

Long-Term Global Implications of the Rohingya Crisis

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On a global level, the Rohingya crisis is a major setback when it comes to upholding the message of human rights and equality as well as the right to live and right to integrity for all human beings, indiscriminately. The Rohingya refugee crisis on its own is quickly becoming a prominent example of where international organisations of human rights and conflict resolution have failed millions of people belonging to the largest displaced minority group.

Understandably so, it is easier to be said than done, considering the Rohingya crisis has several powerful regional and global giants behind it, subverting any semblance to a resolution for their own power play. Regardless, a refugee crisis such as this, where a host country like Bangladesh has to bear the responsibility and burden of catering to such a large population outside of maintaining its own overpopulated land, should have been solved by then, considering even the commendable response by the Government of Bangladesh is still falling short.

Apart from the image of humanitarianism being tarnished for the sake of geopolitical influence of regional giants, the Rohingya Crisis has several other global implications. Any potential implications, medium to long-term, are highly sensitive to one crucial and complex consideration; the length of stay of the Rohingya people in Bangladesh. Repatriation is a significant concern for the hosting country, but the need to ensure a secure and dignified return for refugees is universally regarded, so no alternative to

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the very best option for the refugees will be considered. Hence, full repatriation tends to be, under current circumstances, a remote prospect at best.

Recently, Bangladesh warned that if the Rohingya issue is not resolved immediately, "regional and international security would certainly be jeopardised"¹, requesting Philippines to exert more political pressure over Myanmar along with other ASEAN members, mentioning the close ties of Myanmar and Philippines could help leverage the repatriation decisions.

The repatriation should be regarded as a priority for all international stakeholders. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina has said, "It is a responsibility of every human being to stand beside the distressed humanity... it would be inhumane if we don't stand beside the Rohingyas at the time of their distress,"² after the discussion in the UN General Assembly session in New York that year in 2017. She also said, "The global community will have to continue their pressure on the Myanmar government to take back the forcibly displaced Rohingyas from Bangladesh,"³ the next year. If we can expect their stay to keep expanding, an ulterior option would be to start shifting the refugees to a separate, more secured location that can house and give space to them better than the current congested camps can provide. The camp in Bhashan Char can

¹ Global security to be at stake if Rohingya crisis left unresolved: Dhaka. (2020). Retrieved October 18, 2020, from The Daily Star website: <https://www.thedailystar.net/country/news/global-security-be-stake-if-rohingya-crisis-left-unresolved-dhaka-1980201>

² 5-point proposal could resolve Rohingya crisis: PM. (2017). Retrieved October 12, 2020, from The Daily Star website: <https://www.thedailystar.net/rohingya-crisis/5-point-proposal-could-resolve-myanmar-rohingya-crisis-says-bangladesh-prime-minister-sheikh-hasina-1477306>

³ Sattar, Z. (2019). Rohingya crisis and the host community. Retrieved October 12, 2020, from The Financial Express website: <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/reviews/rohingya-crisis-and-the-host-community-1564498784>

be quite a sigh of relief in this regard, but it still should not be considered a permanent solution.

The financial implication is also another issue. Globally, while the conflict resolution still needs some concrete response, there have been plenty of conflict management attempts, most quite successful at keeping the Rohingya people in somewhat of a good living condition, ensuring their safety. But the financial implication of it all is starting to become a bane for the international organisations and donors. As the length of repatriation procedure keeps getting shifted and the stay of the refugees in Bangladesh keeps expanding, the cost of supporting the refugees and the host community as well keeps increasing. Even if we consider only the refugee population, the cost of food, shelter, education and other basic needs would be a minimum of US\$1,219 per refugee per year which translates to US\$3.2 billion to US\$11.6 billion in total requirement of over the period of the Rohingya refugee stay over at Bangladesh⁴. With the refugee crisis becoming a protracted conflict more and more by the years that pass, the challenge of sustaining donors' interest to support these persecuted and helpless people will become more difficult and at some point, the resources will begin to dwindle. In fact, even within the first year of the crisis in 2017, the donor response in terms of financial assistance had been quite slow, so it is hard to stay optimistic at this point. And given the situation with the coronavirus pandemic and the worldwide economic recession, how much can we expect the donors to provide?

⁴ UNDP. (2018). Impacts of the Rohingya Refugee Influx on Host Communities. Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/Impacts%20of%20the%20Rohingya%20Refugee%20Influx%20on%20Host%20Communities.pdf

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It is without a doubt, a difficult conflict to resolve. Considering how internally divided Myanmar is, with their numerous insurgent groups and internal violent conflicts among their heterogeneous ethnic population, we cannot expect a unanimous decision from Myanmar agreeable by everyone and beneficial for the Rohingya people anytime soon. So the implications therefore remain a threat ready to become more than just implications, turning into major challenges for not just the host country, but globally.