

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	564
Land:	Bangladesh
Kilde:	European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)
Titel:	COI Query response. Bangladesh: Procedure for persons of Rohingya origin to obtain, replace and renew Bangladeshi passports, including abroad; information on possibility to legally purchase and register land/property
Udgivet:	5. marts 2026
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	16. juni 2026



COI QUERY

Country of Origin	BANGLADESH
Title	Bangladesh: Procedure for persons of Rohingya origin to obtain, replace and renew Bangladeshi passports, including abroad; information on possibility to legally purchase and register land/property
Reference period	January 2022 to 4 March 2026
Topic(s)	1. Background information 2. Procedures for persons of Rohingya origin to obtain, replace and renew Bangladeshi passports 3. Possibility to legally purchase and register land/property during the period of 1980s–1990s
Date of completion	5 March 2026
Query Code	Q10-2026
Contributing EU+ COI units (if applicable)	N/A

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Cite as: EUAA, Country of Origin Information Query, Bangladesh, Bangladesh: Procedure for persons of Rohingya origin to obtain, replace and renew Bangladeshi passports, including abroad; information on possibility to legally purchase and register land/property, 4 March 2026, [url](#)

COI QUERY RESPONSE – Bangladesh

Procedure for persons of Rohingya origin to obtain, replace and renew Bangladeshi passports, including abroad; information on possibility to legally purchase and register land/property during the period of 1980s–1990s

1. Background information

The Rohingya are a long-established Muslim community in Rakhine State in western Myanmar. In 1982, Myanmar introduced a citizenship law that did not recognise the Rohingya as one of the country's official ethnic groups, leaving them without citizenship. Many Rohingya have fled violence and insecurity, seeking refuge in Bangladesh for decades.¹ In August 2017, more than 750 000 Rohingya crossed into Bangladesh after a military crackdown in Rakhine State, joining earlier waves of refugees who arrived in the 1970s and 1990s.²

In January 2026, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) indicated that over one million Rohingya refugees, many of them stateless, are currently in Bangladesh, with most living in and around the Kutupalong and Nayapara camp areas in Cox's Bazar, among the largest and most crowded refugee settlements globally.³ According to the Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN),⁴ as Bangladesh is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol, the Rohingya in the country have 'limited legal protections'.⁵ Bangladeshi governments have also tended to avoid referring to them as 'refugees', instead using the label 'Unidentified Myanmar Nationals'⁶ or 'forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals'.⁷ As a result, 'the overwhelming majority of Rohingya [...] in Bangladesh'⁸ have not been granted refugee status.⁹ While the alternate classification used allows access to basic humanitarian assistance,

¹ EU, European Commission, ECHO Factsheet - The Rohingya crisis, August 2018, [url](#), p. 2; UNHCR, Where are Rohingya refugees now – and what support do they receive?, n.d., [url](#)

² UNHCR, Emergency Appeal - Rohingya Emergency, n.d., [url](#)

³ UNHCR, Rohingya Refugee Crisis Explained, 23 January 2026, [url](#)

⁴ The Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN), run by ODI Global's Humanitarian Policy Group, is an independent, practitioner-focused forum and publisher that shares analysis and good practice to improve humanitarian action worldwide through knowledge exchange and learning. See HPN, About us, n.d., [url](#)

⁵ HPN, The Rohingya Response in Bangladesh: Local Capacities and Coping Strategies, October 2018, [url](#), p. 25

⁶ HPN, The Rohingya Response in Bangladesh: Local Capacities and Coping Strategies, October 2018, [url](#), p. 25

⁷ World Bank, Bangladesh Country Report – The Big Questions in Forced Displacement and Health, June 2022, [url](#), p.13

⁸ ASILE Project, Bangladesh – Final Country Report, October 2023, [url](#), p. 3

⁹ NRC, Rohingya in Bangladesh: Seven years, seven insights, 25 August 2024, [url](#); ASILE Project, Bangladesh – Final Country Report, October 2023, [url](#), p. 3

it restricts many rights typically associated with refugee status, including freedom of movement and access to formal education, livelihoods, and paid employment.¹⁰

Concerning the Rohingya refugees' legal status in Bangladesh, an August 2024 report by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) noted that, 'due to lack of legal status, Rohingya have no right to live and work in Bangladesh, and informal livelihood opportunities and remittances are the primary source of income generation for a majority, beyond the limited and insufficient assistance received via the humanitarian response'.¹¹ As of 23 January 2026, UNHCR stated that 95 % of Rohingya households in Bangladesh were 'dependent on humanitarian assistance'. At the same time, the conflict in Myanmar continues to drive new internal displacement and cross-border movements, putting heavy pressure on protection and humanitarian systems amid large funding gaps and ongoing violence.¹²

On 25 August 2025, Bangladesh's interim leader Muhammad Yunus, speaking at a conference in Cox's Bazar, stated that Bangladesh was not in a position to commit further resources to support the Rohingya population in the country, and urged the international community to develop a roadmap for their return to Myanmar.¹³

2. Procedures for persons of Rohingya origin to obtain, replace and renew Bangladeshi passports

In Bangladesh, citizenship is a prerequisite for obtaining a passport,¹⁴ under the Bangladesh Passport Order, 1973.¹⁵ The statutes that regulate citizenship in Bangladesh are the Citizenship Act 1951 (CA 1951) and the Bangladesh Citizenship (Temporary Provisions) Order 1972 (BCTP Order 1972).¹⁶ According to existing legislation, a person born in Bangladesh acquires citizenship by birth unless their father is a diplomat or an enemy alien. In practice, however, citizenship by birth is reportedly granted only when a child is born in Bangladesh to two Bangladeshi citizen parents.¹⁷

Information on procedures for persons of Rohingya origin to obtain, replace and renew Bangladeshi passports was scarce among the sources consulted by EUAA within time constraints. However, the following information may be relevant.

¹⁰ World Bank, Bangladesh Country Report – The Big Questions in Forced Displacement and Health, June 2022, [url](#), p.13

¹¹ MSF, Behind the Wire: Impact of state containment and exclusion strategies on the Rohingya, August 2024, [url](#), p. 18

¹² UNHCR, Rohingya Refugee Crisis Explained, 23 January 2026, [url](#)

¹³ Aljazeera, Bangladeshi leader demands justice for Rohingya, 'safe return' to Myanmar, [url](#); Reuters, Bangladesh runs out of resources for Rohingya refugees, 25 August 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴ European University Institute, Report on Citizenship Law: Bangladesh, December 2016, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁵ Bangladesh, The Bangladesh Passport Order, 8 February 1973, [url](#)

¹⁶ Bangladesh, The Citizenship Act, 1951 (Act No. II of 1951), [url](#); Bangladesh, The Bangladesh Citizenship (Temporary Provisions) Order, 1972 (President's Order), 15 December 1972, [url](#)

¹⁷ SEAP, Bangladesh, Last updated 17 June 2025, [url](#); European University Institute, Report on Citizenship Law: Bangladesh, December 2016, [url](#), p. 13

The August 2024 MSF report noted that, in the past, some Rohingya managed to obtain Bangladeshi National ID cards or passports and travel onward (often to Saudi Arabia). The same source added that increased scrutiny by Bangladeshi authorities, together with the UNHCR biometric database shared with the government, has made such routes increasingly difficult and rare. As a result, more Rohingya remain effectively confined to camps in Bangladesh and are increasingly dependent on a political solution.¹⁸

In January 2026, media reported that Bangladesh's Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain said many Rohingyas had left the country years ago using Bangladeshi passports because of Bangladesh's own mistakes and alleged corruption when passports were handwritten, and that Saudi authorities were pressing for those passports to be renewed. Further, Hossain reportedly stated that, for broader interests, Bangladesh decided to issue passports to about 69 000 Rohingyas, while emphasising that a Bangladeshi passport does not by itself prove Bangladeshi citizenship.¹⁹

- **General procedure for Bangladesh citizens to obtain, replace and renew Bangladeshi passports in Bangladesh**

Bangladeshi citizens requesting or replacing a passport apply through the official e-Passport Online Registration Portal and complete the application online.²⁰ The Bangladesh Department of Immigration & Passports' e-Passport portal, updated 7 May 2025, states that applicants must bring a printed application summary (including any appointment details), original identification documents (NID card or birth certificate), and a printed application form when attending enrolment at a passport office. It also lists the payment slip for offline payments only, any previous passport (if available), and a GO/NOC for government employees where applicable. The notice adds that additional supporting documents may be required depending on the type of application and whether any corrections are requested.²¹

- **General procedure for Bangladesh citizens to obtain, replace and renew Bangladeshi passports abroad**

Several official Bangladesh government sources describe that e-passport applications are made via the official e-Passport portal and involve online submission plus an in-person enrolment/biometrics step.²² For example, the Consulate General of Bangladesh in Dubai of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has offered e-Passport services since 2021 and lists the following categories of eligible applicants:

'A. WHO ARE ELIGIBLE?

- A Bangladeshi citizen or Bangladesh origin national living in the UAE

¹⁸ MSF, Behind the Wire: Impact of state containment and exclusion strategies on the Rohingya, August 2024, [url](#), p. 19

¹⁹ Dhaka Tribune, Foreign adviser: Rohingyas with passports are not citizens, 28 January 2026, [url](#); ANA, Bangladesh: Rohingya Passports Do Not Grant Citizenship, 30 January 2026, [url](#)

²⁰ Bangladesh, Welcome to Bangladesh e-Passport Portal, n.d., [url](#)

²¹ Bangladesh, Documents need to be carried while enrolment at Passport offices, Last updated 7 May 2025, [url](#)

²² Bangladesh, Consulate General of Bangladesh, Sydney, e-Passport, n.d., [url](#); Bangladesh, Consulate General of Bangladesh in Dubai, E-Passport, n.d., [url](#)

- A newborn baby of a Bangladeshi parents
- Applicants currently holding an MRP with less than 1 Year validity. E-Passport applications will not be accepted if the existing MRP has more than one year of validity remaining.
- Applicants wishing to replace an old styled handwritten Bangladeshi passport
- Applicants who lost their e-passport/MRP but have a copy. In such case, a lost report from the UAE police will be required.
- Applicants holding a Bangladeshi National ID card (NID)/Smart ID or a 17 digit online verifiable Birth Registration Certificate [English Version]'.²³

For a newborn's first Bangladeshi passport, applicants must submit a printed, signed e-Passport online application (with barcode) and appointment summary, the child's 17-digit Bangladeshi birth certificate in English verifiable online, two recent 3R lab-printed photos meeting specified requirements, the child's UAE birth certificate in English, and the parents' original passports (MRP/e-passport) and/or Bangladeshi NID or 17-digit online birth certificates (in English).²⁴

Applicants who already hold a Bangladeshi passport and are converting an MRP to an e-Passport, or applying for re-issue of an e-Passport/MRP because it is expiring, damaged, or needs replacement (including lost passports with a police report), are required to submit a printed, signed copy of the completed online e-Passport application (with barcode) together with the appointment summary sheet. They must also provide either a Bangladeshi National Identity Card (NID) or a 17-digit online-verifiable Bangladeshi birth certificate in English and present their current original MRP/e-Passport (or, if lost, printed police report). In the UAE context, they must additionally provide a photocopy of their Emirates ID/resident permit (along with the original), a UAE visa copy, and a valid student ID if the applicant is a student, and they must attend in person for identity checks and biometric enrolment.²⁵

3. Possibility to legally purchase and register land/property during the period of 1980s–1990s and current legislation on land and property

Information on the possibility to legally purchase and register land/property during the period of 1980s–1990s was not found among the sources consulted by EUAA within time constraints. However, the following information may be relevant.

Article 42 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on the right to property provides that:

'(1) Subject to any restrictions imposed by law, every citizen shall have the right to acquire, hold, transfer or otherwise dispose of property, and no property shall be compulsorily acquired, nationalised or requisitioned save by authority of law.

²³ Bangladesh, Consulate General of Bangladesh in Dubai, E-Passport, n.d., [url](#)

²⁴ Bangladesh, Consulate General of Bangladesh in Dubai, E-Passport, n.d., [url](#)

²⁵ Bangladesh, Consulate General of Bangladesh in Dubai, E-Passport, n.d., [url](#)

(2) A law made under clause (1) of this article shall provide for the acquisition, nationalisation or requisition with compensation and shall fix the amount of compensation or specify the principles on which, and the manner in which, the compensation is to be assessed and paid ; but no such law shall be called in question in any court on the ground that any provision of the law in respect of such compensation is not adequate.²⁶

According to the Housing, Land & Property (HLP) Working Group,²⁷ ‘access to Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) rights has long been a challenge for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh’.²⁸ In January 2026, the HLP Working Group found that newly arrived Rohingya refugees in the camps of Cox’s Bazar access shelter through diverse but largely informal pathways, with widespread unaffordable renting and shelter ‘purchases’ often lacking written proof. According to the HLP Working Group, among those who bought shelter, 92% lack written proof of purchase/ ownership. Absence of documentation leaves households highly vulnerable to disputes, land claim and eviction.²⁹

Similarly, between November and December 2025, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)’s Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance (ICLA) programme assessed HLP conditions among Rohingya refugees in 25 camps in Cox’s Bazar and found tenure insecurity to be ‘widespread and structurally embedded’. The same source indicated that most households lived on public land under informal, contested arrangements without written protection from eviction, alongside pervasive informal renting.³⁰

NRC further explained that dispute resolutions ‘are heavily shaped by power asymmetries’.³¹ Block Majhis³² are usually approached first but are widely distrusted due to perceived corruption and retaliation risks, while NGO services and Camp-in-Charge (CiC) offices are seen as fairer but remain difficult to access and slow, especially for women and female-headed households who fear reprisals.³³

²⁶ Bangladesh, The Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, Act XIV of 2011, [url](#), Art. 42

²⁷ The Housing, Land & Property Working Group (HLP WG) is a coordination group in the Rohingya response in Bangladesh that works to strengthen people’s access to housing/land/property rights and address related risks. See Rohingya Refugee Response, Housing, Land & Property Working Group, n.d., [url](#)

²⁸ Rohingya Refugee Response, Housing, Land & Property Working Group, n.d., [url](#)

²⁹ HLP Working Group, Housing, Land and Property (HLP) Situation Of Newly Arrived Refugees In Cox’s Bazar – Assessment Report, January 2026, [url](#), p. 1

³⁰ NRC, Needs Assessment: Housing, Land and Property in Cox’s Bazar Camps, January 2026, [url](#), p. 1

³¹ NRC, Needs Assessment: Housing, Land and Property in Cox’s Bazar Camps, January 2026, [url](#), p. 1

³² Majhis are Rohingya refugee community leaders appointed within the camps in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh. Each Majhi is responsible for a specific camp block and acts as an intermediary between refugees and the camp authorities, including the Camp-in-Charge (CiC) office and humanitarian agencies. See ACAPS, Rohingya Crisis, Thematic report, June 2018, [url](#), p. 3

³³ NRC, Needs Assessment: Housing, Land and Property in Cox’s Bazar Camps, January 2026, [url](#), p. 1

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