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THE ROHINGYA CRISIS AND NATIONAL SECURITY OF BANGLADESH: A SECURITY GOVERNANCE PERSPECTIVE

Abstract

The presence of more than 1.1 million Rohingyas has put enormous pressure on Bangladesh's local and national security environment. The paper ponders how such a massive exodus creates insecurity for the host country by instigating social conflict among and between host communities and the Rohingyas. Thus, the present paper deals with two fundamental questions: how the prolonged stay of Rohingyas can affect the national security of Bangladesh, and how Bangladesh should approach the security governance in respect of Rohingyas in Bangladeshi camps while also engaging effectively for the safe, dignified, and sustained return of the Rohingyas to Myanmar? This paper endeavours to examine how Rohingya crisis can affect Bangladesh's national security while also highlighting the overall security regime. The paper also aims to find out a plausible security governance framework to administer the Rohingya exodus. It argues that Rohingya crisis is a humanitarian catastrophe that can emerge as a national security concern for Bangladesh, demanding holistic security governance architecture. The paper also argues that collective failure of the international and regional community may destabilize the region's overall security environment, let alone the national security of Bangladesh.

Keywords: The Rohingya Crisis; National Security, Security Governance, Bangladesh, Myanmar

1. Introduction

In the era of the territorially demarcated nation-state system, every individual is to be recognized as a citizen of a particular country without discriminating against their religious and/or ethnic identity. Fundamental to this understanding is to recognize the belongingness of an individual as a "Citizen" of a state. Despite this understanding, there also remains the question of identity formation. The identity acts as an inherent strength within a group or community to advance and protect the self and community way of life, strengthening the national interest. In a particular context, it may be debated whether the identity evolves naturally or is conferred to by the state authority in pursuance of "Theo-cultural" construction. In social anthropology, the concept of "identity" is mostly used in the context of "ethnic identity".¹ In the present global

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¹ Martin Sökefeld, "Debating Self, Identity, and Culture in Anthropology", *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 40, No. 4, 1999, p. 417.

context, there are several state-centric conflicts and oppressions where the huge populace has fled persecution to the neighbouring countries leaving behind their home and hearth, kith and kin. This migration occurs due to the fear of tyrannical acts and violence either by repressive government or local dominant ethnic group(s) or by a combination of both. UNHCR estimated that 82.4 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced at the end of 2020 due to persecution, conflict, violence, and human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order. The same study found that “there are also millions of stateless people, who have been denied a nationality and lack access to basic rights such as education, health care, employment and freedom of movement”.²

The deep-rooted racial animosity and hatred against the Rohingyas of Myanmar arguably evolved during the colonial era in the land of the once peaceful cosmopolitan polity.³ Independent Myanmar seemed to begin its democratic journey with a normative humanistic approach where the law of Myanmar officially recognized the Rohingya ethnicity. The honeymoon period of the destitute Rohingyas was short-lived due to the radical views of the broader radical Burmese Buddhists. The successive military regimes exploited these views to divert the commoners’ attention away from the failures of autocracy. The Rohingya ethnic Muslim minority community being denied citizenship in Myanmar through its draconian “1982 Citizenship Law” has been systematically subjected to state-sponsored persecution and brutality for a long. The last pogrom heightened to a level in August 2017 which surpassed all such past brutality in contemporary and perceivable history. As a result, more than 1.1 million Rohingya fled to neighboring Bangladesh. The unprecedented brutality and persecution of 2017 were termed as a “textbook example of ethnic cleansing”.⁴ According to the UN Secretary-General, the present Rohingya crisis in Myanmar’s Rakhine State has become one of the world’s worst humanitarian and human rights crises.⁵ The central problem links with the political identity and the belongingness of Rohingya to Myanmar with citizenship rights. Amidst such volatility, both Bangladesh and Myanmar governments prevailed in good sense and moved quickly to work on the repatriation mechanism. Bangladesh showed its willingness and magnanimity to cooperate with its counterpart– Myanmar, demanding the safe, dignified, and sustainable return of the Rohingya. However, no Rohingya has returned to their homeland, where they lay their hearts for centuries and generations.

² “UNHCR Global Trends 2020”, available at <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>, accessed on 03 July 2021.

³ Ranabir Samaddar and Sabyasachi Basu Roy Chaudhury, “Rohingyas: The Emergence of a Stateless Population”, *REFUGEE WATCH, A South Asian Journal on Forced Migration, Migrants, Communities and Political Ecology*, Vol. 51 & 52, 2018, pp. 1-18.

⁴ Stephanie Nebehay, “U.N. sees ‘textbook example of ethnic cleansing’ in Myanmar”, available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-myanmar-rohingya-un-idUSKCN1BM0SL>, accessed on 23 April 2021.

⁵ UNSC Resolution SC/13469, 28 August 2018.

Bangladesh, showing unconditional respect to universal humanity, gave shelter to more than 1.1 million ethnic Rohingyas. Most of these ethnic Rohingya Muslims of Northern Rakhine of Myanmar fled the persecution and brutality by radical Buddhist Rakhines under the patronage of local security forces and Tadmaw (Myanmar Military) on 24 August 2017 – a day before the submission of the Annan Commission Report. Bangladesh has seen Rohingya exodus for the past four decades, starting from 1978. Though most of the Rohingyas of the initial two exodus (1978 and 1991) returned to Myanmar on bilateral terms, the current more than 1.1 million seems will take time due to Myanmar’s lack of willingness. The “Southern Tip” of Bangladesh now houses more than 1.1 million Rohingyas at Cox’s Bazar and Teknaf mega camps, making it the largest settlement of such nature in the world.⁶ It is, indeed, an extraordinary burden to host such a huge number of Rohingya.

Against this backdrop, this paper examines how Rohingya crisis can affect the national security of Bangladesh while also highlighting the overall security regime. Thus, it tries to answer two research questions. First, how can the prolonged stay of a huge exodus of Myanmar’s Rohingyas affect Bangladesh’s national security? Second, how should Bangladesh approach the security governance in respect of Rohingyas in Bangladeshi camps? It argues that Rohingya crisis can impair the national security of Bangladesh thus necessitating the appropriate and dynamic security governance to protect local and national security environment, and safeguard Bangladesh’s national interests. It also argues that collective failure of the international and regional community may destabilize the overall security environment of the region, let alone the national security of Bangladesh. The paper is divided into five sections. After the introductory section, the second section chalks out the theoretical framework for analysis. Section three highlights the Rohingya crisis and Bangladesh’s security governance challenges. Section four focuses on the mitigation and security governance approach for Bangladesh regarding the Rohingya crisis, and section five concludes the paper.

2. Understanding of National Security and Security Regime

2.1 *National Security as a Concept*

The concept of national security can be traced back to the European “Thirty Years War” (1618 to 1648), primarily between the two Christian religious camps. However, the subsequent development of the war shifted the focus from religion

⁶ International Crisis Group Asia Report N°303, *A Sustainable Policy for Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh*, Brussels, Belgium: ICG, 2020.

to politics of governing the nation-states, which changed the European geopolitics, defined the role of the society and religion of European nation-states.⁷ The same century witnessed another catastrophe popularly known as “English Civil Wars and Political Machinations” (1642–1651) primarily on the matters of England’s religious freedom and governance. This also contributed greatly to the evolution of national security as a concept.⁸ The Thirty Years War concluded with the “Treaty of Westphalia” in October 1648.⁹ The treaty, for the first time, formally contemplated that a nation-state must go beyond religion to deal with external security threats in maintaining its sovereignty. It founded the principles of nation states’ concept of sovereignty and formally recognized the states’ right to resolve their affairs.¹⁰ The conventional concept of the nation-state and its sovereignty also, to some extent, owes to the pre-Westphalia security regime governed by emperors, religious authorities, monarchs, or their successors. Hence, it purports that the modern concept of sovereign states and international security discourse has its legacy to the “Holy Roman Empire” while the notion of sovereign states took a more comprehensive approach through the promulgation of the 17th century Westphalia Peace Treaty. The thrust of the treaty remained with the achievement of peace and stability. Besides, it concentrated on the equilibrium of nation-states for its sovereignty and territorial integrity. It is worth noting that territory is one of the fundamental statehood ingredients within which a nation-state exercises and enjoys sovereignty. Abraham Lincoln identified territory, its people, and law as the three primary ingredients of a sovereign state. According to him, “the territory is the only part which is of certain durability”.¹¹

The very concept of peace delineated in the Westphalia Peace Treaty was challenged by the 18th century political philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804), who resuscitated the old-fashioned principle of universalism in a secular context which was stirred up by “Enlightenment”. In his treatise “Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch”, Kant recorded that the nation-states ought to follow the new system of enlightened world order. Moreover, the nation-states should out-prioritize the national interests putting the common good on the top of the agenda and following international law. Hence, two schools of thought are present in the contemporary debates concerning the role of international institutions on global

⁷ “Thirty Years War”, available at <https://www.history.com/topics/reformation/thirty-years-war>, accessed on 21 April 2021.

⁸ Gary Rivett, “Peacemaking, Parliament, and the Politics of the Recent Past in the English Civil Wars”, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 76, No. 4, 2013, pp. 589-615.

⁹ Richard Cavendish, “The Treaty of Westphalia”, available at <https://www.historytoday.com/archive/months-past/treaty-westphalia>, accessed on 22 April 2021.

¹⁰ Derek Croxton, “The Peace of Westphalia of 1648 and the Origins of Sovereignty”, *The International History Review*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 1999, p. 569.

¹¹ Ivo D. Duchacek, “Components of International and National Systems”, in Ivo D. Duchacek (ed.), *The Territorial Dimensions Politics: Within. Among and Across Nations*, New York: Routledge, 2019, pp. 1-26.

affairs, international law, and states' sovereignty. Amidst the divisions amongst the political scientists, one camp promotes neo-Kantian liberalism¹² while the others do the advocacy for Hobbesian (1588-1679) realism,¹³ including Hugo Grotius (1583–1645),¹⁴ who espouses nation state's supremacy.

The concept of “power” stands central to the understanding of national security¹⁵, which essentially defines a nation state's limit of sovereignty. To some extent, the “state power” also aids to decide or control its destiny while eliminating external forces. There are two fundamental elements of a nation state's power, i.e., hard power and soft power. Moreover, the combination of these elements for advancing effectively the actor's goals and objectives is known as “smart power”.¹⁶ Hard power provides the state the strength to control its external disturbances. In contrast, soft power deals with the ability to exert its influence without war or military engagements. This leads to the instruments of power which span over a spectrum of hard power at one end to diplomatic means at the other. The hard power exists in national armed forces, intelligence, and law enforcement agencies. The primary instruments of soft power rest in formal and public diplomacy, economic cooperation, arrangement and agreements in trade and commerce, cultural and educational exchange, international financial regulations including foreign aids. International and national legitimacy for wielding power are greatly influenced by reputation, global perception, and intent of statecraft. Military strength is imbued with fighting capabilities and capacities only to be used when necessary. While the military is perceived to be “standing” in nature demonstrating the country's fighting power, the growth and use of military strength depend on the extent of its involvement both at national and international domain. The “force” as an instrument of power must be used cautiously and when needed, must be applied decisively to attain the objective(s) keeping in mind that its indiscriminate and/or imprudent use may wane the country's strength and power. In its narrow view, the “force” can be understood as a coercive instrument of power. Apropos, national power follows the national security under the canopy of national defense, which stands for the national sovereignty on the territorial and socio-political front from external aggressors on the one hand, and the nation's lives in terms of terrorist

¹² Frederick C. Beiser, *The Genesis of Neo-Kantianism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

¹³ Sharon A. Lloyd and Susanne Sreedhar, “Hobbes's Moral and Political Philosophy”, in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, USA: Stanford, 2020.

¹⁴ Eric Wilson, “Making the World Safe for Holland: “De Indis” of Hugo Grotius and International Law as Geoculture”, *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, Vol. 32, No. 3, New York: Research Foundation of State University of New York, 2009, pp. 239-287.

¹⁵ Barry Buzan, *People, States, and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*, UK: Heatshef Books Ltd, 1983.

¹⁶ Ernest J. Wilson, “Hard Power, Soft Power, Smart Power”, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 616, 2008, pp. 110-124.

attacks, economic burdens, and environmental challenges on the other. According to Robert E Osgood Jr.¹⁷,

“National security necessarily denotes a nation’s determination to preserve certain interests at all costs. Foremost among these national interests are: nation’s integrity, political independence and fundamental political institutions. It embraces not only the survival of nation but its ability to survive.”

2.2 *Understanding of Security Regime*

Global security regimes pragmatically evolved based on World War II outcomes in which present-day national security is perceived and loomed. There are a few schools of thought, enumeration of which may help understand national security in the context of internationalism.

2.2.1 *Collective Security*

Under the umbrella of a collective security regime, nation-states, through forming alliances make arrangements to ensure and protect members states’ security interests. The collective security regime can be shaped at the regional or global level, i.e., North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), United Nations (UN). However, in the collective security arrangement, the nation-state is equally responsible for ensuring its security which is bolstered by international norms, law, and governance regime. Collective security is closely related to collective defense for supporting any member state if it is attacked by the external actor(s) away from the formed alliance. For example, in the heyday of European imperialist power, there were several alliances, i.e., “Triple Alliance” with Germany, Italy, and Austria-Hungary; “Triple Entente” formed as a nucleus of the allied power that included Great Britain, France, and Russia¹⁸ before and during World War I. The collective defense being bounded by a specific geographical area focuses on only military matters within the alliance’s area of influence,¹⁹ now expanding beyond the areas of interests.²⁰

¹⁷ Robert E. Osgood Jr, *Ideals and Self-interest in America’s Foreign Relations*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953.

¹⁸ Bernadotte E. Schmitt, “Triple Alliance and Triple Entente, 1902-1914”, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 29, No. 3, 1924, pp. 449-473.

¹⁹ A. M. Kishk, *NATO and the Gulf Countries: An Analysis of the Fifteen Year Strategic Partnership*, Singapore: Springer Nature, Singapore Private Ltd, 2021.

²⁰ Stefan Popov, “NATO Expansion: from Collective Defence to Collective Security”, *Perspectives*, Vol. 13, 1999, pp. 59–67.

2.2.2 Global Security

The concept of global security evolved after the Cold War in the last decade of the 20th century.²¹ UN was the lead agency of the concept of global security, which focused on the post-cold war world order scenario. The global security concept contemplated that security is interrelated and transcended through the individual states. The focus of global security remains on the security of each state with the understanding that no one country is secured if all are not secured.²² Its primary focus goes further to resolve conflicts through global governance resting on international law and respecting universal human rights norms. It capitalizes on diplomatic and military means to pursue conflict resolution to obtain ultimate peace and security. Essentially, global security governance helps assess the political, economic, and military trends around the world, which aids in locating potential conflicts in individual countries or regions including emerging security threats in the global context. While national security signifies the ability of a particular state to defend its interest, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and its people,²³ global or international security emanates from the sources of natural and human activities needs collaborative actions due to especially globalization.

2.2.3 International Law

The functional diversities and coverage of security are very fluid. It is argued that the security apparatus is used to attain and whip up benefaction for vested political objectives, which could prevail at both state and global levels of politicking. According to Paul D. Williams, “security is, therefore, a powerful political tool in claiming attention for priority items in the competition for government attention”.²⁴ In the context of international law, Samuel Makinda contemplates that while applying the tools for ensuring security, “the preservation of the norms, rules, institutions, and values of society” is of utmost importance. He also argues that a country’s societal structure includes citizenry who must be protected from “military and non-military threats”²⁵ while applying the security apparatus of a country to counter any such threat. It may be noted that the term “preservation” presumes definite, deliberate,

²¹ Michael D. Intriligator, “Global Security After the End of the End of the Cold War”, *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 1994, pp. 101–111.

²² H. E. Jiechi, “Working Together to Build a World of Lasting Peace and Universal Security and a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind”, available at https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1577242.shtml, accessed on 12 August 2021.

²³ Anton Grizold, “The Concept of National Security in the Contemporary World”, *International Journal on World Peace*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 1994, pp. 37–53.

²⁴ Paul D. Williams, *Security Studies: An Introduction*, UK: Routledge, 2019.

²⁵ Samuel M. Makinda, “Sovereignty and Global Security, Security Dialogue”, *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 29, No. 3, 1998, pp. 281-292.

and most importantly, conscious strides and schemes in the context of security governance. Hence the societal perception, especially of its leadership, is of great value to determine the states' actions covering the breadth and depth of the national security agenda.

2.2.4 *Non-military Notion of National Security*

The Brundtland Commission Report²⁶ delineates the associations between notions of the intangible foursome of peace, security, development, and the environment. It argues that “linkages among environment, development, and conflict are complex and, in many cases poorly understood.” The report proposes a comprehensive approach in which international and national security must transcend the traditional emphasis on military power and armed competition. The commission highlights that the real sources of insecurity can also emanate from unsustainable development, and its impact can be interwoven with the traditional nature of the conflict that can escalate and deepen the latter.²⁷

One school of security, departing from idealists and traditional realists, posits that contemporary security study needs more close association with post-structuralism to develop insights on the construct of the international-national dichotomy of security, the discursive nature of the security concept, and the relationship between security politics and national security. The poststructuralist view of security would help understand the transformation of the security concept. Post-structuralism debated the expansion of security concept where Ole Wæver— a proponent of post-structuralism argues that security is primarily discursive practice thus cannot be confined to the military domain only.²⁸ The emphasis is not on the objectivity of the relationship between the concept and possible domain of security, rather understanding how an issue is securitized. Thus, it is significant to understand how an issue is problematized and whether or not state-centric security governance is to be built on the conquest of other broad-based interrelated domains.²⁹

Hence, it is essential to focus on the broader concept of national security, including human security, economic security, environmental security, political

²⁶ Gro Harlem Brundtland, *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future*, Oslo: UNDP, 1987.

²⁷ Hans Gunter Brauch, “Conceptual Quartet of Security, Peace, Development and Environment”, in Hans Günter Brauch, Úrsula Oswald Spring, Czeslaw Mesjasz, John Grin, Pal Dunay, Navnita Chadha Behera, Béchir Chourou, Patricia Kameri-Mbote, P.H. Liotta (eds.), *Globalization and Environmental Challenges: Reconceptualizing Security in the 21st Century*, Switzerland: Springer, 2008.

²⁸ Lene Hansen, “A Case for Seduction? Evaluating the Poststructuralist Conceptualization of Security”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 32, No. 4, 1997, pp. 369–397.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

security, and societal security. It would help understand how different domains of security interact and interlink with each other.³⁰ The non-military notion of national security embraces a range of domestic matters of a nation-state, which, if not paid attention to, may severely jeopardize the national security of a country.

No wonder that the security landscape of the Rohingya crisis largely looms on the “social conflict” notion. Social conflict refers to the competition among and between groups of either different ethnicity or different interests. In such cases, variables of group structures and their boundaries of interaction are significant to perceive conflicts and threats emanating from social interaction. If one sees power, structure, and distribution as central to understanding of social order, he will be concerned with the process of social conflict. Men in groups are ever deciding whether to keep what they have, concede a portion of it to avoid difficulty, or risk some difficulty in an attempt to get more. The nature of the structure and the distribution of power engender social conflict. In this context, the huge exodus of Rohingyas residing in Bangladeshi camps can be a cause of social conflict.³¹

3. Rohingya Crisis and Bangladesh’s Security Governance Challenges

After a lull of nearly two decades since the early 1990s, the Rohingyas witnessed renewed successive waves of communal violence perpetrated by both the Government’s security forces and the majority of Rakhine Buddhists in 2012. Myanmar’s Rohingya crisis started receiving greater international attention following a credible election in 2015, which ended nearly fifty years of dictatorship. However, the Rohingyas had little to gain from such democracy where they were debarred from voting and landed up as increasingly marginalized. Amidst tension between Myanmar’s military and democratic forces, two rivals had commonalities concerning the national identity of Rohingyas.³² This consensus started becoming vivid with the so-called emergence of a Rohingya insurgency in Rakhine State. In October 2016, allegedly, a group of armed Rohingyas killed nine policemen. The security forces sealed off the surrounding areas and launched indiscriminate brutal counter-insurgency operations with this plea. In collaboration with the radical local Buddhist community, military operations perpetrated severe human-rights violations

³⁰ Bjorn Møller, “National, Societal and Human Security: Discussion — Case Study of the Israel-Palestine Conflict”, in H.G. Brauch, P.H. Liotta, A. Marquina, P.F. Rogers, and M.E.S. Selim (eds.), *Security and Environment in the Mediterranean. Hexagon Series on Human and Environmental Security and Peace*, Berlin: Springer, 2008.

³¹ Raymond W. Mack, “The Components of Social Conflict”, *Social Problems*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 1965, pp. 388–397.

³² Amal D. Chickera, “Stateless and Persecuted: What Next for the Rohingya?” available at <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/stateless-persecuted-rohingya>, accessed on 21 July 2021.

backed by mass propaganda campaigns against the Rohingyas³³ to divert barely implied genocidal imprecations.

The pervasive anti-Muslim and anti-Rohingya sentiments in Myanmar have reached a new height and become rampant in the social and political conflict landscape of Myanmar since 2012. The Myanmar government and the radical Buddhists randomly depose Rohingyas calling them “Bengali,” sometimes the derogatory “Kalar” or at best the “so-called Rohingya”,³⁴ which bears an alarming connotation. The Rohingya community in Myanmar continuously confronted deep-rooted animosity from the radical Buddhist society of Myanmar, including the notable pro-democracy advocates and other ethnic minorities who themselves faced severe oppression from the autocratic government during their struggle for rights in Myanmar.

The government of Bangladesh is steadfast to contain the dispossessed Rohingyas to return them to their homeland- Myanmar the soonest. It is thus vital yet challenging for the Bangladesh government to prevent them from integrating into mainstream society. The security concern of the camp and its surrounding areas remains a priority for the management body of the government.

Rohingya crisis has taught Bangladesh not to compromise with security issues while equally upholding the humanitarian concerns. In particular, based on UN recognition of Bangladesh as a “lower-middle-income status in 2015 and its on track to graduate from the UN’s Least Developed Countries (LDC) list in 2026”,³⁵ Bangladesh’s profound desire remains to become a middle-income country by 2026, and a high-income nation by 2041; the Rohingya issue has plunged Bangladesh into a haze since 2017. The security threat level increased when Rohingyas tried to flee to neighbouring countries, and Bangladesh faced accountability questions. Also, the funds needed to protect that massive exodus kept policymakers in a foggy state for a long time. In such a dilemmatic situation, the development of Bhasan Char’s project came to the fore which received Bangladesh’s contribution of USD 120 million besides donor countries.³⁶ Furthermore, reviewing the impact of the Rohingya exodus, the UN Development Program identified 28 environmental risks that might strike in the nearer future.³⁷

³³ Linda Crossman, *Myanmar’s Rohingya Refugees: The Search for Human Security*, Washington D.C: Georgetown University, 2014.

³⁴ Human Rights Watch, 2020, op. cit.

³⁵ The World Bank, “The World Bank in Bangladesh (Overview)”, available at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/bangladesh/overview>, accessed on 25 March 2021.

³⁶ Ferdinand Moses and Shandralingam Kengatharan, “Bringing Rohingya Refugees Off-Track of Long-Term Economic Vulnerability in Bangladesh”, *Journal of Nusantara Studies (JONUS)*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2018, pp. 45-46.

³⁷ Mayesha Alam, “How the Rohingya crisis is affecting Bangladesh — and why it matters”, *The Washington Post*, 12 February 2018.

Beyond ambiguity, the Rohingya crisis has become a global concern and geopolitically significant event in South East and South Asia. This crisis has the potential to turn into as a severe national security threat due to its transnational vulnerabilities. India has also reckoned the Rohingya crisis as “a security threat” for them.³⁸ Bangladesh’s worries started to surface following emerging armed violence by Rohingya combative in the camps. It has been quite evident from the killing of Rohingya leader Muhibullah – “the most high-profile advocates for the Rohingya and the chairman of the Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace and Human Rights, a civil society organization that often represented the Rohingya internationally”.³⁹ The incident took place on the evening of 29 September 2021. Hence, by forming an alliance and maintaining a connection with militant group(s), these groups may destabilize the local security environment.⁴⁰ Such alliance building has been seen in the case of ISIS, and Al Qaeda, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Red Army Faction.⁴¹ The US withdrawal from Afghanistan has the potential to spread violence by the vested group(s) who may also try to recruit Rohingyas for perpetrating violence and/or use them as a proxy to serve their purpose. The Rohingyas can also be used to connect with other similar group(s) in the region.⁴² The Rohingyas can pose numerous threats of conducting illegal activities that can undermine the security of the country.⁴³ Myanmar accused ARSA of attacking government establishments before their military operations in Rakhine state. Thus, ARSA would emerge as a “proxy” to spoil the interests of the stateless Rohingyas.

The geopolitical competition between China and India has been a major factor in resolving the Rohingya crisis. In 2018, the Indian government completely ignored the Rohingya issue during a speech by the Indian Prime Minister at Viswa-Bharati University while the Prime Minister of Bangladesh urged India to address the Rohingya crisis facing Bangladesh.⁴⁴ An Indian scholar, Shreya Upadhyay, in her article, “The Future of India’s Do-nothing Policy toward the Rohingya”, mentioned the Indian policy and criticized India’s stance on the issue of Rohingyas.⁴⁵ Siegfried O. Wolf mentioned that Rohingyas—the stateless community could turn to be a security threat and can pose psycho-social and

³⁸ Ahmad Adil, “UN experts call on India to stop Rohingya deportation”, *Anadolu Agency*, 03 April, 2019.

³⁹ Feliz Solomon, “Rohingya Civil-Rights Leader Mohib Ullah Killed in Bangladesh”, *The Wall Street Journal*, 30 September 2021.

⁴⁰ Norman Fernandez, “National Security 2020: Pondering Why Rohingyas are hated in Myanmar”, *Malay Mail*, 27 April 2020.

⁴¹ Tricia Bacon, *Why Terrorist Groups Form International Alliances*, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018, pp. 20-52.

⁴² National Security 2020, op. cit.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Kamal Uddin Ahmed, “The Geo-politics of Rohingya Crisis”, *The Financial Express*, 06 June 2018.

⁴⁵ Shreya Upadhyay, “The Future of India’s Do-Nothing Policy Toward the Rohingya”, *The Diplomat*, 07 December 2017.

human security challenges to the host countries.⁴⁶ He also argued that Rohingyas, living in an appalling environment and involuntarily concentrated settlement, can be potentially targeted by criminal networks.⁴⁷ It is reported that Rohingyas are engaging in different criminal activities inside the camps of Cox’s Bazar. The illicit trade has long relied on drug trafficking cartels, smuggling Yaba across the border – and in recent times, vulnerable Rohingyas living in the Bangladesh camps have also been recruited as drug mules.⁴⁸ Following the influx of Rohingyas, flora and fauna, farming and fishing, jobs and business, infrastructure and governance, have all been affected and impacts are wide-ranging on the lives of the host communities ranging from higher commodity prices and lower wages to shortage of drinking water due to depletion of the water sources.⁴⁹ It is becoming difficult for the government to mitigate and manage the challenges. Time and again, the local community, law enforcers, local media, and CSOs in Bangladesh have raised their concerns about the increasing involvement of Rohingya in various criminal activities.⁵⁰ Since 2016, there have been about 60 murders recorded in the camp, mostly from knife attacks. It is observed that local host communities are facing considerable challenges for food and other resources, which are being consumed by the Rohingya influx. One estimate revealed that in Teknaf and Ukhiya areas of Cox’s Bazar District, a minimum of 100 hectares of cultivable land had been occupied by Rohingya settlements. Ensuring food security for the host communities is gradually being difficult. Nearly 2,000 hectares of woodland reserves have also been impaired.⁵¹ It is worth noting that about 4,300 acres of hilly and forest lands were cleared off their green growths for making shelters for the Rohingya exodus who later used the trees and bamboos as fuel. One study revealed that out of 1502 hectares of forest land, about 793 hectares had been infringed, and around 3,000 to 4,000 acres (1,200–1,600 hectares) of hilly land in the Teknaf-Ukhiya-Himchari area depleted. A total of 6,800 tons of wood are collected each month, and each family uses on an average 60 culms of Bamboo,⁵² which creates an ecological imbalance in the area.

⁴⁶ Siegfried O. Wolf, “The Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis or Security Threat?” *The Diplomat*, 06 October 2015.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Naimul Karim, “Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh warned to be wary with human trafficking rising”, available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bangladesh-myanmar-trafficking-idUSKCN1VD0XD>, accessed on 23 August, 2019.

⁴⁹ Zaidi Sattar, “Rohingya crisis and the host community”, *The Financial Express*, 30 July 2019.

⁵⁰ Stephan Uttom and Rock Ronald Rozario, “Struggling Rohingya seduced by crime at refugee camps”, *Union of Catholic Asian News*, 09 May 2021.

⁵¹ TRT World Correspondent, “Food Security crisis grows in Bangladesh Rohingya refugee camps”, available at <https://www.trtworld.com/asia/food-security-crisis-grows-in-bangladesh-rohingya-refugee-camps-25729>, accessed on 10 April 2019.

⁵² UNDP Bangladesh, *Environmental impacts of Rohingya influx: A multifaceted problem requires multifaceted responses*, Dhaka: UNDP, 2018.

Managing the world's largest forcibly displaced settlement in Bangladesh poses a great challenge. While sustaining a large population in an inadequate space, the Rohingya exodus created environmental hazards causing mass biodiversity damages, deforestation, and disease transmission, which Bangladesh already got rid of. Drinkable water scarcity, infectious disease spread, and pandemic breakout are also real possibilities in the camps that can transcend the local community. All these factors are leading to conflict - relationship with the host community in Cox's Bazar area. Maintaining law and order, ensuring everyone's security, and preventing illegal activities are complex tasks to pull off without adequate policy planning and prudent implementation. Thus, the government of Bangladesh must think about these possibilities to ensure a healthy and peaceful condition around the camps until their safe and dignified return to Myanmar, where they belong to.

4. The Mitigation and Security Governance Approach

While traditional security adopts a top-down, state-centric viewpoint to the causes of insecurity, nontraditional or human security viewpoint adopts a bottom-up approach (expanding the horizons to the causes, victims, and perpetrators of insecurity towards state and non-state actors). In "People, States and Fear", Barry Buzan elucidated the concept with the expansion of military security transcending to economic, social, environmental, and political notions of security.⁵³ Over time, two schools of human security gained prominence: the Copenhagen school⁵⁴ and the Tokyo School.⁵⁵ Though the essentials of the two schools vary, they seek the same goal: ensuring security for the human being.

The manifold perils of the Rohingya populace and the challenges emanating from supporting them within Bangladesh form the first layer of security concern. From there, the layer broadens into the immediate international vicinity of Bangladesh-India and Myanmar. Afterward, the regional security implications of South and Southeast Asia form the third tier of security concern, and finally, the global level of insecurity probabilities come to the fore. Kenneth Waltz discarded his first and second levels of analysis (proposed originally in "Man, the state and war"). However, he emphasized the third level in his "Theory of International Politics."⁵⁶ It may be argued in the context that the first and second levels "man'

⁵³ Barry Buzan, *People, States, and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*, Great Britain: Heatshef Books Ltd, 1983.

⁵⁴ Rita Floyd, "Human Security and the Copenhagen School's Securitization Approach: Conceptualizing Human Security as a Securitizing Move", *Human Security Journal*, Vol. 5, 2007, pp. 39-47.

⁵⁵ Lam Peng Er, "Japan's Human Security Role in Southeast Asia", *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 2006, pp. 141-159.

⁵⁶ Hidemi Sukanami, "Understanding Man, the State, and War", *International Relations*, Vol. 23, No. 3, 2009, pp. 372-388.

and the state” should be considered at the individual and national tiers, which is necessary to understand the overall security implications. Furthermore, societal and national responses are vital to address the non-traditional aspect of security at the individual level, whereas at the international (regional and global alike – referred to as “the international system”, or the nature of the international environment”) level, systemic insecurity concerns are to be addressed (in the context of human security).

On 27 August 2017, a huge influx of the Rohingya populace occurred when Bangladesh opened the borders for the persecuted Muslim minority group of Myanmar. Although Bangladesh has not signed the 1951 convention on the “Rights and Protection of Refugees” nor its “1967 Protocol”⁵⁷ in a de jure fashion, the country inherently adopts de facto adherence to these legal instruments by honouring the principle of non-refoulement.

Indeed, Rohingya people are considered as “Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Muslims”. Bangladesh, various international agencies, the United Nations, and its various organs provided basic amenities to the Rohingyas. The huge number of residing in Bangladesh (which outnumbers the populace of a nearby South Asian State - Bhutan)⁵⁸ is now safe from Myanmar’s state-sponsored persecution and brutality.

The emerging security challenges mitigation and governance for Bangladesh during the prolonged stay of the Rohingyas lie in balancing between the fundamental human rights for the Rohingya populace and maintaining the rights of the local community. Bangladesh has so far sustained the Rohingyas. However, the Rohingyas have started showing signs of security concerns due to the prolonged stay in concentrated Bangladeshi camps. While the sustainable return of the Rohingyas hangs under the “Sword of Damocles”⁵⁹ due to the military coup and the unfurling of Myanmar’s nascent democracy, the government of Bangladesh must remain intricately engaged and focussed on addressing both local and global sources of insecurity. From this viewpoint and the analysis of the tiers identified by the levels of analysis and security studies schools, Bangladesh should address the security challenges following the conventional security regimes.

Rohingya crisis poses non-traditional security threats which can transcend traditional security. In the contemporary context, non-traditional sources of

⁵⁷ “UNHCR Global Appeal 2008-2009, Bangladesh”, available at <https://www.unhcr.org/474ac8da11.pdf>, accessed on 05 April 2021.

⁵⁸ “Number of Rohingyas in Bangladesh surpasses Bhutan’s population”, *The Financial Express*, 02 April 2018.

⁵⁹ Evan Andrews, “What was the sword of Damocles?”, available at <https://www.history.com/news/what-was-the-sword-of-damocles>, accessed on 01 September 2021.

insecurity have assumed intriguing prominence while laying enormous ramifications for the national government. Likewise, the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh has altered the security environment of the host community and the country. It has emerged to be the most complex and interconnected with regional and global dynamics. This interconnectedness demands effective security governance amidst the involvement of various actors. The security governance will need collaboration and cooperation among and between various security and humanitarian actors under an effective “Security Governance Framework” to ensure the holistic and comprehensive security of the local community and the nation. In this context, the involvement of regional and international actors appears to be of utmost significance. In this regard, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said, “I believe we can develop a new vision of global security. A vision that respects human rights while confronting the threats of our age A vision that draws upon the resources and legitimacy of a network of effective and mutually reinforcing multilateral mechanisms – regional and global – which are flexible and responsive to our rapidly changing and integrating world”.⁶⁰ Regarding the stance of UN Security Council in April 2003 The Arab League expressed, “The fact is, however, that the Security Council does not deal with all regional arrangements on the same footing. While the Council may allow a particular regional organization to assist in preventing or settling a crisis, it may ignore another regional organization in a similar situation. We believe that the proper functioning of the international collective security system in the coming years will require the Council’s efficient use of assistance by the regional organizations in addressing various crises.”⁶¹

Security governance adopts the basics of coordination between and among multiple actors and entities. The approach can follow both informal and formal chain of actions and processes under rule-based policy objectives where the state becomes the primary actor. When the various actors are well-coordinated, it is expected that security governance would create a well-functioning nexus between political coordination, policy, and rulemaking to solve the problem.⁶²

The security concerns of the Rohingya crisis have the potential to transcend Bangladesh’s national security dimensions. Hence, it demands security governance architecture to provide a framework to deal with the Rohingya crisis holistically

⁶⁰ Kofi Annan, “Secretary-General Hopes Meeting With Regional Organizations Develops ‘New Vision Of Global Security’ To Face Unprecedented Challenges”, available at <https://www.un.org/press/en/2003/sgsm8798.doc.htm>, accessed on 01 September 2021.

⁶¹ Kennedy Graham and Tânia Felício, *Regional Security and Global Governance: A Study of Interaction Between the Regional Agencies and the UN Security Council with a Proposal for a Regional – Global Security Mechanism in Light of the UN High-Level Panel’s Report*, Brussels: Academia Press, 2005, pp. 1-50.

⁶² R. A. W. Rhodes, “The New Governance: Governing without Government”, *Political Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 4, 1996, pp. 652-657.

departing from myopic vision while addressing national security concerns. The security governance framework would provide pathways amidst the complex and dynamic security issues arising from the Rohingya crisis. Bangladesh would need to enhance its cooperation and collaboration networks and mechanisms amongst various actors and stakeholders at the state, regional, and international levels. As ensuring security from evolving and emerging threats goes beyond the capacity and capabilities of the state alone, multiple stakeholders at national, regional, and international levels have been involved under the purview of human security. Under such circumstances, multi-actors involvement needs to be brought under a functional network to keep accountability of and monitor their actions so that no sabotage or subversion can occur including creating “Proxy” from and among the Rohingyas. According to E.J. Kirchner, “security governance” follows the system of rules involving management, regulation, and coordination of issues by separate and multiple actors (public and private) directed towards particular policy outcomes.⁶³ Based on this concept, the model delineated in figure 1 can be pursued by Bangladesh for the security governance of the Rohingya crisis.

Figure 1: Security Governance Model

Recognition of Threat(s)	Recognition of Actors Involved or to be Involved	Networking the Actors	Policy Formulation
Identification of Transcending and Overlapping Nature of Threat(s)	Identification of Sector Based Actors	Building Collaborative Alliance	Adoption Plan
		Establishing Cooperation Mechanism	Implementation Strategy

4.1 Military (Traditional) Notion

Bangladesh government must take cautious notes of the happenings in Myanmar with precision, mostly through intelligence while preparing for a possible further entry of the Rohingyas (as the military regimes of Myanmar had caused several influxes of the Rohingyas to Bangladesh in 1978 and 1993; and even during the proto democratic regime - the influxes of 2012 and 2017 occurred). It also must adhere to the principles of non-refoulment, a concise strategy that goes beyond only repatriation and sustainable return.

⁶³ Emil J. Kirchner, “Regional and global security: changing threats and institutional responses”, in E.J. Kirchner and James Sperling (eds.), *Global Security Governance*, London and New York: Routledge, 2007.

4.2 *Non-traditional Notion*

Bangladesh's security apparatus and statecraft should consider the possibility of lethal violence and criminal activities that can emanate from and within the Rohingyas. For instance, the Rohingya people have grievances against Myanmar, and radical propositions of faith-based violence influence many. Furthermore, the insurgency was a prominent issue in Northern Rakhine, where the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) was allegedly held responsible for conducting the raids against the state and provincial armies.⁶⁴ However, the insurgency movements by aggrieved Rohingyas have the propensity to escalate to a vengeful mode if the global community remains indifferent about the Rohingya crisis solution. The notions of illicit trade of drugs and narcotics find their way in the non-traditional aspect of military security. Since Bangladesh stands in-between the "Golden Triangle" and the "Golden Crescent", while the Rohingyas live in the "camps", the economically vulnerable Rohingyas can be and are being often used as the transporter of narcotics (especially Yaba) from Myanmar through Bangladesh, to deliver to other countries or even within Bangladesh. Bangladesh must mitigate such malice with a comprehensive security architecture involving all elements of security stakeholders, civil administration, and local government bodies.

4.3 *Societal Security Concerns*

The formation of "drug cartel" potentials creates concerns for Bangladesh. Due to social insecurities and future economic worries, the youth of Bangladesh had shown the tendency to enter depression and choose drugs as a resort for relief. Therefore, drug-related problems must be taken into consideration.. Another social security issue that emanates from within Bangladesh is the local populace being aggrieved by the prolonged stay of the Rohingyas and the economic sustenance they (the Rohingyas) receive from the Government, including international agencies. Although the local people of Cox's Bazar, Teknaf, Ukhiya, and other bordering areas welcomed the Rohingyas on humanitarian considerations, a gradual sense of grievance formed among the locals as the Rohingyas has entered into their public (and in many cases, private) spheres and interests. Although the Bangladeshi citizens had provided shelter, food, clothing, and other necessary resources for the Rohingyas for a considerable time, a growing division occurred on some issues:

- Economically the Rohingyas are deemed to be a nuisance for the locals as they are accused of stealing jobs from the locals;

⁶⁴ Andrew Selth, "Myanmar's Armed Forces and The Rohingya Crisis", available at <https://www.usip.org/publications/2018/08/myanmars-armed-forces-and-rohingya-crisis>, accessed on 10 September 2021.

- The rising trends of criminal activities in the immediate and extended localities are linked to the arrival and prolonged stay of the Rohingyas;
- The ethnic division between the Bangladeshi citizens and the Rohingyas gradually created a rift;
- The environmental degradation due to the rapid deforestation had caused a major sense of infringement among the locals; and
- The assistance received from the Bangladesh government and international agencies is frowned upon by the locals; as a result, such assistance often starkly reminds the locals of their deprivation.

4.4 *Economic Issues*

Bangladesh may face economic setbacks while housing Rohingyas for a prolonged time as the country bids to be a “Middle Income Country” within a few years. This would mean the reduction of assistance from international donor agencies and a looming debt crisis. Though the country can still maneuver through the looming economic twilight if a comprehensive plan is executed, the trend of sustaining the Rohingyas for a prolonged time can emerge as an issue to be worried about. Furthermore, the economic sense of deprivation felt by the locals may cause additional sources of escalating insecurity.

4.5 *Environmental Insecurity*

As Bangladesh is standing on the brink of climate change and associated environmental challenges, deforestation and rapid infrastructural overhaul may leave long-term implications in the country’s south-eastern region of the country due to the presence of Rohingyas. Even though Bhashan Char has been prepared to relocate the Rohingyas, the area may not sustain indiscriminate usages of natural resources as it may turn the effort futile, adding further economic and environmental downfall.

4.6 *Public Health Concerns*

The sudden exodus of Rohingyas in Cox’s Bazar area has severely strained existing facilities and infrastructures. It has also exacerbated the availability of critical needs, e.g., health, hygiene, sanitation, nutrition, security and safety, food and shelter. Hence, there is a need to combine national, international, and non-government voluntary efforts so that communicable diseases can be effectively contained before the greater Bangladeshi community is affected.

In the public health sector, Bangladesh has shown remarkable success, especially in the alleviation of many diseases permanently. The pandemic has proven that the Rohingyas may be undergoing the notion of herd immunity – but they are not invincible to death. The Rohingyas are not aware of hygiene practices, and they may be the carriers of deadly diseases.⁶⁵ Therefore, making them aware of the health and safety rules remains a key challenge, which needs to be addressed to keep safe the local community and the nation as a whole.

4.7 *The Notion of Insecurity at Regional Level*

The recent move by the Myanmar military at the national level is significant for Rohingyas repatriation in the context of the regional geopolitical “Great Game” between India and China. The two regional superpowers are vying to gain the geopolitical advantage in South and Southeast Asia – where China is aspiring to utilize Deng Xiao ping’s strategy of biding time by hiding strength is accentuated by the ancient Chinese notion of “All under heaven”⁶⁶. On the other hand, India is trying to expand its sphere of influence in a manner reminiscent of the Kautilyan elucidation of *mandala*.⁶⁷ As Bangladesh and Myanmar stand at the crossroads between South and Southeast Asia, both are eyed by the two regional giants for cooperative efforts foreshadowing complex confrontations. The belt and Road initiative (BRI) led by China is often translated by India as an encroachment into the sphere of India with a “string of pearls” notion.⁶⁸ At the same time, India favours the notion of the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy (FOIPS)” including QUAD.⁶⁹ Bangladesh’s good option may suggest adopting strategic hedging where both BRI and FOIPS could remain on the table. Regional assistance should be sought from the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). However, the national unfurling of Myanmar’s coup may resonate with the growing populism within the majoritarian Burmese people (who were equally responsible for ousting the Rohingyas, worked alongside the Tatmadaw and the law enforcement agencies), with a chance of rising tension

⁶⁵ “The 2nd International Conference on the Rohingya Crisis in Comparative perspective”, available at https://www.ucl.ac.uk/risk-disaster-reduction/sites/risk-disaster-reduction/files/rphingya_conference_report_2020.pdf, accessed on 10 September 2021.

⁶⁶ Huang Youyi, “Context, not history, matters for Deng’s famous phrase”, available at <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/661734.shtml>, accessed on 12 September 2021.

⁶⁷ Amalendu Misra, “Rajamandala a Theory and India’s International Relations”, available at https://comum.rcaap.pt/bitstream/10400.26/29492/1/NeDef142_AmalenduMisra.pdf, accessed on 13 September 2021.

⁶⁸ Kai Neagle, “Why Is China’s Belt and Road Initiative Being Questioned by Japan and India?”, available at <https://www.e-ir.info/2020/05/02/why-is-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-being-questioned-by-japan-and-india/>, accessed on 13 September 2021.

⁶⁹ Jagannath P. Panda, *Scaling India-Japan Cooperation in Indo-Pacific and Beyond 2025: Corridors, Connectivity and Contours*, New Delhi: KW Publishers, 2019.

between the Burmese “pure people” vis-à-vis the 135 registered and many other unrecognized ethnic populace in Myanmar. The reverberations of this tension are already felt in Bangladesh. Francis Wade had shown the chasm of the populace⁷⁰ along with garrison state characteristics of Myanmar. The Chinese influence and involvement over and in Myanmar could form a vital source of security concern for South and Southeast Asia and the whole world. Bangladesh’s diplomatic efforts and engagement must not rest on despair while balancing the regional and global dynamics.

4.8 *The Role of the International Community*

It is expected that the international community led by global institutions, legal instruments, and bilateral and multilateral efforts will play a vital role in the containment of insecurities in Bangladesh, including South and Southeast Asia. However, such notions are firmly grounded in the triad of political will, intangible determinants, and tangible capabilities. Any lacking in any of the three may result in a probability of further escalation. Therefore, the UN and its various organizations must play a more decisive role in upholding international law and norms in the Rohingya crisis. Although divided into many areas, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), can work for a framework that may deescalate any sense of looming insecurity due to the Rohingya crisis.

The Rohingya crisis is humanitarian as well as geopolitical. Bangladesh’s foreign policy took a soft approach at the beginning towards Myanmar while struggling to find the right strategy to put pressure on Myanmar for repatriation and get out of the geopolitical conundrum. Regionally, the strength of BIMSTEC and ASEAN may be harnessed to deescalate tensions, but in the absence of political coalescence and with the growing regional tensions, only economic and technical cooperation may not provide desired results. Therefore, a hybrid political economy approach may be used where the economic ties between the member countries are regulated in a state-centric and a non-state-centric approach. Finally, the bilateral and multilateral notions of diplomacy must assess not the needs of the state and people. The international communities, e.g., UN, Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC), already supporting the Rohingya cause as the International Court of Justice (ICJ) case is lodged. However, these supports must take a deeper view into the Rohingya crisis and look forward to sustainable repatriation and third-country resettlement, for the greater cause of humanity.

⁷⁰ Francis Wade, *Myanmar’s Enemy Within: Buddhist Violence and the Making of a Muslim Other*, London: Zed Books, 2017, pp. 200-280.

5. Conclusion

In both subjective and objective senses, the security in the social and corporeal realm is complex, multi-scaled, and multi-layered. While discussing national security, it is also significant what national security is not. Hence, it is crucial to identify the criterion and constituents of threats to national security. It depends on the securitization process of an issue that will dictate whether or not it must be eliminated or the nation as a whole can tolerate it. If the threat appears to be intolerable, then the questions come about how national effort can influence the threat or employ the appropriate means and resources to contain and defeat it. It is also vital to identify the origin of the threat, i.e., internal or external. While perceiving the threats to emanate from external sources, the national government must seek international cooperation to locate the roots, linkages, and support base in armament, munitions, and finance. On the other hand, if the security threats emerge from internal sources, the government must first scrutinize the threat level, affecting peoples' freedom of movement and creating a hostile environment in maintaining routine life. It is observed that many governments consider political dissent as a hostile act, thus securitizing it as a threat to national security. Hence, the political leadership, national military law enforcement, and security agencies must be cautious in drawing the luminous lines between terrorism, violence, and political views.

Rohingya crisis remains the world's largest state-sponsored atrocity which rendered Myanmar's ethnic Muslim minority community "stateless". Myanmar society considers that Rohingya Muslims are illegal migrants and a threat to their national security. The Rohingyas' ethnic-religious identity was rejected and faced persecution by state and non-state actors in Myanmar. Bangladesh and Myanmar governments agreed upon the settlement of the Rohingya crisis following the bilateral negotiation process. Unfortunately, the bilateral process was forestalled due to Myanmar's reluctance and non-cooperation. Bangladesh lacks the resources and infrastructure needed to cope with the Rohingya crisis. Bangladesh has not entered into the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. Hence, it has no obligation to support the Rohingyas. However, it supported them from a humanitarian ground. Bangladesh has urged the international community to ramp up pressure on Myanmar to take back its citizens. The European Union, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and other Western and Muslim countries have been vocal critics of Myanmar. Nevertheless, Myanmar can get away with international sanctions and embargos due to China, Russia, and India's support. Bangladesh cannot pressurize Myanmar for Rohingya repatriation due to geopolitical constraints. Myanmar had a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Bangladesh in 2018, but the process is not in progress until today. Bangladesh expressed frustration with the UN and Western countries for not taking a more active role in solving the Rohingya crisis.

Despite being a geographically small state, Bangladesh, for its commitment to global peace and security, has extended its wholehearted assistance to millions of ill-fated Rohingyas fleeing Myanmar's brutality. The Rohingya crisis is a complicated humanitarian and geopolitical concern for the government of Bangladesh. However, in the context of past pogroms, the solution to Rohingya catastrophe strongly suggests that only repatriation is not the solution to this whole crisis. A few issues that should be resolved before the return; a safe zone can be established in the northern part of Rakhine state under UN supervision as an intermediate measure. Citizenship to the Rohingyas must be awarded in the present Myanmar nation-state framework, and the collective rights of Rohingyas must also be assured. In the context of Bangladesh's national security, while designating the Rohingya issue to be a threat, it is significant to observe whether it relates to traditional security concerns or is connected with the non-traditional notions of security. Even if it appears to be evolving from ecological and environmental consequences, or socio-economic issues, the signaling of adverse significances must be critically examined to see the possibility of manipulations by the "proxy actor(s)" in the contemporary geopolitical context.