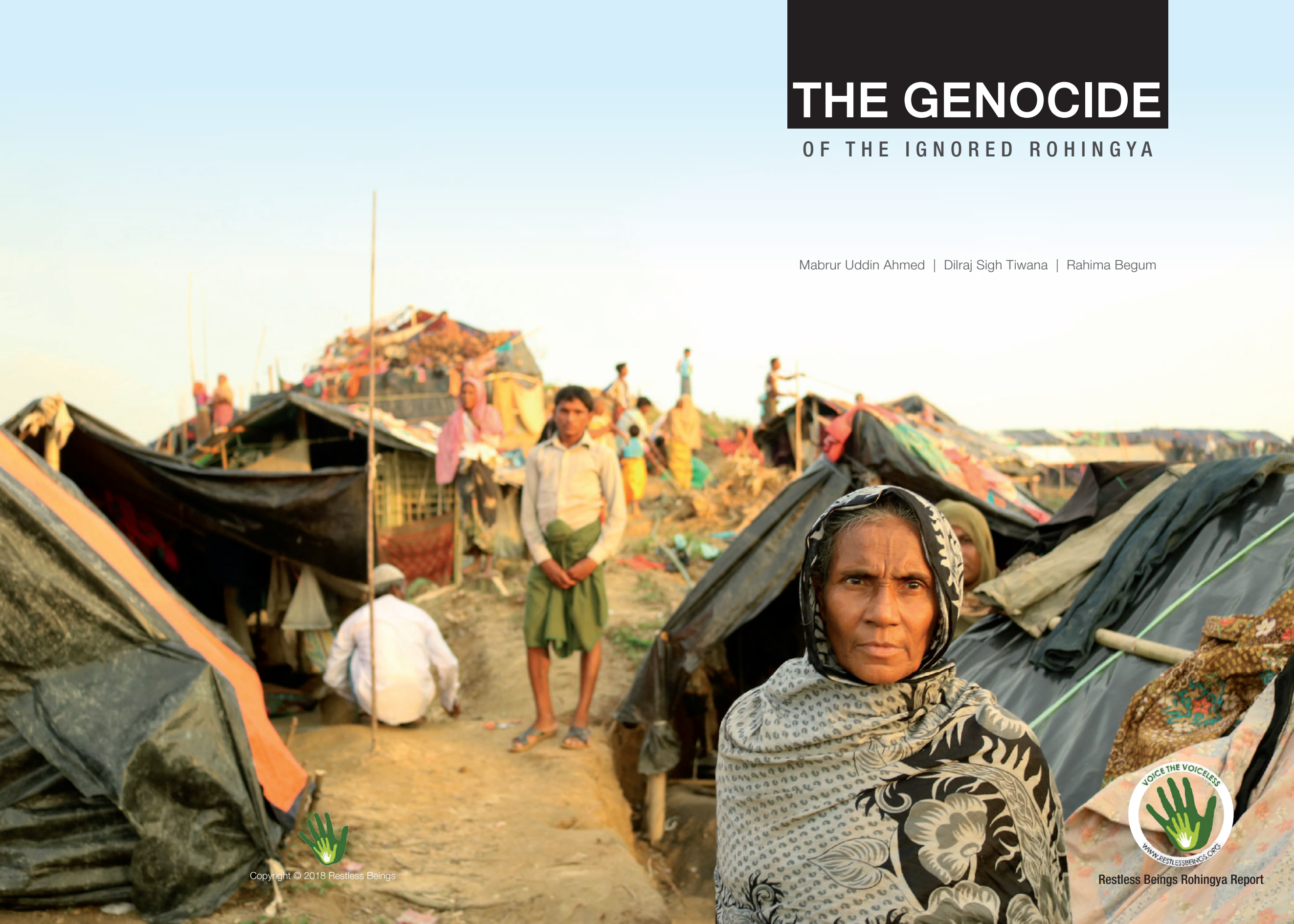


THE GENOCIDE

OF THE IGNORED ROHINGYA

Mabrur Uddin Ahmed | Dilraj Singh Tiwana | Rahima Begum



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Restless Beings Rohingya Report

THE GENOCIDE

OF THE IGNORED ROHINGYA



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Mission Statement:

Restless Beings is an international human rights organisation and UK registered charity (1135134) which aims to support marginalised communities that are deprived of media or public attention.

Its projects are holistic in operation and work towards self-sufficiency.

The organisation is free of political, cultural, religious and racial prejudice. We believe in egalitarianism for all and as such our team and projects are familial in operation, organisation and structure. For more information, please visit our website:

www.restlessbeings.org

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Executive Summary



Following the wave of violence perpetrated on the Rohingya by the Burmese military during August and September 2017, almost 700,000 Rohingya have fled across the border into Bangladesh from Arakan state in Burma. The research for this report was conducted between October 2017 and January 2018 taking 96 accounts from Rohingya refugees. Eight different camps were visited to collect this data. It was found that the interviewees had originated from 23 different villages across Northern Arakan state in Burma.

The objectives of the report were three pronged: to provide an overview of the current conditions in the camps and conditions that the refugees had to endure in Burma before arriving to Bangladesh; to analyse the current conditions in the camp including living conditions and provisions; to carry out a risk assessment of the camps to better understand potential risk concerns. The outcomes are to be presented to Governments to advise on policy and to NGO's to advise on next steps to assist the refugees.

From the data collected it was found that 100% of respondents had witnessed destruction of property and had witnessed violence by Burmese military. More than 80% reported seeing killing by Burmese military with 28% witnessing death of a family member. 67% of interviewees had still not received adequate medical support and 30% had not received adequate shelter. More than 20% had witnessed pregnant women and girls being taken by Burmese military for rape. 14.6% had witnessed children being thrown into pits of fire by military personnel. Furthermore, obvious signs of post traumatic stress disorder were found amongst at least 10.4% of the sample size and 50% of child respondents cited fear of being abducted as their primary security concern. 8.3% of respondents had been approached by human traffickers to move to other parts of the region.

The findings conclude with clear evidence that the crime perpetrated by Burmese military operations from August and September meet the criteria of Genocide. It is recommended that NGO's begin treating the refugees as genocide survivors and that they train their staff accordingly to manage the camps. Pregnant women are not sufficiently supported with medical assistance and NGO's are urged to increase their medical services. Post traumatic stress disorder is also not adequately supported and NGO's should also increase mental health and wellness activities. Additionally, the UN's guidance for funding the refugee crisis remains unmet and Governments are urged to donate more generously to ensure that the funding demands are met. Without such, the risk of trafficking remains at large as identified by a plethora of agencies. Governments are also urged to press Burma to repeal the Citizenship Law of 1982 without which the problem will perpetuate. The repatriation deal at present is premature with no guarantee of safety, return of property and citizenship rendering the repatriation as merely a PR exercise. It also furthers the apartheid conditions that the Rohingya face in other internally displaced persons camps in Sittwe and elsewhere. The repatriation deal without citizenship, safety and property is fundamentally flawed and will need further revision before it becomes viable.

With genocide being clearly evident from the findings it is stressed vehemently to Governments to refer to the crisis as genocide and to press the UN Security Council for a referral to the International Criminal Court against Min Aung Hlaing the Commander -in-chief of the Burmese military.



Min Aung Hlaing Burmese Military Commander In Chief

Objectives



1. To build a thorough situational study which is cross-representative of the facets of the Rohingya refugee community. To focus across a number of camps to ensure that a picture is built up of varying geographical locations of villages in Myanmar and also entry points into Bangladesh. To be able to produce qualitative and quantitative findings of ongoing issues that refugees are facing as well as documenting issues they escaped from. To present data analysis and recommendations to Governments, agencies and NGO's of scale of the issue so that a majority consensus can be reached and long term solutions can be achieved.
2. To be able to surmise the current conditions of camps and the overarching issues faced on a camp by camp basis in order to advise NGO's of the needs of camps generally but in particular provisions for healthcare, relief and aid. To provide advisory comments for NGO's on camp conditions to avoid repetitive field assessment time and finances and to essentially provide the findings and observations to the plethora of organizations vying to assist the refugees.
3. To assess the camps and the refugee communities of risks that are currently being faced and risks that could be possible and feasible in the months ahead. To gather information from a refugee perspectives of the security issues and the effect of short-term, mid -term and long-term exposure to cramped over-crowded conditions of camps. To provide feedback and recommendations to Governments and agencies insofar as current and future risks are concerned.

Methodology

A total of 96 interviews were conducted at 8 different refugee camps relatively close to or directly on the border of Myanmar and Bangladesh; surrounding the rural area of Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh.

This report is primarily based on research directly conducted by Restless Beings during the period of 23rd October 2017 to 26th January 2018.

It also builds on previous information, findings of investigations and studies stretching back to 2008, from the time where the organisation first had a continuous tangible presence in the region and connection to the communities in question within this report.

The data collection approach captured quantitative and qualitative information from refugees in locations where the organisation has had a presence and conducted aid delivery practices in recent months, amidst the escalation of tensions within the region; resulting in a mass migration and establishment of emergency refugee camps.

Data collection was carried out using a mixed and iterative methodology. This began with extensive ethnographic studies building upon similar studies conducted previously; to ensure that the process was conducted in an ethical, unbiased and appropriate manner. A literature review was then carried out to ensure the organisation was informed of contemporary issues, findings and outlying challenges in aid delivery and academic research specific to the area. Focus group discussions were then held with community members, local activists and active aid organisations in the region, to corroborate our findings and to finalise logistics.

This culminated in the main source of data collection for this report i.e. informant interviews conducted via questionnaires, entirely completed in person at varying refugee camps.

Interviews were conducted by researchers with previous training in ethical and participatory research practices. Due to the unique dialect of some of the interviewees, an interpreter was utilised where necessary.

A total of 96 interviews were conducted at 8 different refugee camps relatively close to or directly on the border of Myanmar and Bangladesh; surrounding the rural area of Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh. This sample size reflects similar scales in contemporary refugee analyses conducted by respected international bodies.

Interviews were conducted independently; without any official or directly influencing individuals present, however due to the crowded nature of the camps it is possible that despite the detailed nature of the reports, further details could have been omitted by interviewees in fear of their own safety. In such cases, researchers spent time reassuring and calming interviewees before proceeding. Certain questionnaires offered further questions and the unprompted qualitative answers of greater detail were recorded where available.

The particular refugee camps were chosen for this study due to their contemporary relevance and representation of the volatile crisis in the region. In this sense the largest 2 camps in the region by concentration of individuals were chosen. The 3 most recently established camps and 2 of the longest standing camps were chosen. Finally a camp that is located on the international border was chose. These gave a reflection of varying and contrasting plights of individuals and the different conditions they faced and continue to face.

The sample size and chosen demographic was utilised with the intention of an adequate representation of the communities, however, in certain camps women were reluctant to speak at great length interviewers and therefore male heads of household were nominated to represent them.

Before all interviews, respondents were informed of the nature of the study and the voluntary basis of their participation, which could be stopped at any point throughout the interaction. It was also made clear that no direct benefit or assistance would be associated with participation. Interviewers were requested to inform the lead researcher for referral to specialised partners if any participant requested help or cause for concern was identified.

The iterative process of formulating questions was directly in line with our outlined objectives:

To fulfill objective 1 variables such as hometown, time away from home, mode of arrival, travel time, reason for leaving and witness testimonies were ascertained.

To fulfill objective 2 variables such as current family health, medical/social help received, aid items received were ascertained.

To fulfill objective 3 variables such as issues faced during the day, issues faced at night, what would be required to feel safe, future plans to remain within the camp were ascertained.

The process consisted of more than 100 hours of interviewing time with the refugees. This was in line with the 'Participatory Action Research' method. This technique results in interviews that are largely participant led; with minimal prompting interviewer and impartial questions. This led to receiving more truthful and nuanced witness testimonies as well as providing a basis for a mutually beneficial practice of research where the interviewee is able to process the events, as well as potential reactions and options available to the individual, in a cathartic and relatable manner. This process above and beyond the norm for other aid agencies conducting similar studies and provides the opportunity for more robust analyses.

All averages conducted within the meta-analysis were the mean average.

BACKGROUND



The Rohingya are a stateless ethnic group originating from the Rakhine (Arakan) province of Burma. Historical data records show a presence of the Rohingya in Arakan state from as far back as the 8th century but the most reliable narration of Rohingya presence in Burma can be found in 'A Comparative Vocabulary of Some of the Languages Spoken in Burma Empire' published by Francis Buchanan-Hamilton in 1799 where he observed: *"Mohammedans (Muslims), who have long settled in Arakan, and who call themselves Rooinga, or natives of Arakan."*

Numerous reports of the Rohingya are available from that point onwards. The Rohingya were also active members of the society by the time the British had entered Arakan following the Anglo Burma war of 1823. During World War II the Rohingya fought alongside and for the British against Japanese occupation in Burma. Tensions began to arise along ethnic lines as most of the Rakhine ethnic community were pro Japan. The 1942 conflict saw Arakan state split along ethnic lines with Northern Arakan being mostly populated with Rohingya and Southern Arakan mostly populated by Rakhine. The Constitution of the Union of Burma was established in 1947 and the same year general elections took place with Rohingya having voting rights. Rohingya politicians took part and held positions within local and national governance. By 1954 then Prime Minister U Nu had recognized the Rohingya as an ethnic group of Burma saying "The people living in Northern Arakan are our national brethren. They are called Rohingyas. They are on the same par in the status of nationality with Kachin, Kayah, Karen, Mon, Rakhine and Shan."

The 1962 military coup d'état saw an end to the years of democratic progress that Burma had been making since independence. From the off-set it was clear that the new leader of the country, General Ne Win had plans for a totalitarian state and soon all structures of governance were run by the military. Ne Win took a hardline approach to securing Burmese nationalization. In order to combat the risk of foreign countries entering the region, he argued that the prior democratic system enabled ethnic tensions with respective ethnicities calls for autonomy and that the entire system needed overhauling. He began offensives against border states to block attempts from foreign influence and that included targeting of the Rohingya.



General Ne Win

In essence, the military junta had embarked on a 'Burmanisation' project designed to consolidate the whole of Burma under the flag of the Barman ethnicity and Buddhist religion.

In 1978, Ne Win launched Operation Naga Min or Operation Dragon King. This was a large scale military offensive driving out almost 250,000 Rohingya to neighboring Bangladesh. Merely 4 years later the 1982 Citizenship law was announced which effectively stripped the Rohingya of nationality, citizenship and protection by the Law. The two are seen as the major starting points for the decades long persecution of Rohingya since.

Previous Waves

1978 – Operation Naga Min (Dragon King)

In the early years of Burmese independence political efforts had been made to acquire autonomy for the state of Arakan and these were actively discussed with central Government. However, following Ne Win's coup d'état that notion had been vehemently rejected. Consequently an armed resistance movement had initialised. Operation Naga Min's objective was to rid the locality of the insurgency and the first military offensive occurred in villages surrounding Akyab (Sittwe). For the most of 1978, Arakan state was under siege by Burmese military and Tatmadaw forces leading to more than 250,000 Rohingya fleeing violence to Bangladesh. It was during this operation that Government propaganda also pointed towards the Rohingya as being 'illegal Bengalis' – a term wholesomely rejected by the Rohingya. Bangladesh authorities pressed Burmese counterparts heavily for a repatriation and although in the first few months of the aftermath few Rohingya returned home, the majority did leave once Bangladesh allowed the camp conditions to dwindle with a lack of resources and medical support.

1982 – Citizenship Law

On the back of the 'success' of the 1978 push of Rohingya to Bangladesh, the Ne Win junta began its approach to effectively rule the Rohingya stateless by introducing the beleaguered 1982 Citizenship Law. The premise of the new Citizenship Law was to categorise citizens into three key groups – Citizens, Associate Citizens and Naturalised Citizens. Citizens were regarded as anyone who belonged to one of the national races (Kachin, Kayah (Karenni), Karen, Chin, Burman, Mon, Rakhine, Shan, Kaman, or Zerbadee and crucially NOT Rohingya) or someone whose predecessors had settled prior to British occupation in 1823. For those who could not prove predecessor settlement prior to 1823, if they could prove that one of their grandparents was a citizen of any other nation, they were granted Associated Citizen status. Naturalised Citizens were considered such if they could present 'conclusive evidence' of their predecessor settlement prior to British occupation. For the Rohingya who were no longer regarded as a national ethnic group, and whose predecessors were not citizens of any country or state other than their ancestral Arakan, Citizenship became an impossibility and hence they were rendered stateless. Extra conditions of showing that their grandparents had entered Burma prior to 1823 was not feasible as the Rohingya were ancestral habitants of Arakan from decades and in some cases centuries prior to that. The additional stipulation of speaking a national language of which the Rohingya language was not classified as, further staked the claims to Citizenship against the Rohingya.



1978 Rohingya image

Photo credit MSF

1992 – Operation Pyi Thaya (Clean and Beautiful Nation)

During the summer of 1988 a large scale democracy movement had started which eventually led to the Aung San Suu Kyi led NLD party winning elections in 1990. Subsequently Suu Kyi was placed under house arrest where she would remain for 15 years. In a similar vein to the Naga Min offensive, Burmese military forces once again attacked the Rohingya communities. Rakhine state (Arakan) as it was now known, saw an exodus of between 200,000 and 250,000 Rohingya again fleeing to Bangladesh. Refugees reported mass killings, mass rape, religious persecutions and forced labour by the Burmese military forces.



1992 rohingya camps - credit John Vink 1992

Over the course of 1991-1992, as many as 20 camps were established inside Bangladesh along the Cox's Bazaar border with Burma. In December 1991 Tatmadaw forces even briefly entered Bangladesh territory and fired upon a Bangladeshi military outpost causing huge tensions between the two countries. The NaSaKa were formed as a security and border agency by the Burmese military to Arakan state. The repatriation of these refugees was hugely problematic - initially in October 1992 the UNHCR agency had placed itself as observers of repatriation yet by December had withdrawn its support as clear evidence of forced repatriation was present. A memorandum

of understanding between Burma and Bangladesh followed which would once again place UNHCR in strategic positions in Arakan state to oversee the repatriation. Again during the MOU's lifespan it was clear that repatriation was not voluntary and thousands were being forced back in to Burma weekly. Returnees were not given citizenship which perpetuated the issue in subsequent attacks. Approximately 230,000 Rohingya were repatriated to Burma from 1993 to 1997 with another 30,000 remaining in two UNHCR camps in Bangladesh. These camps saw armed stand-offs and violence with the local Bangladeshi population and remained troubled for much of 1998.

2012-15 Rohingya Exodus during Burma's 'Democratisation'

Suu Kyi was released from house arrest just under a week after Burma's first 'democratic' elections in a generation in 2010. In June 2012 clashes broke out between Rakhine and Rohingya in Northern Arakan. Claims and counter claims of abuse and violence from both Rakhine and Rohingya resulted in a state of emergency being declared in Arakan. A Human Rights Watch report released in 2012 titled "'All You Can Do is Pray': Crimes Against Humanity and Ethnic Cleansing of Rohingya Muslims in Burma's Arakan State," claimed that 'government authorities destroyed mosques, conducted violent mass arrests, and blocked aid (to Rohingya)'. By October of 2012, the violence had spread to other Muslim communities and citizens of Burma in a radical rise of extreme Buddhism which pitted Muslim communities as enemies of Buddhism and Burma. Approximately 200,000 were forced into internal displacement camps (IDP Camps) and land and property burned to ashes. HRW in the same report also highlighted via satellite footage more than 300 acres of destroyed land and property.

2013 saw further religious hatred through the rise of prominence of hate cleric Buddhist Monk Ashwin Wirathu and his 969 movement culminating in a massacre against Muslim communities in Meikthila, central Burma. Wirathu continued his hate speech and anti-Rohingya campaign unabated.

In May 2015, IOM reported that as many as 8,000 Rohingya were stranded at sea having fled Burma for Malaysia. They 'ping-ponged' between Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia with each country refusing to allow the boats carrying the refugees to port. Eventually they were brought in to shore by Indonesian fisherman in Aceh. Between 2012 and 2015 approximately 125,000 Rohingya made the risky and arduous journey by rickety boats from Burma to Malaysia.



2015 Boat Crisis image

Syifa/Antara Foto/Reuters

The Rise of ARSA

On October 9th 2016 Burmese state media reported 9 military personnel had been killed by Rohingya insurgents belonging to an armed group called Harkatul Jama'at (later renamed to ARSA – Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army). The group claimed the attack and the military stepped up its presence in Northern Arakan State. The military presence saw extrajudicial killings, gang rapes and use of heavy artillery including military helicopters firing on Rohingya villagers armed with sticks and stones. 86,000 Rohingya fled widespread and systematic military abuse between October and December



October 2016

Photo AFP

2016 to Bangladesh. A new camp in Balukhali to support the influx sprawled in Ukhiya, Bangladesh. International media were able to access Balukhali and highlight the horrific use of rape on the Rohingya by Burmese military. Suu Kyi infamously brandished these interviews by international media outlets as 'fake rape' in an open show of support to the Burmese military authorities. Insofar as political responses inside Burma, Suu Kyi who had won elections the previous year and was now State Counsellor, echoed the military's call to crackdown on ARSA and deny malpractice by Burmese military servicemen.

August 2017 until present – 'Unprecedented' Rohingya Refugees Leave Burma

In the summer of 2017 many Rohingya bloggers began reporting that Burmese military servicemen were beginning to train and arm Rakhine militia. On August 12th hundreds of military personnel flooded the border area of Arakan state. The Rakhine Commission headed by former UN Security General Kofi Annan published their report to Burma on August 24th outlining a number of recommendations

including: improving infrastructure in Arakan, reviewing the Citizenship law and accelerating the verification process, remove restrictions on movement, instilling a more calibrated response to violence and security and finally ensuring that recommendations are actually followed through.

On August 25th Burmese state television reported that ARSA had targeted 30 military outposts on Burma Bangladesh border resulting in the death of 12 military personnel. In response, the military launched a massive ‘clearance operation’ in conjunction with local Rakhine mobs. Within the first 3 weeks, 1,000 Rohingya were killed. Innumerable reports of indiscriminate beatings, killings and rape were reported by refugees desperately fleeing across the border into Bangladesh. Abhorrent

images of children being burned alive, women being raped in front of family members and whole villages being burned down were reported widespread. Burmese military and crucially Suu Kyi disregarded these reports claiming that the military were simply uprooting ARSA activists. By the end of the 4th week of violence, 400,000 had fled to Bangladesh leading to the UN describing the teaming numbers of refugees as an ‘unprecedented’ refugee crisis. Initially keeping borders close, Bangladesh eventually allowed the Rohingya to cross territory by road, boat and any route possible on humanitarian grounds. By January 2018, a reported 655,000 Rohingya had



1992 rohingya camps credit John Vink 1992
fled to Bangladesh with numbers still swelling.



Gawdu Tharya village near Maungdaw in Rakhine state in northern Myanmar. (AFP Photo)



The Repatriation Deal

On November 23rd 2017, Bangladesh and Burma agreed a repatriation deal to take back the refugees escaping violence since August 2017. The deal touted the first repatriations to begin 2 months after the deal was signed by January 23rd. The repatriation deal was widely criticised for fear of the refugees being forcibly repatriated, and/or repatriated to unknown locations most likely ‘ghettoised’ camps and without citizenship. The deal was based on the guiding principles of the 1992/1993 pact. The failures of the 1992/93 pact has lead to international observers claiming that the 2017/18 deal was set for failure once again. Bangladesh Foreign Minister Shahidul Haque speaking to BBC Bangla said “We asked them to take back 15,000 every week. But they said they will take back 300 people every day, so that makes 1,500 every week”. Meanwhile, Myanmar’s foreign secretary U Myint Thu told BBC Burmese: “The repatriation process will commence on 23 January” and added that three transit camps were ‘under construction’ with plans to ‘build new villages’. The question over administration of the repatriation, citizenship, land and property reclamation hang over the deal. Furthermore, on the eve of the first batch of ‘repatriation’ Bangladeshi officials postponed the repatriation citing “The list of people to be sent back is yet to be prepared, their verification and setting up of transit camps is remaining.” – Abul Kalam, Bangladesh’s refugee relief and rehabilitation commissioner speaking to Reuters on January 22nd.w

(insert image 8,9,10)

International Community Response

The massive numbers of refugees arriving into Bangladesh following the 25th August Burmese military campaign made headlines across the world and while international observers and experts pored over the possibilities, the international community's response was criticized by rights groups across the globe. One of the many reasons for this was the scope of control the Suu Kyi administration had over military affairs. The Burmese Constitution states that Suu Kyi, although her party the NLD won the 2015 elections resoundingly, cannot be President of Burma due to her being a widow and parent of foreigners. She holds the position of State Counsellor and effectively the de facto leader of the country. Crucially however, the military is ruled by the Commander in Chief, Min Aung Hlaing, who is not accountable to President or State Counsellor and holds power over key ministries such as Home Affairs, Defence and Border Affairs. Hlaing claimed his army was continuing its 'clearance operations' after clashes with 'extremist bengalis', a claim which was not denounced by Suu Kyi. Suu Kyi later even claimed that there were "no conflicts since 5 September and no clearance operations" and still refuses to acknowledge even the name 'Rohingya'. Consequently numerous cities have rescinded their 'Freedom of The City' given to Suu Kyi for her campaigns against human rights abuses. Various universities have withdrawn their honorary awards, most notably Oxford University seemingly cutting ties with Suu Kyi. There have even been calls to strip Suu Kyi of her Nobel Peace Prize. Hlaing has seen little international criticism comparatively and continues to enjoy lavish receptions from militaries across the world willing to sell arms and equipment to Burma despite the brutality of their attacks against the Rohingya. The Burmese media meanwhile have been very pro military action and there has been virtually zero discourse of military or Government criticism.

The response from the international community and in particular the United Nations has been stifled somewhat by the supportive regional powers of India and China. China maintains its veto right and as yet there has still been no clear Security Council resolution regarding the Rohingya of Burma. The United States, United Kingdom, the EU, Malaysia, Turkey and the OIC have all made strong statements about the treatment of the Rohingya by Burma. The United Nations General Assembly in September 2017 also gave platform for Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh to make strong statements that included:



Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister, Bangladesh; Photo: BSS

"We are horrified to see that the Myanmar authorities are laying landmines along their stretch of the border to prevent the Rohingyas from returning to Myanmar"

She further reiterated a series of action points which included an unconditional cessation of violence by Burmese military forces, the establishment of a UN fact finding mission, 'safe zones' inside Burma for Rohingya, sustainable repatriation of the refugees and that all of Rakhine Commissions recommendations should be implemented.

Other notable statements by international leaders have included:

"...this genocide which is unfolding, this ethnic cleansing.." – French President Emmanuel Macron speaking to French TV channel TMC September 2017

"This is a major humanitarian crisis which looks like ethnic cleansing...we will continue to play a leading role in bringing the international community together – working through the UN and with regional partners to do everything possible to stop this appalling and inhuman destruction of the Rohingya people" – Theresa May, British Prime Minister at Lord Mayor's Banquet November 2017



Theresa May, Prime Minister, UK photo Reuters

"These abuses by some among the Burmese military, security forces, and local vigilantes have caused tremendous suffering. ... After a careful and thorough analysis of available facts, it is clear that the situation in northern Rakhine state constitutes ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya." - Rex Tillerson, US Secretary of State November 2017

"...being subjected to almost an ethnic cleansing, with provocative terrorist acts used as a pretext..." - Turkey President Recep Erdogan at UN General Assembly September 2017

"We share your concerns about the extremist violence in the Rakhine state and especially the violence against the security forces and how innocent lives have been affected and killed." – Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaking alongside Suu Kyi, Burma, September 2017

"(China is)willing to play a constructive role... for security and stability in their border areas." Xi Jinping China President, November 2017

"The humanitarian situation ... is catastrophic." Antonio Guterres, UN Security General, December 2017



Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein UN High Commissioner of Human Rights photo Reuters

"The situation seems a textbook example of ethnic cleansing," Zeid Ra'ad Al-Hussein UN High Commissioner for Human Rights speaking at UN Human Rights Council, Geneva, September 2017

"The elements suggest you cannot rule out the possibility that acts of genocide have been committed," Zeid Ra'ad Al-Hussein UN High Commissioner for Human Rights speaking to BBC, December 2017

Facts / Findings



Sample and demographic data

[Sample size of 96]

Male and female from 4 to 65

Average mean age of 32.86

69.79% male to 30.21% female

Aggregated Household

Number of Refugees: 973

Avg household 10.14

Witness Data

[83.33% personally witnessed deaths themselves ranging from 1 to over 1000]

[28.13% saw at least one member of their own family die in front of them]

[100% of Hindu camp testimonies clearly indicate that reason for fleeing was also shooting and burning of villages – either instigated by the military and/or with Rakhine Buddhist support – Highlighting the ethnic nature of the conflict]

[100% of all testimonies outline a first hand experience or imminent threat of shootings, killings, beatings, cuttings, and/or burning of villages as the reason they were forced to flee their homes]

[61.46% witnessed deliberate burning and destruction of homes and villages specifically]

[Cumulative number of deaths witnessed: 2476]



Secondary Event info

[20.83% have witnessed or received information regarding further attacks and violence after initial trigger]

[All journeys were made by foot
Some through the mountains
Some by boat – exclusively for those who had money to pay traffickers]

Average of 6.21 days travel
– up to 21 days of travel]



Camp and Medical Data

[66.67% require treatment for some form of illness ranging from high fevers to chronic malnourishment with specialist care required for those in latter stages of pregnancy]

[57.29% access to medical support (in many cases dependent on access to money or borrowing ability)]

[30.21% of households had been given no shelter many sleeping without or forced into cramped and insecure conditions with others]

[80% of pregnant women are in households with no medical support many in late stages]



Observations

[50% of children interviewees stated a fear of being kidnapped by traffickers as the primary night time issues within the camp]

[8.3% of all respondents said they had been approached by traffickers to move to other parts of the country or to other states]

[46.87% explicitly expressed a preference to eventually leave the camp and go back to Burma if they can reclaim land, have safety and security]

[11.46% witnessed kidnapping or fearful of being taken away or raped]

[100% of female respondents in Thumbre camps (based in Burma but on the zero point of border) reported Burmese military coaxing people into cars and eye witness testimony of young girls being taken away]

[10.42% explicitly site trauma and mention symptoms of ptsd through hearing bullet sounds, flashbacks, nightmares and fears over sanity – 40% of these individuals are children under 13]

[20.83% directly saw girls get kidnapped raped or targeted because they were pregnant]

[14.58% saw children and babies being specifically targeted by military to be thrown into fire pits]

Mochni Lama Para

Nestled between the 1992 UNHCR Nayapara and the 2007 Leda Bazar camps is a new makeshift camp established after the 2017 influx of Rohingya refugees. This study focused on a smaller camp off the main Mochni camp – Mochni Lama Para. This camp is very scarce on any meaningful facilities with just 2 water pumps and 4 toilets servicing 109 households and 1300 refugees. Refugees were found living in makeshift bamboo structures with the majority having not received adequate tarpaulin shelter. Polythene sheets were mostly used for protection against the elements. The Burma border is a little over 400 yards from the camp which was previously used as salt farming terrain.



Average time away from home for refugees : **2.2 months**

Most common travel method to reach Bangladesh from Burma : **boat and foot**

Average travel time to arrive into Bangladesh : **5.7 days**

Most common hometown (village) : **Hashurata, Maungdaw**

Most common reason for leaving Burma : **Military shooting and burning of homes and property**

Average number of deaths witnessed by refugees in Burma : **29**



The military came and were **separating the women** of the village, so we realised we must escape. My family all left together, but they started shooting at us from behind. They shot 3 of my children from behind. They shot two of my sons and my daughter. The military were shooting everywhere. **More than 100 were shot in front of us.** They **totally burned everything**, all the houses, at least 500 homes burned. To get here we took a boat and had to walk for 6 days. We left everything behind... Food is not available here, we must on rely on whatever little is given and there is often fights during distribution. We need warm clothes for the night... I will do whatever the government says, but we need a proper staying place. If I can work then I can feed myself.

Salamafulla, 38
Hashurata

The **military came to our area firing gunshots everywhere.** They killed my father. They shot him in the chest and he died right there. I have seen **women being cut open, pretty girls being taken away.** I don't even know what can bring hope now.

Mahmadullah, 30 (male),
Bodhupara

The **military shot at us all.** They killed my 9-year-old son. They killed 2 of my daughters; they were 4 and 5 years old. After we left they **burned the whole village...** At night here it is very scary. We **saw one kidnapper take a child...** We won't go back unless we feel safe.

Rajuna, 30 (female),
Alithanjo

Palangkhali (Shobulla Kara)

Palangkhali is a major entry point for the Rohingya arriving into Bangladesh following the military crackdown in 2017. In October 2017, some 15,000 refugees had been stuck on the border area of Palangkhali. This study focussed on one of the many hills that the Palangkhali camp is based around – Shobulla Khara. Made up of very steep terrain that was previously used as rice and paddy fields, there are approximately 290 households with a refugee population circa 3,000. Many water pumps and latrines had been built but were unusable due to high salt content in the water pumps and latrines overflowing.



The military came and **burned everything; everything was dying**. The village and the people were being completely destroyed. **Many hundreds died right in front of us**. They shot the teenagers and **threw the babies in fire pits**. They set fire to the mosque 3 times, and eventually destroyed it. I had to flee with my two children, so I left my parents behind; they were too old to get away. I know they have been killed... I had to pay a trafficker 1300 taka to get us on a boat, and we walked for 8 days to get to the camp. We have received no food and shelter yet; we are forced to borrow from other people. We at least need a safe space for the night; there is no light. We will stay here for now but I am scared to go back to Burma, I know the attacks are still going on and will continue.

Mohammed Ali, 62 (male)
Brashidon

They came and **burned everything**, Hindu men wearing Muslim clothes. All the boys and men were being killed. **They raped many, many girls**, and even chopped up the victims. They took the pretty girls with them, I saw my cousin being beheaded in the struggle... Now I am very scared at night. **Children are being taken away at night**. They come from behind the hill; they have taken many children. I miss my friends and going to school. Even if I had some toys I would be happier.

Rakhiya Begum, 11 (female)
Merula

The military came and were shooting; when we saw the **burning of the village** we ran. I saw the **pretty girls being taken away** while they killed the children and the old. They chopped off the head of an old woman in front me. Those that could not escape were **tied to a tree and executed**... It took over 8 days to come here; I feel very weak and am suffering from heat stroke. We need security and lights to feel safe... Even now I find it hard to talk about what happened.

Dholu, 60 (female),
Mondu Dhakkin

Average time away from home for refugees : **1.2 months**
Most common travel method to reach Bangladesh from Burma : **boat and foot**
Average travel time to arrive into Bangladesh : **8.2 days**
Most common hometown (village) : **Saydnapura, Maungdaw**
Most common reason for leaving Burma : **Military shooting and burning of homes and property**
Average number of deaths witnessed by refugees in Burma : **18**

Kutupalong

Now the world's largest refugee camp, Kutupalong was originally established in 1992 as one of the two 'official' refugee camps. From 1992 to 2015 the camp had become two distinct wards, one being the official camp and the other hosting unregistered refugees. At that time, across the two camps, more than 90,000 were housed here. Since the 2016 violence and then the massive influx in 2017 the camp has grown to the largest in the world housing 547,000 refugees (ISCG Situation Report January 14th 2018). This study focussed on two parts of the Kutupalong area – the Hindu camp set up in early September 2017 and along Ward A1 block A and B. The Hindu camp is well served with NGO's serving hot food and electric lines serving 495 Rohingya Hindu refugees. Ward A1 is far more cramped and squalid and teeming with newer arrivals and more established members of the community.



Average time away from home for refugees : **3.2 months**
Most common travel method to reach Bangladesh from Burma : **on foot through mountains on border region**
Average travel time to arrive into Bangladesh : **5.9 days**
Most common hometown (village) : **Shikonchori, Maungdaw**
Most common reason for leaving Burma : **Military shooting and burning of homes and property**
Average number of deaths witnessed by refugees in Burma : **2**



The military along with Rakhine Buddhists were beating Rohingya Muslims. We heard of 180 killings of Hindus in other villages. We were scared and we came here with Muslims. **We lived in peace with Muslims** and played together.

Holi Rudra, 12
Shikonchori

I had to come out of Burma to save my life and my family members' lives. I saw the military shoot 3 young boys in front of me. I saw them cutting a lady after raping her...I need a shelter but more than that I need a home.

Arfat Hossain, 31 (male)
Hawarbil

The military came to our area. I saw girls and pregnant women being killed with machetes. Children were being thrown into fires... only peace will bring hope.

Rajuna, 30 (female),
Alithanjo

Thumbru

(Border but camp is actually in Burma territory)

A tributary that is 3-5 meters wide separates Burma and Bangladesh in Thumbru. Thumbru is actually situated in Burma and the refugees cross the stream which is centimeteres deep into Bangladesh which lies a few meters away. There is heavy presence of the Burmese and Bangladeshi military forces in Thumbru which leads to a very sombre atmosphere for the 650 households and approximately 5,000 refugees who live here.

Burmese military helicopters were observed on a number of occasions by researchers of this study. There are water pumps and latrines available in Thumbru but aid is only available sporadically. A makeshift medical desk has been placed here by the Bangladesh Government but is massively overburdened. Thumbru was previously inaccessible from the Bangladesh side but due to the magnitude of the humanitarian crisis, the Bangladesh army has created land access for some NGO's. This is a devastatingly under-served camp due to the political implications of a camp which is actually situated in Burma.



Average time away from home for refugees : **1.4 months**

Most common travel method to reach Bangladesh from Burma : **on foot**

Average travel time to arrive into Bangladesh : **1.6 days**

Most common hometown (village) : **Mehdi, Maungdaw**

Most common reason for leaving Burma : **Military shooting and burning of homes and property**

Average number of deaths witnessed by refugees in Burma : **4**



The **Military shot at us**. The Rakhine people were with them. They **burned the village**. They pulled out my brother and sister from our home and killed them. They were beheaded. They raped many women. They **raped whoever they could find**. We just hid and stayed quiet. My husband stayed behind with his parents; I haven't heard from him at all. I am 8 months pregnant; I have an infection, but **no help for pregnant women** here. I saw the **military placing land mines** with my own eyes. I saw someone's leg blown off by a land mine. I am scared the military will come for us at night; two people were burned. A **human trafficker** has been talking to us. I am sleeping on rice bags. I miss my husband and my country. Nothing can replace home.

Minara, 20
Lapyuya

I have been at the border for 2 months. The **military burned our house**, took our cattle, and fired at us. One of those I saw killed was my own nephew. They shot him in the stomach. They **used launchers to burn the village; 700 homes burned**. They shot the men and took all the women in one go. **All young girls were raped. They were cutting the children and throwing them on the fire....** At night they come and shoot in the air or rape girls. Helicopters come every day. **My own daughter's leg was destroyed on a land mine.**

Atlas Miam, 60 (male)
Mehdi

My village was burned.

They burned our rice fields and our goats too. Petrol was poured onto people and they were burned. My brother Nahdul was shot his chest.

I saw people being chopped up, young boys and girls. They were put in sacks and dumped in the rivers; I saw the dead body parts... I am scared of the military coming to the camp. The military say they will give you money, to trick you into going with them. **I can't sleep at night; I have nightmares.** I will only feel safe with citizenship in my own home.

Mohammed Yunes, 12 (male)
Mehdi

Gundum

The camp in Gundum is an extension to the Balukhali camp which was initially established in 2016. Lying on the 'no mans zone' between Bangladesh and Burma, through September and October almost 400,000 Rohingya streamed through this point on to camps in Balukhali and Kutupalong. In the initial days, Restless Beings established 900 bamboo structures for those fleeing. At the time, smoke billowing from burning villages was easily visible. Refugees were moved away from the border fence in late September and formal camps were set up. This report focused its research on Gundum B camp where people were still streaming into in late October. More than 4,000 structures were present at the time but it was used more as a transit point for the larger Kutupalong and Balukhali camps. Food and non food items were being regularly distributed by NGO's here and assisted by Bangladesh military personnel. Medical facilities here were practically non-existent and refugees were urged to shift to the larger camps for medical needs.



Average time away from home for refugees : **7.2 days**
Most common travel method to reach Bangladesh from Burma : **on foot and via boat**
Average travel time to arrive into Bangladesh : **6.4 days**
Most common hometown (village) : **Merulla, Maungdaw**
Most common reason for leaving Burma :
Military shooting and burning of homes and property and intimidation by forces
Average number of deaths witnessed by refugees in Burma : **26**



I heard shooting sounds and woke up to see **over 100 dead bodies** in the village and **grenades being thrown**. I saw six of my friends being shot and sliced. 200 women were being taken. They were **raping and killing them...**

I have **nightmares** about the deaths I saw and my friends being sliced...In Burma the Rakhine people were making us pay extra rent. Had to give money to pay at the mosque other wise the military would lock it...here I have no sleep on the floor I have no shelter.

Anwas Shah m 21 Busidon

The **military fitted bombs near my house**. I could hear the gunfire and explosions everywhere. The Rakhine people were being violent towards us. I saw **people being shot and sliced with knives....** There is a lack of security and permanence in the camp; I need shelter and light... I want to stay in Bangladesh. It would go back to Burma if it is safe but I hear that villages are still being burned..

Amarullah, 18 (male)
Boddusara

Military and police told us to leave the village, those who had left were bad people and they will keep us safe in a camp. They forced young men and men with beards into police cars and we never saw them again. Later at night I **saw the military shooting people and those that didn't die were cut**, with help from Rakhine people. We cried and ran away...I have received no aid. We are scared of the elephants in the night-time around the camp...**I want Rohingya citizenship and then I will leave.**

Abdul Hamid, 20 (male)
Merulla

Thaingkhaili

Thaingkhaili is situated just south of Balukhali and was established as a makeshift camp following the summer 2017 exodus. Housing more than 29,000 refugees, the Thaingkhaili camp spreads west away from the main Teknaf –Cox's Bazaar highway and continues for a number of wards. The terrain is very steep and at times quite inaccessible. The camp has a large number of water pumps and latrines and those that were initially built but became unusable have been replaced with more permanent and deeper facilities. Most of the camp that heads west was previously green spaces that were not used for population. As such, there has also been an elephant population displacement from the area which has lead to some reported sporadic elephant attacks. There is a presence of ad hoc medical camps in the area.



Average time away from home for refugees : **2.5 months**

Most common travel method to reach Bangladesh from Burma : **on foot**

Average travel time to arrive into Bangladesh : **5.8 days**

Most common hometown (village) : **Boulibazar and Tula Toli, Maungdaw**

Most common reason for leaving Burma : **Military shooting and burning of homes and property**

Average number of deaths witnessed by refugees in Burma : **67**



The **military came and started killing people; burning their houses.**

I saw my neighbours being shot; my own house was burned. They **burned peoples' bodies; I saw at least 200 die like this.** The military called women to the top of the hill and raped and burned their bodies. **Pregnant mothers were raped mostly...** I am **9 months pregnant and having stomach pains.** My name is on a list but I still have **not received any medical support...**

Whenever we can get peace,
I prefer Burma.

Ismathaura, 20
Borozulla

The **military was beating, raping, cutting, burning and killing so many people.** First houses were burned, then all ran out; they were all shot and some were beheaded. There was a big hole where all the **bodies were burned with petrol. There were more than 500...**

I am feeling weak and dizzy but have not received any medication...

We won't find peace anywhere
but we could stay here.

Rubaida, 65 (female)
Diyoltoli

My family was being **tied to trees and shot.** My niece and nephew were sliced. We ran and hid but saw them get murdered...I have diabetes but no access to medicine, I am struggling with the lack of food...I have candles but need more light at night. I am **suffering from nightmares** still. I will never go back unless safe; I hear that attacks are continuing.

Solotra Khatum, 65 (female)
Zimankhali

Balukhali

First established after the exodus of 2016, Balukhali has slowly grown from circa 14,000 arrivals in 2016 to now encompassing 585,000 as part of the expanded Kutupalong-Balukhali site. It now joins up to nearby Kutupalong camp and now is part of the largest refugee camp in the world. Most new arrivals from August 2017 onwards have traversed to the Balukhali camp. There are many NGO's and INGO's operating within Balukhali. Conditions are very often over-crowded and chaotic. This report focussed its research in the Balukhali Bazar area of the camp. The terrain used to be peaks and troughs of small hills but due to the sudden nature of population settlement, and the onset of rains, it quickly became a muddy squalid terrain by late October 2017. Of all the camp sites, Balukhali has the smallest structures at just an average of 4.47 square meters per family (ISCG). This makes for an area very susceptible for large landslides with devastating consequences. Contaminated water is a major problem in Balukhali with many inadequate water pumps and latrines leading to risk of infection. Diphtheria was first found in Balukhali camps in December 2017 and the entire camp is seriously over-crowded and under-serviced.



Average time away from home for refugees : **3.6 months**

Most common travel method to reach Bangladesh from Burma : **on foot**

Average travel time to arrive into Bangladesh : **8.3 days**

Most common hometown (village) : **Deboltoli, Maungdaw**

Most common reason for leaving Burma : **Military shooting and burning of homes and property**

Average number of deaths witnessed by refugees in Burma : **4**



The military along with the Buddhists **burned my house**. I saw **girls being raped and killed**. They **killed the children by throwing them on the fire**.

Hajera Khatun, 40
Bolibazar

The **military took my sister and raped her**. We never got her back. My family was locked in our house and it was set on fire. They **burned my house** so we fled... I feel scared at night; we need more light and security... **I want citizenship if it is in Burma or Bangladesh**.

Aminul mostafa, 21 (male)
Ashikka Para

The Military and the Buddhists said to us that **Muslim Rohingya can never stay in Burma, if we don't leave we will die**... I want to stay in Bangladesh.

Zabbar miah, 41 (male)
Deboltoli

Conclusions



In order to capture an overarching picture of the current conditions of the camps, the suffering that was faced in Burma and to highlight areas of possible risks in the future, Restless Beings interviewed 96 males and females from age 4 to 65 across 8 camps in Cox's Bazaar region of Bangladesh. There was a 69%:31% split between males and females questioned and the average mean age of interviewees was 32.86.

From the 688,000 that have arrived into Bangladesh thus far, when accompanying family members are taken into account, 973 peoples plight has been documented. The average number of people living in each 'household structure' was found to be 10.14 which suggests very cramped living conditions which are not sustainable long term. Each structure is a one room structure that at best is separated internally by hanging clothes. Many households are shared with people who are not family members. The combination of a staggering population and the relatively small geographical area which houses the community leads to consequential issues such as predation and abuse.

The overwhelming majority of interviewees arrived by foot and boat. The average travel time was 6.21 days but there were some testimonies which included up to 21 days of travel. Interviewees identified 23 different villages in Burma as their home. The variation in the time it took to arrive shows the wide-scale area within Burma which was affected by the military operations. It is explicit from this data that this was not a pogrom of violence nor sporadic in nature but shows the Burmese military's "intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group" (as defined by the 1948 UN Genocide convention) – in this case the Rohingya, an ethnic group, of Arakan state in Burma.

The staggering figures of 83% of interviewees personally witnessing deaths and 28% witnessing a family member being killed portray the scale of the violence witnessed. In some cases reports of seeing dozens being killed in front of them shows the nature of the Burmese military's offensive.

One of the camps where interviews were taken was the Kutupalong Hindu only camp. Including this and other camps, 100% of interviewees reported seeing military or Rakhine burning homes and property in their home villages. 100% of testimonies also outlined first hand experiences or imminent threats of army gunfire, killings, beatings, beheadings or burning of villages as the primary reason for fleeing. This level of targeted campaigns against the Rohingya by the Burmese military fit part of the description of genocide as outlined in the 1947 UN Genocide Convention Article 2a and 2b - Killing members of the group; Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group.

Within the camps themselves, two thirds of refugees interviewed 66.7% required medical treatment of some form of illness. These illnesses ranged from high fevers to malnourishment to imminent child birth. 57% of interviewees reported that they had some form of access to medical support and treatment but this was dependent on accessing money to get treatment. 30.2% reported that they did not have adequate shelter with the majority still sleeping directly on the exposed earth in cramped conditions. The conditions in these camps is similar to the conditions in which more than 150,000 Rohingya are living in in IDP camps following the 2012 wave of violence. It is also similar to the conditions Rohingya found themselves living in following similar military campaigns in 1978 and 1992.

The majority of children reported feeling insecure in the evenings and night with fear of the dark and the threat of kidnapping being the primary reasons stated. Sanitation facilities was reported time and again in terms of difficulties faced during the evening. The overall conditions of the camps suggest cramped, squalid living conditions with medical needs under-served and the security of camps and specifically



the threat of trafficking a particularly striking issue. The report findings of the camp conditions and the similarity of the conditions faced time and again by the Rohingya after military attacks of the past lead to conclusive evidence that the Burmese military have been 'Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part' (Article 2c 1948 UN Genocide convention)

The data shows that 20.8% of respondents saw women and girls being targeted, kidnapped or raped because they were pregnant. 11.5% had witnessed kidnapping by Burmese military either with intent to kill or rape. 14.6% reported seeing children being massacred either via machete attacks or being thrown into fire pits. This leads to conclusive and tangible evidence of genocide yet again as defined

by Article 2 (d) "Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group" and 2e - the targeting of children as laid out by the 1948 UN Genocide Convention.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is naturally present in most interviewees and refugees following the violence that they have witnessed with many people stating a continued fear but 10.42% explicitly site trauma and mention symptoms of PTSD through hearing bullet sounds, flashbacks, nightmares and fears over sanity . 40% of these individuals are children of 13years or younger with some interviews as young as 5 year olds expressing their lasting trauma.

46.9% of refugees interviewed explicitly expressed a preference to eventually leave the camps and go back to their home country, Burma but only if there is safety and security in Burma and with Citizenship rights. Many also described their absolute resignation that there may never be peace so would accept building a life elsewhere. The repatriation deal signed by Burma and Bangladesh does not explicitly grant citizenship rights to those returning. The significant proportion of interviewees stating security issues and fear of abductions as well as the impending risk of traffickers operating in the area points to a severe risk of trafficking within the camps.

The deliberate and systematic approach by the Burmese military of targeting the Rohingya which includes large-scale death, using rape as weapon, the targeting of pregnant women and children and inflicting conditions on the Rohingya such that they feel fleeing the country is the only viable solution can be summarised as a Genocide. The 1948 UN Genocide Convention defines genocide as:

"In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

The International Criminal Court has been setup to identify and prosecute on a number of areas with genocide being one. It would be the instrument of justice to prosecute genocidists.

From the findings and conclusions of this report one of the most pertinent risks prevalent within the makeshift refugee camps is that of human trafficking. This can be summarised into two distinct categories; voluntary and forced trafficking. Voluntary trafficking is when members of the Rohingya community voluntarily seek to migrate to other states via networks of traffickers, whilst forced trafficking is when someone is being trafficked without consent most commonly for some form of abuse or subjugation. 50% of children who were interviewed stated that they felt fearful of being abducted and/or trafficked at night. 8.3% of respondents said that they had been approached by human trafficking agents to travel out of the camps onto other states or regions.



Recommendations

As per the objectives of this report to serve Governments and their agencies (specifically United Kingdom Government and Bangladesh Government) and to non-government organisations and international non-government organisations (NGO's and INGO's), the recommendations and notes have been categorised into appropriate sections below:

NGO's And INGO's

Objective 1 – Situational study of camps and refugees

NGO's deploying staff to camps should be made aware of the case that rather than refugees, the Rohingya are at large a community of genocide victims and sufferers. As such, the approach by staff and programmes should match the needs of the people. Relief and aid efforts should be sensitively designed. Those carrying out research and ground studies should be vigilant over the use of language and the nature of trauma that the Rohingya have suffered. Camp conditions are overwhelming with almost 700,000 living in a relatively small geographical area. Many of the arrivals have lost family member and have been separated from loved ones. NGO's should train their staff adequately prior to deployment and should also have provisions for mental health wellness on their return.

Objective 2 – Camp Needs Assessment

The most urgent need in the camps is that of medical assistance and treatment with 67% of refugees still awaiting any form of medical support. Within this, pregnant women are simply not being adequately supported medically. The data finds that 80% of pregnant women are in households with no medical support with many of those interviewed in late stages of pregnancy. It is imperative that more medical support is provided for pregnant and lactating mothers and NGO's need to increase their medical support for mothers in the camps.

Victims of rape and especially those giving birth from rape need to be fully supported. 50% of children stated a fear of abduction and simple measures such as providing more light sources could greatly increase camp security.

30% of refugees stated that they did not have adequate shelter and NGO's need to ensure that adequate weather proof shelters are provided in greater numbers.

100% of those questioned had witnessed and experienced violence, death and destruction of property. 10.4% of those questioned displayed obvious symptoms of PTSD but the actual figures of PTSD are significantly higher and provisions should be made available such as mental health medical centres and more mental health wellness activities within camps.



Objective 3 – Risk Assessments of Camps

NGO's have a vital role to play in terms of reducing the risk of trafficking. On a primary level the better the provisions for the refugees the less likely they will be to search for voluntary trafficking routes. Secondly NGO's can use their bases of influence to provide information to refugees through education programmes of the risks involved with voluntary trafficking to third countries.

Diphtheria has also proven to be a risk in the camps and outbreaks of cholera, chronic diarrhoea and other illnesses cannot be ruled out. Once again through programmes of education these can be significantly reduced.

Finally, with repatriation looming, NGO's and INGO's should pursue their home Governments to push for access to Burma to provide for the refugees who will be repatriated to Burma. Currently a blockade on aid is in place in Burma but if repatriation is to happen, funding streams should be prepared to potentially have a presence on either side of the border. It must be stressed by all parties involved that the apartheid conditions of barbed wire and severe restriction of movement should be removed immediately.

Governments

Objective 1 – Situational study of camps and refugees

Findings have suggested that the overwhelming majority of the interviewees have witnessed unfathomable violence by the hands of the Burmese military and its subsidiaries. 83% of respondents having first hand witnessed killings by the Burmese military, 28% witnessing first hand family members being killed, 100% of interviewees witnessing their homes and property being destroyed and burned and 100% of respondents saying they had witnessed violence lead to the conclusion that Genocide had occurred at the hands of the Burmese military. Furthermore the scale of the violence and destruction with findings from 23 different villages across a wide geographical area of Burma substantiate the Genocide label of the atrocity. These findings match to the 1948 UN Genocide Convention definition namely:



- (a) Killing members of the group; (at least 2476 deaths witnessed including family members accounted for from a sample size of just 96)
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (100% of respondents had witnessed homes being burnt/destroyed and 100% witnessed violence – 10.4% showing obvious signs of PTSD)
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (10.41 people per household structure, 67% of interviewees requiring medical attention, 30% of respondents still not having adequate shelter)
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (20.8% of respondents had seen women or girls who were pregnant being raped, 11.5% of respondents had witnessed women/girls being abducted with intent to kill or rape)
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. (14.6% of interviewees had witnessed children being massacred by beatings or being thrown into pits of fire)

All of the above lead to an obvious campaign by the Burmese military “with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group” – in this case the Rohingya (an ethnic group – even the Rohingya Hindu testify to experiencing and witnessing violence and destruction which shows that this is an attack on ethnicity rather than religion alone)

As such, it is absolutely imperative that the UK Government, the Bangladesh Government and all other members of the international community refer to this issue as a Burmese military Genocide. Not doing so has dangerous consequences mainly in allowing the Burmese military to act without impunity. The term Genocide clearly has legal implications. As laid out in the Rome Statute 2002, the International



Criminal Court has been established to identify and try parties liable to international crime. Article 6 of the Rome Statute defines Genocide with the same wording as that of the 1948 UN Genocide Convention. Burma is not a signatory of the Rome Statute as such the only means for a referral to the ICC is through a UN Security Council referral. The UK Government should lead on getting this referral as it has shown leadership over recent months in getting the crisis discussed at Security Council level. Bangladesh being the host country to the refugees should also press ahead with this with the Security Council as it has had to bare the forefront of Burmese military genocide towards the Rohingya time and again in 1978, 1991 and now in 2017. Without being brought to account those who are responsible for the genocide will act again as precedence has shown. Other Governments and international bodies such as OIC, ASEAN, EU and AU should support this and ensure that the correct terminology is used. Terms such as 'ethnic cleansing' do not match the atrocities that have been experienced and witnessed and to do so is

allowing the Burmese military to commit such horrors without being legally accountable.

Objective 2 – Camp Needs Assessment

This objective was primarily aimed at providing information and data to NGO's and INGO's. Despite this Government agencies that are currently based in the camps should be made aware of the findings. There is still a massive vacuum in terms of meeting the needs of medical treatment with 67% still needing medical assistance. PTSD is clearly visible in the camps with at least 10.4% showing obvious signs. Security is also a massive concern with deeper implications of forced and voluntary trafficking. The total funding estimated by OCHA to meet the crisis needs was set at US\$434.1 and to date there is still 29% of that budget unmet. International governments are urged to continue donating to ensure that vulnerabilities such as medical and security needs are met. Whilst issues such as medical and security needs remain unmet and with the prospect of a forced repatriation to Burma without citizenship and safety looms the risk of trafficking both voluntary and forced increases. The Bangladesh Government needs to ensure that they maintain two way communications with NGO's with regards to the provisions needed in camps. With 30% of interviewees still requiring adequate shelter, provisions for more permanent structures are needed to withstand seasonal adjustments.

Objective 3 – Risk Assessments of Camps

UN spokesman, Stephane Dujarric in November 2017 said "The UN Migration Agency (IOM) has found that human trafficking and exploitation is rife among Rohingya refugees who have fled Myanmar into Bangladesh"

The Bangladesh Government has provided army assistance to maintain law and order in the camps but a combined international effort is needed in terms of dealing with the trafficking issue at large. Voluntary trafficking whereby refugees seek to take advantage of trafficking networks by buying places on foreign bound boats is a high risk currently especially between February and May when it is sailing season. Regional Governments such as Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and India should work alongside the Bangladesh Government to ensure that a repeat of the boat crisis of 2015 (see Background) is not repeated. Within Bangladesh trafficking that is exploitative in nature has been identified by various agencies and a crackdown on such networks is needed. This report recommends strongly that the Bangladesh Government continue its presence of military in the camps and this should be supported by international governments in terms of funding and training where necessary.

The repatriation deal between Bangladesh and Burma however is problematic as it does not guarantee citizenship rights, a return of property and belongings and any assurance of safety. Burma has indicated that the repatriation would involve shifting the Rohingya into purpose built refugee camps and inferentially a return to camp living conditions faced in Bangladesh. This repatriation has been trialled once previously by both nations in 1992 and there were countless problems. Apartheid conditions will be created by such a repatriation deal. Having such a repatriation deal also increases the risk of voluntary trafficking to severe. To combat this the Bangladesh government should re-negotiate the terms of the repatriation and use international bodies such as UNHCR to ensure that mistakes from 1992 are not repeated. Diplomatic efforts should continue by international governments such as the UK to broker a deal which



works in favour of the victims, the refugees, the Rohingya as opposed to the two states Burma and Bangladesh. Sheikh Hasina Bangladesh PM at the General Assembly of the UN in September stated: “We are horrified to see that the Myanmar authorities are laying landmines along their stretch of the border to prevent the Rohingyas from returning to Myanmar”, and concerted efforts should be made by Bangladesh Government to insist on Burmese military to remove these landmines before any repatriation takes place.

Furthermore, international Governments need to press Burma to allow for aid agencies and NGO's to enter Arakan to meet the needs of the returning refugees who will return with no home, no property, no citizenship and no safety. Burma has already indicated that the refugees will be returning to newly established camps but this will perpetuate the apartheid on the Rohingya. NGO's must be allowed to provide basic needs for the returning refugees. Additionally, some of those interviewed for this report were from the only visible camp on the border in Thumbru which is actually located in Burma. This camp and others that exist currently on the border fence but in Burma are seriously under-serviced and all international Governments should continue to push for access for INGO's and aid agencies such as UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM and others.

Longer term and to ensure that such a repeat of violence does not reoccur, the repeal of the 1982 Citizenship law should be encouraged by Governments who maintain diplomatic ties and as a caveat for future trade aspirations. The use of sanctions has previously shown mixed results and consequentially using caveats such as insisting on law reform to welcome more democratic attributes such as citizenship rights and the respect of human rights is a better approach. As a major supporter of the democratic reform of Burma, the UK is well placed to lead on the 1982 Citizenship Law repeal. If the prospect of Citizenship is real and founded then the repatriation process will be far smoother and productive. It is the only long term solution. History has unfortunately repeated itself many times for the Rohingya and the heart of the issue remains the issue of citizenship for a people who have been stripped of their citizenship by a military junta of the 1960's.

