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Bangladesh's Refusal to Receive Rohingya Refugees

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Bangladesh is a country which feels pride in presenting herself as a secular state. There is no doubt that the analysts and experts push for secularist trends as it gives freedom of speech, allows private religious practices and makes life livable under ideal circumstances. Secular states are regarded as being true to its citizen's choices and beliefs. Bangladesh has been trying hard to maintain its status as it is a multi-religious

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country where extremism is evident. Constant religio-political conflicts have now become a routine and mark the news headlines with Muslims and Hindus clashing very frequently. As India holds a strong influence in its neighboring state, it is speculated that India may be influencing in pushing Bangladesh into a proxy war. As Bangladesh is fighting at an array of fronts which ranges from overpopulation to terrorism; the country needs to look into devising an effective strategy to address the growing concern of Rohingya's. Lately, as Bangladesh has announced to close down its borders with Myanmar, the Rohingya's are fearing for their lives who are residing in camps nearby the border and waiting to cross and enter Bangladesh, whenever an opportunity seems to be suitable. There is no doubt that being a secular state, there are high hopes of the United Nations (UN) as well as the Rohingya community from Bangladesh. However, as the country is suffering from an array of internal issues, there is less which can be done to accommodate this fleeing minority, who are often regarded as the illegal Bangladeshi immigrants in their home country. Rohingya's are standard without a roof and are at risk of their lives as the Myanmar government has launched a massive operation against this minority and with the help of the Army, their villages are erased whereas the women are raped and killed.

Role of Bangladesh

Bangladesh is home to approximately 30,000 registered and around 300,000 to 500,000 unregistered Rohingyas who are living in the overcrowded country, however, recently the local government has decided to close down its borders and have initiated

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a massive crackdown against the illegal Rohingya residing in the country. The arrested Rohingya families and individuals are now being sent back whereas the Rohingya's claim that it is a barbaric act on the part of Bangladeshi government as the Myanmar soldiers are killing those illegal immigrants right away. The United Nations has also raised its concerns as the Rohingya genocide at termed to be at the last stages. Above all, instead of extending a humanitarian hand to the fleeing, Bangladesh has closed its doors which have further left the fleeing at the mercy of nature and their fate which is likely to be their eventual death. Further to it, as Myanmar has restricted the international journalists and media reporters from entering its marked zones, on the other hand, Bangladesh has also placed a ban on the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) from supplying any aid to the refugees across the border. The Bangladeshi government has received a lot of criticism from within its population and the international community as it is estimated that Bangladesh being a signatory of various forums such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Four Geneva Convention of 1949, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), could have played a significant role in addressing this issue and stop the genocide of minority Muslims in its region. Further to it, the Bangladeshi leadership should have been the one to highlight this issue which

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is not only risking hundreds of innocent lives but is also affecting its borders and other countries of the region. However, terming the Rohingya's illegal Bangladeshi's further places a significant responsibility on the shoulders of Bangladesh so that it clarifies the matter and assists in extending recognition to this displaced community.

Way Forward

There is no doubt that the matter of Rohingya genocide has been put on the back benches by the Bangladeshi government as well as the international community. Many believe that since the Muslims are being targeted in this particular case, therefore, the world media was not interested in giving an extended coverage to this issue. However, now the matter has aggravated and is impacting the other countries of the region in shape of human trafficking and illegal immigrations, this issue is now in the limelight. The Myanmar government, still in denial regarding any maltreatment by its forces, has also refused to comply with the demands placed by the UN council. Following recommendations are suggested for the Bangladeshi leadership so that it cannot only highlight this issue but is also able to play a vital role to assist the Rohingyas:

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) stand guard on the bank of Naf River near Bangladesh-Myanmar border to prevent Rohingya Refugees

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1. Bangladesh's government must fight the case in the International Arbitration Council on behalf of Rohingya's, as the reputation of Bangladesh is also at stake. The Myanmar government is constantly regarding its people as illegal Bangladeshi's which is further aggravating the matter and increasing aggression amongst the Rohingya community by developing a sense of disownment.
2. If Bangladesh cannot afford to provide citizenship and employment to the fleeing Rohingyas, then it must establish refugee camps and allow the international NGO's to operate for the welfare and survival on the humanitarian grounds. This will not impact the country's economy, and chances exist that due to this forward step was taken by Bangladesh, it may be able to achieve greater recognition in the international community.
3. Bangladesh, being a strategic player in the region, must highlight the Rohingya genocide so that this particular ethnicity can be saved from extinction and the brutalities of Myanmar government and its military must be highlighted so that their actions can be rectified through sanctions and embargoes.
4. The Rohingya genocide is a threat to the regional stability and peace, and the issue of fleeing Rohingyas is further adding to the problems of the regional countries. Bangladesh must take the international forum and present the facts to the world powers who are working with the Myanmar government. The brutal face of their leadership must be unveiled.

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5. At last but not the least, the Bangladesh government must prevent the holocaust of the 21st century which is taking place against the Muslims, and the facts suggest that this trend is slowly taking pace. The quietness from the Muslim leaders is also condemnable as their fellows are battling for their lives. Bangladesh must introduce a forum to engage the Muslim leaders and invite them to devise a solution to this emergency.

Conclusion

The policies adopted by the Bangladeshi authorities are disappointing as they have not only shut its doors on the fleeing Rohingyas but have also disallowed the NGO's to operate. Closing down the doors particularly on the Muslims who are in dire need is a simple act of selfishness and can be synonymous to the stance of Myanmar government, which indicates that they are supporting this genocide. There is a lot which the Bangladeshi government can do and save millions from facing a tough and brutal fate. The government should take the leadership role and highlight this aggravating issue at the international political and diplomatic fronts so that issue can be addressed and the role of Myanmar government and its military can be rectified.

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