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Problems Related to Refuge Provided in Bangladesh to Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (Rohingya): An Assessment of Governance Challenges

Executive Summary

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Problems Related to Refuge Provided in Bangladesh to Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (Rohingya): An Assessment of Governance Challenges

Research Advisers:
Advocate Sultana Kamal
Chairperson, Board of Trustees, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB)
Dr.Iftekharuzzaman
Executive Director, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB)
Professor Dr.SumaiyaKhair
Adviser -Executive Management, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB)

Research Supervisor:
Mohammad Rafiqul Hassan
Director
Research and Policy, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB)

Study conducted by:
Gulam Mohiuddin, Programme Manager-Research, Climate Finance Governance, TIB
Zafar Shadeq Chowdhury, Deputy Programme Manager, Research and Policy, TIB
Md Razu Ahmed Masum, Assistant Manager - Research, Climate Finance Governance, TIB
Md. Jashim Uddin, Area Manager, Civic Engagement, TIB

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1. Background and rationale

Rohingya issue is a historical one that can be traced back to colonial period (The Wall Street Journal, 2016). Since the recent influx starting on 25 August 2017, more than 5,09,000 new arrivals are reported as of 03 October (Inter Sector Coordination Group, October 2017) those are residing in 0 registered camps, 3 makeshift camps and in 7 spontaneous locations in Ukhia, Teknaf and Bandarbans along with the existing Rohingyas in Bangladesh who came since 1991(ISCG, October 2017).

The United Nations has called the Rohingyas the world's most persecuted minority group and described the atrocities by Myanmar's authorities as "ethnic cleansing" (The Conversation, September 2017). Amnesty International has described it as 'crime against humanity'.

The Rohingya influx in a noticeable volume started at 1978 when 200,000 of them came to Bangladesh. Among them 180,000 returned through bi-lateral diplomatic negotiation and repatriation and 10,000 died and 10,000 reported missing (Human Rights Watch, 2000).

The second stream of influx started in 1991 when a total of 2,50,000 Rohingyas came in to Bangladesh. The influx however continued over the years in subsequent streams - more Rohingyas entering in 2012, 2014 and 2016. However, since last August 2017, the latest stream of influx was unprecedented in volume and suddenness.

About 80% of those fleeing in are women and children and there are babies being born along the way (the guardian, September 2017). Management of this huge and sudden influx has become a logistical nightmare for the local administration and organizations. However, collective efforts are put from the government, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and lots of individual and Community Based Organization's initiatives which are helping the process of initial response to emergency need.

Despite collective efforts to manage the overall situation, there might be governance challenges considering the suddenness and volume of this recent influx. Also, chance of abuse, exploitation, violence, irregularities and corruption normally increase in such type of emergency situation. Besides, when so many stakeholders are working together from different kind of entities, struggle in coordination is common.

In this backdrop, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has undertaken this study to explore the governance challenges in the situation and overall management. Recommendations are drawn to address the identified challenges aiming different stakeholders.

2. Aim and Objective

The aim of this study was to make a rapid assessment over the relief response and shelter management for the Forcedly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (Rohingyas)
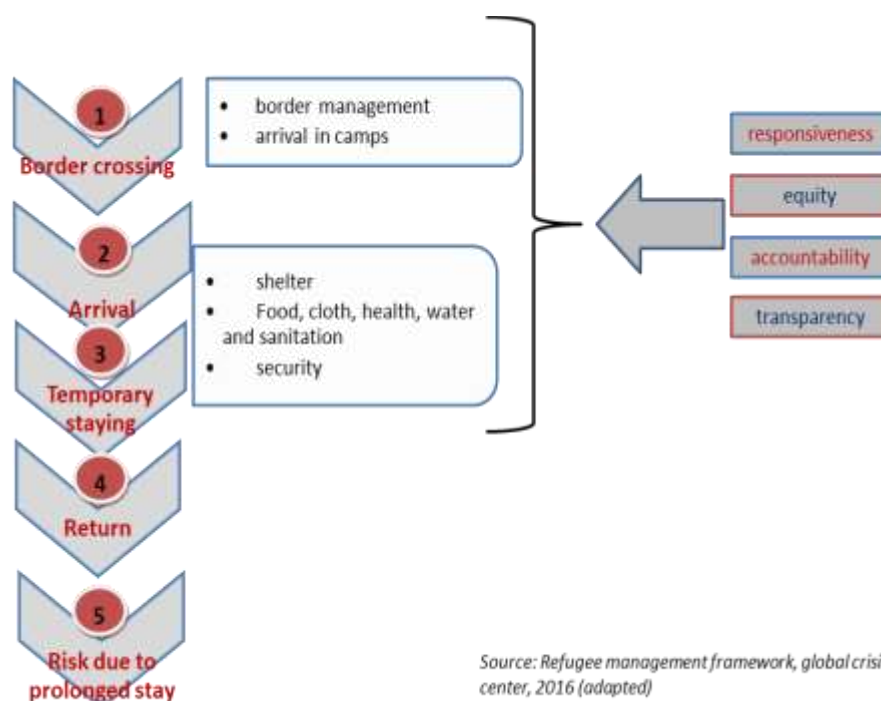
. The specific objectives were:

- A brief review of related stakeholders and the coordination mechanism among them
- A brief review of the provisions and arrangement including the relief management for the Rohingyas
- Identifying governance challenges and generating recommendations

3. Research method and sources of data

This is a qualitative study and data were collected on the selected issue till data saturation was reached. Data were collected and analyzed in the light of selected governance indicators- Transparency, Accountability, Equity and Responsiveness. The field collection was done a 4 member core team from TIB staffs who stayed at field level for 14 days. Two local youths were recruited to provide support for language barrier in interviewing Rohigyas. A detailed check list was developed and thorough training was provided on the objective of the research, data collection methods and tools.

Analytical framework

Source: Refugee management framework, global crisis center, 2016 (adapted)

Key Informant's Interview (KII) and Observation was the primary method of data collection along with related literature review. KII was conducted with all major

stakeholders working there including Government agencies, International Aid Agencies, Non-Government Organizations, Private Sector and Rohingyas.

4. Scope of the study

The assessment covered the following issues like- Placement of the refugees, arrangement of basic needs, documentation and registration, exposure to risk of crime and abuse, relief management. The assessment focused focus on adequacy, method of distribution, coordination, accountability measures instead of numbers.

5. Research Findings

5.1 Stakeholders: Role and Coordination

Valiant efforts are being putted on by all the relevant stakeholders after the recent Rohingya influx. A wide range of stakeholders from Government, UN Bodies, Aid agencies, INGOs, NGOs along with the local inhabitants and volunteers are working and supporting the management of the overall situation.

Table-1: Sector wise Stakeholders Engaged in Relief Response & management

Sector	Lead agency	Non-UN Operational Partners
Education	UNICEF	
	SCI	
Food Security	WFP	
Health	IOM, WHO	
Nutrition	UNICEF	
Safety, Dignity and Respect for Individual Rights	UNHCR	▪ 39 International Agencies ▪ 16 National Non-Government Organizations
Child Centred Care	UNICEF	
Gender Based Violation	UNFPA	
Refugee Response (Multi-Sector)	UNHCR	
Shelter/NFI	IOM	
Site Management	IOM	
WASH	UNICEF	
	ACF	

5.2 Strong points of overall management

- Sincere efforts have been taken by all related stakeholders; specially District Commissioner (Cox's Bazar) and his team have played a significant role in overall coordination. Government organizations are deploying additional manpower as required.

- Field visits have been conducted from Prime Minister's Office, related ministries and departments to oversee the ongoing activities.

- ISCG and partner organizations are putting valiant efforts and taking different initiatives as required.

- Given the emergency situationand evolving nature of the scenario almost on a daily basis, coordination among the stakeholders (Govt. Organizations, International Agencies, NGOs and others) is satisfactory.

- Rohingyas staying scattered all over are being brought together in camp areaswhich is very important for bringing in discipline in relief distribution and providing security to the Rohingyas as well

- All stakeholders are responsive towards the Rohingyas

- Information regarding foreign aid (Govt. to Govt.) and relief provided by the NGOs are disclosed by the District Administration

- ISCG is providing situation report periodically about the overall activities and progress in different sectors

- Local inhabitants and people from all over Bangladesh has come forward with aid and other supports to address this sudden and massive challenge

- UNICEF and partner organizations are building some child centrs. Though the number is inadequate in terms of need but the quality of the infrastructures built so far are good

5.3Crossing the border and reaching the camps

Rohingyas are crossing the border over several points that includes both land and water ways. Major boder points for Rohingya incoming in Teknaf are Shah Porir Dwip, Shamlapur, Hnila, Whykhong Kanjar Para, Leda, Unchiprang. In case of Ukhia the major points are Anjumanpara and Jamtoli. Rohingyas are also incoming using the land border of Tombru at Ghumdhum Union and Naikkhongchari.

The people crossing the land border have been using local transport to reach the nearby camps. The transportation system and duration of journey depends on the border point they have crossed and which camp they want to go. Those coming through waterway, crossing the Naf River, have a different way and process to enter Bangladesh and reach the camps. At first they cross the river by boat and then they come to land border of Bangladesh. Then they are directed by the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and local inhabitants towards the camps using local transports. However, there is no formal process of receiving them at border or any initial enlisting or security check.

5.4Finding the place for shelter and building the shelter

Most of the Rohingya settlements are built in the hilly land where bamboos are used for framing the shelter structures which are then covered by polythene papers. Hills were dug to make the place suitable for building a shelter. The shelters are typically built on a land size of 12x18 ft.. There is no formal process of allotting the place for staying or taking shelters. Newcomer Rohingyas find a place besides the existing

shelters or they build their shelters through digging and leveling new spot on hill.Palli Biddut (Rural Electrification Board) has started working to provide electricity supply and they are going to complete distribution line to 10 distribution spots where RRRC is coordinating the process. Interestingly, many Rohingya families have come with a solar panel and arranged lights at their shelters with their own arrangement.
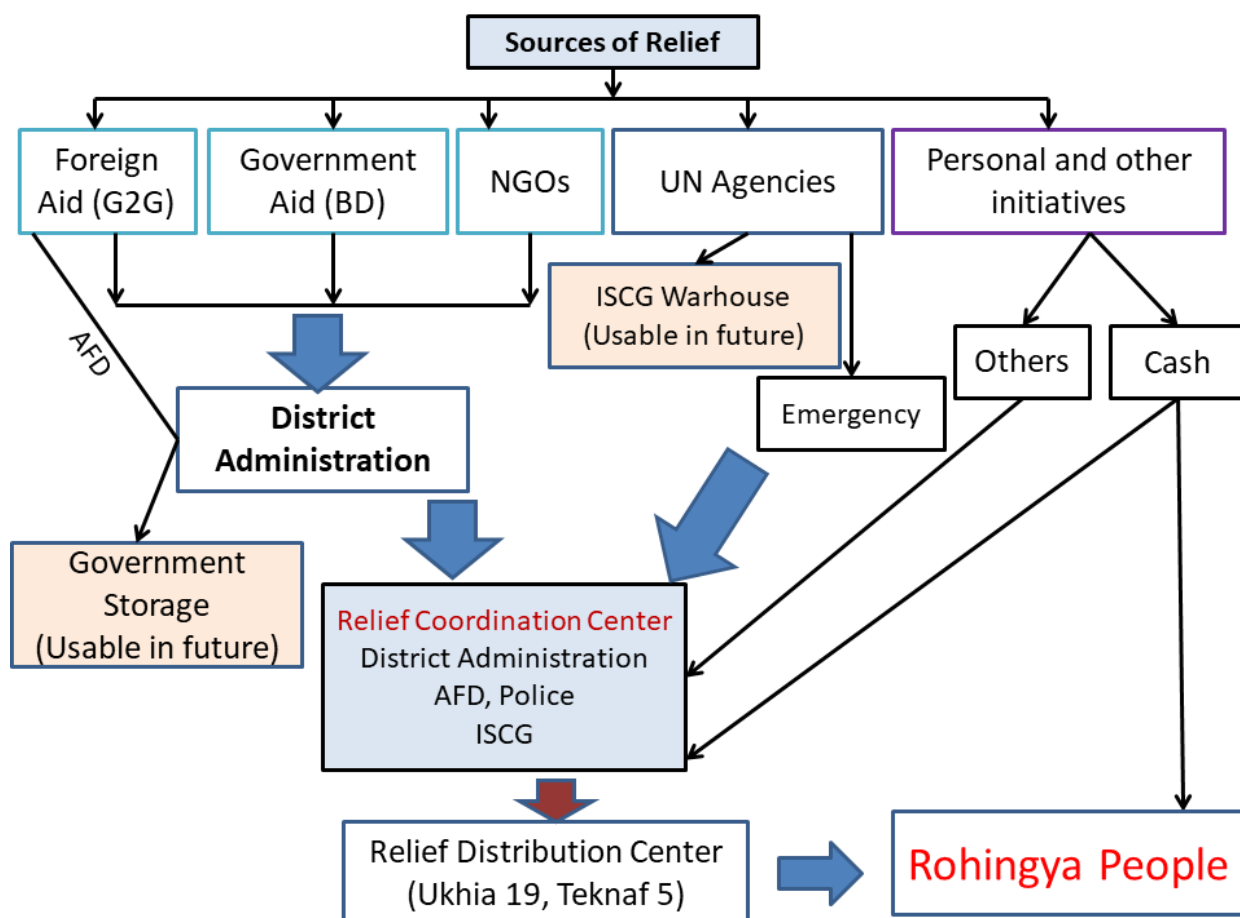
5.5Relief Management: Food, cloth, health, water and sanitation
At the earlier days of influx there was hardly any management of the relief, understandably. Then the ISCG started working there along with the government counterpart and situation got improved. However, since the Armed Forces Division (AFD) is deployed discipline was established and the overall process has a structural condition now. Several stakeholders are involved in the overall relief management process on the basis of different sources of relief materials.

The sources of reliefs are respectively foreign aid (govt. to govt.), national aid (Bangladesh govt.), NGOs, ISCG (mostly UN agencies), personal initiatives and others (different informal/formal organizations apart from NGOs). Foreign aid is mostly stored in the government storage except the perishable items and emergency needs. District administration receives the aid and Armed Forces Division (AFD) helps in transporting and arranging the security of the process. Aid from Bangladesh Government and NGOs are also locally received by District Administration. District administration forwards them to the relief coordination center established in Ukhia. The relief coordination center is maintained by AFD and consists of representative from the District and Upazilla Administration, ISCG and Police force. This coordination center determines where the relief will go for distribution. There are 24 distribution points in the overall area of Rohingya settlements and among them 19 is located in Ukhia and 05 in Teknaf.

Relief of UN agencies also being stored in different warehouse located in field areas for future use apart from those are perishable items and emergency. There are a great deal of relief is being provided by personal initiatives and different informal and formal organizations (not NGOs). Apart from scattered cash donations personally all the reliefs are being coordinated and distributed by the Relief Coordination Center.

World Food Program (WFP) is leading the food providing activities along with other partner organizations like ACF, SHED, Redcross, PULSE Bangladesh etc. In the beginning of influx cooked food were given where nowadays the food items are normally provided in the form of reliefs. According to the latest ISCG report everyone is being provided food now. Quarterly food security, livelihood and risk assessment is planned in upcoming months.

Sources of Relief

Foreign Aid (G2G) → Government Aid (BD) → NGOs → UN Agencies → Personal and other initiatives

AFD

ISCG Warhouse (Usable in future)

Others | Cash

Emergency

District Administration

Government Storage (Usable in future)

Relief Coordination Center
District Administration
AFD, Police
ISCG

Relief Distribution Center (Ukhia 19, Teknaf 5) → Rohingya People

Secotr	Types of service	Service provided	Present total demand
Food security	Emergency Food (till 15 October, 2017)	5,36,000	5,36,000
Nutrition	Pregnant Women (till 15 October, 2017)	12,662	55,000
	Under five Children (till 15 October, 2017)	49,306	1,50,000
Water and Sanitation	Tubewell (till 29 October, 2017)	4,370	25,000
	Temporary sanitary Latrine (till 29 October, 2017)	24,773	38,000
	Total population covered by water and sanitation service (till 29 October, 2017)	5,30,000	11,66,000
Health	Rubella vaccine for the children range from 9 months to 15 years (till 15 October, 2017)	1,35,519	-*
	Polio vaccine and vitamin A capsule for children ranged 0-5 years (till 15 October, 2017)	72,334	1,50,000
	Sexual and reproductive health service (till 15 October, 2017)	76,931	-*
	Mental and psychological support (till 15 October, 2017)	84,643	-*

* Present total demand is not yet determined

Rohingya people prefers to wear their own cultural dress and this is why lots of provided cloths were wasted away (particularly the used cloths) in the early days. A total number of 21 organizations are working in water and sanitation sector with coordination of Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE). UNICEF and ACF are leading the overall operation on water and sanitation. The need assessment regarding the water and sanitation has started. World Health Organization (WHO) and International Organization for Migration (IOM) is leading the health sector with coordination of Civil Surgeon of Cox's Bazar.

Arrangement for people with special needs
No significant arrangement has been initiated yet for the Rohingyas with disability. However, though there is no structured initiative, Bangladesh government has planned to shift Rohingya disable children to a separate camp location. Besides that,the Ministry of Social Welfare has identified 18,449 orphans as of October 20, 2017 and enlisted specific categorized children who have lost their both parents (both father and mother) orfather only, orphans (having no gruadian), lost children, and physically challenged ones. Also, the UNICEF and its partner organizations have established some child center where each center can accommodate 25 children on an average.

5.6 Safety and security
Cox's Bazaar police have taken an initiative to raise local awareness to control any chance of human trafficking in the community level with the community leaders including elected public representatives, EMAM (religious leaders) and local elites. Besides the awareness activity, police has acknowledged that the arrangement of security measures within the camp areas, especially makeshift camps. There are 11 checkpoints over the Cox's Bazaar District to control the Rohingya movement around the national boundaries. 04, 03, 03 and 01 checkpoints are established respectively at Ramu, Ukhiya, Tecknaf and Cox's Bazaar. Cox's Bazaar district police arrested about 24,880 Rohingyas as of 03 October 2017 who has tried to travel other parts of the Bangladesh from Cox's Bazaar. 690 Rohingyas are found in different districts of the country.Along with 1600 regular Police Force at Chittagong 667 additional policemen are deployed in Cox's Bazaar are from Chittagong range to help this overwhelmed crisis.

5.7 Registration and documentation process
Several Key Informants mentioned that ideally the registration was supposed to be as soon as they come to this land. But there is no arrangement for enlisting or registration for the Rohingya Asylum Seekers at the Border Points. However, bio-metric registration is started recently which is coordinated by Passports Office. There are sevenregistration camps for the biometric registration of Rohingyas in Ukhiya and Tekhnaf. UNHCR, IOM and other partners are working on mobilizing the Rohingyas for the biometric registration. In total 3,13,000 Rohingyas were registered by 28th October.

6. Challenges:

Border crossing, currency exchange, finding a place to build shelter

- No formal and definite arrangement exists in the border points. No security check was done during the influx to avoid trafficking of illegal drug and firearms. No provision of emergency support also is there for those injured by Mayanmar Army.
- Rohingyas were exploited and subject to extortion in different steps of their journey starting at border crossing and reaching up to one of the camp areas and finding a place to build the shelter. Such as, those who crossed the border by boat had to pay an equivalentamount of BDT5,000-15,000 in Burmese Kiyat and/or gold jewelries where the actual boat fare is supposed to be equivalent to BDT200-250 according to local people. Taking the advantage of the absence of any formal money exchange system, '*Dalals*'(brokers) are exploiting the Rohingyas badly during money exchange. Where standard rate is 6000 BDT for 100,000 Burmese Kiyat, Rohingyas are getting 2000-4500 BDT out of it. Since they do not understand the value of Bangladeshi currency they often had to provide more fare during use of local transport. Though the place they are staying and building the temporary houses belongs to Forest Department, a local syndicate is taking BDT2000-5000 from each family. This syndicate consists of local UP members, local political leaders and some of the Rohingya 'Majhi' as several stakeholders mentioned.
- The tents received from the foreign aid are suitable for cold weather mostly hence given the present weather condition those are not usable yet. Rohingyas preferred to stay in their self-made shelter houses made of bamboo and plastic
- The shelters they are staying are not disaster resistant. Moreover, shelters are located very close to each other which has created a potential risk of fire hazard; many of the shelters are built leveling hill and which has exposed them to potential risk of landslide as well.

Relief management and basic supports (Food, Cloth, Health, Water and Sanitation)

- Since there is no complete list of Rohingyas yet, equity was not possible to ensure in relief distribution and other supports.
- In some cases, complain was found in irregularities and corruption conducted by the 'Rohingya Majhis' which include selling the relief token, embezzlement of relief material, taking bribe from Rohingyas to provide the relief token etc.
- Absence of inadequate cloths for the winter and rainy season is a potential health risk; especially to the children and pregnant women

- There is a huge deficiency in arrangement of water and sanitation. Moreover, the infrastructures were built in this regard (tube-well and latrine) lacks proper maintenance and monitoring. 30% of the built tube-wells need immediate replacement/maintenance and 36% of built temporary toilets will be filled and unusable in near future.
- Health service is also inadequate in terms of demand and possible risk of waterborne-disease and contagious diseases are high. Moreover, HIV affected Rohingyas have been identified which might turn into a national health hazard
- Though periodically situation report is published by the ISCG but organization wise detail information of ongoing activities in different sectors (except WASH) is not open yet
- District Authority use a substantial time in providing protocol to the visiting guests and VIPs (both national and international) which is a obstacle for them to monitor the overall relief management

Security, Registration and Grievance Redress Mechanism

- The link roads are not completed to the camps yet. Hence, the security arrangement is not adequate at the moment. Particularly, during night Police is struggling in patrolling the camp areas
- There is no grievance redress mechanism established. Also, the legal procedure to mitigate the criminal offenses within Rohingya community (except homicide) is not yet decided.
- There are lacking in manpower and registration centers for bio-metric registration of Rohingyas which is making the overall progress slow. Rohingyas have mixed perception about this registration. In some cases it was found that they have negative and wrong perception about this registration and there are some allegations that they are being discouraged by some of the NGOs working there.
- A portion of the Rohingya people, especially Majhis, are using mobile phone and robi sim-cards which is illegal

Environmental impact and degradation

- During building the shelters hills and local forestry were cut down which is affecting the local environment and biodiversity. For instance, some shelters are located in the elephant trail and few times they were attacked by elephants
- The firewood for daily cooking of food is collected from natural sources which is a huge burden to the local forestry
- There is no program of Department of Environment to address this environmental degradation yet

7. Immediate and long term impacts

Relief and basic supports (Food, Cloth, Water and Sanitation)

- In long term it will be uncertain to provide adequate basic supports to Rohingyas by Bangladesh without continuous and adequate flow of relief and other supports from the international community
- There is a risk of miss-management of the whole situation unless biometric registration is completed urgently and using the list equity is ensured in proving relief and other supports

Security

- If security arrangement is insufficient there is potential risk of increasing the crime and violence (especially against women and children). Different interest groups might utilize this probable messy condition to use the Rohingyas for different crimes (such as murder, robbery, drug peddling etc.) to meet their own interests
- This Rohingya crisis might be a potential risk for the entire Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) areas in terms of terrorism and religious and ethnic minorities might be victim of it
- If law enforcement agencies fail to stop the spreading of Rohingyas in all over the country it will create a long term multipurpose risk in terms of social, economic and national security
- There is a organizational power structure emerging within the Rohingya community which might result in a complex long term problem unless dealt in-time and properly
- During the influx the border points were relaxed and the risk of drug and human trafficking has increased noticeably using this opportunity

Environment

- Massive cutting down of hill, destruction of forests and inadequate sanitation system has created a long term risk for the environment and biodiversity of the area

Impact on local inhabitants/community

- Since the influx, local communities of Ukhia and Teknaf is impacted due to increased price of the goods, reduced employment opportunity, increased transportation cost, stagnation of the different basic services (e.g. education, health), reduced quality of services and accessibility. Besides, local inhabitants in Ukhia and Teknaf are now less than half of Rohingya people staying there (local inhabitants are 4,75,000 where number of Rohingyas is about 1,000,000).

In long term this situation might affect the overall quality of life and development badly

Impact on national development

- This Rohingya crisis is a sudden and additional pressure to the both government and development organizations which has created an additional risk for the development and rehabilitation programs of other affected people in the country (affected people in haor area and northern part due to recent flood)
- The national cost to address this crisis is going to impact the national economy and development
- This crisis will also affect the tourism of the Cox's Bazar area

8. Recommendations:

For Government of Bangladesh:

1. Government should invest its best diplomatic efforts involving all related stakeholders to mount pressure on Myanmar government so that this emerged Rohingya crisis is not prolonged and return of Rohingyas is ensure within a shortest possible time
2. The national multipurpose- cost in addressing this Rohingya crisis should be properly estimated and initiatives should be taken to ensure reimbursement of this cost. Relevant experts should be involved in this estimation process and overall administrative, legal and different service cost should be considered

For International Agencies, States and Donor Agencies:

3. This Rohingya crisis is an international crisis. Though, Bangladesh has provided them temporary shelter considering the humanitarian aspect, all related stakeholders and parties (especially, India, China and all other countries who has diplomatic, business, investment, economic and defense deals with Myanmar; and other international agencies and UN agencies) should come forward to mitigate this crisis. Besides providing the relief, collective diplomatic pressure should be put on Myanmar so that they take their citizens back immediately

For related government and non-government organizations in Rohingya management:

4. The biometric registration should be completed with urgency and priority deploying adequate manpower. If needed, necessary incentives should be provided such as- to receive relief one must complete the registration

5. A complete need and risk assessment by the related stakeholders and experts should be conducted and equity and adequacy should be ensured in providing the relief and other supports

6. The syndicate that is exploiting Rohingya people in different steps like border crossing, currency exchange, and finding a place for building makeshift shelter should be identified through proper investigation and legal steps should be taken immediately

7. The overall monitoring process of the respective assigned organizations should be increased and periodical monitoring reports should be prepared and published

8. An integrated website including all kinds of information regarding Rohingya management should be established and updated periodically

9. An effective grievance redress mechanism should be established including all stakeholders

10. The enlisting of person with disabilities and orphans should be completed with urgency and necessary especial measures should be taken for them

11. To protect the environment, forest and biodiversity of the area a strategic planning should be done and necessary interventions should be taken including all related stakeholders

12. A primary listing in the border points should be arranged and necessary measures should be taken to resist the trafficking of illegal drugs and other goods

13. Necessary measures should be taken to avoid irregularities in relief token distribution

14. The security arrangement should be strengthened in the camp areas (especially at night)

15. Special care like maternal and child health care should be ensured for pregnant mothers, infants and children along with encouraging the Rohingyas to adopt family planning methods

16. Needs of affected local inhabitants should be addressed and integrated into the overall response program

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