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ROHINGYA ON THE EDGE OF A PRECIPICE

The international community is sleepwalking into a catastrophe. Over the past 18 months, Bangladesh has quietly absorbed more than 150,000 new Rohingya refugees fleeing escalating violence in Myanmar. This is in addition to the nearly 1 million already stranded in Cox’s Bazar and other camps, making it the largest stateless refugee population in the world. Yet the response from the international community has not been one of renewed support – it has been a retreat.

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, global aid for the Rohingya is drying up. Funding for food, shelter, healthcare and education has been slashed. The World Food Programme has been forced to reduce food rations to just \$3 per person per month, barely enough to survive. With donors shifting priorities to domestic defense budgets and new conflicts elsewhere, the Rohingya are once again being relegated to the

margins of international concern. This erosion of support comes at a time when the humanitarian burden on Bangladesh has never been greater. Dhaka, despite facing severe economic constraints of its own, continues to admit desperate Rohingya fleeing new waves of violence and persecution.

The current interim government under Mohammed Yunus has rightly refused to turn away the persecuted, a morally commendable stance, but this cannot be sustained indefinitely. Without a massive injection of resources and strategic international commitment, the entire aid infrastructure in Bangladesh risks imminent collapse. If that happens, the consequences will be catastrophic – and not just for the Rohingya.

The camps in Cox’s Bazar and surrounding areas are at a tipping point. Remarkably, since their mass expulsion in 2017, the Rohingya have

remained overwhelmingly peaceful and orderly, a testament to their patience, discipline and continued hope that the world will eventually come to their aid. But hope is now rapidly evaporating.

We are likely to eventually see the first signs of systemic breakdown in the form of unrest and riots within the camps. With families unable to feed themselves, children out of school and no future on the horizon, desperation will inevitably turn into anger. There have already been whispers of growing criminal activity, informal weapons smuggling and rising tensions between different groups inside the overcrowded settlements. Once this tinderbox is lit, it will be very difficult to contain.

More worrying still is the growing attraction of extremist ideologies. The Rohingya are a people who have endured ethnic cleansing, mass rape, the destruction of their villages

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and years of forced displacement. They have pleaded for justice, for rights and for basic human dignity. But if the world continues to ignore their plight, they may conclude that violence is the only language to which anyone listens.

It is no secret that transnational extremist groups have tried to recruit disillusioned Rohingya youths in the past. So far, the community has resisted. But when you strip away hope, abandon education and replace aid with hunger, you create the perfect breeding ground for radicalization. We are not far from the day when some Rohingya, with nothing left to lose, may choose a darker path. And the security implications for the wider region would be severe.

This is precisely why the international abandonment of the Rohingya is not only immoral but also dangerously shortsighted. It is a basic principle of conflict prevention: where desperation festers unchecked, violence will follow.

There is no justification for this dereliction of duty. The Rohingya situation is not a forgotten crisis. It has been at the center of international human rights conversations for nearly a decade. In 2022, the US formally recognized the genocide against the

Rohingya. Numerous UN reports have documented the atrocities. Yet, in 2025, the global community appears content to let this entire people disappear into statelessness, starvation and silence.

What should happen now is clear. First, the major donors must immediately reverse the funding cuts. The argument that resources are stretched due to Ukraine, Gaza or defense buildups cannot stand when the cost of feeding a Rohingya family for a month is a fraction of what is spent on a single missile system. This is not about capability; it is about political will.


Second, a coordinated diplomatic strategy must be revived. The upcoming UN Rohingya Conference presents a final opportunity to galvanize action. The conference must do more than offer platitudes. It must commit to a multilateral repatriation framework with enforceable timelines and guarantees of safety and citizenship in Rakhine State. This includes directly engaging new actors in Myanmar such as the Arakan Army and the national unity government, both of which now control large areas of territory and have signaled at least a willingness to engage on Rohingya rights.

Third, regional countries must step up. They have moral, religious and strategic stakes in this crisis. They should increase their contributions to humanitarian aid and push the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to take a stronger line with Myanmar's junta. Silence is no longer neutrality. It is complicity.

Finally, Bangladesh must not be left to shoulder this burden alone. Its generosity should not become its punishment. International institutions, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, must consider direct support packages for the Bangladeshi economy tied to its hosting of refugees. Humanitarian hosting is a global public good and those who deliver it should be rewarded, not bankrupted.

We are standing on the edge of a precipice. A population of more than 1 million people faces total abandonment, while new refugees continue to flee persecution with nowhere safe to go. If the camps collapse into chaos or extremism, the world will have no excuse. The warning signs are clear. The UN has raised the alarm. Bangladesh has held the line. But without urgent global action, this fragile situation will shatter.

• Dr. Azeem Ibrahim is the director of special initiatives at the Newlines Institute for Strategy and Policy in Washington, DC.

 Source: arabnews.pk

MYANMAR AMBASSADOR MEETS NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER



Myanmar ambassador to Bangladesh Kyaw Soe Moe met Bangladesh National Security Adviser Dr Khalilur Rahman at the latter’s office in Dhaka on Tuesday (15 July).

The two sides discussed bilateral relations and cooperation in areas of mutual interest, said a press release issued by the Myanmar embassy in Dhaka.

According to the press release, the meeting came amid growing controversy surrounding a proposed UN-led aid corridor through Bangladesh to deliver humanitarian assistance to civilians in Myanmar’s Rakhine State.

The statement further said that Chief adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus recently

described the proposal as merely “an idea” put forward by the UN Secretary-General during his visit in March, stating that no concrete progress had been made since.

While Dhaka had earlier shown openness to the aid initiative, the proposal has since drawn sharp criticism from political parties and defence officials, who labelled it a “bloody corridor” due to perceived threats to national sovereignty and security, it added.

Notably, Bangladesh recalled its ambassador and military attaché from Myanmar in May this year.

■ Source: daily-sun.com

BETWEEN DIPLOMACY AND DISPLACEMENT: THE CONTRADICTIONS OF THE ROHINGYA REPATRIATION DISCOURSE

Introduction

The Rohingya crisis remains one of the most enduring humanitarian and political challenges faced by South and Southeast Asia. Since the mass displacement of over 700,000 Rohingyas from Myanmar’s Rakhine State in 2017 following violent military operations in the region, international efforts to facilitate their safe, voluntary, and dignified repatriation have repeatedly failed. This is due to entrenched structural barriers, volatile security dynamics, and a persistent lack of political will.[1]

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Author: Mahfuz Parvez

Mahfuz Parvez is Professor and Chairperson, Department of Political Science, University of Chittagong; and Executive Director, Chittagong Center for Regional Studies, Bangladesh (CCRSBD).

■ Source: orfonline.org