

Will Cox's Bazar alone be able to bear the burden of Rohingya Refugees? **We Demand Localization and Accountability in Rohingya Relief Works**

A. Cox's Bazar CSOs-NGOs Forum

We the NGOs i.e. CSOs working in Cox's Bazar have formed this forum from 5 meetings since last September. Our basic objectives are 1) To ensure coordination among us, 2) To strengthen such a Civil Society in Cox's Bazar that will assist in human rights and justice, and 3) Uphold the localization and accountability. We consider the current Rohingya refugee problem as an extreme, complex and transitory problem for the people of this district. For that reason, we are arranging this press conference. Hopefully everyone, including the government, United Nations agencies and the NGOs, can understand the importance of the topics we present.



B. Demographic balance is under threat, Rohingya refugees should be relocated to other part of the country ensuring their basic needs

Cox's Bazar district has a population of about 27 lakhs. The population of Ukhiya and Teknaf is around 4,71,768 (Ukhiya: 2,7,379 and Teknaf: 264389, [source: Bangladesh Statistical Bureau 2013]). Meanwhile, the number of Rohingya refugees has reached almost 6 lakhs. That is, the amount of population in the district has increased by 26% to 33 lakhs. It is estimated that the number of Rohingya refugees going to be 10 lakhs by December 2017. That means the population of the district will be approximately 37 lakhs. That is 61.6% more than the previous population, and thus it will become the most densely populated district

Population (Year Wise)	Bangladesh		Cox's Bazar	
	Total Population	Population per KM ²	Total Population	Population per KM ²
2011	14,97,72,364	1016	22,89,990	919
2017	17,00,00,000	1153	33,00,000	1325
2011 to 2017 rate of increase	13.5%		44.1%	

of Bangladesh. See an analysis table on this:
The population density was 1016 per square kilometer. Besides, Cox's Bazar population was 22 lakh 89 thousand 990 in 2011. And 919 people lived in every square kilometer.

Population of Bangladesh increased by 13.5% per square kilometer, but in Cox's Bazar the population would increase to 44.1%.

In 2017, the total population of Bangladesh will be around 17 crore, of which 1153 will live in every square kilometer. (Population and Housing 2011)

In 2017, the total population of Bangladesh will be around 17 crore, of which 1152 will live in every square kilometer. In 2017, Cox's Bazar population will be around 37 lakh, and 1485 people will live in every square kilometer. It is relatively evident that at this time, the population of Bangladesh increased by 13.5% per square kilometer, but in Cox's Bazar the population would increase to 61.6%. (<http://populationof2017.com/population-of-bangladesh-2017.html>)

In the meantime, Rohingya refugees have spread to the cities of Cox's Bazar, both the two sides of the Marine Drive and other upazilas of the district. The Mayor of the city said that the number of Rohingya people in the city may be 50-70 thousand. Inter Sectoral Coordination Group (ISCG) said, about 100,000 Rohingya refugees have taken shelter outside the camps.



Price of essential items in Cox's Bazar city is increased. The water level has dropped to more down. About 4000 acres of forest has become depleted. According to the Parliamentary Standing Committee, environmental damage is so far approximately 150 crore taka, in actual term it can be about 400 crore taka.

That does not seem to be real case. It is a threat to the people of Cox's Bazar and Marine Drive tourism. So, our proposals are as follows:

1. Fulfilling their basic needs, the Rohingya Refugees have to move to other districts of Bangladesh.
2. Immediately, Rohingya refugees living on the sides of the marine drive, inside the city, especially the mountain spaces, must be identified and they have to be returned to the camps.
3. Considering safety and balance issues Rohingya refugees must be kept in 5/6 camps instead of 2/3 camps.
4. Temporary Structure Based Shelters must be built since the present Tent Based Shelters have risk of health and high temperature. The type of tents they currently have is a threat during rain and storm storms. It should be noted that last year Cox's Bazar experienced the second highest rainfall.

C. Local usual lives are under Threat: We demand recovery of nature, economy and environment.

Already the price of essential items in Cox's Bazar city, including Ukhia Teknaf, is increased. The water level has dropped to more down. About 4000 acres of forest has become depleted. According to the Parliamentary Standing Committee, environmental damage is so far approximately 150 crore taka, in actual term it can be about 400 crore taka. The Rohingya communities are denied health and

education in the last four decades. Their children did not get any vaccinations. Their health behavior is not adequate. Myanmar is one of the countries in the world where the number of AIDS sufferers is very high, it is 8 in every thousand. Since deforestation is shrinking the roads recognized for elephants, the elephants have already started killing people. Our proposals for government and UN organizations who are engaged in relief works:

6. Quick research has to be done to identify the short term and long term loss of the natural resources, economics, health and tourism of Cox's Bazar. Based on the research findings, a long-term plan should be announced, so that people of Cox's Bazar are assured before the announcement of the next year budget.
7. The Rohingya refugees will have to be taken to other places from the place of elephant movements immediately.
8. The standard of the government hospitals in Ukhia, Teknaf and Cox's Bazar Sadar will have to be improved. The Ukhia Sadar Hospital has to be converted to a 250-bed hospital.
9. For every project UN and non-governmental organizations must allocate minimum 20% of total allocation for the local community.
10. There were restriction for NGOs in taking development projects in Cox's Bazar due to the issue of Refugees and others, these restrictions must be relaxed. It is to be noted that Cox's Bazar district is lagging behind compared to many other districts on various development indicators. Development organizations work with the issue of human rights, social justice

and gender equality, have to be provided opportunity to work.

11. HIV / AIDS patients should get separate medical treatment. Extensive awareness should be made about this.
12. Instead of using ground water, emphasized should be given. Water reservoir should be constructed in those areas. Unlimited sea water could be collected from the nearest sea and easily could be used after treatment.
13. To recover the damage caused to the environment in that area, an "Environmental Recovery Fund" should be formed with a % of fund used for development and relief activities.

D. Localization and accountability must be ensured for all relief and development programs for refugees. UN Agencies, International and National NGOs must work with partnership with the local NGOs ensuring localization and accountability instead of being directly operational.

During 2013-2016, the declaration of the World Humanitarian Summit on the development and human rights activities is to emphasize on localization and accountability. The discussion of the implementation of this policy has been started again. All UN agencies, international NGOs, National NGOs have given their commitment towards a process of localization and accountability named Grand Bargain. Accordingly, the activities of those organizations should be changes, in order to ensure that the sovereign, accountable and sustainable development of local civil society (NGOs) at the local level is ensured. We raised these issues to Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under Secretary General and UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, when he visited. We were raising the issues of the host community. The reflection of which we later got in his speech in Geneva, we are re-presenting our suggestions in this regard:

14. All UN agencies and international NGOs must work with the partnership with the local NGOs, they must not be operational at the field level.
15. Local NGO means who has been evolved locally, which leadership is from the local community.
16. The neutrality of the UN and INGO staff over their own

interests is questionable. We have example of many such incidents. To ensure humanitarian and dignity based behavior we demand code of conduct.

17. We demand Compliance Management Policy for all these organizations, refugees and all other people must be allowed to take the benefit of this policy.
18. UN agencies, INGO, NNGO and LNGO must publish the information about relief and development works, specially information about funds according to the International Aid Transparency Initiatives policy. So that local people and media can monitor and comment. We believe that this money has been allocated for the people of Bangladesh, transaction cost of these organization is very high. For this reason, we have suggested partnership policies and accountability with local NGOs as per WHS and GB Policy.
19. Inter Sector Coordination Group is mainly controlled by UN agencies and some NGOs. In very cluster representation of local NGOs must be ensured. Many of their rules are not convincing with local conditions. In many cases, they are biased towards INGO and NGO
20. UN agencies and NNGO have to renounce their Monopolistic approach, and local NGOs must be given opportunity to work. It should be remembered that LNGOs were the first to come forward in this Relief Program and they represent the host community.
21. UN agencies and INGOs will have to hire local experts and staffs rather than foreign experts. However, they will not be able to go directly to operational role. In the interest of the

development of local NGO / CSO, partnership approach must be incorporated. Buy goods and goods locally. LNGOs employees cannot be tempted by INGO and UN agencies. All those organizations and IFRC have to make Standard Price Policy. So that the local NGOs do not have to fall into uneven competition in all areas, including house rent, car and truck utensil.

E. For the sake of national image and security, everyone will have to think. What is the government's control? The role of the army is commendable, we want continuation of this role.

We appreciate the district administrators and the army, they initially controlled the wave of the refugees and disorderly refugees, protecting the whole nation from spreading refugees across the country. The army coordinated with the efficiency and discipline of grassroots. At different points of the border, they are sending their refugees to camp with discipline, with great patience, humanity and discipline. In Bangladesh, especially in Cox's Bazar, the general public of Ukhia Teknaf have received refugees very generously. When in many countries, specially in developed countries the idea of xenophobia has evolved, foreigners are being driven out of many countries, the foreigners are being expelled, such humanity, generosity and well-being of the nation, government and army are unprecedented. The main motivation behind all these things is our Honorable Prime Minister, who responded very quickly. For the honorable Prime Minister, Bangladeshi and Bangladesh also got a place of pride for all mankind. But the number of refugees has already been 6 million. By December it could go to 10 lakh. The way it has been thought of for 30-40 thousand refugees before, it will not be okay to think about it. Currently, various national security issues have been involved, which are also political, economic and social issues. In that case, the Refugee Management will have to think in:

22. At this moment, ISCG is making all the information on how many refugees are coming and how. All the sources are using their information. When the number of refugees was 30-40 thousand then maybe there was no thought for the government. But now it is about 6-10 million issues. It is not just about humanity but it also involves political and social issues. It is also a matter of national security and the protection of local equilibrium

society. Therefore, at this moment, a special unit of Relief Commission should be placed immediately or the Deputy Commissioner for Refugees Affairs. In order to establish it quickly, support from the army can be taken.

23. For more reasons, we are asking the government to come out with more foreign-based information formation and coordination, which are (1) In the ISCG there are biasness towards small number of UN agencies and INGOs, (2) In different cluster of ISCG, there is no representation of LNGOs, (3) ISCG does not participate in other relief activities except FD7.
24. District administration has other general activities. So, the refugee crisis management should be completely different from the district administration. Since the refugee activities are going in large number, we are proposing to set up an office of a relief commissioner headed by a secretary level officer. In this case, there will be enough manpower for the Information, Monitoring, Coordination. If it is delayed, it can be filled with manpower from the army. In this way, in the whole refugee management, the full authority of the government should be established without any external dependence.

F. Stop the visibility or display competition and do the real work.

We have noticed that, some UN agencies, INGOs and NNGOs are involved in doing Self-propaganda of their work. From their clothes to the cars, there are plenty of banners in the workplace. It has been found that, for a 3/5 feet toilet, 4/6 feet banner has been stretched. Such exhibit competition has created a hostile attitude towards development organizations within the public. We would like to request all

concerns to stop such “display competition” and to pay attention to the original work.

G. Follow the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to ensure child care and their rehabilitation.

We are expressing our concern knowing various types of news that a separate house will be arranged for the children who have lost their parents. Our opinion, in this regard, children should be kept in touch with their families. In this case, we will request the government and all concerned to follow the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We hope to make more changes and revisions based on the above-mentioned positions or demands, on a timely, mutated and opinion basis. We are expressing our concern knowing various types of news that a separate house will be arranged for the children who have lost their parents. Our opinion, in this regard, children should be kept in touch with their families. In this case, we will request the government and all concerned to follow the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We hope to make more changes and revisions in this position in time based on demands and opinion.

Participating Organizations

PHALS, HELP Cox’s Bazar, ACLAB, AGRAJATRA, JALABAD Foundation, POPI, ANANDO, BASTAB, NONGOR, MUKTI Cox’s Bazar, YPSA, EXPEORUL, ISDI, Gono Shasthaya Kendro, ASA, COAST Trust.

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