

Policy Brief

on

From the Refugee Camp to the United Nations General Assembly-An Example of Evidence Based Policy Advocacy for the Rohingya Refugee People

Prepared by

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The **Rohingya refugee crisis**, now entering its **eighth year**, remains one of the world's most **protracted humanitarian emergencies**. With over **1.1 million stateless Rohingyas** taking refuge in Bangladesh primarily concentrated in **Cox's Bazar** and **Bhasan Char**—the crisis has far outgrown its original humanitarian framing. It now represents a **multidimensional challenge** that intertwines humanitarian distress with **regional security threats**, **geopolitical rivalries**, **livelihood vulnerabilities**, and **stalled repatriation pathways**.

While the global spotlight has shifted toward the wars in **Ukraine** and **Gaza**, and the ongoing displacement crises in **Europe** and the **Middle East**, Bangladesh continues to bear an **extraordinary and disproportionate burden**—all while facing dwindling international aid and donor fatigue. The situation has evolved from a humanitarian emergency into a multidimensional regional crisis marked by three defining characteristics:

- **A Regional Security Challenge** – Heightened risks of radicalization, human trafficking, and organized crime in and around the camps threaten regional stability.
- **A Political and Diplomatic Stalemate** – International mechanisms have stalled as **Myanmar's military junta evades accountability**, obstructing justice and voluntary repatriation.
- **A Livelihood and Social Catastrophe** – Refugees and host communities alike are trapped in cycles of poverty, exclusion, and growing tension, while environmental degradation compounds their suffering.

As international funding declines and local pressures intensify, the **urgency for regional, collective solutions** becomes ever clearer. Key stakeholders emphasize that a sustainable resolution requires:

1. A **regional coalition approach** to complement faltering global diplomacy;
2. Robust **justice and accountability mechanisms** for Myanmar's military; and
3. **Innovative, livelihood and ICT based interventions** to empower both Rohingya refugees and host communities.

SPF's Role in Evidence Based Advocacy and Peacebuilding

The **Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF)**, Japan, through its **Peacebuilding Department**, has been at the forefront of addressing the Rohingya crisis by combining **research, humanitarian engagement, and high level policy advocacy**. SPF's initiatives focus on strengthening regional

peace and security by promoting **evidence based decision making**, enhancing **livelihood opportunities**, and facilitating **dialogue and cooperation** among governments, civil society, and international institutions.

SPF has commissioned **in depth field research** in Rohingya refugee camps and host communities, assessing security risks, governance challenges, and livelihood barriers. These findings have informed both **local interventions** and **international diplomacy**, shaping the dialogue at national, regional, and global levels—including the **United Nations General Assembly**.

Through its peacebuilding initiatives, SPF aims to contribute to a **dignified and peaceful repatriation process**, grounded in justice, inclusion, and long term stability for the Rohingya people.

Linking Research to Global Policy: From Dhaka to New York

This policy paper draws upon the outcomes of two major international policy platforms in 2025 that reflect SPF’s commitment to the Rohingya cause:

1. **The Bengal Delta Conference (Dhaka, 30 August 2025)** — A high level seminar titled *“Rohingya Refugee Crisis: Regional Security Risks, Repatriation Pathways, and Livelihood Challenges”* convened academics, diplomats, and policymakers to re evaluate the Rohingya crisis through a regional lens.
2. **The UN High Level Conference on the Situation of Rohingya Muslims and Other Minorities in Myanmar (New York, 30 September 2025)** — Convened by the President of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), this forum brought global leaders together to renew momentum for justice and repatriation.

At both platforms, SPF researchers presented findings from their field studies and regional assessments, highlighting the urgent need for **coordinated security policies, justice mechanisms, and innovation driven livelihood solutions**.



Bengal Delta Conference- SPF session on Rohingya Refugee issues

Key Insights from the Bengal Delta Conference 2025

The **Bengal Delta Conference 2025**, held in Dhaka as part of SPF’s regional policy engagement, offered a profound reassessment of the Rohingya crisis, emphasizing its evolving nature as a **political, security, and humanitarian emergency**.

1. The Crisis Behind the Curtain – A Political Issue Disguised as Diplomacy

Ms. Shama Obaed (Bangladesh National Party) asserted that the Rohingya issue has long been exploited for diplomatic prestige rather than addressed as a political imperative. She warned that without genuine political will, neither regional cooperation nor international mediation can deliver justice.

2. A Dialogue Without End

Professor Niaz Ahmed Khan, Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University, observed that repatriation talks ongoing since 1977 remain inconclusive. Yet he cautioned that “the dialogue must not stop,” as silence would normalize statelessness. Drawing lessons from Lebanon, Uganda, and Kenya, he urged Bangladesh to pursue pragmatic models of host community resilience.

3. The Regional Security Dimension

Ambassador (Retd.) Tariq A. Karim reframed the crisis as a **regional security emergency**. Hosting the world’s largest refugee camp, Bangladesh faces mounting threats including job competition, radicalization among displaced youth, transnational crime, and ecological tensions. He proposed a **regional action plan** backed by collective diplomatic and security mechanisms to ensure **dignified repatriation and citizenship rights**.

4. A Crisis of Livelihoods and Futures

Dr. Fahim Hossain warned that rising frustration and deprivation are eroding social cohesion within both refugee and host communities. **Dr. Faheem Hussain**, linking the Rohingya experience to global displacement trends, emphasized that the **digital divide** has become a silent catastrophe. Without access to internet, mobile technology, or education, Rohingya youth risk becoming a **lost generation**, locked out of opportunity and innovation.

5. The Security–Humanitarian Tightrope

Mr. Michael Kugelman, U.S. foreign policy analyst, urged balance in framing the crisis:

“Over securitizing the Rohingya crisis may invite misguided interventions, while neglecting the security dimension risks losing international attention.”

He praised Bangladesh’s leadership in international forums, including UNGA, but stressed that humanitarian imperatives—**justice, education, and dignity**—must anchor all policy responses.

Policy Implications

The conference distilled **four central policy imperatives** for advancing peace, stability, and justice:

1. Regional Security Risks

- Instability in Cox’s Bazar could spill over into South and Southeast Asia.

- *Policy Implication:* Treat the Rohingya crisis as a **regional security issue**, not merely a national burden.

2. Repatriation Pathways

- *Policy Implication:* Complement UN diplomacy with strong **regional leadership** from ASEAN, India, China, Japan, and Bangladesh.

3. Livelihood and Technology Challenges

- *Policy Implication:* Incorporate **digital inclusion, youth empowerment, and host community resilience** into humanitarian frameworks.

4. Diplomatic and Political Approaches

- *Policy Implication:* Embed **justice, accountability, and citizenship guarantees** into all repatriation negotiations.



Policy brief handover to the honorable Chief Advisor Professor Mummad Yunus

Policy Recommendations

1. Establish a Regional Coalition

- Create a **joint ASEAN–Bangladesh–India–Japan–China task force** to coordinate safe, voluntary, and dignified repatriation.
- Promote **shared responsibility** in hosting and monitoring refugee protection.

2. Integrate Security and Humanitarian Agendas

- Align counter trafficking and anti-radicalization efforts with **humanitarian relief and conflict mediation programs**.

- **Innovate Livelihood and ICT Solution** Implement **ICT based education, vocational training, and mobile literacy programs** in refugee camps and host communities.
- Build infrastructure that supports **economic self reliance** for both refugees and locals.

3. Embed Justice and Accountability

- Pursue Myanmar's military through **international legal mechanisms** (ICC, ICJ).
- Ensure that repatriation includes **full citizenship, rights, and dignity**.

4. Revive Global Attention and Solidarity

- Elevate the Rohingya issue at **UN, G20, and regional forums**.
- Reframe donor engagement by linking **humanitarian support with regional peace and stability**.

SPF's Policy Advocacy in Action

In 30th August 2025, **Dr. Emadul Islam**, representing the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, **presented a policy brief to Professor Muhammad Yunus**, Chief Advisor of the Interim Government of Bangladesh, summarizing the findings of SPF's research and the outcomes of the Bengal Delta Conference.

In 30th September 2025, Dr. Islam participated in the **UN High Level Conference on the Situation of Rohingya Muslims and Other Minorities in Myanmar** at **UN Headquarters in New York**, where he addressed global leaders on behalf of the **Sasakawa Peace Foundation and The Nippon Foundation, Japan**. His intervention reaffirmed SPF's **long term commitment** to peacebuilding, justice, and dignified repatriation.



Dr Emadul Islam deliver speech on Rohingya refugee crisis at UN General Assembly

Conclusion: A Call for Justice, Cooperation, and Dignity

The Rohingya crisis is no longer merely a **humanitarian tragedy** it is a **political, security, and justice challenge** with profound regional and global implications. Bangladesh's extraordinary compassion and endurance must be matched by **collective leadership, shared regional responsibility, and renewed international solidarity**.

If neglected, the Rohingya people risk remaining trapped in **permanent statelessness**, and the region risks enduring instability. But if addressed through **justice, innovation, and cooperation**, this crisis could become a **landmark example of peacebuilding and global moral responsibility**.



Seminar On **Rohingya Refugee Crisis: Regional Security Risks, Repatriation Pathways, and Livelihood Challenges**

30 August 2025, 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM | InterContinental Dhaka, Bangladesh



Master of Ceremony
Dr. Abu Bakar Siddique
Professor and Dean
Royal University of Dhaka



Moderator
Dr. Emadul Islam
Senior Research Fellow
Ocean Policy Research Institute, the
Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan



Panelist
Professor Niaz Ahmed Khan
Vice Chancellor
University of Dhaka



Panelist
Ambassador (Retd.) Tariq A. Karim
Advisor, Centre for Bay of Bengal Studies
Independent University, Bangladesh



Panelist
Ms. Shama Obaed
Organizing Secretary
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)



Panelist
Mr. Mohammed Mizanur Rahman
Commissioner, Refugee Relief and Repatriation
Commissioner (RRRC), Cox's Bazar



Panelist
Dr. Faheem Hussain
Assistant Professor
School for the Future of Innovation in
Society, Arizona State University



Panelist
Michael Kugelman
Senior Fellow,
Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada



Organized by | Peace Building Department; Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF), Japan
In BENGAL DELTA CONFERENCE 2025

