

Conflict Potential of the Rohingya People in Bangladesh and Beyond

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Abstract

The article addresses how Myanmar's Rohingya conflict could generate a potential for conflict within the borders of Bangladesh and beyond. The conflict in Myanmar due to the Rohingyas being deprived of their national citizenship had led to the mass exodus in 2017 to Bangladeshi land and the subsequent conflict in the host place. It was referred to various situations, including disputes, killing, abduction, and tensions between the refugees and host people. Based on existing theories of 'exporting conflict' such as displacing conflict and spill over effect of ethnic conflict, the article attempted to show how the Rohingya conflict originated in Myanmar lead to serious conflicts taking place in Bangladesh. The theoretical basis proposed in the article had been supported with reliable secondary sources of information and published expert opinions on the contemporary situation of the temporary Rohingya settlements in Bangladesh with regards to their sheltering, refugee management, and progress towards their repatriation process to Myanmar. The article argued that Myanmar's civil conflict had spilled over into Bangladesh's borders due to a sequence of events starting from when Myanmar's civil conflict erupted from its National Citizenship Act. Findings suggest that the Myanmar conflict has been displaced to Bangladesh through many refugee settlements that puts Bangladesh's population in midst of a host of issues concerning livelihood, safety, and security. This has been done while touching upon Bangladesh's position as a host country to millions of Rohingya refugees and shouldering issues already stemming from the temporary shelter of Rohingya people within its borders.

Keywords: Rohingya, Myanmar, displacement, conflict, Bangladesh

Introduction

Bangladesh is now hosting the highest number of over 1,1 million Rohingya¹ people who have been brutally tortured and persecuted by the Myanmar army (Bakali & Wasty, 2020; Alam, 2019). This large number of displaced people are living in temporary relocation facilities in the Cox's Bazar region of Bangladesh, with additional measures for their relocation taking place in the Bhasan Char Island near the coast of the Bay of Bengal (Islam et al., 2021). Effectively stateless, the development of the Rohingya refugees² in Bangladesh over the years may prove to be critical for Bangladesh as a host country for these displaced people. With its shortage of resources and high unemployment rates, and refusing to become full signatories to the international conventions for protecting refugees, Bangladesh is in a unique and complex position with its displaced Rohingya population (Chowdhury, 2019; Bhattacharya & Biswas, 2020). Indeed, the Rohingya people have not been idle within their camps in Cox's Bazar. Their high birth rates and long duration of stay within the borders of Bangladesh have led to entire generations being raised in the camps (Milton et al. 2017). Moreover, their efforts to persist and mobilize to regain what they have lost have led to sprawling economies being born within these settlements as they cope with the reality of their longterm statelessness (Crabtree, 2010), and not always of the lawful kind of economies. Drug trafficking has spiralled to the point that this now bustling economy is threatening to destabilize the Cox's Bazar region (Banerjee, 2019). Moreover, Rohingya women are falling victims to organized large-scale trafficking networks with connections in nearby countries. These trafficking syndicates have spawned to take advantage of helpless Rohingya women with false promises of having better lives in countries such as Thailand, India, and Malaysia, and have even promised as such in their home country Myanmar, where Rohingyas have still not been guaranteed proper human rights assurances (Routray, 2019).

When these factors are taken into account, other issues such as how this growing population of stateless people can affect Bangladesh as a host country, in the long run, can also influence the existing problems of aid delivery and healthcare assurances for the Rohingya population. Although it cannot be denied that ensuring proper aid to the Rohingya taking refuge in the country is of significant importance to Bangladesh as well as the broader international community until their repatriation succeeds, it is not the only set of issues that require attention. Moreover, the potential for conflict from hosting this particular stateless community may prove to be detrimental to Bangladesh in the long run or even in the near future, as the reportedly high criminality of the Rohingya population in Bangladesh may indicate (Uddin, 2015). With rising environmental costs in the back and refugee management costs and housing logistical dilemmas at the forefront, Bangladesh may be at further risk from

¹ The Rohingya population in Bangladesh have not been given an official refugee status, since Bangladesh is not an official signatory to the international instruments that protect the rights of refugees. Instead, their official status is officially stated by the government of Bangladesh as Forcefully Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN) (Roy, 2020).

² Although the government of Bangladesh does not officially recognize the Rohingya people taking shelter within its borders as refugees, they are mentioned as such in this article for strictly academic purposes.

spill over effects from Myanmar's own civil strife (Farzana, 2021). The article seeks to bring attention to this particular side of the Rohingya refugee crisis, which is how Myanmar's Rohingya conflict can generate a significant potential for conflict within the borders of Bangladesh. Briefly touching upon the background of the Rohingya exodus and its reasons, the article goes over the sheltering of the Rohingya people in Bangladesh and the contemporary status of their post-settlement situation in Bangladesh. The article provides a review of relevant literature from reliable sources to discuss theories of conflict displacement, civil war and spill over effects, a concern of neighbouring states of a country's ongoing civil war, refugee flow, refugee sheltering and management, refugee repatriation, and the crisis and stresses a host state experiences from hosting refugee populations. Afterwards, the article critically analyses Bangladesh's position as a host country for Rohingya people to discuss areas of Bangladesh that is affected due to this position and the conflict potential that this position entails for the country. A summary analysis providing a bird's eye view of the critical aspects proceeds the article with some concluding remarks.

Rohingya Settlement in Bangladesh: Background and Effects

The Rohingya people principally reside in the Arakan province, also known as the Rakhine state of Myanmar from 788 to 810 AD (Rahman, 2010). The Rohingyas are predominantly Muslim descendants of immigrants from the Middle East and later of Bengalis during the fifteenth to the seventeenth century (Milton et al., 2017). It has been argued that the British occupation before Myanmar's independence in 1948 is the precursor to the Rohingya crisis that is prevalent in Bangladesh and in some other parts of the world today. With the 'divide and rule' policy of the British colonial powers, the seeds of dissent were sown in Myanmar's fragmented ethnic diaspora of predominantly Buddhist Burmese populations (i.e., over 87%) (Ansar, 2020). After the independence of Burma, the military-backed government used their legislative authority to fully remove the citizenship rights of the Rohingya minority people in 1982. The infamous Myanmar Citizenship Act of this year officially recognizes 135 ethnic groups as part of Myanmar's ethnic population, and this list does not include the Rohingyas (Parashar & Alam, 2019). This has led to the apparent stateless status of the Rohingya population and has given Myanmar's military apparatus free reign to violently prosecute this community in their own ancestral lands. The Rohingyas faced persecution at the level seen in systematic genocides, with first their movements restricted by laws and legal obstructions, and their identity compromised via mandatory identification checks at designated checkpoints in the Rakhine region, and fines and property confiscation from their now compromised identification documents (Uddin, 2019).

The flow of Rohingya refugees to Bangladesh started in the 1970s despite them arriving in larger groups in the early 1990s. The cause behind the first influx of Rohingya refugees that had led to around 200,000 coming into Bangladesh due to oppression, discrimination, violence, and forced labour practices by the Myanmar authorities (Uddin, 2019). Since then, from around 600,000 Rohingya refugee people in Bangladesh during 2017 (Milton et al., 2017) has swelled up to an estimated 800,000 Rohingyas or more in the following year (Martin, Margesson, & Vaughn, 2018), with the latest exodus in 2017 alone bringing in 700,000

Rohingyas (Rahman et al., 2020). Now with over 1,1 million Rohingyas taking refuge in Bangladesh as of 2020, it has become increasingly difficult for the country to assist this growing population (Islam, Inan, & Islam, 2020).

The Rohingya people are taking shelter in camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf areas of Bangladesh, located in the Cox's Bazar district in the South-East corner of the country (Imtiaz, 2018). Bangladesh has been heavily involved in properly sheltering this large Rohingya population within its borders and seeing to their necessities with helps from international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) despite not being directly affiliated with the international legal instruments such as the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees or its protocols (Milton et al., 2017; Mia et al., 2021).

The presence of a large number of Rohingyas has led to many security complications for the GoB and the Rohingya population in the form of human rights violations by organized crime groups, a thriving black market economy of narcotics, contrabands, and Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) (Taufiq, 2019), and health complication for the Rohingyas in the forms of malnutrition, outbreaks of contagious diseases, declining material health, and poor family planning (Chowdhury et al., 2018; Islam & Nuzhath, 2018; Islam et al., 2020). The initial acceptance of the local host community has waned at present, with tensions escalating in various issues ranging from speedy environmental degradation, health risks, challenges concerning national security and negative impacts on the economy, food security, employment, and tourism of Bangladesh (Mia et al., 2021). The population problems of the Rohingya population, and the criminal activities involving drugs and human trafficking of the Rohingyas alongside the resource competition has further contributed to insecurity and conflict between the Rohingya people and the host community (Banerjee, 2019). This insecurity and conflict can be considered as a precursor to further changes in the relationship among these communities in the near future, with lasting changes in bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Myanmar. The exodus of Rohingyas to Bangladesh is a direct result of the conflict taking place within Myanmar, and the literature can be perused to effectively argue that the potential for further and more intense results of this conflict remains to be seen in Bangladesh.

Existing literature on migration and displacement induced conflict

Migration and displacement induced conflict in the host place has been a nascent topic with the increasing number of migrants and displaced people across the world. Thus, different theories are used to analyse how conflict of the country may affect the neighbouring one through population migration and spill over effects. The review of literature concerns primarily findings related to the theories of conflict displacement and civil war spill over effects. The discussion moves on to neighbouring state's concerns regarding an ongoing civil war in a country. The discussion brings the context of Bangladesh and its position as a neighbouring country to Myanmar.

Displacing the Conflict Theory

Displacement as a result of conflict has been studied for decades and is prominently known as 'conflict-induced displacement' (Swain, 1996; Muggah, 2000). Established literature on the topic agrees that the threat created from war or outbreak of violence can cause people to make difficult decision to leave their homes behind and move on to elsewhere (Edwards, 2009). There is debate on the minimum scale and scope of a conflict to force people to migrate away from their homes, but studies show that violence from either government or rebel forces can force migration (Davenport, Moore, & Poe, 2003). Large-*n* analyses have also shown that economic opportunity in origin and destination countries are related to forced migration if measured in terms of economic development and poverty levels. There have been mixed results for other factors that force people to migrate outside their country of origin, but it suggests that people tend to migrate from their country of origin only when their threat to life outweighs the economic security they lose by leaving their homes and localities, and the attachment and belongingness they feel towards their homes (Adhikari, 2012). For the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar, the causes of migration, according to the records of activities of Myanmar's military wing in the Arakan region, involve state-sponsored violence and oppression, and severe threats to the lives of Rohingyas in the region.

Civil Wars and Spill Over Effect

Civil war in a country and the resulting possible spill over effects onto other countries have been discussed extensively in the literature on civil wars and their impacts. An empirical study regarding what types of civil wars tend to spill over to other countries (i.e., to spill over international boundaries) by Bosker and de Ree (2014) strongly indicates that only civil wars involving ethnic conflicts (i.e., ethnic wars) have such a tendency (Salehyan, 2010; Bosker & de Ree, 2014). From the point of Myanmar's civil war, and the ethnic divide that the National Citizenship Act has legally brought to the forefront, this is particularly relevant. Another finding regarding the spill over effects of a country's civil war indicates that neighbouring states are more likely to increase their military expenditure as a result of an erupting or ongoing civil war in a neighbouring state (Phillips, 2014). This is explained as resulting from a perception of a possible future threat by the neighbouring states embroiled in a civil war. Bangladesh's military expenditure, on the other hand, has alternated between slight rises and declines in their military expenditure as a percentage of the country's GDP in the years after 2010 (SIPRI, 2021). The latest military expenditure of the country in 2020 is also less than the previous year (i.e., 2019). Another finding regarding the spill over effects of civil wars indicates that states that are fragile (i.e., when the state has the weak capacity and weak state legitimacy and is unable to deliver the fundamental state functions to its people) are more prone to be affected by civil wars in neighbouring states, as is seen for countries in Africa which are deemed as fragile states. The effects on these neighbouring fragile states have been found to be even greater than the state where the civil conflict originated (Dunne & Tian, 2019). A very relevant findings in the case of spill over effects of conflicts suggest that influx of refugees and intentional (i.e., 'artificial') separation of ethnic groups explain a part of the

spill over effect of civil wars in neighbouring states observed in Sub-Saharan Africa (Carmignani & Kler, 2016). These spill over effects are primarily measured in terms of economic changes and triggering civil wars in neighbouring states. This leads to the discussion on if states should be concerned of other effects besides a full-fledged civil war or serious economic problems if a neighbouring state is embroiled in a civil war.

Civil War and Neighboring States' Concerns

The findings by Carmignani and Kler (2016) also observe that in the Middle East, Nigeria, Kenya and Somalia, spill over effects can be in the form of terrorism and/or other forms of violence. These instances of violence can lead to social destabilization in neighbouring states even if they are not directly classified as civil wars. This has been reflected in another work on the spill over effects of the Syrian War where the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) threat and the changing nature of the Kurdish insurgency led to political and security issues for neighbouring Turkey. The open support of the Turkish government of the Syrian oppositional regime, and the armed insurgency of ISIS and the Democratic Union Party (PYD or Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat)-Peoples Protection Units (Yekîneyên Parastina Gel or YPG)/Kurdistan Workers Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê or PKK) led to heavy political, economic and security problems for Turkey (Dal, 2016). This is very pertinent to the concerns of Bangladesh in terms of the ongoing civil conflict in Myanmar, a crucial starting point of which is the segregation and denial of citizenship of a segment of Myanmar's population. This concern stems from the notion that its spill over effects would hamper international peace and security. Not only has the Rohingya crisis led to more than 700.000 displaced Rohingyas fleeing to Bangladesh's border after 2017, but fighting in the Kokang region in 2015 forced about 30.000 refugees to enter China while Thailand had still been hosting 120.000 war-victims by that year (Belkania, 2020). For Bangladesh, the civil war in Myanmar has already become costly as it manages a very large portion of now what it terms as Forcefully Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN). The issue of whether third party states intervene when a civil war is ongoing in a state within a particular region has been looked into by Kathman (2011) where it has been found that only when countries and their interests are linked to the region where a state is experiencing a civil war or to that state itself, they are more likely to intervene. This is different to the concern of neighbouring states wherein the interveners are third parties not directly adjacent or close to the state/s that experience civil wars. The article shows that third parties are increasingly likely to intervene in states experiencing a civil war when the effects of the war threaten to spill over to neighbouring states and threaten regional destabilization and to that end, threaten the regional interests of the third parties (Kathman, 2011). This indicates how civil wars, being international events, concern entities outside the immediate regional proximity of the state/s experiencing a civil war precisely because they can have a tendency to disperse and spill over to its surrounding region and affect parties outside of the said region. The logical framework, as seen in Figure 1, can be formed for analysing the conflict potential in Bangladesh due to the Rohingya presence.

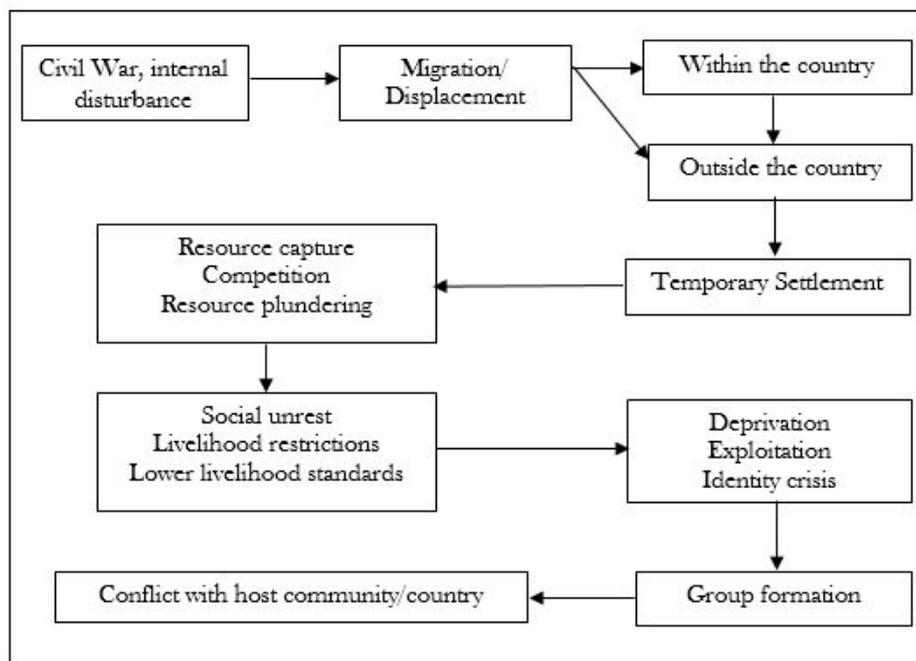


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

Source: Developed by the author by reviewing literature

The framework starts with the onset of civil war and internal disturbance within a state. This leads to migration and/or displacement either within the borders of a country where the civil war manifested, or it can take place beyond its borders (Reuveny, 2007; O'Malley, 2018; Bohnet, Cottier, & Hug, 2018). When it is the latter, these displaced populations take refuge in host countries. For survival, these displaced populations, sometimes recognized as refugee populations in the host countries settle in, capture resources and compete for them with the host population as they become increasingly scarce (Homer-Dixon, 2010). This leads to social unrest, restrictions on livelihood for both the displaced and the nearby host community, and decreasing livelihood standards as resources become scarce and market prices increase with the decreasing supply (Homer-Dixon, 2010; Ghimire, Ferreira, & Dorfman, 2015). This leads to the livelihood standards where the displaced populations reside to drop for both the displaced and host communities. The social unrest can stem from these disruptions in livelihood, or they can arise from differences in ideology, origin, or any form of difference that can be seen as a distinct feature of any of the displaced or host communities (Khal, 2006; Amusan, Abegunde, & Akinyemi, 2017). Furthermore, such changes in the host society can then lead to deprivation of resources and livelihood opportunities for both displaced and host communities (Brzoska & Fröhlich, 2016). Moreover, this deprivation combined with the exploitation of the displaced populations by interest groups can lead to an identity crisis where distinct in-groups and out-groups can take shape between the displaced and host communities, even where initial differences were minimal and the initial responses from the host community were positive (Salehyan, 2010). The result is a conflict with the host community and/or country depending on the level of incompatibility between the two

communities. The article has used some important aspects of this framework, such as competition over resources and conflict, livelihood and conflict relationship, and deprivation and conflict formation, for answering the research question. The presence of many the Rohingyas have already put pressure on resources, jobs, and the environment which have strong connections and potentials for conflict formation in the host areas in Bangladesh.

The available data on the situation in Bangladesh hosting the Rohingya people will be analysed in various sections, starting with how the situation changed over time for the host country after the displacement.

Methods

The article is written based on qualitative methodology using mixed data of secondary information and published opinion and arguments of the relevant experts. Secondary information, opinion, and interviews of the relevant experts published in discussion forums and webinars have been scrutinized and assessed for constructing the arguments. During the COVID-19 pandemic, seminars and symposiums over the issue of the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh have been organised using online platform. Some of the seminars are available online for public use. For example, the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) and Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD) have made available the opinion and interviews of the participants of seminars online. The policy briefs have also been published in their websites. The article uses the published opinion and interviews of the participants and experts in various seminars organized by the relevant organisations in Bangladesh. Such methods are suitable to collect data and information regarding the topic of security and conflict potential of the Rohingya issue during the pandemic period. Moreover, relevant literature has been assessed for constructing a framework and supporting the arguments. Moreover, different newspapers, articles and opinions of experts published in periodicals have also been examined for analysing how the Rohingya conflict in Myanmar has the potential to generate a new form of conflict in Bangladesh after the mass exodus in 2017.

Analysis

Analysis of conflict potentials in Bangladesh

The crises and stresses experienced by people in the host place can be separated into the experiences of the Rohingya population and the experiences of the host population. The experiences of the Rohingya population in the host place range from issues of livelihood and economy to socio-political and security issues. The conflict potentials of the Rohingya refugees to the host society is a complex issue that can be illustrated based on existing literature, findings, perceptions of the experts and media reports.

Non-traditional security issues (livelihood, health, and environment)

The Rohingya people in Bangladesh receive aid from government subsidized programs and relief from aid agencies such as CARE, IRC, UNHCR, and WASH, among many others. These combined efforts to support the Rohingyas in the host country are often inadequate to meet their basic needs (Karin et al., 2020). These people then look to other economic activities to gather enough resources and income to compensate for their gap in basic necessities. The livelihood strategies that the Rohingya population engage in for income generation involve engaging in day labour, selling products in local markets, receiving the aid of friends and relatives of registered camps (for the many unregistered Rohingyas), and receiving remittances from family and relatives abroad (as a study shows that 39% of the households have at least one member abroad in a third country), selling relief in exchange for money or other necessities, and a limited form of self-employment via services (Crabtree, 2010; Rieger, 2020; Momem, 2021). These alternative methods and channels of income have the side-effect of being particularly uncertain and unsustainable, leading to long delays between work, businesses, and receiving money and help from relatives (Momem, 2021).

Moreover, the livelihood options for the unregistered Rohingya people (which are well over 200,000 of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh) primarily consist of working with the forest resources in the hilly areas of Cox's Bazar, which contributes greatly to deforestation and the destruction of the local ecosystem, thereby exposing the Rohingya and the host community to extreme weather events (Mowla & Hossain, 2021; Rahman, 2021). Furthermore, the overall unsanitary conditions within the cramped camps have generally been prone to contagious diseases, and the COVID-19 pandemic that began in 2019 hit the area quite severely. The drop in overall maternal health and child nutrition has been alarming among the Rohingya population at the onslaught of this recent pandemic, notwithstanding how it also greatly affected the livelihoods of the Rohingya people in the process, thus leaving the populations vulnerable (Hossain, 2021).

The host community alongside the Rohingya refugee population feel the decrease of food and the drop in employment opportunities. Nearly half of the families in the host community have suffered from a decrease in income (i.e., 49,5%) (Bhatia, et al., 2018; Zaman et al., 2020). It is considered that there are still a few and limited field studies conducted on the host community in Cox's Bazar regarding the impact upon their collective lives for hosting the Rohingya population. However, all previous research share a collective picture, which there are both positive and negative outcomes due to the Rohingya influx and their subsequent refuge in the host place, and that the positive impacts are outweighed by the negative impact on the host community from the Rohingya population in the host place. Businesses, hotels, students working part-time jobs and people who own houses in the region for rent are part of the host community that have benefitted from the Rohingya influx and their refuge (Siddique, 2019). On the other hand, low-wage labourers and educational institutions are part of the host community that have been negatively impacted from the Rohingya influx and their refuge. Moreover, shortage of food and daily goods such as fish and vegetables, shortage of land for housing, deforestation of hilly areas in the region, a lack of low-skill jobs for the local population, and the blanket security restrictions imposed upon

the people in the area due to the rampant crime and drug trade, have led to a decrease in the quality of life for the host community significantly (Bhatia, et al., 2018; Zaman, Sammonds, Ahmed, & Rahman, 2020).

Furthermore, the presence of the Rohingya population in the host place has led to complications in the overall health of the host community in the case of a significant spread of contagious diseases such as COVID-19 (Lopez-Pena et al., 2020), water-borne diseases such as cholera and diarrhoea (Faruque et al., 2021) among the general host population, and non-communicable diseases such as heart diseases, arthritis, diabetes among the elderly (i.e., geriatric) people within the host community (Begum et al., 2021). The widespread of these diseases have been attributed to the decrease in the quality of life for people in the Cox's Bazar, which is a direct result of the changes that have started from the Rohingya influx over the years (Siddique, 2019; Lopez-Pena et al., 2020).

National security

The national security issues that Myanmar's conflict has caused for Bangladesh as a host country can lead to the host country adopting drastic measures to protect its national interests. The organized crime groups that have been increasingly active in the Cox's Bazar region thrive because of the dense population within the Rohingya camps. The black market of small arms and light weapons, contraband, and narcotics have led to a sprawling black-market economy in the area. Although the Rohingya refugee population in Bangladesh are in many ways becoming victims of such organized crime, the host country can see it as an issue that requires unavoidable preventive measures on a large scale. The consequences of guerrilla warfare conducted by organized rebel forces operating in Bangladesh's Rohingya camps can decrease the credibility of Bangladesh as a host country while giving avenues for Myanmar to indefinitely prolong its Rohingya rehabilitation measures, thus raising the costs upon Bangladesh for hosting the Rohingya population. For the Rohingya community, this can lead to a forced dependence of organized criminal groups and black-market economies for their livelihoods and survival. As succinctly mentioned in a pertinent discussion between people of three think tanks:

“Rohingyas are highly vulnerable to transnational crimes like human and drug trafficking, radicalization, and other dangerous ventures which could generate trickle-down effects on the regional security status,” (Azad, 2021)³.

If the host country, in this case, utilizes its security forces in a more significant capacity to counter the security deficits in the Cox's Bazar and its surrounding region, the resulting

³ This quote is from the segment delivered by Major General Md Emdad Ul Bari, ndc, psc, te, Director of the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS). The other two think tanks from the cited seminar video are the Bangabandhu Centre for Bangladesh Studies, Canada (BCBS), and the Center for Genocide Studies (CGS), Bangladesh.

scenario may prove to be detrimental for the local host community as well as the Rohingya community, while deteriorating Bangladesh-Myanmar relations to a significant degree.

Social Cohesion

The social cohesion between the host and Rohingya community in Cox's Bazar have already begun to deteriorate, particularly since the 2017 exodus. The worsening social cohesion can lead to an unwanted change in attitudes and behaviour from both the host and the Rohingya community in the region. The decreasing levels of trust from both communities as competitions for resources become more and more intense, can lead to increasing levels of dispute between the two communities. The security measures to prevent any catastrophic event in the region will lead to more stringent blanket security measures, which will only increase tension between the two communities in Cox's Bazar. Ellis et al. (2016) have explored the decreasing social cohesion due to refugee populations in a host state, and their findings indicate a concerning conclusion. The finding is consistent with previous research showing that exposure to violence and adversity was associated with greater support for both legal and illegal political activism (Ellis et al. 2016).

When these activities are linked with traumatic past events that have a lasting effect on the present conditions of the refugee populations, then a lack of progress in repatriation can worsen the social cohesion as the displaced populations become increasingly engaged in violent activism. If the host community sees the Rohingya population as being increasingly detrimental to the very well-being of the host community, it can lead to collective action from the host community to socially restrict the Rohingyas from any forms of opportunities for their livelihood. This in turn may result in a countermeasure where the alienated Rohingya community are forced to increasingly fall back on the unlawful channels of revenue generation with increasing support from the Rohingya community in Bangladesh as a whole. While this can be taken by the Rohingyas to prevent the possibilities of their collective exploitation by the host community, such a situation can only exacerbate the tensions in the host country.

Safety and security of the host community

The safety and security of the host community will be increasingly put in jeopardy as the security of the region deteriorates from the organized crime and unlawful drug and weapons trade. The host community's security can be viewed as an increasingly important case at the expense of the safety and security of the Rohingya refugee population. The lack of official refugee status of the Rohingya population may accelerate increasingly harsher security measures on the Rohingya population, but the lack of such measures can prove detrimental for the host community in return. With regards to this security risk, Major General Md Emdad Ul Bari, ndc, psc, te, Director of the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS), has mentioned that,

“Different reports said that the Rohingya have shown a tendency to flare up conflicts and threaten both social and national security at both transit and destination countries,” (Gazi Md Abul Kalam Azad, 2021).

If the host community does not see government interventions to raise the security of the region as satisfactory, then collective measures from the host community outside government involvement to make the region more secure (e.g., through the local government and law enforcement, active exclusion from income opportunities) can lead to civil unrest and a communal divide between the host and the Rohingya community in the region.

Impacts on natural resources

A reduction of natural resources in the form of deforestation and destruction of natural hilly terrain can lead to severe long terms negative consequences for the region of Cox's Bazar. Not only are events such as landslides and flash floods more common, but such extreme weather events along with cyclones and storm surges hit the area with increasing intensity. Such extreme weather events greatly decrease the quality of life with people from both the host and the Rohingya community losing their lives as a result. The reduction of forest resources can lead to a decrease in optimal weather for the host country while decreasing soil fertility and contributing to global warming in the region. Moreover, the destruction of hilly ecosystems as a result can lead to a decrease in endemic wildlife and fauna. The resource conflicts that can stem from this situation as natural resources become increasingly scarce in the area can have severe consequences for the overall stability of the region.

Conflict Potential of the Rohingya People in the South and South-East Asian Regions

The conflict potential of the Rohingya people and its widespread implications within the borders of Bangladesh have already been discussed. The discussion shows the enormous pressure it puts on the government of Bangladesh and its administration as well as on the lives of the citizens of Bangladesh. However, this has far reached consequences outside of its borders as well. The over 1,4 million Rohingya people living across the 34 camps in the Cox's Bazar area of Bangladesh can in time be a grave concern within the South and South-East Asian region.

It is to be noted that the Rohingya people in the camps of Cox's Bazar have frequently attempted to leave the confines of their camps and migrate to other countries, notably to Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. These journeys have often been taken via risky routes and more often via human traffickers (Routray, 2019). It does not only put the desperate Rohingyas themselves at risk, but also poses serious concern for the host countries they are moving to as the numbers of such migrants increase. Even around 10,000 Rohingya people have become a serious concern for the people in India, leading to social tensions among the local Indian and Rohingya populations (Basavapatna, 2018), and such numbers can be seen in these South-East Asian nations if this issue continues to be overlooked.

Moreover, the Rohingya have consistently shown to have a strong national identity, which becomes the reason that they continue to pursue insurgent endeavours to regain their place in their home country in Myanmar. These insurgent endeavours have taken place from the peripheral areas of Myanmar, involving a varied level of support from Rohingya people across the South and South-East Asian region (Fair, 2018). Although their efforts may be justified on moral grounds due to their continued long-standing oppression by Myanmar's government, the process itself compromises the countries that are hosting the Rohingya refugees and migrants. Through limiting the bilateral and multilateral negotiating capabilities of these host states in the long run by being indirectly implicated of hosting 'insurgents' (Chaijaroenwatana & Haque, 2020), host states can become compromised in international relations. This has already been observed in the case of Bangladesh and to a very limited extent in Thailand (Banerjee, 2019; Chaijaroenwatana & Haque, 2020).

Insurgent tendencies of the Rohingya populations in host countries can be seen as a very limited concern when compared to the social tensions their presence can create. As their populations continue to flee their country and to other states in South and South-East Asia, their stateless situation remains unresolved and pressures on Myanmar's government to take a positive stance on the matter remain little to non-existent. This over time can become a more serious regional issue across countries of South and South-East Asia. This issues, in turn, can not only impact individual states negatively, but can also deteriorate the bilateral and multilateral arrangements of the existing prominent regional coalitions and organizations such as the Associate for South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), or the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). It is believed that only speedy collective actions in resolving this issue can prevent it from becoming a disastrous regional conflict for the South and South-East Asian regions.

Discussion and Conclusion

The article has discussed how the Rohingya people living in Bangladesh after the persecution are complicating the local environment and putting pressure on the local people. The start of the civil war in Myanmar stemming from an ethnic conflict between the Burmese government and the Rohingyas community has led to the migration of the Rohingya populations in large numbers to Bangladesh. The Rohingya population have started to occupy increasingly scarce land resources and their consumption of forest resources and competition for livelihood with the local population have led to social unrest within the settlement area. This unrest comes with a host of other issues that involve decreasing livelihood standards and decreasing availability of desirable income opportunities for both the displaced community that seek to adjust to the new lifestyle and the host society that have received the displaced Rohingya community. The situation coincides with the conflict displacement theory where a conflict in a neighbouring state leads to populations being displaced in the host country, bringing with them several issues of concern for the host government (Homer-Dixon, 2010; Reuveny, 2007; Ghimire et al., 2015).

The resulting deprivation of being delegated an FDMN status with reduced rights and opportunities, as well as the less than optimal livelihood standards for the Rohingya refugee population leads to an identity crisis where they seek to raise their own position at the cost of the host society, with alternative channels of revenue and guerrilla initiatives to return to their home country with the rights and opportunities they have lost in the civil war (Milton et al., 2017; Elis et al., 2016). This opens up this displaced community to exploitation as organized crime groups take advantage of the Rohingya people to further their own interests and involve them in crimes such as human trafficking, drug trade, and illegal importation of small arms and light weapons across the border and inside the host country. This raises concerns for the host government even further. As per the theory of conflict spill over, the civil war in Myanmar now becomes an interlinked issue for the host country Bangladesh as the displaced populations create a significant security issue for it (Salehyan, 2010). This leads to the conflict to shift from the displaced population and the origin state to between the displaced population and the host state and its society.

Myanmar's civil conflict involving the Rohingya population has affected the host country Bangladesh in a myriad of ways. The positive effects of introducing income opportunities and revenues from aid and relief are overshadowed by the negative consequences the conflict has brought to the area (Karin et al., 2020). From national security concerns to issues regarding the safety and stability of the region, the conflict in Myanmar can lead to a manifestation of intractable conflict in Bangladesh. This can, in turn, lead to the host community being gravely affected by a fall in overall security in the area while putting the Rohingya community at risk of further exploitation by organized crime groups and Myanmar's government. The conflict potential in the host society due to Myanmar's civil conflict can lead to an overall drop in the security within the Cox's Bazar and its surrounding region (Rahman, 2010; Taufiq, 2019). Actions undertaken by the host government to protect its national interests by preventing organized crime and illegal trade in the area can lead to a more hard-line approach from these organized groups to protect their own interests, thus putting the Rohingya population and the host community at risk.

The decrease in social cohesion between the host and the Rohingya community can lead to the Rohingya community being alienated and looking for alternative sources for their survival in illegal channels. It will cause social cohesion to further decrease and cause instability of the Cox's Bazar and its surrounding region. Moreover, the safety and security of the host community can lead to the host community adopting harsher security measures which can exclude the Rohingya community from income and livelihood opportunities through proper channels, thus forcing them to become dependent on unlawful channels of income and livelihood. The natural resources of the region are decreasing at a rapid pace due to the high dependence on forestry and land, which leads to harsher weather events in the region that decrease the overall quality of life for the people. This can lead to a resource conflict in the near future where the stability of the region can be at risk.

The theories and case studies conducted on conflict displacement and conflict spill over effects are believed to coincide with the data from the Rohingya situation in Bangladesh. The conflict displacement has led to Myanmar's civil conflict generating conflict potentials in

Bangladesh by negatively impacting available livelihood opportunities for the host population, and by lowering the security of the region through the heavy involvement of Rohingya refugee populations in organized crime at both intrastate and transborder levels. However, if further studies are conducted in-depth to explore how exactly the conflict displacement and the conflict spill over that have taken place in the host country Bangladesh, particularly with the help of some primary data, then that would provide an even more concrete and robust foundation where a case can be made in support of the host country and the displaced Rohingya refugees. Therefore, the foundation can pave the way for a more reliable approach to the repatriation of the Rohingya displaced people with the full extent of their rights and opportunities and thus effective action towards proper conflict resolution in both Myanmar and in Bangladesh.

The Rohingya community have been prosecuted for over half a century by this point in time, and their situations remain to be improved, while their plight remains to be unanswered. For the host community, however, the possible conflict looming in the near future should not be overlooked. The Rohingya community, being destitute are prone to be exploited by organized groups for their own purposes. It is a pressing need for the host country to act in favour of facilitating smooth repatriation for the Rohingya community while tackling the ongoing issues that Myanmar's conflict has spilled over within its borders.

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