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Country Policy and Information Note

Bangladesh: Background information, including internal relocation

Version 3.0

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Preface

Purpose

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and analysis of COI for use by Home Office decision makers handling particular types of protection and human rights claims (as set out in the [Introduction](#) section). It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into two main sections: (1) analysis and assessment of COI and other evidence; and (2) COI. These are explained in more detail below.

Assessment

This section analyses the evidence relevant to this note – i.e. the COI section; refugee/human rights laws and policies; and applicable caselaw – by describing this and its inter-relationships, and provides an assessment of, in general, whether one or more of the following applies:

- A person is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm
- The general humanitarian situation is so severe as to breach Article 15(b) of European Council Directive 2004/83/EC (the Qualification Directive) / Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights as transposed in paragraph 339C and 339CA(iii) of the Immigration Rules
- The security situation presents a real risk to a civilian's life or person such that it would breach Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive as transposed in paragraph 339C and 339CA(iv) of the Immigration Rules
- A person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- A person is reasonably able to relocate within a country or territory
- A claim is likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- If a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts.

Country of origin information

The country information in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual, 2013](#). Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

The structure and content of the country information section follows a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to this note.

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the 'cut-off' date(s) in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after these date(s) is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available, and is from generally reliable sources. Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information, and
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

Multiple sourcing is used to ensure that the information is accurate, balanced and corroborated, so that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture at the time of publication is provided of the issues relevant to this note.

Information is compared and contrasted, whenever possible, to provide a range of views and opinions. The inclusion of a source, however, is not an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a brief footnote; full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve our material. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this note, please email the [Country Policy and Information Team](#).

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

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Globe House

89 Eccleston Square

London, SW1V 1PN

Email: chiefinspector@icibi.gov.uk

Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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Assessment

Updated: 25 January 2018

1. Introduction

1.1 Scope of this note

- 1.1.1 Whether, in general, a person who fears serious harm or persecution from non-state actors can internally relocate within Bangladesh.

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1.2 Points to note

- 1.2.1 For further information and guidance on particular claim types, see the [Country Policy and Information Notes \(CPINs\) on Bangladesh](#).
- 1.2.2 In September 2017, the Home Office published a [report of a Fact-Finding Mission \(FFM\) to Bangladesh](#) undertaken in May 2017. The FFM had a wide brief, covering the political situation, police, judiciary, religious minorities, and sexual minorities, amongst other subjects. This CPIN should be read alongside the FFM report.
- 1.2.3 The [‘Bangladesh Country Overview’ report](#), dated December 2017, produced by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), also provides useful background information about Bangladesh.

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2. Consideration of issues

2.1 Credibility

- 2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 2.1.1 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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2.2 Exclusion

- 2.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses applies. If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.
- 2.2.2 For further guidance on the exclusion clauses and restricted leave, see the [Asylum Instruction on Exclusion: Article 1F of the Refugee Convention](#) and the [Asylum Instruction on Restricted Leave](#).

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2.3 Internal relocation

- 2.3.1 Bangladesh is a highly, and very densely, populated country and a person is legally (and practically) able to move freely around the country, except to Cox's Bazar and the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in the south because of the Rohingya migration crisis (see [Freedom of movement](#) and the [Country Policy and Information Note on Burma: Rohingya](#)).
- 2.3.2 Access to economic means, social support and education are all available (see [Employment](#), [Social security system](#) and [Education](#)). Bengali culture exists in all parts of Bangladesh (see [Ethnic and religious groups](#) and [Languages](#)), so internal relocation is not culturally or linguistically unreasonable.
- 2.3.3 In general, where the risk is from non-state agents, relocation to another area of Bangladesh is likely to be reasonable, depending on a person's circumstances. Decision makers must determine each case on its facts and, if applicable, consult the guidance for the relevant category of claim.
- 2.3.4 See the [Country Policy and Information Note on Bangladesh: women fearing gender-based violence](#) for information and guidance about restrictions on women's movement within the country.
- 2.3.5 For further guidance on internal relocation, see Asylum Instructions on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#) and [Gender Issues in the Asylum Claim](#).

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Country information

Section 3 updated: 8 January 2018

3. History

- 3.1.1 For an overview of Bangladesh's recent history, see the [BBC's Bangladesh Profile](#), which includes a timeline of events.

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Section 4 updated: 8 January 2018

4. Geography and demography

4.1 Area

- 4.1.1 Bangladesh borders India to the west, north and east, Burma (Myanmar) to the south-east and the Bay of Bengal to the south, and has a total land area of 130,168 sq. km¹. This is about the size of England².

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4.2 Population

- 4.2.1 The US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) estimated Bangladesh's population at 157,826,578 in July 2017, making it the eighth most populated country in the world. Urban areas with significant populations include (according to 2015 data):

- Dhaka (17.598 million)
- Chittagong (4.539 million)
- Khulna (1.022 million)
- Rajshahi (844,000)³
- Sylhet (approx. 500,000)⁴

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4.3 Administrative Divisions and main cities

- 4.3.1 The capital of Bangladesh is Dhaka. The country is divided into eight administrative Divisions. These are:

- Barisal
- Chittagong

¹ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Factbook – Bangladesh, Geography, updated 3 January 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bg.html>. Accessed: 8 January 2018

² Brilliant Maps, England vs Great Britain vs United Kingdom Explained, 10 April 2016, <http://brilliantmaps.com/eng-gb-uk/>. Accessed: 18 August 2017

³ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Factbook – Bangladesh, People and Society, updated 3 January 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bg.html>. Accessed: 8 January 2018

⁴ Sylhet City Corporation, undated but copyrighted 2014, <http://www.sylhetcitycorporationbd.org/index.php/cms/home/>. Accessed: 13 December 2017

- Dhaka
- Khulna
- Mymensingh
- Rajshahi
- Rangpur
- Sylhet⁵

4.3.2 [Maps of the World](#) provided a political map of Bangladesh showing the current eight Administrative Divisions.

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4.4 Ethnic and religious groups

4.4.1 The main ethnic group of Bangladesh is Bengali, who constitute over 95% of the population⁶.

4.4.2 Bangladesh's government recognizes 27 ethnic groups under the 2010 Cultural Institution for Small Anthropological Groups Act; other sources estimate there are about 75 ethnic groups; critics of the 2011 census claim that it underestimates the size of Bangladesh's ethnic minority populations (2011 estimate)⁷.

4.4.3 The CIA estimated (in 2013) that the population of Bangladesh is:

- 89.1% Muslim
- 10% Hindu
- 0.9% other (including Buddhists and Christians)⁸

4.4.4 Also see: [Home Office Fact-Finding Mission \(FFM\) to Bangladesh, May 2017](#), sections 1, 8 and 9, and the [Country Policy and Information Note \(CPIN\) on minority religious groups](#).

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⁵ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Factbook – Bangladesh, Government, updated 3 January 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bg.html>. Accessed: 8 January 2018

⁶ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Factbook – Bangladesh, People and Society, updated 1 August 2017, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bg.html>. Accessed: 18 August 2017

⁷ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Factbook – Bangladesh, People and Society, updated 3 January 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bg.html>. Accessed: 8 January 2018

⁸ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Factbook – Bangladesh, People and Society, updated 3 January 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bg.html>. Accessed: 8 January 2018

4.5 Languages

4.5.1 The official language is Bangla (Bengali)⁹. Many groups have their own language or dialect¹⁰.

4.5.2 Also see: [Home Office Fact-Finding Mission \(FFM\) to Bangladesh, May 2017](#), sections 1 and 8.

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Section 5 updated: 8 January 2018

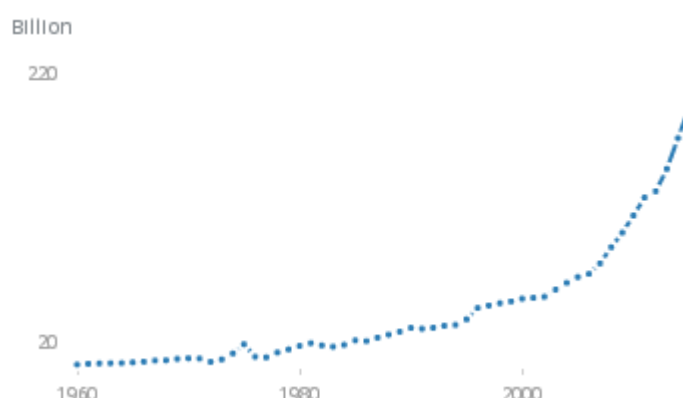
5. Economy

5.1 Economic growth

5.1.1 The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook profile on Bangladesh, dated August 2017, noted Bangladesh's economy '... has grown roughly 6% per year since 1996 despite prolonged periods of political instability, poor infrastructure, endemic corruption, insufficient power supplies, and slow implementation of economic reforms. Although more than half of GDP [Gross Domestic Product] is generated through the services sector, almost half of Bangladeshis are employed in the agriculture sector, with rice as the single-most-important product.'¹¹

5.1.2 The World Bank provided a chart showing Bangladesh's growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) since 1960.

Chart showing Bangladesh's rate of GDP (US\$) since 1960¹²



5.1.3 The World Bank, in an undated profile of Bangladesh, noted it:

'[had] made substantial progress in reducing poverty, supported by sustained economic growth. Based on the international poverty line of \$1.90 per person per day, Bangladesh reduced [the proportion of people living in]

⁹ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Factbook – Bangladesh, People and Society, updated 1 August 2017, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bq.html>. Accessed: 18 August 2017

¹⁰ Minority Rights Group International, World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples – Bangladesh – Adivasis, 2017, <http://minorityrights.org/minorities/adivasis/>. Accessed: 18 August 2017

¹¹ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Factbook – Bangladesh, Economy, updated 1 August 2017, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bq.html>. Accessed: 18 August 2017

¹² The World Bank, Data – Bangladesh, copyright 2017, <https://data.worldbank.org/country/bangladesh>. Accessed: 8 January 2018

poverty from 44.2% in 1991 to 18.5% in 2010, and is projected to decrease to 12.9% in 2016.

'The country achieved the MDG [Millennium Development Goal] 1 on halving poverty five years ahead of time, with 20.5 million people rising out of poverty during the 1991-2010 period. In parallel, life expectancy, literacy rates and per capita food production have increased significantly. Progress was underpinned by strong economic growth, with 6 percent plus growth over the decade and reaching to 7.1 percent growth in 2015/2016. Rapid growth enabled Bangladesh to reach the lower middle-income country status in 2014.

'However, sustained growth has rapidly increased the demand for energy, transport and urbanization. Insufficient planning and investment have resulted in increasingly severe infrastructure bottlenecks.'¹³

- 5.1.4 Also see: [Home Office Fact-Finding Mission \(FFM\) to Bangladesh, May 2017](#), section 1.5

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5.2 Employment

- 5.2.1 According to UN Data, 47.5% of people are employed in agriculture, 17.7% in industry and 35.3% in 'services and other' (2010 data). The unemployment rate is 4.5% (2014 data). 43.1% of women in the labour market are employed; the rate is 80.9% for men (2014 data)¹⁴. However, these figures do not consider those employed informally.

- 5.2.2 Also see [Home Office Fact-Finding Mission \(FFM\) to Bangladesh, May 2017](#), section 1.5

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5.3 Social security system

- 5.3.1 The [US Social Security Index](#) provided details of the social assistance and employer liability systems in Bangladesh, including: old-age pensions; disability pensions; survivor allowances; sickness benefits; maternity benefits; work medical benefits; death benefits; work injury benefit; death compensation; and disability benefit. There is no statutory unemployment benefit, although there is severance pay in certain areas of employment¹⁵.
- 5.3.2 Dr M Alimullah Miyan, of the International University of Business Agriculture and Technology, Dhaka, noted that pensions are available mainly for those employed by the government; that 36 million agricultural labourers are not

¹³ The World Bank, Bangladesh – Overview, 2017, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/bangladesh/overview>. Accessed: 7 September 2017

¹⁴ UN Data – Bangladesh, 2017, <http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=bangladesh>. Accessed: 21 September 2017

¹⁵ US Social Security Index, 'Social Security Programs Throughout the World (SSPTW): Asia and the Pacific, 2016', <https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/proqdesc/ssptw/2016-2017/asia/bangladesh.pdf>. Accessed: 13 December 2017

covered by pensions; and that most people are reliant on family for support in old age¹⁶.

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5.4 Education

5.4.1 The US State Department (USSD), in their 2016 human rights report, stated:

‘Primary education was free and compulsory through fifth grade, and the government offered subsidies to parents to keep girls in class through 10th grade. While teacher fees and uniforms remained prohibitively costly for many families, the government distributed hundreds of millions of free textbooks to increase access to education. Enrollments in primary schools showed gender parity, but educational attainment was low for both boys and girls. The completion rates fell in secondary school with more girls than boys at the secondary level. The 2010 Education Policy extended compulsory primary education to the eighth grade; however, in the absence of legal amendments to reflect the policy, it remained unenforceable. Government incentives to families who sent children to school contributed significantly to increased primary school enrollments in recent years, but hidden school fees at the local level created barriers to access for the poorest families, particularly for girls. Many families kept children out of school to become wage earners or to help with household chores, and primary school coverage was insufficient in hard-to-reach and disaster-prone areas. Early and forced marriage was a factor in girls’ attrition from secondary school.’¹⁷

5.4.2 See: [Home Office Fact-Finding Mission \(FFM\) to Bangladesh, May 2017](#), section 1.6.

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Section 6 updated: 10 March 2020

6. Security forces and judiciary

6.1.1 See the [Country Policy and Information Note on Bangladesh: Actors of protection](#).

Section 7 updated: 18 January 2018

7. Citizenship and nationality

7.1.1 The [Bangladesh Citizenship \(Temporary Provisions\) Order 1972](#) introduced the citizenship laws after the country’s independence. Article 2 of the Order stipulates that anyone who was born in the territories now comprised in Bangladesh (or whose father or grandfather was born in these territories) and who was a permanent resident in these territories on 25 March 1971

¹⁶ Dr M Alimullah Miyan, International University of Business Agriculture and Technology, Dhaka, Bangladesh, ‘Retirement and Pension System in Bangladesh’ (undated but quotes sources from 2005), <https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.airroc.org.tw%2FISLSSL2005%2Fprogram%2Fdoc%2FIII-2.doc>. Accessed: 13 December 2017

¹⁷ US State Department (USSD), Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016 – Bangladesh, Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons, March 2017, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dliid=265532>. Accessed: 8 January 2018

and continues to be so resident, will be deemed to be a Bangladeshi citizen. Article 2A provides that a person to whom the above article would have applied, but who is resident in the United Kingdom, shall be deemed to have continued to have been permanently resident in Bangladesh. The Government may notify, in the official Gazette, any person or categories of persons to whom this Article shall not apply. In case of doubt as to whether a person is qualified to be deemed a citizen of Bangladesh under Article 2 of the Order, a decision of the Government will be final¹⁸.

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Section 8 updated: 8 January 2018

8. Freedom of movement

8.1.1 Bangladesh has 2,460 km of railways, 21,269 km of roads and 19 airports¹⁹. The main airport is [Shah Jala International Airport, Dhaka \(DAC\)](#). [On the World Map](#) provided a map of Bangladesh showing the major roads, railways and airports²⁰.

8.1.2 The USSD 2016 report noted:

‘The law provides for freedom of movement within the country, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, and the government generally respected these rights, except in two sensitive areas – the CHT [Chittagong Hill Tracts] and Cox’s Bazar. The government enforced some restrictions on foreigners’ access to the CHT...

‘Some senior opposition officials reported extensive delays in getting their passports renewed; others reported harassment and delays at the airport when departing the country. Authorities barred one BNP official from leaving the country to attend a party event in Bahrain while another was detained at the airport before being allowed to board a plane. Another opposition leader required High Court intervention in order to obtain his passport from the government after nearly a year of delays.

‘The international travel ban continued on war-crimes suspects from the 1971 independence war.

‘The country’s passports are invalid for travel to Israel according to Bangladesh policy.’²¹

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¹⁸ Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Division, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary ‘The Bangladesh Citizenship (Temporary Provisions) Order, 1972’, Articles 2, 2A and 2B, http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/pdf_part.php?id=423. Accessed: 12 September 2017

¹⁹ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), The World Factbook – Bangladesh, Transportation, updated 5 December 2017, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bg.html>. Accessed: 13 December 2017

²⁰ On The World Map, Large detailed map of Bangladesh with cities, undated (website copyrighted 2012-17), <http://ontheworldmap.com/bangladesh/large-detailed-map-of-bangladesh-with-cities.html>. Accessed: 13 December 2017

²¹ US State Department (USSD), Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016 – Bangladesh, Section 4. Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government, 3 March 2017, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dliid=265532>. Accessed: 7 September 2017

Section 9 updated: 8 January 2018

9. Entry / exit procedures

- 9.1.1 See [Home Office Fact-Finding Mission \(FFM\) to Bangladesh, May 2017](#), Annex D: meeting with official from the British High Commission (BHC), 18 May 2017, for information about entry/exit procedures.

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Section 10 updated: 10 March 2019

10. Documentation

- 10.1.1 For information on official, forged and fraudulent documents, see the [Country Policy and Information Note on Bangladesh: documentation](#).

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Version control

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **3.0**
- valid from **14 April 2020**

Changes from last version of this note

Reissued following removal of the sections referring to actors of protection. There has been no substantive update to the rest of the content of this CPIN; an update will follow.

Information on actors of protection is now available in the [Country Policy and Information Note on Bangladesh: Actors of protection](#).

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