



Humanitarian and Political Responses to the Rohingya Refugee Crisis and Their Effects on Bilateral Relations: A Comparative Study of Bangladesh and India

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Abstract

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The current research examines the multifaceted Muslim Rohingya refugee crisis and its implications for Bangladesh and India relations. The crisis, originating from systemic persecution in Myanmar, has resulted in a significant influx of the Muslim minority that gave rise to the Rohingya refugees' crisis Bangladesh, straining its resources and raising security concerns. Bangladesh's humanitarian response contrasts with India's more cautious approach, emphasizing national security and immigration control. Thus, this study analyzes the humanitarian, security, and political dimensions of both countries' responses, exploring their impact on bilateral relations. Additionally, this paper discusses cross-border challenges and the role of the international community and offers policy recommendations for improving refugee management and cooperation. The findings suggest that, while there are areas of cooperation between Bangladesh and India, significant challenges remain, necessitating ongoing diplomatic engagement and international support to foster regional political relations and achieve a sustainable resolution to the crisis.

Keywords: Bilateral relations, humanitarian response, Muslim minority crisis, Rohingya refugee crisis, regional political relations

Introduction

The Rohingya refugee crisis has been one of the most pressing humanitarian concerns in South Asia over the last decade.¹ The Rohingya are an ethnic Muslim minority from Myanmar's Rakhine State who have faced decades of systemic discrimination, statelessness, and violence. The Myanmar government, predominantly Buddhist, has refused to recognize the Rohingya as one of the country's ethnic groups, denying them citizenship under the 1982 Citizenship Law. As a result,

¹"UNICEF," UN, 2024, <https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/rohingya-crisis>.

they have been rendered stateless in their own homeland, deprived of basic rights, such as access to education, healthcare, and freedom of movement.²

Tensions between the Rohingya and the Myanmar military have simmered for years, with waves of violence causing sporadic outflows of refugees into neighboring countries, particularly Bangladesh.³ However, the situation escalated dramatically in August 2017, when the Myanmar military, known as the Tatmadaw, launched a brutal crackdown in response to attacks by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) on Myanmar's security forces. The military campaign, widely described as a form of ethnic cleansing or genocide, resulted in mass killings, rapes, and the burning of entire Rohingya villages.⁴ Thus, as a result many fled to Bangladesh to escape from the brutality and violence of Myanmar.

The United Nations and international human rights organizations condemned the atrocities, yet the violence triggered a massive exodus of over 740,000 Rohingya into Bangladesh, adding to the hundreds of thousands already residing in the country from previous crises. Currently, Bangladesh is home to nearly one million Rohingya refugees, most of whom live in sprawling, overcrowded camps in Cox's Bazar, which is now the largest refugee settlement in the world.⁵ Meanwhile, India, which also shares a border with Myanmar, has a relatively smaller number of Rohingya refugees but has adopted a different approach to managing the crisis than Bangladesh. The complexity of the situation has not only presented humanitarian and security challenges but has also influenced regional politics and the bilateral relations between Bangladesh and India.⁶

This research seeks to examine and compare how Bangladesh and India have responded to the Rohingya refugee crisis to maintain regional peace, focusing on security, humanitarian aid, and cross-border challenges. Both countries, being neighbors of Myanmar and regional

²"Rohingya Refugee Crisis Explained," 2024, <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/rohingya-refugee-crisis-explained/>.

³Andrew Selth, *Myanmar's Armed Forces and the Rohingya Crisis*, (2018), <http://archive.nyu.edu/handle/2451/61001>; Christine Maria Smith, "The Exploitation of Refugees in Areas of Conflict: The Rohingya in Bangladesh" (Master's Thesis, University of Pretoria (South Africa), 2019), <https://search.proquest.com/openview/f8ec3af6e9ddcd3e5b9c4c211f11356a/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=2026366&diss=y>.

⁴Noor Mohammad Osmani et al., "Genocide Of Rohingya Muslims: A Classical Model of Ethnic Cleansing," *Al-Shajarah: Journal of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC)*, (2018): 215–36, <https://journals.iium.edu.my/shajarah/index.php/shaj/article/view/744>; Maung Zarni and Alice Cowley, "The Slow-Burning Genocide of Myanmar's Rohingya," *Pacific Rim Law & Policy Journal Association* 23 (2014): 683, https://heinonline.org/hol/cgi-bin/get_pdf.cgi?handle=hein_journals/pacrimpl23§ion=26.

⁵Gabriele Cecconi, "CAMPS OF DESPAIR: There Seems to Be No Future for the Dispossessed Rohingya Refugees Living in Vast, Sprawling, Underfunded Camps in Bangladesh.," *Geographical* 95, no. 5 (2023): 44–54, <https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA747069187&sid=googleScholar&v=2.1&it=r&linkaccess=abs&issn=0016741X&p=AONE&sw=w>; Chloé Guillerme de Vries et al., *An Investigative Environmental Impact Assessment for Kutupalong Refugee Camp and Surroundings, Bangladesh*, (2017), https://www.academia.edu/download/55797399/Investigative_EIA_-_Rohingya_Refugee_Camp.pdf; Ishrat Zakia Sultana, *Rohingyas in Bangladesh: Owning Rohingya Identity in Disowning Spaces*, (2019), https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/bitstream/10315/36310/2/Sultana_Ishrat_Z_2019_PhD.pdf.

⁶Mudasir Amin, "Nobody's Children, Owners of Nothing": *Analysing the Indian State's Policy Response to the Rohingya Refugee Crisis* (Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy, 2018), https://www.thehinducentre.com/incoming/article24811444.ec/BINARY/Policy%20Report%2024%20Mudasir_a5.pdf; Md. Ismail Hossain et al., "The Rohingya Refugee Crisis: A Threat to Peace and Security in South Asia," *The International Journal of Community and Social Development* 3, no. 4 (2021): 353–71, <https://doi.org/10.1177/25166026211028365>; Md Khadimul Islam, *How Newspapers in China, India and Bangladesh Framed the Rohingya Crisis of 2017*, (2018), <https://egrove.olemiss.edu/etd/648/>.

stakeholders, have had to navigate a delicate balance of humanitarian obligations and national security interests. As the primary host country, Bangladesh has borne the brunt of the crisis, dealing with the socio-economic impact of hosting a large refugee population while seeking international support for repatriation efforts. India, though less directly affected in terms of refugee numbers, has also faced domestic political and security concerns, especially in its northeastern states, and has had to consider its strategic relations with both Bangladesh and Myanmar.

This aims to provide a holistic understanding of the Rohingya crisis from the perspectives of Bangladesh and India, highlighting their distinct but interconnected responses towards the Muslim minority crisis. The research will also underscore the broader implications of refugee crises on regional politics, international relations, and security dynamics, maintaining peace as a resolution to this contemporary conflict.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study's theoretical framework incorporates a range of ideas from migration and refugee studies, international law, and international relations to examine how Bangladesh and India are managing the Rohingya refugee situation and the impact this has on their bilateral relations.

2.1. Migration and Refugee Theories

2.1.1. Forced Migration Theory

Forced migration refers to the coerced movement of people due to conflict, persecution, or natural disasters.⁷ The Rohingya exodus from Myanmar fits within this framework, as the Rohingya's Muslim minority was compelled to flee due to state-sponsored violence. This theory emphasizes the role of "push factors," such as human rights violations, genocide, and persecution, in driving mass displacement. The situation in Myanmar, where the Rohingya Muslims have been systematically marginalized, resulted in large-scale forced migration to neighboring countries like Bangladesh and India.

2.1.2. International Refugee Protection Laws

The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol outline the legal rights of refugees and Muslim minorities and the responsibilities of nations to protect them.⁸ However, neither

⁷Stephen Castles, "Global Perspectives on Forced Migration," *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 15, no. 1 (2006): 7–28, <https://doi.org/10.1177/011719680601500102>; Arthur C. Helton and Eliana Jacobs, "What Is Forced Migration," *Geo. Immigr. LJ* 13 (1998): 521, https://heinonline.org/hol-cgi-bin/get_pdf.cgi?handle=hein.journals/geoimlj13§ion=40; Will H. Moore and Stephen M. Shellman, "Fear of Persecution: Forced Migration, 1952-1995," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48, no. 5 (2004): 723–45, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002704267767>; Holly E. Reed et al., "Forced Migration," in *International Handbook of Migration and Population Distribution*, vol. 6, ed. Michael J. White, International Handbooks of Population (Springer Netherlands, 2016), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-7282-2_27; William B. Wood, "Forced Migration: Local Conflicts and International Dilemmas," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 84, no. 4 (1994): 607–34, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8306.1994.tb01879.x>.

⁸Seyla Benhabib, "The End of the 1951 Refugee Convention? Dilemmas of Sovereignty, Territoriality, and Human Rights," *Jus Cogens* 2, no. 1 (2020): 75–100, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42439-020-00022-1>; Erika Feller, "The Evolution of the International Refugee Protection Regime," *Washington University Journal of Law and Policy* 5 (2001): 129, https://heinonline.org/hol-cgi-bin/get_pdf.cgi?handle=hein.journals/wajlp5§ion=13; Maja Janmyr, "No Country of Asylum: 'Legitimizing' Lebanon's Rejection of the 1951 Refugee Convention," *International Journal of Refugee Law* 29, no. 3 (2017): 438–65, <https://academic.oup.com/ijrl/article-pdf/doi/10.1093/ijrl/eex026/21735809/eex026.pdf>; James C. Simeon, "Strengthening International Refugee Rights through the Enhanced Supervision of the 1951 Convention and Its

Bangladesh nor India is a signatory to these conventions, limiting the formal legal framework guiding their response to the Rohingya refugees. Despite this, both countries faced international pressure to adhere to customary international law principles, such as non-refoulement (the principle of not forcing refugees to return to places where they face danger). This lack of formal adherence complicated the regional response, particularly in India, where national security concerns were prioritized over refugee rights.

2.2. Security Studies

From a security perspective, forced migration can create new risks, particularly in terms of internal security, border management, and potential radicalization.⁹ The influx of refugees may be viewed as a threat to national security, leading to restrictive migration policies and border controls. In Bangladesh, the massive influx of Rohingya refugees has strained resources and raised concerns about law and order in refugee camps. However in India, there is fear of infiltration and terrorism linked to the refugee population.

2.2.1. Bilateral Relations Theory

a) Realism

Realism in international relations theory emphasizes the pursuit of national interest, security, and power.¹⁰ Bangladesh and India have both addressed the Rohingya crisis with a focus on their respective national security issues. Bangladesh, while hosting the majority of refugees, has sought international aid and diplomatic support for repatriation efforts, while India, balancing its regional influence and peace has focused more on border security and strategic ties with Myanmar. These realist concerns have influenced both countries' policies and bilateral relations.

1967 Protocol,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Migration Law, Theory and Policy* (Routledge, 2016), <https://api.taylorfrancis.com/content/chapters/edit/download?identifierName=doi&identifierValue=10.4324/9781315613239-8&type=chapterpdf>; Patrick Wall, “A New Link in the Chain: Could a Framework Convention for Refugee Responsibility Sharing Fulfil the Promise of the 1967 Protocol?,” *International Journal of Refugee Law* 29, no. 2 (2017): 201–37, <https://academic.oup.com/ijrl/article-pdf/doi/10.1093/ijrl/eex025/20311061/eex025.pdf>.

⁹Didier Bigo, “Migration and Security,” in *Controlling a New Migration World* (Routledge, 2003), <https://api.taylorfrancis.com/content/chapters/edit/download?identifierName=doi&identifierValue=10.4324/9780203164938-7&type=chapterpdf>; Margriet Drent et al., *Relationship between External and Internal Security* (Clingendael Institute., 2022), <https://redesign.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/2016-02/The%20relationship%20between%20external%20and%20internal%20security.pdf>; Suna Gülfer İhlamur-Öner, “Delinking the Migration-Terrorism Nexus: Strategies for the de-Securitization of Migration,” *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs* 24, no. 2 (2019): 195–224, <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/906939>; Barbara Sude et al., “Lessening the Risk of Refugee Radicalization,” *Perspective* 166 (2015), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep02436.pdf>.

¹⁰Özer Çiftçi, “A Comparative Analysis of the National Interest Concept in Theories of International Relations,” (Master’s Thesis, Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi (Turkey), 2009), <https://search.proquest.com/openview/da054b19e45d44962e6159df71d4a127/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=2026366&diss=y>; W. Julian Korab-Karpowicz, *Political Realism in International Relations*, 2010, <https://philpapers.org/rec/KORPRI-4>; Munafrizal Manan, “Foreign Policy and National Interest: Realism and Its Critiques,” *Jurnal Global and Strategis* 9, no. 2 (2017): 16, <https://megalecture.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Foreign-Policy-and-National-Interest-Realism-and-I.pdf>; Brian C. Schmidt, “Realism and Facets of Power in International Relations,” *Power in World Politics* (London: Routledge, 2007), 43–63, <https://api.taylorfrancis.com/content/chapters/edit/download?identifierName=doi&identifierValue=10.4324/9780203944691-8&type=chapterpdf>.

b) Liberalism

Liberalism, on the other hand, focuses on cooperation, diplomacy, and international institutions.¹¹ This perspective can be seen in the international response to the crisis, particularly in Bangladesh's appeal for global support through the United Nations and humanitarian organizations. Bangladesh's relationship with India has also included diplomatic dialogues for managing cross-border challenges and seeking India's support in pressuring Myanmar for repatriation.

Table 1. Timeline of Key Events that have shaped the Rohingya Exodus

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|--------------------|---|
| 1978 | Operation King Dragon: The Myanmar government launched a military operation targeting the Rohingya, resulting in the exodus of over 200,000 Rohingyas to Bangladesh. Many later returned following a bilateral agreement, but this set the stage for future displacements |
| 1982 | Myanmar Citizenship Law: The law denied the Rohingya citizenship, cementing their stateless status and stripping them of rights to work, travel, marry, and access education and healthcare |
| 1991-1992 | Further Displacement: Another military crackdown forced approximately 250,000 Rohingya to flee to Bangladesh. Most returned following an agreement between the two countries, but underlying tensions remained unresolved. |
| 2012 | Communal Violence: Buddhist-Rohingya clashes in Rakhine State resulted in deaths, destruction of property, and further displacement of Rohingya people, marking a new phase in the crisis. This event attracted more international attention to the growing violence in the region |
| 2016 | First Large-Scale Exodus: After attacks on Myanmar police posts by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), the military launched counter-insurgency operations that led to widespread human rights violations. Around 87,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh. |
| August 2017 | The Major Exodus: The most significant escalation occurred following ARSA attacks on Myanmar security forces. In retaliation, the military launched a brutal campaign described by the UN as a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing." Over 740,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh within months, joining hundreds of thousands who had fled in earlier waves. |

3. Overview of the Rohingya Refugee Crisis

3.1. Origin and Timeline

The Rohingya refugee crisis originates from the systematic persecution of the Rohingya, a predominantly Muslim ethnic minority, in Myanmar's Rakhine State.¹² The Rohingya have long

¹¹Robert O. Keohane, "Twenty Years of Institutional Liberalism," *International Relations* 26, no. 2 (2012): 125–38, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117812438451>; Andrew Moravcsik, *Liberalism and International Relations Theory* (Center for International Affairs, Harvard University Cambridge, MA, 1992), https://www.princeton.edu/~amoravcs/library/liberalism_working.pdf; Cornelia Navari, "Liberalisms," in *Security Studies* (Routledge, 2012), <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780203122570-12/liberalisms-cornelia-navari>; Schmidt, "Realism and Facets of Power in International Relations."

¹²Stephen C. Druce, "Myanmar's Unwanted Ethnic Minority: A History and Analysis of the Rohingya Crisis," in *Managing Conflicts in a Globalizing ASEAN*, ed. Mikio Oishi (Springer Singapore, 2020), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-32-9570-4_2; MD Mostafa Faisal, "The Rohingya Refugee Crisis of Myanmar: A History of Persecution and Human

faced discrimination in Myanmar, where they are regarded as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh despite many having lived in the country for generations. The root cause of the crisis lies in their statelessness, stemming from Myanmar's 1982 Citizenship Law, which excluded the Rohingya from the list of recognized ethnic groups, rendering them effectively stateless. Tensions between the Rohingya and Myanmar's government intensified over the years, leading to periodic violence and displacement.

Table 2. Current Status of the Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh

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|--|--|
| Living Conditions in Camps: | The camps in Cox's Bazar are severely overcrowded, with poor sanitation and limited access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and clean water. According to the UNHCR, about 52% of the refugee population are children, many of whom suffer from malnutrition and trauma-related issues. Humanitarian agencies provide essential services, but the needs far exceed their available resources. Seasonal flooding and landslides also threaten the safety of the camps, further complicating efforts to improve living conditions. |
| Repatriation and the Stalled Process: | Efforts to repatriate the Rohingya to Myanmar have repeatedly stalled due to ongoing instability in Rakhine State, where the Rohingya fear continued persecution. Although Myanmar and Bangladesh have signed repatriation agreements, the conditions in Myanmar remain unsafe, preventing any large-scale return. The Rohingya demand citizenship, security guarantees, and recognition of their rights before considering voluntary repatriation. |
| Bhasan Char Relocation: | In 2020, the Bangladesh government began relocating some Rohingya refugees to Bhasan Char, an island in the Bay of Bengal. While the government claims the move is necessary to reduce overcrowding in Cox's Bazar, humanitarian agencies have expressed concerns about the safety and sustainability of the island as a long-term settlement. As of late 2023, around 30,000 refugees have been relocated to the island, but many remain unwilling to move due to fears of isolation and inadequate living conditions. |
| International Response: | International aid agencies and governments continue to provide humanitarian assistance, but funding shortfalls remain a significant issue. The UN and various human rights organizations have called for more robust action from the international community to pressure Myanmar to create conditions for safe repatriation. In the meantime, Bangladesh has borne the brunt of the crisis, hosting nearly a million refugees with minimal support for long-term solutions. |

3.2. Current Status

As of the latest data, nearly 1 million Rohingya refugees are living in Bangladesh, primarily in the Cox's Bazar district, home to the largest refugee camp in the world. The majority of these

Rights Violations," *International Journal of Social, Political and Economic Research* 7, no. 3 (2020): 743–61, <http://ijosper.uk/index.php/i/article/view/113>; Md Salman Sohel, "The Rohingya Crisis in Myanmar: Origin and Emergence," *Saudi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 2 (2017), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3307082; Benjamin Zawacki, "Defining Myanmar's Rohingya Problem," *Human Rights Brief* 20 (2012): 18, https://heinonline.org/hol-cgi-bin/get_pdf.cgi?handle=hein.journals/huribri20§ion=38; Benjamin Zawacki, "Defining Myanmar's Rohingya Problem," *Human Rights Brief* 20, no. 3 (2013): 2, <https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1873&context=hrbrief>.

refugees arrived during the 2017 crisis. Cox's Bazar has become synonymous with the crisis, as the influx of refugees has put immense pressure on the local infrastructure, environment, and economy.¹³

The Rohingya crisis remains one of the largest protracted refugee situations in the world, with no immediate resolution in sight. The situation continues to challenge Bangladesh's resources and has created new dynamics in regional politics, particularly with India and Myanmar, considering the Muslim minority rights.

4. Bangladesh's Response to the Rohingya Muslim Minority Crisis

Bangladesh has adopted a largely humanitarian approach to the Rohingya crisis, despite the immense strain on its resources and infrastructure. Since the first major influx of Rohingya refugees in the late 1970s, Bangladesh has provided shelter and necessities to those fleeing persecution in Myanmar. However, the unprecedented exodus of 2017, which saw over 740,000 Rohingya fleeing to Bangladesh within a few months, presented an overwhelming challenge.

The Rohingya refugees are primarily concentrated in the Cox's Bazar district, where Bangladesh established the *Kutupalong* camp, now the world's largest refugee camp. Bangladesh's initial response was to work closely with international humanitarian organizations, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to set up makeshift shelters, distribute food, and provide healthcare services. Despite not being a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, Bangladesh has allowed international agencies to operate in the camps and deliver aid to the refugees.

While Bangladesh's government has maintained that the Rohingya crisis is a temporary issue, it has continuously supported international calls for assistance, seeking to pressure Myanmar into repatriating the refugees under safe and dignified conditions. The government's response has also included a focus on addressing the immediate needs of the refugee population, especially through initiatives involving education for Rohingya children, although challenges remain due to the restrictions on formal schooling in the camps.¹⁴

¹³Mehereen Akhter, Sayed Mohammad Nazim Uddin, Nazifa Rafa, Sanjida Marium Hridi, Chad Staddon, and Wayne Powell, "Drinking Water Security Challenges in Rohingya Refugee Camps of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh," *Sustainability* 12, no. 18 (2020): 7325, <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/12/18/7325>, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12187325>; Akhtar Alam et al., "Cyclone Risk Assessment of the Cox's Bazar District and Rohingya Refugee Camps in Southeast Bangladesh," *Science of the Total Environment* 704 (2020): 135360, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969719353525>; Abhishek Bhatia et al., "The Rohingya in Cox's Bazar: When the Stateless Seek Refuge," *Health and Human Rights* 20, no. 2 (2018): 105, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6293360/>; Md Rafiqul Islam et al., "An Assessment of the Sustainability of Living for Rohingya Displaced People in Cox's Bazar Camps in Bangladesh," *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work* 7, no. 3 (2022): 331–45, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41134-022-00212-5>; Shamrita Zaman et al., "Disaster Risk Reduction in Conflict Contexts: Lessons Learned from the Lived Experiences of Rohingya Refugees in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh," *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* 50 (2020): 101694, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212420919317145>.

¹⁴Saleh Ahmed et al., "The Sustainability–Peace Nexus in Crisis Contexts: How the Rohingya Escaped the Ethnic Violence in Myanmar, but Are Trapped into Environmental Challenges in Bangladesh," *Sustainability Science* 16, no. 4 (2021): 1201–13, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-021-00955-6>; Md Reza Habib, "The 'Stateless' Rohingya in Bangladesh: Crisis Management and Policy Responses," *Asian Politics and Policy* 13, no. 4 (2021): 577–96, <https://doi.org/10.1111/aspp.12611>; Nadia Islam, "Understanding Bangladesh's Historical Perspectives Through the 2017 Rohingya Crisis" (PhD Thesis, Harvard University Division of Continuing Education, 2024), <https://dash.lib.harvard.edu/handle/1/37378540>; Nahid-Uz-Zaman Khan, *Rohingya Crisis: Security Implications on*

Bangladesh's humanitarian response to the Rohingya crisis has been bolstered by extensive support from international organizations and governments. The UNHCR, in collaboration with other agencies like the World Food Program (WFP) and UNICEF, plays a critical role in managing the camps and providing essential services, such as food distribution, medical care, and education.

The international community has also been involved in advocacy efforts to hold Myanmar accountable for the atrocities committed against the Rohingya. The UN has condemned Myanmar's actions, labeling them as ethnic cleansing, and has called for accountability through international legal mechanisms. Bangladesh has supported these efforts, urging the international community to press Myanmar for the safe and voluntary repatriation of Rohingya refugees.

However, despite significant international support, funding shortages remain a major issue. Humanitarian agencies frequently report funding gaps that hinder the ability to provide adequate services to the refugees. Bangladesh continues to appeal for more financial and logistical support to manage the crisis effectively.¹⁵

Bangladesh has emerged as a frontline state in responding to the Rohingya refugee crisis, hosting over a million Rohingya refugees who have fled violence and persecution in Myanmar.¹⁶ The government, along with various international organizations and NGOs, has undertaken significant efforts to provide humanitarian assistance in refugee camps, particularly in Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char. In Cox's Bazar, one of the world's largest refugee settlements, the Bangladesh government has established extensive infrastructure to support the influx of refugees. This includes the provision of food, shelter, and healthcare services. Various agencies, including the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), work collaboratively with the Bangladeshi government to deliver essential supplies, including food rations, hygiene kits, and medical assistance.

The government has also established multiple refugee camps, including *Kutupalong* and *Balukhali*, which are equipped with basic amenities. Humanitarian organizations have set up health clinics, schools, and child protection services to cater to the specific needs of vulnerable populations, including women and children. Efforts have been made to ensure access to clean

Bangladesh and Ways Ahead, 2022, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/trecms/AD1210408>; Christine Maria Smith, "The Exploitation of Refugees in Areas of Conflict: The Rohingya in Bangladesh," (Master's Thesis, University of Pretoria (South Africa), 2019), <https://search.proquest.com/openview/f8ec3af6e9ddcd3e5b9c4e211f11356a/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=2026366&diss=y>.

¹⁵A. S. M. Ali Ashraf, "Humanitarianism, National Security, and the Rohingya Refugee Policy of Bangladesh," *Strategic Analysis* 45, no. 3 (2021): 184–206, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2021.1918953>; Delwar Hossain, "The Rohingya Crisis and the Emergence of 'Humanitarian' Bangladesh," *Star*, 2017, https://www.academia.edu/download/101624640/02_The_Rohingya_Crisis_and_the_Emergence_of_Humanitarian_Bangladesh_Delwar_Hossain.pdf; Ishrat Hossain, *After Humanitarianism: Bangladesh's Evolving Rohingya Policy*, (2020), <https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/70322>; Sanam Tareq, *Role of Bangladesh in the Rohingya Crisis of Myanmar*, (2020), https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Sanam-Tareq/publication/350062289_ROLE_OF_BANGLADESH_IN_THE_ROHINGYA_CRISIS_OF_MYANMAR/links/604f0531299bf13c4f089b9e/ROLE-OF-BANGLADESH-IN-THE-ROHINGYA-CRISIS-OF-MYANMAR.pdf; M. Ala Uddin, "Rethinking Global Responsibility: Toward an Alternative Humanitarianism in the Rohingya Crisis.," *Journal of Bangladesh Studies* 26, no. 1 (2024), <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&profile=ehost&scope=site&authtype=crawler&jrnl=15290905&AN=178889987&h=IBPNSHISg3IOi99ryiC19ac2L8Db99p0XOkgo%2Bu%2Fr5voW7x4bfaCf0iSBEgfBRb5jmyV29mFavVLIhC%2BY4gJpQ%3D%3D&crl=c>.

¹⁶Nadia Islam, "Understanding Bangladesh's Historical Perspectives Through the 2017 Rohingya Crisis."

water and sanitation facilities, which are critical in preventing disease outbreaks in crowded living conditions. Additionally, the Bangladeshi government has initiated programs for vocational training and psychosocial support to help refugees regain a sense of normalcy and develop skills for potential future integration or repatriation. Despite these efforts, the scale of the crisis has put immense pressure on the country's resources, leading to challenges in sustaining long-term humanitarian assistance.

In summary, Bangladesh plays a crucial role in providing humanitarian assistance to Rohingya refugees, supported by India and international organizations.¹⁷ However, the delivery of aid faces numerous challenges, including logistical difficulties, corruption, and the need for coordinated efforts. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure that the humanitarian response is effective and sustainable, providing the necessary support for Rohingya refugees as they navigate this ongoing crisis.

5. India's Response to the Rohingya Muslim Minority Crisis

India's response to the Rohingya Muslim minority crisis has been shaped by a combination of domestic political considerations, security concerns, and regional diplomacy. Unlike Bangladesh, which hosts a large population of Rohingya refugees, India has adopted a more restrictive approach, largely focusing on limiting the inflow of Rohingya into its territory. India is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol, and thus, it does not have a formal legal framework for dealing with refugees. Consequently, the Rohingya in India are classified as "illegal immigrants," and there has been resistance to granting them refugee status.¹⁸

India's official stance is that the Rohingya pose both economic and security challenges, and the government has indicated that it does not intend to offer long-term asylum or resettlement for the refugees. While India has allowed some Rohingya refugees to remain in the country, they face precarious living conditions, limited access to employment, and minimal legal protection.

Security concerns have played a pivotal role in shaping India's policy on Rohingya refugees.¹⁹ The government has repeatedly expressed fears that the presence of Rohingya refugees could lead to increased risks of terrorism, insurgency, and instability in sensitive border areas, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir, which is already a region of heightened security due to the ongoing conflict with Pakistan.

¹⁷Arnab Roy Chowdhury, "International-Domestic Linkages in a Developing-Country Context: The Case of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh," *Policy Studies* 40, nos. 3–4 (2019): 303–19, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2018.1557623>.

¹⁸A. N. M. Hossain, "Geopolitics of Rohingya Refugee Crisis and Regional Security," *International Journal of Safety and Security Engineering* 12, no. 2 (2022): 167–77, <https://real.mtak.hu/141799/>; Santa Islam, "Rohingya Refugee Response Encircling South Asian Geo-Politics: Debriefing India's Stance from Bangladesh Perspective," *Southeast Asia: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 20, no. 1 (2020): 35–43, <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/SEAMJ-01-2020-B1004/full/html>; Robayt Khondoker and Tanvir Habib, "China and India's Response to the Rohingya Refugee Crisis: A Structural Explanation," *Journal of International Affairs* 22, no. 1 (2020): 39–60, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Tanvir-Habib-3/publication/364318480_CHINA_AND_INDIA%27S_RESPONSE_TO_THE_ROHINGYA_REFUGEE_CRISIS_A_STRUCTURAL_EXPLANATION/links/63475bd92752e45ef6b0f956/CHINA-AND-INDIAS-RESPONSE-TO-THE-ROHINGYA-REFUGEE-CRISIS-A-STRUCTURAL-EXPLANATION.pdf.

¹⁹Mudasir Amin, "*Nobody's Children, Owners of Nothing*": *Analysing the Indian State's Policy Response to the Rohingya Refugee Crisis* (Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy, 2018), https://www.thehinducentre.com/incoming/article24811444.ece/BINARY/Policy%20Report%2024%20Mudasir_a5.pdf.

Moreover, India's strategic interests in Myanmar, including economic investments and military cooperation, have influenced its cautious approach. India has continued its diplomatic relations with Myanmar's government and has avoided openly condemning the military's actions against the Rohingya, concerned that a more assertive position might threaten its strategic interests. India's infrastructure projects in Myanmar, such as the Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project, are critical for regional connectivity and access to Southeast Asia.

While India's policy towards Rohingya refugees within its borders has been restrictive, it has played a role in providing humanitarian aid to both Myanmar and Bangladesh to help manage the crisis.²⁰ India has maintained that its focus is on providing support to facilitate the safe repatriation of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar.

While India has not hosted a significant number of Rohingya refugees within its borders, it has played a supportive role in humanitarian efforts aimed at alleviating the crisis in Bangladesh. In 2017, the Indian government launched "Operation *Insaniyat*," (Operation Humanity), delivering substantial aid to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.²¹ This initiative delivered food, medical aid, and other vital supplies to support the Bangladeshi government in managing the surge of refugees.

6. Humanitarian and Ethical Dimensions towards Muslim Minority Crisis

6.1. Similarities and Differences

The approaches of Bangladesh and India to the Rohingya Muslim minority refugee crisis exhibit both similarities and differences, particularly in humanitarian, security, and political strategies.

Bangladesh has adopted a predominantly humanitarian approach, welcoming over a million Rohingya refugees fleeing violence in Myanmar. The government, despite facing significant economic strain established refugee camps in Cox's Bazar and *Bhasan Char*, providing necessities, such as food, healthcare, and shelter. Additionally, Bangladesh has actively collaborated with international organizations like the UNHCR and various NGOs to mobilize resources and deliver aid to the refugees to maintain peace and regional relations. The government has also emphasized the need for international support, advocating for a collective response to the humanitarian crisis.

In contrast, India's humanitarian approach has been more cautious. While India has provided humanitarian assistance to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, its policies on granting asylum to Rohingya individuals on its territory have been more restrictive. India has not recognized Rohingya refugees as refugees under the 1951 Refugee Convention, leading to a lack of formal protection and support. Instead, India has focused on repatriation and deportation, emphasizing the need for security over humanitarian considerations. This divergence in humanitarian strategies reflects the different socio-political contexts and priorities of each country.

²⁰A. S. M. Ali Ashraf, "Humanitarianism, National Security, and the Rohingya Refugee Policy of Bangladesh," *Strategic Analysis* 45, no. 3 (2021): 184–206, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2021.1918953>.

²¹Fatema Akther, "Role of India in Rohingya Crisis," *GPH-International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research* 5, no. 09 (2022): 46–54, <http://gphjournal.org/index.php/ssh/article/view/708>.

Security concerns are paramount in both countries, yet their approaches vary significantly. Bangladesh's security strategy is driven by concerns over national stability. The government has invested in enhancing border security and monitoring to prevent illegal crossings while ensuring that refugees do not become radicalized. There is a growing awareness of the need to balance humanitarian assistance with security measures, as the presence of a large refugee population can create vulnerabilities.

India's security strategy, on the other hand, is primarily focused on the potential threats posed by illegal migration and radicalization. The Indian government has expressed fears about the infiltration of terrorists among Rohingya refugees, leading to increased surveillance and border security measures. India has undertaken initiatives to deport undocumented Rohingya migrants, framing these actions within the context of national security.

6.2. Effectiveness of Policies

The effectiveness of Bangladesh's and India's policies regarding the Rohingya Muslim minority crisis can be evaluated based on their humanitarian outcomes, security implications, and effects on bilateral relations.

Humanitarian Outcomes: Bangladesh's proactive humanitarian approach has allowed it to provide essential services to Rohingya refugees, alleviating some immediate suffering. However, the continued strain on resources, infrastructure, and local communities poses challenges to the sustainability of this assistance. The effectiveness of Bangladesh's policies is evident in the international recognition of its efforts, but the lack of long-term solutions for refugees remains a critical issue.

India's limited humanitarian engagement has resulted in mixed outcomes. While its support to Bangladesh is commendable, the lack of formal recognition and protection for Rohingya refugees within India limits the effectiveness of its policies. The strict immigration stance and deportation efforts have also drawn criticism, highlighting the tension between national security and humanitarian obligations.

Security Implications: Both countries face security challenges due to the refugee crisis, but the outcomes differ. Bangladesh's focus on balancing humanitarian aid with security measures has allowed it to maintain stability in its border regions, although concerns over potential radicalization persist. India's emphasis on strict border controls and deportations reflects its security-first approach but risks alienating vulnerable populations and exacerbating humanitarian issues.

The Rohingya crisis has both strained and strengthened Bangladesh-India relations. Bangladesh's expectations for stronger support from India have occasionally led to frustration, particularly regarding India's diplomatic approach towards Myanmar. However, collaborative efforts in humanitarian assistance and border management demonstrate areas of cooperation. The divergent approaches to the crisis have, at times, led to misunderstandings and tensions, particularly regarding the treatment of refugees.

While Bangladesh and India share some common goals in addressing the Rohingya refugee crisis, their approaches to humanitarian assistance, security, and political strategies reveal significant differences. The effectiveness of their policies varies, with Bangladesh's humanitarian efforts yielding immediate support but facing sustainability challenges, while India's focus on

security raises concerns about the treatment of refugees and their rights. The ongoing crisis continues to shape the bilateral relationship between these neighboring countries, underscoring the complexities inherent in managing humanitarian and security challenges.

7. Challenges: Issues of Bangladesh -India in the Rohingya Muslim Minority Crisis

As the Rohingya Muslim minority refugee crisis persists, Bangladesh faced increased internal security challenges, primarily concerns of extremism and radicalization within the refugee population. Given the dire conditions in the camps, some international security experts have expressed concerns that extremist groups may attempt to exploit the vulnerability of Rohingya refugees, particularly the youth, for recruitment into militant activities.

Bangladesh has sought to mitigate these risks by strengthening security in and around the camps. The presence of law enforcement agencies has increased, and the government has enforced strict regulations on movement in and out of the camps to prevent refugees from becoming involved in illicit activities, such as drug trafficking or human smuggling. Security forces regularly patrol the camps to maintain law and order, as there have been reports of criminal gangs operating within the refugee population, which has added to the government's concerns.

There is also tension between the Rohingya refugees and local populations in Cox's Bazar. The presence of such a large number of refugees has strained local resources and created socio-economic friction, occasionally leading to clashes between the two communities. This has further compounded Bangladesh's security challenges ²².

7.1. Political and Legal Challenges

India's handling of the Rohingya crisis has sparked significant political and legal debates.²³ The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has taken a hardline stance on the issue, framing the presence of Rohingya refugees as a threat to national security. This narrative has resonated with certain sections of the population, particularly in regions where communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims are high.

Politically, the issue has become intertwined with India's broader immigration and citizenship debates, particularly in light of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) passed in 2019. The CAA provides a path to citizenship for religious minorities from neighboring countries, but explicitly excludes Muslims, including the Rohingya.²⁴ This has raised concerns about the selective nature of India's refugee policies and accusations of religious discrimination.

Legally, the deportation of Rohingya refugees has faced challenges in India's courts. In 2017, two Rohingya refugees, *Mohammad Salimullah* and *Mohammad Shaqir*, filed a petition in the

²²Ahmed et al., "The Sustainability–Peace Nexus in Crisis Contexts."; Habib, "The 'Stateless' Rohingya in Bangladesh."; Islam, "Understanding Bangladesh's Historical Perspectives Through the 2017 Rohingya Crisis," (2024); Khan, *Rohingya Crisis*; Smith, "The Exploitation of Refugees in Areas of Conflict," (University of Pretoria (South Africa), 2019).

²³Dabiru Sridhar Patnaik, and Nizamuddin Ahmad Siddiqui, "Problems of Refugee Protection in International Law: An Assessment through the Rohingya Refugee Crisis in India," *Socio-Legal Rev.* 14 (2018): 1, https://heinonline.org/hol-cgi-bin/get_pdf.cgi?handle=hein.journals/soclerev14§ion=5.

²⁴D. Ananda, "The Intersection of Indian Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 and Religious Persecution," *Discover Global Society* 2, no. 1 (2024): 76, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44282-024-00108-x>.

Supreme Court of India, challenging the government's plans to deport Rohingya refugees.²⁵ They argued that such deportations would violate India's obligations under international law, particularly the principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits the return of individuals to countries where they face persecution. While the case is ongoing, the Indian government has defended its policy, stating that national security concerns justify the deportation of Rohingya refugees

7.2. Cross-Border Security Issues

The Rohingya crisis has significant cross-border security implications for both Bangladesh and India²⁶, particularly concerning issues like smuggling, trafficking, and transnational crime. As Rohingya refugees continue to flee Myanmar, their movement across borders creates an environment where various forms of illicit activity can flourish.

The porous nature of the Bangladesh-Myanmar and India-Myanmar borders complicates efforts to control these illicit activities. Insufficient border security measures, coupled with the sheer volume of refugees crossing into Bangladesh, have created opportunities for smugglers and traffickers to operate with relative impunity. Moreover, local law enforcement agencies often lack the resources and training to address these challenges effectively, further complicating the situation.

Both Bangladesh and India have expressed fears regarding the potential radicalization of Rohingya refugees, viewing it as a significant security concern.²⁷ The precarious living conditions in refugee camps, coupled with feelings of marginalization and despair, create an environment where extremist ideologies could take root.

The movement of Rohingya refugees into India presents significant challenges for both Indian states and national authorities.²⁸ The porous borders between Bangladesh and India facilitate the illegal migration of Rohingya individuals seeking safety and a better life. States like Assam and West Bengal have experienced an influx of Rohingya refugees, leading to heightened tensions and concerns regarding national security, demographic changes, and resource allocation.

Efforts to repatriate Rohingya refugees to Myanmar have been fraught with difficulties and complexities.²⁹ Although the governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar signed agreements in 2017 and 2018 to facilitate the voluntary return of Rohingya refugees, significant obstacles have hindered progress. Many refugees are hesitant to return due to fears of persecution and violence in their home state of Rakhine, where conditions remain unstable and unsafe.

²⁵“Rohingya Deportation,” Supreme Court Observer, 2021,

<https://www.scobserver.in/cases/mohammad-salimullah-rohingya-deportation-case-background/>.

²⁶K. Yhome, “Examining India’s Stance on the Rohingya Crisis,” Orfonline.Org, 2023, <https://www.orfonline.org/research/examining-india-s-stance-on-the-rohingya-crisis>.

²⁷Md Nurul Momem, “The Rohingya Refugee Crisis: Implications for Regional Security,” in *Decolonising Conflicts, Security, Peace, Gender, Environment and Development in the Anthropocene*, vol. 30, ed. Ursula Oswald Spring and Hans Günter Brauch, The Anthropocene: Politik—Economics—Society—Science (Springer International Publishing, 2021), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-62316-6_21.

²⁸Yasmin Aldamen, and Dilana Thasleem Abdul Jaleel, “A Depiction of Rohingya Refugees in India’s Online News Platforms Following the Shift in the Indian Government’s Stance in 2017,” *Societies* 14, no. 8 (2024): 140, <https://www.mdpi.com/2075-4698/14/8/140>.

²⁹Carrie Perkins, “Where Is Home? Navigating the Complexities of Refugee Repatriation,” in *Handbook of Culture and Migration* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2021), <https://www.elgaronline.com/abstract/edcoll/9781789903454/9781789903454.00038.xml>.

Negotiations regarding repatriation often stall on issues related to the guarantees of safety and security for returning refugees. The lack of a comprehensive plan for their reintegration into society in Myanmar further exacerbates concerns among refugees. Many demand assurances of citizenship rights and access to basic services, which remain unaddressed by the Myanmar government. The international community, including the United Nations, has emphasized the need for sustainable solutions that respect the rights and dignity of Rohingya refugees, but efforts to secure such commitments from Myanmar have met with limited success.

The role of international organizations in monitoring and facilitating repatriation is crucial, yet their efforts are often hampered by the lack of cooperation from the Myanmar authorities. Additionally, ongoing violence in Rakhine State complicates the situation, as sporadic clashes between the Myanmar military and ethnic groups contribute to the volatile environment.

Bangladesh and India recognize the importance of effective border management to address the challenges posed by illegal migration and cross-border crime.³⁰ Both nations have engaged in dialogue and cooperation to enhance border security measures, focusing on preventing illegal crossings and ensuring the safe and humane treatment of refugees.

Moreover, the humanitarian aspects of refugee management should not be overlooked. Bangladesh has expressed concerns about the treatment of Rohingya refugees who may inadvertently cross into India, emphasizing the need for humane policies that prioritize the rights and safety of vulnerable populations.

7.3. Military and Border Surveillance

To address the multifaceted security challenges arising from the Rohingya crisis, both Bangladesh and India have strengthened their military and border surveillance capabilities.

Bangladesh has deployed additional military and police forces to monitor the borders with Myanmar and manage the large refugee population in Cox's Bazar. Enhanced border security measures include the construction of fencing, the installation of surveillance cameras, and increased patrols in border areas³¹. These efforts aim to prevent the smuggling of drugs and weapons, as well as to deter the influx of new refugees.

Additionally, Bangladesh has engaged in discussions with international organizations to seek assistance in bolstering border security. The government recognizes that effective border management is essential not only for addressing security concerns but also for ensuring the safe and dignified return of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar. On the Indian side, the government has implemented measures to secure its northeastern borders with Myanmar. This includes deploying the Border Security Force (BSF) to enhance surveillance and patrols in vulnerable areas. India has also intensified cooperation with Myanmar's military and law enforcement agencies to share intelligence and combat cross-border crime. India's approach emphasizes a balance between humanitarian concerns and national security. While it seeks to control the movement of refugees,

³⁰Zahoor A. Rather, "India–Bangladesh Border Issues: Challenges and Opportunities," *International Studies* 50, nos. 1–2 (2013): 130–44, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020881716654388>.

³¹N. S. Jamwal, "Border Management: Dilemma of Guarding the India-Bangladesh Border," *Strategic Analysis* 28, no. 1 (2004): 5–36, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09700160408450116>.

it also engages in diplomatic dialogue with Myanmar to facilitate the repatriation process and address the underlying causes of the crisis.

8. Impact on Bangladesh-India Bilateral Relations

8.1. Diplomatic Relations

The Rohingya Muslim minority refugee crisis has significantly influenced the diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and India, two neighboring countries with historical ties and shared colonial history of interests.³² Initially, both countries recognized the humanitarian need to address the influx of refugees fleeing violence in Myanmar. However, as the crisis evolved, it changed the dynamics of regional relationship of both countries.

India's historical ties with Myanmar, rooted in security and economic interests, have sometimes placed it at odds with Bangladesh's stance. While Bangladesh has called for stronger actions against the Myanmar military, India has opted for a more diplomatic approach, emphasizing dialogue and cooperation. This divergence in strategies has led to tensions in their diplomatic relations, as Bangladesh expects India to take a firmer stand on human rights abuses while India seeks to maintain its strategic partnership with Myanmar.

8.2. Cooperation vs. Conflict

The Rohingya Muslim minority crisis has created both opportunities for cooperation and points of contention in Bangladesh-India relations. On the one hand, the two countries have collaborated on humanitarian efforts to support Rohingya refugees. India has provided aid packages to Bangladesh and engaged with international organizations to bolster humanitarian assistance in refugee camps³³. Additionally, both nations have worked together to enhance border security, addressing concerns about illegal migration and transnational crime.

However, the refugee situation has also led to conflict over border management and immigration policies. Bangladesh's concerns about illegal crossings and the potential influx of radicalized individuals have prompted a push for stricter border controls. In contrast, India's approach, which has included the deportation of undocumented Rohingya refugees, has raised alarm in Bangladesh regarding the potential human rights implications of such policies. This has led to accusations of indifference from India towards the plight of the Rohingya, further straining bilateral ties.

Moreover, the political climate in India, particularly regarding issues of citizenship and national identity, has added complexity to the relationship. The treatment of Rohingya refugees in India has sparked debates on human rights and humanitarian obligations, with varying responses across different states. Such discussions can create ripples in bilateral relations, affecting the overall cooperative framework established between the two countries.

³²Michelle J. Lee, "Media Influence on Humanitarian Interventions: Analysis of the Rohingya Refugee Crisis and International Media Coverage," *Journal of International Humanitarian Action* 6, no. 1 (2021): 20, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41018-021-00108-5>.

³³Delwar Hossain, and Md. Shariful Islam, "Understanding Bangladesh's Relations with India and China: Dilemmas and Responses," *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region* 17, no. 1 (2021): 42–59, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19480881.2021.1878582>.

8.3. Long-Term Strategic Implications

The Rohingya Muslim minority crisis carries long-term strategic implications for Bangladesh-India relations, particularly in the context of regional security and geopolitics. As the crisis continues, both countries must navigate the delicate balance of addressing humanitarian needs while safeguarding national interests.

One significant implication is the potential for increased regional instability. The prolonged presence of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, coupled with the risk of radicalization, could lead to security challenges that affect both nations. If Bangladesh struggles to manage the situation effectively, it may inadvertently contribute to rising tensions along the border, which could spill over into India.

Additionally, the evolving geopolitical landscape in South Asia may compel both countries to reassess their strategies regarding Myanmar. With China increasing its influence in Myanmar, both Bangladesh and India may need to rethink their diplomatic approaches to secure their interests in the region. India, in particular, may find itself needing to enhance its engagement with Myanmar to counterbalance Chinese influence, which could lead to further complexities in its relationship with Bangladesh.

In conclusion, the Rohingya refugee crisis has had a profound impact on Bangladesh-India bilateral relations, influencing diplomatic ties, creating areas of cooperation and contention, and posing long-term strategic challenges. As both countries navigate the complexities of this crisis, the path forward will require careful consideration of humanitarian needs, national security, and the broader geopolitical context.

9. Conclusion

The Rohingya Muslim refugee crisis, characterized by the large-scale departure of Rohingya individuals from Myanmar due to extensive persecution, carries considerable humanitarian, security, and political consequences for both Bangladesh and India. Bangladesh has emerged as a frontline state, hosting over a million Rohingya refugees and demonstrating a commendable humanitarian approach despite facing immense economic challenges. The government has established refugee camps and collaborated with international organizations to provide essential services to maintain regional political relations. However, this influx has strained local resources and raised security concerns regarding the potential for radicalization among the refugee population. In contrast, India has adopted a more cautious approach, focusing on national security over humanitarian considerations. While the Indian government has provided limited humanitarian aid and engaged in diplomatic discussions, it has primarily emphasized repatriation and stringent immigration controls, resulting in legal and political challenges for Rohingya individuals within its borders. The divergent responses of the two countries highlight the complexities of balancing humanitarian obligations with national security interests.

The crisis has also influenced bilateral relations between Bangladesh and India. While both countries have areas of cooperation, particularly in security and humanitarian assistance, tensions have occasionally arisen due to differing approaches and expectations. The effectiveness of their policies varies, with Bangladesh's focus on immediate humanitarian needs contrasting with India's security-first strategy. In conclusion, the Rohingya crisis presents a multifaceted challenge for Bangladesh and India, necessitating a balanced approach that prioritizes humanitarian assistance

while addressing security concerns. Future relations between the two countries will depend on their ability to navigate these complexities and work together towards a sustainable solution that protects the rights and dignity of the Rohingya people, so the peace can be maintained

10. Recommendations

To address the challenges posed by the Rohingya Muslim minority refugee crisis between Bangladesh and India, several policy recommendations can be made.

- Firstly, both countries should create a joint task force to enhance refugee management, enabling better coordination of humanitarian efforts and information sharing. India is encouraged to formalize a framework for recognizing and managing Rohingya refugees, ensuring legal protections and asylum pathways.
- Secondly, regular diplomatic engagement and shared development projects can further enhance bilateral ties, promoting stability and cooperation. The international community should increase humanitarian aid, particularly through organizations like UNHCR, while exerting diplomatic pressure on Myanmar to ensure the protection and voluntary repatriation of Rohingya refugees.
- Additionally, regional organizations, such as ASEAN, should be encouraged to play a more proactive role in addressing the crisis. By implementing these recommendations, Bangladesh, India, and the global community can work together to manage the Rohingya crisis more effectively.

The Rohingya refugee crisis has drawn significant attention from international bodies, most notably the United Nations (UN) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)³⁴. The UN has been actively involved in addressing the humanitarian needs of Rohingya refugees and advocating for their rights. The UNHCR has mobilized resources to provide essential services, including food, shelter, healthcare, and education for refugees, particularly in Bangladesh. It has also called for the international community to provide more substantial support to Bangladesh, which is hosting the bulk of the refugees.

The United Nations Human Rights Council's Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar (2017–2018) found that the Rohingya were systematically abused, including mass killings, sexual violence, and forced displacement. The council called for the prosecution of high-ranking military officials. Later investigations by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights confirmed these findings and said that the actions of the Myanmar military could be considered crimes against humanity and genocide. The UN General Assembly passed resolutions calling for accountability and the safe, voluntary, and dignified return of Rohingya refugees, but only if they are promised citizenship rights and safety. However, the United Nations Security Council has not been able to agree on actual enforcement measures

³⁴Antje Missbach, and Gunnar Stange, "Muslim Solidarity and the Lack of Effective Protection for Rohingya Refugees in Southeast Asia," *Social Sciences* 10, no. 5 (2021): 166, <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-0760/10/5/166>; Kimberly Ramos Gamez and L. E. van Waas, "Examining the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR): The Case Study of the Rohingya Crisis," Master of International and European Law Dissertation, (Tilburg University, 2017), <https://amo.uvt.nl/show.cgi?fid=142893>.

because of disagreements among its members. China and Russia, in particular, have used their veto powers and geopolitical interests to block decisive action against Myanmar.

ASEAN has taken a cautious approach to the Rohingya crisis because it doesn't want to get involved. Still, it has been involved in limited communication and cooperation to help Bangladesh and deal with the humanitarian crisis. ASEAN's involvement, even though it is limited, shows that more people are realising how the crisis affects the region and the need for joint action.

The crisis has big effects on geopolitics, changing how big countries like the US and China reacts. The US has condemned Myanmar's actions, imposed targeted penalties, and sent humanitarian aid to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. On the other hand, China has taken a more measured approach, giving Myanmar diplomatic support while trying to keep the peace in the region, which shows its strategic and economic priorities.

This geopolitical rivalry makes the problem worse because both countries want to have power in the region, which leads to different policy strategies. In conclusion, even though international organizations like the UN and ASEAN help with humanitarian and diplomatic issues, the problem is still affected by larger geopolitical goals and a lack of coordinated efforts.

Author Contribution

A.B.M.Nurul Absar is the sole author.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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