

**THE ROLE OF TRANSNATIONAL NGOS' ACTIVITIES IN AIDING
THE ROHINGYA REFUGEE CRISIS IN BANGLADESH: A CASE
STUDY OF THE FINNISH RED CROSS**

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Abstract

In fact, Myanmar's military forces have been deliberately persecuting the Rohingya minority since 1978. In 2017, the Rohingya had to flee Myanmar and, as a result, there was an influx of more than one and half million Rohingya to Bangladesh. The Finnish Red Cross (FRC) had a quick response to the emergency appeal of the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC) on the behalf of the Rohingya in Bangladesh in 2017. This research paper is to learn how the activities of the FRC affected the Rohingya refugees, what challenges were faced by the staff of the FRC, and what part was played by other contributors in cooperation with the FRC. The research materials include primary and secondary data. I used this data in methodological triangulation in a deductive approach. From October 2017 to October 2018, 43,780 patients were treated by the RCEH. The main challenges faced by the staff of the FRC was the lack of local infrastructure, lack of internet availability and so on. In contrast, the Inter Sector Coordinator Group (ISCG) and Bangladesh Red Crescent Society were one of the key contributors in attempting to solve these problems, as well as cooperating with the FRC staff, local government, local and international NGOs, and other agencies. This paper is intended to benefit research on the contribution of international NGOs (INGOs) from a global humanitarian perspective.

Keywords: Finnish Red Cross, Globalization, Rohingya, Transnationalism, TNGOs

JEL Codes: F35, J68, L31.

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1. Introduction

For global peace and security, ethnic conflicts and extreme nationalism have been an important issue around the world. Since World War II (WW II), ethnic conflict has reached an extreme level. In the last decade of the 20th century, there are several countries around the world that have experienced vast amounts of ethnic violation: Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda, Congo, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, India, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Haiti, and Colombia (Rahman, 2015a, p. 288). Ted Robert Gurr, a leading scholar on ethnic conflicts, published an article in 2000 in which he described the ethnic conflict as a “tsunami of ethnic and nationalist conflict” (Gurr, 2000, quoted in Ganguly, 2003, p. 9–10).

The number of displaced persons caused by forced migration around the world dramatically increased between 1945 and 1952 due to borders at the state level being built up and those at the national level being changed, ultimately forcing people to neighbouring countries to survive (Hansen, 2016, p. 2). Globally, the number of refugees and displaced persons rose by 2 million in 2017. By the end of the year, the figure had reached over 50 million worldwide. While it has been acknowledged that there are 68.5 million forcibly displaced persons worldwide, 25.40 million are of “refugees’ status”, 40.00 million are “internally displaced people”, and 3.1 million are considered “asylum-seekers” (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2017a, p. 2). At the same time, Southeast Asia (SEA) is a mostly refugee-produced territory and of significance in the SEA region, Myanmar has the highest number of refugees (Ullah and Hossain, 2005, 2011). Since the 15th century, a Rohingya minority have been living at the Arakan State, later renamed Rakhine State (RS), in Myanmar. Despite this, according to UNRHC Global Trend report, Rohingyas are living in the fourth position with a refugee/stateless status around in the world (Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, 2017; Fuller, Leaning, Mahmood and Wroe, 2016, p. 1841; Prodip, 2017, p. 135-146; UNHCR, 2017a, p. 3). According to Walton and Hayward, 2014, there are not only religious and ethnical reasons behind the Rohingya minority having a refugee/stateless status; there are also geopolitical, economic, and historical reasons.

The first forced migration of the Rohingya minority was in 1978, and again in 1991-1992, 2012, 2016, and 2017 to the present (Ahmed, 2010 Danish Immigration Service, 2011; Human Rights Watch, 2012; Inter Sector Coordinator Group, 2018, p. 1-2; United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees, 2018, p. 1-3). It is important to mention that there are 314.40 km of borders shared between Bangladesh and Myanmar, including 207.2 km of land boundary, 68.2 km of the Naf River, and 39 km of maritime boundary up to Saint Martin to push in Bangladesh. Since there are such large borders between Bangladesh and Myanmar, the Rohingya had several ways to get into Bangladesh during the Rohingya conflict in Myanmar (Rahman, 2015b, p. 30). Since the beginning of the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar in 1978, the Bangladesh Government has provided shelter to the Rohingya refugees in the Cox’s Bazar District in Bangladesh (Yasmin, 2017, p. 401-423), despite the fact that the Bangladesh Government had not signed “the 1951 Refugee Convention” or “the 1967 Protocol” (UNHCR, 2010).

Figure 1: Makeshift camps at Cox's Bazar District in Bangladesh



Source: YLE Uutiset (2017) 'Finnish Red Cross sends field hospital to Bangladesh'. 27 September [Online] Available on https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/finnish_red_cross_sends_field_hospital_to_bangladesh/9854252 (Accessed 1 November 2018).

From 25 August 2017 to 15 December 2018, an estimated 736,404 Rohingyas newly arrived at Cox's Bazar District in Bangladesh from the RS in Myanmar, bringing the total Rohingya refugees to 907,952 as of 15 December 2018 (Inter Sector Coordinator Group, [ISCG] 2018, p. 1-2; United Nation High Commissioner for Refugee, 2018, p. 1-3). According to the United Nations (UN), "The situation seems a textbook example of ethnic cleansing, Zeid Ra'ad alHussein told the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva" (United Nations News, 11 September, 2017). According to Dean and Ritzer, the first cycle of globalization started in 1492, and another from 1982 to now it still in progress (Dean and Ritzer, 2015). From the perspective of a global humanitarian crisis, the term "globalization" has added a new dimension.

Globalization is increasing inter-connectedness and facilitates the transfer of information between countries and flows of people to wealthier countries (Fryer, 2017, p. 13).

From the local, regional, and global perspectives, many NGOs have been emerged to contribute to helping the humanitarian crisis worldwide. Some NGOs extend or operate their activities across national borders through a network of transnational NGOs (TNGOs). TNGOs are joined to the network based on the same rules, values, norms, and working activities (Willetts, 2013). Keck and Sikkink originated the term "transnational NGOs network" in 1998 (Jordan and Tuijl, 2000). The Finnish Red Cross (FRC) is one of the prominent TNGOs that has been serving since 1877 both globally and locally (A Profile of the Red Cross in the European Union, 2003, p. 26)

2. Research Questions/Research Objectivise

The main aim of this thesis will be to investigate the role of the FRC in the Rohingya refugee emergency in Bangladesh. The recent Rohingya refugee crisis in Myanmar began in August in 2017. While Rohingya refugees quickly moved into Bangladesh, the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) argued that it is impossible to tackle the situation without the financial and technical support of international agencies. From August 2017 to October 2017, 600,000 to 700,000 Rohingyas have entered Bangladesh from Myanmar to escape the Myanmar military force (Humanitarian Practice Network 2018, p. 5; Inter Sector Coordinator Group, 2018, p. 2).

This is my main research question: how does the FRC's contribution affect the situation for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh? I personally argue that since Bangladesh is one of the most impoverished countries, during the Rohingya refugee crisis of 2017 the FRC undoubtedly helped the Rohingya survive until repatriation to Myanmar. So, before I confronted the main question of my research, I first decided to investigate three minor research questions:

- What do the FRC's activities contribute to the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh?
- What challenges do the FRC staff face in Bangladesh?
- What factors affect the FRC's cooperation with other agencies in Bangladesh?

3. Research methods

As previously noted, from August to October in 2017, 600,000 to 700,000 Rohingya travelled from Myanmar to Bangladesh to avoid persecution by Myanmar's military forces. Thirty-one Partner National Societies (PNSs) (Partner National Societies includes the Red Cross Red Crescent Society, whose organization come from across the global), responded to the emergency appeal of the IOM/IFRC in 2017. The FRC was one of them (Red Cross Red Crescent Response to Population Influx in Bangladesh, 2018, p. 6; YLE Uutiset, 2017). Since this research paper involves the case study on the role of the FRC among the Rohingya refugee in Bangladesh, review of the literature and doing structured interviews will be the primary methods used to gather data. I will apply three theories, globalization theory, transnationalism theory, and transnational NGOs network theory, to answer the three minor research questions. I use the deductive approach to analyses the data.

To complete the structured interview, I was helped by my co-supervisor Dr. Pirjo Pöllänen to make contact with the FRC. After Dr. Pirjo Pöllänen talked to the international aid department at the FRC, we sent an email with a list of questions to one FRC staff member who worked as an international aid worker for the FRC. I only received one response from a FRC staff member who had experience with the FRC in Bangladesh. Because of the lack of primary data, I received, I emphasized the secondary data. Using methodological triangulation, I combined the data from the primary and secondary sources. My methodological triangulation consisted of sourcing data from interviews, field notes, annual reports, and newspapers (Blythe, Bryant-Lukosius, Carter, DiCenso, Neville, 2014).

4. Theoretical Framework

From the beginning of the 1990s until today, there have been numerous reasons to use the term globalization in research as an important signifier. The first reason is to point out the international market-based production that has been extended around the world from the local market to the global market, with its vast array of products. The second reason is that the global culture or transnational culture has been identified by scholars as global culture. The third reason is to chronicle the emergence of global transnational non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are engaging in humanitarian and developmental work around the world. The fourth reason is transnational migration; there has been an increased mixture of people's own cultures with other communities' cultures. The final reason is that the developed countries are dominated by developing countries (Robinson, 2007, p. 125). Moreover, as explained earlier in this study, from the perspectives on globalization in the early 1990s, there have been two points of view on how NGOs have contributed to humanitarianism and development, and these approaches are "transnationalism and constructivism" (Ahmed and Potter, 2006). At the same time, I am interested in researching the role of the FRC as a transnational NGO among the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

4.1 The world-systems theory

One of the critical aspects of the world system theory is that it can be categorized into three regions based on geographical and economic circumstances. These include core or powerful countries, periphery countries, and semi-periphery countries. The core region includes economically powerful and solvent regions such as North America, Japan, and Western Europe. The periphery region includes regions that are developing and trying to become part of the core region, such as Latin America, Africa, and most of Asia. The semi-periphery region includes countries that have shifted down from the core to the periphery region or are currently shifting up from the periphery into the core region (Robinson, 2007, p. 129).

Most importantly, there is at least one angle of the world system theory that supports the findings of this research paper. According to the world system theory, experts argue that core countries are economically solvent and can take advantage of technology to help developing countries. However, there has already been an influx of over one and a half million Rohingya refugees into Bangladesh, even though Bangladesh is a periphery country. Notably, for financial matters, the Bangladeshi government willingly demanded support for Rohingya refugees. Recently, however, Bangladesh has jumped from a low-income to a middle-income country in April 2018 (Taylor, 2018). As a result, many international donor agencies have come to the aid of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, including the FRC, which has been serving Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh since 2017. As Wallerstein noted, to solve the global crisis (for example, viewing the Rohingya crisis as part of a global issue), the capitalist countries' GOs and NGOs have contributed through the transnational network. As the FRC is one of the transnational NGOs, it has facilitated work for the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh since 2017.

4.2. Theories of globalization and governance

Over fifty years ago, there was a dramatic change in the global political geography, which has is controlled by international geopolitics, particularly in regard to the formal and

informal relationships between state organizations and non-state organizations. In the 1960s, the political geographies of different areas were reflected through electoral geographies and political parties. At the time, there were two perspectives regarding political geography. The first perspective looked at formal politics, including the government, democracy, elections, and transnational governmental organizations. However, formal politics are always connected to people at the community and individual levels (Sideway, 2001). On the other hand, informal politics always concerns grassroots level politics, which mainly focuses on personal lifestyles. Contemporary political geography always includes nationalism, social movements, citizenship, and national identity (Sideway, 2001, Cloke et al., 1999).

In the global governance theory, it has been argued that the global political geography establishes a relationship between two aspects of society, such as the formal and the informal. Transnational governmental organizations and NGOs are examples of formal organizations. The ISCG was mainly created as a platform for local and international NGOs to work together in humanitarian crises, and it is monitored by IOM, UNHCR, and other international agencies. There is a transnational network-based organization in Cox's Bazar District in Bangladesh called ISCG, Cox's Bazar District which mainly coordinates between Government of Bangladesh (GOB) and the local and international NGOs. One of the minor research questions that will be investigated is the following: What factors affect the FRC's cooperation with other agencies in Bangladesh?

4.3. Transnationalism theory

Three tenets have been established to explore transnational studies (Saunier, 2013, pp. 1–21). First, transnationalism involves establishing relationships between local people and an understanding of their social norms and values; such relationships should exist across borders through globalization. Second, transnationalism can exist both domestically and internationally. Third, transnationalism impacts personal, national, and regional issues worldwide.

Another point of view regarding transnationalism focuses on international relations in NGO networks for academic purposes. Local and INGOs form relations for humanitarian purposes and to promote global development; transnationalism allows them to establish transnational NGO networks (Ahmed and Potter, 2006).

“Transnationalism seems to be everywhere, at least in social science. That is, across numerous disciplines there is a widespread interest in economic, social and political linkages between people, places and institutions crossing nation-state borders and spanning the world” (Vertovec, 2009, p. 1).

According to Portes (1999), Vertovec (2009), Morgan (2017), Dunn (2005), Lima (2010), and Riedel (2017), three perspectives exist regarding transnationalism: the economic perspective, the sociocultural perspective, and the political perspective.

In terms of the political transnationalism focuses on reducing political violations and bilateral agreements between two or more countries. INGOs use this perspective to further humanitarian and global development (Portes, 1999; Vertovec, 2009; Morgan, 2017, pp. 3–20; Dunn, 2005, pp. 15–31; Lima, 2010; Riedel, 2017, pp. 7–27).

Risse-Kappen discussed transnationalism in terms of various aspects, including transnational capital and international trade, and explained that INGOs use transnationalism to engage and coordinate with one another (Risse-Kappen, 1995, pp. 7 – 8). As aforementioned, the Rohingya refugee crisis reached an extreme in October of 2017; as a result, the UNHCR and the IOM established an institution to coordinate local GOs and INGOs using the ISCG in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh, which is monitored by three co-chairs: the Resident Coordinator of IOM Bangladesh, the Resident Coordinator of UN Bangladesh, and the Resident Coordinator of UNHCR Bangladesh. The members include the ISCG, UN agencies, INGOs, Bangladeshi Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), Action Contre la Faim, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Save the Children, the ICRC, and the IFRC (Humanitarian Practice Network, 2018, pp. 5–6).

4.4. Transnational NGO network theory

Definition of NGOs

NGOs emerged in 1880 and focus on humanitarianism, global development, and environmentalism. For example, the Congress of Vienna was held in 1815 to abolish slavery. Dunant, a key contributor to the establishment of NGOs and the founder of the ICRC in 1859, explained that the ICRC could be used to serve those injured during battle (Eriksson, 2008, p. 1).

Mercer (2002) described NGOs as follows:

“Organizations that are officially established, run by employed staff (often urban professionals or expatriates), well supported (by domestic or, as is more often the case, international funding), and that are often relatively large and well-resourced. NGOs may, therefore, be international organisations, or they may be national or regional NGOs” (Mercer, 2002, p. 6). Technology is of key factor that influences how NGOs work together from around the world (Vertovec, 2009, p. 11).

As aforementioned, the term transnational NGO network originated from Keck and Sikkink in 1998 (Jordan and Tuijl, 2000). Transnational networks work within NGOs around the world; they also establish relationships between official political organizations worldwide. Transnational NGO networks include several actors: International and domestic NGOs and research and advocacy organizations, Local social movements, Foundations, The media, Churches, trade unions, Parts of regional and international intergovernmental organizations parts of the executive or parliamentary branches of government” (Keck and Sikkink, 1999, pp. 91–92). These actors are encouraged to work within NGOs and share the same rules, norms, values, and ethics in order to effectively handle global issues (Keck and Sikkink, 1998, pp. 1, 8). “Transnational approach some grassroots, networks, relations, identities approach towards globalisation” (Assmuth, 2017, p. 2).

The FRC is one of the oldest and most prominent humanitarian organizations; it has been in service since 1877. At the moment, the FRC is serving Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Ethiopia with the help of the BDRCS, the NRC, and the Danish Red Cross. The FRC is able to provide constant aid because of its agreements with other agencies based on the Geneva Conventions of 1949. Undoubtedly, the FRC is a transnational NGO (FRC News, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c).

5. Empirical Results

To collect the data necessary for this study, an email was sent to the FRC's International Department containing a list of questions. I only received one response from an FRC liaison delegate. This liaison delegate has worked with the FRC in Bangladesh for over three months in 2018, spent more than two years with the FRC in RS, and participated in numerous other missions. I also collected secondary data from various sources, such as journals, annual reports, the official ICRC YouTube channel, and newspapers. Methodological triangulation was used to combine mainly primary and secondary data so it could be described and analyzed in this study (Forbes and Heale, 2013). Methodological triangulation was used to collect the data for this research paper.

In the next paragraphs, I seek to learn the answers to minor research questions by applying methodological triangulation as a source of data.

5.1 Research question 1

What do the FRC's activities contribute to the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh?

The FRC immediately sent workers and supplies to Bangladesh to build a mobile hospital. The FRC International Operations and Programme Director, Kalle Löövi, stated the following in October of 2017:

“We must hurry. Together with the Norwegian Red Cross, we are sending a hospital and roughly 20–25 aid workers to the area. The first Finnish Red Cross workers will be travelling on Saturday and the Finnish portion of the hospital early this week” (FRC News, 2018d, para. 3).

As I already have pointed out that since the 1990s the global refugee crisis has been a global problematic issue. While I already have mentioned that after the 1990s for humanitarian and development perspective to emerge the NGOs and work the globally from two perspectives those are transnationalism and constructivism. However, my main concern regarding the transnationalism as a political perspective. At the same time, of course, in the recent crisis of Rohingya, I mean 2017's Rohingya crisis in Myanmar from August to October in 2017, more than one and half million Rohingya Refugees influx to Bangladesh to survive. Besides, the FRC among the key Transnational NGO contributes for Rohingya as October in 2017. Most importantly, the FRC has built up on the Red Cross Emergency Hospital (RCEH) with 60 beds facilities and supported by BDRCS, NRC, CRC, IFRC, and other agencies. Additionally, the FRC was the leading position of the RECH and 22 delegated from FRC worked in the RCEH. Moreover, the main task was the RECH treat surgical care and obstetrics as well as the RCEH opening time is 24/7 I mean unstop treatment facility. Even from October to December in 2017, 12 000 patients were treated in RCEH (Finnish Red Cross 2018). Moreover, from October in 2017 to October in 2018, the main outcome the RCEH as below mentioned

“Since the hospital opened in October 2017, a total of 43,780 patients have been treated, 5,340 children have received psychosocial support at the child-friendly space, 2,211 surgeries were performed, and 511 babies were born” (Mayers, 2018).

5.2. Research question 2

What challenges do the FRC staff face in Bangladesh?

Most importantly, it has to need to keep in mind that although I already have pointed that Bangladesh just shifted to mid income country from low income country in April in 2018. For this reason, undoutly seemed from this research paper that the FRC staffs must face several challenges to work at Rohingya camps in Bangladesh. One the problems is to identify that local language one of the key problems for FRC staffs as most of the people can speak in Chittagonian or Rohingya language even local volunteers also lack of English proficiency as well as although eights translators are worked for RCEH staffs to deal for the Language issue but here also seem that lack of professional translators and skilful person.

Regarding the language issue while my interviewee responded as follows:

“The Red Cross Emergency Hospital (RCEH) employs some translators and volunteers who assist our international and local staffs in communicating with the refugees. Additionally, the BDRCS is our focal point for relations with local authorities.”

As the infrastructure is another problem for FRC staffs as roads are available even during the rainy season there might impossible walk on foot on the camps, supply and logistic issue another concern issue as there are only 2 warehouses available which can use the BDRCS/IFRC.

In fact, the internet facility needed as a common everyday life but in the Rohingya camps, Internet facilities are not available although IFRC Asia Pacific regional office also provided to deal the internet facility with 20mbs which can use Red Cross Red Crescent staffs, but other agencies' staffs also concern issue about the internet. Also, 3G Robi internet one of the primary options to use the internet in Cox's Bazar

As my interviewee answered about the security challenges in the following way:

“The security of our staff and patients is based on the acceptance and trust towards the Red Cross/Crescent movement by the local host and refugee communities. The Finnish RC and RCEH follow the IFRC security guidance, and the RCEH has 24/7 guard system in place.”

5.3. Research question 3

What factors affect the FRC's cooperation with other agencies in Bangladesh?

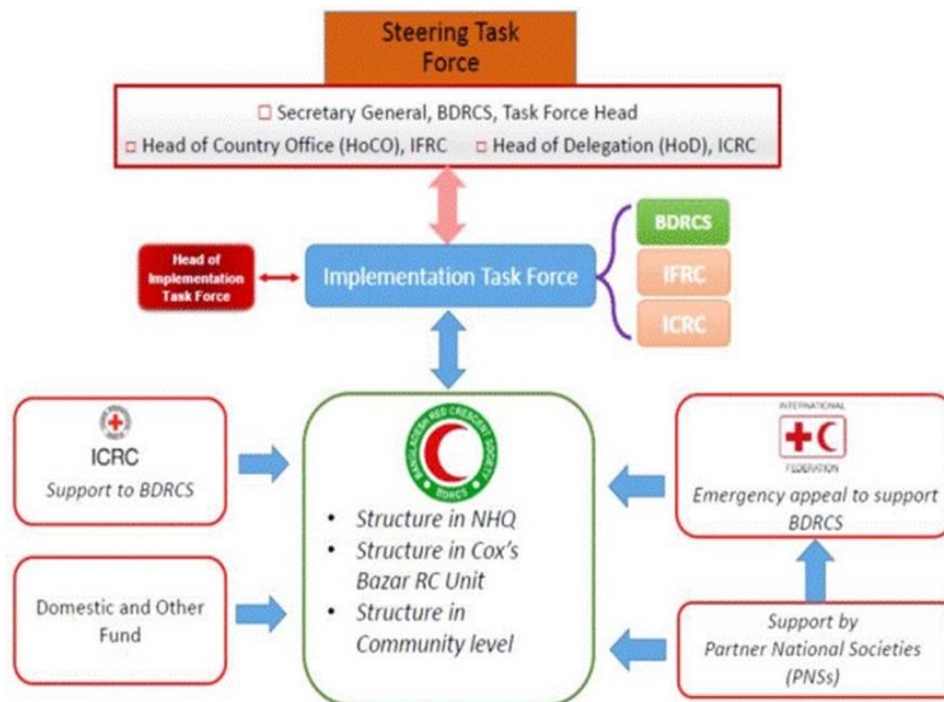
As the previous answered to seemed that the FRC staffs have to face the several problems to work for Rohingya refugee in Cox's Bazar. However, to solve the such kind of problems to establish the Inter Sector Coordinator Group (ISCG) in Cox's Bazar on Bangladesh which is led by UN Bangladesh Resident representative, IOM Head of the mission of Bangladesh, UNHCR resident representative, Bangladesh. However, the main role of the ISCG is to ensure to cooperate between of 31 PNSs, BDRCS, IFRC, ICRC and local GOs-NGOs and other agencies. As the ISCG to facilitate the whole working activities are divided ten sectors. However, health one of them as the FRC focus on the health sector as led the RCEH. So, in the secretarial ISCG held in monthly meeting where FRC staff's representative can share experienced and tried to solve the problems. Also, the BDRCS also tried to cooperate with local GO-NGOs and INGOs and other agencies. BDRCS has

facilitated to coordinate for focusing on the Window Approach, in particular, 31 Partner National Societies (PNSs) continued to help in several sectors like translators appointed and technical support to FRC staffs.

To facilitate coordination between the BDRCS, the IFRC, the ICRC, local/international NGOs, local authorities, PNSs, and other agencies, a monthly meeting is organized and led by the BDRCS with support from the IFRC and the ICRC. Moreover, the BDRCS's one-window approach is an essential player in coordinating between all the stakeholders working to assist the Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar (Dahal, Hoegl, Letch, and Mäntyvaara, 2018).

Below, the one-window approach is illustrated through a chart so that the coordination between all stakeholders, external and internal, can be better understood.

Figure 2: One-Window Approach.

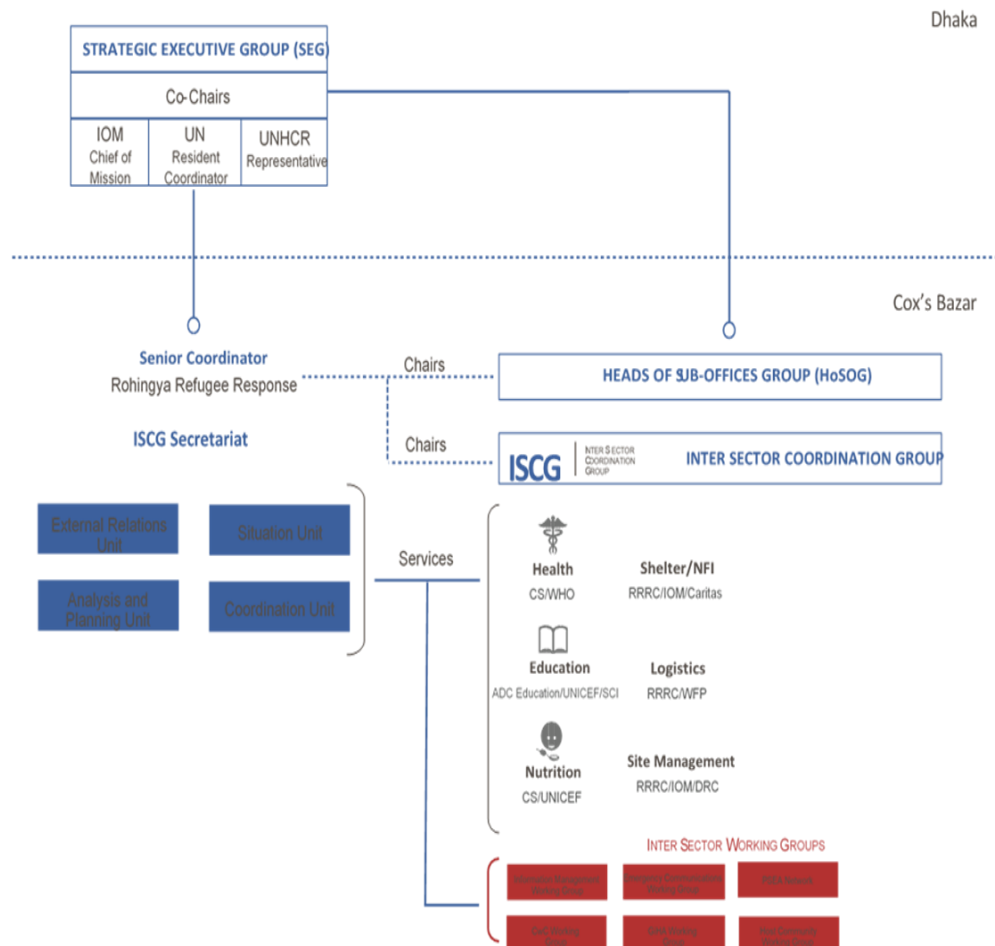


Source: Dahal, Y. P., Hoegl, J., Letch, J., and Mäntyvaara, A. (2018). Internal Review Bangladesh Population Movement Operation 2017, Final report 2018, p. 15 [Online] Available at <http://adore.ifrc.org/Download.aspx?FileId=182300&.pdf> [Accessed 10 December 2018]

“The inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) is the central coordinating body for humanitarian agencies serving Rohingya refugees in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh. These agencies are organized into 12 thematic Sectors and Sub-Sectors (e.g. Protection, Health, WASH) as well as Working Groups that focus on cross-cutting issues (e.g. Protection, Gender in Humanitarian Action, Communicating with Communities). ISCG’s

Humanitarian Data. Exchange [HDX], portal features the latest data on the response.” (Humanitarian Data Exchange, 2018, para. 1).

Figure 3: Structure of the ISCG



Source: Joint Response Plan (JRP) for the Rohingya. (2018b). Humanitarian Crisis: Food Distribution. [Online] [Accessed at <https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/JRP%20for%20Rohingya%20Humanitarian%20Crisis%202018.PDF>] / [Accessed on 10 October 2018].

How does one cooperate with the ISCG? My interviewee stated the following:

“The Red Cross Movement is represented by the IFRC Head of Sub-Office in the monthly, strategic-level Heads of Sub-Office Meeting.”

My interviewee also answer related to how necessary is FRC cooperation with local NGOs as follows:

“The Red Cross Emergency Hospital functions under the legal umbrella as the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society; in addition, most Red Cross Emergency Hospital staff is employed by the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society.”

According to the Red Cross Response to Population Influx in Bangladesh (2018), the BDRCS is one of the leading humanitarian organizations in South Asia. The BDRCS has contributed to the Rohingya refugees in Cox’s Bazar in Bangladesh since 1978. Further, the BDRCS cooperates with the FRC and other international agencies, as stated in the following:

“DRCS and its Movement partners - International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) and 31 Participating National Societies (PNS) (Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies) - have since August 2017 been conducting a large-scale humanitarian response to deliver life-saving humanitarian assistance and services through multilateral and bilateral support” (Red Cross Response to Population Influx in Bangladesh, 2018, p. 6).

6. Conclusion

Since the 1990s, the number of refugees has increased around the world. In SEA, Myanmar has had the highest number of refugees since 1978, as the Rohingya have been stateless since then. When new citizenship was enacted in Myanmar in 1982, the Rohingya were not given legal citizenship, even though they were living in RS with citizenship status since the fifteenth century. As such, they obtained refugee status in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia in particular. Most of the Rohingya refugees have been living in Bangladesh; from August to October of 2017, between 600,000 and 700,000 Rohingya people escaped to Bangladesh to survive (Humanitarian Practice Network, 2018, p. 5; ISCG, 2018, p. 2). Since then, the Rohingya have been living in refugee status in several camps in Cox’s Bazar in Bangladesh. Since Bangladesh changed from a low-income country to a middle-income country in April of 2018 (Taylor, 2018), the Bangladesh Government should be able to fulfil the basic needs of the Rohingya refugees.

Both international GOs and NGOs have made contributions to aid the Rohingya refugees. In 2017, the IFRC and the IOM called for an emergency appeal for the Rohingya refugees, and the Finnish Government donated 40,000.00€ to the Rohingya refugees (FRC, 2018; Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, 2017). The FRC, the BDRCS, the NRC, the CRC, and other agencies focused their activities and funding on improving the health care sector, specifically by building the RCEH, a 60-bed hospital. The Rohingya refugee crisis began in 1978 and saw influxes in 1978, 1991–1992, 2012, and 2017 up until the time of writing this paper (2019).

From August to October of 2017, more than 1.5 million Rohingya refugees travelled to Bangladesh from Myanmar. The FRC providing aid in 2017 by establishing the RCEH in Cox’s Bazar in Bangladesh. One of the key outcomes of the RCEH was that, from August of 2017 to August of 2018, 43,780 patients were treated. However, the FRC staff faces several issues, including language barriers, infrastructure problems, bad weather, a lack of internet facilities, and a lack of clean drinking water. The BDRCS used the One-Window Approach in an attempt to have many agencies work under the same umbrella. The ISCG also contributes to ensuring cooperation between all the stakeholders in Cox’s Bazar in

Bangladesh. In January of 2018, Bangladesh and Myanmar signed a repatriation agreement; over two years, more than 600,000 Rohingya refugees returned to Bangladesh. Although this research paper was written in March of 2019, I was unaware of the agreement. It is unclear whether the Rohingya returned to Myanmar based on the repatriation agreement.

At this point, I strongly agree with the director general of the IOM, William Lacy Swing, who visited the camps in Cox's Bazar in July of 2018. He stated that he felt "uncertainty about their future" (IOM Bangladesh, 2018, p. 1). From 1978 up until the time of writing this paper (2019), the Rohingya refugee crisis in RS in Myanmar is a global issue. The following headline speaks volumes: "Rohingya: End of a Race Amidst World's Silence?" (Quddusi, November 2016).

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