

# Impact of Forcibly Displaced People's Identity Crisis on Host State's Security: The Case of Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh

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## Abstract

A long-term ethnic conflict between the Rohingya Muslim and Buddhist Rakhine communities, the legal exclusion of the Rohingya from the 1982 Citizenship Act, and various forms of discrimination for decades in Myanmar led the Rohingya population to become stateless in their own country and fall into an identity crisis. The study explores how Rohingya refugees fall into the identity crisis and analyzes how they threaten Bangladesh's state security and destroy the state's global image. Using desk-based research, the study found that the identity crisis of Rohingya refugees encouraged them to seek alternative ways of getting Bangladeshi passports and flights worldwide as Bangladeshi nationals, creating an image crisis for Bangladesh through their illegal activities. Focusing on how vulnerable Rohingya refugees are and looking at the security tensions within the hosting state, the study recommends changes to make identity policies for people who have been forced to move.

**Keywords:** Forced Migration, Forcibly displaced people, Identity crisis, Rohingya refugees, Bangladesh, Myanmar.

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## INTRODUCTION

Globally, 100 million people who have been forcibly displaced account for 1% of the world's population, or the total population of the 14th greatest densely populated country on the planet (UNHCR, 2022), and 26.5 million refugees until the mid of 2021 (UNHCR, 2021b). These vulnerable groups face significant physical, economic, and social sufferings due to war and conflict, persecution, or natural disasters when considering moving to flee to a new place of residence. They face even more difficulties when they lack official documents proving their identity, national origin, and ethnicity. As per the World Bank, around 1.5 billion individuals globally lack proper identification documents (WB, 2016: 2). But those who have been forcibly displaced are not the only ones with identity crises. Also, identity crisis may not be only a result and a cause of forced displacement (Manby, 2016: 1) but make stateless. Unfortunately, over 75 percent of the total of the world's recognized stateless people are members of ethnic, religious, or linguistic minorities in the countries where they have existed for centuries due to discrimination, exclusion, and

persecution (UNHCR, 2017: 1, 7). For example, Syrian Kurds were left stateless in Syria after the government imposed a special census in 1962. A judgment by the Dominican Republic's Constitutional Court in 2013 had a detrimental impact on Dominicans of Haitian ancestry who were born in the country, denying many of them of their nationality. The Roma and other minority ethnic groups of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia became stateless in the early 1990s (UNHCR, 2021a: 9-10).

In this paper, our study specifies that 'Rohingyas' refer to the minority Muslim community and are native to Arakan or Rakhine State in Myanmar (Chakraborty, 2015; Al Imran and Mian, 2014: 233). They are violently trying to change their identity as 'illegal Bangladeshi migrants' by the Myanmar government and Buddhists. Rohingya are one of the most oppressed people on the planet, Muslim minorities, having been the victims of state-sponsored mass killing, ethnic cleansing, and inhumane acts. Also, they are forcibly displaced from their native land, and their identity falls into question. The 1982 Citizenship

Law and pertinent sections of Myanmar's 2008 Constitution are widely credited with removing the Rohingya from their citizenship and subsequent oppression as a minority (Alam, 2018: 180), leaving them stateless and in a state of an identity crisis. In addition, the Myanmar government has undertaken institutionally discriminatory practices against the Rohingya through various prohibitions on getting married, family planning, jobs, education, religious choice, and free movement of people (Kipgen, 2019: 63). As a result, several waves of Rohingya refugee influx have occurred from Myanmar to their neighboring countries, particularly Bangladesh. Since the late 1970s, the Rohingya refugee crisis has been a controversial subject in Myanmar and Bangladesh. So, this study tries to explore how the identity of Rohingyas was excluded from Myanmar and why?

Terminologies are vital when attempting to understand broad migration areas. The term "refugee" is defined by the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol as a political-legal status framed in international human rights law (Estevens, 2018: 2). A well-founded fear of oppression must be one of the five reasons specified in Article 1A (2) of the Refugee Convention: race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. It is stated explicitly that persecution on any other grounds will not be considered a refugee. Natural disasters, poverty, and mass unemployment are all reasons for becoming refugees, but these people are classified as "economic migrants" (Kudrat-E-Khuda, 2020: 6). Also, the term "forcibly displaced people" defines people who are forced to move away, either inside or outside borders, as a result of persecution, war, other acts of violence, violations of human rights, poverty, discriminatory treatment, climate change, and other vulnerable circumstances (UN, 2018b: 3). Our study uses both expressions 'forcibly displaced people' and 'refugee' and only considers those forcibly displaced people or refugees who have experienced persecution, war, and conflict from minority groups, have no identification and are stateless.

The study reviewed literature from scholarly published works, including articles, books, and various web sources like data from the US Department of State's TIP Reports, the Institute for Economics & Peace's (IEP) Global Terrorism Indexes, and other official statistics for an identity crisis, stateless minorities, refugees, or forcibly displaced people who negatively impact host countries' state security. In this context, we aim to investigate the impacts of the identity crisis of forcibly displaced Rohingyas on the state security of Bangladesh. Because if they are not monitored, massive waves of refugees threaten to overwhelm and destroy the host countries. Criminal activity, violent extremism, and defiance are increasingly associated with refugees. In the worst-case

scenario, the refugee is penalized or politicized as a security danger to host countries (Whitaker, 1998: 414-415), which contributes to increased crime and the expansion of the black labor market, and poses an even more significant threat to national security (Metevlev, 2016: 6). The concepts of national security and state security are synonymous, and both terms are often used interchangeably. Although state security reflects the sovereignty of the state and national security includes the protection of human and civil rights and freedoms, population, economic, social, environment, and cultural heritage (Kitler, 2020: 49, 69). The study uses both terms to describe the impacts of the identity crisis of forcibly displaced people on host countries. Most of the research about the impact of refugees on host countries always considers economic security, political security, and social security.

The study offers to know how much impact of identity crisis of forcibly displaced Rohingyas have on host Bangladesh's state security. We assumed that the identity crisis encouraged Rohingya refugees to seek alternative ways of faking Bangladeshi passports for use globally. Surprisingly, many Rohingya refugees have been living in Saudi Arabia their entire life, but the authorities did not give them citizenship; even they pressured Bangladesh to issue the passport for them, which shows the administrative weakness of Bangladesh. Also, they are associated with crimes, including human trafficking and terrorism, because they are trapped by traffickers and international terrorists or militant groups offering them a better life. Thus, Rohingya refugees are making Bangladesh an image crisis worldwide. So, the issues addressed by this article are the impacts of the identity crisis of forcibly displaced people on host countries' state security. Secondly, Rohingyas fell into an identity crisis, stateless and forcibly displaced as refugees. Thirdly, their impacts on the state security of Bangladesh that create an image crisis for Bangladesh globally. Lastly, we conclude that the identity crisis of forcibly displaced individuals has created tensions in hosting nations regarding state security. Therefore, we expect to identify the situation's causes, facilitating the development of identification policies for forcibly displaced people.

### **Identity Crisis of Forcibly Displaced People and State Security of Host Countries**

About 12 million stateless people globally, according to UNHCR chief Filippo Grandi (UN, 2018a). Even though only 4.3 million stateless people are registered (UNHCR, 2021b), it is estimated that there are a minimum of 15 million stateless people globally (ISI, 2020: 1). One of the most critical factors determining if a person is stateless is whether any state is willing to acknowledge that person as national (UNHCR, 2014). Discriminatory denial of access to national identity and similar documents violates

domestic and international law. For example, following the independence of South Sudan in 2011 to construct a separate country, Sudan changed its nationality law to exclude people of mixed ethnicity from being identified as Sudanese. However, the Sudanese constitution states that a child born to a Sudanese father or mother has “an absolute right to a national identity” (Manby, 2016: 4-5).

‘Identity’ has become one of the foggy notions in contemporary politics. Scholars have failed to reach an operational definition and shared understanding of this term like many other social science concepts. However, in the traditional sense, identity is defined as “all-inclusive oneness, seamless, without inner distinction” (Hall and Du Gay, 1996). It creates a sense of ‘we-ness’ instead of ‘they-ness.’ But, within one identity, there can have various identities (Ashmore *et al.*, 2001). So, individual differences in a society, group differences within a broader society, or state differences within the global community can all be used to shape identity. In numerous cases, religious, cultural, ethnicity, shared history, and race lenses are used to explain, conceptualize, and clarify specific identities. As a result, identities are typically built around states, global regions, cultures, and racial groups (Yue and Mensah, 2017: 474). Identity is a set of socially structured characteristics that offer members of that group a feeling of belongingness, and it becomes crucial when it brings into question (Alam, 2018: 181). Identity becomes a question when others try to modify people’s identifying characteristics (Minow, 1996).

Migration and migrants, refugees, or forcibly displaced people have long been seen as inextricably linked to national security threats because many are stateless and have no identity. So, there are links and strengths in the impact on national security due to the refugee crisis (Gordic *et al.*, 2017: 34). Europe has been dealing with the world’s worst migrant and refugee problems since World War II, which poses a severe challenge to European security, including the social, political, and economic consequences on European countries (Ranaldi, 2016: 163). There are five broad circumstances in which refugees or forcibly displaced people may be viewed as a risk to the national security of the country that produces them, the country that accepts them, or bilateral relations. When migrants or refugees reject the administration of their nation of origin, they are viewed as a safety risk or based on cultural challenges in the native land. They put economic and social pressure on hosting communities. When the hosting community uses them as a weapon against places of origin, refugees can threaten national security (Weiner, 1992: 105-106).

Also, many refugees or forcibly displaced people threaten the host countries’ state security by faking or using their passports, yet very few have been

researched. According to EUROPOL (European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation) and FRONTEX (European Border and Coast Guard Agency) studies from 2016, the usage of counterfeit passports is linked to terrorism (Molnár, 2019: 134). In this case, refugees are the easy prey for terrorists or other international criminal groups. There’s a strong connection between fake travel documents and state security because many refugees, traffickers, terrorists, smugglers, and criminals are entering the border of the states bearing passports that appear legal but are fraudulently obtained. Falsifying passports violates host states’ national sovereignty (Sadiq, 2011: 238). Also, refugees can impact the image of those countries using fake passports. For example, Ali, a refugee in Denmark from Afghanistan, forged a Russian travel document he brought from Pakistan, and Denmark authorities had documented him as a Russian national (Whyte, 2003: 362). The question is, if Ali does criminal activities in Denmark, or engages in terrorist groups, then which country will be blamed for his crimes? Of course, Russia because he registered as a Russian citizen. Thus, refugees or forcibly displaced people impact on the host countries’ state security.

At the same time, human traffickers prey on refugees and forcefully displaced persons because of their fragile status, severe losses, and insecure life conditions (Wilson, 2011). Human trafficking, as per United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), comprises three aspects: recruitment (including transportation systems, transition, detaining, or transporting people into a situation) by fear or use of pressure (also along with other types of coercive power, kidnappings, cheating, deceit, misuse of authority or position, and so on) for trafficking (Van Reizen *et al.*, 2012: 56). Trafficking in persons negatively impacts the host countries’ state security because host countries are their route or origin of trafficking victims because they longer stay in host countries (Yousaf, 2018: 209). Human traffickers are exploiting Syrian refugees by offering them passage to the Arab World and Europe via Turkey and the Balkan path (Mandic, 2017), which made Turkey Tier 2 ranking from 2014 to 2021. Turkey failed to fulfill the modest standards set by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 (US Department of State, 2021: 563). The situation not only made a lousy reputation globally but also the possibility of United States sanctions and other prohibitions against Turkey (US Department of State, 2021: 51-54), which is a threat to Turkey’s state security.

Refugees are viewed with suspicion by citizens, bureaucrats, and politicians in today’s age of global terrorism and violent telepolitics. Because they have been involved in or experienced conflict in their home country, the spread of such disputes to the receiving nations is typically a significant concern

(Whitaker, 1998: 416). The role of migration flows as a channel for international terrorism has received much attention globally. For example, 19 hijackers' capability or terrorists from other countries to access and survive and prepare in the United States in readiness for the September 11, 2001 assaults on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon raised substantial severe concerns about the relationship between cross-border travel and global terrorism (Adamson, 2006: 165). In Europe, migration was a dominant issue on the European public safety agenda during the 1990s. Terrorist assaults by the Kurdistan Workers' Party in various Western European regions in the 1990s and the 1995 Paris metro explosions by Algeria's Militant Islamic Gang raised concerns about migration and state security (Adamson, 2006: 166). Also, the Madrid bombings on 11 March 2004 (Frykberg, 2004; Lucassen, 2018) and the London bombings on 7 July 2005 (Goodwin and Gaines Jr, 2009) provide compelling evidence of the connectivity between the forcibly displaced people movement and terrorism in Europe.

### **Identity Crisis of Forcibly Displaced Rohingyas**

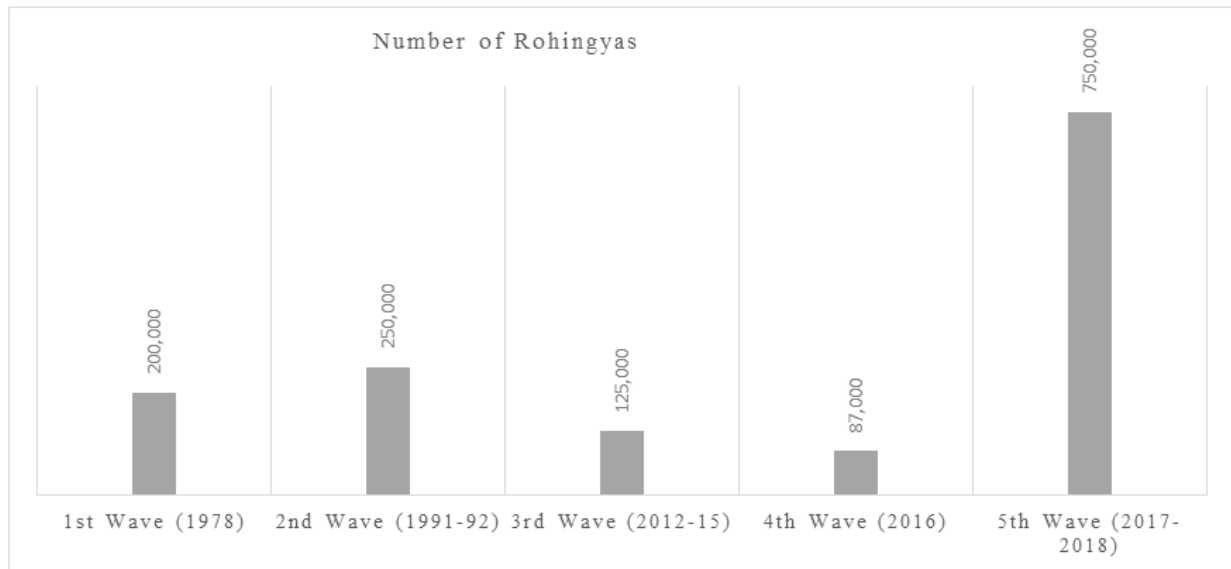
For centuries, Rohingyas have traced their roots and legacy to the Arakan area of Rakhine state, located in Myanmar's west. Their ancestors backed the Arakanese Kingdom of ancient times when Buddhism and Hinduism controlled them. However, by the arrival of Arab merchants, they had been greatly influenced by them in the second half of the 8th century (Mallik, 2021: 329). The Australian National University has also found Rohingyas stone monuments in the Burmese state of Arakan in the eighth century (Green, 2013: 94). As they are now recognized, the Rohingya first appeared in the region's history during the 15th century (Balazo, 2015: 6). As native Muslim residents of the Arakan, Rohingya (Rooinga) and their language have been documented since 1799 (Buchanan and Charney, 2003: 55). Rohingyas aren't just an ethnoreligious Muslim minority in this world today, even though they settled before the British Burma period of 1823 (Parashar and Alam, 2019: 95; Green, 2013: 94). The official stance of the Myanmar government and Buddhist nationalists, Rohingyas, have come from Bangladesh during the British period to cultivate the land (Chakraborty, 2015).

It is evident that till 1784, after Bodawpaya, the ruler of neighboring Burma, seized and integrated it into his territory, the Arakan state remained an independent Islamic empire. That resulted in the first massive influx of refugees of Muslims to Bengal (present Bangladesh) from Arakan, approximately 200,000 migrants (Oberoi, 2006; Bahar, 2010; Ahmed, 2010). Arakan's two-thirds people had fled the country by 1798 (Jilani, 2001: 70). Many Rohingyas who had migrated to Bangladesh started returning to their native land Arakan following the signing of the Treaty of Yandabo on February 24, 1826, which became a British territory (Bahar, 2010: 107; Jilani, 2001: 74-76).

Moreover, under the British, Arakan's initial civil governor, Robertson, invited farmers from Bengal (now Bangladesh) to reside in Arakan to enhance agricultural material productivity (Karim, 2000: 108). Following the 2nd and 3rd Anglo-Burmese battles, the entire country of Myanmar was brought under British control, designed as an Indian province, more than one million Indians entered the country, and the Rohingyas were legally labeled as "Indian Muslims" (Bahar, 2010: 108; Yegar, 1972: 29-31). Understandably, the Rohingya's historical existence in Arakan is obscured by the arrival of Bengali farmers and Indians, and some recent events further deprived them of their legacy (Balazo, 2015: 7). Interestingly, it is worth reminding that the 1947 Myanmar Constitution assured Rohingyas full citizenship rights (Selth, 2013); and accepted them as citizens of the newly independent Myanmar in 1948 by the then Prime Minister U Nu (Balazo, 2015: 8). But, despite living in Myanmar for centuries, this minority community has been denied citizenship (Al Imran and Mian, 2014: 233) by passing the 1982 Citizenship Law (Haque, 2017: 454).

The 1982 Citizenship Law was launched by repealing the Union Citizenship Act 1948, which asserted that the Arakanese were one of Burma's indigenous races, and Rohingyas were identified as citizens (Haque, 2017: 460). However, discrimination against Rohingyas began with the Foreigners' Act of 1864, and the Immigration Act of 1974 denied their citizenship rights; Rohingyas were formally recognized and recorded as foreign to Myanmar (Momem, 2021: 617; Hamzah, 2016: 37-38). The 1982 Citizenship Law approved a new citizenship system (full citizenship- pink cardholders, associate citizenship- blue cardholders, and naturalized citizenship- green card holders) based on indigenous ethnic identity (Aung, 2007: 273-276). This law codifies Myanmar's eight national races traced in Myanmar before 1823 (Bamar-9, Chin-53, Kachin-12, Kayin-11, Kayah-9, Mon-1, Rakhine-7, and Shan-33), divided into 135 distinct indigenous ethnic groups, but excludes the Rohingyas (Yue and Mensah, 2017: 475; Holliday, 2010: 118-119; Kipgen, 2019: 63).

The law also has restricted the Rohingya people's access to fundamental necessities and services such as schooling, public service jobs, weddings, and legal, economic, and social isolation since they were regarded as non-nationals or outsiders. Consequently, they are also oppressed by the Myanmar military, including forced labor and sexual assault (Aku Ganyo, 2019: 3). Recently, Rohingya refugees have been among the most persecuted ethnic and religious minorities globally. Persecutions (1978, 1991-1992, 2012-2015, 2016, and significantly between 2017-2018) by the Myanmar government (military) and Buddhists against Rohingyas led to their forcibly fleeing to their neighboring countries.



**Figure 1: Waves of Rohingya influxes from 1978 to 2018**

**Source:** Compiled from (Ashraf, 2021: 185).

When approximately 750,000 Rohingya migrants from Myanmar's Rakhine state fled Bangladesh in 2017, the size of the departure received unparalleled worldwide focus. In the past, 662,000 Rohingyas arrived in Bangladesh in four significant waves: 1978, 1991-92, 2012-2015, and 2016 (Figure 1). As a result, almost 90% of Rohingyas are refugees now, mainly in Myanmar and Bangladesh, and the remaining portion is distributed across other Muslim and South-East Asian countries (Mallik, 2021: 329). The 1982 Citizenship Law not only created the Rohingyas' identity crisis but also designed false identities (Bengali or foreigners) for them. At the same time, all riots, particularly the clash between Buddhist monks and Rohingyas in 2012 and the military crackdowns between 2016-2018, made them 'stateless.'

### **Identity Crisis of Forcibly Displaced Rohingyas and Bangladesh's State Security**

Rohingyas, a forcibly displaced minority Muslim group, who are stateless and have an identity crisis, are unlikely to return to Myanmar, which has a deep state security threat to Bangladesh. So, they impact the economic, social, and environment (Kudrat-E-Khuda, 2020) and threaten the host country's security. This study addresses their impacts on Bangladesh's state security or image globally. Also, unregistered Myanmar nationals and Rohingya refugees represent a huge danger to the country's sovereignty, security, economics, wellbeing, and reputation by engaging in serious crimes (Al Imran and Mian, 2014: 238). And other types of exploitation originating from the displacement of Rohingya in Cox's Bazar, involving both Rohingya and Bangladeshi communities, were assessed by a team from the Secretariat of the Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration (ADFM) in 2018

(McCaffrie, 2019: 49). Along with human trafficking, drug trafficking, ransom kidnapping, muggings, and other violent crimes, false marriages to gain citizenship have become a severe security issue, despite the Bangladesh government's 2014 prohibition on marriage between Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshis (Shafi, 2020). However, based on the review of works of literature and secondary data, the following themes have emphasized the potential threats to Bangladesh's state security by Rohingya refugees because of engaging in various activities.

### **Fake Bangladeshi National Identity Cards (NIDs) and Passports**

Stateless forcibly displaced Rohingyas already have obtained fake birth records, national id cards (NID), and even passports. The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed a case in 2019 against a list of 150,000 fraudulent Rohingya NIDs. Five laptops were stolen from the Chattogram EC office, and some laptops still had NID registration information was sold. At least one such laptop was obtained by a group of dishonest persons, who used it to issue 55,000 bogus NID cards to Rohingya people. In addition, a non-profit organization working for civil rights in Cox's Bazar, Sushasoner Jonno Nagorik (Sujan), submitted a list of 1,500 phony NIDs to Rohingya people (Halder, 2022). In Chattogram, Bangladesh Police apprehended many traders with bogus NIDs and 25,000 replicas of Bangladeshi passports (Hossain *et al.*, 2020: 29). Even though there is a restriction on marrying residents, numerous terrible Rohingya people aim to stay married to local Bangladeshis to obtain citizenship by using counterfeit NIDs and documents.

All types of fake documents of the Muslim minority stateless forcibly displaced Rohingyas,

including national identity cards (NID), birth certificates, and passports, are obtained with the help of local politicians and corrupt government officials. Moreover, the Rohingya refugees can get national benefits by using Bangladeshi NID cards and passports. Such issues may be regarded as severe security threats to the sense of identity (Hossain et al., 2020: 30), harming Bangladesh's state security. Even though the government does not keep track of the accurate figure for fraudulent passports, former Expatriates Welfare Minister Nurul Islam stated in April 2018 that approximately 250,000 Rohingya refugees had traveled overseas using Bangladeshi passports (Mahmud, 2018; Shafi, 2020). In addition, after being trained to pretend to be Bangladeshi, 300 Rohingya traveled abroad using fraudulent passports (Rashid, 2019). Bangladeshi immigration police have detained many Rohingyas attempting to travel overseas using forged Bangladeshi passports. They also tried to pass themselves off as Bangladeshi citizens, conducting a range of international offenses that could be associated with the country's image (Mohammad, 2017: 20). Although the Bangladesh passport was never especially powerful in the international community, many counterfeited Bangladeshi passports were issued to Rohingya people, and their activities worldwide negatively impacted it. According to the second quarter edition of the Henley Passport Index 2022, the Bangladeshi passport is the ninth weakest in the globe, allowing its holder to travel to only 40 of the world's 227 places without a visa (Bhuiyan, 2022). It is a horrible feeling, who holds a Bangladeshi passport dictates how they are treated in foreign territories in many ways. Because they face not only never-ending hassles in getting visas that other nationals do not require, but they also frequently experience challenges and harassment in international airports for matters that would not be a problem for people of other nations.

Many forcibly displaced Rohingyas emigrate as Bangladeshi labor migrants (Barua, 2021: 205; Zafar, 2020: 2108) worldwide, especially in the Middle Eastern countries. For example, according to claims in the media, a group of corrupt Bangladeshi persons helped 55,000 Rohingyas move to Saudi Arabia by faking Bangladeshi passports (The Business Standard, 2021), which is why they are referred to as "Bangalee people" by the Saudi authorities (Daily Sun, 2021). There has also been proven evidence that following claims of undisciplined and illegal behavior, these illegal Myanmar nationals are creating considerable annoyance to the Bangladeshi communities in Saudi Arabia. These are all blamed squarely on Bangladeshi nationals (Al Imran and Mian, 2014: 238), and Bangladeshis suffer from an "image crisis." On the other hand, diplomatic tension has arisen between Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh due to the Rohingyas' passport renewal problem. In Saudi Arabia, the Rohingya do not have a passport from any country. Saudi citizenship is

not awarded to the children of Rohingya refugees born in Saudi Arabia and speaking Arabic. Saudi Arabia is pushing Bangladesh to re-issue their passports. In this regard, Saudi Arabia has already given a file of 55,000 people whose passports have been damaged and whose valid has ended, according to UNB reports. Because Issa bin Youssef Al-Duhailan, the Saudi Ambassador to Bangladesh, stated that "those Rohingyas who already have moved to Saudi Arabia using Bangladeshi passports are considered Bangladeshis." "They're not Bangladeshis; they're Myanmarese," argued Asaduzzaman Khan, the Home Minister of Bangladesh (The Business Standard, 2021; Dhaka Tribune, 2021). As a result, Saudi Arabia has officially threatened to deport Bangladeshi employees unless the government of Bangladesh re-issues passports to the Kingdom's 54,000 Rohingya Muslims, who have been residing there for decades. Saudi Arabia threatens Bangladesh with economic leverage because over two million Bangladeshi nationals working in Saudi Arabia, providing remittances worth billions of dollars each year, which is a significant source of income for Bangladesh (Islam, 2020). Thus, Rohingya refugees' impact on state security of Bangladesh, showing both administrative and diplomatic weakness, which makes terrible reputation of Bangladesh globally.

### Human Trafficking

Bangladesh is both a producer and a popular route for human trafficking (Hossain, 2020; Barua, 2021: 199). In the last ten years, 200,000 Bangladeshi children and women have already been smuggled, and at least 20,000 are traded yearly to India, Pakistan, and Middle Eastern territories. (Khan, 2021). The Rohingya are one of the ethnic groups who suffers the most at the hands of human traffickers because they are easy prey when attempting to flee persecution in Myanmar by escaping to neighboring countries (Haraldsen, 2014: 38). Organized trafficking syndicate agencies span Bangladesh, Myanmar, India, Thailand, and Malaysia (Routray, 2019: 3) to prey on the forcibly displaced Rohingyas. Our study expands those trafficking started in larger boats carrying hundreds of Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh to Thailand, Malaysia, and other countries and those who attempted to procure Bangladeshi passports to fly out to Middle Eastern countries. Following the Rohingya invasion in August 2017, people's vulnerability in Bangladeshi Rohingya refugee camps has increased, leading to an increase in the risks of human trafficking as well as the number of incidents of human trafficking (Barua, 2021: 199). Traffickers offer promises that they will gain employment in that country, which is an appealing proposal and an opportunity to get away from the horrible conditions in the camps. Traffickers operating freely in Bangladeshi Rohingya refugee camps are now trafficking teenage girls and women and transferring them to Malaysia and Middle Eastern countries (Routray, 2019: 4).

Some disturbing events due to Rohingya refugees imply that the number of Bangladeshis (many of them Rohingya using Bangladeshi passports) trafficked abroad is out of control, which is unfitting for the country's overall image. "More than a dozen stateless forcibly displaced Rohingyas were deported to Bangladesh by Saudi Arabia for entering the country on fraudulent Bangladeshi passports," revealed Mohammed Nour Azem Miah, the officer-in-charge at Shahjalal International Airport police station, Dhaka. Miah added, "53 individuals were on board the Saudi deportation flight to Bangladesh, maybe all Rohingyas" (Ullah, 2019). About 700 Rohingyas trafficked using Bangladesh's passports were apprehended in Saudi Arabia after committing illegal acts (Chakraborty, 2018: 118). Forcibly displaced Rohingya people, on the other hand, are exhibiting their strength because the host community's population is less than half that of the Rohingya community, causing xenophobia within the host community. As a result, they seek a better way of life. Human traffickers are seizing this chance, attracting them with hopes of a better life at home and abroad; consequently, some have been exploited, and many more are in danger of becoming victims of human trafficking. For example, 426 trafficked victims from March 2019 to February 2021 were identified by the YPSA (Young Power in Social Action) in Cox's Bazar; out of the total victims, 322 persons belong to the Bangladeshi nationals, while 104 persons are Rohingyas (Barua, 2021: 206-207).

These human trafficking events are also counted as trafficking in persons of Bangladesh, which has a severe security crisis for Bangladesh and impacts

the image of Bangladesh. As a result, we can assume how human trafficking of Rohingya refugees has a direct detrimental influence on the country's international standing from the following table. The vast amounts of smuggling and the government's poor performance in trafficking management have put the country on the US Department of State's expanded tier 2 watchlist on human trafficking from 2010 to 2011. After enacting the 2012 Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act (PSHTA), Bangladesh upgraded its ranking to Tier 2 in 2016 from Tier 2 Watch List. Such a momentous step underlines Bangladesh's success over the previous year; there has been significant progress in addressing human trafficking. These include the passage of the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act (PSHTA) in 2012, the introduction of 7 anti-trafficking criminal trials, and the prosecution of recruiting companies that exploit Bangladeshis wishing to work overseas (Hossain, 2020). For example, the government of Bangladesh estimates 355 victims identified in 2016, a considerable decline from the 1,815 and 2,899 victims found in 2015 and 2014, respectively. After massive influxes of Rohingya refugees in August 2017, Bangladesh was downed to Tier-2 Watch List because the government of Bangladesh reported more than double the cases (770 potential victims) in 2017 from the previous year, 2016 (US Department of State, 2018: 90). There were fewer migrants in the last years and many illegal Rohingya, whose statelessness and inability to get help and work legally enhanced their vulnerability to human trafficking (US Department of State, 2017: 82). As a result, there was a notable drop in prospective trafficking victims (419 victims) from 2017 to 2018.

**Table 1: Bangladesh Tier Ranking by Year due to Human Trafficking**

Year (s)	Tier 1 Countries that successfully satisfy the TVPA*'s minimal standards for trafficking eradication.	Tier 2 Countries whose governments do not entirely fulfill the TVPA's minimal standards are making considerable efforts to meet those criteria.	Tier 2 Watch List Nations attempting to follow the TVPA's specific standards either have many affected people, are unable to show control practices or are included on the watch list owing to prospective compliance pledges.	Tier 3 States whose governments struggle to achieve the TVPA's least standards and make insufficient efforts.
2010			×	
2011			×	
2012		×		
2013		×		
2014		×		
2015		×		
2016		×		
2017			×	
2018			×	
2019			×	
2020			×	
2021		×		

**Source:** Compiled from the TIP Reports (US Department of State, 2017; US Department of State, 2018; US Department of State, 2019; US Department of State, 2020; US Department of State, 2021).

**\*TVPA indicates the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000.**

Although it was ambiguous how many of the forcefully displaced Rohingyas were also victims of forced labor or sexual exploitation, two organizations managed to identify 969 new possible victims of human trafficking. From October 2017 to October 2018, one organization discovered 99 Rohingya who was taken from Rohingya refugee camps and trafficked in prostitution and exploitation. Another group found numbers of Rohingya and Bangladeshi sufferers of human trafficking. Still, it did not confirm them (US Department of State, 2019: 87-88). Although it is impossible to quantify the volume of refugees who have fallen victims to human trafficking, there were 420 cases recorded between December 2018 and June 2019, a 4-fold increase over the preceding 14 months, according to the IOM (Meçe, 2020: 183). Again in 2019, the government recognized 585 probable trafficking victims, while certain NGOs identified and assisted at least another between December 2018 and 2019, 1,456 victims of human trafficking were discovered, including 543 Rohingya (US Department of State, 2020: 95). In 2020, the government recognized 6,866 suspected trafficking victims, up from 585 in the preceding reporting period. Some NGOs detected and assisted at least 1,683 trafficking victims, including 339 Rohingya found between December 2019 and 2020 (US Department of State, 2021: 110-111). Thus, forcibly displaced Rohingyas are affecting the country image, and threatening the state's security. Because including Bangladeshi victims of trafficking, there are many undocumented and registered forcibly displaced stateless Rohingya people in Bangladesh who are easy to prey for human traffickers.

On the other hand, the United States Secretary of State unveiled the world Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report for 2021, lifting Bangladesh from Tier 2 Watch List to Tier 2. The Tier-2 score indicates that the Bangladesh government is trying to make serious and rising attempts to satisfy the essential benchmarks for trafficking elimination. Therefore, even though Bangladesh was on Tier-2 Watch List for four consecutive years of 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 (US Department of State, 2021: 109), the United States waived sanctions against Bangladesh. However, according to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, any country named on the Tier 2 Watch List for two back-to-back years and might be designated Tier 2 Watch List for the following year could then be placed Tier 3 in that third year. Furthermore, governments in Tier 3 countries may be subject to reasonable limitations on international aid. For example, they can opt to remove financing for the participation of a state official or employee in cultural and educational outreach activities. Moreover, The President can advise the US Executive Directors of all multinational

investment institutions and the International Monetary Fund to strike against using their maximum effort to reject any loan facilities (US Department of State, 2021: 54). Therefore, more work must be done to achieve these requirements and adequately stop this heinous crime.

### **Militant Group (Terrorism)**

The vulnerable status of the forcibly displaced people is said to be being manipulated by local and global active terrorists and Islamist organizations attempting to disrupt the region (Wolf, 2017: 1). Therefore, the possibility of the forcibly displaced Muslim minority Rohingyas being infiltrated by an international terrorist organization cannot be ignored. After two years of investigating the scope of security dangers, according to USAID (2012), refugees in Bangladesh might be attacked by terrorists or militant groups who were refused citizen status in Burma (Idris, 2017). They have limited access to food, drinking water, adequate shelter, clothing (Wolf, 2014: 3), and other fundamental rights. Also, the majority of Rohingyas are uneducated and religiously blind. They did lose all their property during the 2017 Myanmar conflict. As a result, they no longer have a distinct identity and are limited from freely moving. Meanwhile, several extremist groups are using deceptive tactics to entice Rohingyas to join them, such as offering free money, food, and weapons.

On the other hand, the militancy of the Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO) and the Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front (ARIF) is well evident in their terrorist acts. The Myanmar government banned both organizations' operations in Arakan because they fought for the Rohingyas' autonomy and independence. But after several drives and the disappointment of being unable to find a place in Bangladesh, they have spread their activities far beyond Bangladesh's Southeastern region (Al Imran and Mian, 2014: 239). While there is currently no evidence of Rohingya extremist groups in refugee camps, there are worries that Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) militant groups are attempting to polarize Rohingya refugees (Ashraf, 2021: 198). For example, in June 2019, Bangladesh Police caught three extremist Rohingyas with bomb-making ingredients, local guns, gunpowder, and other extremist insignia (Hossain *et al.*, 2020: 30). The Rohingyas' predicament has been frequently highlighted on different Islamic State (IS) terrorist group online sites, especially Dabiq. Islamic State (IS) and Al-Qaeda stated that they are intended to establish a foothold and use Bangladesh as a platform for violent assaults on Myanmar (Bashar, 2017: 6). Therefore, it increases the likelihood of these militant groups using Bangladeshi territory, which is a massive concern for Bangladesh's state security.



**Table 2: Impact of Terrorism for Bangladesh**

Year (s)*	Rank (s)	Score (s)**
2012	39	3.672
2014	23	5.250
2015	25	5.921
2016	22	6.479
2017	21	6.181
2018	25	5.697
2019	31	5.208
2020	33	4.909
2022	40	4.411

\* Data not found for 2013 and 2021.

\*\*0-Below= No Impact/ Not Included, 1-2= Very Low, 3-4= Low, 5-6= Medium, 7-8= High, 9-10= Very High

**Source:** Data compiled from the GTI Reports (Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), 2022; Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), 2020; Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), 2019; Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), 2018; Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), 2017; Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), 2016; Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), 2015; Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), 2014; Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), 2012).

Except for 2012, when the impact of terrorism on the country was low (3.672), most of the time, the terrorist has implications on Bangladesh were between medium and high. In 2017, the latest massive Rohingya influx from Myanmar to Bangladesh, the country's rank was 21 in global terrorism with a score of 6.181. Also, 2016 was a high risk for Bangladesh with a 6.479 score and 22 levels of global terrorism impact. 2018 was just below the high-level implications of terrorism for Bangladesh, with 25 of the worldwide terrorism impact ranking. The score of terrorist influence has decreased to 4.909 in 2020 and 4.411 in 2022 from 5.208 in 2019. The number of crimes in the Rohingya camps has been continuously climbing, which has the impact of terrorism on Bangladesh. According to reports, 10 to 15 armed militias have formed in Cox's Bazar District's Rohingya camps. In 2019, 263 cases were filed, 184 in 2020, and 570 in 2021. On 26 November 2021, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urged the global community to prioritize the Rohingya crisis, saying, "The threat of terrorism in the Cox's Bazar camps is becoming problematic." The rising levels of violence may shortly expand beyond our boundaries" (South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP), 2022). The offenses include possessing unauthorized weaponry and drugs, burglary, kidnapping, trafficking, killings, and human smuggling.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Rohingya refugees, a minority Muslim group rooted in Arakan or Rakhine State, Myanmar, the Myanmar government, and Buddhists are brutally attempting to transform their citizenship status as 'illegal Bangladeshi migrants.' The 1982 Citizenship Law and associated articles of Myanmar's 2008 Constitution are primarily blamed for stripping the Rohingya of their citizenship and repeated mistreatment as a minority, rendering them stateless even in an identity crisis. Because they were forcibly removed from their native land, casting doubt on their identity. As a result, Rohingyas are one of the world's most oppressed Muslim minorities; most fled to neighboring

Bangladesh, having been subjected to state-sanctioned mass killings, ethnic cleansing, and brutal treatment. The study tried to analyze their impact on host Bangladesh's state security and found that the identity crisis of forcibly displaced Rohingya is a threat to Bangladesh's state security, which shows the weakness of Bangladesh's administration and makes a lousy reputation for Bangladesh globally. Along with faking Bangladeshi passports, they are associated with human trafficking, drug dealing, ransom kidnapping, muggings, and other violent crimes with the support of traffickers, local politicians, terrorists, and international extremist groups. The study also found that Rohingyas have considerable potential to become members of various international militant groups, including Islamic State (IS) and Al-Qaeda, a huge security concern for Bangladesh.

The research findings point to the necessity for a more effective relationship between humanitarian organizations working in refugee camps and the local government because they may raise awareness about illegal trafficking and other crimes. If there can be a quick fix for the Rohingya, the identity problem must be addressed first; the 1982 citizenship law must be revised to include the Rohingya as an officially recognized ethnic minority eligible for citizenship rights. Rohingyas, those who were taken to Myanmar or migrated there during the British colonial period, must also be regarded as Myanmar nationals. Simultaneously, the Bangladeshi government needs to stop criminal procedures for acquiring citizenship and obtaining passports and NIDs from unethical local authorities by enforcing laws. Also, the government of Bangladesh should identify Rohingyas holding Bangladeshi passports and discuss with countries' governments to regain the image of Bangladesh and safe movements of Bangladeshi people globally. In addition, international communities must pressure the Myanmar government to persuade them to change the citizenship act and give the Rohingya citizenship.

Finally, the Myanmar government must ensure the safe passage of refugees to their land, which is the only way to end the Rohingya people's identity issue. Policymakers may use this study's findings to make sustainable, safe policies for forcibly displaced people. Also, researchers can use them for future research on how refugees create a terrible image of host countries globally and threaten state security.

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