Protracted Rohingya Crisis in Bangladesh: Are National and Regional Security at Stake?

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the stimulating impact on national and regional security issues, steaming from concurrent major Rohingya humanitarian crisis in Bangladesh. Being a resource scarce and moderate level GDP earning country, Bangladesh cannot accommodate this huge population of 1.3 Million for indefinite time. Therefore, this study aims to analyze whether any real threat is looming at national and regional level security of Bangladesh as well as for South Asia region from this crisis by using qualitative research approach. With the theoretical account of new "Non-Traditional Security" approach, this paper attempts to explore five areas of security concerns- military, political, economic, social, and environmental emanating from Rohingya refugee crisis at all three levels of local, national and regional security. The data collection methods used in conducting the research include in-depth interviews, KII, observation like primary data collecting techniques along with extensive content analysis of secondary data. Empirical data analysis implies that there is rising concern towards internal security of Bangladesh as it converting into a protracted one in nature with passing days. Similarly many South Asian countries which sheltered Rohingyas are also in view of South Asian region's security is at stake from different aspects. No progress has been achieved yet

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even though Bangladesh is trying its best to resolve the problem, which is certainly endangering its own security measures. So, the study recommends among others that more holistic regional approach is indispensable in resolving this protracted refugee crisis as soon as possible.

1. INTRODUCTION

A humanitarian crisis which started since 25th August of 2017 is turning into a security issue for both Bangladesh, the host country of almost 1.1 Million of Rohingyas and South Asian region too [1]. Rohingyas are in the shelter of Bangladesh for over five years now. This long period of time has passed yet no repatriation process has been started and it is causing suffering to Bangladesh in various aspects. This act of generosity also raises some worrying issues for Bangladesh's own fragile politics, economy and society. There are also few observers who are claiming that there is no realistic chance for the refugees returning to Myanmar in the foreseeable future [2]. This extra burden of refugees is taking a toll on political, security, economic, environmental and social arenas of Bangladesh. Price hike, labour wage decrease, population imbalance, destruction of forest lands, local intolerance towards Rohingya refugees etc. are some illustration of present scenario [3]. With the duration of the crisis getting longer, Bangladesh is getting more worried for its national security and internal stability. Local peoples of Cox's Bazar are getting impatient with staying of Rohingyas who are creating difficulty for them. As such, food insecurity is increasing as an outcome, people are losing lands, forest resources, livelihoods [4]. The security issue has become the prime concern of Bangladesh government now. As said by Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina, Rohingyas are a threat to national, regional security that has possibilities to hamper peace and harmony of the region. Bangladesh, Malaysia earlier followed liberal policy to support Rohigya refugees on the ground of humanitarian crisis before 1990s. Whereas Thailand initially accepted Rohingyas in 1990s but now all three Asian countries following rational foreign policy to depart Rohingyas to Myanmar prioritizing own national security after 1990s [5].

On the contrary, refugees in India often become pawns of local geo-politics, depending on the relations between India and their country of origin [6]. The Rohingya crisis going to be the biggest security threat to South Asian countries in coming days, this mere saying by Indian International Affairs Adviser Dr Gowher Rizvi further emphasizes the importance of security in context of Rohingya crisis. May be right now it is Bangladesh's problem but if not cared it will become the entire world's problem tomorrow [7]. Previous research work and studies support this statement by Nell Gabiam's research work where he pointed out that after 9/11 era, refugee crises are seen as a potential source of regional and global instability that can heighten security threats such as terrorism. 21st century humanitarian crisis now is a complex situation where state, regional, global security is intertwined with each other [8]. According to UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) estimation, 84% of the world's refugees in 2016 were hosted by developing countries which have less capacity to protect and assess those refugees in relation to its total population, GDP etc. As a result they can be potential source of security threat for host community in creating terrorist activism, militant ideologies, spillover of civil strife etc. [9]. On top of it, women, children, youths are most vulnerable to exploitation and abuse in such condition [10].

However, all those studies were mostly country specific. Thus, all the findings cannot be generalized in all refugee related situations. Although security related some work have been done in context of Rohingya refugee issue for Bangladesh but they are not fully fledged ones rather a limited one. Thereof this study is valuable in a sense that solely focuses on the side of security related problems generating from the crisis and tries to relate with realist securitization theory. With time, the significance of national along with regional security is increasing in a globalized world where security is prioritized above all other issues and it is known that security is the pillar of a state's existence. Significance of this study increases when local, national and regional-these three levels of security is connected with each other and analyzed in a combined way. This integrated approach reveals how any one level of security impacts get spillover into another level of security area. Definitely it is going to add value and new addition of research work at security study field.

Therefore, this study focuses on the consequences of Rohingya refugee crisis upon the host community in particular national security of Bangladesh along with regional security. The research can be divided into three parts: the first part is about the host community impact from the crisis, the second part is concerning the overall national security of Bangladesh and the last part related with the consequential impact of the crisis on regional level.

The objectives of the research is to,

a. Assess the impact of the crisis on host community people of Bangladesh.
b. Examine overall security threat coming from the crisis for Bangladesh in near future.
c. Identify concern for regional security of South Asia deriving from Rohingya refugee crisis.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This part provides a description of the principle concepts and constructs a theoretical frame, showing how they are related to each other to give the study a direction about what it is trying to solve. It follows a conceptual framework by linking all the concepts like security, Rohingyas, factors causing security threats at local, national, regional levels and lastly how it is legitimate in context of Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh. Here we have chosen 'Securitization Theory' by Barry Buzan to use for this study. The motivation behind choosing this particular theory is it aligns very well with the objectives of our study and rigorously answers above following research questions we set out to address through this paper.

'Securitization theory framework' developed by Barry Buzan

Scholar Barry Buzan has offered 'broader framework of security' in his book 'People, States and Fear' in contrast to past works which offered only a narrowly founded concept of security. The Copenhagen School adopts a multi-sectoral approach to security that moves from 'Traditional security studies' of military threat [11]. It focuses on moving further beyond it to non-military threats.

The components of the framework are [12]— **Securitizing actor:** The individual who points to the threat and makes aware of it. **Threat:** The thing what is being pointed as threatening. **Referent object:** What is being threatened is specified here. **Speech act:** This is the sales pitch wherein the securitizing actor makes clear what that threat is. **Audience:** The community that receives the speech act and approves of the need for emergency action to deal with the threat.

Something or any issue is 'securitized' when it is constructed into a threat. This can be presented or declared by country elites or influential actors whose securitizing any issue will be accepted before a larger audience as people will also admit that issue as a threat for national security as a whole. For our study, Bangladesh government is that 'securitizing actor' which has identified 'Rohingya refugee crisis' as 'Potential Threat' for both national and regional security at the international platforms different times and thus seeking generous support from international community to resolve the crisis as soon as possible.
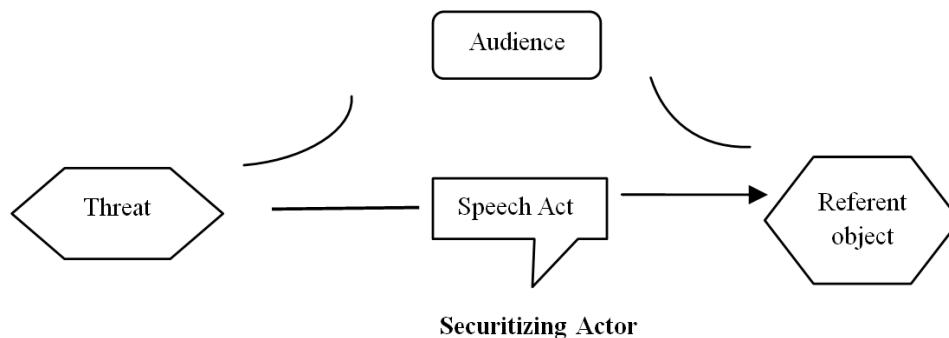
Fig. 1. 'Securitization theory framework by Barry Buzan'. Buzan, B. (2008) People, States and Fear: An Agenda For International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War era. ECPR Press

Concept of 'security': Security concept has been one of the traditional ideas where only state was the unit of analysis. According to the realist view of security, it is derivation of power and a synonym for power. But post Cold War period saw more complex and multifaceted conceptualization of security. The concept of national security has traditionally included political independence and territorial integrity as values to be protected but other values like physical safety of people, economic welfare, autonomy, psychological wellbeing etc are now considered in this context [13].

According to scholar Barry Buzan in 'New Patterns of Global Security in the Twenty-first Century', security refers to the pursuit of freedom from threat, states maintaining their independence, societies from any hostilities. Security includes the bottom line of survival as well as the conditions of existence. It also means identifying threats as significant enough to warrant emergency action and exceptional measures including the use of force [14].

Concept of local level security: There is no commonly accepted definition of local level. However according to scholar Klause Kapuy, all over the world human beings are embedded in infrastructure where Infrastructure offering something to the individual and infrastructure obliging the individual. It includes: human, social, technical, economic, rules and ruling infrastructure. It is the lowest level of personal infrastructure which can be defined as local level. To protect individual from various level of threats like global, state, regional level, it is important to focus on the local level as threats irrespective of its origin from any level has direct impact on local levels that happen close to home of every individuals. Thus the importance of local level security is significant in terms of ensuring state security by curbing risk of threats originating at local level [15].

Concept of national security: Also scholar Buzan has referred security based on three levels – individuals, states and international systems and various sectors like political, military, economic, societal, and environmental. It is a very interesting approach by the scholar where he looks at security from all angles going

from micro to macro level [12]. It also addresses the social aspects of security and how people or societies construct or securitize threats.

Military threats can affect all components of the state. It can put into question the very basic duty of a state to be able to protect its citizens as well as have an adverse effect on the 'layers of social and individual interest'.

Political threats can take the form of competition amongst ideologies or an attack to the nation itself.

Economic threats points to 'the normal condition of actors in a market economy is one of risk, aggressive competition and uncertainty', this insecure nature makes economic security hard to disentangle. But if developed and developing countries are compared, it is clear that with economic security other levels of security become easier to establish.

Societal threats are about identity and the balance that can be found within any given state. Weak states are often ill-equipped to deal with differences in identity and culture.

Environmental threats are often though as 'struggle against nature' like earthquakes, hurricanes etc. but the notion is changing and issues of human impact on earth is getting focused with phenomena like global warming, pollution, natural resources depletion [14].

Concept of regional security: According to Buzan, 'regional security is a relational phenomenon. Because security is relational, one cannot understand the national security of any given state without understanding the international pattern of security interdependence in which it is embedded.' For that reason, amity and enmity among states is very important here. And these feelings can be affected by things such as ideology, territory, ethnic lines, historical precedent. In this perspective, regional security means a group of states whose individual national security is closely linked to each other that one's security cannot be independently viewed from others [12]. So here for this paper, national security and regional security is studied interrelated.
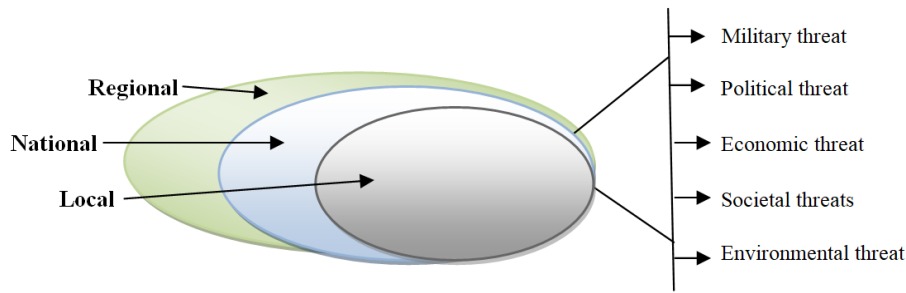
Fig. 2. Buzan, B. (2008) People, States and Fear: An Agenda For International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War era. ECPR Press. An intertwined picture of three-level security system (Developed by the author)

Also the very concept of regional security has a long tradition in international relations and is understood as effectively implemented protection of the system of mutual relations between countries in the region against the threats of instability, crises, terrorism, organized crime, uncontrolled migration, social tensions, environmental disasters, proliferation of mass destruction and means of their delivery, armed conflicts and regional wars. The consequences of not taking regional security into consideration could be disastrous for any state that chooses to do so.

This improved theoretical framework of three-level security threat has worked as the guideline of exploring the current Rohingya refugee crisis through five areas of 'Non-traditional security threats' as the study aims to examine in details. This above mentioned framework will guide the rest of the study to fulfill its research objectives. This is a broader framework of exploring the current security condition of local, national and regional levels in terms of the threats illuminating from Rohingya crisis. It is important to mention here, military, environmental threats at regional level are not part of the analysis according to theoretical framework. As the crisis is getting complicated with passing days which has implications at all three levels, this study is certainly a step forward for security studies field.

Who are the 'Rohingya'?: The **'Rohingya',** who are considered as the most deprived Muslim ethnic minority group in the world, took shelter in Bangladesh since 1978 to avoid persecution from their Myanmar government. The main reason for fleeing is the exemption of Rohingyas from citizenship act 1982, where 135 officially recognized races living in the country of which Rohingyas are not considered one. The 2017 exodus of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, which totaled almost 0.75 million people, is the highest since 1978 [16]. According to the 1951 Refugee Convention by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the term **'Refugee'** applies to any person who "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence" [17]. The Government of Bangladesh has termed Rohingyas as 'Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals' (FDMNs) because Bangladesh has not signed any Refugee related Convention or laws such as 1951 Refugee Convention or any of its Protocols or the UNHRC Statute which could bind it to accept Rohingyas as 'Refugee' [18].

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHOD

This study has followed 'Qualitative Research Design' as it is focused on 'how' Rohingya crisis may produce significant security threat for Bangladesh as well as for South Asia region, it needs to be explored deeply and the approach is constructivist in nature. The reason of choosing qualitative research approach in this study specifically is the need of gathering data from field as well as deep analysis of secondary data sources. Different data collecting tools like observation, in-depth interview with semi-structured questionnaire, KII, expert's opinions, content analysis of international and governmental and NGO reports are used and later on incorporating 'Thematic content analysis' process, all collected data has been analyzed.

Primary data sources: To collect primary data, Kutupalong camp, one of the world's biggest Rohingya camps located at Ukhia was chosen as

50

it was impossible to cover all the camps in such short duration of time. Using semi-structured questionnaire sets, interviews were taken from Rohingyas as well as local community people, local thana, govt. officials, local school teacher, local farmers, an Ukhiya chairman, UNHCR official. For better insights on security issues, Rohingya-host social relations, participant observation, face to face interviews are used for getting in-depth insights about the local people's feelings, perception for Rohingya refugee group. The purpose of 'Key Informant Interviews' was to collect information from a wide range of people—including community leaders, Professionals or residents who have first-hand knowledge about the issue. By using simple random sampling method, total 50 participants from both groups, Rohingyas and local Bangladeshi people were selected and all the data was collected in between March 2021 to December 2021. It is important to note that the study has followed the ethical principles in every step of data collection and analysis.

Secondary data sources: Besides collecting primary data, secondary sources for example; reports from different government officials regarding Rohingya crisis impact on security, foreign NGO reports, local NGO reports were collected. Also different articles and news from leading newspapers like 'Prothom Alo', 'Daily Star', Dhaka Tribune, Daily Observer, BDnews24 from Bangladesh as well as some foreign newspaper like India Times, Pioneer, Aljazeera, BBC have been collected after the refugee influx took place on August 25 of 2017. Then according to theoretical framework, data has been analyzed thematically later on.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As this study is based on three-tier model of security by Buzan, for more comprehensive understanding, it has been divided into three sub-sections according to the study objectives.

a. Local Level Impacts on Host Community and Local Security in Bangladesh

i) Political Threat

Impact on local security: Rohingyas often involve in fighting over sharing relief items received from NGOs, according to Ukhia Chairman. It is heard that Rohingya heads get more portion of reliefs in comparison to other peoples and this makes them economically strong which is the main conflicting area between Rohingya heads and other common Rohingyas. Also many Rohingyas are involved in drug dealing, smuggling, trafficking etc. Many also try to flee from the camp to settle in foreign countries for better lifestyle. They are buying fake ID card and passports for that (Interview dated on April 11, 2021). UNHCR officer stated, *"Also we need to remember that Rohingyas have passed through a critical period witnessing murder, shooting, rape, burning up houses etc. trauma that it is quite natural that it will remain in their memory for years and change their psychological orientation."* (Interview dated on June 10, 2021). It is reflected in their behavior as they are gradually trapping into stealing, robbery, smuggling illegal activities. Increasing cases of criminal activities around camp areas are rising insecurity among local community, said from local thana (Interview dated on March 18, 2021). According to Ukhia chairman, *"Although local people are tolerating Rohingyas but internally grievance is building up among them regarding all everyday difficulties faced because of Rohingya refugees."* (Interview dated on April 11, 2021). Rohingya refugees are way more in population in opposite to local Bengalis. That's the main fact of security concern for the lost community. This imbalance has lead to more problems in Ukhia like transportation, socio-economic activities, communication etc. failure for the host community people.

ii) Economic threat

Impact on daily commodity price and job sector: Rohingyas are consistently receiving huge aid assistance from international community which is more than the actual need for them. Those extra aid portions are thus sell off by Rohingyas for earning money for fulfilling other needs which is further causing price hike of daily commodities in those areas. For example, according to the Forest officer in Cox's Bazar, *"People now have to buy fish 600 taka per kg which used to be 300/kg two years ago before Rohingya influx."* (Interview dated on June 12, 2021) Also a local Bengali woman said *"After these Rohingya people came in our area, all commodities price has just skyrocketed in a short span of time"* (Interview dated on May 4, 2021). Another loss incurred by host community is the loss of social forest which was a way of income for them. But these lands all are now under control of Rohingyas where camps are built for their residence. The sudden termination of

resource accession for host community is adding to their misery now. People did not get proper compensation for the economic loss of social forest till now. Only 30% has got some compensation whereas 70% still did not get any. With increasing decline of wages for host community people, poverty gap has risen by 1.9 and 1.4 in Teknaf and Ukhiya respectively [19]. According to Forest officer of South division of Cox's Bazar, local influential persons are using Rohingyas as day laborers illegally by making them cut forest trees, selling firewood in markets, kilns despite ban on their movement outside camps. This has lead to labor competition between host community and Rohingyas as well as has dropped host community's labor value. Many have been arrested by local police while working illegally. The most affected part of host community is who depended on fishing as for security reason, fishing on Naf River has been banned and for this they are deprived of their livelihood.

iii) Environmental threat

Impact on natural resources, environment and biodiversity: The most affected area of concern for the host community is the natural resources and huge destruction of forest lands which is taking place since the Rohingya refugee influx since 2017. Almost 60% firewood comes from cutting trees from nearby forests by Rohingyas illegally. This has led to a huge vacant of lands and forest areas preserved by forest department (Interview dated on June 12, 2021). After seeing the huge destruction of forests, many international organizations have started supplying free kerosene, LPG to Rohingya families, whereas host community is deprived of the facility. Another concern is the loss of biodiversity in camp areas of Teknaf and Ukhia, before the arrival of Rohingyas it was used to be the corridor of passing wild elephants but now they cannot move freely and pass the areas because of the camps of Rohingyas. They have been confined within the camp areas from which they can't pass by. The principle of Kutupalong High School said *"During 1994, when I was a small kid, elephants used to pass from this areas as there was a habitant of wildlife animals in present camp areas but evacuation of forests and lands has made them loss their natural habitats."* (Interview dated on May 5, 2021) Because of this, many a time elephants attack camp areas and during the conflict between people and elephants, people got killed too. It is a huge loss for our natural heritage and biodiversity undoubtedly. The arbitrary

installation of huge number of tube wells has led to serious decrease in water level, especially in Teknaf and Naikhongchori, said by UNHCR official (Interview dated on June 10, 2021). This is leading to irrigation problem for many farmers to sustain their agricultural legacy in affected areas. Also there is constant fear that with water level decreasing at such rate, there will be salt water intrusion rendering it totally unusable and after few years no water availability there.

Impact on solid waste management: It's a reality that for such huge population like 1 million, organizing wastage management system is quite impossible work. Besides other solid waste like plastics, polythene bags, bottles are also dumped in open areas freely by Rohingyas which is adding to the worsening of the situation. According to a NGO worker, *"They (Rohingyas) do not understand the importance of cleanliness and dumps wastes here and there, also in drains resulting into water clogging, spreading bad odor, and viruses of various diseases in the host community."* Local people complain of Rohingyas filling up of canals, lands by waste dumping (Interview dated on July 30, 2021).

iv)Social threat

Impact on social cohesion: Tension between Rohingya and local people is increasing regarding benefits and facilities. According to locale at Kutupalong, *"We used to cultivate paddy on our lands but now a little land is remained to cultivate. Our source of income is those lands only."* People are suffering from pasturelands to rear domestic animals like cows, hens, cattle, duck as those lands are now the home of million refugees. This is creating a feeling of deprivation among host community gradually. (Interview dated on May 4,2021) They have complaint of distributing large amount relief items to Rohingyas which is much more than the actual demands. According to Kutupalong High School principle, *"Apart from threatening the Biodiversity, the use of the forest resources may lead to a rise in social conflict between the host communities and the Rohingyas in upcoming days."* (Interview dated on May 5, 2021). Stealing of firewood, timber, cut parts of planted trees of host community without acknowledging them etc. often leads to heated conversation between host community and Rohingyas. Other issues of contention between host community and Rohingya people are mainly usurping local Bengalis lands, who often ask them to leave from their place. Family quarrels are very common scenario of camps. In reality, host community is

now impatient with all these economic, social, environmental degradation which have direct impact on their everyday lives. A division is clearly witnessed between Rohingyas and local community as 'We Vs Them'. A local community people said in agitation that 'Since Rohingyas have come in Ukhiya as refugee, nothing is same as before. They have destroyed everything and all'. (Interview dated on May 6, 2021).

Impact on health, education and transportation-infrastructure system: Refugee influx also has impact on local health care services to include now hospitals and clinics are more paying attention to deal with Rohingya refugees resulting in longer wait for local people to receive treatment. Here one thing has to be remind that in contrast to Rohingya refugees who receive treatment in free of cost, local community has to pay for those services which are not available same as pre-influx period. Doctors are busier in handling cases of refugees and this has led to overstretched health facility for host community. In educational sector too, it has brought negative consequences to include, lowering level of student attendance, security concern for girl's students. According to a local woman, *"this is happening because of the increasing poverty level among host community as families are incorporating their children into livelihood earning rather than sending them to school"*. Also many schools which were used as transit camps are not still in position for academic use, whereas many teachers are now involved in NGO jobs too, they are less available during school period. Many families are restricting their girls to go to school for their safety concern with deteriorating security level after Rohingya refugee influx (Interview dated on May 4, 2021). As thousands of international and domestic NGO workers travel on daily basis to the camp areas, there is increasing traffic jam and damage of road, bridge and pools etc. The damage is causing air pollution and sound pollution too.

b. Implications of Rohingya Crisis on National Security Arena of Bangladesh

It is needless to mention, when a country suffers from local level insecurity, in real it is indirectly endangering whole country's national security altogether. In keeping acquaintance with the theoretical framework segment of the study, non-traditional threats emanating from ongoing Rohingya crisis will be examined:

i) Military threat

Military threat is more of a traditional security concern which is given less significance in modern 21st century where a greater number of factors go in at stake. At the initial period of Rohingya influx in august 25, 2017 Myanmar did violated air space of Bangladesh quite a time leading it to traditional security threat for Bangladesh. However, Bangladesh government did not get influenced by their provocation and acted maturely, said by faculty member of University of Dhaka. [Interviewed dated on October 30, 2021] The porous border between Bangladesh and Myanmar is leading to trans-border criminal activities. [20]. Rising concern for national security is evident for Bangladesh now as million of Rohingyas accessing social media through illegal means. About 5 lakh Rohingyas have their own mobile set which is an alarming threat for Bangladesh, said by Cox's Bazar police super Md. Iqbal Hossen to Prothom Alo. There is group of peoples who are selling SIM cards to Rohingyas without any national ID at price of 120-200 tk. at refugee camps. This involves the high risk of national informational leaking or trafficking, thus dangering national security. Rohingyas are using fake national cards and spreading worldwide in illegal means [21,22]. The police fears of a new wave of smuggling by sea to try to reach Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia [23].

ii) Political threat

Many incidents have been taking place after such huge population migration to Bangladesh which can be described as a threat to political ambiance of Bangladesh. The rise of extremist along with religious ideological diasporas seems to a political threat looming for internal security of Bangladesh. As evidence, some cases of political threat are identified through secondary means of data.

'Several suspected Rohingya insurgents in custody: Bangladesh officials' published in 'Radio Free Asia' in 2018 which reported that many suspected group members ARSA are roaming in Bangladesh and they were accused of carrying sub-machine gun, ammunition. But government official said to have increased security to not allow any kind of insurgency in the soil of Bangladesh [24]. Many Rohingya terrorist oraganizations like Rohingya Soliderity Organization, the Harkat-al-Yaqin, the Arakan Rohingya and Salvation Army (ARSA) have been trying to establish an independent Muslim state

whereas it is alleged that Pakistan and many Muslim organizations from Middle East are assisting these terrorist groups. Along with that there are also reports of Islamic State and the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba who are trying to recruit Rohingyas [25]. Their geographical proximity to the Golden Triangle, a notorious drug production and smuggling region exposes Rohingyas to the temptations of funding their operations through illicit activity" [26]. On different times, Bangladesh police authority has arrested Rohingyas for involving in criminal activities like smuggling, drug trafficking [27], human trafficking, arms trade [28], kidnapping [29], prostitution [30]. After committing crime they hide into the hilly and remote places of CHT and Chittagong. This is how Rohingyas are getting involved into criminal activities and causing harm to the country and its peoples [31]. Many incidents of Rohingyas attacking, killing local people are increasing [32]. So it is very evident that when a huge population remains workless for a long period of time, they surely engage into illegal activities and while doing so they do not care for maintaining law and order as filling their empty stomach is the prime concern [33]. As reported by International Crisis Group (ICG), Rohingya refugees in camps left vulnerable to being seduced by criminal gangs such as ARSA militants who are still active in those camps. And this is happing because of a shelved repatriation process and dismal, poor living conditions in the camps [34].

iii) Economic threat

Burden of hosting 4.7% world's total refugees in a country like Bangladesh with only 0.31% of world's population is unimaginable and it's affecting the national economy and budget very hardly [35]. According to Joint Impact Assessment Study 2019, the immediate effect of Bangladesh hosting about one million Rohingya refugee on its soil is that prices of daily commodities have risen by 50%, wages of day labourers have decreased, some 2500 households have fell below the poverty line. The poverty has increased by nearly 3% in the host community is something that is not talked about much. The report reveals that 75,000 people in the host community are now vulnerable in terms of poverty due to the refugee crisis. Since cheap labour is available from the Rohingyas and a ban on fishing on Naaf river along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border is causing hardship and threatening livelihoods of some 35,000 fishermen. All these fisher folk families had an annual income of 70,000 per annum pre-influx

periods which has dried up now. The road infrastructure damage from the crisis is about USD 200 million. Overall the impact of 1 million refugees living in two hill districts has taken a toll on agricultural production. Department of Agriculture Extension (DoAE), more than 100 hectares of cropland have destroyed due to refugee presence [36]. Local residents of Cox's Bazar are facing increasingly insecurity in food and other resources due to the influx of Rohingya refugees. Global Network Against Food Crises surveyed that percentage of households with poor or borderline food consumption increasing sharply from 31% in 2017 to 80% in 2018 [37]. Total forest land destruction amounts to a loss of USD 555 million [35]. Bangladesh has incurred worth $6 Billion damage on socio, economic, environmental arena as a consequence [38]. On top of these, declining funding from International community is adding more burden to GoB. 73% funding rate in 2017, 69 in 2018 directly dropped to 55% in this year [39].

iv) Social threat

Bangladesh Poverty Assessment Report found out that the local poverty level has been raised by approximately 52% along with average daily wage in the area dropped by 24%. With limited natural resources getting depleted at alarming rate, tensions are getting high which impact will expand outwards soon [40]. As said by BIISS senior research fellow, in a country like Bangladesh with limited resources and overpopulation, huge number of refugees are undoubtedly pressurizing on resources, social cohesion, also easy target group of manipulation. [Interview dated on November 18, 2021] Reports collected from both local and Rohingya people found that there is increasing discomfort among the locale for Rohingyas as they are suffering from various problems for Rohingyas only. On the contrary, Rohingyas are having the view that locale people are envying them thinking the former having a good and comfortable life here but in reality, they are living in a cage only. Also the unprecedented growth in Rohingya population is continuing to intensify the crisis, especially for the local people of Cox's Bazar [41].

v) Environmental threat

Three coastal areas—Teknaf, Saint Martin Island, Sonadia Island along with Himchhari National Park, Teknaf Sanctuary are facing ecological crisis with numerous types of rare

animals because of Rohingya settlement. Experts say, the area is flying zone of migratory birds from Middle and East Asia to Australia. The birds may change the route if their resting place is hampered. Poaching of animals is also reported to be done by Rohingyas secretly [42]. A large section of forest land has been destroyed with their arrival already. Adverse and irreversible impacts on land, water, air and overall ecosystem of the country due to the crisis impacted the life and livelihood of the people living in that area and beyond. The amount of forests and biodiversity loss has been happened from the crisis and still taking place is vast. Even though refugees are provided with LPG, the huge population has not been covered yet and there is still firewood collection continues. 5,500 acres of reserve forests have been destroyed and 1,500 hectares of wildlife habitat got decimated [35]. The settlement and resettlement process has cost 20,000 hectares or 49,500 acres of forests alone. Due to mass deforestation and constant construction for rehabilitation, soil and terrain are degrading regularly [41]. The over-night change of elephant habitat can be witnessed from the picture. About 1.5 acre land is being used for Rohingya refugee camp within Whykong national park's area. As they are locked in the Himchari forestland, they could not pass through the refugee camps to Teknaf forest areas. Till now total 25 people died from elephants attack including 13 Rohingyas.

On the basis of above dominant narratives on the impacts of Rohingya crisis happening at multi-sectoral levels of Teknaf and Ukhia Upazilla is indirectly hampering Bangladesh's internal security.

c. Regional Security Concern over Rohingya Crisis in South Asia

Even though this refugee crisis is an internal problem of Myanmar state, this has worldwide implications of it as to escape military atrocity of the state, 1.3 million Rohingya had to flee its neighboring countries like Bangladesh, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia. For better understanding coherent thematic areas are created to follow dominant narratives.

i) Political security threat

Islamic extremism uprising and radicalization: There is growing fear of extremism among these unemployed, idle Rohingyas. According to 'The Pioneer' author Jai Kumar Verma, India's decision of not allowing Rohingyas in and not bowing down to International pressure and repatriate them was the right decision. In defense he wrote that India is not a signatory member of 1951 Refugee Convention or its protocols, so it is not bounded to accept Rohingya refugees according to law but still it has more than 300,000 refugees from 30 different countries living in the country [43].

The biggest fear of the crisis for both India and Bangladesh is that a large number of young Rohingyas can be easily radicalized resulting into a big threat for whole region's security. The Rohingya refugee camps situated at areas of Chittagong in Bangladesh is quite infamous for extremism and secessionist activities. Many times terrorists from North-East region took shelter in this area. So it is quite assertive about the security implications deriving from the refugee crisis will get influenced [44]. If the crisis is not resolved quickly, it will turn into a protracted refugee situation and from statistics, 52% of Rohingya are in their adulthood. But one thing is clear that all those actions will involve violence of course which in turn will beget further violence which is not any good for any party involved in the crisis now. It will affect not only the Rohingyas and Bangladesh but also its neighbors India, Myanmar, the region and lastly the international community also [45]. Possibility of radicalized Rohingya refugees disbursing to different parts of South Asia region is high like Kashmir, Pakistan to carry out terrorist insurgencies, said by Bangladesh Foreign Ministry officer. [Interview dated on December 10, 2021] There are already incidents of Rohingyas engaged in petty and semi crimes to include--- human trafficking, arms trade, drug dealing that are increasing in alarming rate which are indicators for future bigger catastrophe. In Bangladesh, presence of ethnic and linguistic conflict in CHT area will certainly influence the crisis. *"These crimes which are now Rohingya's occurring at local level will initially carry out at bigger scale e.g. regional level. As Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan share porous border links with each other, this will lead to cross-border terrorist linkage and activities."* [Interviewed dated on December 10, 2021] According to Dhaka University faculty member, *'There is a significant dimensional role of CHT area of Bangladesh amid this Rohingya crisis which needs to be focused on for better understanding of security crisis for all local, national, regional levels'.* Even after CHT Peace Accord signed in 1997, there are still separatist activities going on in isolated way though. Many

55

times, CHT is a safe sanctuary for terrorist groups of neighboring countries and these groups can easily attract workless, frustrated Rohingyas to join in terrorist activities [Interviewed dated on October 21, 2021].

ii) Social security threat

Regional complex: A 'Regional complex' concept was introduced by scholar Barry Buzan for analyzing regional countries interdependence in security sector mainly [12]. This is quite relevant with the Rohingya crisis presently which is creating concern for regional security of South Asia and Southeast Asian countries for its intensity increasing day by day. While Rohingyas are presently scattered in different parts of these region's countries, it may create a feeling of peer group among those Rohingya people in a globalized and digital era of communication. This will lead to complex regional security crisis and for that reason all regional countries who getting affected by Rohingya crisis need to come together and resolve it strong handedly, said by BIISS senior research fellow [Interview dated on November 18, 2021]. The Rohingya crisis will become the biggest security threat to South Asian countries in coming days, this mere saying by India further emphasizes the importance of security in context of Rohingya crisis. May be right now it is Bangladesh's problem but if not cared it will become the entire world's problem tomorrow. It was pre-planned genocidal act by Myanmar to eliminate Muslim minorities from its soil [7]. Moreover, the ultra nationalist movement in India regarding national citizenship may blow the hidden fire of religious sentiment among the Rohingyas. India's internal political heat may spill over to Bangladesh in a process, said by University of Dhaka Faculty member [Interview dated on December 19, 2021].

Compassion and aid fatigue: This prolonged refugee situation is slowly disinteresting donor communities and this aid fatigue can breed violence in camps when Rohingyas will not get proper daily commodities as before. This will result into negative outcome where conflict may arise. The former Director of UNHCR too expressed concern over increasing ominous signs of aid fatigue among international donors [46]. Lack of assistance and funding will have severe consequences on the maintenance of law and order which will affect the solution process too. They will easily get attracted to criminal activities to save their lives and engage into transnational criminal activities. According to

Relief Web of UNHCR statistics, the number of Rohingya living in countries around the world is listed below which is why it is begetting regional insecurity ---

Table 1. Rohingya population in different countries of the world

Country name	Rohingya population
Bangladesh	1.3 Million
India	40,000
Myanmar	400,000
Pakistan	350,000
Thailand	5000
Malaysia	150,000
Indonesia	1000
Saudi Arabia	500,000
United States	12,000
United Arab Emirates	50,000

Source: Lotha, L. (2019) [47]

iii) Economic security threat

Geo-politics and economic interests of regional states: There is strong remark from Bangladesh side that if this crisis is not resolved soon, it will directly impact interests of all within the region. Until violence and atrocities in Myanmar do not end, it may hamper China and India's economic projects too as development is not possible in a violent atmosphere [48]. Regional security dimension is mainly interconnected with each other countries within a region. Myanmar being an attractive investment and development partner for other neighboring countries, proper solution of the crisis is imperative otherwise it may hamper bilateral relationship of Myanmar with others. Particularly in South Asia region regarding Rohingya crisis, it is seen that India is not willing to accept Rohingyas as refugees and trying to push them towards Bangladesh. In this condition, there is a high chance of deterioration of diplomatic relationship between these two friendly countries. Indirectly it means decreased and hampered economic progress of whole South Asian region.

Another reason can be increasing development of relationship between India-Myanmar in recent years. Myanmar is India's strategic neighbor with whom it shares a 1640km long border [49]. India's Mega 'Kaladan Project' in Myanmar has created venue for Indian interest of not getting involved in Rohingya crisis and has been latently supporting Myanmar's military operation against Muslim minority Rohingyas. This project is significant in this sense that it will connect Sittwe

port of Myanmar to Indian border by providing a sea-river-land link creating alternative to current route of 'Chicken's neck' between Bangladesh and Bhutan for transporting goods to landlocked North-Eastern States [50]. Also it is increasing strategic alliance with Myanmar to thwart China's influence in the region. On the face of sudden Rohingya crisis, the long held initiative of BCIM to create economic corridor has been dropped off China's priority list. It's surely a big loss as this could have been a great platform of making strong diplomatic relationship among the protagonists [51]. However, not everyone thinks or views 'Rohingya crisis' as a regional security threat because not every countries of South Asian regions are sheltering Rohingya refugees presently. According to University of Dhaka faculty member, *"A little heat can indirectly fall upon other regional countries as according to Buzan's regional complex theory, countries of a region are inter-connected with other like a web where one country's security implication has spillover influence to other regional countries."* [Interview dated on November 17, 2021]

5. CONCLUSION

From the data analysis and discussion section, we can come to the conclusion that three levels of security paradigms- local, national, regional are compactly interlinked with each other in the case of Rohingya refugee crisis and any insurgency has spillover effect on its subsequent levels. Drawing from the thematic data analysis of both primary and secondary data on socio, economic, political, environmental security threats according to the objectives of the study, it confirms of posing a major security threat for Bangladesh along with South Asia region. Among all security threats, environmental destruction and ideological uprising, illegal movement, criminal activities are the most alarming security threats that are identified as crucial. In context of regional security too, the unregulated population movement is a source of potential threat to national and regional level. So far movements of Rohingyas have been to neighboring countries as India, Thailand, Malaysia but now growing network across regions will certainly facilitate onward movement of them in different regions in future. This is more likely to happen when realization of no return to their own homeland is impossible will strike millions of Rohingyas.

However, from the regional level analysis, our empirical data shows that apart from UN, other regional organizations have done very little to take steps against the atrocity of Myanmar. ASEAN has failed to question its member state, Myanmar for its inhumane treatment to its own people. At the moment, two major recommendations that have been voiced by most of the experts interviewed for the study are:

1. Myanmar should amend its law, allowing Rohingyas citizenship and other related rights.
2. It also needs to create a safe zone with the deployment of forces from different countries [52].

The important role of geo-politics that can play in this process should not be forgotten. The big powers like, China, Japan, India are backing Myanmar right now and this making Myanmar taken for granted the whole crisis. But these big powers are also friends of Bangladesh too. Bangladesh has to make understand these countries that their respective investment in Myanmar will be in danger if there is continued violence in Rakhine and it needs both collective political commitment and will from its member countries. Here one quote is very relevant to mention. "Every solution brings with it a cost to pay, and at this moment in time no country is ready to pay that cost. That is why no solution is reached yet regarding the crisis." Said by Foreign Ministry official of Bangladesh on Rohingya repatriation issue [Interview dated on December 10, 2021].

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, Participants' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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