



Compensation for Myanmar's Ethnic Cleansing of the Rohingya: Who should pay and how much?

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Abstract: Rohingya people have faced recurring military crackdowns and fled from Myanmar in significant numbers in 1978, 1931, 1992, 2012, 2015, 2016 and 2017. These recurring military crackdowns have devastated Rohingya peoples' lives and rendered them increasingly marginalised and made most of them destitute. In August 2017 the Myanmar army burned approximately 300 Rohingya villages. It is estimated that during the August 2017 military crackdown 25,000 Rohingya were murdered, 18,000 raped, 43,000 received gunshot wounds, and 116,000 beaten. As a result, at least 800,000 Rohingya fled from Myanmar and took refuge in Bangladesh, joining those who had fled earlier. At the time of writing, the number of Rohingya in Bangladesh is estimated to 1.2 million, but this research focuses on data gathered in January 2018 and a refugee population of 800,000.

This study was conducted by a research consortium consisting of academics and practitioners from Australia, Canada and Norway and several international institutional partners from Australia, Bangladesh, Canada and the Philippines. The research team visited the Rohingya refugee camps on several occasions and conducted structured interviews with 3,300 Rohingya household heads of families in total comprising 16,314 members. In-depth semi-structured questionnaires and qualitative interviews were utilised in collecting various socio-economic data, such as livelihood activities, household income, expenses, savings, asset holdings, the condition of respondents' houses in Myanmar and experience of atrocity crimes (killing, rapes, physical and psychological torture etc.) before fleeing. The study attempts to impute justifiable values to land and other material possessions left behind by Rohingya from Rakhine State in the post-August 2017 flight to Bangladesh, and also for the loss and trauma experienced by those fleeing.

In this paper, researchers develop a compensation model using economic and demographic data collected from respondents. The paper goes beyond investigating the cost of displacement of Rohingya people to develop an estimate of the compensation that would be required for repatriation, resettlement and rehabilitation of Rohingya people to restore their original state of economic life in Myanmar. An amount of US\$6.440 billion is assessed to be a minimum compensation as of June 2023 for the Rohingya people, exclusive of interest. Additionally, the cost to the international community, the Bangladesh government and environmental damage are estimated to US\$2.645 billion. This paper argues that compensation of Rohingya by Myanmar for material losses, trauma and stress is an alternative means of proceeding to achieve some measure of social justice and hope for refugees. Whilst it is acknowledged that money can never compensate for the atrocities experienced by Rohingya people.

Keywords: Rohingya, Myanmar, genocide, ethnic cleansing, murder, rape, rehabilitation, resettlement, repatriation, compensation

Introduction

There is a great deal of evidence from numerous sources confirming the most recent atrocities perpetrated on Rohingya in Rakhine state, Myanmar (or Burma), that led around 800,000 of them to flee to neighbouring Bangladesh from August 2017 onwards, joining an estimated 180,000 who had fled in earlier periods (MSF 2017). This mass exodus and the causes of it were labelled on 11 September 2017 as “a textbook example of ethnic cleansing”¹ in an address by Al Hussein, United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights. However, similar charges, including of genocide, had been invoked in earlier episodes of violence perpetrated against Rohingya (e.g., Ritu 2012; Beech 2014; Zarni and Cowley 2014; Solomon 2016).

Many have called for a case to be brought against the Myanmar military and other officials to the International Criminal Court (e.g. Human Rights Watch). However, others argue that such a case may actually worsen the situation (e.g., Pedersen 2018), or that without the cooperation of Myanmar, any action is unlikely to succeed (Guilfoyle 2019). Yet, unless the international community takes some action to punish the behaviour and actions of Myanmar officials, how can Rohingya currently in Bangladesh be persuaded to return or what other solution to their emergence from the Bangladeshi refugee camps might exist?

Bangladesh has its own economic and social issues to confront without the added burden of dealing with so many refugees (Yasmin 2017). Since an international response to the situation will need to address Rohingyas’ rights to return (Beyrer and Kamaruzzaman 2017), the question arises as to ‘if not a criminal prosecution, then what?’ This study proposes that one potential solution to this wicked problem is to compensate Rohingya for their trauma and financial loss in order to serve basic justice and encourage them to repatriate to Myanmar; or to resettle in other willing countries.

The next section provides a historical background to Rohingya in Myanmar. This is followed by an account of the most recent violence in August 2017 that prompted the flight of an estimated 800,000 Rohingya and then an explanation of why their situation of statelessness has occurred. Exploration of the international community’s response follows, and the issues for Bangladesh that arise from housing an estimated 1.1 million in total refugees from Myanmar. The prospects for repatriation of the refugees to Myanmar follows, with evidence of their trauma, loss and material goods left behind presented from refugees’ responses to structured interview questions. From these responses, an estimate of compensation to which refugees should be entitled is made.

A Brief History of Rohingya in Myanmar

The Rohingya crisis can be best understood with knowledge of Britain’s imperial history. Macintyre (2018) provides a concise account of this background, but scholarly literature documents this history too (e.g., Ullah 2011). It is likely Muslims arrived in one of Myanmar’s seven states, Rakhine, the then kingdom of Arakan, in the eighth century, calling the location “Rohang”. The natural movement of people between Bengal and the neighbouring Mrauk-U Kingdom continued in a significant way in the period from the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries, and the ethnicity of Islamic faith evolved there -- the present day Rohingyas. Keen to take advantage of cheap labour, colonial authorities encouraged unrestricted migration of Muslims from Bengal into the region during the 19th century. However, local ethnic Rakhines bitterly resented the Muslim minority, believing their land and jobs were being taken, and so they responded with racism, fear and anger, helping to stoke Burmese nationalism and anti-Indian riots. This ethnic resentment lies behind the Burmese government’s non-recognition of the term ‘Rohingya’, referring instead to the Muslim minority as “Bengalis” and “illegal immigrants” (e.g., see Ferrie 2013). Oh (2018) presents evidence and argues that the application of international law as it relates to countries in East Asia remains problematic due to colonialism.

Following the Japanese invasion of Burma during the Second World War and British withdrawal, Muslims and Rakhines turned on one another (Ullah 2011). The opposing communities, already divided by ethnicity, religion and longstanding hostility took opposite sides in the conflict. The Muslims of northern Arakan, armed and supplied by the British, represented not just a defence against the Japanese, but also a counterbalance to the pro-Japanese Buddhist Rakhine community. Some historians claim that instead of resisting the Japanese, Rohingya recruits used their British-supplied weapons against their “collaborationist” Rakhine neighbours, destroying monasteries and pagodas and attacking Buddhist villages. The Japanese imperial forces raped, tortured and killed Muslims as Allied sympathisers.

Buddhists also killed numerous Muslim Rohingyas, thousands of whom fled to then British-held Bengal. The numbers killed and displaced by both sides are disputed, but alongside the world war, a brutal ethnic, religious, civil war raged. This led to total segregation of people along religious lines. While Muslims flocked in the northern Rakhine from middle and southern parts, Buddhist Rakhines left northern Rakhine. Some in the British Army believed that the Muslim minority should be rewarded for its loyalty after the war. However, a “Muslim National Area” in Burma,

¹ Mulaj (2006) defines “ethnic cleansing” as a systematic policy designed by and pursued under the leadership of a nation or ethnic community or with its consent, with a view to removing—by means of force and/or intimidation—a population deemed “undesirable” because of its ethnic, national or religious origin.

which some Rohingya believed they had been promised by the British, never eventuated, and in 1948 Burma gained independence from Britain. “The summary executions, arrests, torture and ill-treatment by Burma's security forces are underpinned by a warped perspective that paints the Rohingya as interlopers and aliens rather than integral elements of Burmese society” (Macintyre 2018).

Similar outbreaks of state-sanctioned violence, including institutionalised rape, occurred in June and October 2012, 2015, 2016, and 2017, with Facebook playing an important, acknowledged, negative role in later periods in fomenting hate (Blayne 2018; Meixler 2018; Roose and Mozhur 2018). For instance, Kipgen (2013) reports that this violence led to the loss of over a hundred lives, destruction of thousands of homes, and the displacement of thousands of people. Further, there are reports that poorer Buddhists who fled the pro-democracy crackdown in 1988 (Rahman 2013) were encouraged to migrate to Rakhine from Bangladesh to replace the around 86,000 Rohingya who fled (Beech 2014), with land and homes granted to them (Rahman 2013). Reports of internment camps housing an estimated 140,000 Rohingya, and from which international humanitarian organisations were banned, also emerged (e.g., Beech 2014). Appendix 1 provides a timeline of these and other major events in what the International State Crime Initiative research arm of the Queen Mary University of London labels genocide and annihilation of Rohingya. Ahmed (2009) argues that this entrenched discrimination is government-generated because the National Museum in Yangon, which houses collections from all other sub-nationalities, makes no mention of Rohingyas.

What caused Rohingya people to flee in such numbers to Bangladesh in August 2017?

There is little disputing of the evidence behind why more than 800,000 Rohingya people felt compelled to uproot themselves, leave all but that which could be carried, and travel on foot and through a river to Bangladesh. Newspaper reports, non-government organisation reports (e.g., MSF 2017; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and Fortify Rights 2018, Save the Children 2017, 2018, ISCI 2015, 2018), formal global body reports (e.g. UN 2017), independent reports (e.g., Habib et al., 2018), satellite imagery (refer Figure 1), and academic papers (e.g., Ullah and Chatteraj 2018) provide irrefutable evidence of widespread burning and destruction of Rohingya areas consistent with accounts by refugees. There is also more recent evidence of widespread razing of remaining structures and building activity where Rohingya homes used to stand in Myanmar (Figure 1). The refugees themselves speak of atrocities (e.g., Save the Children 2017) perpetrated by Myanmar authorities that are consistent in their recounting. Harrowing stories of shootings, rape, stabbings, hacking, flinging children, babies and the infirm into fire or rivers are the norm among refugees (Habib et al., 2018). This latest outbreak of violence follows prior crackdowns by Myanmar authorities that resulted in a similar flight of refugees to Bangladesh.

Fortify Rights (2018) provides evidence that the military's actions in August 2017 were premeditated and not merely a response to an insurgent attack by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) militants widely reported as triggering the Myanmar authorities' response. That organisation's Report claims that the military was encouraged after a similar October 2016 response by the Myanmar military which was disproportionate and failed to distinguish between civilians and militants (International Crisis Group 2016; Solomon 2016), forcing tens of thousands of Rohingya to flee, but which received little international condemnation or action (Quackenbush 2018). Interview evidence from survivors is presented by Fortify Rights of the arming of non-Rakhine civilians with knives and swords by the military and of the participation of these armed civilians in the atrocities that were perpetrated. A 2018 UN report confirms this premeditation, indicating "the nature, scale and organisation of the operations suggests a level of preplanning and design" intended to "solve the problem" of the Rohingya by embarking on disproportionate and gruesome "clearance operations" targeting and terrorising the entire Rohingya population.

Figure 1: Satellite Imagery at key dates

Image 1 | 1 January 2017



Image 1: on the January 1st 2017 shows a village under foliage and beside a structure starting to develop.

Image 2: on the 16th September shows the village under foliage has been burned



Image 2 | 16 September 2017



Image 3 | 7 December 2017

Image 3: on the 7th December 2017 (4 months after August 2017), the burned village has been cleared, and the small structure becomes much more visible with a roof

Image 4: on the 26th April 2018 shows in the space of the burned village a new settlement is being built with very much visible roof and structure



Image 4 | 26 April 2018

Description: Location coordinate 20 49 23.26 N 92 24 01.83 E
Image source: Google Earth

A report published by the International State Crime Initiatives (ISCI) claimed that a leaked document apparently adopted by the Myanmar regime in 1988 reveals the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) adopted an 11 point “Rohingya extermination plan” (reproduced in Box 1). The Report also claimed that at least seven of the first eight elements of the plan had been effectively instituted (Green et al., 2015). Habib et al., (2018) also found a widespread impact on the socio-economic lives of Rohingya of discriminatory policies implemented by the Myanmar government and authorities. The ISCI Report found evidence of Nazi ideology in official Arakan National Party (ANP) documents and an interview with an ANP spokesman in Sittwe by ISCI revealed that “*Rohingya should be moved to ‘concentration camps’ in central Myanmar*” (Green et al., 2015, p. 46).

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Box 1: State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) Rohingya Extermination plan adopted in 1988

1. *The Muslims (Rohingyas) are not to be provided with citizenship cards by identifying them as insurgents.*
2. *To reduce the population growth of the Rohingyas by gradual imposition of restrictions on their marriages and by application of all possible methods of oppression and suppression against them.*
3. *To strive for the increase in Buddhist population to be more than the number of Muslim people by way of establishing Natala villages in Arakan with Buddhist settlers from different townships and from out of the country.*
4. *To allow them temporary movement from village to village and township to township only with Form 4 (which is required by the foreign nationals for travel), and to totally ban them travelling to Sittwe, the capital of Arakan State.*
5. *To forbid higher studies (university education) to the Rohingyas.*
6. *No Muslim is to be appointed in government services.*
7. *To forbid them from ownership of lands, shops and buildings. Any such properties under their existing ownership must be confiscated for distribution among the Buddhists. All their economic activities must be stopped.*
8. *To ban construction, renovation, repair and roofing of the mosques, Islamic religious schools and dwelling houses of the Rohingyas.*
9. *To try secretly to convert the Muslims into Buddhism.*
10. *Whenever there is a case between Rakhine and Muslim the court shall give verdict in favour of Rakhine; when the case is between Muslim themselves the court shall favour the rich against the poor Muslim so that the latter leaves the country with frustration.*
11. *Mass killing of the Muslim is to be avoided in order not to invite the attention of the Muslim countries.*

Source: Green et al. (2015), p 36.

Citizenship and the Rohingya

Despite Myanmar authorities' denials and insistence on non-recognition and non-citizenship, there is much evidence that Rohingya people have lived in Myanmar for centuries. The Rohingya are often labelled the "world's most persecuted minority" in part because they do not have citizenship in Myanmar or anywhere and so are 'stateless'. Citizenship status is very important since it represents the basis for the recognition of other rights (Parashar and Alam 2019; Hunter 2019); without it, Rohingya people lack the very right to have rights (Arendt, 1968). The Burmese government does not accept Rohingya as one of the country's "national races" settled before the pre-British Burma Period in 1823. This situation has worsened due to the 1982 Myanmar Citizenship Law that left Rohingya without nationality (Human Rights Watch 2013). However, there is evidence that the Rohingya have been natives to Rakhine as early as the eighth century (Topich and Leitch, 2013). Myanmar authorities do not accept this claim and counter that the Rohingya came either from Chittagong when the British colonial authorities encouraged labour migration during 1891–1931 or from East Pakistan with the creation of Bangladesh in 1971 (Human Rights Watch, 1996).

Kyaw (2017a) makes the case that it has been the policies and practices of Myanmar governments since the late 1970s that have given rise to the statelessness of Rohingya, who were recognised as citizens of Myanmar until their first exodus in 1978, with the Rohingya being accepted by the Burmese State in the 1950s (Ba, 1958). Ullah and Chattoraj (2018: 543) provide further evidence of the historical recognition of Rohingya within Myanmar, stating. "The first President of Burma, Sao Shwe Thaik, a Shan, claimed in 1959, that the 'Muslims of Arakan' certainly belong to the indigenous races of Burma (Rogers, 2012; Buchanan, 1992). The Rohingya people were issued with citizenship/ID cards (Moore, 2015) and granted the right to vote under Burma's first post-independence Prime Minister, U Nu. In addition, they held important positions in civil service. In the 1960s, the official Burma Broadcasting Service (BBS) relayed a Rohingya-language radio programme three times a week as part of its minority language programming, and the term 'Rohingya' was used in journals and school text-books until the late 1970s (Green et al. 2015)."

Myanmar recognises eight national races (Kachin, Karenni, Karen, Chin, Burman, Mon, Arakanese, Shan) as the primary basis for citizenship, but it is the citizenship law 1982 and the lack of recognition of citizenship of the Rohingya means that their status is effectively stateless. However, despite Myanmar authorities' denials and insistence on non-recognition and non-citizenship, there is much evidence that Rohingya people have lived in Myanmar for centuries (Balazo 2015).

The Bangladesh perspective

While Bangladesh is not a signatory to refugee conventions, it is a member of the UN and has not turned away the latest and largest in a series of exoduses by Rohingya from Myanmar. However, there are several factors that make it unlikely that Bangladesh can agree to, or cope with, the latest influx indefinitely. Yasmin (2017) documents serious economic, health, environmental, security, social and reputational consequences of the refugee crisis from a Bangladeshi point of view.

Refugees are mostly being housed in a forested area of Cox's Bazar that is inevitably being degraded as refugees search for wood for cooking (Rahman and Southworth 2018; Hassan, Smith, and Walker 2018). This area was one of the most frequented tourist areas in Bangladesh, but the presence of the camps impacts this activity as a source of income for the locals. There are also security concerns in a country that is already coping with instances of Islamist extremism. With such unavoidably poor conditions in refugee camps, it seems inevitable that at least some members of underemployed youth will turn to radical solutions (International Crisis Group 2016, Institute for Economics and Peace 2018). Further, desperate refugees are willing to work locally for very little reward, undercutting the livelihoods of local Bangladeshis, potentially creating social unrest. There is evidence of people trafficking and the use of fake Bangladeshi travel documents, which tarnish the reputation of Bangladeshis and Bangladesh if illegal acts are engaged in by refugees who manage to travel overseas. While there can be no doubting the generosity of Bangladesh, a less-developed country facing land and water loss attributable to climate change and regional politics, has spent billions of USD in attempting to manage the situation with international aid, provision of nutrition and avoidance of serious disease outbreaks, surely this country cannot be expected to absorb this number of refugees indefinitely.

There are reports of refugees escaping the camps to avoid forced repatriation. Rather than international aid being used to maintain welfare within the camps, would it not be more productive in the long-term to recompense families for their losses in order to create seed funding and microfinance loans for refugees to sustain themselves in their own livelihood activities?

The prospects for repatriation

Burmese nationalism-fuelled racism (Kyaw, 2016) is manipulated by the largely coercive military regime (Parashar and Alam 2019), and extremism and Islamophobia mean that Myanmar nationals are hostile to Rohingya. Given this, successful repatriation of the refugees to Myanmar is unlikely. The greatest probability is that the refugees will remain permanently in Bangladesh given the history of past attempts at repatriation following previous outbreaks of violence. Additionally, there is the question of what is to become of the remaining estimated 300,000 Rohingya effectively confined within Rakhine, a significant number of internally displaced person (IDP) camps within Myanmar given United Nations Responsibility to Protect obligations (Barbour and Gorlick 2008; Mooney 2008).

Three commonly accepted factors influence a refugee's decision to return or not: the security thesis, the economic thesis, the education thesis and the refugees' social capital (Stefanovic and Loizides 2011). An agreement between Myanmar and Bangladesh to repatriate the first group of 5000 refugees was struck in November 2018, and despite Myanmar announcing that it was ready to receive the first 2000 (Reuters 2018), at the time of writing no one has been repatriated since it is not clear that the human rights of returnees are guaranteed.

In August 2017, a Commission chaired by the former Secretary-General of the United Nations (1997-2006), Kofi Annan, released a report, titled "Towards a Peaceful, Fair and Prosperous Future For The People Of Rakhine". The Report, which does not mention 'Rohingya' because there was a specific request not to, included 88 Recommendations and ominously, but presciently, signalled the human catastrophe that might unfold if its recommendations were not implemented. The Advisory Commission on Rakhine State had been initiated in September 2016, following a request from Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the State Counsellor of Myanmar. The Kofi Annan Foundation and the Office of the State Counsellor established an Advisory Commission on Rakhine State. The Commission was a national entity, and the majority of its members were from Myanmar. It was mandated to examine the complex challenges facing Rakhine state, which it summarises as three-fold: development, human rights and security crises, and to propose responses to those challenges. During the enquiry under the Commission, ethnic-related violence erupted.

Since reforms in 2010, the Myanmar military (Tatmadaw) appointed 25 percent of seats in both legislative bodies, and selects candidates for the ministerial posts of Defence, Border Affairs and Home Affairs, and at least one of two Vice-Presidents, enabling control of the entire security apparatus in the country with no civilian oversight. Given this situation, In September 2018, the United Nations Human Rights Commission reported on the violence that had flared in August 2017 and major prior incidents in 2016 and 2011 under an international fact-finding mission established in September 2017 (UNHRC 2018). The mission received no cooperation from the Myanmar government. Amongst the recommendations were that the Myanmar government should "ensure adequate compensation for appropriated land" (Rec 2). This study attempts to impute justifiable values to land and other material possessions left behind by Rohingya from Rakhine State in the post-August 2017 flight to Bangladesh, and also for the loss and trauma experienced by those fleeing.

Gisselquist (2019) observes that one of the most challenging contexts for legal empowerment is when gaps between law and practice can be traced to intentional group-based discrimination and favouritism in public institutions. Indeed this is the case for the Rohingya. If pressure on Myanmar resulted in recompense to those forced to flee, other countries might be more willing to offer resettlement. Refugees with some savings to provide seed funding for entrepreneurial activities would be much less of a burden. Certainly, Bangladesh needs some assistance since the social dynamics in that country make long-term resettlement problematic.

There is a great deal of evidence that existing and retired political and military personnel benefit from the exploitation of the country's natural resources. The income gap in Myanmar is amongst the widest in the world (Kyaw 2018) and Global Witness (2015) reported that some of Myanmar's senior ruling party figures, including active and retired military officers, control the lucrative gem and jade trade and that the military itself owns large or majority stakes in mining companies, particularly the Shwe gas field (SGM 2015). The Shwe gas project generates more than US\$2 billion² yearly for the Myanmar government and the military, which represents 40 per cent of the country's income. Page 6 of the Global Witness Report states: "Global Witness estimates that the value of official jade production in 2014 alone was well over the US\$12 billion indicated by Chinese import data, and appears likely to have been as much as US\$31 billion. To put it in perspective, this figure equates to 48 per cent of Myanmar's official Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 46 times government expenditure on health." Another telling statistic comes from Global Firepower in relation to military spending. Myanmar with a population of approximately 54 million in 2017 on this measure ranked 61st in military spending at \$2,400M or 2.5 per cent of GDP in 2017 compared to Bangladesh with a population of 161 million at \$1,590M or 1.4 per cent of GDP in 2017³. With 406,000 active troops in service in 2018, the country ranked 13th in the world, while Bangladesh had 160,000 active troops ranked thirty-seventh out of 136 countries⁴.

An agreement between Bangladesh and Myanmar was signed in November 2017 for repatriation of 2000 Rohingya if they could prove that they had lived in Myanmar before fleeing across the border over the prior three months and was to begin within two months. Few details were released, but it was reported (Beech 2017) that Myanmar did not want international agencies to be involved, and did not want the returnees to go to their native villages, instead planning to send them to 'camps'. These 'camps' sound suspiciously like the IDP camps in which many Rohingya who stayed in Myanmar exist in a semi-imprisoned state. Further, it was not clear what evidential paperwork Myanmar authorities would accept, even if returnees had been able to flee with paperwork (Beech 2017). In January 2018, the repatriation process was conceived, provided Myanmar created a conducive atmosphere for return. After about ten months, Bangladesh agreed to repatriation in mid-November 2018, but Rohingyas were not found keen to return to Rakhine voluntarily. They instead demanded citizenship, freedom of movement and security and demanded compensation as preconditions for considering a return (Habib et al. 2018).

Crisis response: International aid and humanitarian assistance

In the aftermath of the August 2017 atrocities, the Bangladesh government has been praised for opening the border and accepting the Rohingya refugees. This means that an economically struggling Bangladesh, already overcrowded, is now shouldering much of the burden for more than a million Rohingya individuals. As the first responder to the crisis, the Bangladesh government and community responded with immediate food relief and other necessities. The Bangladesh government, with assistance from the International Migration Organisation, UNHCR, MSF, Red Cross and other international agencies, has provided makeshift shelter arrangements for displaced Rohingya. Since this fastest-growing refugee influx in the world began in 2017, countries, UN agencies, and non-government organisations (NGOs) from 22 countries have funded US\$727.8 million⁵ at the time of writing to address the immediate humanitarian crisis, representing 70 per cent of the total funding requirements.

Meanwhile, the Myanmar government has denied involvement in atrocities (e.g. Green 2017), arguing that Rohingya burned down their own homes and businesses. Myanmar refuses to cooperate with inquiries into these events and their outcomes. Writing of the denials of previous violent crackdowns, Green (2017) states: "Rather than visit the scene of the violence or challenge the perpetrators of hate and violence, she (Aun Sung Suu Kyi) and her NLD (*National League for Democracy*) government have instead fashioned crude denials which at heart blame the Rohingya for their own persecution. Rather than taking allegations of security force abuse seriously, Suu Kyi's government has adopted military dictatorship-era tactics of blanket denial, an absolute ban on international observation, severe limitations on humanitarian access within the region, the muzzling of the press, and the

² 'Govt earns US\$170 million monthly from gas exports' (<https://www.mmtimes.com/business/15034-govt-earns-us-170-million-monthly-from-gas-exports.html>), Viewed 30 January 2019.

³ Global Fire Power (<https://www.globalfirepower.com/defense-spending-budget.asp>) and World Bank (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS>), viewed 24 January 2019.

⁴ Global Fire Power <https://www.globalfirepower.com/active-military-manpower.asp> viewed 24 January 2019.

⁵ Refer <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/656/summary>.

'blacklisting' and deportation of human rights activists." The situation has worsened since then, with two Reuters journalists sentenced to seven years jail for reporting on a massacre of Rohingya (Hurst 2018), subsequently losing an Appeal against this sentence in January 2019 (Massola 2019). Myanmar's UN Ambassador U Hau Do Suan said the government refused to cooperate with the latest fact-finding mission because of concerns about its "impartiality" (Myanmar Times 2 Feb 2019). "The military got the message that for the so-called greater good of reforms taking place, the international community considers the Rohingya expendable," Mr Farmaner, head of the Burma Campaign UK, an advocacy group, said (Ford 2018).

Research design

This current paper extends some of the findings of an international collaborative research project (Habib et al. 2018) that entailed interviewing 3,300 Rohingya households living in the makeshift camp, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh during January 2018. After conducting an initial review of the relevant literature, a semi-structured interview guide and open-ended qualitative interview questionnaire were developed for primary data collection from participants in the refugee camps in Bangladesh. Among the 1.1 million Rohingya currently living in Bangladesh (BBC, 2018), this study particularly targets the displaced Rohingya population who experienced atrocity crimes during the August 2017 crackdown. Thus, the target population of this study was the estimated 800,000 who had arrived in Bangladesh since August 2017 (Green 2017), living in makeshift camps on 4,000 acres of public land in a forested area (Ahmed, 2018). These refugee camps are the most densely populated makeshift camps in the world (Solomon 2017).

Researchers utilised high-resolution aerial imagery (including satellite and drone images) and other geospatial techniques, such as maps of zones created by the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) for identifying the camp area. Using the ISCG zoning system geospatial products, the research team created zone centroid using ArcGIS 10.3. Then, mobile phone GPS technology and Avenza maps apps were used to navigate to the zone centroid. Analysing the spatial datasets and related attributes in ArcGIS 10.3, 33 camp zones were identified where, post-August 2017, the displaced Rohingya population resided, and 100 households⁶ were selected from each of the 33 zones. Sector centroid was created using ArcGIS 10.3; and 33 geo-referenced pdf maps were created (one for each sector) using a combination of high-resolution drone imagery, road networks and known infrastructure. Those geo-referenced pdf maps were uploaded to Avenza maps apps and used for navigational purposes. Once the research interview team reached the zone centroid, male and female researchers working in pairs visited 100 households at random within that zone. Household heads⁷ aged between 18 and 99, male or female, were invited to participate in interviews.

Members of the research team then contacted Rohingya leaders (known as Majhi) in each zone where they live. These leaders are responsible for coordinating fellow Rohingya for communication and translation services, or to some extent, supporting the Bangladesh government or other international agencies for relief coordination in other ways. These 33 Majhis (Rohingya leaders in 33 different zones) assisted the researchers to approach Rohingya households for participation in interviews voluntarily.

Working in pairs comprising a male and female interviewer, random households were approached starting from the zone centroid, 'knocking' at individual makeshift 'houses', making known that this research was being undertaken and inviting each prospective participant to take part in a semi-structured interview. Once a household agreed to participate, a 30-40-minute semi-structured interview commenced with the head of household. The gender of interviewers and interviewed were matched to accommodate local cultural norms. Participants were given the right to discontinue the interview at any time, and different (replacement) households were invited to participate if discontinuance occurred. In this way, interviewers randomly approached and interviewed individual households until 100 household semi-structured interviews from each zone were completed.

To ensure a high level of data standardisation during collection, significant training of interviewers and field operations managers was provided by specific members of the research team who remained in the field for at least 80 per cent of the total data collection period, ensuring data quality was not compromised. During this time, many camp inhabitants were asked by a member of the research team for their consent to be photographed or video graphed to create a pictorial record of the situation in the camp. Where permission was given, visual recording proceeded. The quality control process involved discarding 80 household interviews due to data validation errors, data inconsistency, invalid answers, and extreme values recorded. Consequently, a total of 3,221 household interviews from 33 zones comprise the final sample for data analysis. The following section presents the analysis of primary data collected from respondent Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

Results and discussion

The 3,221 participant household heads who participated in the study by Habib et al., (2018) when an estimated 650,000 Rohingya had fled came from 23 townships and 1,306 villages in Myanmar till December 2017. Table 1 reports that

⁶ A group of two or more persons who make common provision of food or other essentials for living.

⁷ The household head is considered to be the principal member of the household.

the 3,221 household heads interviewed comprised 16,314 family members with an average household size of 5.07 people and with 56 per cent having male heads and 46 per cent over the age of 18. With an average household size of 5.07, the estimated population of 800,000 used in this current study equates to 157,791 households.

Table 1: Number of Households and their dependent children in Bangladesh refugee camps (from Habib et al., 2018)

	Household Heads with Dependents in each Age Range	Age Ranges of Family Members		%
	N	N	%	%
Number of newborns (1-6 months old)	282	344	3.92	
Number of infants (7 months–5 Years)	1,497	2,594	29.53	
Number of children (6-12 years)	1,633	3,119	35.50	
Number of adolescents (13-18 years)	1,401	2,728	31.05	
Total number of children <=18		8,785	100	53.77
Number family members >18	3,803	7,552		46.22
		16,337		100
Who are unmarried		4,772		
Total households	3,221	16,337	Family size 5.07	

Turning to household income, Table 2 reports the various sources of income when household heads had resided in Myanmar compared with Bangladesh, with income from ‘farming’ making up the vast majority (74.6 per cent) in Myanmar, but ‘no income’ generating activity making up the majority (26.1 per cent) of responses in Bangladesh. The variety of income-generating activities is much lower in Bangladesh and opportunities for the skilled much lower.

Table 2 Household Sources of Income in Myanmar and Bangladesh

Myanmar – before displacement			Bangladesh – after refuge		
Occupation	N	%*	Occupation	N	%*
Farming	2,403	74.6	No income generating activity	842	26.1
			Service	159	5.0
Grocery shop	431	13.4	Grocery shop	15	0.5
			Teaching in local Moktob	15	0.5
Day labour	376	11.7	Day labour	14	0.4
			Translator	10	0.3
Irrigation	224	7.0			
Fishing	206	6.4			
			Camp management	4	0.1
House wife	110	3.4			
Food processing	64	2.0	Dry fish business	3	0.1
Medicine shop	39	1.2	Medicine shop	1	0.0
Vending	36	1.1			
Tailoring	29	0.9			
Service	15	0.5			
Butcher	9	0.3			
Craft Making	8	0.3			
Barbershop	6	0.2			
			Firewood collection	1	0.0
Other*	50	1.6	Other**	127	4.0
	4,006			1,191	

Percentage of total interviewed, multiple sources of income were mentioned by some respondents,

*Other occupations include teacher, shopkeeper, own business, local legislator, mechanic, NGO worker, landlord, contractor, carpenter, imam, guard, doctor, driver. ** Other occupations include teacher, imam, tailor, relief worker.

It is little wonder then that Table 3 reports a dramatic drop in average income when in Bangladesh (US\$2.78) compared with Myanmar (US\$233). Notably, this household income does not include incomes from subsistence farming, homestead garden/pond, or animal husbandry. Rohingya refugees living in Bangladeshi Camps are involved in few income-generating activities, not being permitted to work outside the camps. If these income data are compared to those of income data in Rakhine, one can determine the approximate economic situation before their exodus.

Table 3 Monthly Household Income in Myanmar and Bangladesh

	Myanmar		Bangladesh	
	Kyat*	US\$	BDT**	US\$
Total income	1,054,444,790	748,656	656,801	7,882
Average income	327,467	233	232	2.78
Standard deviation	450,033	320	1,928	23.14
Maximum income	1,500,000	1,065	50,000	600
Per capita expenditure		255		

*1 kyat = 0.00071 US\$, **1 BDT = 0.012 US\$, In Bangladesh, maximum income is from relief work (n= 1, 50,000) and as a translator (n = 3, 15,000)

Table 4 reports assets the household heads noted as their households having possessed in Myanmar prior to fleeing, with the widespread holding of land titles, farming and irrigation equipment, basic furniture, phones and buffaloes or cows for milk. Rohingya appeared to have owned limited transport assets (e.g., bicycles, motorcycles, and boats). This may have affected their mobility and consequently their access to economic activities, markets and basic health services in Myanmar.

Table 4 Assets held in Myanmar

Asset type	Count	%*
Land		
Land (without title)	71	2.2
Land (with title)	3065	95.16
Fishpond	372	11.6
Accommodation		
Number of households with more than one bedroom	745	23.1
Bed	3100	96.2
Access to basic Toilets	2932	91
Transport		
Boat	80	2.5
Bicycle	233	7.2
Motorcycle	259	8
Communication		
TV	54	1.7
Mobile phone	2629	81.6
Radio/CD player	100	3.1
Internet access	71	2.2
Farming		
Farming equipment	2344	72.8
Irrigation equipment	171	5.3

Asset type	Count	%*
Buffalo /Cow	3033	94.2
Homestead garden	1389	43.1
Others		
Sewing machine	111	3.5
Solar system	2489	77.3
Table	2836	88.1
Tubewell	2874	89.2

Multiple responses, *% of interviewed

Table 5 reports household heads' accounts of their families' house condition in Myanmar. Most house walls (83 per cent) were made of wood or bamboo, most floors (91%) were earth or clay, and most roofs were palm leaf or thatch grass (97 per cent). These materials point to the combustible nature of housing in Myanmar.

Table 5 House condition in Myanmar

		Brick/ concrete/ Stone	Alum- inum/ Tin	Palm leaf/ Thatch/ grass	Wood/ bamboo	Plywood/ logs	Earth/ clay	Roof Tile	Parquet/ Polished wood
Floor	Count	72	-	1	48	34	2942	4	118
	%	2.2	-	0.03	1.5	1.06	91.3	0.12	3.7
Wall	Count	20	-	1	2,686	128	363	-	21
	%	0.6	-	0.03	83.4	3.97	11.3	-	0.7
Roof	Count	16	48	3,113	32	11	-	-	-
	%	0.5	1.5	96.7	1.0	0.34	-	-	-

Table 6 reports household heads' estimates of household savings when in Myanmar at an average of US\$862, but most of these savings were left in Myanmar (estimated average US\$773) with an estimated average US\$37 brought to Bangladesh. On average, it took 5.6 days to travel from Myanmar to Bangladesh according to the household heads and the average cost of the journey was reported as US\$158.

Table 6: Cash held by Rohingya Households

	Household Savings in Myanmar		Money Brought to Bangladesh		Money left in Myanmar	
	kyat	US\$	BDT	US\$	BDT	US\$
Total savings	3,911,037,083	2,776,836	168,061,003	119,323	3,505,038,079	2,488,577
Ave. savings	1,214,231	862	52,177	37	1,088,183	773
Std. dev.	2431719	1727	316,702	225	2,028,503	1,440
Maximum	10,000,000	7,100	5,000,000	3550	7,500,000	5,325

1 kyat = 0.00071 US\$

Table 7 reports household heads' accounts of crimes against them or their family members before travelling to Bangladesh. In terms of property, over 88 per cent reported their homes as having been vandalised or burned down, 32 per cent as having damaged or destroyed crops, 28 per cent as having their businesses vandalised, 20 per cent as having had cash or other valuables taken from them. Satellite images obtained by Human Rights Watch revealed showed fires burning in more than ten locations, across a 100-kilometre stretch of land in Rakhine state (Holtz 2017a). More than 1,000 buildings in villages had been burned (Holtz 2017b) with the near-total destruction of 284 villages across northern Rakhine (Holtz 2017b). In terms of crimes against persons, almost 90% reported being beaten, 44% arrested, 32% exposed to gunfire, 27% had a family member thrown into the fire, 19% had a family member murdered, and 14% had been raped. The statistics are consistent with reporting by Naqvi (2017) that "one hospital was struggling to treat dozens of men who had arrived with broken bones, bullet wounds and horrific stories of death."

Table 7 Were you or your family members victims of crime in Myanmar prior to travelling to Bangladesh?

Crime(s) experienced in Myanmar prior to travelling to Bangladesh	Count	%	Extrapolated to estimated population of 128,205 households	95% CI Lower	95% CI upper
Burned down home	2,890	89.72	115,026	113,686	116,375
Beaten	2,886	89.60	114,872	113,520	116,223
Vandalism at your home	2,846	88.36	113,282	111,859	114,669
Arrested	1,400	43.46	55,718	53,529	57,919
Gun shot	1,035	32.13	41,192	39,128	43,264
Damaged or destroyed crops	1,029	31.95	40,961	38,893	43,022
Vandalism at your business	892	27.69	35,500	33,523	37,485
Thrown family member into fire	865	26.86	34,436	32,467	36,392
Snatched money or valuables	633	19.65	25,192	23,436	26,955
Murdered	602	18.69	23,962	22,235	25,687
Evicted	500	15.52	19,897	18,298	21,505
Raped	445	13.82	17,718	16,185	19,240
Robbery	437	13.57	17,397	15,878	18,910
Multiple responses recorded					

Method of Estimation: Estimated Rohingya families 650,000 in January 2018 (Alam2018), Household size= 5.07, therefore estimated total number of Rohingya Families is 128,205. Presuming a normal distribution (since $np(1-p) > 10$ where $n=3221$ and p =estimated proportion, the estimated 95% confidence interval (CI) can be calculated as $= z \pm 1.96 \sqrt{p(1-p)/n}$. For instance, for the 'Burned down home' estimate of incidence in the population of the estimated 128,205 families, the 95% CI = $Z \pm 1.96 \sqrt{\left(\frac{0.8972(1-0.8972)}{3221}\right)} = 1.96 * 0.00535$. Hence the incident estimate is $128205 \times (0.8972 \pm 0.0105)$, so there is 95% confidence that the number of homes burned down lies between 113,686 and 116,375.

When these numbers are extrapolated to the population of families in the camp at the time of the interviews, the estimated incidences of crimes are truly horrifying, as Table 7 reveals. The limitations of the estimates need to be acknowledged given that the population of families is estimated, as well as the potential for reporting of the sample incidents not to be representative of the population, the possibility that responses from different household heads refer to the same incident, and that some crimes are counted twice (e.g., homes vandalised and homes burned). With these limitations in mind, the estimation of the number of murders is $23,962 \pm 1,727$, the estimated number of rapes is $17,718 \pm 1,533$, the estimated number of incidents of a family member thrown into fire is $34,436 \pm 1,969$, the estimated number of beatings is $114,872 \pm 1,352$, the number of gunshot injuries is $41,192 \pm 2,064$ and the estimated number arrested is $55,718 \pm 2,189$. In terms of property crimes, the estimated number of houses burned is $115,026 \pm 1,340$, the estimated number of houses vandalised is $113,282 \pm 1,423$, the number of crops damaged or destroyed is estimated at $40,961 \pm 2,068$, and the estimated number of businesses vandalised is $35,500 \pm 1,977$. Many of these numbers are far more than previous reports.

Household heads were asked whether they or any of their family members had specific experiences during the August 2017 incident. Their responses are recorded in Table 8. Almost all had witnessed neighbours' injuries and close to 11 per cent had been injured themselves or had a family member injured, some permanently, including loss of sight. Over 80 per cent of household heads or families had witnessed the death of a neighbour and 6 per cent had witnessed the death of one of their own family members, close to 60 per cent had witnessed the rape of a neighbour and 0.5 per cent had witnessed the rape of one of their family members. Over 85 per cent had witnessed the burning down of homes and over 60 per cent the burning of villages.

Table 8 Did any family members die in Myanmar as a result of the 2017 incident

	Count	%
Witnessed neighbour injured	3,134	97.30
Witnessed death of a neighbour	2,631	81.68
Witnessed rape of a neighbour	1,904	59.11
Witness of Burning or Burned down home	2,753	85.47
Witness of Burning or Burned down village	2,173	67.46
Been injured	346	10.74
Witnessed death of a family member	195	6.05
Witnessed a family member being injured	190	5.90
Witnessed rape of a family member	15	0.47
Lost sight	27	0.84
Permanent disability due to injury	13	0.40
None	1	0.03

In terms of repatriation, household heads were asked to choose from a given list of suggested arrangements that might motivate a return to Myanmar for themselves and their families. As reported in Table 9, all of the options resulted in over 90 per cent affirmative responses. First ranked was the granting by Myanmar of citizenship, followed by prosecution of perpetrators, recognition of Rohingya ethnicity by the Myanmar government, cash compensation, provision by Myanmar of services for Rohingya, such as education and health, a halt to the violence, deployment of a UN peace force, broadening of socio-economic opportunities for the Rohingya population and re-establishment of normal life.

Table 9 What sort of arrangement would motivate you to return to Myanmar?

	Count	Percentage
Granting of citizenship	3,132	97.24
Prosecution of perpetrators	3,096	96.12
Recognition of Rohingya ethnicity by Myanmar government	3,089	95.90
Cash compensation	3,047	94.60
Provision of citizen's services (education, health etc.) to the Rohingya population	3,030	94.07
Full halting of violence	3,018	93.70
Deployment of UN peace force	3,005	93.29
Broadening of socio-economic opportunities for Rohingya population	2,995	92.98
Re-establishment of normal political, economic and social life	2,984	92.64
Others	15	0.47

Multiple responses

The overwhelming desire of the household heads was to return to Myanmar as soon as possible (79 per cent) (refer to Table 10).

Table 10 When you would like to return to Myanmar?

	Count	Percentage
As soon as possible (ASAP)	2,549	79.14
3 months	1	0.03
6 months	37	1.15
1 year	0	0.00
> 1 year	12	0.37
Don't know	434	13.47

The implication of results reported in Table 9 is that voluntary repatriation to Myanmar of refugees in Bangladesh is unlikely unless the past pattern of behaviour by authorities in Myanmar changes so that refugees do not return to threats, ‘camps’, non-citizenship, and inequity in access to services and opportunities. Given Myanmar’s behaviour in relation to the repatriation agreement with Bangladesh signed in November 2017, the agreement between the UN and Myanmar on June 18 (AAP 2018), and the fact that international aid agencies called for a halt to planned returns, the signs are not positive for conducive conditions for repatriation in the short or long-term. Given this, this paper argues that compensation of Rohingya by Myanmar for material losses, trauma and stress is an alternative means of proceeding to achieve some measure of social justice and hope for refugees. Whilst it is acknowledged that money can never compensate for the horror experienced by Rohingya who fled, the next section attempts to quantify the dollar value of loss experienced by Rohingya.

Compensation calculation

This section presents and rationalises the estimates and calculation of compensation for the displaced Rohingya population from their original state of economic life in Myanmar and losses for the atrocity crimes committed by Myanmar authorities and, in some cases, other villagers. Discussion in the following section goes beyond investigating the cost of displacement of Rohingya to develop an estimate of the compensation that would be required for repatriation, resettlement and rehabilitation of Rohingya to restore their original state of economic life in Myanmar. The compensation estimation for Rohingya refugees presented in the paper focuses on the specific losses incurred by the estimated 700,000 Rohingya refugees who took refuge in Bangladesh extrapolated from data gathered for and reported in Habib et al., (2018) based on a then estimate of 650,000 who had fled at that time (January 2018).

The basis of the compensation estimate relies on two principles; first, an estimate of economic loss that includes assets, house condition, income, savings and other factors that are material in nature and quantifiable in market value; and second, an estimate for the trauma and livelihood loss experienced by Rohingya refugees. The calculations are as at 25 August 2020 and rely on several sampling parameters reported in Habib et al., (2018) based on primary data gathered in January 2017 when the estimated number who had fled since August 2017 was 650,000. Since then, the estimate has risen to 800,000 (Green 2017), consisting of 157,791 families adopting the average family size of 5.07 from Habib et al., (2018) originally living in 1,306 villages in Rakhine state, Myanmar.

Calculation factors	
Population size	800,000
family size	5.07
Families	157,791
Number of villages	1,306

Valuation of assets and income foregone

Various data documentary sources (e.g., World Bank, Asian Development Bank, CIA) and diplomatic sources from Myanmar are used as the reference for costs and values of various assets in Rakhine state where the respondents were originally based. Table 11 presents the estimates of land value owned by Rohingya. Diplomatic sources confirmed the average value of one acre of land is US\$ 500 and, on average, each family owned two acres of land used for both the homestead and farming. Each Rohingya village also had three fishponds (on average), with an approximate size of one acre and an estimated value of USD\$ 3,000. The value of these assets is over US\$165 million.

Table 11 Valuation of assets (Land)

Land ownership	Average size	Average value in USD /unit	Population	Estimated value in USD	95% CI Lower	95% CI Higher
Land (acre)	2 Acres	2,500/ acre	97.36% (1) x 157,791 households	\$768,126,588	\$763,758,441	\$772,494,735
Fishpond (average 3 per village, 1 acre each)	3 Acres	7,000	1,306 villages	\$27,426,000	\$27,426,000	\$27,426,000
Total				\$795,552,588	\$791,184,441	\$799,920,735

- (1) Proportion of 3221 households with land ownership (95.16 with title and 2.20% without title) reported in Habib et al. (2018). Land reclamation for farming and restoration of ponds and fish stock

Table 12 reports the value of lost monthly income compared with the situation in Myanmar prior to fleeing. Habib et al., (2018) (Table 7) reported monthly income per household of USD233. Since refugees are not permitted to work in Bangladesh, this represents income the refugees have foregone. Habib et al., (2018) (Table 9) also reported that on average households left cash of USD773 behind in Myanmar when they fled and an average cost to travel to Bangladesh of USD158. The value comes close to US\$772 million. If Rohingyas are given equal opportunities, they would have a per capita income of about US\$ 800, estimated per capita income for Rakhine State as of 2017. This would estimate the average Rohingya family income at US\$ 4,056. This is what a Rohingya family has been deprived of per year since they were evicted from October 2016 and August 2017. This will push the figure for compensation significantly. Table-12 makes a lower estimate of losses faced by Rohingyas.

Table 12 Loss of savings and income as of June 2023

Category	Average Per Family Based on Tables 7 & 9 Habib et al., (2018)	Population	Estimated value in USD	95% CI Lower	95% CI Higher
Average loss of income (70 months from August 2017 to June 2023)	\$233 per month	70 months x 157,791 households	2,573,571,210	2,438,487,773	2,708,654,647
Loss due to left in Myanmar	\$773	157,791 households	121,972,443	115,873,821	128,071,065
Cost of travelling to Bangladesh *	\$157	157,791 households	24,773,187	23,534,528	26,011,846
Total			\$2,720,316,840	\$2,577,896,122	\$2,862,737,558

*Cost of return to original places of residence in Rakhine will have to be factored in during the repatriation.

Table 13 Value of housing

Types of housing	Percentage respondents 3,221 households Refer Table 5	Estimated value in USD\$	Population of 157,791 households	Value estimate in USD\$	95% CI Lower	95% CI Higher
Brick house	0.50	\$25,000 ⁸	788	19,723,875	10,115,023	29,332,727
Tin roof house	1.50	\$7,000	2,366	16,568,055	\$11,931,486	21,204,624
Palm leaf/ Thatch/ grass roof house	1.34	\$3,000	2,114	6,343,198	4,463,539	8,222,858
Earth/ clay house	91.3	\$5000	144,063	720,315,915	712,636,998	727,994,832
Others	5.36	\$1000	8,458	42,287,988	40,068,346	44,507,630
Total Estimated value				\$805,239,031	779,215,390	\$831,262,671

⁸ Information suggests this value should be closer to \$100,000

<https://www.theweek.in/news/world/2019/07/09/india-hands-over-250-pre-fabricated-houses-to-myanmar-rakhine.html#:~:text=Myanmar%27s%20Rakhine%20state,-The%20houses%20were%20built%20under%20the%20Rakhine%20State%20Development%20Programme,co>

st%20of%20USD%2025%20million.

Table 13 estimates the value of housing stock of various materials abandoned by Rohingya, most of which was reportedly razed by the Myanmar military using rocket-propelled grenades (Smith 2017). The value is close to US\$805 million.

Table 14 Valuation of sundry assets

Types of assets	Percentage of respondents	Estimated value in USD\$	Population Extrapolated to 157,791 households	Value estimation in USD\$	95% CI Lower*	95% CI Higher*
Bed	96.24	\$20	151,858	3,037,160	3,034,198	3,040,122
Table	88.05	\$10	138,935	1,389,350	1,386,825	1,391,875
Chair (set of 4)	80.00(assumed)	\$20	126,233	2,524,656	2,518,432	2,530,888
Toilet setup cost	25.00 (assumed)	\$25	39,448	986,194	977,772	994,628.12
Boat	2.48	\$500	3,913	1,956,500	1,895,963	2,017,037
Bicycle	7.23	\$20	11,408	228,160	224,127	232,193
Motorcycle	8.04	\$200	12,686	2,537,200	2,478,983	2,563,417
TV	1.68	\$200	2,651	530,200	510,187	550,213
Mobile phone	81.62	\$100	128,789	12,878,900	12,848,745	12,909,055
Radio/CD player	3.10	\$50	4,892	244,600	237,853	251,347
Agricultural tools	72.77	\$100	114,825	11,482,500	11,447,843	11,517,157
Irrigation tools	5.31	\$500	8,379	4,189,500	4,102,210	4,276,790
Buffalo /Cow	94.16	\$400	148,576	59,430,400	59,357,372	59,503,428
Homestead garden	43.12	\$50	68,039	3,401,950	3,382,671	3,421,229
Sewing machine	3.45	\$100	5,444	544,400	530,190	558,610
Solar system	77.27	\$150	121,925	18,288,750	18,239,808	18,337,692
Tube well	89.23	\$200	140,797	28,159,400	28,111,130	28,207,670
Tube well setup cost	89.23 (assumed)	\$200	140,797	28,159,400	28,111,130	28,207,670
Kerosene stove	100 (assumed)	\$10	157,791	1,577,910	1,577,910	1,577,910
Basic clothing	100 (assumed)	\$100	157,791	15,779,100	15,779,100	15,779,100
Other Household assets	100 (assumed)	150	157,791	23,668,650	23,668,650	23,668,650
Total				\$220,994,880	220,421,099	221,536,681

*Assumption that unit value is correct.

Table 14 reveals that an estimated US\$221 million +/- US\$573,000 would be needed for restitution of material asset loss when Rohingya fled to Bangladesh with only what they could carry.

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Table 15 Estimate of trauma compensation

Types of loss	No. incidents in 3,221 households (refer Table 7 Habib et al., (2018))	Value in USD\$	Population extrapolated to 157,791 households	Value estimation in USD\$	95% CI Lower*	95% CI Higher*
Loss of life	602	20,000	29,491	589,817,957	547,332,507	632,303,407
Permanent disability	40	15,000	1,960	29,392,921	20,340,864	38,444,979
Gunshot injury	1,035	5,000	50,703	253,513,948	240,790,363	266,237,532
Beating injury	2,886	5,000	141,380	706,899,761	698,582,414	715,217,108
Burns	865	5,000	42,375	211,873,975	199,798,342	223,949,609
Rape victim	445	15,000	21,800	326,996,251	298,791,308	355,201,194
Total				\$2,118,494,813	\$2,005,635,798	\$2,231,353,829

*Assumes payment per unit is correct. However, figures on compensation for loss of life, disability, rape etc. are likely to be lower in comparison to such compensations amount offered in the neighbouring countries or regional standard.

Table 15 reveals that an estimated US\$2118 million +/- \$113 million would be needed to compensate for the trauma involved in the loss of life of loved ones and injuries to those who lived.

Table 16 Summary of Compensation items

Compensation items	Table number	Amount (USD\$)	95% CI Lower	95% CI Higher
Land	11	795,552,588	791,184,441	799,920,735
Savings and income	12	2,720,316,840	2,577,896,122	2,862,737,558
Housing	13	\$805,239,031	\$779,215,39	\$831,262,671
Valuation of sundry assets	14	\$220,994,880	\$220,421,099	\$221,536,681
Cost of trauma	15	\$2,118,494,813	\$2,005,635,798	2,231,353,829
Total		\$6,439,603,272	\$5,595,137,460	\$6,946,811,474

The combined totals of the estimates for assets and income foregone and the trauma experienced by Rohingya to an estimated US\$6.440 billion +/- \$0.844.

From August 2017 to close to the fifth anniversary of the exodus from Myanmar in June 2023, US\$3,088 million of a planned US\$6,217 million has been donated by various donors to Bangladesh (<https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/656/summary>).

Further to the estimated total compensation of more than US\$ 6.440 billion, the influx of refugees to Cox's Bazar has caused a significant impact on the local ecological environment. It would cost an estimated US\$ 57,075,000⁹ million to restore the environmental damage in the area. Additionally, an estimated cost of food and shelter etc. provided by the international agencies, local and international NGOs, Bangladesh government could amount to US\$3,088,235,294¹⁰ for the last 70 months since the influx of Rohingyas in August 2017. Finally, conservative estimation reveals an additional US\$1 billion cost to the Bangladesh government for infrastructure and resources. Therefore, a total of \$2,645,310,294 cost has been incurred by the displacement of Rohingya to the international

⁹ Table 3 of Hassan et al., (2018) provides an estimate of forest loss for three camps, Kutupalong–Balukhali, Nayapara–Leda and Unchiprang camps that developed between pre- and post-August of 2017. The calculation of estimation, 25,000 USD per Ha * 2,283 Ha loss of forest= 57,075,000 USD.

¹⁰ Cost of food and shelter US\$44,117,674/ per month * 70 months = USD \$3,088,235,294.

community and the Bangladesh Government for crisis response, exclusive of interest and costs related to maintenance of security. The cost to the international community, the Bangladesh government and environmental damage estimated US\$2.645 billion, plus the estimated total compensation of **US\$6.440 billion** (Habib, M., 2023), for the displaced Rohingyas as at June 2023, equals approximately US\$9.585 billion (Habib, M., 2023), exclusive of interest and security costs.

Conclusion

The situation of Rohingya people in and from Myanmar seems to be an intractable, wicked problem. Normative appeals to the authorities in Myanmar to act in a humanitarian way fail to result in accountable or acceptable action, no matter what agreements are reached. Despite the economic and social dynamics within Bangladesh, and the burden on Bangladeshis within proximity of the refugee camps, no other country has expressed any willingness to assist with resettlement in any meaningful way. Given the circumstance, and the virtually incontrovertible, consistent, corroborated evidence of premeditated perpetration of ethnic violence against Rohingya within Rakhine state, in complete disproportion to any alleged or acknowledged provocations, Myanmar as a state should make reparations for those who fled. Penny (2017) argues that “Myanmar's civil society, and its capacity to publicly imagine a free, equal and peaceful future, will remain stifled until it acknowledges the state's genocide against the Rohingya.” The payment of compensation by Myanmar would represent an incontrovertible acknowledgement of its role in the violation of Rohingya's human rights.

Myanmar is not without resources and wealth, despite the impoverishment of its population. Compensating refugees for their trauma, orphaning, losses and material assets left behind in Myanmar would make Myanmar economically and morally accountable to some extent. In the absence of repatriation and restitution, which seems to be a bridge too far for the Myanmar authorities and Burmese majority to accept, or action against perpetrators in the International Criminal Court, which may worsen the situation, establishing standardised norms for compensation may be the only feasible action. Providing refugees with some cash resources that could be used to better their lives, perhaps create livelihoods, or contribute to their own resettlement may be the best that can be hoped for when the alternative is to create generations of refugee camp dwellers that will feed resentment and radicalisation. Given the huge aid funding donated by many countries to assist Bangladesh in sustaining the refugees, it is unrealistic to expect compensation of refugees to come from aid funds.

This study, based on estimates from data gathered in Cox's Bazar refugee camp, provides a systematic methodology for calculating the compensation required to in some way make a gesture of restitution. An amount of US\$9.585 billion (Habib, M., 2023) is assessed to be a minimum compensation as of June 2023 for the Rohingya people, exclusive of interest. Extracting that amount from the Myanmar government will not be easy, but nor would prosecution of a few in authority under international law for potential genocide. If action such as is suggested is not taken; if the atrocities committed have no repercussions except on innocent parties and those who try to assist, then what message is sent to victims and future perpetrators of such appalling and inhumane behaviour worldwide?

Similarly, the international community has also failed the Rohingyas in varying degrees. Some countries remained silent despite knowing incontrovertible evidence of atrocity crimes, while others tried to protect Myanmar from international examination and accountability.

This study is not without limitations. Estimates of normative dollar compensation for outcomes associated with mental and physical trauma, rape, loss of loved ones, loss of material assets, and loss of livelihoods are notoriously subjective and value laden. Estimates of the population and sub-samples falling within each affected category are again likely to be laden with error, but that does not mean one should not try.

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Appendix 1: 'Timeline of Genocide' reproduced and adapted from Green et al., (2018: p. 8)

Period	Event
1977-78	Myanmar Rohingya branded 'illegal Bengalis' and a military offensive forces up to 200,000 Rohingya to flee to Bangladesh. Most return the following year.
1982	Citizenship Act enacted.
1989	Burma renamed Myanmar; Arakan state renamed Rakhine state; new 'citizenship scrutiny' cards issued to Myanmar nationals – most Rohingya are excluded.
1990	National League for Democracy (NLD), led by Aung San Suu Kyi, wins elections. Aung San Suu Kyi placed under house arrest. Candidates from Rohingya parties elected to parliament.
1991-92	Military operation in northern Rakhine state forces up to 250,000 Rohingya to flee to Bangladesh.
1992	Nasaka military/border security force established in northern Rakhine state, notorious for abuses. (October) UNHCR-led forced repatriations start: up to 230,000 Rohingya are repatriated by 1997.
1993	Border Region Immigration Control restricts marriages of Rohingya in Maungdaw township.
1994	Myanmar stops issuing birth certificates to Rohingya children.
1995	Rohingya given Temporary Registration Cards.
1997	Head of Sittwe Immigration Office restricts Rohingya travelling outside their township.
2001	Anti-Muslim riots across the country; many Rohingya displaced. Twenty-eight mosques and Islamic schools destroyed in and around Maungdaw township.
2005	Maungdaw Township Peace and Development Council restricts Rohingya marriages and birth rate.
2008	Rohingya granted Temporary Registration Cards and permitted to vote in widely discredited Myanmar Constitution referendum.
2010	Myanmar elections, Rohingya allowed to vote, Rohingya MP elected. Aung San Suu Kyi released after elections.
2012	(April) Aung San Suu Kyi elected MP. (June and October) Anti-Muslim violence in central and northern Rakhine, curfews imposed throughout Rakhine state. (July): President Thein Sein states the 'solution' to the violence is to expel 'illegal' Rohingya to other countries or camps administered by the UN's refugee agency.
2013	Anti-Muslim violence in Meiktila in central Myanmar.
2014	(March) Rakhine nationalists attack international NGO offices in Sittwe. (April) Rohingya excluded from census (July). President Thein Sein begins 'citizenship verification' process in Rakhine state, which is abandoned due to civil protests.
2015	(February) Parliament grants temporary white cardholders (mostly Rohingya) the right to vote. Days later the President reverses the decision. (May) Boat crisis in Andaman Sea; UNHCR estimates up to 150,000 Rohingya had fled Myanmar by boat since January 2012. (August) Rohingya representative in northern Rakhine state, U Shwe Maung, is barred from re-election.
2015	(November) NLD wins landslide victory in general election. NLD purged all Muslim candidates before election, and Rohingya were barred from voting or standing as candidates.
2016	(April) NLD-led government restarts 'citizenship verification' process in Rakhine state; Aung San Sui Kyi creates and assumes the position of State Councillor, the civilian head of state.
2016	(August) Government pays former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's foundation an undisclosed sum to run the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State.
2016	(9 October) The Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) claim responsibility for attacks in northern Rakhine state; Myanmar army's response forces up to 90,000 Rohingya to flee to Bangladesh.

2017	(March) The UN Human Rights Council establish Fact-Finding Mission, which is subsequently barred from entering Myanmar. (24 August) The Kofi Annan Foundation presents its final Report, which does not use the term 'Rohingya'; Myanmar government agrees to implement its recommendations.
	(25 August) Reported attacks by ARSA on border security posts sees the beginning of a sustained genocidal assault on Rohingya villages across northern Rakhine state, triggering a mass exodus of Rohingya to Bangladesh.
	(October) US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson states: "The world can't just stand idly by and be witness to the atrocities", condemning the Myanmar military for its attack on Rohingya Muslim civilians.
2018	(January) In a departure from the Myanmar's military blanket denial of any wrongdoing, Myanmar admits that its soldiers and local villagers were responsible for the deaths of ten Rohingya Muslims found in a mass grave in the country's western Rakhine state.
	(April) State Department of US government investigates allegations of atrocities committed against Myanmar's Muslim Rohingya minority.
	(May) Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the Global Center for the Responsibility to Protect, and Fortify Rights call on UN Security Council to refer Myanmar to the International Criminal Court.
	(June) UN fact-finding mission recommends to the UN Security Council that Burma's military chiefs should be tried by the International Criminal Court.
	(July) International Criminal Court gives Myanmar until July 27 to respond to a prosecution request that it consider hearing the case of alleged deportations of Rohingya from Myanmar to Bangladesh.
	(August) US treasury department imposes economic sanctions on some members of Burmese security forces.
	(August) International Criminal Court rules it has jurisdiction to investigate the forced deportation of Rohingya Muslims from Rakhine.
	(September) UN Human Rights Council agrees to set up a team to collect evidence of alleged crimes committed in Myanmar against Rohingya Muslims and others since 2011.