

Bangladesh (6)

78

Home	Site map	Contact us	About this website
------	----------	------------	--------------------



Research/Evaluation

Basic facts
News
Protecting refugees
Our partners
Publications
Research/Evaluation
Executive Committee
Administration
Special events
How you can help

You are in: Research: Country of Origin and Legal Information

U.S. Committee for Refugees World Refugee Survey 2002 – Bangladesh

June 2002

Search UNHCR Onli

Table of Contents

- ▶ Burmese Rohingya
- ▶ Biharis
- ▶ Returned and Displaced Chakma
- ▶ Bangladeshi Hindus

At the end of 2001, Bangladesh hosted approximately 122,000 refugees. Of these, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recognized as refugees 22,061 ethnic Rohingya from Burma and 112 persons from Somalia, Sierra Leone, Iran, and other countries.

The U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR) also considered as refugees an estimated 100,000 other Rohingya who have fled to Bangladesh since 1993. Although they fled Burma for reasons similar to those of the UNHCR-recognized refugees who entered in 1991 and 1992, Bangladesh classified them as illegal immigrants. During the year, 283 Rohingya repatriated to Burma with UNHCR assistance.

An estimated 60,000 Chakma and other Jumma peoples (ethnic groups of which the Chakma are a subgroup) were internally displaced in Bangladesh. An unknown number of Hindus and other religious minorities – perhaps as many as 200,000 – were displaced at year's end as a result of post-election violence that began in October.

An estimated 5,000 to 20,000 Hindus from Bangladesh were asylum seekers in India at the end of 2001.

Some 240,000 to 300,000 Biharis were living in Bangladesh in refugee-like circumstances at year's end.

Burmese Rohingya

Some 250,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh from

At the end of 2001, only 22,061 of the Rohingya who entered Bangladesh in 1991 to 1992 remained, mostly living in UNHCR-run camps. Although Bangladesh wants the refugees to repatriate, most adamantly refuse to do so.

Because donor governments have shown increasing reluctance to fund UNHCR's assistance programs in the camps for the Burmese, the refugee agency has sought to introduce projects aimed at helping the refugees become more self-sufficient and facilitating the agency's eventual withdrawal from the camps. However, the Bangladeshi authorities, fearful that the refugees might become too well-established in Bangladesh, have rejected many of these proposals.

http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rsd/_wwBmeBmVixowwwwwwwwwwww.../15d8007e077.htm

Efforts to curb new arrivals have had only limited success. Since 1993, continuing abuses by the Burmese authorities have led an estimated 100,000 Rohingya to flee to Bangladesh. (The actual number is unknown; the 100,000 estimate has been quoted frequently for several years, while some local media put the number as high as 200,000.) Because Bangladesh denies the refugees legal status and assistance, they live in difficult conditions.

In January 2001, Bangladeshi authorities arrested two leaders of an insurgent Rohingya group, the Arakan Rohingya National Organization (ARNO). Bangladesh accused ARNO of training guerrillas in Bangladesh forests.

That same month, Bangladeshi officials said that the governments of Bangladesh and Burma were working to resolve their "border problems" (i.e., illegal border-crossings), which they said had halted the refugee repatriation earlier in the month.

By year's end, however, the border issues had not been resolved. In December, a Bangladeshi official said that Bangladesh had tightened security on the Burma border to stop "illegal infiltration," and that Bangladesh took the step after local newspapers carried "exaggerated" accounts of illegal cross-border movements.

According to Forum-Asia, a regional network of human rights NGOs, Rohingya continued to flee to Bangladesh in 2001, joining the thousands of others there forced to "eke out a living as illegal immigrants." Among those were some who had previously been in the camps and had either repatriated voluntarily or been returned to Burma by force.

