

Economic Impact of Rohingya Exodus on Bangladesh

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Abstract

Rohingyas of the Rakhine state of Myanmar have earned the status of migrants while escaping from mass killing and torture. Bangladesh has been their close destination since the first attempt to migrate and it has welcomed them. This study aims at uncovering the economic impact of the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh, which has faced the first wave of the influx, through understanding the changes in its economy. The Rohingya exodus may not have affected the economy yet but it has already caused enough trouble to its only touristic region, Cox's Bazar. The business intervention of China and Myanmar has a significant role in creating the current crisis. Thus, Rakhine state under the surveillance of the Myanmar military witnessed torture and persecution of Rohingya Muslim community for decades. Therefore, the international community has to come forward immediately and force Myanmar to resolve the crisis and help recover Bangladesh from great distress.

Keywords: Bangladesh, Economic Security, Genocide, Migration, Rohingya, Silk Road.

Rohingya Toplu Göçünün Bangladeş'e Ekonomik Etkileri

Öz

Myanmar'ın Arakan eyaletinin Rohingya bölgesindeki işkence ve katliamlardan kaçanlar mülteci statüsü kazanmıştır. Bangladeş, yakın konumu sebebiyle göçmenlerin ilk varış noktası olmuştur. Bu çalışma, Rohingya krizinin ilk göç dalgası ile karşı karşıya kalan Bangladeş ekonomisindeki değişiklikleri anlamaya çalışarak, ekonomik etkileri ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Rohingya'dan gelen göçmen akımı henüz ekonomiyi etkilememiş olabilir ancak halihazırda turistik bölge olan Cox's Bazar'da olumsuz etkileri hissedilmektedir. Çin ve Myanmar'ın ticari müdahalesi de mevcut krizin ortaya çıkmasında önemli rol oynamıştır. Myanmar ordusunun gözlemlendiği Arakan eyaleti, onlarca yıldır Rohingya Müslüman topluluğunun gördüğü işkence ve baskıya şahitlik etmiştir. Bu sebeple uluslararası toplum bir önce adım atarak Myanmar'ı çözüm için zorlayarak Bangladeş'i bu sorundan kurtarmaya çalışmalıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bangladeş, Ekonomik Güvenlik, Soykırım, Göç, Rohingya, İpek Yolu.

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“Our crop fields are destroyed. Our forests are destroyed... It’s a huge impact for the whole community.” Kazi Abdur Rahman, a deputy district administrator in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh

Introduction

Migration has been a buzz concept in the 21st century as lots of countries found to be under the condition of war or statelessness due to terrorist intervention like Syria, Iraq, Myanmar and so on. Rohingya, a tribal group from the Rakhine state of Myanmar also called the ‘illegal Bengali immigrants’¹, has recently earned the status of migrants as they tried to escape mass killing in a form of ethnic cleansing from their land by their government forces.² As a neighbouring country, Bangladesh has been their close destination since the first attempt to migrate. Bangladesh has welcomed them even though it is a lower-middle-income country³ with its large number of population and limited land resources. For the last two years, it has accepted around 1.1 M Rohingya⁴, still, the number is increasing.

Rohingya has its history begin back in 1947 when united India was separated by the then British empire into Pakistan and India. Soon after the separation of India-Pakistan in 1948 Burma got its independence from the British colonial rule, since then the Rohingyas have been facing systematic torture and exclusion from all forms of rights and protections and became stateless.⁵ The torture against the Rakhine Muslim also termed as Rohingya got its ultimate image while violence erupted between the Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims in 25th August 2017 and about 71 people died.⁶ The Rohingya militia group, Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) at the same time attacked on Myanmar Police post which claimed 12 security officers’ lives and the migration began.⁷

1 Joseph Chamie, “International Migration,” *Foreign Policy Association*, Great Decisions, 2016, 35–50, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44214820>, p.42.

2 Faisal S. HAZIS, “Malaysia in 2017,” *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 2018, 201–18, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26492778>, p.213

3 “The World Bank: Bangladesh,” Organisation, The World Bank, 2019, <https://data.worldbank.org/country/bangladesh>, p-all.

4 BD Department of Immigration and Passports, “Myanmar National’s Registration” Daily Report - Date: 04/06/2018,” Government, www.dip.gov.bd, June 5, 2018, <http://www.dip.gov.bd/site/news/p-all>.

5 Clara Tran, “South-East Asian Migrant Crisis: Who Are the Rohingya Fleeing Myanmar by Boat?,” News, ABC News, May 21, 2015, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-05-21/explainer-who-are-the-rohingya-fleeing-myanmar/6487130>, p-all.

6 Esther Htusan, “Myanmar: 71 Die in Militant Attacks on Police, Border Posts,” Online News, The Spokesman Review, August 25, 2017, <http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2017/aug/25/myanmar-71-die-in-militant-attacks-on-police-borde/p-all>.

7 Daljit Singh, “Introduction,” *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 2018, vii–xvi, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26492765>; UNHCR Staff, “100 Days of Horror and Hope: A Timeline of the Rohingya Crisis,” UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency, December 1, 2017, <https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2017/12/5a1c313a4/100-days-horror-hope-timeline-rohingya-crisis.html>, p.xiv.

There are two sides of a coin, Rohingya exodus in the form of ethnic cleansing is one side of the coin and the other side remain in the global capitalist business plan which is ongoing with the China One Belt One Road project. As Rahman shared, in his article on the connectivity and business project of China, “connectivity is also found in history as one of the major factors, triggering conflicts and wars, since these were mostly confined among the connected ones i.e. neighbours”.⁸ It clearly indicates that the connectivity has direct influence over the relationship with the countries. The multi-billion-dollar project and plans of Silk Road are, therefore, a plan to extend its connection towards another part of Asia, Africa and Europe which will help restructure its economy and geopolitical status in the near future.⁹ This project, therefore, has been found to have a connection with the tension arising in the region.

The tension within Myanmar has affected the four corners of the world. The Rohingya migration thus has moved the host countries as well as the aid of providing countries and organisations since its inception. This study, therefore, aims at uncovering the economic impact of the crisis on the host country, Bangladesh, which has faced the first wave of the migration. As a lower-middle-income country¹⁰ how it is encountering a large number of migrants and also managing its locale with its limited resources are the main study areas of this article.

Statement of the Problem

In order to understand the economic impact, the condition of the Rohingya migrants needs to be understood at the very outset. Historically and evidently the Rohingyas have been forced to migrate from their land or residence which may have diversified causation. The Muslim of the Rakhine state has been facing different sorts of tortures and discriminations since they have been singled out as a minority group in Myanmar.¹¹ Sahana, Jahangir and Anisujjaman, in their paper of forced migration and expatriation of the Rohingya discussed the nature and causes of forced migration. They are referring to South¹² stated about the three forms of forced migration which

Syed Badrul Ahsan, “The Rohingya Crisis: Why the World Must Act Decisively”, *Asian Affairs* 49, no. 4, October 29, 2018, pp. 571–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03068374.2018.1528791>, pp.571-572.

8 Khalid Rahman, “China and SAARC: Connectivity — Need for an Enabling Environment.” *Policy Perspectives* 11, no. 1, 2014, pp. 47–56. <https://doi.org/10.13169/polipers.11.1.0047>.

9 David Arase, “China’s Two Silk Roads Initiative: What It Means for Southeast Asia,” *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 2015, 25–45, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44112796.p.25-26>

10 “The World Bank: Bangladesh.”p.all.

11 Cameron Sumpter and Joseph Franco, “Migration, Transnational Crime and Terrorism,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12, no. 5, 2018, pp. 36–50, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26515430.p.44>

12 Ashley South, “Burma: The Changing Nature of Displacement Crises,” RSC Working Paper Series,

has been operated in Myanmar. The forms of forced migration can be due to the armed clashes between Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims; the Myanmar military occupation at the borderstate which was justified by the name of 'development', they wanted to seize the land for natural resources and do extraction work which actually allowed them to do all forms of exploitations; and lastly due to the vulnerability of their livelihood which caused them to migrate internally for better life.¹³ It is likely that the current revival of the Rohingya issue has a relation with the economy of the state.

According to the report published by Centre for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh and other government officials about 205 thousand Rohingya have been already living in the two major areas of Cox's Bazar who entered in different times since 2005 to 2017.¹⁴ The total estimation was 400 thousand illegal Rohingya residing in Cox's Bazaar, Bandarban, Khagrachari and Rangamati who came after 2005 were already roaming out there for survival.¹⁵ After 2017, the newly arrived Rohingya was added to the exiting number and ended up with a million-plus population at the coastal region of Bangladesh. As of now, the number is closed to 1.3 million people who need different forms of assistance in order to survive over there.¹⁶

The sudden increase in the number of the total population in the coastal region which is a great source of income through tourism is now at risk; and has a direct influence on its GDP. Bangladesh as a least developing country with its own big number of population cannot handle this burden alone. The former finance minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith feared that the Rohingya would be a big pressure to the country's economy, and said that "Myanmar will destroy Bangladesh's economy this year".¹⁷

Conflict Violence and Displacement in Burma, Oxford, UK, Refugee Studies Centre, QEH, University of Oxford, UK, February 2007, <https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/burma-the-changing-nature-of-displacement-crisis>, p. 3.

13 Mehebab Sahana, Selim Jahangir, and Md. Anisuzzaman, "Forced Migration and the Expatriation of the Rohingya: A Demographic Assessment of Their Historical Exclusions and Statelessness," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 39, No. 1, January 2, 2019, pp. 44–60, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2019.1587952>, p. 45.

14 Dr.Fahmida Khatun, "Implications of the Rohingya Crisis for Bangladesh", Organisational Presentation, November 11, 2017, p. 11

15 Porimol Palma and M Abul Kalam Azad, "Rohingya Trouble in Jobs Abroad," *The Daily Star*, February 11, 2009, online edition, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news-detail-112441>,p-all.

16 Emese Laura Laszlo, The Impact of Refugees on Host Countries: A Case Study of Bangladesh under the Rohingya Influx, Master's Thesis, Aalborg University, 2018, <https://projekter.aau.dk/projekter/files/281553531/Thesis.pdf>Aalborg University, 2018, p. 26.

17 Abdur Rahim Harmachi, "Myanmar Will Destroy Bangladesh's Economy with Rohingya Crisis: Muhith," Online News, bdnews24.com, October 15, 2017, <https://m.bdnews24.com/en/detail/wb-imf/1408057>,p-all.

The economy of Bangladesh is still growing at a slower rate but with a steady growth. However, in 2016 the nominal gross domestic product of Bangladesh at the current US Dollar rate was US\$ 221.415 billion.¹⁸ The government revenue in 2017 as per the Bangladesh Ministry of Finance was US\$ 28.64 billion at that year's current daily exchange rate. But in order to provide support to the Rohingya refugees, it would require at least 1 billion US\$ a year,¹⁹ which is equal to 3.5 % of the Government's revenue.²⁰

It is clearly comprehensible that managing an additional million of the population would be a great burden and if it is for an uncertain period of time the burden would give birth to other problems which are economic tension and public dissatisfaction. This study, therefore, offers to find an answer to the following questions:

- What are the possible impacts of Rohingya on Bangladesh economy in terms of GDP, local wages, and price of commodities?
- How the geopolitical issue along with the economic motivation of the neighbouring country affecting the Rohingya crisis?
- What are the socio-political impacts of the economic crisis due to the Rohingya migrants on Bangladesh?

Objective and Methods of the Study

Economics is a complex subject but in order to understand the negative impact of Rohingya on Bangladesh's economic and political situation, the author has used the complex economical result in a simplistic way. The main objectives of the study are to understand changes in the economic data specially the GDP, local wages situation and price of the commodities in relation to Rohingya; to investigate into the geo-political relationship along with the economic plans and projects of the neighbouring country with Myanmar; and lastly to explore and identify the socio-political impacts of the Rohingya migrants on the local people of the concern areas of Bangladesh.

This is a secondary data-based research where most of the information has been collected and used is relating to the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh. The author has collected all the information from online-based journal articles, newspapers, organisational reports and web portals. The author has

18 "The World Bank: Bangladesh", p-all.

19 Ibrahim Hossain OVI, "How Much Does It Cost to House Rohingya Refugees?", Online News Portal, Dhaka Tribune, September 14, 2017, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2017/09/13/cost-house-rohingya-refugees/>, p-all.

20 Laszlo, "The Impact of Refugees on Host Countries: A Case Study of Bangladesh under the Rohingya Influx" p. 40.

conducted a desk study in order to find the answers to the research questions and fulfil the objectives. Statistical charts and historical data along with descriptive information about the facts have been accumulated here and presented with analysis.

Economic Status of Bangladesh before Rohingya Exodus in 2017

Bangladesh has gotten its independence from Pakistan in 1971. As a war-torn country, it had to start off from scratch. However it has done considerable progress in its economy and also democratic system. The rising ready-made garments sector has boosted up its economy a lot and also made a way for its female population to be empowered and also contribute to the GDP. But the total number of populations is way big compared to any other country within a small geographical area which makes it the world's 8th largest populous country.²¹ In the meantime, the ever-increasing number of Rohingya migrants are taking over its only seaside areas since the 90s and it continues. Especially in the last two years, it has absorbed about a million Rohingya who has fled from persecution by Myanmar military force since 25th August 2017. Eventually, the local population and the leaders have become quite uncomfortable and tensed as their country has limited resources and is overpopulated due to Rohingya exodus.²²

Despite the claims of corruption at the governmental departments Bangladesh has exhibited continuous progress in all the sectors. For the sake of analysis, if the last four fiscal years' statistics (2015-16 to 2018-19 provisional) are considered, the current picture of development and progress can easily be comprehensible. The sectoral growth rate of GDP in the last four years has been positive and continuous. The overall growth especially in the sector of manufacturing industries, electricity, gas and water supply, health and social work sectors, and community, social and personal services are markedly encouraging (See Table 1). In order to understand the economic situation just before the August 2017 Rohingya migration the previous two fiscal years sectoral growth rate of GDP and Per Capita GDP and GNI have been tabulated here. The information presented here is collected from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and Finance Ministry.

21 "Total Population by Country 2019," Organisation, *World Population Review*, accessed April 10, 2019, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/>. p-all.

22 Mayesha Alam, "How the Rohingya Crisis is Affecting Bangladesh — and Why it Matters," *The Washington Post*, February 12, 2018, Online edition, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/02/12/how-the-rohingya-c%E2%80%A6>. p-all.

Bangladesh has managed to earn its GDP growth at a fair rate in the last four years where it increased its Per Capita GDP from US \$ 1,385 (2015-16) to 1,675 (2017-18) (see Table 2); and it has experienced considerable achievement in the Per Capita GNI as well, which is US \$ 1,465 (2015-16) to 1,751 (2017-18). It has a sharp growth in its GDP from 7.11% to 7.86% (2017-2018) (See Table 1)²³. The smooth and steady growth in the GDP indicates Bangladesh is progressing towards the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations; even though, the total economy of Bangladesh is not that sufficient enough to support the refugees or even support all those Bangladeshi citizens who are residing at the border region of the country and hosting the refugees as well.

However, the world has opened its arms to these refugee people and donating extensively for a humanitarian cause with all forms of relief and supports. The donations which are in most of the cases made in US Dollars have also added up to the GDP of the country. Therefore, the hit of the Rohingya arrival may not have affected the economy directly which would require some time but has already caused trouble for its only coastal regions, towns and beaches where is called Cox's Bazar. This place is happened to be known for its touristic attractions and cultural heritage of the indigenous people who have been living there for a long time. Now the whole place has been remaining occupied by the foreign aid workers and as well as Rohingya people. But the businessmen of that particular region especially the hoteliers are growing with the locales who have gotten opportunities to work with them as well as with the foreign aid agencies.²⁴

Economic Impact of Rohingya Refugees on Bangladesh after 2017

As discussed earlier the Rohingyas have taken shelter at the coastal region of Bangladesh, a district called Cox's Bazaar which is prominent for its tourism and agriculture-based businesses. Due to the Rohingya exodus, the hotel business is suffering at this area as they have claimed to a loss in hotel reservations about 40% even if in the pick season of their business compared to the previous year.²⁵ Due to a sudden increase in the demand of foods and other supplies, and the imminent supply shortage, price hike hit

23 "Provisional Estimates of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Bangladesh 2018-19(p)", Bangladesh: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, April 2019, http://bbs.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bbs.portal.gov.bd/page/057b0f3b_a9e8_4fde_b3a6_6daec3853586/GDP_2018_19p_web%20-02-04-2019.pdf. p. 6.

24 Alam, "How the Rohingya Crisis is Affecting Bangladesh — and Why it Matters", p-all.

25 Special Correspondent, "Cox's Bazar Tourism Sector Faces Serious Setback," *The Daily New Nation*, November 14, 2017, online edition, <http://thedailynewnation.com/news/154542/coxs-bazar-tourism-sector-faces-serious-setback.html>. p-all.

everybody in the region.²⁶

In order to survive, the Rohingya people have been taking over the local wage market for cheap rate (charging only 300 taka instead of 550 taka which is local standard) which creates dissatisfaction among the local wage earners.²⁷ In addition to that, the displaced population of Myanmar for their shelter and firewood supplies has destroyed around 1500 acres of social forest in Cox's Bazaar, which involved 2000 local poor and unemployed people with an anticipated 45% benefit of the forest trees.²⁸ Some other forests and hilly areas are also supposed to be destroyed by the migrants for shelter.

The problem doesn't end here in Cox's Bazaar as the Rohingya tried to leave from the country as migrant workers to Middle Eastern countries which caused diplomatic and other forms of crisis. Before 25 August exodus Rohingya has been present in Bangladesh for quite a long time. They have tried to get a voter identity card and manage their passport illegally in order to migrate as workers to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for example. According to *The Daily Star* news report, about 700 Rohingya refugees had gone to Saudi Arabia who was later arrested by authorities and awaiting for deportation as Saudi officials were pushing Bangladesh to take them back. This kind of events particularly hampers Bangladesh's overseas labour market and image as well.²⁹

The overall consequences are so immense as Rohingya migrants bring crisis along with themselves. The sudden migration has already affected local food market with the higher price of the products, depression at the daily wages which affected the local wage earners, basic rights and needs such as education, health and security are hampered for all; as well as being vulnerable to natural calamities like flood and landslide at those areas during rainy seasons.³⁰

26 Harun-Ur Rashid, রূপে হুজিগাদরে কারণে খাদ্য নিরাপত্তাহীনতায় ভুগছেন স্থানীয়রা- The locals are suffering for food security due to Rohingyas," Online News Portal, DW.com, April 4, 2019, <https://p.dw.com/p/3GFDR> p-all.

27 Kamrul HASAN, "Locals Unhappy about Losing Labour Market to Rohingyas," Dhaka Tribune, December 11, 2017, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/2017/12/11/locals-labour-market-rohingyas/>. p-all.

28 Tarek Mahmud, "Rohingya Influx: 15-Year-Old Forestation Project Destroyed in 57 Days," Dhaka Tribune, October 21, 2017, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2017/10/21/rohingya-influx-15-year-old-forestation-project-destroyed-57-days/> p-all.

29 Palma and Azad, "Rohingya Trouble in Jobs Abroad." p-all.

30 Sudip Dey, "Adverse Rohingya Impacts on Bangladeshi Economy and Its Solutions," *American Journal of Trade and Policy*; Vol 4, No 3 (2017): 12th Issue, December 24, 2017, 129-32, <https://journals.abc.us.org/index.php/ajtp/article/view/1067> p. 129.

Impact on National Economy

Bangladesh has never accepted such a huge number of refugees; as a result, it had to revise its budget to manage the helpless people for the 2017-18 fiscal year. It has been considered as:

*'one of the fastest refugee exoduses in modern times, involving at least 60% of the former Rohingya population of the whole of Rakhine State, and resulted in the creation of the largest ever refugee camp.'*³¹

The response came in after the UN's "2017 Humanitarian Response Plan" (HRP) activated by UN OCHA to handle the Rohingya crisis.³² Even though, it was anticipated that after a period of time the crisis would attack the national budget as foreign aids slow down and the crisis still remains. This has eventually impacted Bangladesh national budget as the parliament had to reduce its own development budget and relocate to the Rohingya fund for the 2018-19 fiscal year.³³ For example, to protect Bangladesh's touristic zone and also a continuous revenue-generating place, it has planned to invest US\$ 300 million for developing residential facilities at 'Bhasan Char' of Noakhali district and relocate there all the Rohingya refugees who are residing at Ukha and Teknaf Upazila of Cox's Bazaar district.³⁴ With the help of international donor agencies, Bangladesh has planned to complete this project where their own funding is USD 120 million.³⁵

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs initially planned to support the crisis with US\$ 434 million for the period of September 2017 to February 2018.³⁶ This particular donation was aimed at

31 Anthony Ware and Costas Laoutides, "Myanmar's 'Rohingya Conflict: Misconceptions and Complexity," *Asian Affairs* 50, no. 1 (January 2, 2019): 60–79, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03068374.2019.1567102>. p.61.

32 "Rohingya Refugee Crisis," UNOCHA, September 21, 2017, <https://www.unocha.org/rohingya-refugee-crisis>. p-all.

33 Kristy Crabtree, "Economic Challenges and Coping Mechanisms in Protracted Displacement: A Case Study of the Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh," *Journal of Muslim Mental Health* 5, no. 1 (March 31, 2010): 41–58, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15564901003610073>. p.41.

34 Asif Showkat KALLOL, "Doing the Math on the Rohingya Crisis," *Dhaka Tribune*, November 10, 2017, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/uncategorized/2017/11/10/doing-the-math-on-the-rohingya-crisis>. p-all.

35 Bangladesh Shangbad Shangstha, "Bangladesh, Turkish Premiers Agree to Work Together on Rohingya Crisis," *The Daily Star*, December 19, 2017, <https://www.thedailystar.net/country/dhaka-ankara-sign-2-memorandum-of-understanding-to-boost-cooperation-bilateral-relation-between-bangladesh-bd-and-turkey-1507315>; Ranajit Chandra Kuri, "Bhashan Char Being Prepared for Rehabilitation of the Rohingya," *Dhaka Tribune*, September 27, 2017, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/2017/09/27/bhashan-char-prepared-rehabilitation-rohingya>. p-all.

36 Aynul Islam, "Economic and Social Impact of the Rohingya Crisis", Institutional, *Current Event Analysis*, ULAB, Dhaka: Center for Enterprise Society, ULAB, January 2018, https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:ORugsAndy8wj:https://ces.ulab.edu.bd/wpcontent/uploads/sites/18/2015/07/ULAB_CES_Current_Event_Analysis_Rohingya-Jan-2018.pdf+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=tr.\uc0\u8221{} Institutional, *Current Event Analysis* (ULAB, Dhaka: Center for Enterprise Society, ULAB, January 2018 p. 2.

supporting all existing and incoming Rohingya refugees and also the local communities of Cox's Bazaar. Until January 21, 2018, almost 70.3% of the fund was invested while the policymakers have still been worried about the urgently required fund as per their year-based estimation (see table 3).³⁷ Using per capita income based forecasting method both Policy Research Institute (PRI) and South Asian Network on Economic Modelling (SANEM) have prepared an estimation for the requirements of the fund for a single year where they estimated approximately US\$ 1 billion. On the other hand, the Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD) estimated US\$ 882 million for a ten-month period up to June 2018 in light of UN OCHA's HRP fund estimation.³⁸

The Geopolitical Issues in the Region and its Impact on Rohingya

The Rohingya, identified as Muslim ethnic group were residing at the south western part of Myanmar. This ethnic group has been facing persecution and torture³⁹ ever since Myanmar got independence from British rule which continued with forced labour and also the denial of citizenship.⁴⁰ Due to the crisis, international media has raised questions with the roles and responsibilities of the countries like China, India and Russia who remained mostly silent in the issue and did not condemn Myanmar's action.⁴¹ Geographically, Myanmar is surrounded by India, China, Bangladesh, Thailand and Laos. Therefore, it has vital importance for all of these countries as a buffer zone. It also has several infrastructural projects and pipelines with China which is connected to the Bay of Bengal went through the Rakhine state,⁴² the land of the Rohingyas which is believed to be full of natural resources and minerals. It simply indicates the ethnicity is not the only problem with the Rohingyas as there are some other underlying issues which need to be identified and analysed. The present business intervention, particularly the oil and natural gas project of China and Myanmar has important role playing at the border of Arakan where the Rakhine state is the starting point.⁴³

37 Khatun, "CPD", p.18.

38 Khatun. p..37.

39 Jobair Alam, "The Rohingya of Myanmar: Theoretical Significance of the Minority Status," *Asian Ethnicity* 19, no. 2 (April 3, 2018): 180–210, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14631369.2017.1407236>. p.180.

40 South, "Burma: The Changing Nature of Displacement Crises", p.5.

41 Editor, "The Economy... the Hidden Side behind the Rohingya Muslim Crisis – Rawabt Center," *Rawabet Center for Research and Strategic Studies* (blog), October 20, 2017, <https://rawabetcenter.com/en/?p=3872>. p-all.

42 Eric Meyer, "With Oil And Gas Pipelines, China Takes a Shortcut Through Myanmar," *Forbes*, February 9, 2015, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ericmeyer/2015/02/09/oil-and-gas-china-takes-a-shortcut/> p-all.

43 Pu Zhendong, "China-Myanmar Oil and Gas Pipelines to Lower Energy Costs," Online News Portal, *China Daily*, June 6, 2013, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/m/guizhou/2013-06/06/content_16590423.htm. p-all.

Oil and natural gas pipeline projects have been important reasons for the long term strong business relationship of China and Myanmar but there is another part of this story. Myanmar has discovered gas (second gas column) in the Bay of Bengal located about 100 km far from the Rakhine state.⁴⁴ In order to protect the gas pipeline and also to protect the natural resources, Myanmar has deployed its military at project areas since the inception of the project which has also incited domestic instability and clashes with ethnic groups including Rohingya.

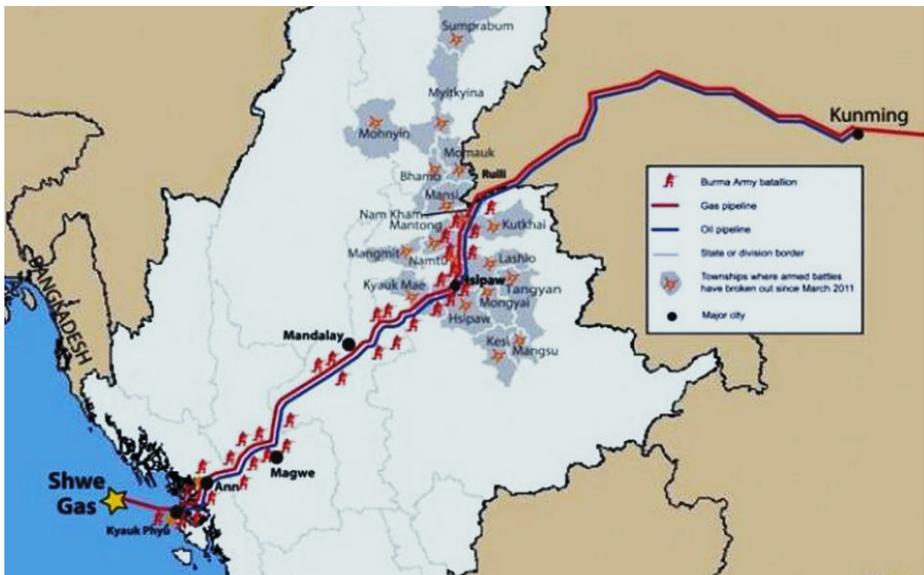


Figure 1 China Myanmar Oil and Natural Gas Pipeline Project

Image Source: Shwe Gas Movement in Eric Meyer, "With Oil and Gas Pipelines, China Takes A Shortcut Through Myanmar", *Forbes Asia*, 9 Feb 2015, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ericmeyer/2015/02/09/oil-and-gas-china-takes-a-shortcut/#741ca9977aff>

The crisis of Rohingya as an ethnic group has started long ago as they claimed they came at Northern Arakan with the first Muslim group in the ninth century but they have been subjected to persecution by the local Buddhist monks and greedy Myanmar government who is refusing their citizenship since the 1980s.⁴⁵ Myanmar has been trying to protect its business with China through persecuting these Rohingya ever since the project started and

44 Aung Shin, "Second Gas Column Discovered in the Bay of Bengal," *The Myanmar Times*, February 14, 2016, <https://www.mmmtimes.com/business/18976-second-gas-column-discovered-in-the-bay-of-bengal.html> p-all.

45 Jobair Alam, "The Current Rohingya Crisis in Myanmar in Historical Perspective," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 39, no. 1 (January 2, 2019): 1–25, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2019.1575560> p..14.

China is supporting Myanmar merely to protect its own investment and maintain their Silk Road plan which is also through the Rakhine state.⁴⁶

It must be mentioned here that Myanmar is the only ASEAN (Association of South East Nations) country here who shares a border with India. India is also looking for extending its land and sea-based transit to all ASEAN countries as well as access to southern China sea which would be an opportunity to expand its business with South East and East Asian countries.⁴⁷ Myanmar, on the other hand, has a large market in India for its agricultural crops and fish which avail them earn millions of dollars. Myanmar has another geographical importance in the region which might affect China's emerging economy, as the region is vulnerable to smuggling and terrorism.⁴⁸ The Middle East and Arab countries have remained silent while only Turkey has come forward since the August of 2017 with their relief and medical support for the Rohingya and also presented the crisis as genocide before the United Nations.⁴⁹

Conclusion

What has happened at Rakhine State in Myanmar? The United Nations has expressed a clear warning after its investigation is concluded as genocide might have taken place but the other countries have remained silent to the crisis even the International Criminal Court, ICC has no jurisdiction over there since Myanmar does not recognise it.⁵⁰ It is not a good sign because no one seems to be responding to the world's worst humanitarian crisis in time. However, being an over populated and limited resourceful country, Bangladesh has proven its generosity by providing shelter and support to those displaced people.⁵¹ But the problem seems to be remained unsolved as Myanmar did not show any sign of taking their people back no time soon.⁵²

46 Michele PENNA, "How China Has Used Myanmar's Rohingya Crisis to Its Advantage," *World Politics Review*, January 3, 2018, <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/23901/how-china-has-used-myanmar-s-rohingya-crisis-to-its-advantage>. p-all

47 K. YHOME, "The Burma Roads," *Asian Survey* 55, no. 6 (2015): 1217–40, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26364333>. p.1217.

48 Muhammad Shahruckh SHAHNAWAZ, "China and South Asia: Threats, Strategies, Cooperation and Expectations," *Pakistan Horizon* 64, no. 2 (2011): 65–80, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24711178>. p.69

49 Editor, "The Economy... the Hidden Side behind the Rohingya Muslim Crisis – Rawabt Center." p-all

50 Simon TISDALL, "World's Awkward Silence over Rohingya Genocide Warnings," *The Guardian*, January 3, 2018, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/03/worlds-awkward-silence-over-rohingya-genocide-warnings>. p-all

51 BSS, "PM Hailed as 'Mother of Humanity': Shajahan | The Asian Age Online, Bangladesh," *The Asian Age*, October 4, 2017, <http://dailyasianage.com/news/88866/pm-hailed-as-mother-of-humanity-shajahan>. p-all.

52 Bayes AHMED et al., "Humanitarian Disaster for Rohingya Refugees: Impending Natural Hazards and Worsening Public Health Crises," *The Lancet Global Health* 6, no. 5 (May 1, 2018): e487–88, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(18\)30125-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(18)30125-6). p. e487.

Bangladesh, on the other hand, cannot support this large number of populations for long as the local people are going to run out of their patience soon and the Rohingya would try to live free outside of their camp for food and better life. Only a handful of countries and organisations like the UN and EU have been donating and taking care of these people, however that is not sufficient enough for a long time period. As a result, major global players have to take over the situation and force Myanmar to take back Rohingyas. Previously, back in 1991, Bangladesh faced the exodus as well due to the massive rape and torture of the adolescent girls, later with the help of UNHCR voluntary repatriation had been tried but had to be stopped because of Myanmar's abuse.⁵³ The effort did not work after all. Therefore, secure repatriation or safe return of the Rohingya has become another issue for the UN and Bangladesh.

In the meantime, the Rohingya refugees have been facing ultimate crisis in the camps as their number has increased enormously which has already endangered women's privacy and their safety inside the camp, due to the increase in the number of petty offences⁵⁴ as well as with the help of local profit makers they are getting out of the camp and trying to migrate to different districts and countries. In addition to this issue, the host communities are becoming impatient as their land and market are almost occupied by the Rohingya as this has made their life more critical and unbearable. Due to the over demand in the market, the prices of all items of vegetables and foods have also increased. Employment opportunities are not sufficient, price hikes in the daily markets, exposure to water born diseases etc. have forced the migrants to involve in the criminal activities. Drug related crimes have already been increased in the area. For cooking, the Rohingya have been using firewood for which they have destroyed the forest areas of Cox's Bazaar which also pose an environmental threat for the area.

Considering all the facts and data, it is easily comprehensible that the condition of Rohingya people is getting worse. They need immediate support for humanitarian as well as social service which is also getting weak as time passes by.⁵⁵ The world leaders have to take a decision early in order to protect these people and also help recover the hosting communities as they are getting victimised as well. Only mutual understanding or simple agreement

53 Rita MANSHANDA, "Gender Conflict and Displacement: Contesting 'Infantilisation' of Forced Migrant Women," *Economic and Political Weekly* 39, no. 37 (2004): 4179–86, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4415535>. p. 4180.

54 Iftekharul BASHAR, "New Challenges for Bangladesh," *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 4, no. 11 (2012): 10–13, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26351100>. p.10-11

55 Abhishek BHATIA et al., "The Rohingya in Cox's Bazar," *Health and Human Rights* 20, no. 2 (2018): 105–22, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26542064> p. 107.

with Myanmar is not going to work as previous attempts have failed for multiple times. Strong, continuous monitored and controlled repatriation could help resolve the problem but before that the Rohingya have to be legally recognised as Myanmar citizens by their government for which a regional oversight committee could pressure the authority to do it as early as possible. Neighbouring countries have to act responsibly in such as kind of situation. A well-developed international framework in line with the law of United Nations has to monitor the whole process continuously and if needed have to take mighty action against the Myanmar government and restore regional peace and security.

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Annex

Table 1: Sectoral Growth Rate of GDP at Constant Prices, 2015-16 to 2018-19 (provisional)				
Industrial origin sector	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Agriculture	2.79	2.97	4.19	3.51
Agriculture and Forestry	1.79	1.96	3.47	2.58
Fishing	6.11	6.23	6.37	6.29
Industry	11.09	10.22	12.06	13.02
Mining and Quarrying	12.84	8.89	7.00	7.39
Natural gas and Crude petroleum	11.77	0.34	2.25	3.11
Other mining & coal	14.42	21.19	12.66	12.02
Manufacturing	11.69	10.97	13.40	14.73
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	13.33	8.46	9.19	10.57
Electricity	14.20	9.22	10.19	11.57
Gas	9.91	0.28	2.20	2.85
Water	7.40	11.09	5.66	7.17
Construction	8.56	8.77	9.92	9.63
Service	6.25	6.69	6.39	6.50
Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles, Motorcycles and Personal and Household Goods	6.50	7.37	7.45	7.70
Hotel and Restaurants	6.98	7.13	7.28	7.43
Transport, Storage and Communication	6.08	6.76	6.58	6.88
Land Transport	6.28	7.06	6.72	6.93
Water transport	3.20	4.10	3.50	3.72
Air transport	1.48	2.79	2.74	6.04
Support transport services, storage	5.19	6.40	9.58	7.20
Post and Telecommunications	6.81	6.98	6.53	7.56
Financial Intermediations	7.74	9.12	7.90	8.32
Monetary intermediation (Banks)	8.85	9.95	8.51	9.42
Insurance	0.54	2.05	1.63	-2.51
Other financial auxiliaries	4.54	9.06	9.05	8.29
Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities	4.47	4.80	4.98	5.15
Public Administration and Defence	11.43	9.15	8.47	6.45
Education	11.71	11.35	7.01	6.50
Health And Social Works	7.54	7.63	7.02	9.15
Community, Social and Personal Services	3.30	3.62	3.65	3.69
GDP at constant market price	7.11	7.28	7.86	8.13
Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, http://bbs.portal.gov.bd				

Table 2. Per capita GDP and GNI at Current Prices, 2015-16 to 2018-19 Provisional (p)

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19(p)
GDP (M.Tk.)	17,328,637	19,758,154	22,504,793	25,361,770
GNI (M.Tk.)	18,326,749	20,607,164	23,531,077	26,497,865
Population (Million)	159.89	161.75	163.65	165.55
Per capita GDP (In Tk.)	108,378	122,152	137,518	153,197
Per capita GNI (In Tk.)	114,621	127,401	143,789	160,060
Exchange rate (Taka per US\$)	78.27	79.12	82.10	83.86
Per capita GDP (In US \$)	1,385	1,544	1,675	1,827
Per capita GNI (In US \$)	1,465	1,610	1,751	1,909

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, <http://bbs.portal.gov.bd>

Table 3: Cost Estimation for Hosting Rohingya

Institute	Estimation	Time Span
PRI	\$800 million - \$1 billion	1 Year
SANEM	\$1 billion - \$1.12 billion	1 Year
CPD	\$882 million	10 months

Source: Dhaka Tribune and CPD Research

	Core Assumption	Cost for Bangladesh	Timeline
Scenario 1	1. No Rohingya repatriation happens until August 2018. 2. Bangladesh pays 50% of the total fund requirements. 3. Shelter along with Water and Sanitation structures from last period remains usable.	\$167.8 million	March 2018 - August 2018
Scenario 2	1. No Rohingya repatriation happens until February 2019. 2. Bangladesh pays 50% of the total fund requirements. 3. Half of the shelter along with water, sanitation and hygiene structures need to be rebuilt as these areas are natural disaster prone.	\$240 million	September 2018 - February 2019

Source: "Implications of the Rohingya Crisis for Bangladesh" by CPD