






# 5th anniversary of Rohingyas' Exodus in Bangladesh: **What's Next?**



-  [www.ghrd.org](http://www.ghrd.org) | [www.ghrtv.org](http://www.ghrtv.org)
-  @Global Human Rights Defence
-  @globalhumanrightsdefence



by Irene Asia Scomparin (Team South Asia)

HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
DEFENCE

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Sr. No.	Topic	Page No.
1.	Introduction	1
2.	Who are the Rohingya?	2
3.	What is the Rohingya crisis?	3
4.	Hope is Home	4
5.	The Current Situation and Expectations for the Future	5
6.	Bibliography	6

# Introduction



The end of August 2022 marked the fifth anniversary of the exodus of the Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar into Bangladesh. From August 25, 2017, the Rohingya group set out to flee from Myanmar to escape violence and persecution and search for refuge in the neighbouring country of Bangladesh. Five years later, around a million people are still sheltered in the Southern area of Bangladesh. According to the UNHCR, this influx of mass migration from Myanmar can now be considered a protracted situation (The UN Refugee Agency, 2022), thus representing a serious matter of mobility crisis in the international arena.



## Who are the Rohingya?

They are a predominantly Muslim community with origins in the Indian subcontinent. Despite the fact that most Rohingyas have resided in the Rakhine State – a Western area of Myanmar – for several centuries, they are not recognised as official citizens of the State. Myanmar authorities have often objected to using the appellation of ‘Rohingya’ and described the community as a group of illegal immigrants from neighbouring countries such as Bangladesh. According to the United Nations, the Rohingya are currently considered one of the most persecuted minority groups in the world due to the constant discrimination and violence they face (UNICEF, n.d.). This also entails that they rely entirely on humanitarian support in regards to housing and subsistence on a day-to-day basis.

The prolonged clashes between the Rohingya group and Myanmar’s Buddhist majority are not only a result of contrasting religious stances but also come from some political and economic drivers. The Rakhine State represents one of the poorest areas within Myanmar, and thus the Rohingya are often accused of representing an additional burden to the State (Shams, 2017). For these reasons, thousands of Rohingya flee towards the neighbouring countries every year, yearning to escape systematic discrimination and targeting.

“

The Rohingya people are one the biggest stateless ethnic minorities in the world.

”

## What is the Rohingya crisis?

In the last 50 years, the Rohingyas tried to escape violence in Myanmar through continuous outbreaks of exodus towards the rest of the Indian subcontinent. The latest and largest refugee influx from Myanmar began in August 2017 due to prolonged clashes that started in 2012. After a series of attacks initiated by some Rohingya militants (the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, or ARSA) on the State border posts in mid-2017, Myanmar's army launched the so-called 'clearance operations', a sweeping campaign of violence aimed at the Muslim-minority Rohingya people in Rakhine State. The UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar highlighted that the actions causing this exodus included crimes against humanity and other grave human rights violations (The UN Refugee Agency, 2022), therefore representing a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing" as described by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2017).

During the 2017 exodus, more than 700,000 people sought shelter in the camps of Cox's Bazar district in South-eastern Bangladesh, joining the 300,000 people already sheltered from previous waves of displacement and so effectively creating the largest refugee camp in the world (UNICEF, n.d.). Life at the Cox's Bazar camp is increasingly affected by precarious health conditions and generally low safety levels, and the additional influx of Rohingyas put pressure on the host community and its already overstretched facilities and services. According to the UNHCR and multiple humanitarian assessment surveys, the Rohingya people face serious challenges in this sheltering area due to a lack of proper nutrition, sheltering and sanitation facilities, and livelihood opportunities (The UN Refugee Agency, 2022).

The government of Bangladesh and its citizens, assisted by many international organisations, have endured the responsibility and burden of the Rohingya crisis for five years. The current policy framework of Bangladesh presents the presence of Rohingya refugees in the country as a temporary measure, whilst a solution for repatriations in Myanmar is found (The UN Refugee Agency, 2022). Recently, the United Nations General Assembly has acknowledged the key role of Bangladesh's humanitarian assistance in its annual resolution on the situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar (Khalidi, 2022). The resolution expressed solidarity with the government of Bangladesh and its people by praising the sustained efforts and cooperation in seeking justice and accountability for the human rights violations against the Rohingya people in Myanmar (Khalidi, 2022).

## Hope is Home

Five years after the initial outbursts of violence in Rakhine State, numerous Rohingya refugees continue to express their intention to return 'home' to Myanmar. On August 25, 2022, many Rohingya refugees gathered at the Kutupalong Refugee Camp in Bangladesh to mark the fifth anniversary of their fleeing from the neighbouring country of Myanmar. "We are demonstrating as in 2017 the Burmese (Myanmar) army killed our people in a genocide," protester Jamalida Begum stated to the reporters (Paul, 2022). "For the last five years, we have been saying the same thing to the world. But no one listened to us. Today, we are again demonstrating just to let the world know that we want justice." In their eyes, the repatriation of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar is considered the only solution to end the current crisis. "We want to go back to our homeland with all our rights and under the direct supervision of the United Nations. We want security for our life and wealth there," stated the Rohingya community leader Mohammad Jobaer (Paul, 2022).

## The Current Situation and Expectations for the Future

Five years after the mass exodus of 2017, the future of the Rohingya community remains uncertain, as the right conditions to assure a safe and dignified return to Myanmar have not yet been met. Regardless of the international efforts and cooperation with the leaders of Myanmar, the position of the Rohingya people within Myanmar continues to be critical. According to the UN standards, repatriations could be conducted only once a series of fundamental parameters, such as guarantees of general human rights and freedom of movement, as well as a definitive pathway to citizenship, are met by the receiving country (The UN Refugee Agency, 2022). The international community, including the United Nations, is responsible for working toward the ideal environment under which a viable solution for the crisis and repatriation is to be found. Until this goal is achieved, the humanitarian community has to maintain ongoing support for the Rohingya community and the government of Bangladesh.

During the 73rd Session of the UNHCR Executive Committee, Ms. Shanchita Haque, a member of the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh at the UN in Geneva, provided a statement underlining the Rohingya crisis that the Bangladesh government is currently facing. She stressed the need for prompt action to rehabilitate the Rohingya living in squalor in Cox's Bazaar. "Bangladesh has done everything possible on its part to resolve this crisis through engagement with Myanmar and other relevant countries," Ms. Haque stated, but "due to Myanmar's blatant non-compliance with bilateral agreements and flagrant breach of international commitment, not a single Rohingya could return to Myanmar during the last five years" (Haque, 2022).

Another highlighting speech was delivered on September 22, 2022, by UK Minister for Development Vicky Ford at the United Nations General Assembly. On that occasion, Minister Ford emphasised the importance of the work that the international community still has to do in order to end the cycle of violence in Myanmar toward the Rohingya community. "To achieve true justice for the Rohingya, their citizenship in Myanmar must be restored. The systematic human rights violations they have suffered for decades must end. And Rohingya people must be meaningfully included in future visions of Myanmar society," Ford stated (Ford, 2022). This is the common vision for the future that the international community should consider in their efforts to end the Rohingya crisis. All available opportunities from now on should be seen as a vehicle for practical actions of diplomatic engagement to stop the displacement of this community and for a safe and dignified return (The UN Refugee Agency, 2022).

An example of this behaviour could be seen in the current legal allegations that Myanmar is facing. As a result of 2017 Myanmar's targeting of the Rohingya community and continuous violent actions throughout the years, in November 2019, the country of Gambia filed an application to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) accusing Myanmar of genocidal actions in the villages of the Rohingya in Rakhine province. Towards the end of July 2022, the ICJ decided to undertake the jurisdiction of this case (Islam, 2022). The outcome of this case will be decided in the future and will entail an important milestone in the Rohingya crisis.



## Bibliography

Ford, V. (September 27, 2022). Rohingya crisis side event at the 2022 UN General Assembly: Minister Ford's statement. UK Government - Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. Retrieved November 23, 2022, from <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/rohingya-crisis-side-event-at-the-2022-un-general-assembly-minister-fords-statement>.

Haque, S. (October 12, 2022). 73rd Session of UNHCR Executive Committee. General Debate: Statement by Ms. Shanchita Haque, CDA a.i of Permanent Mission of Bangladesh. UNHCR. Retrieved November 23, 2022, from <https://www.unhcr.org/excom/announce/6346d2037/bangladesh-6346d2037.html?query=rohingya>.

Islam, M. R. (September 21, 2022). The Gambia v. Myanmar: An analysis of the ICJ's decision on jurisdiction under the Genocide Convention. American Society of International Law. Retrieved November 23, 2022, from <https://www.asil.org/insights/volume/26/issue/9>.

Khalidi, T. I. (November 17, 2022). UN adopts Rohingya resolution by consensus, expressing solidarity with Bangladesh. BDNews24.com. Retrieved November 23, 2022, from <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/gnyq9ppsc>.

Paul, R. (August 25, 2022). Myanmar Rohingya, five years on, desperate to leave Bangladesh camps and go home. Reuters. Retrieved November 23, 2022, from <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/myanmar-rohingya-five-years-want-leave-bangladesh-camps-go-home-with-justice-2022-08-25/>.

Shams, S. (December 9, 2017). Myanmar's Rohingya: 10 questions, 10 answers. Deutsche Welle. Retrieved November 23, 2022, from <https://www.dw.com/en/rohingya-people-in-myanmar-what-you-need-to-know/a-40340067>.

The UN Refugee Agency. (August 23, 2022). UNHCR appeals for renewed support and solutions for Rohingya refugees. UNHCR. Retrieved November 23, 2022, from <https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2022/8/63048f944/unhcr-appeals-renewed-support-solutions-rohingya-refugees.html?query=rohingya>.

The UN Refugee Agency. (2022). Joint Response Plan. Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis. UNHCR. Retrieved November 23, 2022, from <https://reporting.unhcr.org/2022-jrp-rohingya>.

UNICEF. (n.d.). Rohingya crisis. UNICEF. Retrieved November 23, 2022, from <https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/rohingya-crisis>.

United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. (September 11, 2017). Darker and more dangerous: High Commissioner updates the Human Rights Council on human rights issues in 40 countries. OHCHR. Retrieved November 23, 2022, from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2017/09/darker-and-more-dangerous-high-commissioner-updates-human-rights-council-human?LangID=E&NewsID=22041>.



**Global Human Rights Defence (GHRD)** permits any entity to use this publication only on the condition that they give credit to **GHRD** and its work.



[www.ghrd.org](http://www.ghrd.org)

Follow Us on  
**Social Media**

 [www.ghrd.org](http://www.ghrd.org) | [www.ghrtv.org](http://www.ghrtv.org)

 [@globalhumanrightsdefence](https://www.instagram.com/globalhumanrightsdefence)

 [@globalhumanrightsdefence](https://twitter.com/globalhumanrightsdefence)



Stay updated on  
**human rights news**

 [www.ghrtv.org](http://www.ghrtv.org)

 [@ghrtv\\_worldnews](https://www.instagram.com/ghrtv_worldnews)

**Donate**



<https://tikkie.me/pay/StichtingGI/q7U797fD5TVKtA8Vx4nieG>

