A Sustainable Policy for
Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh

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Principal Findings

What's new? Two years after atrocities in Myanmar's Rakhine State drove a wave of Rohingya refugees into Bangladesh, prospects for repatriation remain dim. Frustrated Bangladeshi authorities refuse to plan for the long term, have introduced stringent security measures at refugee camps, and may move some refugees to a remote island, Bhasan Char.

Why did it happen? The Bangladeshi government is struggling with growing security challenges near the refugee camps and domestic political pressure to resolve the crisis. It is also irritated by the lack of progress in repatriating any of the estimated one million Rohingya refugees on its soil.

Why does it matter? Dhaka's restrictions on aid activities prohibit its partners from building safe housing in the Rohingya camps or developing programs that cultivate refugee self-reliance. Combined with heavy-handed security measures, this approach risks alienating refugees and setting the stage for greater insecurity and conflict in southern Bangladesh.

What should be done? While pressing for eventual repatriation, Bangladesh and external partners should move past short-term planning and work together to build safe housing, improve refugees' educational and livelihood opportunities, and support refugee-hosting communities. Dhaka should also roll back its counterproductive security measures and plans for relocations to Bhasan Char.

Executive Summary

Bangladesh is host to roughly one million Rohingya refugees, most of whom fled over the border following a brutal military crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine State that began in August 2017. While generously providing safe haven to this enormous population, Bangladesh has sought to treat the displacement crisis as a short-term challenge, focusing on the importance of repatriation and refusing to engage in multi-year planning. This approach has not succeeded. Repatriation efforts have stalled, crime and violence in the Rohingya camps and around them in southern Bangladesh appear to be on the rise, and Dhaka has reacted increasingly sharply. In August, it began rolling out stringent restrictions on refugees and NGOs that are interfering with the delivery of humanitarian assistance in the camps and alienating refugees, thus potentially aggravating local insecurity. Bangladesh should reverse the counterproductive measures it has imposed, publicly acknowledge the long-term nature of the crisis it is facing and begin working with external partners and refugees to mobilise the resources needed to meet it.

In late 2017, after the number of Rohingya refugees crossing the border began to diminish, Bangladesh and Myanmar moved quickly to put in place a repatriation mechanism, but so far no refugees have returned through these formal channels. Myanmar appears unwilling to create the conditions needed to encourage refugees to return, while Bangladesh and its foreign partners generally appear to lack the leverage to push Myanmar to address key issues such as citizenship and security for the Rohingya. China, Naypyitaw's most important regional partner, appears reluctant to throw its full weight behind this push, and even if it did, it is unclear whether its weight would be sufficient.

Although Bangladeshi officials privately acknowledge that the refugees are unlikely to return in the near or even medium term, the country's policy toward the Rohingya remains focused on near-term repatriation. Dhaka worries that by publicly acknowledging that Bangladesh will be hosting these refugees for years to come, it will reduce pressure on Myanmar to make the changes needed to enable repatriation, and could create a pull factor that draws yet more Rohingya over the border. As a result, it is restricting the humanitarian response to meeting the refugees' immediate needs, rather than addressing long-term challenges such as building durable shelters to withstand the region's harsh monsoons, developing programs to help refugees become more self-reliant through education and the creation of livelihood opportunities, or helping host communities absorb the impact of the refugees on the local economy. These are the kinds of programs and resources that will over time become increasingly important to Dhaka's successful management of the crisis.

Recently, Bangladesh has begun moving in the opposite direction by clamping down on refugees and humanitarian activities. In August – amid rising concern about insecurity in southern Bangladesh – Dhaka began rolling out new restrictions on refugees' freedom of movement and access to mobile phones, as well as on NGO operations in the camps. It has begun fencing some of the camps and says it will build watchtowers and instal surveillance cameras. Although plans are not firm, it has also

announced that it will press ahead with relocating some refugees to a silt island in the Bay of Bengal that is vulnerable to severe weather.

Dhaka's response to the Rohingya displacement crisis is at an inflection point. If the Bangladeshi government continues to look at the situation through a short-term lens and falls into a pattern of heavy-handed responses to security challenges, the situation could become more fraught and dangerous for all concerned. In the absence of prospects for repatriation and longer-term planning, such a crackdown will only increase the refugees' desperation. It could even make them more susceptible to recruitment into criminal or extremist networks, which would add to the security challenges Bangladesh faces.

There is another way forward. Rather than implementing the full suite of security measures it has proposed, it could scale back the most draconian, and instead focus on promoting genuine camp security by increasing a law enforcement presence and ensuring accountability for offenders. Rather than treating the Rohingya displacement crisis as a year-to-year problem, it could shift to a longer-term perspective and loosen restrictions on the activities that donors and humanitarian partners can undertake. Working together, Dhaka and its partners could mobilise resources and develop programs to build safer facilities, help refugees work toward a better future through education and livelihood opportunities, and support host communities. For their part, external partners can make clear to Bangladesh that if it makes this pivot, they will both continue to press Myanmar on repatriation – an essential goal that Dhaka's domestic constituents want to continue seeing at the top of the agenda – and provide the funding and resources required to allow this approach to succeed.

Whether or not Dhaka publicly acknowledges it, hundreds of thousands of Rohingya are likely to remain in Bangladesh for years to come. While the Bangladeshi government must consider the political implications of expressly recognising this probability, it should also consider the practical implications of failing to do so. The most promising path for responsibly managing the Rohingya displacement crisis requires the government to shift its sights to planning for the long term and looking to external partners for support in making those plans succeed. That is the path it should now take.

Yangon/Brussels, 27 December 2019

A Sustainable Policy for Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh

I.   **Introduction**

For the past four decades, Bangladesh has provided safe haven for Muslim Rohingya facing violence and persecution in Myanmar's northern Rakhine State. In 1978, around 200,000 Rohingya civilians crossed into Bangladesh to escape a violent Myanmar government operation aimed at rooting out illegal immigrants. In the early 1990s, roughly a quarter-million refugees arrived in Bangladesh after the Myanmar military unleashed another wave of abuses. Most of the Rohingya who left Rakhine State during these episodes eventually went home, though some stayed behind in the country that gave them shelter.[1]

The number of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh increased dramatically after late August 2017, when Myanmar security forces embarked on a campaign of terror in response to attacks by a militant group, the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), on Border Guard Police posts. In the space of several months nearly 750,000 Rohingya fled over the border, joining those who had sought refuge there during previous crises. Bangladesh's southern Cox's Bazar district now hosts around one million Rohingya, some 600,000 of whom live in the Kutupalong "mega-camp", the largest refugee settlement in the world.[2] Hosting a refugee population of this size would be an extraordinary burden for any country, but for a developing country like Bangladesh that has faced periodic political instability and conflict – including a two-decade insurgency in the Chittagong Hills Tracts region at the end of the last century – the strain is especially pronounced.[3]

This report looks at the Bangladeshi government's efforts to grapple with this new and greatly expanded Rohingya refugee crisis. In any such crisis, repatriation is the first and preferred option – but, for reasons laid out here, the current cohort of Rohingya refugees is unlikely to return to Myanmar any time soon. The report therefore suggests some ways in which the government can improve its crisis response in order to sustainably accommodate large numbers of Rohingya for some years to come. It builds upon earlier Crisis Group reports and briefings published since the Rohingya's mass flight around August 2017.[4] It is based upon fieldwork in Bangla-

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[1] See Crisis Group Asia Report N°261, *Myanmar: The Politics of Rakhine State*, 22 October 2014.

[2] Only 34,000 of these people are officially registered as refugees with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Bangladesh, which is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, refers to the rest as "forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals". This report, along with most international actors, such as the UN, uses the term refugees.

[3] Crisis Group interviews, Bangladeshi government and UN officials, Dhaka and Yangon, June and August 2019.

[4] See Crisis Group Asia Report N°292, *Myanmar's Rohingya Crisis Enters a Dangerous New Phase*, 7 December 2017; Crisis Group Asia Report N°296, *The Long Haul Ahead for Myanmar's Rohingya Refugee Crisis*, 16 May 2018; and Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°155, *Building a Better Future for Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh*, 25 April 2019.

desh and Myanmar, including interviews with refugees in the Cox's Bazar camps, UN and non-governmental organisation officials, donors and diplomats, Bangladeshi and Myanmar government officials, and independent experts.

II.   Stalled Repatriation, Rising Frustration, New Restrictions

A.   *The Displacement Crisis Drags On*

During the refugee crises of the 1970s and 1990s, the Bangladeshi government provided sanctuary to Rohingya fleeing military operations in northern Rakhine State. In both instances the majority of refugees returned home within a few years, but this is unlikely to be the case for the present crisis, which also involves significantly larger numbers of people. In past decades, Bangladesh's response to successive inflows of Rohingya refugees has been to focus almost exclusively on repatriation. Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya returned to Rakhine State following forced migrations in 1978 and the early 1990s, and Dhaka hoped in 2017 that it could broker a mass return once more. As soon as the number of new arrivals began to subside that October, Bangladesh opened formal negotiations with Myanmar on a process for repatriation. The following month, the neighbours signed a memorandum of understanding, and in December 2017, they set up a Joint Working Group to coordinate repatriation in what both sides committed would be a safe, voluntary and dignified manner.[5]

The two countries have made little progress since then, however. Two attempts at repatriation, in November 2018 and August 2019, ended without a single refugee who had been cleared return agreeing to go back. The problem is the conditions back home. Although the majority of refugees express their wish to repatriate, they are reluctant to return to Myanmar until the authorities remedy the institutionalised discrimination and systemic persecution that underpins recurrent violence toward the Rohingya and that Rohingya who remain in Myanmar continue to face. Rohingya leaders have drawn up a set of prerequisites for repatriation, including recognition of the Rohingya as an official Myanmar ethnic group, restoration of full citizenship rights, and lifting of restrictions on the community's freedom of movement and access to services in Rakhine State.[6] "This will be our last time as refugees. We will not let this be repeated. We must return with full rights", said a senior member of a new political group that the Rohingya have formed in the camps.[7]

Many countries back the Rohingya demands, including (increasingly) Bangladesh, where officials recognise that unless Myanmar tackles the underlying causes of the Rohingya plight returnees will be very likely to cross the border again at some point. But the demands have had little impact on decision-makers in Naypyitaw. Myanmar has persistently refused to entertain the kinds of changes that would allow the Rohingya to rebuild their lives with a reasonable measure of security and economic opportunity. It has instead argued that the way to fix the problems of Rakhine State is through an infusion of investment and aid focused on infrastructure and economic development in the northern part of the region – an infusion that would do precious

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[5] "Myanmar signs pact with Bangladesh over Rohingya repatriation", *The Guardian*, 23 November 2017.
[6] Crisis Group interviews, Bangladeshi government and refugee leaders, June and August 2019. See also "Rohingya refugee leaders draw up demands ahead of repatriation", Reuters, 19 January 2018.
[7] Crisis Group interview, Rohingya community leader, Cox's Bazar, June 2019.

little to help the Rohingya absent the introduction of meaningful protections for their economic, civil and political rights.[8]

Neither Myanmar's attitude toward the Rohingya requests nor conditions on the ground in Rakhine State appear likely to improve in the foreseeable future. Because of widespread antipathy toward the Rohingya, Myanmar's looming general election in 2020 makes gestures of support even more unlikely than at less politically charged moments. There has also been a sharp increase in clashes in Rakhine State between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army, an ethnic armed group fighting for autonomy that represents the state's Buddhist majority. This conflict has displaced at least 65,000 people and has made prospects for repatriation even more remote.[9]

As the displacement crisis drags on, Bangladeshi officials increasingly view Myanmar as insincere in its public commitment to take back the refugees. Each side has accused the other of manipulating repatriation protocols and procedures to slow the process. Bilateral tensions spiked in June, when a trusted aide to Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi, Minister for the State Counsellor's Office Kyaw Tint Swe, told an audience in Japan that Bangladesh was responsible for the failure to repatriate refugees through formal channels.[10] Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina shot back that "the problem lies with Myanmar, as they don't want to take back the Rohingyas by any means".[11] This public criticism has continued in recent months, including at the UN General Assembly in September and a Non-Aligned Movement Summit in October.[12]

The exclusion of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) from the bilateral repatriation discussions – apparently at Myanmar's insistence – means that there is no neutral party at the table to help iron out such logistical problems.[13] As noted below, China has recently assumed a mediation role, but it is widely seen as siding with Myanmar and has made little progress bringing the two sides together.

In addition to their frustration with Myanmar, Bangladeshi officials are also beginning to lash out at other countries for their perceived inability or unwillingness to push Naypyitaw to ensure accountability for crimes committed in Rakhine State and to take the steps necessary for repatriation to begin.

The problem is not lack of effort, however. On the legal front, actions against Myanmar for alleged atrocities against the Rohingya are now pending at the International Criminal Court, the International Court of Justice and the Argentinian domestic courts – although because of limitations on enforcement capacity any verdict against the Myanmar state or senior officials may be largely symbolic.[14] Many countries, as well

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[8] See Crisis Group Report, *The Long Haul Ahead for Myanmar's Rohingya Refugee Crisis*, op. cit.
[9] See Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°154, *A New Dimension of Violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State*, 24 January 2019.
[10] "Myanmar says Bangladesh not helping refugee return", *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 2 June 2019.
[11] "Bangladesh PM attacks Myanmar over Rohingya deadlock", *Frontier Myanmar*, 10 June 2019.
[12] See, for example, "Myanmar objects to Bangladeshi minister's remarks over Rohingya at NAM meeting", *The Irrawaddy*, 25 October 2019; and "Myanmar blames Bangladesh for Rohingya repatriation failure", *The Irrawaddy*, 18 November 2019.
[13] Crisis Group interviews, UN official and diplomat, Dhaka, June 2019.
[14] Priya Pillai, "Three complementary legal strategies for accountability: a momentous week for the Rohingya", *Opinio Juris*, 19 November 2019.

as the UN and non-governmental organisations, have sought to push Myanmar to take a more constructive approach to addressing the Rohingyas' plight. But none of them has had much success in shaping decision-making on this issue by officials in Naypyitaw – whose intransigence is linked to pervasive domestic bias against the Rohingya and, increasingly, reflects a siege mentality toward international demands.

In order to mount a more effective campaign against Myanmar, Bangladesh will need more help from regional heavyweights, particularly China.[15] Thus far, however, Beijing has proven reluctant. China generally shies away from pushing other governments on issues relating to human rights, regarding such pressure as meddling in internal affairs, and it wants to advance security and economic ties with Myanmar.

Dhaka has worked to change these calculations, especially in Beijing. Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid a six-day visit to China in early July 2019 and lobbied Chinese officials to press Myanmar more forcefully to improve conditions in Rakhine State so that voluntary repatriation can take place.[16] Hasina and members of her cabinet have also tried publicly emphasising the potential impact of a protracted refugee crisis on "regional stability", including the multi-billion-dollar Chinese investments in Rakhine State, such as the Kyaukphyu deep-sea port and oil and gas pipelines.[17] There is something to this warning, given the porous border between Bangladesh and Myanmar and the numerous armed groups in the region, including the Arakan Army. Although Bangladesh's policy is that it will not allow its territory to be used by these armed groups, officials in Dhaka are understandably keen to remind regional partners that they ignore the threats Bangladesh is wrestling with at their own peril.[18]

Following this push, China has begun to position itself as a mediator, and has at times been critical of Myanmar's unwillingness to make concessions in discussions about repatriation.[19] Overall, however, the impact has been modest. The primary outcome of Hasina's visit to Beijing is that China urged both sides to make another attempt at repatriation, which predictably ended without a single refugee returning. China's ambassador to Dhaka, Zhang Zuo, visited Rohingya refugee camps, but likely only to placate the Bangladeshi government after he had echoed Myanmar's line that "the real solution to the problem lies in development".[20] China also proposed – with Bangladesh's support – that Myanmar allow refugee leaders to conduct "go and see" visits to northern Rakhine State to help them weigh the possibility of return-

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[15] Bangladesh has also lacked India's support. Although New Delhi does not have the influence in Naypyitaw to push for a shift in policy toward the Rohingya, the fact that it has tended to take Myanmar's side – largely for strategic and economic reasons – is still important symbolically to Bangladesh, which has looked to India as its most important international partner since its independence in 1971.
[16] "PM Hasina: China promises to remain beside Bangladesh in Rohingya crisis", *Dhaka Tribune*, 8 July 2019.
[17] "China-led port project inches ahead in Myanmar", *Asia Times*, 15 July 2019.
[18] Crisis Group interviews, UN officials and political analysts, Dhaka, June 2019.
[19] "Myanmar, Bangladesh, China to form Joint Working Group on Rohingya repatriation", *The Irrawaddy*, 26 September 2019.
[20] Crisis Group interviews, Bangladeshi political analysts, Dhaka, June 2019. See also "Beijing sees solution to Rohingya crisis in BCIM implementation", United News of Bangladesh, 8 May 2019.

ing.[21] Myanmar said no, suggesting either the limits of Chinese diplomacy or the absence of pressure from Beijing to back it up. Naypyitaw may well understand that when push comes to shove, Beijing will continue supporting Myanmar, which it considers of much greater strategic value than Bangladesh.

Bangladeshi leaders' frustrations reflect the lack of options at their disposal to address the refugee challenge. Following earlier migration waves, Dhaka sometimes mobilised mass repatriation campaigns using coercive tactics, such as cutting food aid to refugees, as was the case in the late 1970s.[22] In general, diplomats and humanitarian organisations doubt that the current government will go to these extremes. They believe that Dhaka wishes to keep the international good-will it has accrued in hosting the Rohingya and avoid the international condemnation that would come with forced repatriation. They also think that the Bangladeshi public, despite clamouring for progress on repatriation, might still oppose such harsh measures.[23] Speaking at the UN General Assembly, Sheikh Hasina reiterated her government's commitment to voluntary repatriation.[24] While a constructive statement, it underscores the importance of planning for a future in which the circumstances that permit return could be years away.

B.   *Political Pressure and a Crackdown*

Over the course of 2019, Bangladesh's leaders have grown increasingly concerned at the impact of the Rohingya displacement crisis on their country. The crisis has created tension between Bangladeshis living in Cox's Bazar (one of the country's least developed areas) and the refugees being hosted there. It dominates the country's politics and is frequently in the news in ways that feed public anxiety. Throughout the year, media outlets have run prominent pieces linking the Rohingya to an increase in drug-linked crime in border areas and calling for stronger security measures.[25] Since January, security forces in Cox's Bazar have killed dozens of Rohingya and locals alleged to be involved in drug trafficking and other crimes, in what officials refer to as "gunfights" but may be better described as extrajudicial killings.[26] While the public frets about Rohingya links to drug trafficking, others, particularly in the military, worry that the crisis could threaten the fragile peace between the government and the ethnic minority armed groups that waged an insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts between 1977 and 1997.[27]

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[21] "Myanmar rejects Rohingya refugee visit to Rakhine State to inspect conditions for repatriation", Radio Free Asia, 3 October 2019.
[22] "Burmese Refugees in Bangladesh: Still No Durable Solution", Human Rights Watch, May 2000.
[23] Crisis Group interviews, UN officials, diplomats and political analysts, Dhaka and Cox's Bazar, June 2019.
[24] "Address by Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina", Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 27 September 2019.
[25] See, for example, "Crimes in the Rohingya camps", *The Daily Star*, 31 March 2019.
[26] "39 Rohingya killed in 'gunfights' with Bangladeshi authorities in 2019", *The Irrawaddy*, 23 September 2019. See also "'Gunfights' in Bangladesh", *The Interpreter*, 13 June 2018, and "Bangladesh: Alleged Extrajudicial Killings in the Guise of a 'War on Drugs'", Amnesty International, 4 November 2019.
[27] Crisis Group interviews, UN officials and diplomats, Dhaka, June 2019.

Against this backdrop, in August, several quickly unfolding events appeared to aggravate officials' already high levels of anxiety over the displacement crisis and to prompt the unexpected rollout of increased security measures and restrictions in the refugee camps.

To begin with, on 22 August, a second attempt at repatriation ended with none of the 3,450 refugees cleared by both countries agreeing to return home.[28] The same day, a politician from the youth wing of the ruling Awami League was killed near the border town of Teknaf in Cox's Bazar. Allegations quickly spread that two Rohingya were responsible, prompting a riot that saw local Bangladeshis attack refugees and vandalise Rohingya shops. The manhunt that ensued ended with police killing the two suspects and created a climate of panic in the refugee camps.[29]

Three days later, on 25 August, large crowds of refugees – some media reports put the number at 200,000 – demonstrated to mark what they referred to as "genocide day", ie, the anniversary of the outbreak of violence in northern Rakhine State in 2017 that triggered the mass exodus.[30] Although the demonstrations were peaceful, Bangladeshi officials were troubled by what they saw of refugees' capacity to mobilise quickly and in significant numbers. The event also strengthened domestic pressure on the government to take a tougher line against the Rohingya.[31] Meanwhile, on 31 August India released a citizenship register that effectively stripped citizenship from 1.9 million people in the eastern state of Assam, including many Muslims perceived to be illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. It is unclear what will happen to them if they become stateless, but some in Bangladesh fear that India will follow Myanmar's lead and force the country to open its borders to these Muslims, exacerbating its refugee-related burdens yet further.[32]

To be sure, Dhaka has reason to be concerned about security in southern Bangladesh. Reports of violent deaths and drug seizures are emerging on an almost daily basis from Cox's Bazar, particularly around the town of Teknaf, which is on the Naf River directly opposite northern Rakhine State. As Crisis Group recommended in April 2019, measures to improve law and order could include instituting a regular Bangladeshi police presence in the camps – where armed groups and criminal networks appear to be active – investigating crimes and bringing perpetrators to justice. Failure to address these issues risks both harming the refugees and fuelling insecurity and instability in this part of Bangladesh.[33]

Bangladeshi efforts to control crime and respond to domestic political pressure, however, have been implemented in a way that has only heightened tensions. The authorities' heavy-handed response risks increasing resentment among the refugees and, consequently, adding to the security challenges. Among other things, the gov-

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[28] The first attempt at repatriation, in November 2018, also ended with no refugees agreeing to return.
[29] "Rohingya refugees shot dead by Bangladesh police during gunfight", Agence France-Presse, 25 August 2019.
[30] "'Genocide Day': Thousands of Rohingya rally in Bangladesh camps", Al Jazeera, 25 August 2019.
[31] Crisis Group interviews, UN and Bangladeshi government official, October 2019. See also "August 25 Rohingya rally: Contradictory findings out of two inquiries", *Dhaka Tribune*, 10 September 2019.
[32] "Bangladesh concerned about fallout from India's citizen register", *The Straits Times*, 14 October 2019.
[33] Crisis Group Briefing, *Building a Better Future for Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh*, op. cit.

ernment has tightened enforcement of travel restrictions on refugees so that it is difficult to leave the camps' vicinity; placed Rohingya leaders under stricter police surveillance; evicted several humanitarian NGOs from the camps; and threatened to ban more.[34] It has also cut off internet access in the camps and threatened to arrest any refugee found with a phone – restrictions that have not only hurt refugees' ability to share information, mobilise, and organise social and political activities, but also have "seriously disrupted" relief activities and coordination efforts, according to aid groups.[35] Finally, the government has replaced local officials in the camps known to be sympathetic to refugees, including the refugee relief and repatriation coordinator, who was regarded highly by humanitarian partners.

The government's restrictive policies are already affecting the humanitarian response. Since the replacement of local officials in early September, NGOs report that it is increasingly difficult to operate in the Rohingya camps: they are subjected to much closer scrutiny and face long delays in the processing of visa requests and provision of other documents required to operate in Cox's Bazar.[36] Some have had to interrupt delivery of humanitarian services after local authorities insisted that they replace Rohingya volunteers with Bangladeshi citizens, a request agencies working in the camps deem "totally unrealistic". "Bangladeshis would never accept to do such menial work for symbolic pay", commented one aid worker. "This could kill the humanitarian response".[37]

These polices have also increased refugees' vulnerability and sense of desperation. While the pay for humanitarian work may be so low as to be "symbolic" from locals' perspective, it is an important source of income for thousands of Rohingya volunteers, particularly women.[38] Moreover, many of the refugees rely on remittances from abroad to supplement the support they receive from aid groups, but struggle to receive these without access to mobile phones.

Beyond their financial impact, the new restrictions on movement and internet access are humiliating and painful for many refugees, and have created an atmosphere of isolation, boredom and despair.[39] These restrictions may become more onerous still. In September, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan announced that the govern-

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[34] According to some officials as many as 41 NGOs had been banned from the refugee camps. See "Bangladesh withdrew 41 NGOs from Rohingya camps for 'malpractices'", bdnews24.com, 31 August 2019.

[35] Crisis Group interview, Rohingya refugee, October 2019. See also "Situation Report Rohingya Refugee Crisis", Inter Sector Coordination Group, September 2019, p. 3; and "Bangladesh, growing tired of hosting Rohingya refugees, puts new squeeze on the teeming camps", *The Washington Post*, 11 September 2019.

[36] In remarks that suggest a dim view of NGOs, Sheikh Hasina has told journalists that certain "international agencies that are providing voluntary services or working at Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar never want any refugee to go back". "Bangladesh PM attacks Myanmar over Rohingya deadlock", op. cit. But some have suggested her remarks were likely aimed at pacifying domestic constituencies. "The finger-pointing at the international community is just populism – the prime minister needs to blame someone", said one Bangladeshi NGO leader. Crisis Group interview, Bangladeshi NGO leader, Dhaka, June 2019.

[37] Crisis Group interview, aid worker, October 2019.

[38] "Cash ban stokes worry among Rohingya volunteers", *The New Humanitarian*, 17 December 2019.

[39] Crisis Group interviews, refugee and aid worker, November 2019.

ment would fence the three largest refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, installing barbed wire, watchtowers and closed-circuit video cameras in an effort to further restrict the refugees' movement.[40] Work on at least some of the fences is already under way.[41]

Finally, as further discussed below, in October, Dhaka suggested that it would press forward with an on-again, off-again plan to relocate some of the refugees to Bhasan Char, a silt island in the Bay of Bengal where it has already built shelters for an estimated 100,000 people. This idea has been criticised by humanitarian organisations because of concerns that harsh weather conditions on the island would endanger its inhabitants. Critics have also decried the site's physical isolation, the access challenges it would present for organisations providing aid and the freedom of movement restrictions it would imply for residents.[42]

Despite these announcements and actions, it remains unclear whether the government will maintain the restrictions and follow through on its plans. Competing interests and priorities within the government, administration and security agencies, along with the lack of a clear solution to the crisis, have created a confused and haphazard policymaking environment. "Everyone is holding their breath", said one UN source. "The Bangladesh government could still walk backward from some of these proposals".[43]

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[40] "Bangladesh to fence Rohingya camps in further crackdown", *Frontier Myanmar*, 27 September 2019.
[41] Crisis Group interviews, Rohingya refugee and UN official, December 2019.
[42] Crisis Group interviews, UN and Western government officials, June and October 2019.
[43] Crisis Group interview, UN official, October 2019.

III. **Overcoming a Dangerous Contradiction**

Bangladesh's policy toward the Rohingya contains a dangerous contradiction. Bangladeshi officials privately acknowledge that large-scale returns are unlikely to begin any time soon, but because of concerns about saying so publicly, they have so far been unwilling to undertake the kind of medium- and long-term planning that is necessary to manage both security risks and humanitarian assistance at the refugee camps. Most immediately, the government has indicated that it wants to continue with a single-year plan for 2020.[44]

A. *A Reluctance to Face the Future*

In explaining Bangladesh's reluctance to engage in planning past the short term, officials identify a number of concerns. They worry that by visibly planning to host the Rohingya for what could stretch into an unknowable number of years, they will give international partners a reason to relax pressure on Myanmar to take the necessary steps to enable large-scale returns. They claim that recognising this likelihood would be demoralising to the Rohingya, and might encourage them to take up arms to force political change or turn to drug trafficking and other criminal activities to provide for themselves.[45] Conversely, they argue that if conditions improve too much, some of the estimated 600,000 Rohingya who have thus far remained in Rakhine State might be motivated to cross into Bangladesh.[46] Finally, they point to the domestic blowback they would face if they were to begin planning to accommodate the Rohingya for a long period of time, especially among residents of Cox's Bazar, who increasingly see the refugees as both a drain on the local economy and a source of insecurity.[47]

Some local officials familiar with the displacement crisis and who worked closely with refugees and humanitarian groups had sought to thread a needle between these concerns and the importance of providing support that takes into account the needs of refugees almost certain to be around for at least the medium term. To improve conditions in the camps and provide refugees with a partial means of supporting themselves, they had quietly allowed some activities – such as paving roads, digging drains and building sturdier housing – that contravene official policy. Many camp residents worked as "volunteers" with NGOs to get around prohibitions on employment, and were doing tasks for which it would be difficult to hire locals.[48]

The informal skirting of official policy to allow space for refugees to achieve a measure of self-reliance follows a pattern established over the past 25 years. Bangladesh looked the other way as tens of thousands of Rohingya who fled the 1991-1992 military operation but never returned integrated into Cox's Bazar and nearby districts. Many found work or established businesses, and their children enrolled in lo-

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[44] Crisis Group interviews, UN officials and diplomats, Dhaka, June 2019.

[45] Crisis Group interviews, Bangladeshi government officials, June and August 2019.

[46] "Detailed findings of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar", Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, September 2019, p. 6.

[47] Crisis Group interviews, UN and Bangladeshi government officials, diplomats and political analysts, Dhaka, Cox's Bazar and Yangon, June and August 2019.

[48] Crisis Group interviews, UN and humanitarian organisation officials, Cox's Bazar, June 2019.

cal schools. Some even obtained Bangladeshi citizenship, often through illegal means. The results of this "quiet integration" approach are evident even today. A short walk through the local market that leads from the town of Ukhiya in Cox's Bazar to the registered refugee camp at Kutupalong reveals gold shops, mobile phone outlets and fruit stalls run by long-time Rohingya refugees who have become part of the local community.

This "quiet integration" approach is not a tenable solution to today's crisis, however. The million-strong refugee population is too large and the economic situation of the district too strained.[49] Rather than integrating, the Rohingya could well end up overwhelming local capacity if special provisions are not made. Bangladeshi authorities have already taken some anti-integration measures, including forcing some Rohingya children out of the state school system earlier this year.[50]

B.   *The Downsides of Dhaka's Current Approach*

Against this backdrop, one option for Bangladeshi authorities is to continue going in the direction in which they have already begun to move: tightening security, affording little freedom of movement, restricting access to employment and continuing to manage this massive displacement crisis through a sequence of one-year plans. But while the government may believe that this strategy plays well with its domestic constituents and serves its repatriation objectives, it should weigh the significant practical risks that its approach creates.

The emphasis on near-term planning may short-change the communities of Cox's Bazar by denying them access to donor funding that might help them better bear the burden of this influx of refugees. Many donors recognise the need to provide support to local Bangladeshi communities in order to cushion the impact that the population surge in the district has had on the local economy, and host community support is an important part of their planning. Yet the government's restrictions on aid programs and its year-to-year approach to planning do not encourage the mobilisation of aid funding for anything beyond the most basic needs of the refugees, let alone host community development. In some cases, donors have already committed to multi-year financing, but in the absence of proper planning there is a risk that these funds will not have the maximum possible impact.[51]

The flaws of this approach are showing as Bangladeshis in Cox's Bazar cope with the welter of problems that have come with the sudden influx of hundreds of thousands of people. Wages for daily labourers have declined and state schoolteachers have quit their jobs for higher-paying positions with NGOs, creating challenges for educating local children. Crime has increased and thousands of acres of forest have been decimated for the creation of camps and by refugees in search of firewood. The aid operation has also caused significant traffic congestion, creating safety concerns,

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[49] Crisis Group interviews, UN officials, diplomats and aid workers, Dhaka and Cox's Bazar, June 2019.
[50] Those expelled were the children of registered refugees who arrived in the early 1990s. See "Bangladesh: Rohingya Refugee Students Expelled", Human Rights Watch, 1 April 2019.
[51] "Moving Beyond the Emergency: A Whole of Society Approach to the Refugee Response in Bangladesh", Centre for Global Development and International Rescue Committee, October 2019, p. 19.

particularly for local children walking to school. Failure to address host community frustrations is almost certain to manifest itself in increasingly greater tensions between the Rohingya and their hosts. "At first we had sympathy and we helped them", said one politician in Ukhiya, near the Kutupalong camp. "But now we are living side by side, the situation has changed … we are facing many problems".[52]

Another impact of Bangladesh's short-term focus is that humanitarian and development organisations face a range of restrictions in terms of how they are able to respond to the crisis. The UN and NGOs, for example, are not permitted to build permanent housing, which leaves refugees vulnerable to cyclones and landslides. Bangladesh has two cyclone seasons per year. As one aid worker observed: "Twice a year, we're rolling the dice. So far we've gotten lucky, but eventually we won't".[53] Even in 2019, during which, as the aid worker said, the camps have been "lucky", monsoon rains caused dozens of landslides that left at least ten people dead and destroyed 5,000 shelters.[54]

Finally, short-term planning makes it very difficult to develop programming that would help refugees achieve a measure of self-reliance through livelihood opportunities and education for their children. Local observers worry that, as the situation becomes protracted, a combination of frustration, boredom and despair could lead greater numbers either to turn to crime to support themselves or to armed violence as a means of having a say in their future.[55]

Still, to date, the primary concession that Dhaka has made to the long-term reality of the Rohingya presence has been to construct a facility on a silt island in the Bay of Bengal, Bhasan Char, ostensibly to relieve overcrowding in the camps. Sheikh Hasina has made this relocation project her signature initiative, handing the navy a $276 million budget to make the cyclone-prone island habitable by building shelters and other infrastructure. The facility would be able to house an estimated 100,000 refugees.[56]

The government says refugees who relocate will enjoy better services, security and livelihood opportunities (primarily agriculture and fishing) than in the Cox's Bazar camps. Evaluating these claims is difficult, however, because the government has not permitted the UN to undertake any technical assessment and UN officials have not been able to visit the site for more than a year. UN agencies and international rights groups have expressed repeated concerns about the plan, particularly that it would leave refugees exposed to the threat of cyclones. The prospect of moving to Bhasan Char is also unpopular with many refugees, due to concerns about the island's safety and its isolation.[57] (The island is much farther away from Myanmar than the camps are.)

[52] Crisis Group interview, local politician, Cox's Bazar, June 2019.
[53] Crisis Group interview, international aid worker, Cox's Bazar, June 2019.
[54] "Deadly monsoon destroys 5,000 shelters in Bangladesh", Agence France-Presse, 14 July 2019.
[55] Crisis Group interviews, Rohingya leaders and UN official, Cox's Bazar, June 2019.
[56] "Bangladesh project to house Rohingya on flood-prone island ready to open", Radio Free Asia, 12 October 2018.
[57] Crisis Group interviews, Rohingya leaders, UN and humanitarian organisation officials, Dhaka and Cox's Bazar, June 2019. See also "For Rohingya, Bangladesh's Bhasan Char 'Will Be Like a Prison'", Human Rights Watch, 14 March 2019.

Sensing the discontent among refugees and donors, and probably wary of going ahead just prior to the risky monsoon season, the Bangladeshi government backed away from an April 2019 deadline to begin relocation. In October 2019, it claimed that several thousand refugees had agreed to relocate, and that the first would move in November 2019, but it appears to have once again backed down in the face of UN and refugee concerns.[58]

Moreover, even if it were viewed as both safe and desirable, relocation to Bhasan Char on its own would not be an adequate response to the protracted refugee crisis in Bangladesh, as it can only accommodate a relatively small proportion (roughly one tenth) of the Rohingya population in Cox's Bazar.

C.   *The Advantages of a Longer-term Approach*

Given the downsides of short-term planning and heavy-handed security measures for managing what all parties agree (at least privately) is going to be a multi-year displacement crisis, one question the government of Bangladesh should be asking is whether there might be a more promising approach.

The answer is a provisional yes. Given the enormous burdens of hosting one million refugees, no strategy can realistically promise simultaneously to provide for their needs and eliminate all of the burdens and risks they create for host communities. Still, by taking a longer-term approach to planning for these challenges, Dhaka would be able more effectively to mobilise government capabilities and donor resources in trying to meet them, while also position them better for a successful return to Myanmar when conditions in Rakhine State improve.

Responsible preparation for a years-long period of hosting the Rohingya does not require Dhaka or its external partners to abandon pressure on Myanmar to create conditions that will allow refugees to return to their rightful homes. Indeed, donors, international organisations and civil society should continue to press vigorously for needed reforms in Rakhine State. They should appeal to regional heavyweights China and – to a lesser extent – India to join the effort, arguing along the same lines as Sheikh Hasina that the protracted displacement of one million Rohingya risks creating instability well past Bangladesh's borders. By rallying to Dhaka's side in continuing to push Myanmar, external partners may help allay its concerns – and those of its domestic constituents – that they have abandoned hopes for repatriation even as they work to improve conditions for the refugees during their stay in Bangladesh.

To maximise its efforts at improving those conditions, however, Dhaka will need to drop its insistence on meeting the needs of the Rohingya and their host communities through one-year planning. It will also need to relax its restrictions on humanitarian programs. It should work with the UN on a multi-year Joint Response Plan and encourage donors to consider the full suite of needs that must be met over the next several years – from basic humanitarian services to support for communities that may be chafing at the burdens of a long-term refugee presence to programming that can help refugees achieve a measure of self-reliance. It should also, with donor and UN support, build camp facilities that can withstand the monsoons, cyclones and accompanying mudslides that put residents at risk.

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[58] "Rohingya island relocation uncertain after UN doubts", *Dhaka Tribune*, 4 November 2019.

When it comes to programming for the promotion of self-reliance, perhaps the greatest opportunity lies in education. Current educational programming contains major gaps: while early learning centres at the Rohingya camps enrol substantial numbers of children under age twelve, educational opportunities for older children are non-existent.[59] Survey data suggests that camp residents are correspondingly focused on the need to educate their older children, and eager for higher quality education in all age groups.[60] To fill these gaps, Rohingya leaders have supported informal education programs to supplement current offerings, and madrassa schools, which teach both religious and secular subjects, are proliferating. For its part, UNICEF has prepared a multi-level standardised curriculum, which targets competencies similar to those that children would learn in a more formal school setting, up to the eighth grade. None of these stopgaps, however, provides children with exposure to an accredited curriculum that can be the gateway to educational advancement down the road.[61]

The medium-term goal should be to teach the curriculum that is used in Myanmar.[62] Crisis Group interviews indicate that Rohingya leaders strongly prefer this option because they see their future as being back in Myanmar.[63] Giving Rohingya children instruction in the Myanmar curriculum could help strengthen literacy in a community where, as a result of lack of opportunity, around half of the refugees received no formal schooling before arriving in Bangladesh (though many had attended religious schools) and many cannot speak the Myanmar language.[64] By providing language and literacy skills, an education in the Myanmar curriculum could help Rohingya overcome perceptions that they are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh when they are ultimately able to return to their homes, and therefore make it easier

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[59] Although official enrolment figures for children under twelve are high – 420,000 children across 5,475 centres – community leaders and NGO workers caution that some children have been enrolled multiple times and the quality of education varies significantly. Crisis Group interviews, Rohingya community leaders and NGO workers, Cox's Bazar, June 2019. See also Situation Report Rohingya Refugee Crisis, op. cit., p. 2.

[60] "We Do Not Believe Myanmar! The Rohingya Survey 2019", Xchange, March-April 2019. According to the survey, 99.8 per cent of respondents believed that there was enough educational opportunity for those under twelve and 99.4 per cent said there was not enough opportunity for those twelve and above. Six in ten said they were dissatisfied with the quality of education.

[61] Rohingya leaders have expressed frustration both that they were not consulted in the development of the UNICEF curriculum and that – because it is not accredited in either Bangladesh or Myanmar – it would put students at a disadvantage should they seek to enrol in formal schooling at a later date. Crisis Group interviews, Rohingya community leaders, Cox's Bazar, June 2019.

[62] When refugees first began arriving in Bangladesh after August 2017, Myanmar reportedly rejected a request to use its curriculum in the camps. It is unclear how strongly it was pressed, however, and more recently both the Bangladesh and Myanmar governments have expressed willingness to explore the possibility of using the Myanmar curriculum. Crisis Group interviews, NGO workers, Cox's Bazar, June 2019. See also "UN, NGOs accused of bungling effort to educate Rohingya children", Al Jazeera, October 2019.

[63] Crisis Group interviews, Rohingya leaders, Cox's Bazar, June 2019. This preference was also reflected in a recent survey of the informal education sector in the camps, where use of the Myanmar curriculum is common. "We Must Prevent a Lost Generation: Community-led Education in Rohingya Camps", Peace Research Institute Oslo, 2019, p. 7.

[64] "We Do Not Believe Myanmar! The Rohingya Survey 2019", op. cit. Only one in ten females and two in ten males had any formal schooling.

to overcome resistance within Myanmar to extending them citizenship and in turn support repatriation efforts.

The Bangladeshi government could also use the development of this programming as a tool to further its diplomatic goals. Teaching the Myanmar curriculum would require not only the approval but also the support of the Myanmar government, which would need to facilitate both accreditation and the travel of Myanmar-speaking teachers to the camps. Although by some accounts Naypyitaw earlier refused requests along these lines, Bangladesh should press again, seeking support from China and others, and underscoring that Myanmar can show its support for repatriation by acceding. It would also be a way for Bangladesh and Myanmar to pursue cooperation on an issue that is less politically charged than repatriation, citizenship or accountability for crimes committed in Rakhine. Ideally, Myanmar NGOs and civil society organisations could be engaged to support this effort, creating valuable links between the Rohingya and mainstream Myanmar society, from which they have been cut off.

Regardless of the curriculum and language of instruction, it is important that the authorities scale up education quickly, in consultation with Rohingya community leaders and those running informal education programs. While the refugees' future is uncertain, education will be an asset wherever they end up.

Progress on livelihood opportunities and skills-based training is no less essential, although the path forward is less clear than it is in the area of education. The overwhelming majority of Rohingya are unemployed and reliant on humanitarian aid.[65] Aid pledges remain robust but will inevitably decline in the coming years, even if Dhaka takes steps to encourage more donations.[66] Creating income-generating opportunities for the Rohingya could help reduce their reliance on external support and give them more agency. Because of the potential impact of work force competition on wages and opportunities for Bangladeshi locals, however, any move in this direction needs to be paired with support to host communities to blunt ill effects and mitigate possible friction with the Rohingya. Local humanitarian workers and Rohingya leaders suggest that there is a great deal of work that Dhaka, donors, NGOs and institutions such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank could usefully do to develop a package of livelihoods programs that benefit refugees and corresponding support that cushions surrounding communities against the impact of a surge of new workers into the local work force.[67]

In shifting to an approach that emphasises the development of refugee self-reliance, Bangladeshi authorities should roll back newly introduced and counterproductive security restrictions that pull in the opposite direction – increasingly toward treating the Rohingya population as a nascent security threat to be isolated or walled off. While camp security should be a priority, the government needs to avoid draco-

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[65] "We Do Not Believe Myanmar! The Rohingya Survey 2019", op. cit. Eighty-eight per cent of the 1,277 respondents said they were unemployed at the time of the survey.
[66] Crisis Group interviews, UN officials, aid workers and diplomats, Dhaka and Cox's Bazar, June 2019. The 2019 Joint Response Plan is 66 per cent funded, only slightly below the 2018 plan which was 71 per cent funded. For funding figures, see the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs website.
[67] Crisis Group interviews, Rohingya leaders and aid workers, Cox's Bazar, June 2019.

nian and alienating measures like fencing and phone confiscation that appear intended to make camps seem like prisons and threaten access to or provision of humanitarian services.[68] Similarly, the government should shelve plans to relocate tens of thousands of detainees to Bhasan Char until it has addressed the well-founded concerns raised by humanitarian workers and refugees, and can ensure that the process is voluntary.

Finally, the Rohingya themselves should have greater opportunity to participate in planning for their future in order to create trust, build optimism about the future and develop the community's capacity to fend for itself. In interviews with Rohingya leaders, Crisis Group found a perception that neither Bangladeshi officials nor humanitarian organisations consult them properly on key initiatives, which has led to possibly avoidable problems in implementation.[69] Initially, the lack of consultation was understandable: the chaos of the immediate crisis response made deliberation difficult. But the Rohingya have since organised and are finding their voice. Refugees are establishing new groups focused on politics, education and gender. Some of these organisations may not be truly representative of the entire community (women remain very much under-represented in most of them), but together they are increasingly positioned to offer a range of valuable perspectives about the community's future – a future they see as being back in Myanmar.[70]

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[68] Crisis Group Briefing, *Building a Better Future for Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh*, op. cit.
[69] Rohingya leaders highlighted several examples where inadequate consultation had led to negative outcomes. These include the hiring of Rohingya women as volunteers with NGOs, which provoked a conservative backlash and resulted in them facing threats from other refugees, and the design of smart ID cards distributed by UNHCR, which had prompted protests from refugees, who were concerned that it would undermine their prospects for ethnic recognition in Myanmar. Consulting with religious and other leaders could have helped the humanitarian organisations anticipate resistance to these steps and build support that would have mitigated the backlash. Crisis Group interviews, aid workers and Rohingya community leaders, Cox's Bazar, June 2019.
[70] Crisis Group interview, leader of a Rohingya women's group, Cox's Bazar, June 2019.

IV. **Conclusion**

Near-term prospects for repatriating Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh are slim. Dhaka's policy toward the refugees should evolve to recognise this emerging reality. Its recent policy moves to combat crime and insecurity and to put in place restrictions on refugees and NGOs are largely counterproductive and could lead to a dangerous downward spiral in the camps that would only undermine security further. Beyond rolling back draconian measures and focusing on steps better tailored to making the camps safe – such as increasing police presence – the government should shift its focus to addressing the question of how it will create a secure and protected environment for both the Rohingya and their hosts in southern Bangladesh over the longer term.

Taking a longer view of the displacement crisis, and discarding the practice of single-year planning to manage it, could help Dhaka mitigate risks from armed gangs to extreme weather. Providing the Rohingya with education and vocational opportunities as part of this effort could help not only avert militancy and criminality but also support the refugees' eventual reintegration into Myanmar.

Such a policy shift from Dhaka will require international partners to play their part as well. They should continue pressing Myanmar to create the conditions for safe, voluntary and dignified repatriation. On the ground in Bangladesh, they should significantly increase support to Bangladeshis in and near Cox's Bazar, not only to alleviate the burden that the refugee crisis has imposed but also to mitigate the domestic political backlash that is narrowing Dhaka's policy options for the crisis response. Together with Dhaka, they should look for ways to expand the role of Rohingya refugee representatives in making decisions about their future. It is a future that the Rohingya, Dhaka and external partners all hope will bring the refugees back to Myanmar, but that in the meantime will require all parties to make the best of a difficult situation in Bangladesh.

Yangon/Brussels, 27 December 2019

Appendix A: Refugee Population in Cox's Bazar District, Bangladesh
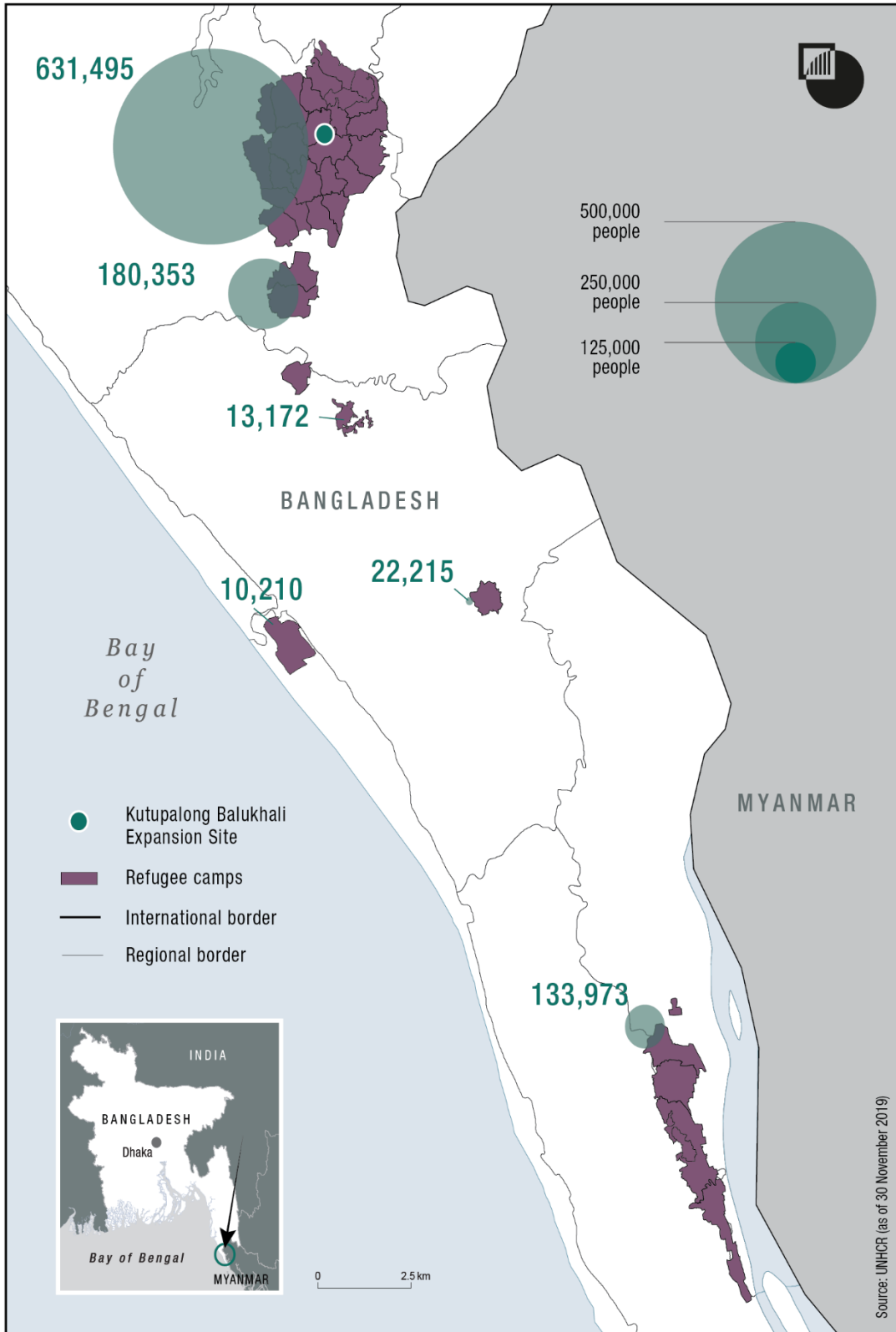
Appendix B: About the International Crisis Group

The International Crisis Group (Crisis Group) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 120 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

Crisis Group's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries or regions at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, it produces analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international, regional and national decision-takers. Crisis Group also publishes *CrisisWatch*, a monthly early-warning bulletin, providing a succinct regular update on the state of play in up to 70 situations of conflict or potential conflict around the world.

Crisis Group's reports are distributed widely by email and made available simultaneously on its website, www.crisisgroup.org. Crisis Group works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analyses and to generate support for its policy prescriptions.

The Crisis Group Board of Trustees – which includes prominent figures from the fields of politics, diplomacy, business and the media – is directly involved in helping to bring the reports and recommendations to the attention of senior policymakers around the world. Crisis Group is chaired by former UN Deputy Secretary-General and Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Lord (Mark) Malloch-Brown.

Crisis Group's President & CEO, Robert Malley, took up the post on 1 January 2018. Malley was formerly Crisis Group's Middle East and North Africa Program Director and most recently was a Special Assistant to former U.S. President Barack Obama as well as Senior Adviser to the President for the Counter-ISIL Campaign, and White House Coordinator for the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf region. Previously, he served as President Bill Clinton's Special Assistant for Israeli-Palestinian Affairs.

Crisis Group's international headquarters is in Brussels, and the organisation has offices in seven other locations: Bogotá, Dakar, Istanbul, Nairobi, London, New York, and Washington, DC. It has presences in the following locations: Abuja, Algiers, Bangkok, Beirut, Caracas, Gaza City, Guatemala City, Hong Kong, Jerusalem, Johannesburg, Juba, Mexico City, New Delhi, Rabat, Tbilisi, Toronto, Tripoli, Tunis, and Yangon.

Crisis Group receives financial support from a wide range of governments, foundations, and private sources. Currently Crisis Group holds relationships with the following governmental departments and agencies: Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Austrian Development Agency, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, European Union Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, French Development Agency, French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, German Federal Foreign Office, Global Affairs Canada, Irish Aid, Iceland Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Principality of Liechtenstein, Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the UK Department for International Development, and the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

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December 2019

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Seizing the Moment: From Early Warning to Early Action, Special Report N°2, 22 June 2016.

Counter-terrorism Pitfalls: What the U.S. Fight against ISIS and al-Qaeda Should Avoid, Special Report N°3, 22 March 2017.

Council of Despair? The Fragmentation of UN Diplomacy, Special Briefing N°1, 30 April 2019.

Seven Opportunities for the UN in 2019-2020, Special Briefing N°2, 12 September 2019.

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Stirring up the South China Sea (IV): Oil in Troubled Waters, Asia Report N°275, 26 January 2016 (also available in Chinese).

East China Sea: Preventing Clashes from Becoming Crises, Asia Report N°280, 30 June 2016.

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The Korean Peninsula Crisis (I): In the Line of Fire and Fury, Asia Report N°293, 23 January 2018 (also available in Chinese).

The Korean Peninsula Crisis (II): From Fire and Fury to Freeze-for-Freeze, Asia Report N°294, 23 January 2018 (also available in Chinese).

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Southern Thailand's Peace Dialogue: No Traction, Asia Briefing N°148, 21 September 2016.

Myanmar's Peace Process: Getting to a Political Dialogue, Asia Briefing N°149, 19 October 2016 (also available in Burmese).

Myanmar: A New Muslim Insurgency in Rakhine State, Asia Report N°283, 15 December 2016 (also available in Burmese).

Building Critical Mass for Peace in Myanmar, Asia Report N°287, 29 June 2017 (also available in Burmese).

Buddhism and State Power in Myanmar, Asia Report N°290, 5 September 2017 (also available in Burmese).

Jihadism in Southern Thailand: A Phantom Menace, Asia Report N°291, 8 November 2017 (also available in Thai and Malay).

Myanmar's Rohingya Crisis Enters a Dangerous New Phase, Asia Report N°292, 7 December 2017 (also available in Burmese).

The Long Haul Ahead for Myanmar's Rohingya Refugee Crisis, Asia Report N°296, 16 May 2018 (also available in Burmese).

Myanmar's Stalled Transition, Asia Briefing N°151, 28 August 2018 (also available in Burmese).

Bangladesh-Myanmar: The Danger of Forced Rohingya Repatriation, Asia Briefing N°153, 12 November 2018.

Fire and Ice: Conflict and Drugs in Myanmar's Shan State, Asia Report N°299, 8 January 2019 (also available in Burmese).

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Building a Better Future for Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh, Asia Briefing N°155, 25 April 2019.

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