of the most concerning issues in Bangladesh. They engaged in drugs, drug trafficking, violence against women and children, riots, decaying social values, and gender discrimination. The trade of drugs is another security threat for Bangladesh. It should be noted that China, India, and Bangladesh are the countries with the greatest rates of drug addiction in their bordering regions with Myanmar. As a result, Bangladesh has seen an upsurge in drug shipments arriving by land and water. According to the findings of the study, a large number of Rohingya girls and women are participating in prostitution. It represents a significant challenge for the local community.

Women and children are disproportionately affected by the consequences of environmental degradation, particularly those associated with fuelwood harvesting and burning. Foraging and transporting wood requires women to work long hours, putting them at a greater danger of weariness and vulnerability to attack than males. Time spent on such activities detracts from childcare, family, and social duties, and children who participate in incomparable activities may have less time available for schooling due to their participation. Environmental difficulties related to refugees are often the result of large populations of people congregating in a small area within a short period, as is frequently the case. The Rohingya refugees, both legal and undocumented, are often held responsible for the worsening environmental conditions in the area. Deforestation, notably by tree cutting, water pollution, and other environmental challenges, are among the most pressing concerns regarding the environmental component of security. For example, it has become obvious that refugee-related environmental effects may have substantial negative consequences for the health and wellbeing of the local population and the health and wellbeing of the refugee community, as has been shown in many studies.

Two developments have occurred: first, host countries have become more sensitive to the potential economic loss that they may suffer as a result of environmental damage caused by large concentrations of refugees, and second, the absence of a consistent policy for the rehabilitation of damaged areas after refugees have been repatriated. The destruction of renewable natural resources, such as forests, soils, and water supplies, is the most significant source of environmental concerns among the refugee population, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Particularly severe consequences for regions of high environmental importance may be connected to the area's biological richness, its role as a sanctuary for endangered species, or the ecosystem services these areas provide. It is widely believed that the Rohingyas are destroying the woods, cutting the hills for their refuge, and settling in various locations around Myanmar, causing enormous harm to the natural ecosystem. They take down trees on purpose in order to support their families. There are numerous types of environmental contamination in the locations where Rohingya refugees, both documented and undocumented, reside. A significant source of worry is water contamination, which is caused by a lack of access to sanitation and safe drinking water. The sewerage management in the camps is a major concern. Particularly, the location of the Tal camp is a great concern. All the sewage flows into the Naf River, spoiling the purity of the river water. Moreover, waterborne diseases are more likely to spread due to such flow. Deforestation is becoming another major environmental disaster in this area.

V. Conclusion

The Rohingya situation in Bangladesh has become a very complex issue. It has become a burden for Bangladesh as a host country in many ways. Bangladesh is in the dilemma of two folds. One is considering Rohingya as human rights ground, and another is security and other challenges for Bangladesh created by sheltering these Rohingya people from human rights perspectives. As a result, Bangladesh must find a comprehensive solution to the refugee issue and develop a unified security policy to cope with all of the possible dangers it faces. If this does not change, Bangladesh's condition will deteriorate shortly. This paper will specifically attempt to discuss the conditions or factors necessary for sustainable solutions and how the implementation of Rakhines post-conflict socio-legal framework, which ensures national security, positively or negatively impacts Rohingya refugees' humanitarian status. It will use the case of Rohingyas in Bangladesh as an example. Thus, this research explores many unknown facts to understand the problem and find sustainable policy solutions for Bangladesh and the Rohingya community. Some critical issues about the refugee study can be raised, such as religious and racial persecution, involuntary migration, coping with new atmospheres, response to repatriation and resettlement process by refugees, and perception of refugees'

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experience. However, the study reflects such vital issues through the life history of Rohingya refugee people.

Dealing with refugee people from the nation-state point of view might not be adequate for understanding their life; moreover, in a general sense, people are supposed to stay within the border of their country and go back home But apart from such notion, International relations study needs deep study perception to understand underlying phenomena of refugee life and that study might contribute to making proper policy concerning refugee welfare program to present in a nutshell, this study divide Rohingyas experience in two way, as minor ethnic group to their home and as a refugee in exile, especially in Bangladesh. As the author visited the refugee camp, the author knows that all of them Rohingya refugees are unwilling to go back to their own country as they do not have to be worried about their livelihood problem, which made the Myanmar regime a bit relaxed as ethnically Bangladesh cannot force them to go back. Finally, the research finds that Rohingyas are exploited for many reasons, and the personal security of the Rohingya in the camps is under threat in many ways. Thus, the paper argues that the overall fundamental human rights of the Rohingya in the camps are undermined. In other ways, Rohingya also creates challenges for the host country Bangladesh.

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