

Understanding Migration Governance in the Global South

A Backlash in the Host Community: From Refugee Guest to Criminal Identity

The Rohingyas, the stateless Indo-Aryan predominantly Muslim ethnic group who live in the Rakhine state of Myanmar, are one of the most persecuted minorities in the world. They were denied citizenship under the 1982 Myanmar Nationality Law and are suffering from different restrictions on their freedom of movement, access to state education and government jobs. The Rohingya people's migration from the Arakan of Myanmar to the southern part of Bangladesh has been started since the 1980s. Over one million migrated Rohingyas live as Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN) in Bangladesh. In 2017, due to the unprecedented bloody racial attack on Rohingyas in Rakhine, a significant 2nd wave of Rohingya migration began. Consequently, more than 773,000 Rohingyas fled from Myanmar and sheltered on Bangladesh's Southeast coast. The International Criminal Court and the International Court for Justice are investigating the crime against humanity and the genocide, respectively, after the mass displacement in Rakhine led by the Burmese military junta in 2017.

In the second half of the 20th century, politicians did not welcome the migration of the Rohingya community to Bangladesh. In the 21st century, the perception has changed, and they have been considered refugee guests. Due to the undue displacement from a neighbouring country, the government of Bangladesh and the local people welcome the arrival of Rohingya people in Bangladesh to save their lives. Currently, it has been hosting almost one million Rohingyas. Bangladesh's ruling elites and opposition parties welcome the Rohingya community's migration. The Prime minister of Bangladesh stated that it is difficult to supply necessities to migrated Rohingyas but not impossible. She said, "If we can feed 160,000,000 people we can also feed an additional 500,000 to 700,000 people at their time of distress" (Dhaka Tribune, 2017). She added, "If necessary, we will eat one meal a day and share another meal with these distressed people. After all, we are human beings and we stand for mankind" (Dhaka Tribune, 2017). The local people welcome them and supplied privately foods and shelters to them.

The Bangladesh Government successfully managed the Rohingya community's rehabilitation in various Cox's Bazar district areas. The law-enforcing agencies and the members of the defense force assisted in Rohingyas's rehabilitation. Currently, the scenario in the Rohingya camps is not satisfactory. The Rohingyas are currently considered as the criminals. There has been frequent allegation to be criminalized of the Rohingyas in these camps. The government and non-government agencies' reports suggest increasing

criminalization records of Rohingyas who migrated to Bangladesh. What is happening in the Rohingya camps is clearly stated in Shawon's report (2023) published by the Dhaka Tributes:

Several thousand members of government and non-government organizations are working in the 33 Rohingya camps of Cox's Bazar that shelter over a million refugees. Usually, they visit the camps in the morning and leave before dusk. This is not because they are doing their official job very punctually. They rather leave for security reasons as the camps are unofficially ruled by some armed forces groups from late afternoon. At least 11 rogue armed groups, including Myanmar's Arakan Salvation Army (Arsa), are active in the refugee camps. They are allegedly engaged in drug trading, kidnapping, infighting, extortion and rapes, according to a report by the Ministry of Defence...Clashes between groups are often centered around drugs, extortion, and human trafficking. Scattered killings are happening. Arsa's presence and the dubious activities of the other groups are posing a security risk, according to the report.

In 2021, Bangladesh's government successfully rehabilitated Rohingya in a new place known as Bhasan Char. Despite the above-stated scenario, the ruling elites highly appreciate the transfer of migrated Rohingya community from the Ukhiya to Bhashan Char, an improved and secure place. This island can accommodate ten million people in one hundred twenty shelters (CNN, 2020). However, the local community living on Hatiya Island and the coastal belt of Noakhali are worried about their security because of the transfer of the Rohingyas to Bhashan Char (Kuri, 2017). The politicians and government officials travelled to the area "to calm the fears of locals by saying surveillance activities will increase once the Rohingya are settled" (Kuri, 2017). Ayesha Ferdous, the representative of the local constituency, stated, "local people should have no fear as the new centre will be focused on helping the Rohingya to recover from their traumatic experiences"(see Kuri, 2017).

Based on the above context, this research enterprise aims to explore the following two research questions:

Why and how have Bangladesh Rohingya camps been prone to criminal activities despite the host communities' positive attitudes? How can these criminalized Rohingya camps be governed?

Based on the theoretical framework presented by Atak et al. (2018), the above-posed research questions have been explored using the mixed method. More than 30 interviews

have been accomplished to answer the presented questions. Four of the six of the IMO's migration indicators have been considered to examine the above research questions. The four indicators are migrants' rights, whole of government approach, the wellbeing of migrants, safe orderly and designed migration (IMO). Primary data has been collected by visiting the filed-Cox's Bazar and conducting interviews with relevant government officials, Rohingya migrants and also officials of international organizations, including the International Organization of Migration and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The Myanmar government is not interested in rehabilitating Rohingyas in their home. The Government of Bangladesh is not also interested in settling the Rohingya migrants permanently. Despite this government policy, it has taken an initiative that looks like a permanent settlement. Although at the initial stage, the international community were against the migrants' transfer to Bhashan Char, the Government of Bangladesh worked alone to develop this shelter and transfer them. Since "international migration lacks coherent global governance" (Betts, 2011), this study will unfold a new understanding of migration governance, primarily how migrants are managed by the government in the global South (Boswell, 2007). There are three global migration governance levels: international, regional and national (Awad, 2017). Although the national level of migration governance is "the preeminent level in global migration governance, the international norms affect the formulation of the laws and policies prepared to govern migration at the national level" (Awad, 2017). Bangladesh is at the embryonic stage of formulating laws and policies related to national-level migration governing the forcibly displaced Rohingya people from Myanmar to Bangladesh (Hossain, 2020). **This study facilitates the understanding of how a national government governs refugees in the global south and why and how the migrants turn into a criminal identity despite the host's positive attitudes towards the migrants. Additionally, it contributes to framing a mechanism of how the migrants in the global south should be governed when they turn in a criminal identity formation.**

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