



FACT-FINDING REPORT

ON ROHINGYA REFUGEES IN BANGLADESH

24-29 MARCH 2018



FORUM-ASIA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the face of a new wave of violence that included genocidal killings by security forces in Myanmar's Rakhine (formerly Arakan) State since 24 August 2017, some 671,000 Rohingyas have fled to Bangladesh from their villages and townships as of April 2018. They are now living in refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, together with another 200,000 or so Rohingya refugees who crossed the border into Bangladesh over the past many decades when successive waves of violence broke out.

In this context, FORUM-ASIA and its members in Bangladesh – Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), Madaripur Legal Aid Association (MLAA), Odhikar, Resource Integration Centre (RIC) and Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) – organised a fact-finding mission on 24-29 March 2018 to collect first-hand information about the human rights and humanitarian situation in refugee camps housing the Rohingyas in various camps in Cox's Bazar of Bangladesh, and measures taken to respond to the situation by various actors.

The Rohingya refugees survived horrendous atrocities, including torture, sexual violence, and mass executions. They also lost properties including foodstuff and livestock, as their houses were set on fire. The scale of the atrocities recounted by them revealed clear patterns and elements of mass atrocity crimes (genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and crime of aggression).

Most of the camps the team visited had basic services, such as makeshift latrines, tube wells, mosques, madrassas, basic child learning/friendly centres, food distribution centres, market places, and trauma counselling centres. In some locations, semi-concrete toilets were also seen. However, the trauma centres and child friendly spaces

were not found to be used. A significant number of huts were near shallow stream and on hilltops, vulnerable to be washed away during monsoon. Both the Rohingyas and service providers the team interacted with indicated their awareness of the danger and were reportedly preparing for all eventualities. On the spot, however, the preparation was not visible. This vulnerability was a serious concern among Rohingyas themselves.

In the field, coordination gaps were visible among agencies providing support and services to the refugees. This was particularly evident in the lack of proper information-sharing and communication about agencies with specific expertise and facility at their disposal, such as excreta disposal facility. This gap prevented the refugees from benefiting from this facility even when the need was dire.

All the refugees the team interacted with wanted to return to their home village on guarantee of Myanmar citizenship with recognition of Rohingya identity, a UN-protected safe zone, and unrestrained freedom to exercise their human rights, including the right to education and livelihood opportunities, as enjoyed by any other Myanmar citizen.

Further to talking to the refugees in the camps, the fact-finding mission concluded that the violence that is both shockingly widespread as well as systematically intentional was central to the stories and narratives of Rohingya refugees. The violence is forced upon them just because of who they are, with an intent to destroy them. In the camps, everyday life seems normal. Basic services are available for which refugees are appreciative of and grateful for. However, inter-agency coordination needs immediate improvement to address the urgent needs of the refugees.

The fact-finding has resulted in a nine-point recommendation addressing the governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar and the international community, including the UN, regional players, and other stakeholders. The main recommendations are as follows:

- The Government of Bangladesh and the international community should respect, protect, and fulfil all human rights of the uprooted Rohingya people, including their immediate needs of basic health, sanitation, and hygiene in the camps, and also their longer term special needs.
- The Government of Bangladesh, the international community and all agencies involved should immediately put in place an alternative measure to deal with the challenges connected to the upcoming monsoon season. The camp authorities should also be prepared for a possible outbreak of cholera and other water-borne diseases.
- Opportunities should be established in the camps for systematic education for refugee children.
- A special package of assistance should be developed for single women, who are in a sizeable number with most of them heading a family as their male counterparts have been killed, with services including psychosocial counselling and livelihood skills training.
- Special packages of care and protection, including the protection of identity, should be arranged for unwanted children of rape victims.
- Given that the primary responsibility of protecting the Rohingya population lies with Myanmar as the country of origin and Bangladesh as the host country, the two Governments must critically engage in dialogue with the presence of international stakeholders, such as UN agencies, to find a sustainable solution to the Rohingya refugee crisis as soon as possible.
- The international community should initiate an effective and independent international criminal investigation into the alleged mass atrocity crimes committed against the Rohingya people. Justice and accountability for such crimes must be established and those responsible held to account. To this end, a process of preserving evidence of gross human rights violations and related crimes should be initiated immediately.
- Existing preparation towards repatriation of the Rohingya refugees back to Myanmar, as is being heard, is extremely premature and exclusive. A repatriation process should involve the consultation with and participation of the Rohingya community, including Rohingya women, in all stages to protect and safeguard their rights and interests.

ABBREVIATIONS

ARSA	Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASK	Ain O Salish Kendra
BGP	Boarder Guard Police
ICG	International Crisis Group
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ISCG	Inter-Sector Coordination Group
MLAA	Madaripur Legal Aid Association
MMK	Myanmar Kyat
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
RIC	Resource Integration Centre
RMMRU	Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem in Perspective

In the face of a new wave of violence that included genocidal killings by security forces in Myanmar's Rakhine (formerly Arakan) State since 24 August 2017, some 671,000 Rohingyas have fled to Bangladesh from their villages and townships as of April 2018.¹ They are now living in refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, together with another 200,000 or so Rohingya refugees who crossed the border into Bangladesh over the past many decades when successive waves of violence broke out.

The persecution against Rohingyas is rooted in longstanding discrimination and denial of basic human rights, including the right to religion, ethnic identity and citizenship. This discrimination dates back to Burma's independence from the United Kingdom in 1948. However, it became systematic after 1962, when the military junta took control of the country and introduced laws stripping the Rohingyas of citizenship and impinging upon their religious and cultural rights, including the right to found a family. In particular, the 1982 Citizenship



1 UNHCR. 2018. "Bangladesh 5 - 20 April 2018" Operational Update. (Draws on reports of the Inter-Sector Coordination Group). <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/63289>

Introduction

Law denies Rohingyas Myanmar citizenship, and, with this denial, deprives them of all basic rights and freedoms making them vulnerable to violence and repression.²

In 1978, a military operation – code named the ‘Dragon King’ – was organised specifically targeting against the Rohingyas. In the operation, the Burmese military is found to engage in ‘widespread killings and rapes of Rohingya civilians, and ... the destruction of mosques and other religious persecution’ resulting in the ‘exodus of an estimated 200,000 Rohingyas to neighbouring Bangladesh’.³ This operation terrorised the entire Rohingyas and psychologically forced them into submission. It also encouraged the ethnic Rakhines, who constitute some two-thirds of the population in Rakhine State (with the Rohingyas being the remaining one-third), to engage in destruction and decimation of the Rohingyas and their properties.

Then on state-sponsored violence against Rohingyas continued to occur. In 1991/92, following the deployment of military to the Rakhine State, troops began a systematic campaign ‘to drive these ‘foreign elements [Rohingyas]’ across the border into Bangladesh’ using such tactics as ‘seizure of land, destruction of mosques, mass arrests, and widespread rape’.⁴ In 2012, a series of violence broke out leading to nearly 200 people being killed, over 260 being injured, over 8,000 houses, mostly of Rohingyas, being destroyed and some 140,000 people being displaced.⁵

In 2014, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Tomás Ojea Quintana, had found ‘discrimination and human rights violations’ aimed at the Rohingyas in a pattern so ‘widespread and systematic’ that it might ‘constitute crimes against humanity as defined under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court’. The pattern included ‘extrajudicial killing, rape and other forms of sexual violence, arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment in detention, denial of due process and fair trial rights, and the forcible transfer and severe deprivation of liberty’.⁶

Similarly, in 2016, ‘the military committed extensive and severe human rights violations against the Rohingya including the burning of homes, mass rape, torture, execution without trial, and the blocking of aid’⁷ forcing hundreds of Rohingyas to flee to Bangladesh. The Rakhine State was on ‘complete lockdown for six weeks’ as the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Yanghee Lee, remarked.⁸

The latest violence against Rohingyas escalated into the crisis point after a militant group – the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) – claimed responsibility for the August 25th attacks on police and army posts that killed 14 members of the security forces and one government official.⁹ In retaliation, the Government mobilised the military that mounted what the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said as the ‘widespread and brutal attacks’ that

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- 2 For further information, see, Human Rights Watch. 2015. *Burma: Amend Biased Citizenship Law*. (<https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/01/13/burma-amend-biased-citizenship-law>)
 - 3 Zawacki, Benjamin. 2013. “Defining Myanmar’s “Rohingya Problem”. *The Human Rights Brief* 20, No. 3, 2013 (<http://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/hrbrief/vol20/iss3/2/>)
 - 4 Akins, Harrison. 2016. “Why the Appointment of Kofi Annan to Myanmar’s Advisory Commission on Rakhine State is Important.” *Huffpost*. (https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/why-the-appointment-of-kofi-annan-to-myanmars-advisory_us_57c893bae4b07addc411a8fd)
 - 5 ICG. 2014. Myanmar: *The Politics of Rakhine State*. Asia Report N°261, 22 October 2014 (<https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/myanmar/myanmar-politics-rakhine-state>). The report details violence meted out to Rohingyas from 1978 to 2012.
 - 6 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar. *A/HRC/25/64*, 2 April 2014 (<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session25/Pages/ListReports.aspx>)
 - 7 Christian Solidarity Worldwide. 2017. *BURMA: Human rights violations against Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine state since 9 October 2016*. (file:///Users/FA-BKK-CP-032/Desktop/CSS%20Report%20on%20Burma%202016.pdf)
 - 8 OHCHR. 2016. *Myanmar: UN expert warns of worsening rights situation after “lockdown” in Rakhine State*. (<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20895&LangID=E>)
 - 9 ICG. 2017. *Myanmar’s Rohingya Crisis Enters a Dangerous New Phase*. Asia Report N°292, 7 December 2017 (<https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/myanmar/292-myanmars-rohingya-crisis-enters-dangerous-new-phase>).

include ‘acts of appalling barbarity committed against the Rohingya, including deliberately burning people to death inside their homes; murders of children and adults; indiscriminate shooting of fleeing civilians; widespread rapes of women and girls; and the burning and destruction of houses, schools, markets and mosques’.¹⁰ The barbarity, the High Commissioner suggested, may have ‘elements of genocide’.

In this context, FORUM-ASIA, together with its members in Bangladesh – Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), Madaripur Legal Aid Association (MLAA), Odhakar, Resource Integration Centre (RIC), and Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) – organized a fact-finding mission on 23-29 March 2018 to collect first-hand information about the human rights and humanitarian situation in refugee camps housing the Rohingyas in Cox’s Bazar.

1.2 Objectives and Methodology

1.2.1 Objectives

The larger objective of the mission was to assess the human rights and humanitarian situation on the ground and the measures taken to respond to the situation by various actors, including the people and Government of Bangladesh, United Nation agencies and non-governmental organisations. How the supply of services was coordinated and whether the services addressed special needs of women, particularly the survivors of sexual violence, children and the senior (elderly) people, were the focus of attention.

1.2.2 Methodology

This report is based on information collected from over 80 Rohingya men and women through seven focus-group discussions and eight in-depth interviews on seven locations/extensions of refugee camps in Lambasia, Kutupalong, Balukhali, and Thyingkhali between 24 and 28 March 2018. Discussion and interviews were conducted with the help of interpreters. All the participants of the focus-group discussions and interviews consented to include the information they have shared in the report. They also consented to the publication of

their names. However, in the report, their real names are not used in view of their security. Observation of campsites, service distribution centres, child development centres, and informal interaction with people in and around the camps were also used as sources of information. Interviews and discussions with survivors of sexual violence were conducted under strict ethical standards and with informed consent.

A separate interaction was organised with the majhis (block leaders) – the Rohingya men and women working as a bridge between camp management teams and Rohingyas refugees – to gauge how the camps were managed and services distributed. The fact-finding mission team met with three service-providing agencies to examine the state of coordination among them, and also to get a sense of their preparedness to deal with possible eventualities, such as floods and landslides during the monsoon that may badly affect the camps.

Each day, on completion of the interaction, a debriefing was organised among all fact-finding team members to share the experience and observation of the day, and see if some adjustments to field planning, including data collection, had to be made. Then, each team worked separately to draw the summary of findings of the particular team. In drawing the summary each team took due care not to miss any bit of experience of the respondents and their interpretation of it. The report was drafted based on the notes. The draft was reviewed by all team members of the fact-finding mission and finalised with their comments and inputs.

1.2.2.1 Methodological Limitations

1.2.2.1.1 Limited Sample Size

The sample size involves 80 Rohingya people, which is just a fraction of the refugee population in the camps. Although every effort has been made to ensure proper representation in the choice of extensions/locations and participants for discussion/interviews, the information collected might still not be exhaustive.

10 UN. 2017. “UN rights chief calls for probe into attacks against Rohingya, says genocide ‘cannot be ruled out’.” *UN News* (5 December 2017). (<https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/12/638322-un-rights-chief-calls-probe-attacks-against-rohingya-says-genocide-cannot-be>)

Introduction

1.2.2.1.2 Number of Rohingyas

The total number of Rohingyas is very difficult to ascertain. As work on a centralised database is going on, as the mission was informed, and might take some time for a final figure to come out, the data tally will continue to be challenging. Figures available differ from agency to agency, and these too are based on extrapolation.

Sources	Total Refugees	Post 25 August 2017 Arrivals
UNHCR ¹	876,049	671,000
IOM ²	898,300	687,000
ISCG ³	1,100,160 (Government figure of biometric registration)	

1 See footnote 1 above.

2 See <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/iom-bangladesh-rohingya-humanitarian-crisis-response-external-update-20-26-april>

3 ISCG. 2018. *Situation Report: Rohingya Refugee Crisis (12 April 2018)*. https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/20180413_iscg_sitrep_1.pdf

1.2.2.1.3 Accuracy of Dates

The report builds on the memory of Rohingya men and women who have survived the worst forms of structural and direct violence one can think of, and have been struggling hard to come to terms with it. As such, the dates of events narrated by them may not always be accurate. What remains doubtless is the horrendous story of suffering they have endured, which was evident from the scars on their bodies, amputated body parts, and frank and open admission by women sexually abused by security forces.

1.2.3 Mission Members and their Roles

1.2.3.1 Mission Members

The mission comprised 10 members: six from member organisations of FORUM-ASIA in Bangladesh; an expert invited from a FORUM-ASIA member organisation in India; and three representatives from the FORUM-ASIA Secretariat.

1.2.3.2 Role Assignment

The mission members were divided into three groups. One group, led by a women member of the mission, interacted exclusively with women that included survivors of sexual violence. Another two groups interacted with Rohingya men. To make the interaction smooth, organised, and non-intrusive, a member was identified as a coordinator of the group to facilitate the interaction, and a member as the main note taker. However, all members in the team were assigned to take note of main points as well as their observations, and contribute to the discussion as relevant. A set of guiding questions (Annex 1) was developed to facilitate the interaction.

1.3. Structure of the Report

The report is organised into six sections, including this introductory one. The second section presents the history of Rohingya persecution. It is the history of their experience through their own interpretation. The third section presents the typology of violence they had endured before being forced to leave for Bangladesh from their lands in Rakhine state. The fourth section presents an overview of the situation inside the camps based on observations as well as information shared by the refugees. The fifth section presents in brief how the refugees look at their future. The final section presents conclusions and recommendations drawn from the discussions in previous sections.

II HISTORY OF PERSECUTION AGAINST ROHINGYAS

The history of persecutions against the Rohingyas dates back to 1948, when the country, then called Burma, achieved independence from the British rule.¹¹ During colonial rule, the British colonisers divided people on the basis of their ethnic and religious identity, and played on that division, often times pitting one against the other. In the then Arakan State, now renamed Rakhine State, the division was predominantly between the Muslim Rohingyas and the Buddhist Rakhine ethnic group.

After Burma's independence in 1948, the Rohingyas were further sidelined and marginalised. The Burmese state adopted exclusionary policies, drawing on ambiguous and contradictory provisions in the Constitution, including provisions on

citizenship, that gave way to biased interpretation and operationalisation.¹² The Rohingyas, on their part, demanded, and even launched an armed rebellion for, among other things, the recognition of their cultural identity and Burmese citizenship.¹³ The rebellion soon petered out and the Rohingyas continued to be pushed aside even under civilian rules.

The situation of Rohingyas was worse under the military regime. In March 1962, General Ne Win launched a military coup against the civilian Government of the day, suspended the Constitution, and imposed a military dictatorship. The regime followed a much tougher and harsher approach to ethnic minorities, including the Rohingyas, as narrated in the sections below.



11 Abdelkader, Engy. 2017. "The History of the Persecution of Myanmar's Rohingyas." *The Conversation*, 21 September 2017 (<https://theconversation.com/the-history-of-the-persecution-of-myanmars-rohingya-84040>)

12 Farzana, KaziFahmida. 2017. *Memories of Burmese Rohingya Refugees: Contested Identity and Belonging*. New York: Palgrave (pp 46-47).

13 Chan, Aye. 2005. "The Development of a Muslim Enclave in Arakan (Rakhine) State of Burma (Myanmar)." *SOAS Bulletin of Burma Research*, Vol. 3, No. 2, Autumn 2005 (<https://www.soas.ac.uk/sbbr/editions/file64388.pdf>)

History of Persecution Against Rohingyas

2.1 The Persecution in Rohingya Memory¹⁴

2.1.1 1962 to July 2017

The Burmese state was never kind to Rohingyas. However, until 1962, there used to be some social and legal protection available to them. They had access to education and representatives in parliament. Some Rohingyas were also in the government service. With the institution of the military dictatorship, these opportunities were closed. The military regime first denied Rohingyas' access to higher-level education as soon as it usurped power and, gradually across a five-year period, secondary and primary level education as well.

By the early 1990s, educational opportunities were almost closed for the Rohingya children beyond grade seven, which they could study in their villages. To study beyond grade seven, they had to go to the city, which would require prior permission from the authority that was almost impossible to get. As such, they would not even try to get permission, as it would only invite repercussions. The government of Myanmar had announced a ban on Rohingyas to enter certain fields, such as engineering and medicine.

By 1993, violence against Rohingyas had become the new norm at the hands of the security forces as well as Buddhist Rakhines (formerly Arakans). Violence took the form of anything one could think of: torture; killing; violence against women; pillage; destruction of properties, and so on. Even monks were part of the violence.

In 1992 and 1993, additional military and Border Guard Police (BGP) camps were set up to control the movement and everyday life of Rohingyas. Every Rohingya had to register before going to a next village or city for shopping or any other purpose, and had to return within the time given to them. The security forces would keep the time. A failure to return within the time permitted would involve both imprisonment and fine. In some cases, the military would even

delete the name of the person from the list of village inhabitants, and would relegate them to the status of an illegal inhabitant.

Registrations of marriage, birth, and death were compulsory, not only of humans, but also of animals, particularly of cows, buffalos, and goats. The key purpose of the registrations was to extract money. Each registration would involve a charge between 10,000 and 20,000 Myanmar Kyat (MMK)¹⁵. In case of any delay in registration, the amount would increase exorbitantly. Security forces would check at regular intervals the number of cattle owned. If the number of cattle exceeded the number registered, a heavy fine would be imposed and the best cattle would be snatched.

Almost half of their produce had to be given to security persons every harvest season. During patrol, which used to happen regularly, security persons would take cattle, chickens, or fishes of their choice. Fertile land was occupied on the pretext of office construction for security forces. The actual intent was, however, to deny the Rohingyas the fertile land to work and create difficulties for them to make a living and force them to leave the village. In some cases, fertile lands were taken from the possession of the Rohingyas and distributed to Buddhist Rakhines in an apparent attempt to fan inter community hostility and conflict.

Their social life, such as marriage, was also under control. One had to get permission before marriage. In the case of a woman, she had to be sent to the camps for enquiry and age verification, as the security forces would explain, and stay there for a day or two, or as long as the security forces would keep her. In the camps, she would be raped. Rape was, thus, institutionalised in the military and BGP camps. Similarly, a widower had to wait for at least three years to get clearance from security forces to remarry. The clearance for remarriage would involve a fine of 500,000 to 1,000,000 MMK.

Even the celebration of festivals was heavily restricted. Purchase of groceries and other essentials were almost banned, especially in the last few

14 This section presents the narrative as experienced by Rohingyas. It primarily draws on the information shared during focus group discussions held among the Rohingyas, both men and women, on 25 and 26 March 2018 in different camps.

15 This amount is about USD 7.5 and 15 (exchange rate: 1 USD = 1,340.16 MMK)

years. No community would be allowed to slaughter an animal (a cow in Eid, for example, their own property) more than the number permitted. A breach of permission would involve widespread torture and fine. Permission to build and operate Madrasas and Mosques were denied after 1993. Some Mosques were even locked, preventing the Rohingyas from visiting and praying. They had no access to the market even to buy shroud to wrap dead bodies, and had to use old blankets.

To build a house was also difficult. If the construction was found to violate instructions from security forces, which were always oral and confusing, heavy fines would be imposed. The use of boat – for transportation of goods or movement of persons – would also involve payment of fines.

No Rohingyas were allowed to set up any trade or business. No one was expected to own a mobile (SIM) and communicate with people from other villages. They knew nothing about the next village and the situation there. Each village was cut off from the others.

Almost all Rohingyas were subjected to forced labour. They had to be on call round the clock to engage in development projects for which they would get no wage or compensation. If anyone failed to show up, they would be beaten and fined. In the event of illness, the Rohingyas would not get anything more than locally available basic medicines.

No receipt was available for the payment of fines. Instead, every moment a fine was paid, a Rohingya was asked to sign an undertaking that the amount paid would not be reported to anyone.

2.1.2 August 2017 Onwards

On 20 August 2017, amidst the rumour of two monks being killed somewhere in Rakhine State, security personnel, including BGP, came to a Dongkhali village and called villagers to gather in an open space. In the gathering, the villagers were asked to identify which of them killed the monks. Failure to identify the killer, the security forces threatened, would result in dire consequences. After a volley of verbal abuse and humiliation, the security forces left.

Some four or five days later, at around midnight of 25 August, people of Daultoli, Tulatoli, Dongkhali

and other villages heard bizarre sounds of gunshots from nearby BGP camps. Next morning, at around 7 or 8, they saw security personnel enter the village from outskirts, setting houses to fire with rocket launchers. People left their houses and belongings in panic and started to run uphill and downhill for safety. Dozens were killed while trying to flee.

By 30 August, almost all Rohingyas had left their villages. Some were hiding in jungles. Others were in different spots of the beach along the river. Some others had already left for Bangladesh. In the morning of 30 August, security personnel surrounded those hiding in different places, and forced them towards the beach, firing and shouting at them. Within hours, some 1,800 to 2,000 people had gathered at a beach in Tulatoli. Security personnel and Rakhine Buddhists, armed with local weapons, then separated women and children from men, and started to murder the men. Some 200 men jumped into the river to escape the murder. Only 50 of them could survive, the rest were shot dead while swimming. Those killed on the beach were dumped in large pits, dug by the security personnel and the Rakhine Buddhists, and set on fire. Gasoline needed to burn the corpses was supplied through a helicopter.

After the men were killed, the security personnel turned to women and children. Some children were killed and thrown into the river instantly. Most of the women and girls were taken to nearby houses, where they were raped, beaten, stabbed and even killed. The houses were then locked and set on fire for the wounded to be burned alive.

Once Rohingyas started to leave en masse, which the security forces and Rakhine Buddhists wanted to see; the security forces then started to loot whatever cash and jewellery the fleeing Rohingyas had. Women who had no jewellery were abused, manhandled, and humiliated.

Most of the Rohingya villages in Rakhine State as of March 2018 have turned into ghost towns. All houses, including mosques, have been destroyed, without any sign that the villages were ever inhabited. All who escaped massacre are in the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar.

The Government of Myanmar had been planning for this expulsion of Rohingyas from Rakhine for long. At times, security forces were directly involved. Other times, it was Buddhist Rakhines and even

History of Persecution Against Rohingyas

monks who abused the Rohingyas and violated their dignity. Security forces did nothing when all that was happening. The international community did not take head of this crisis unfolding, and did nothing to prevent it.

2.1.3 Journey into Bangladesh

The journey to Bangladesh from the villages in Rakhine State took from two to 14 days, depending on which village they came from and which route they followed. Those who had to carry children, elderly, and the wounded spent more time than the rest. The walking track passed through forests, marshland and hills. To avoid the attention of security forces, the Rohingyas did not pick the usual plain or main road. Most of them walked days without food and water, except a few lucky ones, who happened to get some food from villagers.

Crossing the Naf River into Bangladesh by boat involved a charge up to 300,000 MMK for 10 persons. This payment to boat owners was mostly in kind, such as jewellery. Children and the wounded were, however, rarely charged.

Initially, most of the Rohingyas stayed by the roadside after entering Bangladesh. A few stayed near the registered camps housing Rohingyas who had gone to Bangladesh before 1992. Local people and members of Tablighi Jamaat provided the stranded Rohingyas with food and shelter until external agencies came to help them.

After 12 September 2018, following the initiation of the Government of Bangladesh, the refugees started to move to a designated place in makeshift camps, which were initiated by the Bangladesh at Yunchiprang.

The stories and testimonies the Rohingyas have recounted include all egregious forms of violence one can find in a glossary of violence: deliberate murder; torture and ill treatment; rape, including mass rape and gang rape and other forms of sexual violence; and destruction of both private and public properties. This section presents a typology of the most egregious violence meted out to Rohingyas as explained by them to the mission.



III TYPOLOGY OF VIOLENCE METED OUT TO ROHINGYAS

3.1 Destruction of Entire Villages

Rohingyas were not unfamiliar with such incidents such as the burning of their houses by security forces and/or Buddhist Rakhines, but it used to be sporadic in the past. However, from August 2017, it crossed all proportions. Entire villages were set on fire, including mosques and madrassas in a systematic way. A former teacher from Maungdaw said:

Two days after the rumour of the killing of policemen and monks going around, we saw the plume of smoke in the sky coming from villages close to ours. This was the smoke of villages being set on fire. Immediately, helicopters started to hover around to support the troops on the ground. It was the same day the massacre took place on the beach of Tulatoli. Fearing our village would be the next target, we left the village and came to Bangladesh. As feared, our village was destroyed after a few days. Within two to three months thereafter, almost all Rohingya villages were completely burned down.

In the afternoon of 27 September, Mr. A. Kurim, aged 19, was in a mosque to pray with other devotees in his Swaprang village. As soon as the prayer was finished, they saw around 60 military personnel and armed Rakhine Buddhists approach the mosque. Sensing possible violence, Mr. Kurim and the other devotees ran into a house for security:

The military and the extremists came to the front of the house where we were hiding and set fire to the house. Then they started to shoot at us indiscriminately. Amidst the volley of bullets, three of us ran out of the backdoor and jumped into a pond, leaving some 20 or so behind in

the burning house. Three or four militaries followed us and kept firing. I got two shots in my head, one in my shoulder and one in the left leg. I could not move and stayed in the pond until my brother came to lift me the next morning.¹⁶

All the houses around were completely burned down jointly by the military and the extremists. The village headman, a Buddhist Rakhine, whom I knew, was leading the mob that day. I heard him shout twice or thrice 'to kill all men and not to forget to snatch money and ornaments from women'. He also ordered his men 'to cut off the breast of women who would not give their ornaments'.

Ms. Tasmida, aged 35, from Buthidaung, a survivor of gang rape by military, thus recalled the destruction of her village before her eyes:

At around 10 am on 3 September, military personnel came to our village and set fire to all the houses one by one. There were about 100 houses, of which 90 were burnt to ashes immediately. As the military personnel were busy burning the houses, I ran with my children and followed others to Bangladesh. We walked 12 days to reach this place.

3.2 Mass Killings

On 27 September, about 60 people were killed, including Mr. Kurim's father, near a mosque at Swaprang Village. Before being shot at close range, most of their hands were tied to a wooden log and they were beaten by iron rod both by security forces and Rakhine Buddhist extremists. 'I could see all this from the pond, where I was hiding and wounded', said Mr. Kurim, showing bullet wounds on his head

¹⁶ Kurim was taken to a house uphill and kept for seven days without any medication. His brother then carried him, on his back, to Bangladesh, which took nine days. In Bangladesh he was treated at Chittagong Medical College. His left leg was amputated and was on prosthetic leg provided by Saudi Arabia, as the mission was told.

Typology of Violence Meted out to Rohingyas

and shoulder and a prosthetic leg, 'nothing could be more horrendous than to see one's father being killed in such a barbaric way. What else could I do?'

Mr. Ekram, aged 30, from Dioltoli, was one of the witnesses to the mass murder at Tulatoli on 28 September. He lost nine members of his family to the massacre, including his mother, wife, and two-year old son:

Around 150 military personnel and Mogh (Rakhine Buddhist) extremists forced all villagers to gather along the beach at Tulatoli. There were around 2,000 people from Dioltoli and Tulatoli. Most of them had already lost their houses and properties. The army and the Moghs came towards us shouting abuses. They ordered us to kneel down, and started to separate women and children from men. In the meantime, around 200 young men ran into the river. I was one of them.

The military men ran behind us shouting and firing. Around 150 were instantly shot dead. Around 50 could somehow escape the bullets and crossed the river. I was one of them. It was a tough swim, but tougher to leave behind wife and a two-year old son, who were killed together with my mother, siblings and other relatives. Nine people were killed from my family.

From across the river, we could hear screaming, and hue and cry, and saw them being killed. After some time, a helicopter flew over us. We ran and ran to avoid aerial killing and hid into a hill forest. Walking one day and one night, I came to Palong Khali, Bangladesh.

A few days later, I came to know that all those killed were dropped in pits, charred and buried en masse. Helicopter supported the ground troops with petrol and other material needed to dig pits and burn the dead bodies.

Mr. A. Ahmad, aged 29, from Swaprang village, recounted that mass killing also occurred inside police camps. On 27 August, his father and brother were taken to a BGP camp, together with many others.

None of them returned from the camp. 'They did not return, which means the police killed them', he said. 'The police or army would take anyone they would find – men, women and children – and kill and throw. Killing was a sport for them, like a sport of children'.

3.3 Violence against Women, including Gang Rape, Mass Rape and Other Forms of Sexual Violence

'There is nothing to hide. We want the world to know what happened to us'. A group of about 35 women and girls at Balukhali refugee camp, all survivors of rape and sexual assault, as they identified, wanted to share their stories collectively. A team of women members of the mission intended to talk one-on-one in private, following a focus-group discussion with the women on other general issues. But, all of them wanted to be heard. 'We are all survivors of rape. We have been gang raped and mass raped. We have the same story and want to share it collectively'.

The group comprised women aged between 11 and 40 and most of them were from Rathedaung. One of them, Ms. M Khatun, aged 30, and a mother of three daughters and five sons, thus recounted her story before fleeing to Bangladesh:

About seven days after Eid-ul-Adha, military men came into my house at around noon. They took my daughter and me in one room at gunpoint, and gang raped both of us. After the rape, they killed my daughter. They also killed my husband, my father-in-law, brother-in-law and son-in-law as they confronted the army to protect us. After the rape and killing, they set our house on fire.

Ms. F Khatun, aged 40, whose husband and four children were killed, added:

The military would not just rape and leave women unconscious or shoot them dead. They would adopt the most heinous way to kill. After being raped, many women's breasts were cut off and were left to die over a period of time in utmost pain. Violence we endured cannot be explained in words.

Ms. S Khatun, aged 27, whose four of eight children were killed, together with her husband and father-in-law, was taken by the military to a camp along with her four children and mother-in-law. There were many other women in the camp. All of them were raped and tied with ropes. The military then went to the village to destroy it. Taking this opportunity, they somehow managed to untie the ropes and ran to the jungle where they stayed for a few days and fled to Bangladesh. Ms. H Begum, aged 25, whose two of four sons were killed, was the other woman to survive the mass rape and flee to Bangladesh, together with her husband, a brother, two cousins, Ms. Khatun, and dozens others.

Ms. S Begum, aged 25, a mother of two kids, was gang raped. Her husband and son were killed as well:

My husband was killed when he tried to combat the army men approaching to rape me. My son was killed as he screamed when seeing the army rape me. I am still bleeding months after the gang rape. The medicine I was given only gives me temporary relief.

Ms. K Khatun, aged 25, from Buthidaung village, had a family of seven members. Security forces killed two of her children. Ms. Khatun was married off at the age of 16. Her husband was a rich farmer, with 10 cows, five goats, and a trade of rice that would earn him about 500,000 to 600,000 MMK a year. But life was never smooth and easy. Security forces were a constant threat all along. Torture and sexual violence against women were very common. Ms. Khatun was gang raped three times in 2017. The last of the three occurred in August 2017:

In one evening at around 9 pm at the end of August 2017,¹⁷ eight military personnel in combat dress surrounded my house. Four of them stood at the back.

Four forced open the door from the front, entered my house and started to rape me. My daughter, U Habiba, aged 12, and son, N Islam, aged 17, tried to resist the army. Both were instantly killed. After the gang-rape, I fainted. After I gained consciousness hours later, I took the remaining children and went to the jungle to join other villagers. As soon as I reached the jungle, I fainted again. Every two-three hours, I fainted the whole night.

The next day, we left the jungle and fled to Bangladesh. I had a miscarriage on the way. My husband had already left us. There was no one to help me. Everyone was scared, tortured and wounded. We walked for 10 days to reach Thombura, Bangladesh border. Once we reached Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Border Guard helped us to shelter in this camp.

At around 4 pm on 27 August, R Khatun, aged 16, from Swaprang was taken by BGP personnel from her house. 'For hours, we had no idea where she was taken', said her brother, Mr Ahmad:

In the evening, I came to know through a villager that she was taken to a forest nearby. I could not go to the forest until midnight, fearing the army would still be there. At midnight, I found her in the forest lying unconscious with gunshots on her body and brought her home. She died the next morning. Before she died, she said Kwayashi, a Boarder Guard Police, raped her before she was shot. She had known the police for sometime. There were other six or seven girls like her, but she didn't know what happened to them. In the forest, my sister was lying alone when I went to lift her.

17 Khatun does not remember the exact date.

মানসিক স্বাস্থ্য সেবা কেন্দ্র
Mental Health Service Centre

- Psychological First Aid
- Psycho-Social Counseling
- Psychotherapy
- Stress Management


 মন্ত্রণালয়: মহিলা ও শিশু বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়
 Sub-Sectoral Programme on Violence Against Women
 Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
 Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
 Supported by: Government of Denmark




IV SITUATION INSIDE CAMPS



Makeshift latrines are short in supply and many of these have been overused and clogged to the extent that they cannot be used anymore.

4.1 Limited Basic Services

Most of the camps the team visited had basic services, such as makeshift latrines, tube wells, mosques, madrassas, basic child learning centres (also called child friendly spaces), food distribution centres, market places, and trauma counselling centres. In some locations, semi-concrete toilets were also seen.

All the refugees the team interacted with reported that they receive a sack of rice (30 kilos), lentils (4 kilos) and oil (2 litres) from the World Food Programme. A family comprising up to three members gets these items once a month. A family of four or more gets twice a month. Other items, such as salt, sugar, chilly/powder, baby food and so on are not part of the relief package. In some camps, some agencies were reported to supply these items. However, no one got these in the camp sites the team visited.

Refugees would get basic medical facility during the day. In case of serious illness, the patients could be referred to further treatment outside the camps following permission from the camp-in-charge.

While the refugees were in general satisfied with what they had been receiving, they commented that the quantity of rice was often less than what was expected to be (30 kilos). They also expressed difficulty managing other essentials, such as salt, sugar, chilly, vegetables and baby food, which they would not get. Some refugees in a camp reported that they got pre-paid coupon from some agencies with which they can use to buy the essentials. But the coupons were not available to all. Most of those who did not get any external assistance reportedly sold some of the food items they got from the World Food Programme to buy the essentials.

As regards women's health and sanitation, some women were reported to receive some sanitary napkins initially. However, the service did not continue after some time. At the time of the visit, no one reported of the availability of such services. Medical centres would provide only basic services. The refugees had the impression that the centres would give medicine without diagnosis. Some even suggested that it was the same medicine given for all kinds of illness. As the centre would operate only during the day, no medical facility was available at

Situation inside Camps



night even in case of emergency. A woman survivor of gang rape, who reported of bleeding at a regular interval, did not find the health centre of any use. The 'tablet' she received only gave temporary relief, not the cure she needed.

Other services such as the trauma centre and child friendly spaces were not found to be used. None of the women the team met and talked to reported of visiting the centre for the service. A woman survivor, apparently psychosocially tormented, did not even know the trauma centre existed. A woman leader, aged 34, reported that she provided psychosocial counselling for dozens of rape survivor. However, she was not a trained counsellor.

As regards education for children, primary madrassas were reported to provide non-formal education. The refugees, however, wanted to operate a formal education system (based on a Burmese curriculum) inside the camp if authorities would allow them. They claimed to have enough human resources to operate such education, at least up to primary level, which would help prepare their children for future. Madrassas would only engage them in religious education but not help them to earn a living.

There was no system of clothes distribution in the camps. Some refugees got some clothes in the past from some agency. But it was not regular. Likewise, no firewood was supplied. It was refugees' responsibility to manage firewood.

4.2 Physical Condition of Shelter and Other Amenities

All refugees resided in makeshift huts, with dimensions of about ten x eight feet. Each hut was interconnected. Most of the huts observed by the team had a solar panel each. A significant number of huts were near shallow stream and on hilltops, vulnerable to be washed away during monsoon. Both the Rohingyas and service providers the team interacted with were aware of the danger, and were reportedly preparing for all eventualities. On the spot, however, the preparation was not visible. This vulnerability was a serious concern among Rohingyas themselves.

Latrines were seemingly in short supply. One sanitary unit consisting of three adjacent latrines was available for every three blocks, with one block comprising 100 to 200 family members. This means a

latrine was available for roughly 150 family members. Most of those latrines were almost unusable as they were already overused and jammed with faeces. They had no idea whether and when they would be cleaned. The situation forced the men to opt for open defecation in the forest, and women to go to the next block.

Water scarcity was another serious concern. Normal tube wells (with tubes bored 40 feet underground) and deep tube wells (with tubes bored 100 feet) were the source of water. The former was for cleaning, and the latter for potable water. However, almost half of these tube wells were broken and not functioning in the areas the team visited. The refugees had to walk to another camp, half a kilometre or so away, to fetch water. They had no idea if and when the tube wells would be fixed.

4.3 Socio-Cultural Tension within Camps

The cultural practice of dowry was reported to be hunting the refugees even in the camps. Those with daughters of marriageable age were seemingly under pressure about their daughters. Ways to arrange dowry to satisfy a would-be bridegroom was their prime concern, as they would not see the possibility of dowry-less marriage.

Another cause of tension was debt. In a case reported to the team, a family had borrowed money from another in Myanmar. The money was repaid a few months back, but the lender was continuing to pressure the borrower to pay more.

Some cases of divorce and polygamy were reported within the camps. However, on questions of other forms of domestic violence, the women were silent.

4.4 Coordination and Management

4.4.1 Internal Coordination within Refugee Camps

A system of 'majhi' was reported to be in place to connect refugees to the camp-in-charge. The majhis, divided into a head and site majhi, are men and women responsible for facilitating data collection, distribution

of coupons for collecting food, dispute mitigation, and updating the camp-in-charge of the camp situation. The majhis meet the camp-in-charge every Monday. In case of dispute resolution, if an amicable solution could not be found, the case would then be reported to the camp-in-charge for further action. Issues related to women are dealt with by a woman majhi, including cases of discord or even violence against women. A matter that cannot be handled or mitigated is referred to the camp-in-charge.

The contribution of majhis seems to be crucial in making sure no one is left behind in the data collection process or deprived of the services and support available. The majhis do not participate in service distribution and do not act as the proxy of refugees.

4.4.2 Inter-Agency Coordination

The Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission (RRRC) is responsible for the overall coordination and management of refugee camps and services. For smooth operations, camp management has been divided into 12 sectors, with certain agencies responsible for certain sectors. Every week, all the agencies meet to report, share and deal with coordination and management issues. When needed, they meet more frequently. As reported, there was no coordination problem among agencies.

However, in the field, coordination gaps were palpable. This was particularly evident in the lack of proper information sharing and communication about agencies with specific expertise and services at their disposal. Refugees in the extensions that the team visited were not aware of certain services, such as psychosocial counselling, which was reported to be available for the refugees. Similarly, BRAC, a development organisation assisting the refugees in different ways, informed that excreta disposal expertise and facility was one of its services. However, the refugees in at least two extensions in Kutupalong camp did not know of it. Their latrines were overfilled, but they did not have an idea whether any agency was available to help them dispose the human waste. Unaware of this, they were using the forest nearby. The team was also informed of skills training schemes available for women in the camps. However, no women the team visited and interacted knew of it.

V HOW REFUGEES SEE THEIR FUTURE

“ We have got food and shelter here. We should not fear about being attacked and killed. However, we do not have the air, the soil, the open sky and the space around our houses we had back home.”

Participants of a focus group discussion (26 March 2018, Kutupalong)

All the refugees the team interacted with wanted to return to their home village. However, they wanted the following three conditions, which they reiterated were an absolute minimum, to be fulfilled before their return:

- a. Myanmar citizenship with recognition of Rohingya identity;
- b. UN-protected safe zone; and
- c. Unrestrained freedoms, including education and livelihood opportunities, as enjoyed by any other Myanmar citizen.

These three, to the refugees, were fundamental to the repatriation process to begin. They actually had a charter of 14 demands to be fulfilled, which was shared with the team at least in three extensions visited. These demands are addressed to the Governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar (implicitly in the case of the later) as well as to UN, EU, USA and others.¹⁸

They would not accept any other identification or identity and would not return if the international community does not guarantee their safety and security. They also wanted the international community to create a mechanism to closely monitor whether the Government of Myanmar would deliver on its commitments and assurances.

The refugees were particularly hostile to the rumour of internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in which they would be resettled back in Myanmar until further arrangements were made. The idea of IDP camps, they said, was being floated just to betray them. They cited the example of the Rohingyas kept in IDP camps in a pathetic condition after the series of incidents in 2012. No one of them was allowed to leave the camps. IDP camps were just another trap, they commented.

They even said they would not move from the camps to go anywhere else other than their village in Myanmar.

They wanted repatriation as soon as possible. But the design of the repatriation should be worked out together with Rohingyas refugees, Bangladesh, Myanmar, as well as the international community. Any arrangement made without the participation of refugees themselves would not be acceptable to them.

What they suffered was genocide as they categorically stated. They wanted those responsible to be investigated and punished. They also wanted their land and property returned to them, and schools, mosques other public properties destroyed rebuilt.

18 The 14-point demands are in Annex 2.



DIV. OF THE PEOPLE'S
DIRECTORATE
MINISTRY OF FOOD
NET WT. 50KGS
MAINTENANCE (ATAPI)

VI CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“The entire world calls us Rohingyas. But the Government of Myanmar and the Buddhist people call us Bengalis, which we are not. We are Rohingyas and Myanmar is our home.”

Mr Iliyas from Budhidaung (26 March 2018, Kutupalong)

6.1 Conclusion

Central to the stories and narratives of Rohingya refugees is the violence that is both shockingly widespread as well as systematically intentional. The violence is forced upon them just because who they are, and with an intent to destroy them.

The Rohingya men and women have endured unspeakable violence both at the hands of security forces as well as Rakhine Buddhists. Often times, they are reported to work jointly.

Killing was the first response to a perceived deviation from the military imposed norms. As a refugee said, “killing was like the game of children. It would take place any moment anywhere, and would not spare anyone”. Other methods of killings included infants being thrown alive in the river and, burning houses with entire families being charred in houses locked from outside.

Rape was used as a ‘weapon of war’ to destroy the Rohingya community psychologically and physically. Rape in the presence of children, siblings, and elders was meant to inflict humiliation, and destroy the honour and dignity not only of the individual person but also of the entire family and community.

The destruction of villages, mosques and madrassas is not just the destruction of certain

structures. It is the destruction of the Rohingya’s collective memory as mosques and madrassas represent their social, cultural, and even political life.

Not only direct violence, Rohingyas have also been subjected to structural violence. One example of this is Myanmar’s educational policy for Rohingyas. The requirements are designed in a way that Rohingyas would not even try to send their children for education above 8th grade,¹⁹ for which they are required to leave their village with prior permission from authorities. Certain disciplines, such as law, engineering and medicines, are entirely banned for them. Another example is the 1982 Citizenship Law that precludes Rohingyas from obtaining citizenship and, thereby, deprives them of any political or legal protection of their basic rights.

“Not only us, the military also disrespected our Almighty. They would tear off Quran if they found it.”

Ms F Khatun from Rathedaung recounted the violence meted to her and other women as religiously motivated. (26 March 2018, Kutupalong)

19 The team was told that education up to grade 7 is available in the village. For the rest, they should go to the city.



Child learning/friendly centres were often found empty, possibly because children prefer playing outside.

Behind the violence, whether direct or structural,²⁰ is a clear intent to decimate Rohingyas as a people. It has patterns and elements of mass atrocity crimes; that is - genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and crimes of aggression.

“The police shouted at me ‘you monafek (hypocrite)’ and started to shoot.”

P. Mohammad from Swaprang
(26 March 2018, Thyingkhali)

The refugees see their future in Rakhine state, not in the refugee camps or elsewhere. The future they want cannot be designed in their absence. Nor can it be designed without a clear plan to deal with the horrendous past they have suffered. As the refugees repeatedly made it clear, a future plan designed without their inclusion and participation will not be acceptable and sustainable.

The refugees deserve a just and participatory future. Acknowledging atrocities against the Rohingyas and establishing accountability for the atrocities they have survived should be the first step towards this end.

In the camps, everyday life seems normal. Basic services are available for which refugees are appreciative of and grateful for. However, inter-agency coordination needs immediate improvement.

It is not easy for a single host country, Bangladesh, to manage an emergency situation of the scale and magnitude that can be seen in the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar. The fact-finding team would like to join the refugees in appreciating the support and services provided by the peoples of Bangladesh, as well as local and international communities.

Rohingyas in the camps are by and large satisfied with the services they have been getting. However, there seems to be some discrepancies in service distribution. This could be the result of certain

20 Direct violence includes killing, rape, destruction and all other forms that are visible. Structural (or indirect) violence is unseen on a day-to-day life and is structurally imposed by way of discriminatory policy, law and cultural practices. See, Galtung, Johan. 1969. “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research.” *The Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 167-191. London: Sage Publication.

Conclusion and Recommendations



agencies providing assistance in some extensions for a limited period. While the spirit of humanitarianism of such agencies should be appreciated, the camp authorities should be careful about discrimination and deprivation, which such practices may contribute to. Those who would not get services may feel marginalized, neglected, and offended. This will create a negative and divisive environment in the camps.

The coordination gap among agencies was also seen in refugees remaining unaware of the availability of maintenance services, such as human waste management and renovation of tube wells.

If the overfilled latrines are not cleaned as soon as possible and the tube wells supplying drinking water fixed, the camps may be vulnerable to an outbreak of communicable diseases like cholera during the monsoon, which would be devastating.

Another area that requires a coordinated response among agencies immediately is an alternative plan to relocate the refugees staying currently in areas vulnerable to flooding and landslides. The agencies seem to be aware of the vulnerability, and an alternative plan is impending, as the mission was informed. However, its immediacy cannot be downplayed.

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 Recommendations Regarding Refugee Camp Environment and Camp Facilities

1. The Government of Bangladesh and the international community should respect, protect, and fulfil all human rights of the uprooted Rohingya people, including their immediate needs of basic health, sanitation and hygiene in the camps, and also longer term special needs of survivors of sexual violence and other atrocities, by ensuring service distribution by various agencies are more coordinated, streamlined, strengthened, and sustainable.

2. The Government of Bangladesh, the international community and all agencies involved should immediately put in place an alternative measure to deal with the challenges connected to the upcoming monsoon season. Some extensions are clearly vulnerable to floods and landslides, and adequate prevention requires robust preparation. The Camp authorities should also be prepared for a possible outbreak of cholera and other water-borne diseases.

3. Opportunities should be established in the camps for systematic education for refugee children based on Burmese educational curricula and technical education. This is crucial to prepare the children for their future.

4. A special package of assistance should be developed for single women, who are in a sizable number with most of them heading a family as their male counterparts have been killed, with services including psychosocial counseling and livelihood skills training.

5. Special packages of care and protection, including the protection of identity, should be arranged for unwanted children of rape victims. Currently, such a package does not exist.

6. Camp authorities should, with the help of local NGOs, launch a massive social awareness campaign against child marriage, dowry, violence against women, including trafficking, and in favour of girl's education. Such campaign would also be helpful to raise awareness among refugees about the values of dignity and equality within the camps.

6.2.2 Recommendations about Dealing with the Past and the Future of Rohingya Refugees

1. Given that the primary responsibility of protecting the Rohingya population lies with Myanmar as the country of origin and Bangladesh as the host country, the two Governments must critically engage in dialogue with the presence of international stakeholders, such as UN agencies, to find a sustainable solution to the Rohingya refugee crisis as soon as possible.

2. The international community should initiate an effective and independent international criminal investigation into the alleged mass atrocity crimes committed against the Rohingya people. Justice and accountability for such crimes must be established and those responsible held to account. Such investigation is long overdue. To this end, the international community should immediately initiate a process of preserving evidence of gross human rights violations and related crimes, which risk being lost and destroyed.

3. Existing preparation towards repatriation of the Rohingya refugees back to Myanmar, as is being heard, is extremely premature and exclusive. A repatriation process should involve the consultation with and participation of the Rohingya community, including Rohingya women, in all stages to protect and safeguard their rights and interests. To this end, the international community, not least the UN, and relevant regional players, such as India, China, and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), should ensure a comprehensive and time-bound roadmap is developed and implemented




UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

ANNEX 1: INFORMATION COLLECTION PLAN

1. Location: Refugee camp extensions in Lambasia, Kutupalong, Balukhali and Thyingkhali

<i>Role Division</i>		
<i>Team/ Members</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Team 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sheepha Hafija Anjuman Ara Begum 	Collect detailed case of female survivors, and also their vision and view of future – mindful of research ethics (confidentiality, do no harm, no use of authority/force to extract information)	Each member to take note of details (their impression and observation) on paper
Team 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nur Khan Parvez Alam Md. Ashiqur Rahman Mukunda Kattel 	Actively participate in group discussion (listen carefully even unspoken words) Nur Khan – To chair/lead Mukunda – To act as secretary	Each member to take note of details (their impression and observation) on paper
Team 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Babloo Loitongbam Dr Mohammad Jalal Uddin Sikder Mr Mahbub Hasan Hanung 	Actively participate in group discussion (listen carefully even unspoken words) Babloo – To chair/lead Hanung – To act as secretary	Each member to take note of details (their impression and observation) on paper

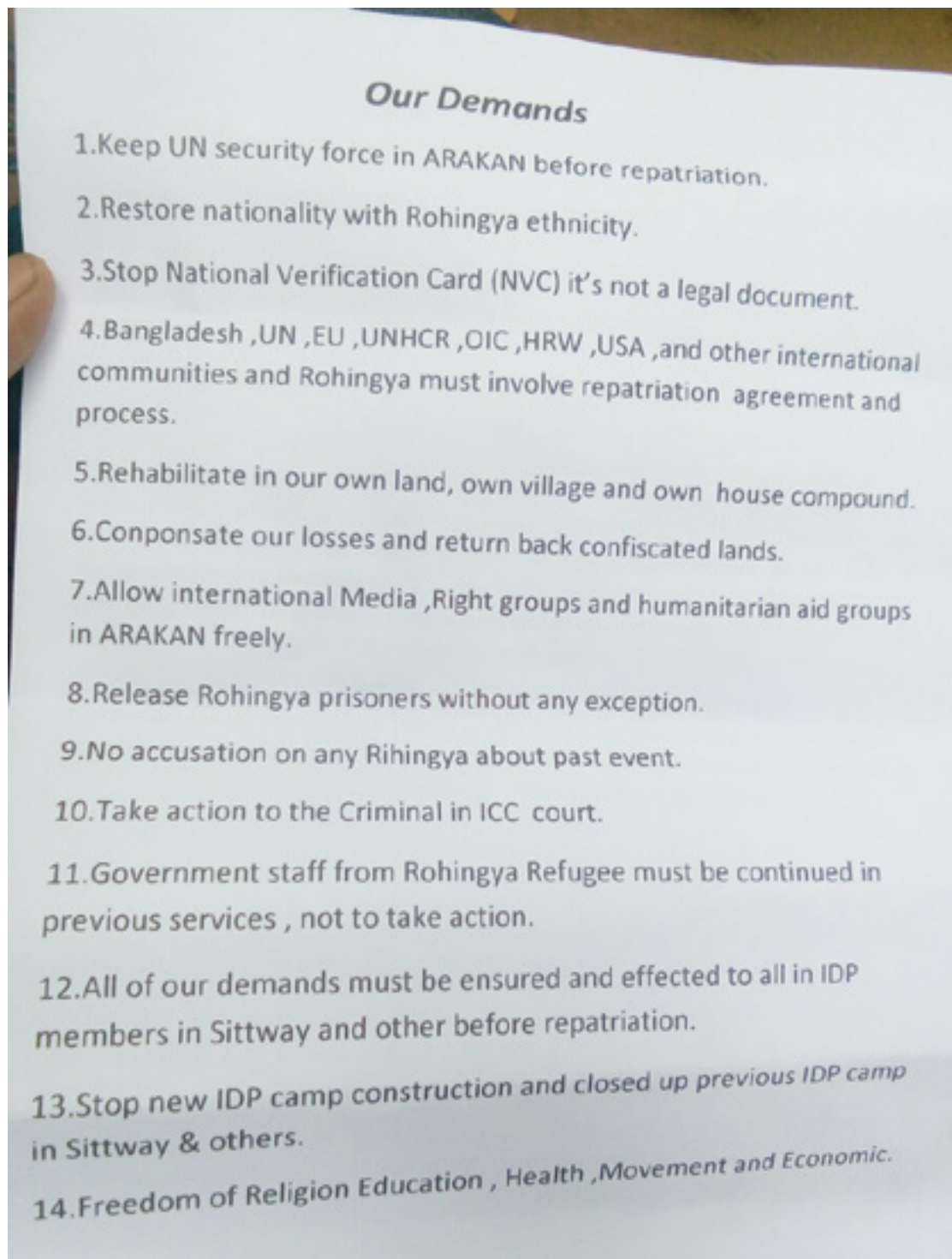
2. Probing Questions: Use the questions to start the discussion, and build other questions as necessary from the responses.

<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Questions</i>
a. Collect facts and circumstances of EGREGIOUS forms of human rights violations	b. Can you tell us what happened to you and your family before you came here? Are you alone here or with family? c. How many people/families from your village are here? d. How do you think of your villager/community now?
b. Collect facts and insights into the type and quality of ESSENTIAL SERVICES available (now)	a. Who provides you and your family food and shelter? b. How is water supply here? Do you have enough toilets? c. Do children go to school? Do they have other educational facilities? d. Do you get medicine if you are unwell? e. Are you satisfied with what you are getting? Why? Why not?
c. Assess scheme/mechanism for EMERGENCY RESPONSE / SERVICES by the GoB and others	a. Have you come across any accident incident here? A sudden illness? b. Do you and your family feel secure inside the camp? c. Have you come across any family dispute in the area you live? d. (How are women treated in the camp?)
d. Explore how the people see their future (what they want from GoB ² , Int'l community, etc.)	a. How do you see your and your families' future? b. Do you feel like going home? When (under what circumstances) do you want to return? c. What do you think GoB should do more? What should the international community do to address the problem facing you? d. Have you discussed these things amongst yourselves?

3. Case Study: Use the following as probing questions.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Probe the circumstances of the situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the environment here safe and secure?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can those responsible be identified/named?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How are women and children treated? Do they get basic facility (specific to their needs)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How does the person feel about herself now?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How should the problem/situation be handled? Who should do what?

ANNEX 2: DEMANDS SHARED WITH THE FACT- FINDING TEAM BY ROHINGYAS



About FORUM-ASIA

The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) is the largest membership-based human rights and development organisation in Asia with a network of 58 members in 19 countries across the region. FORUM-ASIA works to promote and protect all human rights for all, including the right to development, through collaboration and cooperation among human rights organisations and defenders in Asia and beyond. FORUM-ASIA seeks to strengthen international solidarity in partnership with organisations and networks in the global South.

FORUM-ASIA was founded in 1991, and established its Secretariat in Bangkok in 1992. Since then, other offices have been opened in Geneva, Jakarta, and Kathmandu.

FORUM-ASIA has consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC Status) and a consultative relationship with the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR).

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