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VIOLENCE AND ATROCITY-LED DISPLACEMENT AND POTENTIAL OF INTOLERANCE IN THE DESTINATION PLACE: ROHINGYA EXODUS FROM MYANMAR TO BANGLADESH

Abstract

Violence and atrocity committed by any country or actor for any reason force many innocent people to cross the border to save lives, as displaced Rohingyas, the Forcefully Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMNs), did in 2017. Drawing on host community data collected through micro-narratives, interviews, FGDs, and wider secondary sources, this study examines the extent to which genocidal violence faced by the Rohingyas in Myanmar and their subsequent influx into Bangladesh has caused potential of intolerance in the host communities. This paper develops a five-staged pyramid model of host-refugee relations and argues that when the locals cannot afford the adverse effects of refugees that gradually endangers their relations and creates potential conditions for intolerance. The inauspicious effects of the 2017 Rohingya influx developed a local reserved perception towards the FDMNs, which has been far different from the initial generous position. To a great extent, the actions of many, of course not of all Rohingyas, like engaging in criminal, aggressive, and unlawful activities, are as responsible as new evolving security challenges exacerbated by other realities created by different armed groups and entities. Those actions have created a restrained perception of them and forced the locals to maintain as much distance as possible from them. The locals also felt a sense of deprivation generated by service providers. Therefore, narratives of difference have developed against them, while the locals live in anxiety and tension. No large-scale violence happened between them due to the active roles of the state and its agencies; yet, when the very survival of locals and entities feel threatened, no one can rule out the potential of further complicated condition. Therefore, the concerned stakeholders, including the state and international community, must re-strategise to meet the needs of local people and develop a locally based joint early warning system to detect and prevent any unwanted situation.

Keywords: Atrocity-led Displacement, Host community, Forcefully Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMNs), Tension, Intolerance, Violence.

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1. Introduction

Large scale violence worldwide is considered to be one of the leading causes of massive population displacement. The Rohingya ‘ethnic cleansing’ in Myanmar¹ led to the fifth largest population displacement—from one country to another, Myanmar to Bangladesh, in 2017.² As a Muslim minority community in Myanmar, Rohingyas experienced systemic violence and atrocities, leading more than 850,000 of them to leave their homes in the Rakhine state of Myanmar and take shelter in 34 camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf, Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh.³ Bangladesh, which is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, sheltered them on humanitarian grounds but has recognised them as the Forcefully Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMNs). Many claimed that the post-independent governments of Myanmar systematically denied various rights of the Rohingyas. Such denial became more profound once the 1982 Citizenship Act was enacted; systematic and occasional physical violence became part of their lives, forced them to cross the border occasionally—whenever they faced atrocities and human rights violations.⁴ Most of the Rohingyas who crossed the border during the earlier 1978-1979 and 1991-1992 movements returned to Myanmar.⁵ However, including the old registered and unregistered Rohingyas and newly arrived FDMNs, more than one million people live in the temporary camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf.

¹ “UN Human Rights Chief Points to ‘Textbook Example of Ethnic Cleansing’ in Myanmar,” UN News, Last modified July 2, 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/09/564622-un-human-rights-chief-points-textbook-example-ethnic-cleansing-myanmar>

² UNHCR, *Global Trends, Forced Displacement in 2019*, Last accessed on January 5, 2021, <https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2019/>

³ UNHCR, *Refugee Response in Bangladesh*, Last modified January 5, 2021, https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/myanmar_refugees

⁴ Md Rafiqul Islam and Umme Wara, “Conflict Potential of the Rohingya People in Bangladesh and Beyond,” *Journal of ASEAN Studies* 10, no. 1 (2022); Abu Salah Md. Yousuf, “Securitization and Ethnic Violence: Military, Monks and Rohingya Minorities in Myanmar,” *BISS Journal* 41, no. 2 (2020); Maung Zarni and Natalie Brinham, *Essays on Myanmar’s Genocide of Rohingyas (2012-2018)* (Dhaka: Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit, 2019); Imtiaz Ahmed., *The Plight of the Stateless Rohingyas: Responses of the State, Society and the International Community* (Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 2010); Eleanor Albert and Lindsay Maizland, “The Rohingya Crisis,” *The Council of Foreign Relations*, Last accessed January 20, 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/rohingya-crisis>; Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK, “Myanmar’s 1982 Citizenship Law and Rohingya,” Last accessed January 2021, <https://burmacampaign.org.uk/media/Myanmar%E2%80%99s-1982-Citizenship-Law-and-Rohingya.pdf>,

⁵ C. R. Abrar, *Repatriation of Rohingya Refugees* (Colombo: UNHCR’s Regional Consultation on Refugee and Migratory Movements, 1995); Sultana Yesmin, “Policy towards Rohingya Refugees: A Comparative Analysis of Bangladesh, Malaysia and Thailand,” *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (Hum.)* 61, no. 1 (2016).

Multiple reasons, like increased armed conflict,⁶ constraining political options in domestic affairs,⁷ identity-based conflicts⁸, and associated other factors,⁹ have made forced migration an inevitable phenomenon in the contemporary world. Once a massive population movement happens, it affects the host country and puts displaced people under numerous strains and complexities, including security challenges,¹⁰ racism,¹¹ and violence, at worst. Displaced and hosting communities endure specific impacts in their daily lives since they live with various limitations. Many literatures suggest potential risks of civil conflict in the host country involving refugees and their associations.¹² Refugees living in the camps can mobilise and start rebellions and recruit associate fighters.¹³ Some focus on the traditional conflicts wherein the refugees produced a civil war-like situation as the Palestinian refugees did in Jordan in 1970.¹⁴ Others see patterns of violence that engage displaced people and non-state actors, such as the local population and their organisations.¹⁵ These conflicts are linked with various causes, such as land distribution, inequalities, and controlling available resources and opportunities.¹⁶ Therefore, it is not unlikely for the locals to develop a negative attitude towards displaced people and create conditions of intolerance as hosts could find it challenging to accept foreigners into their country for a long period.

⁶ V. Chetail, "Armed Conflict and Forced Migration: A Systematic Approach to International Humanitarian Law, Refugee Law, and International Human Rights Law," in Andrew Clapham and Paola Gaeta (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of International Armed Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁷ William. B. Wood, "Forced Migration: Local Conflicts and International Dilemmas," *Annals of the Association of American geographers* 84, no. 4 (1994): 607-34.

⁸ Lucy Hovil, "The Inter-relationship between Violence, Displacement and the Transition to Stability in the Great Lakes Region," Centre for the study of violence and reconciliation (Johannesburg, 2008).

⁹ Alex Braithwaite, Idean Salehyan, and Burcu Savun "Refugees, Forced Migration, and Conflict: Introduction to the Special Issue," *Journal of Peace Research* 56, no. 1 (2020).

¹⁰ Gil Loescher, "Blaming the Victim: Refugees and Global Security," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 58, no.6 (2002): 46-53.

¹¹ Dionisio Camacho, "The Social, Economic and Industrial Issues Specific to Migrant Workers over 45 Years of Age Seeking Employment, or Establishing a Business, Following Unemployment (A Quantities Approach)," A paper for House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Work Place Relations, Australia, Last accessed June 25, 2020, http://www.aphref.aph.gov.au_house_committee_ewr_owk_subs_sub33.pdf,

¹² Tobias Böhmelt, Vincenzo Bove and Kristian S. Gleditsch, "Blame the Victims? Refugees, State Capacity, and Non-state Actor Violence," *Journal of Peace Research* 56, no. 1 (2019): 73-87.

¹³ Aristide R. Zolberg, Astri Suhrke and Sergio Aguayo, *Escape from Violence: Conflict and the Refugee crisis in the Developing World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989)

¹⁴ Zolberg, Suhrke and Aguayo, *Escape from Violence*.

¹⁵ Böhmelt, Bove and Gleditsch, "Blame the Victims?"

¹⁶ Hanne Fjelde and Gudrun Østby, "Socioeconomic Inequality and Communal Conflict: A Disaggregated Analysis of Sub-Saharan Africa, 1990–2008," *International Interactions*, 40, no. 5 (2014): 737-62.

Literature on the Rohingya influx into Bangladesh shows that the FDMNs have outnumbered the locals in Ukhiya and Teknaf, altered the demographic condition, and threatened the hosts in various ways.¹⁷ Both are trapped in ‘an uncertain’ relationship.¹⁸ The social fabric of these areas has eroded too.¹⁹ They have developed different relationships influenced by their cultural and religious proximities. Despite the restrictions set by Bangladesh,²⁰ there have been events of inter-community marriages.²¹ An anti-displaced people attitude grew among them mostly due to ‘economic instability’, ‘unequal access’ to the labour market, and ‘uneven distribution’ of humanitarian resources.²² Rohingyas are at risk of being targeted and recruited by a variety of transnational organised groups that engage in a variety of illegal activities, which in turn undermines the national security of Bangladesh.²³ The host has potential links them as funds to socio-economic aspects, livelihood and local safety and security.²⁴ Some argued that ‘Myanmar’s civil conflict had spilled over into Bangladesh and created concerns for its non-traditional security, livelihood and safety of locals.’²⁵ The ‘political uncertainty’ of their repatriation contributed to such a perception.²⁶ A dearth of knowledge exists on the potential of intolerance in the displaced Rohingya hosting areas. This paper aims to address this literature gap by examining the extent to which atrocity-led mass population displacement from one country to another creates a condition of intolerance in the destination place. With

¹⁷ Kudrat-E-Khuda, “The impacts and challenges to host country Bangladesh due to Sheltering the Rohingya Refugees,” *Cogent Social Sciences*, 6 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2020.1770943>; Md. Touhidul Islam et al., “The 2017 Rohingya Influx into Bangladesh and its Implications for the Host Communities,” *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 10, no. 2 (2022): 487-512, doi: 10.18588/202211.00a294.

¹⁸ Lailufar Yasmin and Sayeda Akther, “The Locals and the Rohingyas: Trapped with an Uncertain Future,” *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*, XX, no. X (2019): 1-17.

¹⁹ Verena Hölzl, “Between Envy and Fear: In Bangladesh, Tensions between Locals and Rohingya Refugees are Raising,” *DW Akademie*, <https://www.dw.com/en/between-envy-and-fear/a-56930931>, Last accessed on June 25 2021.

²⁰ Afrose Jahan Chaity, “Ban on Bangladeshis Marrying Rohingya: Justified or A Human Rights Violation?” *Dhaka Tribune*, Last accessed June 20, 2021, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/opinion/special/2018/01/02/ban-bangladeshis-marrying-rohingya-justified-human-rights-violation>.

²¹ Relief Web International, *Rohingya Influx Since 1978*, Assessment Capacities Project & Needs and Population Monitoring, 2017, Last accessed November 21, 2020, <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/thematic-report-december-2017-review-rohingya-influx-1978>.

²² Anas Ansar and Abu Faisal Md. Khaled, “From Solidarity to Resistance: Host Communities’ Evolving Response to the Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh”, *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*, 6, no. 1 (2021): 1-14; Ashish Banik, “Strengthening Complementarity in the Humanitarian Response to the Rohingya Refugee Crisis,” *Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh: The Humanitarian Response*, *Humanitarian Exchange*, 73 (2018).

²³ Islam and Wara, “Conflict Potential of the Rohingya.”

²⁴ A. Hoekstra, “Rohingya Crisis: Overpopulated Bangladesh Bearing the Burden,” *DW*. Available at <http://www.dw.com/en/rohingya-crisis-overpopulated-bangladesh-bearing-theburden/a-40673062>, Accessed on September 22, 2021; Islam and Wara, “Conflict Potential of the Rohingya.”

²⁵ Islam and Wara, “Conflict Potential of the Rohingya.”

²⁶ Ansar and Khaled, “From Solidarity to Resistance.”

a focus on the case of the presence of FDMNs in Bangladesh, the paper, based on the perceptions and opinions of the host population and wider secondary resources, answers the question about how the presence of displaced Rohingyas has created conditions of potential intolerance in Ukhiya and Teknaf in Bangladesh.

In order to fulfill its aim and answer the research question, this paper has been structured in a way that connects its theoretical, methodological, and case-specific issues well. The methodology and the analytical framework are discussed in detail. The analytical framework explains factors and issues of tolerance and intolerance between refugee and host communities. It is a five-staged pyramid model that uses instances from different contexts of the world for analysing the process of evolving intolerant attitudes and behaviours of refugees and hosting communities. The following section, with various sub-sections, explores these five stages in the case of hosting FDMNs in Bangladesh and analyses how they have been contributing to developing a different situation in places where they are now. In line with the research aim and question, the final section summarises the main findings of this study.

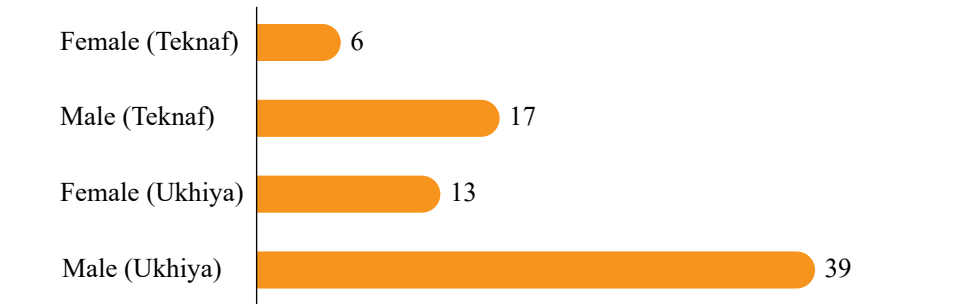
This paper, in the pyramid model, claims that systematic violence and organised atrocity against a section of a country's population causes mass displacement from one country to another, and neighbouring countries that host them for different reasons have to bear the brunt. However, when the influx of displaced people is massive and often difficult to manage, it can gradually create conditions of potential intolerance in the refugee-hosting areas, as the locals develop a sense of deprivation and negative attitudes toward the refugees. In that case, the state's capacity and approaches to manage the refugee crisis are fundamental to avoid such situation. In the case of FDMNs, it is argued that hosting them has been costly for Bangladesh, as their presence has influenced local people and society negatively in various ways. Therefore, apprehension persists among the locals in Ukhiya and Teknaf, whom the FDMNs have numerically outnumbered. The locals are having a feeling of deprivation and discrimination in terms of accessing basic services from the state and availing some opportunities. Hence, narratives of differences have developed when their unreserved solidarity has transformed into an anti-displaced people sentiment. Various questionable, unlawful, and suspicious activities of different Rohingya groups have been a severe concern for the locals, displaced Rohingyas, and Bangladesh. Although there have not been many large-scale confrontations between the host population and FDMNs, a sense of distrust, dissatisfaction, and grievance has gradually developed amongst the former group against the latter. Subtle anxiety

covertly passes across the host population that existing conditions could create potential tensions if not large-scale violence, had the displaced Rohingyas not been repatriated to their home country, Myanmar, and other concerns of needs, safety, and security are adequately addressed by the state and institutions in due mechanisms.

Research Methodology

The paper is based on qualitative research that follows an inductive approach to understand the host population’s perspectives regarding the FDMNs that Bangladesh has been sheltering since August 2017 and explores various factors that could contribute to tension and intolerance in the locality. It undertook a combined approach for data collection and applied multiple methods, including a collection of micro-narratives of the locals living in Ukhiya and Teknaf, in-depth interviews of local socio-political elites, focus group discussions (FGDs) with local stakeholders and consultation of secondary sources, including newspaper reports, articles and reports of different organisations working in Rohingya camps. Collecting micro-narratives is an approach that allows the storyteller to share what s/he feels about a phenomenon. It is a dialectic process that continues between the storyteller and the story collector, thus creating meanings.²⁷ Micro-narratives can be collected from anybody living in a context, irrespective of the differences but having the knowledge and perspective on the subject of study.²⁸ The authors collected 75 micro-narratives from the residents of Ukhiya and Teknaf over six months—from November 2019 to April 2020. Their opinion, insights, and perspectives helped to solidify the understanding, perceptions, and observations about the effects of the 2017 Rohingya influx and its relation with potential intolerance.

Figure 1: Gender ratio of storytellers in Ukhiya and Teknaf*



²⁷ Imtiaz Ahmed, *The Method Matters: An Introduction to Micro-narratives*, (Dhaka: University of Dhaka, 2019).

²⁸ Ahmed, *The Method Matters*.

* Author’s creation

More than 55 storytellers were male, around 20 were female, and they were mostly from lower-income groups. The majority (52) were from Ukhiya, a sub-district hosting the largest numbers of Rohingyas in temporary settlement camps (Figure 1). Almost all were Muslim (71), three storytellers were Buddhist, and one was Hindu. Most storytellers were at the age of between 20 and 50. The respondents were chosen conveniently by local enumerators trained to collect micro-narratives. Before going to the field, they were trained in a three-day workshop on understanding the Rohingya crisis and its associated issues. However, the participation of storytellers was voluntary. Before starting a narrative collection, an enumerator stated the aim and objectives of the study and the participant's rights. Once a storyteller gave oral consent to participate, an enumerator started collecting the story.

Besides the micro-narratives, in-depth interviews with local social, economic, and political elites and FGDs with various local community stakeholders have provided rich data. Between December 2020 and March 2021, the authors conducted nine interviews and four FGDs in Ukhiya and Teknaf. Interviews were conducted individually, allowing respondents to freely share their thoughts and ideas. FGDs were held in a community space like a school or a community meeting place. Two FGDs were with female community members, including homemakers, businesswomen, students, teachers, and NGO workers. The other two were with male participants, including imams, teachers, drivers, barbers, students, NGO workers, small business entrepreneurs, and day labourers. One FGD was with the male group in each sub-district, and the other was with female community stakeholders. Various observations, insights, and opinions came from these participants, who experienced the influx differently under different circumstances. Then authors processed their views and thoughts with the principles of confidentiality and anonymity.

The authors could not talk with the displaced Rohingyas due to different limitations. It was impossible to discuss with them as they often are reluctant to discuss critical issues due to fear and insecurity. Therefore, they consulted broader secondary resources, including books, journal articles, national and international organisations' reports, local and international newspaper reports, and other researchers' data and findings. To develop an argument, this paper carried forward a thematic analysis approach. These themes were generated in line with the analytical framework—a pyramid model of understanding issues and factors of tolerance and intolerance between the host and refugee communities. This analytical model, that has used examples from other refugee-hosting contexts, has significance in analysing any refugee situation and examining gradual relations between the refugee and host communities and how that could lead to intolerance and tension if not violence. Tolerance and intolerance as political discourses are rooted in every society. However,

prejudice does not develop suddenly but gradually. Therefore, it follows some stages that this pyramid model explains. The model explains how intolerance advances between the host and refugee communities. Although refugees are by-products of armed conflicts and violence, they can generate apprehension, tension, and violence in the receiving nations. This is specially true when states and institutions do not pay adequate attention to manage a refugee crisis properly.²⁹

2. Tolerance and Intolerance between the Refugee and Host Communities: Global Experience

Amidst the different sets of challenges and issues, intolerance is a phenomenon that can exacerbate tensions between host-refugee communities. Tolerance is a broader term that allows certain rights (e.g., liberty, freedom of expression, and peaceful co-existence) to people with dissimilarities in various aspects like custom, religion, race, gender, etc.³⁰ In other words, tolerance emanates a meaning related to respect and co-existence, despite having differences between groups/people. In the refugee hosting context, refugees and host communities often have differences and similarities on various issues, such as nationality, religion, culture, language, and ethnicity. Such similarities could cause dissimilarities, and differences could become causes of unity, although these depend on the context where refugees are located and sheltered. Therefore, anytime any problem could originate from such attributes and lead to intolerance at any level—individual to state levels when parties have incompatible goals or positions.³¹ Social intolerance encompasses various issues associated with ‘political prejudice’, ‘ideological rigidity’, ‘cultural insensitivity’, and ‘religious dogma’ against an opponent.³² Besides actual discrimination, any perceived difference, if felt by any of the parties, can set off the ground for evolving intolerant behaviour of the parties.³³

When a community hosts refugees, populist leaders often make it an issue to strengthen their political power by using discourses that profoundly target refugees

²⁹ Adrian Martin, “Environmental Conflict between Refugee and Host Communities,” *Journal of Peace Research* 42, no. 3 (2005): 329-46.

³⁰ Anna Elisabetta Galeotti, *Tolerance as Recognition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Barbara Pasamonk, “The Paradoxes of Tolerance,” *The Social Studies* 95, no. 5 (2004): 206-10.

³¹ Bassem Jamil Kheireddine, Ana Maria Soares and Ricardo Gouveia Rodrigues, “Understanding (In)tolerance between Hosts and Refugees in Lebanon,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 34, no. 1, (2021); Petter Wallensteen, *Understanding Conflict Resolution: War, Peace and the Global System* (London: Sage Publications, 2002).

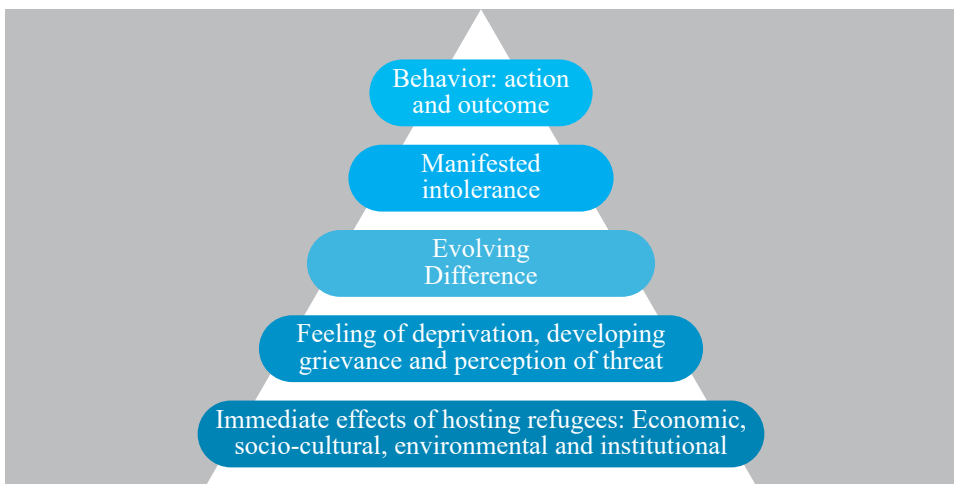
³² Mohammad S Alam and Tanzina Rahman, “Rise of Social Intolerance, Extremist Attitude and Support for Terrorism: Perspective of Youth from Bangladesh,” *Bangladesh Police Academy Journal* 2, no. 02 (2020): 38-66.

³³ Evan P. Apfelbaum et al., “From Ignorance to Intolerance: Perceived Intentionality of Racial Discrimination Shapes Preferences for Colorblindness versus Multiculturalism,” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 69 (2017): 86-101, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2016.08.002>.

and propagate anti-refugee sentiments.³⁴ Various decisive factors like religion,³⁵ culture,³⁶ and politics³⁷ come into play to expose such sentiments and feelings. People, who clutch on these issues, perceive others as threats to their identities and create grounds for intolerance. Prejudice gradually develops and follows some stages to advance to making intolerance between the host and refugee communities.

The paper proposes five inter-connected stages that the host and refugee communities could pass through to get to the point of an inevitable behaviour wherein both parties could involve in intolerant attitudes and actions (Figure 2). The host population feels various actual and perceived differences and discrimination that create responsible complexities for developing a negative attitude towards ‘the other’, the refugees. However, such a negative attitude is not always accountable for violence. Once the minority group feels a sense of ‘relative deprivation’, it contributes to developing a mindset against the other.³⁸ When refugees and host populations maintain a strained relationship, an anti-refugee sentiment is not uncommon amongst the hosts, especially when they feel the former is causing an enormous burden for the latter.

Figure 2: Host-refugee issues, tension, and intolerance: A pyramid model*



³⁴ Sarah Deardorff Miller, “Xenophobia toward Refugees and Other Forced Migrants”, *World Refugee Council Research Paper*, No 5 (2018).

³⁵ Evan Stewart, Penny Edgell and Jack Delehanty, “The Politics of Religious Prejudice and Tolerance for Cultural Others”, *The Sociological Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (2018): 17-39.

³⁶ James L. Gibson, “The Political Consequences of Intolerance: Cultural Conformity and Political Freedom”, *The American Political Science Review* (1992): 338-356.

³⁷ Amy Katnik, “Religion, Social Class, and Political Tolerance: A Cross-national analysis”, *International Journal of Sociology* 32, no. 1 (2002): 14-38.

³⁸ Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (London: Routledge, 1971).

* Source: Authors’ creation.

The first stage of this pyramid focuses on the effects refugees bring into a host society. Refugees are generally seen as threats to the economy, environment, and security³⁹ due to growing complexities related to resources, work, etc., between refugees and locals. Moreover, the international community's humanitarian assistance is directed towards the refugees without considering much of the host population and their needs.⁴⁰ It creates an immediate imbalance in terms of who receives what and as a result, various opinions emerged about migrants. In Kakuma camp in Kenya, for example, refugees were blamed for the economic hardship of locals.⁴¹ As long as the locals perceive them as burdens, other limited benefits refugees bring to the host community become less valuable. It is an early stage of forming a tacit grievance against refugees that continues if the host state does not address deprivation issues.

If capable enough to convince the international community, the state can balance assisting and supporting both the refugee and host population. It depends upon how much they can share resources and facilities for both communities.⁴² The host government and international community artificially generate an exceptional cooperative approach. However, it declines when international support reduces significantly, if not ends, after a certain period when they channel funds to a new context where another crisis evolves.⁴³ Nevertheless, having some support does not always satisfy the host population, who instead see the immediate impacts of refugees on their lives and society. For instance, a negative perception of Syrian refugees developed amongst the local Jordanians when the former shared jobs and received government assistance, including other benefits.⁴⁴ Once the locals face such a financial burden, it can lead to protest movements against the refugees. Such protests are signs of intolerance towards the refugees because the hosts feel threatened by refugee presence and other apparent reasons, including environmental stress,⁴⁵ increased criminal activities,⁴⁶ and adverse socio-cultural and economic effects.⁴⁷

³⁹ Murray Goot and Ian Watson, *Immigration, Multiculturalism and Australian Identity: Australian Social Attitudes: The First Report* (Wales: University of New South Wales Press, 2005).

⁴⁰ Alexander Betts, "Development Assistance and Refugees: Towards a North-South Grand Bargain?" Forced Migration Policy Briefing 2, Refugee Studies Centre: University of Oxford, 2009.

⁴¹ Ekuru Aukot, "It Is Better to Be a Refugee Than a Turkana in Kakuma": Revisiting the Relationship between Hosts and Refugees in Kenya," *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees* (2003): 73-83.

⁴² Martin, "Environmental Conflict between Refugee."

⁴³ Susan F. Martin et al., "International Responsibility-Sharing for Refugees: Perspectives from the MENA Region," *Geopolitics, History and International Relations* 11, no. 1 (2019): 59-91.

⁴⁴ Nafez Ali and Saeb F. Al Ganideh, "Syrian Refugees in Jordan: Burden or Boon," *Research in World Economy* 11, no. 1 (2020): 180-94.

⁴⁵ Martin, "Environmental Conflict between Refugee."

⁴⁶ Idean Salehyan and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, "Refugees and the Spread of Civil War," *International Organization* 60, no. 2 (2006): 335-66.

⁴⁷ Oliver Walton, "Helpdesk Research Report: Preventing Conflict between Refugees and Host Communities," *Governance and Social Development Resource Centre*, 2012.

This pyramid's second and third layers are vital to explain the development of a distinct and differentiating feeling between the communities, developing due to various deprivation feelings and consequent grievances. These have connections with actual threats and perceived issues. The treatments and services refugees receive from the international community and the host country are often considered unfair by the host population, original inhabitants of the land, who may often lack such support.⁴⁸ They see that they do not get the benefits that the refugees receive. It contributes to developing the locals' sense of deprivation. Moreover, they may face various threats, which are not only attached to the state's security but also have multi-dimensional aspects—from the danger of losing one's livelihood (including economic opportunity) to risks of getting mugged, robbed, and attacked. Based on some disproportionate benefits that some locals receive, it segregates the locals themselves too. Cultural threats also emanate from refugees as they have scopes to intermingle with the locals, which can endanger their societal safety and security.

Therefore, despite having some proximities in language, religion, and ethnicity, a sense of differences, grows when the hosts see their lives, security, and livelihoods jeopardised due to refugees' presence. Such a negative perception of refugees could sustain in the minds of the host population. When deprivation, grievances, and such feelings of difference interact, it creates a complex puzzle for locals. Moreover, a sense of threat and fear separates hosts from refugees, helps to endure such a differential attitude amongst the locals, if not the refugees, and forces them to stay separate.⁴⁹ Not only do ordinary people engage in this process, high-profile persons from the host country can also negatively represent refugees, as was the case of Croatia where the president had created a negative representation of refugees as 'others'.⁵⁰

Engagement of high-profile individuals in such refugee discourses may encourage xenophobic and populist rhetoric and boost anti-refugee and anti-immigrant stances.⁵¹ Therefore, movements for stopping refugee flow are common in receiving countries which are infused by negative stereotyping of the refugees.⁵²

⁴⁸ Aukot, "Revisiting the Relationship between Hosts."

⁴⁹ Rahela Jurković, "Political Discourse on Refugees Compared to Refugees' Individual Stories: The Case of Croatia," *Us vs. Them in Central and Eastern Europe: Populism, the Refugee Other and the Re-consideration of National Identity*, (Central European University: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and Center for EU Enlargement Studies, 2018).

⁵⁰ Jurković, "Political Discourse."

⁵¹ Miller, "Xenophobia toward Refugees."

⁵² "Anti-Immigrant Protests Grow as Thousands of Refugees Flood European", ABC News, Last accessed January 25, 2022, <https://abcnews.go.com/International/anti-immigrant-protests-grow-thousands-refugees-flood-europe/story?id=35888428>.

Despite some similarities, the perception of danger to the host country and local feelings of deprivation infuse a narrative that segregates refugees from the locals. It can be exposed through an intolerant attitude of one or both parties, although their power dynamics determine actions.

The attitudinal manifestations of differences could be in various forms, like racism, sexism, and religious and identity differences. Expressing parties' attitudes to each other could be non-violent or violent.⁵³ The former, generated in the form of prejudice, originates from xenophobic discrimination.⁵⁴ Some inherent factors that develop over the period, like a negative perception about refugees, due to real and perceived threats, and their engagement in unlawful activities, influence the manifestation of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against the 'other'.⁵⁵ In other words, locals could develop a tendency to reject and vilify foreigners who are not a part of the community, identity, or nationality. Racial and ideological differences, once exposed, could lead to violent actions against the other. A construction of others, who are foreigners to the core local identity and have external attributes and biases to their nation and identity, makes a fundamental difference in manifesting their tension and anxieties.

Their behavioural response, either violent actions or rejection, could be different on a contextual basis. As a part of an anti-refugees protest, a series of demonstrations, for example, developed in early 2017 in India against the Rohingyas to expel them from Jammu and Kashmir.⁵⁶ On the other hand, in 2014, hundreds of people protested against the rising number of Syrian refugees in Turkey for economic reasons.⁵⁷ Such protests also happened in 2019 when initiatives were taken for naturalising Palestinian and Syrian refugees in Lebanon.⁵⁸ These examples mean that attitudinal manifestation could be non-violent when the locals avoid the refugees. In contrast, it could be aggressive when they face severe threats to identity and security.

⁵³ Allison C. Aosved, Patricia J. Long and Emily K. Voller, "Measuring Sexism, Racism, Sexual Prejudice, Ageism, Classism, and Religious Intolerance: The Intolerant Schema Measure," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 39, no. 10, (2009): 2321-54.

⁵⁴ Kheireddine, Soares and Rodrigues, "Understanding (In)tolerance."

⁵⁵ Allison C. Aosved and Patricia J. Long, "Co-occurrence of Rape Myth Acceptance, Sexism, Racism, Homophobia, Ageism, Classism, and Religious Intolerance," *Sex Roles* 55, no. 7 (2006): 481-92; Aosved, Long and Voller, "Measuring Sexism."

⁵⁶ Böhmelt, Bove and Gleditsch, "Blame the Victims."

⁵⁷ S. Sarten, "Anti-refugee Sentiments in Turkey at All-time High," *Info Migrants*, Last accessed May 15, 2020, <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/18466/anti-refugee-sentiments-in-turkey-at-all-time-high>.

⁵⁸ Yurou, "Lebanese Protest against Refugees' Naturalization in Lebanon," *Xinhua*, Last accessed November 29, 2019, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-11/29/c_138593483.htm.

At the top of this pyramid, it represents the natural behavioural outcome of parties—what actions parties undertake under the circumstances and what types of results could lead are critical to understanding the host and guest relationship. Release of aggression, anger, and intolerance of the communities, is exposed at this level. These are actions undertaken by parties meant to oppose the other, aiming to alter or forgo their goals.⁵⁹ However, actions or behavioural outcomes do not always mean being violent. Anything aimed at the other party is considered conflict behaviour. However, outcomes like ‘compromise’, ‘retreat’, avoidance, or direct actions create an advantageous or disadvantageous situation for the opponent.⁶⁰

Despite having observable differences, growing prejudice, and hatred that develop towards refugees, host community people do not go for direct action unless it is required to protect them from any attacks. Their level of engagement often remains latent. A situation only alters when there are threats to the survival and severe safety and security concerns for the state and its citizens. Existential threat determines how and what approaches the host would undertake against a refugee population. They usually tolerate each other as long as state institutions and agencies maintain fundamental aspects of law and order.⁶¹ States accept refugees and provide essential protection for saving the lives of persecuted people,⁶² although they have the right to choose approaches, strategies, and policies for refugee management. Their management strategies and policy-making, however, depend ‘on the size’ of the refugee community, their population, and the geo-strategic issues of the states involved in the refugee management process.⁶³

Nevertheless, fear persists amongst the host, and so does among the refugees. None of the parties quickly act upon or be aggressive unless the action is for their survival.⁶⁴ Although, the behavioural outcome of the refugee-hosting community depends on a critical variable—the way they perceive refugees. Violent tension

⁵⁹ Christopher Mitchell, *The Structure of International Conflict*, (Springer: 1989).

⁶⁰ Mitchell, *The Structure*,

⁶¹ Brahm Eric, “Conflict Stages,” *Beyond Intractability*, Last accessed May 18, 2021, https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/conflict_stages;; Böhmelt, Bove and Gleditsch, “Blame the Victims?”

⁶² Dany Bahar, “Why Accepting Refugees is a Win-Win-Win Formula,” Last Accessed June 18, 2023, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/refugees-are-a-win-win-win-formula-for-economic-development/#:~:text=Thus%2C%20accepting%20refugees%E2%80%94providing%20the,lives%20in%20their%20host%20countries>.

⁶³ Gerasimos Tsourapas, “The Syrian Refugee Crisis and Foreign Policy Decision-Making in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey,” *Journal of Global Security Studies* 4. no. 4 (2019): 464-481, doi: 10.1093/jogss/ogz016

⁶⁴ Leonard Berkowitz, *Aggression: Its Causes, Consequences, and Control* (Philadelphia: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1993).

does not occur all of a sudden. When an anti-refugee protest movement evolves, violence could be a part of it, or protest results in violence. For example, a protest against Rohingyas in Jammu and Kashmir ended with reported violent attacks on the refugees, creating a problematic situation and challenging perspective for Rohingyas.⁶⁵ However, the capacity of the host country has a determining role in reducing the risk of violence between the communities and groups.⁶⁶ A behavioural outcome—an engagement of the parties in violent action(s), either occasionally or sporadically, or not, can be more persistent if the state does not address such a situation correctly and with care. Weak states may handle refugee situations inappropriately, while strong states have strict refugee management strategies.⁶⁷ As the host state's capacity is vital in dealing with tension, conflict, and violence, it has the leverage to employ approaches and techniques to defuse tensions. The state can close a camp due to the locals' burden, relocate refugees to another location to avoid uncertainties and insecurities, prevent the ruthless section with sticks and apply and continue various conflict management strategies involving non-state actors working with refugees and host communities to prevent any unwanted situation.⁶⁸ A solid refugee management approach prevents any problem exploited by refugees, host communities, or any other opportunist leading to confrontation.

3. Violence and Atrocity in Myanmar and FDMNs in Cox's Bazar: Sources of Tolerance and Intolerance

The world knows how Rohingyas, a Muslim minority group in Myanmar, have been treated by their country in the postcolonial nation-building process. Rohingyas were active in the politics and governance of Myanmar as they had representatives in parliament,⁶⁹ but over the period, they were made stateless, in which one cannot rule out the role of the state and others. The exclusionary political practices and systematic violence in Myanmar made them the world's most persecuted minority.⁷⁰ The state authority in 1989 introduced colour-coded Citizens Scrutiny Cards: pink, blue, and green, respectively, for full, associate, and naturalised citizens, which

⁶⁵ Böhmelt, Bove and Gleditsch, "Blame the Victims?"

⁶⁶ Böhmelt, Bove and Gleditsch, "Blame the Victims?"

⁶⁷ Böhmelt, Bove and Gleditsch, "Blame the Victims?"

⁶⁸ Alfet Hadulu Jillo, *Non-State Actors and the Management of Refugee-Host State Conflict: A Critical Examination of the Kenyan Experience*, (MA Dissertation: University of Nairobi).

⁶⁹ Azeem Ibrahim, *The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Hidden Genocide* (London: C Hurst and Co Publishers Ltd, 2017).

⁷⁰ Kaveri and S. Irudaya Ranjan, "The Politics of Statelessness, refugeehood, and humanitarianism of the Rohingyas", *Frontiers Human Dynamics* 4 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fhumd.2022.921461>

deliberately excluded Rohingyas.⁷¹ There was a claim that when the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) issued the Temporary Registration Card without indicating nationality or place of birth to Rohingyas in 1995, it brought zero validity for claiming their nationality and citizenship in Myanmar.⁷² The generations of negligence of the Myanmar government towards Rohingyas and the nexus between the military and radical monks, who continued “unrestricted ‘hate speeches’” contributed to escalating violence in recent times.⁷³ The atrocities, torture, and violence that the Tatmadaw carried against the Rohingyas in 2017 left no option for those persecuted and traumatised people other than leaving the country and taking shelter in neighbouring Bangladesh.

After the influx of around a million Rohingyas into Bangladesh, acting as a generous host, the government and local people sheltered them in 34 temporary makeshift camps in the hilly forest terrains of Ukhiya and Teknaf. Although Bangladesh opened its border to shelter FDMNs on humanitarian grounds, the country and local people have experienced the situation differently in the last five years. Living in confined and fragile conditions made the FDMNs susceptible to different security risks, both as causes and consequences. However, the majority experienced the impacts of their presence adversely, which created a different perception about the displaced Rohingyas who took refuge in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh.⁷⁴ Based on the analytical pyramid model, this section analyses how various issues and concerns faced by the locals could contribute to developing a different perception of Rohingyas and how that could create conditions of intolerance if the state and other concerned actors do not undertake appropriate measures.

3.1 *Socio-economic and Institutional Impacts*

The 2017 massive influx has brought an array of impacts to the host communities. Local people of Ukhiya and Teknaf described the pros and cons of the 2017 influx, wherein the disadvantages outweighed the benefits. From a four-dimensional (e.g., economic, socio-cultural, environmental, and institutional) perspective, the paper finds that adverse effects seriously hit each aspect, and the

⁷¹ AKM Ahsan Ullah, “Rohingya Refugees to Bangladesh: Historical Exclusions and Contemporary Marginalisation,” *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 9, no. 2, 139-61, DOI: 10.1080/15562948.2011.567149.

⁷² C Lewa, “Asia’s New Boat People,” *Forced Migration Review* 30 (2008): 40-42, doi: 10.1097/01.COT.0000311433.90702.c7; Kaveri and Ranjan, “The Politics of Statelessness”, 2022

⁷³ Yousuf, “Securitization and Ethnic Violence.”

⁷⁴ Islam et al., “The 2017 Rohingya Influx into Bangladesh.”

local people have undertaken various coping strategies under the circumstances they have been through.

The economic impact of the influx is more observable than other aspects. A segment of the host communities, mainly the low-income population, endured hardship as their income dropped significantly.⁷⁵ Many of them lost job opportunities or had to work with low pay compared to their earlier wage rates because many locals employed displaced Rohingyas. The latter sell labour at a cheaper rate than the local labourers used to charge.⁷⁶ Rohingyas, who are not entitled to go outside the camps and work legally,⁷⁷ have been engaged in the labour force informally, creating pressure on the local labour market. Hence, a significant portion of local people either lost their jobs or experienced decreased income.⁷⁸ Some new job opportunities opened when Rohingyas arrived; those have been availed by educated people who work in various NGOs and other agencies involved in the humanitarian industry or have connections to work in the supply chain and do some business. However, Cox's Bazar is one of the poorest districts, and headcount poverty increased in Ukhiya and Teknaf after the influx.⁷⁹ According to some locals, daily commodity prices have increased two to three times compared to the pre-influx period, affecting low-income groups and people below the poverty line.⁸⁰ Losing sources of income has been a source of distress for many, while others lost access to their land, which have been used for setting up temporary makeshift camps.⁸¹ However, many locals have taken up various negative coping strategies to overcome such crises in their daily lives.⁸²

On the ecological front, cutting of hills and trees to establish makeshift camps, has contributed to declining forest resources making collecting firewood from

⁷⁵ Save the Children et al., *Self-reliance Situation of Host Communities in Cox's Bazar*, Dhaka: Undated.

⁷⁶ Shared by a service holder whose micro-narrative was collected on 16 November 2019, a local newspaper editor, interviewed on 1st March 2021, and community members in an FGD, conducted on 2nd March 2021.

⁷⁷ Verena Holzl, "Start-up: The Rohingya Entrepreneurs Eking Out a Living in Refugee Camps," *The New Humanitarian*, Last accessed April 30, 2021, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/feature/2019/04/29/Bangladesh-rohingya-entrepreneurs-eking-out-living-refugee-camps>.

⁷⁸ UNDP, *Impacts of the Rohingya Refugee Influx on Host Communities*, (UNDP: 2018).

⁷⁹ A. F. Lemma et al, Bangladesh Economic Dialogue on Inclusive Growth: *Strategies for Inclusive Growth in Cox's Bazar*, Asia Foundation, UKAID and ODI, 2018, Last Accessed May 22, 2022, <https://think-asia.org/handle/11540/9323>.

⁸⁰ Reflected by various storytellers in Teknaf and Ukhiya and discussed widely in an FGD, conducted in Ukhiya on March 01, 2021; "Rohingya Crisis Deepens Poverty Among Locals: WB", *The Daily Star*, Last accessed on June 23, 2022, <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/rohingya-crisis-deepens-poverty-among-locals-wb-1810873>.

⁸¹ International Rescue Committee, *Access to Justice for Rohingya and Host Community in Cox's Bazar* (2019).

⁸² Highlighted by a housewife, story collected on 10 March 2020, and referred by a development worker, interviewed on 2nd March 2021.

the forests difficult for all, including locals.⁸³ The temperature of the camp areas has unusually been high due to the presence of many people and associated deforestation. Overcollection and overuse of freshwater by many Rohingyas through many newly installed tube wells has caused water scarcity for locals as the layers of water went down.⁸⁴ The biodiversity of the Ukhiya and Teknaf areas has been affected too. For example, the movement of wild elephants was obstructed by the establishment of Rohingya camps, resulting human-elephant conflict with casualties.

Despite government-enforced limitations on integration, informal communication and interaction between the Rohingyas and the local community continues due to socio-cultural and religious similarities.⁸⁵ The condition of local women deteriorated as the number of host-Rohingya marriages increased, creating family problems, leading to domestic violence and destabilising peace.⁸⁶ Human trafficking has increased, and so has the drug trafficking. Various other social ills such as drug use, polygamy, and child marriage have increased and adversely affected local culture and society. In a patriarchal society, when local men get attracted to Rohingya women, that is nothing but men's psyche of fulfilling their masculine culture, creating problems in families and society. Rohingya women and adolescent girls also face insecurity and violence in the camps.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, the locals maintain caution in interacting with Rohingyas. Locals often avoid them due to their nature and involvement in unlawful activities. Sometimes, they create a contentious relationship when they share a common space, like the Kutupalong market, and locals want to avoid them.

Once Bangladesh welcomed Rohingyas on humanitarian grounds, the state and its agencies had to undertake various measures to manage the Rohingya crisis in Cox's Bazar. Some aspects of such procedures affected locals' lives. Hence, mixed feelings have developed among them, and implicit dissatisfaction has grown towards the administration.⁸⁸ Due to the 2017 crisis, displaced Rohingyas received massive

⁸³ Sharif A. Mukul et al., "Rohingya Refugees and the Environment," *Science* 364, no. 6436 (2019): 138; UNDP, "Impacts of the Rohingya".

⁸⁴ Highlighted by a local government representative of Ukhiya, interviewed on 01 March 2021.

⁸⁵ ACAPS and NPM Analysis Hub, *Rohingya Crisis: Host Communities Review*, Last accessed on October 22, 2022, <https://www.acaps.org/special-report/rohingya-crisis-host-communities-review>.

⁸⁶ This issue was referred by local inhabitants in FGDs, interviews and micro-narratives.

⁸⁷ 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* (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41134-022-00212-5>.

⁸⁸ Referred by a local driver, story collected on 10 March 2020, and both male and female participants of FGDs, held in Ukhiya on 1st March 2021, shared their experience in this regard.

attention from the state and international community, which the locals have perceived negatively.⁸⁹ They felt neglected. However, as a part of the Rohingya management process, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) deployed security forces, who have applied different approaches like fencing the camps and setting up security checkpoints so that Rohingyas cannot go outside and integrate with locals and disperse across Bangladesh.⁹⁰

Activities like security checks in designated posts on the main highway and checking the locals' original national identity (NID) have created a reserved perception of security providers.⁹¹ Security checks have been stressful for locals, who had to show NIDs every time to prove their citizenship in Bangladesh, although they had no other option but to comply with the duty officers' approach.⁹² Sometimes they felt harassed, a by-product of hosting Rohingyas. Besides these, not much development happened in repatriating Rohingyas to their country, which concerns locals who think the effects they have experienced may endure for an uncertain period. The temporary FDMNs could stay longer and diffuse with the locals in the future.

Local people of Ukhiya and Teknaf perceived that the effects of hosting Rohingyas have made them think twice about having them anymore, although the government cannot send them back until a repatriation process begins. The presence of FDMNs in various ways influenced their life and livelihood. These may not lead to hostility between the host and guests as long the state and its agencies are responsible for managing the Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar. However, a sense of considering Rohingyas differently has developed amongst the host population as long as Rohingyas have priority over the locals in many aspects.

3.2 *Local's feelings of deprivation and perception of threats*

The impacts of hosting Rohingyas have generated a feeling of discrimination in multiple dimensions amongst the locals when getting inadequate attention from the state institutions and other support providers exacerbates such a sense. However, a sense of deprivation originates not just from reality; a perception generated through the facts

⁸⁹ Indicated in the story of a local service holder, micro-narrative was collected on 3rd March 2020.

⁹⁰ R. A. Rahman, "Home Minister: Barbed Wire Fencing Underway Around Rohingya Camps," *Dhaka Tribune*, January 15, 2022, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/rohingya-crisis/2020/02/15/home-minister-barbed-wire-fencing-underway-around-rohingya-camps>.

⁹¹ Discussed broadly by all female members participated in an FGD, conducted in Ukhiya on 01 March 2021.

⁹² Reflected by a local business person of Teknaf, story collected on 15 March 2020.

also contributes to risks and deficiency of opportunities and services. All collectively contribute to developing a cognitive scenario in the minds of community members who host displaced people. Since Rohingyas' arrival, the hosts in Ukhiya and Teknaf have identified several sources of deprivation in their everyday lives, making many of their lives hazardous. As discussed earlier, underprivileged people have lost work or are forced to work at a low wage. Many lost lands, while others lost sources of income and resorted to alternative income methods. In addition, the government imposed various restrictions, including restricting mobile networks for better management of the crisis.⁹³ Therefore, many locals, if not all, have been deprived of multiple tangible and intangible services and benefits.

The direct assistance that Rohingyas as 'refugees' received in different forms from the international community created a sense of dissatisfaction among the locals.⁹⁴ Although they are not supposed to get such benefits, the presence of FDMNs make them think that they should also have access to such assistance. Upon the direction of GoB, the Joint Response Plan (JRP) revised policies to assist Rohingya-hosting local communities in overcoming their disadvantages. However, there have been complaints that not everyone gets such assistance, or those who get it have inadequate support. A development worker argues that the help of tangible and intangible natures perhaps covers 60 per cent of affected people but is not enough.⁹⁵ Host families who live inside the camps feel deprioritised by the concerned actors. For example, they rarely received gas cooking stoves, while Rohingyas received them to meet their cooking needs, although a shortage of cooking firewood affected both communities.⁹⁶ Electric-powered cookers and deep tube wells were provided to Rohingyas, while the host's tube wells were 150 to 200 feet deep, inadequate and inappropriate to collect fresh water from lower water layers.⁹⁷

There has been a claim that FDMN's presence has restricted the freedom of movement of locals who have to show NID at security posts. While showing NID

⁹³ Shared by local storyteller of Ukhiya, micro-narrative collected on 11 November 2019; H. K. Bhuiyan, "3G, 4G Internet Restored in Rohingya Camps," *The Daily Star*, September 22, 2020, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/rohingya-crisis/2020/08/28/3g-4g-internet-restored-in-rohingya-camps>.

⁹⁴ Reflected by a local representative and local business person of Ukhiya, both interviewed on 1st March 2021.

⁹⁵ Reflected by a development worker, interviewed on 1st March 2021.

⁹⁶ Jessica Olney, Muhammad Badiuzzaman and Mohammad Azizul Hoque, *Social Cohesion, Resilience and Peace Building between Host Population and Rohingya Refugee Community in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh*, (Dhaka: BRAC and UNDP, 2019).

⁹⁷ Olney, Badiuzzaman and Hoque, *Social Cohesion, Resilience and Peace*.

is considered a hassle by the locals, failing to show cards adds to their hassle.⁹⁸ They often had to wait for hours to pass the check post or communicate at home for someone to bring the card and show it to the security personnel.⁹⁹ Sometimes they become highly emotional that they have to prove their nationality to the administration (e.g., security providers).¹⁰⁰ This gives the locals a gusting feeling of mistreatment that questions their nationality which they believe is caused by the presence of the FDMNs. They, therefore, perceive the FDMNs to be responsible for their loss of fundamental freedom.

However, a section of locals has intensified this complicated process. A syndicate developed after the 2017 crisis, which started arranging fake NIDs, birth certificates and Bangladeshi passports for Rohingyas.¹⁰¹ Due to administrative weaknesses, it has been an issue of lack of good governance, as many Rohingyas accessed Bangladeshi passports to go to other countries.¹⁰² However, those who were in Saudi Arabia with Bangladeshi passports were given passports ‘under special arrangements in the OIC agreement’ to arrange ‘asylum’ for Rohingyas there.¹⁰³ Once the issue of fake passports availed by Rohingyas came to the surface after the 2017 influx, the GoB put restrictions and a wide range of conditions on issuing these documents that affect the locals who live in Cox’s Bazar district.¹⁰⁴ Claims go on that they cannot get birth certificates from local councils, as they do not issue certificates due to state restrictions. Without such a certificate, young children struggle to enroll in local schools. Such administrative regulations and legal limits contributed to a sense of questionable freedom, which looked unfair to the locals, generated only because of the presence of FDMNs. A local driver from Teknaf echoed the voice of many host people by saying.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁸ Shared by a local business person of Teknaf, story collected on 6 March 2020; Discussed by female-participants of an FGD, conducted in Ukhiya on 1st March 2021.

⁹⁹ Discussed by female-participants of an FGD, conducted in Ukhiya on 1 March 2021.

¹⁰⁰ Shared by a local story teller, micro-narrative was collected on 17 November 2019, and FGD participants of Teknaf, conducted on 2nd March 2021.

¹⁰¹ F.M. Mizanur Rahaman, “Syndicate Helps Rohingyas Get NID, Passports,” *The Daily Star*, June 22, 2021, <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/syndicate-helps-rohingyas-get-nid-passports-1796749>.

¹⁰² Tarek Mahmud, “250,000 Rohingyas Went Abroad with Bangladeshi Passports,” *Dhaka Tribune*, September 19, 2018, <https://archive.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2018/09/19/250-000-rohingyas-went-abroad-with-bangladeshi-passports>.

¹⁰³ “Bangladesh will not Issue Passports to Rohingyas in Saudi Arabia,” *The Business Standard*, May 03, 2023, <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/migration/bangladesh-will-not-issue-passports-rohingyas-saudi-arabia-625546>.

¹⁰⁴ Discussed widely by FGD participants of Ukhiya and Teknaf, held on 1st and 2nd March 2021.

¹⁰⁵ Micro-narrative of this person was collected on 10 March 2020.

“After the influx, we are deprived of legal, administrative, and other services. What can the local government do? Before, we could go anywhere without fear, and after the influx, we felt harassed in the check posts ... This is shameful for us. Where is our freedom?”

Increased road traffic, accidents, associated injuries, and deaths on the Ukhiya and Teknaf highways have put local lives at risk. People had never experienced such high traffic on this road. The number of cars plying on this highway has increased for carrying goods, rations, and other materials for the Rohingyas. Having such high traffic on the street, many locals stopped sending children to schools alone. Also, the education system has been seriously jeopardised by the presence of Rohingyas in Ukhiya and Teknaf.¹⁰⁶ Once the influx originated in 2017, many students and teachers joined the humanitarian aid industry to earn quick money which is depriving the students of proper education as well as making their education incomplete.¹⁰⁷

The host’s feelings of deprivation and risks have become multifaceted—ranging from everyday routine life to particular aspects of their lives. Although this sense of deprivation also affects their relationship with other concerned stakeholders, its liability goes to the presence of FDMNs in their locality. It carries an implicit feeling of intolerance against them. A Teacher from Ukhiya mentioned: “The Rohingyas have many opportunities, but the locals are suffering and are deprived of every opportunity.”¹⁰⁸ Amongst the host population, a sentiment is growing that the FDMNs have made them ‘foreigners’ in their land, as unwanted guests statistically outnumber them in Ukhiya and Teknaf.

Besides being a minority in its land, a future scenario concerning perceived threats and real insecurities continues to develop among the host community. The locals mention a number of instances about how a section of Rohingyas have been involved in various crimes and unlawful activities, such as robbery, theft, murder, sexual harassment, fighting, gun running, drug dealings, etc. A local service holder working in Ukhiya stated:¹⁰⁹

“I work in the camps. Sometimes we are given our salaries in hand. When we bring back the salaries from the camp, we feel insecure. We fear that

¹⁰⁶ Islam et al., “The 2017 Rohingya Influx into Bangladesh.”

¹⁰⁷ Islam et al., “The 2017 Rohingya Influx into Bangladesh.”

¹⁰⁸ The story of this person was collected on 15 November 2020.

¹⁰⁹ Micro-narrative collected from Ukhiya on 17 November 2020.

organised Rohingya groups might steal from us. Because things like this have happened, that is why we feel afraid. Rohingyas have become desperate, like hungry tigers. They do not even hesitate to kill the locals now. That is why our safety is at risk.”

By statistics, the number of crimes has been on the rise since the arrival of Rohingyas in Cox’s Bazar. Their involvement in various criminal and unlawful activities not only put the locals under threat but also create a hostile and stereotyped label of the Rohingyas. Many recognise them as ferocious and dangerous, who went through various conflicts in life and lacked various behavioural capacities to live in.¹¹⁰ Thus, the whole Rohingya community is portrayed negatively due to unlawful and unacceptable activities of some sections, although the role of local drug lords who use the vulnerability of displaced Rohingyas to meet their unlawful interests cannot be overlooked.¹¹¹ Statistics show that since 2017, Yaba (a stimulant drug) smuggling has increased, and it is claimed by many that small shops inside Rohingya camps are being used as a storehouse and centres of Yaba trade.¹¹² Drug syndicates have spies across the camps and are ‘organised and ruthless’; therefore, ordinary Rohingyas remain highly scared to discuss this. Both old Rohingyas and FDMNs without legal work permission earn currency from drug trafficking.

The drug trade are attracting greedy locals too, who use Rohingyas for illegal business. The more drug consignments enter Teknaf and Ukhiya by crossing the Naf River, the larger the number of local groups involved in such illegal business. It is not only a worry of local people but also a concern for national security—as these drugs, especially Yaba, is routed to different parts of the country, including Dhaka. The Myanmar-Bangladesh trafficking route arguably links with the adjacent Golden Crescent, Golden Triangle drug cartels.¹¹³ Statistics show those involved in drug trafficking connect with other criminal activities, such as gun running, abduction, ransom collection, smuggling, murder, rape, human trafficking, etc.¹¹⁴ While crime

¹¹⁰ Reflected by local male community members in FGDs in Ukhiya and Teknaf, conducted on 1st and 2nd March 2021, respectively.

¹¹¹ Islam et al., “The 2017 Rohingya Influx into Bangladesh.”

¹¹² Tarek Mahmud, “Crime on Rise in Cox’s Bazar Camps,” *Dhaka Tribune*, 1st September 2018, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/2018/09/01/crime-on-rise-in-cox-s-bazar-camps>.

¹¹³ Anjum Iffat, “The Crux of Transnational Yaba-Trafficking Nexus in Bangladesh: Explaining the Reasons and Advocating Counter-Strategies,” *International Journal of Research and Scientific Innovation (IJRSI)*, Vol. 7, No.2, 2000, pp. 13-20.

¹¹⁴ Muktadir Rashid, “Many Rohingyas Get Involved in Crimes,” *New Age*, August 25, 2020, Available at <https://www.newagebd.net/article/114440/many-rohingyas-get-involved-in-crimes>; Accessed on May 22, 2022; A. Aziz, “Rohingya Crisis: 115 Murders Reported in Camps in 5 years,” *Dhaka Tribune*, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/rohingya-crisis/2022/08/25/rohingya-crisis-115-murders-reported-in-camps-in-5-years>. Accessed on 22 September 2022.

rates increase, many Rohingyas become the target of human traffickers who take life risks to migrate to other countries through the sea.¹¹⁵

Statistics show that between August 2017 and August 2022, 2,438 criminal cases were filed over violence in camps against 5,226 displaced people due to their involvement in criminal and unlawful activities.¹¹⁶ More than one hundred Rohingyas were murdered in the camps during this period.¹¹⁷ Although these numbers may look less proportionate to the total FDMNs, such incidents cause serious worries for the state and people. Law enforcement agencies undertook a hard approach to control such criminal and illegal activities, and neutralised many in crackdown operations.¹¹⁸ A section of the unemployed Rohingyas get involved in criminal activities, making some earnings and fighting to establish control inside the camps.¹¹⁹ Another reason for the growing resentment among Rohingyas is that they find their situation hopeless in terms of prospect of returning home. Their repatriation process has not progressed satisfactorily, making them frustrated and ‘unruly’.¹²⁰ It cannot be denied that amongst the sub-districts of Cox’s Bazar - Ukhiya and Teknaf have experienced the most incidents of violence and crime, abduction, assault, gunfights, clashes, etc., since the arrival of the Rohingyas.¹²¹

The organised Rohingya group, Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), also known as Harakah al-Yaqin, is claimed to be a concern for local communities due to its involvement in various questionable activities. Though ARSA claims that its activities have been “confined to Myanmar”, it arguably recruits fighters from the Rohingya camps, “often through coercion,” and ordinary camp dwellers fear reprisal if they talk against it.¹²² It is a source of tension and anxiety for camp dwellers and locals. The Al-Yaqin, an infamous and fearful organisation led by Abdul Hakim, alias Hakim Dakhat, has been active in the camp and adjacent areas. Reports say it has

¹¹⁵ Ruma Paul, Sudipto Ganguly and Krishna N. Das, “Surging Crime, Bleak Future Push Rohingya in Bangladesh to Risk Lives at Sea,” *Reuters*, January 24, 2023, Available at <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/surging-crime-bleak-future-push-rohingya-bangladesh-risk-lives-sea-2023-01-24/#:~:text=Police%20arrested%20%2C531%20Rohingya%20and,on%20police%20and%20human%20trafficking.>

¹¹⁶ Rashid, “Many Rohingyas Get Involved.”

¹¹⁷ Aziz, “Rohingya Crisis.”

¹¹⁸ Rashid, “Many Rohingyas Get Involved.”

¹¹⁹ Mahmud, “Crime on Rise in Cox’s Bazar.”

¹²⁰ Mohammad Al-Masum Molla, “Refugee Camps: Crime Spikes while Rohingyas Despair,” *The Daily Star*, May 17, 2019, <https://www.thedailystar.net/rohingya-crisis/news/refugee-camps-crime-spikes-while-rohingyas-despair-1744768>.

¹²¹ Bangladesh Peace Observatory, <http://peaceobservatory-cgs.org/#/division/upazilla>, Last accessed on May 05, 2021.

¹²² Paul, Ganguly and Das, “Surging Crime, Bleak Future Push.”

many members, including females, in Rohingya camps in Kutupalong and Balukhai areas.¹²³ Besides establishing control in the camps by fighting with other groups, such as the Munna group, Anas group, Mahad group, Salman Shah group, Hafez Ahmad group, Nure Alam Bahini, and Zakir group, its members are engaged in drug and human trafficking, abduction and ransom collection.¹²⁴ A recent defense ministry report that was presented to the parliamentary standing committee states that eleven armed groups are active in the camps and are engaged in extortion, drug, and human trafficking.¹²⁵

After kidnapping ordinary Rohingya and local people, they take them into uninhabited hills and release them once they get money—otherwise, mercilessly torcher and even kill them.¹²⁶ Money that they generate through such activities is used for buying firearms.¹²⁷ They torture and rape ordinary Rohingyas in front of their family members, thus creating a reign of terror inside the camps.¹²⁸ On the other hand, the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO), which focuses on ‘representing and advocating for the rights of Rohingya refugees in Myanmar’ has re-emerged and has been engaged in conflicts with the ARSA, which could create critical conditions for the rights and dignity of displaced Rohingyas and locals.¹²⁹ The fights these groups carry forward to establish control in certain areas could be fatal and increase hostility inside the camps, as six Rohingya people recently were killed in a clash between these two rival groups.¹³⁰ None can say that such activities would not have any domino effects on the host population and host country.

Due to growing insecurity and threats, inside and outside of the camps, the GoB fenced some camps to regulate Rohingya movements, built watchtowers, and

¹²³ Abdur Rahman and Jashim Uddin, “অপহরণ-ধর্ষণে ভীতির সৃষ্টি: কক্সবাজারের মর্তিমান আতঙ্ক ‘আল-ইয়াকিন’ (Creating a reign of terror through abduction and rape: Al Yaqin is a visible fear in Cox’s Bazar), *Dhaka Post*, <https://www.dhakapost.com/exclusive/43355?fbclid=IwAR3eAsUXPGSgVRSIAjiP5AFZXxE5zrPLHVjOSxnbeCBnG0hJ6z0yQsM05PA>.

¹²⁴ Rahman and Uddin, “অপহরণ-ধর্ষণে ভীতির সৃষ্টি.”

¹²⁵ Riadul Karim, “Defence Ministry Report: 11 Active armed Groups in Rohingya Camps,” *Prothom Alo (English)*, February 27, 2023, <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/crime-and-law/sbyhp2noh4>

¹²⁶ Rahman and Uddin, “অপহরণ-ধর্ষণে ভীতির সৃষ্টি.”

¹²⁷ Rahman and Uddin, “অপহরণ-ধর্ষণে ভীতির সৃষ্টি.”

¹²⁸ Rahman and Uddin, “অপহরণ-ধর্ষণে ভীতির সৃষ্টি.”

¹²⁹ “Questions raised about audio recording urging mass killing,” *Dhaka Tribune*, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2023/02/26/rohingya-leaders-audio-urging-mass-killings-sparks-concerns>.

¹³⁰ International Rescue Committee, “Access to Justice”; Al Jazeera, “At Least Six Rohingya Refugees Killed in Bangladesh Camp Clashes,” July 07, 2023, Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/7/7/several-rohingya-refugees-killed-in-bangladesh-camp-clashes>.

set up surveillance cameras to oversee the camp condition, though some argued that such initiatives could undermine camp-dwellers' rights to freedom of movement.¹³¹ One could not discard camp-based extremist groups; the police and Rapid Action Battalion, a specialised wing of Bangladesh police, carried out some operations from time to time in the uninhabited hills.¹³² Denying such a group's presence and activities could considerably complicate the situation as displaced and local people become the targets and victims of their unlawful tasks and violence.

Fear of losing control over land, property, and particularly a part of the territory of Bangladesh goes around. A sense of anxiety, apprehension, and animosity engulfs the host because of various rumors such as Rohingyas have claimed 'both sides' of Arakan,¹³³ i.e. they want to establish control over the Myanmar side of Arakan, and Cox's Bazar, including the Teknaf and Ukhiya regions of Bangladesh, which they claim as their original territory.¹³⁴ A 45-year-old man from Teknaf expressed concern:¹³⁵

"We only want them to be sent back to their country. Just think about what will happen to us if they stay here for the rest of their lives. When I think about it, I get the shivers. What if we have to escape the country in the future?"

Many ordinary people living in rural areas and people of various classes and positions also worry about their future. Another rumor goes around plans to take over the region, from Cox's Bazar to Feni district.¹³⁶ It could be a rumour but has an imminent threat perspective linked to the survival of the local population and protection of the region and Bangladesh. A person who works in Teknaf explained the dangers of having Rohingyas super-critically:¹³⁷

¹³¹ International Crisis Group, *A Sustainable Policy for Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh*. Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2019; Human Rights Watch, "Bangladesh: Halt Plans to Fence-In Rohingya Refugees: Barbed Wire, Guard Towers to Deny Freedom of Movement," 2019, Available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/09/30/bangladesh-halt-plans-fence-rohingya-refugees>, Last accessed on June 23, 2023.

¹³² Rahman and Uddin, "অপহরণ-ধর্ষণে ভীতির সৃষ্টি."

¹³³ Olney, Badiuzzaman and Hoque, *Social Cohesion, Resilience and Peace*.

¹³⁴ Olney, Badiuzzaman and Hoque, *Social Cohesion, Resilience and Peace*.; Rahman and Uddin, "অপহরণ-ধর্ষণে ভীতির সৃষ্টি."

¹³⁵ A local driver of Teknaf; narrative was collected on 07 March 2020.

¹³⁶ Shared by FGD participants of Ukhiya, conducted on 1st March 2021.

¹³⁷ Interview conducted on 2nd March 2021.

“The locals have already become the minority... We feel alarmed ... In the future, they can declare independence. Because in the future, they will become members and Chairmen. They [many of them] have already acquired [fake] NID cards and passports. Maybe they will rule over us 8-10 years or 20 years later. Everyone is frightened over this.”

Threats and fears are not always physical or directly observed; some are associated with locals' feelings. The feeling of bearing the burden of hosting FDMNs is natural; a massive wariness is unseen and unobserved. Although some strategies like vigilance of security forces and fencing the camps with razor/barbed wires have kept the observable threats minimum, locals feel that many organisations have a Rohingya-prioritised policy over the interests of the locals. Once dissatisfaction develops with security checks and a feeling of deprivation, threats, risks, and associated anxieties linked to livelihoods, security, and survival of the local population, a questionable relationship between the host and FDMNs will not be uncommon. Intolerance could loom out of fear, apprehension, and frustration. Thoughts of being chased away by the same Rohingyas they once had provided refuge and shelter could be a critical source for seeing them differently.

3.3 *Narratives of Difference*

The concept of differentiating, which has a complex meaning in a crisis, plays an inflexible role in perceiving the opponent from a specific lens that exposes differences of concerned groups in everyday narratives. Once such differentiating narratives, consciously or subconsciously, influence peoples' thinking, that can tacitly excuse an existing relationship that binds groups—like sympathy to the other group for any reason or accepting them in works.¹³⁸ Religious proximity was one of the reasons that allowed the host people to welcome the FDMNs since the latter experienced and endured persecution, atrocities, and torture in Myanmar. A middle-aged unemployed person from Teknaf explained:¹³⁹

“I did not stop welcoming Rohingyas in my orchard from where every year I collected firewood. They have sought refuge because they are in trouble. If we do not help them, where will they go? If I help people in need, Allah will do the same for me. If I do not help people in need, what type of Muslim am I? Islam says that every Muslim is a brother to other Muslims”.

¹³⁸ Joshua Greene, *Moral Tribes: Emotion, Reason, and the Gap between Us and Them*, Penguin, 2013.

¹³⁹ Micro-narrative collected on 07 November 2019.

The sympathy and empathy that encouraged the host community to shelter Rohingyas on religious and humanitarian grounds have changed over time. Over the period, locals have perceived significant differences with the FDMNs on different grounds despite having religious proximity. One of the main reasons for such change is their ‘attitudes and behaviour’ to the environment and locals. Local FGD participants perceived Rohingyas as orphans when they arrived, but their nature has evolved differently from theirs.¹⁴⁰ Religious proximity does not work much to glue their relationship. Actual and perceived differences have made the distinctions clear to them. An FGD participant argued:¹⁴¹

“They do not have knowledge of Islam over its entirety. They just give importance to prayer (Namaz) and fasting (Roza), and nothing else. They will make you a promise but will not give importance to it. Lying means nothing to them ... They do not consider breaking promises as a bad thing.... Lying and breaking promises are forbidden in Islam.”

This excerpt portrays how host people have distinguished between them, specifying through religious rituals, practices, and normative aspects of religion, although both the communities are Muslims who have religious commonness. Rohingyas are Muslim, saying their prayers in mosques available in the camps and practicing Islamic rituals like other Muslims.¹⁴² With this distinction, the locals may show reluctance to a shared duty that encouraged them to shelter the FDMNs in 2017.

Both communities have some similarities in local dialects. By indicating cultural dissimilarities (e.g., use of different words, dress patterns, etc.), the locals distinguish themselves from the Rohingyas. A teacher of Teknaf exquisitely pointed out the cultural differences between the two. On the language issue, the person stated Rohingyas use the word “mui” (meaning I/me), whereas Bangladeshis use the word “ami” (indicating I/me).¹⁴³ A day laborer in Ukhiya depicted this difference further by saying: “We address them as ‘Apni’ (you), but they use the word ‘Tui’ (you) when they speak to everyone. This is in their language.”¹⁴⁴ The dressing pattern of Rohingyas and Bangladeshis is another distinguishing factor. Rohingyas dress like

¹⁴⁰ Reflected by FGD participant in Ukhiya, conducted on 1st March 2021.

¹⁴¹ Reflected by FGD participant in Ukhiya, conducted on 1st March 2021.

¹⁴² Islam et al., “An Assessment of the Sustainability of Living for Rohingyas.”

¹⁴³ The person was interviewed on 2 March 2021.

¹⁴⁴ Story of this person was collected on 11 November 2019.

they tuck their shirts inside their ‘lungis’, which Bengalis do not do.¹⁴⁵ Rohingya girls also dress differently. They wear ‘thamis’, whereas Bengali girls wear salwar and kamij or shari.¹⁴⁶ Rohingyas lacked the technical know-how to use gas cylinders for cooking¹⁴⁷ and lacked interest in using family planning products.¹⁴⁸

This distinction process has emerged over the period, distinguishing Rohingyas from the locals and creating a different narrative of the FDMNs that goes beyond the earlier sympathetic portrayals. Locals distinguish them from the FDMNs based on linguistic differences, the practice of language, and access to modern amenities used in everyday life. These cognitive differences depict Rohingyas with another dimension which may have contributed to perceiving and framing them otherwise due to their distinctive socio-cultural practices and habits.

3.4 *Attitudinal manifestation of tolerance and intolerance*

When a society experiences dissatisfaction and deprivation and has differences from another community on various grounds, those may help develop a sense of difference or lead to direct intolerance. In hosting such an influx of Rohingyas, locals in the last five years’ experience have silently developed a reserved perspective about them, mixed with distrust. Due to various aspects and activities of different sections, Rohingyas have been labeled with multiple connotations, such as dishonest,¹⁴⁹ selfish,¹⁵⁰ greedy,¹⁵¹ liars,¹⁵² gamblers,¹⁵³ ignorant,¹⁵⁴ goons,¹⁵⁵ stubborn¹⁵⁶, etc. Although one can claim that they earned these titles through the activities of different sections of Rohingyas, one cannot ignore that they went through systematic deprivation and direct violence that forced them to leave their country with trauma. That is a reality; they are waiting to return home. Participants of an FGD, however, analysed traits and argued that some Rohingyas’ violent mentality and nature of involvement in unlawful activities, including abduction and murders, have made

¹⁴⁵ Story of this person was collected on 11 November 2019.

¹⁴⁶ Shared by a housewife of Ukhiya, story collected on 12 November 2019.

¹⁴⁷ Mentioned by male FGD participants, conducted in Ukhiya on 1 March 2021.

¹⁴⁸ Shared by a local driver of Ukhiya, story collected on 15 November 2019.

¹⁴⁹ Shared by housewife in Teknaf; micro-narrative collected on 10 March 2020.

¹⁵⁰ Shared by a businessman in Teknaf whose story was collected on 09 March 2020.

¹⁵¹ Stated by a housewife in Ukhiya, narrative collected on 05 November 2019.

¹⁵² Stated by a business person in Teknaf; whose micro-narrative was collected on 08 March 2020.

¹⁵³ Stated by a local business person in Teknaf; micro-narrative was collected on 06 March 2020.

¹⁵⁴ Stated by a housewife in Ukhiya; micro-narrative was collected on 10 November 2019.

¹⁵⁵ Stated by a service-holder in Ukhiya; micro-narrative was collected on 17 November 2019.

¹⁵⁶ Stated by a pharmacist in Teknaf; micro-narrative was collected on 15 March 2020.

locals fearful.¹⁵⁷ Once such characteristics are exposed, local Bangladeshis see them differently and point out that Rohingyas, due to systematic violence in Myanmar, have brought violence from the other side of Naf to their locality.

Locals describe how they and their forefathers grew up in an atmosphere without fear and intimidation. They rarely experienced fighting, murder, and killing. Therefore, locals have created their version of explaining the characteristics of the Rohingyas. Instead of sympathising with FDMNs' struggles in a violent situation and how Myanmar treated them, some locals use that to describe their engagements in violent activities.¹⁵⁸ Although some attached various attributes to FDMNs, not all are as mischievous as many have projected.¹⁵⁹ Special interest groups operate inside the camps, and their involvement in atrocities, murder, and unlawful activities has secured such titles and attached negative attributes to all. Nevertheless, the unity of Rohingyas is a positive attribute that is not constructively perceived due to various issues. A 34-year-old businessman from Teknaf argued despite having multiple struggles in their life, Rohingyas are united, a source of their courage, which allows them to address any problem.¹⁶⁰

Due to those negative attributes, most people are afraid of interacting with FDMNs. The locals tend to avoid them and do not want to get into trouble with Rohingyas.¹⁶¹ Without seeing much progress in the repatriation process, fear of having them for an unknown period has lurked amongst the hosts.¹⁶² However, some locals take advantage of employing Rohingyas with low wages, whereas some local criminal gangs may exploit and engage them in unlawful activities. These happen due to the greed of profit-seeking locals. Some believe that the experience of torture and atrocity in Myanmar, made the Rohingyas develop a warrior mentality and exercise aggressive behaviour.¹⁶³ This view creates grounds for validating discriminatory behaviour against them. A 52-year-old housewife from Ukhiya argues:¹⁶⁴

"I could not imagine the Rohingyas being this evil. I thought about doing them a favour. That is why I let them stay on my land. And now they want to take control of my land We should not have let them seek refuge here."

¹⁵⁷ FGD conducted in Ukhiya on 1 March 2021.

¹⁵⁸ Shared by male FGD participants in Teknaf, conducted on 2 March 2021.

¹⁵⁹ Shared by a local business person in Teknaf; micro-narrative was collected on 06 March 2020.

¹⁶⁰ Shared by a local business person in Teknaf; micro-narrative was collected on 06 March 2020.

¹⁶¹ Reflected by a service-holder in Ukhiya ; narrative was collected on 3rd March 2020.

¹⁶² Stated by a service-holder in Ukhiya ; narrative was collected on 14 November 2019.

¹⁶³ Interview with a local government representative in Ukhiya , interviewed on 1st March 2021.

¹⁶⁴ Narrative was collected on 10 November 2019.

There are three dominant attitudes of the locals towards them. Firstly, a group wants quick, dignified repatriation, as suggested by many.¹⁶⁵ The second group holds a mixed feeling, which tends to justify why the Rohingyas behave the way they do in the camps and adjacent areas. These two groups sympathise with religious proximity and the torture they experienced in Myanmar but develop reservations due to the involvement of some sections of Rohingyas in unlawful activities and their effects on local society. Having such a space and mixed perception of FDMNs does not mean the situation cannot change. The third perspective speculates an unwanted situation and changes towards more negativity.

3.5 Behavioural Responses

Behavioural responses are actions, reactions, and counter-actions of concerned parties that can escalate a latent situation to a violent event involving them physically. Once some core issues of the state and society are threatened, an unexpected situation could develop. Fear and threats create frustration that could lead to intolerant behaviour as the perception of Rohingyas has changed much from the 2017 welcoming approach. There are issues of tension and anxiety. Despite various concerns and issues of dissatisfaction, deprivation, fear, and lack of freedom, most local people try not to interact with the Rohingyas except for essential interactions in shared spaces like the market. They stay alert as much as possible. A shopkeeper from Ukhiya stated her apprehensions:¹⁶⁶

“After the Rohingya escaped with my husband’s money, I do not feel like interacting with them. I feel angry when I see them. But, since they are different, I try to interact with them, with caution, of course. So, I do not get betrayed. Even my husband is cautious now. If there is a Rohingya customer, he sells things after observing everything.”

Once they are present, distrust and disrespect can make it easier to escalate a situation. It depends on a triggering factor or a series of events that develop over time involving parties in such a relationship. Although there have not been many large-scale incidents where they engaged in direct violence, there have been minor-scale skirmishes, quarrels, and hostile engagements. Most such incidents occurred between

¹⁶⁵ Bayes Ahmed et al., “Sustainable Rohingya Repatriation in Myanmar: Some Criteria to Follow,” in Nasir Uddin (ed.) *The Rohingya Crisis: Human Rights Issues, Policy Concerns and Burden Sharing* (London & New Delhi: Sage, 2022): 301-333.

¹⁶⁶ Narrative of this person was collected from Ukhiya on 18 February 2020.

them either because of petty reasons or the aggressive attitudes and behaviour of the parties.¹⁶⁷ Once a few Rohingyas sat in a paddy field in the evening. After prayer, a host community person returned with his sons and found some people sitting in their paddy field; light from their torch fell on them and angered them. He was tortured and kidnapped and later rescued with the administration's support.¹⁶⁸

On another occasion, participants of an FGD¹⁶⁹ stated that children of both communities played and engaged in quarrels and fights, which Rohingyas used for a clash and disturbed the locality. There are latent tensions between the communities, although the host is not engaging in violence for various reasons, including religious sympathy for Rohingyas and the government's approach to temporarily host them until they repatriate. Ordinary Rohingyas, in general, are not violent, as they have taken refuge in Cox's Bazar to save lives. Given the complexity of the Rohingya crisis, the locals, however, avoid them and maintain a distance from them. Nevertheless, state control is one of the critical factors that keeps parties separate as much as possible and addresses issues quickly when anything happens between them. A local service holder from Ukhiya pointed out why they live peacefully with them:¹⁷⁰

"The local people are surviving because the government and the NGOs/INGOs are helping them. The government has employed members of the security force for the safety of the locals. That is why there has not been any large conflict between the locals and Rohingyas. This is why the locals have survived."

The government sheltered Rohingyas, cooperated with the international community to provide humanitarian assistance, and undertook various other initiatives to ensure the security and safety of displaced and local people. Hosting more than a million displaced people has evolving security concerns for any host country like Bangladesh.¹⁷¹ With the help of the UNHCR, the GoB completed the biometric registration of Rohingyas for better management of the crisis.¹⁷² The GoB

¹⁶⁷ FGD 1, conducted with local community people in Ukhiya on 1st March 2021.

¹⁶⁸ Islam et al., "The 2017 Rohingya Influx into Bangladesh."

¹⁶⁹ FGD 1, conducted in Ukhiya on 1st March 2021.

¹⁷⁰ Narrative of this person was collected on 3rd March 2020.

¹⁷¹ Md. Sohel Rana and Ali Riaz, "Securitization of the Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* (2022):1-17, DOI: 10.1177/00219096221082265.

¹⁷² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "More than half a Million Rohingya Refugees Receive Identity Documents, most for the First Time," 2019, Last accessed July 16, 2023. <https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing-notes/more-half-million-rohingya-refugees-receive-identity-documents-most-first-time>.

has set up watchtowers and fenced the camps to overcome security risks and establish control of the camps.¹⁷³ Army and police check posts have also been set up on the roads to prevent Rohingyas' movement towards towns and other cities and maintain public order. Special battalions of police—the APBn 14 and APBn 16—have been deployed to ensure security and undertaking measures in Rohingya camps.¹⁷⁴ Besides this, the government, with better facilities and amenities, started relocating around 100,000 Rohingyas to Bhasan Char to reduce pressure in Cox's Bazar camps.¹⁷⁵ One could look into those matters differently, either as a part of the securitisation of the Rohingya issue or influencing their rights to freedom of movement;¹⁷⁶ yet, the government approach has been to manage the displaced Rohingyas in a manner that could reduce challenges to the security of the state and its citizens.

Law enforcement agencies have effectively maintained order and stability in the region, even after several years of a massive influx. However, out of apprehension, the host communities have taken some cautionary measures, like forming small local organisations, to prevent any potential attacks that can work in association with the administration to avoid any unwanted situation. The GoB has offered some support to reduce local people's hardship and thus minimise their grievances created by the influx. Sending gifts to local people by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh was a policy approach to keeping them calm.¹⁷⁷

Nevertheless, Rohingyas' involvement in intra-community clashes inside the camps¹⁷⁸ and other unlawful activities have domino effects on the host population.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷³ Human Rights Watch, "Bangladesh is not My Country": The Plight of Rohingya Refugees from Myanmar," 2018, Last accessed July 22, 2023, https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/bangladesh0818_web2.pdf; Daniel P. Sullivan, *Fading Humanitarianism: The Dangerous Trajectory of the Rohingya Refugee Response in Bangladesh*, (Refugee International: 2021).

¹⁷⁴ Mohammad Ali Jinnat and Mohamamd Jamil Khan, "Armed Police Battalions take charge of Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar," *The Daily Star*, July 02, 2023, <https://www.thedailystar.net/city/news/armed-police-battalions-take-charge-rohingya-camps-coxs-bazar-1923689>.

¹⁷⁵ Md. Didarul Islam and Ayesha Siddika, "Implications of the Rohingya Relocation from Cox's Bazar to Bhasan Char, Bangladesh," *International Migration Review* 56, no. 4 (2022): 1195-1205; Md. Rafiqul Islam et al., "Is Bhasan Char Island, Noakhali District in Bangladesh a Sustainable Place for the Relocated Rohingya Displaced People? An Empirical Study," *SN Social Sciences* 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-021-00281-9>.

¹⁷⁶ Rana and Riaz, "Securitization of the Rohingya"; Human Rights Watch, "Bangladesh is not My Country."

¹⁷⁷ Abdul Aziz, "PM's Eid Gifts worth Tk10cr for Rohingyas Being Distributed in Cox's Bazar," *Dhaka Tribune*, June 12, 2018, Last accessed March 23, 2020, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/2018/06/12/pm-s-eid-gifts-worth-tk10cr-being-distributed-in-cox-s-bazar>.

¹⁷⁸ Abdul Aziz, "Tensions High in Rohingya Camps as Casualties Mount from Internal Clashes," *Dhaka Tribune*, October 07, 2020, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/2020/10/07/tensions-high-in-rohingya-camps-as-casualties-mount-from-internal-clashes>.

¹⁷⁹ International Rescue Committee, "Access to Justice."

When local community issues are at stake, keeping patience becomes difficult. Following the murder of a local Jubo League leader by a group of Rohingyas in August 2019, local youths attacked Jadimura Rohingya shanties in Teknaf.¹⁸⁰ Besides hitting the camps, they vandalised billboards and signboards of various NGOs working inside the Rohingya camps.¹⁸¹ Local youths have grievances originated from the fact that instead of locals, outsiders – Rohingyas, formers as well as district outsiders occupy most of the jobs of the NGOs.¹⁸² There were instances when they protested and blocked roads. The murder of a local political leader sparked other resentments. Such an expression of growing anger is not uncommon when their leaders are threatened, attacked, and killed. Yet, it has become more of a security matter for local people who have suffered from the influx and already started disliking Rohingyas for various reasons.

However, pressure for existence and survival is quite visible amidst the host population—as hosting Rohingyas poses a covert threat to Bangladesh.¹⁸³ Being outnumbered in Ukhiya is a reality; it has psychological pressure on the host population, as anything could happen at any time. Since various Rohingya groups are active inside the camps and target displaced and local people to abduct and collect ransom, leading to torture and death, the residents live in fear; they do not generally come out to attack members of those Rohingya groups.¹⁸⁴

As mentioned, state capacity matters in hosting FDMNs and addressing refugee-centric problems and challenges. Bangladesh welcomed them primarily on humanitarian grounds, and undertook a bold approach to hosting them as PM Sheikh Hasina, in a visit to the Rohingya camps in 2017, stated, “We can feed 160 million people of Bangladesh, and we have enough food security to feed the 700,000 refugees.”¹⁸⁵ The state wanted to return them through a bilateral repatriation

¹⁸⁰ Masum Billah, “Bangladeshi Hosts in Cox’s Bazar Running out of Patience with Rohingya Refugees,” *Bdnews24.com*, August 24, 2019, <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2019/08/24/bangladeshi-hosts-in-cox-s-bazar-running-out-of-patience-with-rohingya-refugees>.

¹⁸¹ Billah, “Bangladeshi Hosts in Cox’s Bazar.”

¹⁸² Highlighted by a local pharmacist in Ukhiya ; micro-narrative was collected on 08 March 2020; Abdul Aziz, “Cox’s Bazar Locals Seek Jobs in Charities Working for Rohingyas,” *Dhaka Tribune*, March 04, 2019, [https://archive.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/rohingya-crisis/2019/03/04/cox-s-bazar-locals-demonstrate-for-ngo-jobs-in-rohingya-camps](https://archive.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/rohingya-crisis/2019/03/04/cox-s-bazar-locals-demonstrate-for-ngo-jobs-in-rohingya-camps;); bdnews24.com, “Bangladeshis Protest against Foreign NGOs Employing Rohingya,” 28 December 2020, <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/bangladeshis-protest-against-foreign-ngos-employing-rohingya>.

¹⁸³ Interview with a Buddhist religious leader, interviewed on 1st March 2021.

¹⁸⁴ Interview with a local government representative in Ukhiya, interviewed on 1st March 2021.

¹⁸⁵ “If We Can Feed 160m, We Can also Feed 700,000 Rohingya Refugees,” *Dhaka Tribune*, September 12, 2017, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2017/09/12/bangladesh-can-feed-700000-rohingya-refugees>.

agreement, which did not materialise yet; therefore, the state and society expressed rigidity for not accepting more Rohingyas from Myanmar.¹⁸⁶ The stricter policy the GoB undertook for Rohingya management, including the fencing around the camps, was to deter the “criminal activities” of some Rohingya groups and keep others safe.¹⁸⁷ The country had to rule over criticism of the strict management policy and decision to relocate Rohingyas to Bhasan Char to ensure their safety and protect its population.¹⁸⁸ However, the political uncertainty of the repatriation process made the situation more complicated.

On pressing issues like drug dealing, the GoB undertook a hard approach and started an anti-drug raid in May 2018.¹⁸⁹ Besides this, it opened a soft rehabilitation approach for local drug dealers; as a result, more than a hundred ‘Yaba godfathers’ surrendered to law enforcement agencies.¹⁹⁰ Bangladesh had been pragmatic in addressing the border issues with Myanmar. The Foreign Minister of Bangladesh stated:

“We will never kill a single person at the border. We don’t want to open fire on the Bangladesh-Myanmar border. But from now on, we’ll resort to firing to stop illegal activities.”¹⁹¹

Bangladesh undertakes these measures to establish control over the unlawful happenings in Bangladesh-Myanmar border areas. It undertook actions to ensure things do not go out of its hands, nor does the host population engage in disputes with the FDMNs.

¹⁸⁶ Hannah Ellis-Petersen, “Rohingya Crisis: Bangladesh Says it will not Accept any more Myanmar Refugees: Foreign Secretary tells UN the Country Paying the Price for ‘showing empathy to a persecuted minority,” *The Guardian*, March 01, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/01/rohingya-crisis-bangladesh-says-it-will-not-accept-any-more-myanmar-refugees>.

¹⁸⁷ “Bangladesh: On Track to Complete Barbed-Wire Fence Around Rohingya Camps by Mid-2021,” *Radio Free Asia*, June 01, 2021, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/fence-01062021181747.html>.

¹⁸⁸ Amy Mackinnon, “Ignoring Criticism, Bangladesh Begins Resettling Rohingya: Human Rights Groups have already Voiced Serious Concerns about the Plan to Move Thousands of Refugees to an Uninhabited Island,” December 07, 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/12/07/ignoring-criticism-bangladesh-begins-resettling-rohingya-bhasan-char-coxs-bazar-camp/>.

¹⁸⁹ Arun Devnath, “Bangladesh’s War on Drugs, Far from Over,” *The Hindu*, February 23, 2019, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/bangladeshs-war-on-drugs-far-from-over/article26352447.ece>.

¹⁹⁰ Hasan Al Javed, “Yaba Smuggling Continues even as ‘Godfathers’ Surrender,” *Dhaka Tribune*, August 22, 2020, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/2020/08/22/yaba-smuggling-continues-even-as-godfathers-surrender#:~:text=On%20May%204%2C%202018%2C%20Bangladesh,encounters%E2%80%9D%20with%20law%20enforcements%20agencies>.

¹⁹¹ “Firing on the Border, if Necessary, to Stop Drugs, Arms Smuggling from Myanmar: Momen,” *bdnews24.com*, October 06, 2021, <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2021/10/06/firing-on-the-border-if-necessary-to-stop-drugs-arms-smuggling-from-myanmar-momen>.

Whatever policy and approaches the GoB undertakes, to what extent it would reduce local people's existential threats in Ukhiya and Teknaf remains a question. Concerns over the Rohingya repatriation process are real too. The locals fear offering them excessive scopes may not facilitate this process; instead, it could solidify their presence. Their movement to the Chattogram Hill Tracts could undermine local religious composition and increase social tensions.¹⁹² A sense of destabilisation in the region developed when Myanmar arguably attempted to divert the Rohingya issue into an inter-state issue. Immediately after the 2017 influx, there were provocations as Myanmar's drones and helicopters repeatedly violated Bangladesh's airspace, although the latter avoided the situation by showing self-restraint.¹⁹³ While fighting with separatist groups inside Myanmar, their mortar shells landed and exploded inside Bangladesh, creating tension and panic amongst locals in the Ghumdum border in Bandarban.¹⁹⁴ Perceiving a deteriorated situation and possible immigration, Bangladesh took a cautious stand and wanted to avert Myanmar provocation that could benefit them unilaterally.¹⁹⁵

Violent activities and unlawful actions of some FDMNs have generated fear among the host population. Under these circumstances, hosts' avoidance of Rohingyas has helped them not to respond to anything violently, except occasional engagement in dispute. Despite experiencing various concerns, anxiety, threats, and risks, they continue to shelter them due to the state policy. The locals, who have sheltered and undertaken different adaptive strategies, bear the brunt and restrain themselves from undertaking any actions, setting off a situation of escalating tensions between them. However, provocations could be a source of significant uncertainties, encourage actions and counter-actions inside and outside the camps, and undermine inter-state relations. Intolerance could destabilise the region if the state parties developed a complex relationship. The more days displaced Rohingyas stay in Ukhiya and Teknaf, the more complex and costlier it would become for Bangladesh.

¹⁹² "Prolonged Rohingya Crisis will affect the Economy", *The Daily Star*, December 11, 2022, <https://www.thedailystar.net/supplements/oxfam-human-rights-day-special-magazine-2022/news/prolonged-rohingya-crisis-will-affect-the-economy-3193686>.

¹⁹³ Anisur Rahman, "Sheikh Hasina Accuses Myanmar of Provoking 'War' over Rohingyas," October 07, 2017, <https://www.livemint.com/Politics/nNpc9VK4hOarzrgxn0CJIK/Sheikh-Hasina-accuses-Myanmar-of-provoking-war-over-Rohing.html>.

¹⁹⁴ "1 Killed as Six Myanmar Mortar Shells Explode at Ghumdum," *The Business Standard*, September 16, 2022, <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/rohingya-youth-killed-several-injured-myanmar-mortar-shells-hit-bangladesh-border-497654>; Star Digital Report, "BGB on High Alert as Mortar Shells from Myanmar Land in Bangladesh," *The Daily Star*, September 17, 2022, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/asia/news/bgb-high-alert-mortar-shells-myanmar-land-bangladesh-3121406>.

¹⁹⁵ S. Bashu Das, "Myanmar Aircraft Cross Bangladesh Border, Fire Shells," *Dhaka Tribune*, September 03, 2022, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/nation/2022/09/03/2-shells-from-myanmar-warplanes-land-in-bangladesh>.

4. Conclusion

The Rohingya crisis is a perennial problem for Bangladesh. Being a next-door neighbour of Myanmar, Bangladesh had been a quick point of shelter for Rohingyas when they experienced atrocity and hostility at their homes in Rakhine state. Theoretically, this paper, through a pyramid model that explains the progression of relations between refugees and host communities, leading to tension and intolerance, argues that atrocity-led displacement from one country to another, to a considerable extent, can generate tensions, if not large-scale violence, in the destination place, which though depends upon various factors, including the state's capacity to address emerging issues of intolerance. Tension and anxiety develop steadily influenced by the changes refugees bring to the local context dynamics. Once the hosts experience the disadvantages and adverse effects of hosting refugees, they generate differences in perception and change locals' mindsets towards displaced people. However, whether an evolving tension remains invisible, latent, or becomes exposed to invite actions, reactions, and counter-actions of the parties is determined by the context where refugees are hosted. The means and approaches authorities, especially the host state and supporting actors, apply to maintain order and security are vital for managing anxieties and preventing unwanted situations. A physical confrontation between the host and refugees may not occur when tensions are covert. The state, overtly or covertly, can address any evolving problem. Yet, a problem could go out of control if the host state, due to its weaknesses, cannot deal with issues of meeting the needs and demands of the hosts and managing a crisis prudently.¹⁹⁶

On the Rohingya exodus to Bangladesh and their presence in Ukhiya and Teknaf, this paper argues that the unfavourable effects of the 2017 FDMN influx developed a local reserved perception towards them. The generosity that encouraged the locals to welcome them when the GoB sheltered them during their days when they experienced genocidal atrocity and threats to their lives in Myanmar has not been the same after five years but has turned into suspicion for various reasons. The hosts felt a sense of deprivation, insecurity, and anxiety, indicating an evolving complex social puzzle with proximity and plausibility of tension. The FDMNs are seen as a furuncle with different social tension tipping points, as many, but not all, are involved in anti-social, unlawful, and illegal activities. The existence of various armed and criminal groups and their unlawful activities such as drug dealing, abduction, murder, human trafficking, and fighting among themselves inside the camps has engulfed the locals

¹⁹⁶ Böhmelt, Bove and Gleditsch, "Blame the Victims.?"

in fear. All these contributed to developing a threat perspective to the locals, which generated narratives of differences against Rohingyas, which goes beyond their religious proximity.

Nevertheless, one cannot rule out the issues of state security and survival of the hosts, who are numerically outnumbered in their locality. The local version of the attitudes of various groups of Rohingyas towards them is alarming, although the latter maintain self-restraint for many reasons, including the state's policy of hosting them on humanitarian grounds and various other strategies the state has applied so far for Rohingya crisis management. No large-scale violence evolved between them, but the potential for intolerance exists. One could question the securitised and restrictive policies of the government; but the law enforcement agencies' presence has been vital to maintaining the region's law and order situation and keeping tension at a minimum level. However, locals want Rohingyas to return to their country, Myanmar, without which existing tensions could lead to a physical confrontation that could endanger the locals' safety and the state's security. Therefore, as a host state, Bangladesh and other relevant actors must consider some issues strategically so that any potential threats and risk factors can be identified and addressed quickly. Primarily, it is crucial to empower locals and meet their needs through diversified employment and livelihood opportunities to overcome the deprivation created by the presence of FDMNs. The state could re-strategise deploying competent forces to tackle unlawful and criminal activities that endanger the security and peace of locals, camp people, and locality. Moreover, there must be approaches to develop a locally-based joint early warning system to detect and prevent any potentially unwanted situation. Finally, the state must emphasise bilateral and trilateral, if not multilateral, negotiation processes to expedite the repatriation process of FDMNs to Myanmar.

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