



Rohingyas as Refugees: The Reality of a False Narrative

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What is the Rohingya issue? Is it a case of a persecuted minority of Myanmar? Or, it is merely transplantation of the problem from Myanmar to India which India does already have enough of it?

The History of Rohingya

The truth is that Myanmar's Jihadi scourge is decades old, a legacy of British colonialism. After all, it was the British who, more than a century ago, moved large numbers of Rohingya from East Bengal to work on rubber and tea plantations in then-Burma, which was administered as a province of India until 1937. In the years before India gained independence from Britain in 1947, Rohingya militants joined the campaign to establish Pakistan as the first Islamic republic of the postcolonial era.

When the British, who had mastered the art of "divide and rule", decided to establish two separate flanks of Pakistan on either side of India, the Rohingya's launched a campaign to drive out Buddhists from Muslim-dominated Mayu peninsula in northern Rakhine. They wanted the Mayu peninsula to secede and be annexed by East Pakistan (later Bangladesh).

Subsequently, the Gambit to secede Mayu peninsula failed and gave rise to a self-declared jihad by Rohingyas. Local mujahideen began to organise attacks on government troops and seize control of large areas in northern Rakhine, establishing a sort of Islamic caliphate. However, just after months of gaining

independence in 1948, martial law was declared in Myanmar, and government forces regained control of lost territories by early 1950s. Rohingya Islamist militancy continued to thrive, with mujahedeen attacks occurring intermittently. In 2012, fierce clashes broke out between the Rohingya and the ethnic Rakhines, who feared becoming a minority in their home state. The rape and murder of a young Buddhist woman sparked a chain of events. The sectarian violence that followed aided the Rohingya militancy to mushroom into a full-blown insurgency, with rebels launching guerrilla attacks on security forces.

Rohingyas activities in India

Seeking refuge is not the only motto of Rohingyas in India. There are several incidents which make the presence of Rohingyas in India questionable.

The terror attack on Mahabodhi Temple in Bodh Gaya on July 7, 2013, was directed at international Buddhist tourists to avenge the so-called atrocities on Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, according to arrested SIMI and Indian Mujahideen terrorists Umair Siddiqui and Haider Ali. It also was the same group that had planned the assassination of Narendra Modi, the then Chief Minister of Gujrat at a rally in Gandhi Maidan, Patna. On, October 27, 2013, six died, and hundreds were injured as a result of the cowardly attempt.

In April 2018 Samiun Rahman, a 28-year-old British Rohingya terror suspect serving Al-Qaeda in Syria, was sent to India to recruit and mobilise youth to fight for the Rohingyas. The NIA, in its charge sheet against Rahman, mentions that it was a plot by the Al-Qaeda against India. Rahman was found to have connections in West Bengal, Jharkhand, Delhi and many other states. In September 2017, Delhi police received information that a person named Raju Bhai was planning terror activities. Later it was disclosed that Raju Bhai was none other than Rahman and was attached with the Al-Nusra-Front in Syria. Rahman had received arms training, was in touch with Al-Qaeda and fought against the Syrian Army.

In August 2019, police picked up three members from Rohingya Muslim community for questioning after Rs. 30 lack was recovered from them. The cash was found at a Jhuggi in the Channi Himmat area of Jammu city. Investigations have shown that the money belonged to two Bangladeshi nationals named Ismail and Noor Alam. Both were living in Jammu for the past six years without any valid

documents. It was also revealed during the investigation that the money was parked for some treacherous activities.

There is an organic link between the Rohingya and Jihadist terror groups in Pakistan that go back a few decades, allowing the Rohingyas a run of the place in India will constitute a severe threat to the National security.

Many Rohingya were part of the 'Jihad' against the erstwhile Soviet Union in Afghanistan and had later participated in jihadist action in Kashmir. A large number of them also went back to Bangladesh. It formed the nucleus of the jihadist organisations that struck roots in Bangladesh during the regime of General Ershad and later Begum Khaleda Zia. Using Bangladesh as a base, they have established links with Indian jihadists and also carried out actions inside Myanmar.

Bertil Lintner, a Swedish journalist who has been covering Myanmar and Asia for more than three decades, in his report on Rohingyas Muslim militant group in Myanmar, called the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, previously known as Harakah-al-Yaqin (Faith Movement) responsible for attacks on 30 police posts and an Army base in northern Rakhine State in August 2017, stated the ARSA of having connections with foreign extremist groups despite their blanket denial of such accusations.

This dreaded terrorist group in Myanmar claims to be fighting for self-determination like the other terrorist groups who were killing people for the same logic in Kashmir for decades. The format of Kashmir insurgency and the Myanmar terrorist group have much in common including a standard back-up like ISI, and handlers like Hafiz Sayed. There were instances of Rohingya terrorist fighting in Kashmir and later killed in action by the Indian Forces.

The Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) has claimed its attacks were part of a campaign to achieve fundamental human rights for self-identifying Rohingya Muslims living in Rakhine. In "The truth behind Myanmar's Rohingya insurgency" published in Asia Times, dated, September 20, 2017, Bertil Lintner cited intelligence analysts declaring the group's mentor to be one Karachi-based Abdus Qadoos Burmi, a Pakistani of Rohingya descent. He has appeared in videos broadcasted on social media calling for 'jihad' in Myanmar. According to the article: "Abdus Qadoos has well-documented links to Lashkar-e-Taiba, or the Army of the Righteous, one of South Asia's largest Islamic terrorist organisations that operate

out of Pakistan. The group was founded in 1987 in Afghanistan with funding from now deceased Al Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden. Abdus Qadoos has even appeared in meetings together with Lashkar-e-Taiba supremo Hafiz Mohammed Syed," writes Lintner.

The article describes the group's leader as Ataullah Abu Ammar Junjuni, also known as Hafiz Tohar, who was born in Karachi and received madrassa education in Saudi Arabia. Lintner highlights ARSA's second- ranking leader, "a shadowy man known only as 'Sharif' who comes from Chittagong in southwestern Bangladesh and does not appear in any of the group's propaganda videos." He reportedly speaks with an Urdu language accent, the official language of Pakistan. Security analysts note 150 foreigners in the ARSA ranks, according to the story, "angry and desperate young men. Most of them are from Bangladesh, eight to ten come from Pakistan with smaller groups from Indonesia, Malaysia and southern Thailand. Two are reportedly from Uzbekistan. Training held in the Myanmar-Bangladesh border areas have been carried out in part by older veterans of the Afghan wars, the security analysts say". (Asia Times, 2017)

Massacre of Hindus in Myanmar

In a report published by Amnesty International in January 2020, it mentions a brutal massacre by the ARSA of around 100 Hindu's in Myanmar's Rakhine State in 2017. The report provides first-hand accounts of the survivors from a Hindu village called "**Ah Nauk Kha Maung Seik**". On August 25, 2017, at around 8 am, armed men dressed in black and local Rohingya villagers in plain clothes rounded up dozens of Hindu women, men and children in the village. They robbed, bound, and blindfolded them before marching them to the outskirts of the town, where they separated the men from the women and young children.

A few hours later, ARSA fighters executed 53 Hindu villagers, starting with the men. Eight Hindu women and eight of their children were spared after ARSA fighters forced them to convert to Islam and flee with the militants to Bangladesh. Raj Kumari, an 18-year-old girl who survived the massacre, says: "They slaughtered the men. We were told not to look at them ... They had knives. They also had some spades and iron rods. ... We hid ourselves in the shrubs there and were able to see a little ... My uncle, my father, my brother – they were all slaughtered."

Another survivor named Formila, a 20-year-old girl told, that as she and the other seven abducted women were being marched away, she turned back and saw ARSA fighters kill the other women and children. The same day, all of the 46 Hindu men, women, and children in the neighbouring village of "**Ye Bauk Kyar**" disappeared, presumed killed by the same ARSA fighters. The bodies of 45 people from Ah Nauk Kha Maung Seik were unearthed in four mass graves in late September 2017. The remains of the rest of the victims from that village, as well as all 47 from Ye Bauk Kyar, have not been found.

On August 26 2017, ARSA members killed six more Hindus, including three children, and injured another woman on the outskirts of Maungdaw town, near "**Myo Thu Gyi village**". Kor Mor La, a 25-year-old girl who survived the attack while her husband and five-year-old daughter were both killed, says: 'The people who shot us were dressed in black. ... I couldn't see their faces, only their eyes. ... They had long guns and swords; my husband was shot next to me. I was shot [in the chest]. After that, I was barely conscious.' However, Amnesty in its report criticises the Myanmar Army for a brutal response to these killings.

Rakhine State, where most of Myanmar's Rohingya reside, is attracting jihadists from far and wide. Local militants are suspected of having ties with the Islamic State (ISIS), al-Qaeda, and other terrorist organisations. Moreover, they increasingly receive aid from militant-linked organisations in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. The leading insurgent group, ARSA, is led by a Saudi-based committee of Rohingya émigrés. The external forces fomenting insurgent attacks in Rakhine bear considerable responsibility for the Rohingyas' current plight. It is the link between Rohingya militants and such external forces, especially terrorist organisations like ISIS, that have driven concerned governments to declare that their entry poses a severe security threat. Even Bangladesh acknowledges Rohingya militants' external jihadi connections.

The Rohingyas as a community along the eastern border pose a severe security threat not only to the state of Assam and other northeastern states but also has considerable security implications for neighbouring Bangladesh as well. The security agencies have warned the Union government that Pakistan's intelligence agencies may try "to exploit Rohingyas to support jihad" and thereby Rohingyas can create trouble in the sensitive areas of Assam, which had faced violent clashes a few years back due to large scale illegal immigration. (Amnesty International UK, 2020)

Rohingya's ISI Connection

Reports published in The Economic Times, by Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, dated: July 12, 2018. provided a clear picture of direct lineage and linkage of the Rohingya Terror outfits with Pakistan based ISI and other terror groups explains the Rohingya,s international connections in very detail. A little known Rohingya terror group named **Aqa-Mul- Mujahideen (AMM)** blamed for attacks on Myanmar border outposts in the year 2015 not only maintained links with Hafiz Saeed's Lashkar-e- Taiba (LET) but also developed a connection with the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM) cell in Jammu and Kashmir. Aqa Mul Mujahideen (AMM) leaders were trained in Pakistan and later recruited Rohingya youth in Rakhine region of Myanmar, claimed persons familiar with the group and its activities. AMM is a new armed group that originated from the Harkat-ul-Jihad Islami-Arakan (HUJI-A).

There are reports of Rohingya terrorists fighting alongside Pakistani extremists in Kashmir. One of their top leaders, Chotta Burmi, was killed in Kashmir along with JeM commander Adil Pathan last year. Earlier Burmi allegedly shared the dais with Hafiz Saeed in Pakistan. It is understood that security agencies of India, Bangladesh and Myanmar are coordinating their actions against Rohingya terror groups.

The current HUJI-A chief -- Abdus Qadoos Burmi, a Pakistani national of Rohingya origin, who it is claimed recruited one Hafiz Tohar from Maungdaw in Myanmar. Tohar is now said to be heading the AMM and Qadoos Burmi is reported to be close to Saeed. Saeed's other terror group, Jamat ud Dawa (JuDD)'s humanitarian arm, Falah-e-Insaniat (FiF), was active in Rohingya relief camps in Rakhine State after the 2012 riots.

Qadoos Burmi also developed the HUJI-A network in Bangladesh, using the remote hills along its border with Myanmar, according to government sources in Dhaka. It may be recalled that JuD launched Difa-e-Musalman-e-Arakan conference in Pakistan to highlight the Rohingya cause in 2012. Subsequently, two senior JuD operatives, Shahid Mahmood and Nadeem Awan, allegedly established direct contacts with Rohingya extremists based in camps along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border.

Earlier, the Bangladesh authorities arrested Maulana Shabeer Ahmed, a Pakistan-based Rohingya operative in 2012 who revealed that he was coordinating with Rohingya terrorists in Bangladesh on behalf of JeM. Bangladesh authorities are not ruling out the fact that Rohingya armed groups may have close links with Bangladesh's home grown terrorists and could share hideouts, finances and sources of weapons supply. Pakistan-linked Rohingya terror groups have also allegedly been noticed in Mae Sot area on the Thai side of the Thai-Myanmar border. (The Economic Times, 2018)

Bangladesh's history is replete with HUJI-B's violent campaigns against the pro-democratic and secular Awami-League (AL) political party and other civil society members. The leaders who have spearheaded the Sunni (Hanafi-Deobandi) militant movement in Bangladesh, such as Mufti Hannan, Sheikh Farid and Maulana Abdus Salam guided both covert and overt actions of the group in Bangladesh and beyond, especially in neighbouring Myanmar where both HUJI-A and HUJI-B were active.

We have discussed earlier regarding SIMI, NDF and PFI; these radical organisations have mastered in disguising themselves. HUJI-B, much before it was banned in Bangladesh, it morphed into Islami-Dawat-E- Khalifa in March 1999 to evade scrutiny. Again in 2004, HUJI-B changed its name into Islami-Gan-Andolan Bangladesh (IGA-B). Finally, HUJI-B in all its formations was banned by the US-State Department in February 2008.

When the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi decided to broaden the bilateral security and counter-terrorism partnership, the drivers were New Delhi's concerns over ISI infiltration into the ranks of Rohingyas and Yangon's fight against the Rakhine terrorists.

India and Bangladesh, through their joint counter-terror cooperation, have recently discovered that the ISI had allegedly played a key role in masterminding a terror attack in Myanmar's Rakhine state ahead of Prime Minister Modi's visit. India-Bangladesh-Myanmar may now move toward trilateral info-sharing mechanism to counter this threat in the region.

India and Bangladesh recently discovered that Hafiz Tohar, the military chief of Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), has been maintaining close

links with Pakistan's ISI and the spy agency may have played a vital role in the terror attacks that killed several members of Myanmar's Army.

Phone calls between Tohar and ISI discussing detailed attack plans have been intercepted in the last week of August, indicated people familiar with the issue. Hafiz Tohar set up the Aqa Mul Mujahideen (AMM) and was trained in Pakistan by the Lashkar e Tayyaba (LeT), also named in the just-concluded BRICS Summit declaration. Tohar is widely believed to be behind the deadly attacks on Myanmar security forces in October 2016 and on August 25, 2017.

After the training of a few initial AMM recruits in Pakistan, new cadre members were recruited from among the Rohingya youth in Rakhine State and at refugee camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazaar. They were then trained in camps set up on the Bangladesh-Myanmar border, especially one at the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh, according to experts who have followed this development closely.

"Brigadier Ashfaq" and "Major Salamat", two alleged ISI operatives, have been mentoring AMM and assisting this group in developing close links with JMB in Bangladesh, according to one of the experts cited above. The ISI Brigadier also allegedly maintains close relationships with Bangladesh's Opposition BNP. In this context, India and Myanmar have decided to step up counter-terror cooperation and information sharing. The joint statement issued after Modi-Su Kyi dialogue said: "Both sides... agreed that the fight against terrorism should...hold accountable and take active measures against States and entities that encourage support or finance terrorism.

The 'Quadriga' facilitating Rohingyas in India

The Civil Society and Human Rights NGOs, gang of so-called activists and Urban Naxals who ran helter-skelter for a rescuing a terrorist, are trying to put forward a very human and persecuted type of image for Rohingyas in India. The 'Quadriga (Chaukdi)' gang propagated that deportation of Rohingyas from India is contrary to the Constitutional protections of Article 14, Article 21 and Article 51(c) of the Constitution of India, which provides equal rights and liberty to every 'person'. And this would also be in contradiction with the principle of 'Non-Refoulement', which has been widely recognised as a principle of Customary International Law. They also said that India has ratified and is a signatory to, various Conventions that understand the Principle of 'Non-Refoulement', which

prohibits the deportation of refugees to a country where they face a threat to their life.

In reality each of the above premises was factually wrong and baseless. The first premise is that around 40,000 Rohingyas or more like them have taken refuge in India. This by itself is a false statement because none of them have entered the Indian Territory by law. Each one of them has entered clandestinely, dodging the eyes of the law and are now seeking equity. They have entered India through human trafficking networks that operate in tandem with all negative forces. It emanates a conspiracy at the highest levels.

The UNHCR in India in 2016 and have granted refugee I-cards. The Quadriga tries to convince that the Identity cards do not in any manner supersede the Indian laws. It is however outrageous that on Indian soil it is not the Indian Government but an outside agency that is seeking to determine the status of illegal immigrants. Sovereignty to this extent has never been ceded by India to empower any outside agency to determine who our refugees are and who not. The sole discretion lies with the Central Government. Parliament has not enacted any law about refugees from Myanmar.

It was also said that the deportation "would also be in contradiction with the principle of 'Non-Refoulement', which has been widely recognised as a principle of Customary International Law" is also absolutely wrong. It must also be noticed that the policy of "Non-Refoulement" is not part of customary international law. The logic that "India has ratified and is a signatory to, various Conventions that recognise the Principle of 'Non-Refoulement' that prohibits the deportation of refugees to a country where they face a threat to their life" was also wrong and incorrect. Principle of non- refoulment is rooted in the 1951 Treaty that has not been signed by India or ratified by it.

Lord Denning in his book *The Due Process of Law* has written an "Introduction" to Part Five — "Entrances and Exits" (p. 155) and the opening paragraph thereof reads as under: "In recent times, England has been invaded — not by enemies — nor by friends — but by those who seek England as a heaven. In their own countries there are poverty, disease and no homes. In England there is social security — a national health service and guaranteed housing — all to be had for the asking without payment and without working for it. Once here, each seeks to bring his relatives to join him. So they multiply exceedingly."

Article 370 of the Constitution till very recently imposed many restrictions on non-domiciled people from staying in the state of Jammu & Kashmir. While the rest of India was not allowed to stay in the State of Jammu & Kashmir the illegally immigrated Rohingya community were permitted to settle nearby the sensitive Pakistan border. The situation posed before India by the Rohingyas, is one by invaders, by those who deliberately chose to pay no respect to the authorities or the laws and clandestinely entered Indian soil and now seek protection under same Indian constitution.

The European nations have recently suffered the results of this kind of entry like France, Germany, Belgium, and Britain and also due to the Bangladeshi Muslims in India where attacks by refugees have become the order of the day. The fact remains that, illegal Rohingyas are not refugees; they must be seen as aggressors/invaders. And without doubt, all of them settled in the most strategic locations of the country like Jammu and Kashmir, Hyderabad, Delhi must be a matter of great concern.

The Quadrigas effort to colour the Rohingyas issue with the Chakma refugees was also ill-conceived. There are a great many distinctions in both cases. While the Chakmas never jeopardised India's relations with any friendly country, Rohingyas do. While Chakmas never ran a terrorist organisation, Rohingyas do run ARSA. While the Chakmas were relatively peaceful people, Rohingyas are not. Rohingyas are an indigenous ethnic group belonging to the state of Myanmar, unlike the Chakma refugees who were found to be persons of Indian origin. The lack of any discernible connection to the Union of India on the part of the Rohingyas makes this case completely different from that of the Chakma refugees.

The connection of Rohingyas with ISI, facilitation by radical Islamist group PFI, and PFI's coordination with the Communists groups, the Communist's cordiality with the Christian missionaries and overall the back up and cover up by a particular set of journalists with Human rights organisations makes it a perfect recipe of the Quadriga Gang.

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