



US AND UK CRITICIZE MYANMAR GOVERNMENT FOR ROHINGYA CRISIS AND IMPOSED SANCTIONS

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ABSTRACT:

The Rohingya are an ethnic Muslim minority living in the northern part of Rakhine state in Myanmar. The Rohingya have very old roots in Myanmar. Myanmar was once a colonial province of the British Empire. The Britishers brought laborers from different regions of Bangladesh and India to Myanmar for work, including a large number of Rohingyas. After Myanmar gained independence from the British, it did not accept these migrants and started treating the Rohingya as illegal immigrants. This paper provides an outline of the discrimination, sexual violence and ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya. Along with this, this paper also gives information about the view of US and UK on the Rohingya issue.



KEYWORD: *US, UK, Rohingya, Myanmar, Sanction, Suu Kyi, Ethnic, Muslims .*

INTRODUCTION

The Rohingya are an ethnic, linguistic and Muslim minority group in Myanmar's northern Rakhine State. Although they have lived in Myanmar for centuries, the Myanmar government does not recognize the Rohingya as citizens of Myanmar. The Myanmar government believes the Rohingya are "illegal immigrants" or "Bengalis" who have recently entered the region. As a result, the Rohingya have not been recognized as an official ethnic minority in Myanmar since the 1982 Citizenship Amendment Act. Today these people are stumbling around in different countries as stateless citizens. No country is ready to accept them as its citizens. The Rohingya people have a long history in Myanmar's Rakhine State. Rakhine State, formerly known as Arakan State, is inhabited by members of the Rohingya Muslim and Buddhist communities. However, within the last two centuries, Arakan Kingdom was conquered by the Burmese in 1784 and then Myanmar, like India, was long ruled by the British. From 1824 to 1948, Myanmar was a slave of the British. The British made Myanmar a colonial state and to work there, the British brought laborers from Bangladesh and different regions of India, which had a large population of poor Muslims. Thus, the number of people from this region increased and these people settled permanently in the Rakhine region. After Myanmar's independence, immigrants were not accepted by the indigenous community and the Rohingya were considered illegal citizens.

If we look at the history of Rohingya in Myanmar, it is very old. The Rohingya have been living in Myanmar for centuries and since the British era. When Burma was a colonial province of the British Empire, the British brought laborers from different regions of Bangladesh and India for work, due to which their number increased. After the Myanmar government gained independence, these migrants were not accepted and started treating the Rohingya as illegal citizens. In 1948, Myanmar gained

independence from the British; Major General Aung San, the leader of the democratic movement, was made the Prime Minister. Under the leadership of Aung San, there was talk of including the Rohingya in Myanmar, but in 1948, Aung San was assassinated on political grounds and the matter of including the Rohingya in Myanmar stopped. U Nu, a senior leader of Aung San's party, was named the next prime minister of Myanmar. The U Nu government, like Aung San, adopted a sympathetic attitude towards the Rohingya. The U.N. government passed a citizenship law that guarantees the Rohingya population will be considered eligible to participate in politics, vote and be considered citizens. In 1962, dictator Myanmar's military general Ne Win overthrew the U Nu government, ignored the agreement, and began taking a hard line against the Rohingya. In 1974 the military government passed an Emergency Immigration Act to marginalize the Rohingya community. The Act confiscated the National Registration Cards (NRCs) of the Rohingya and replaced them with Foreign Registration Cards (FRCs).¹

The military government changed the citizenship law in 1982. Rohingya are not recognized as citizens of Myanmar under this amended citizenship law. They were excluded from the country's 135 official ethnic groups. This Citizenship Amendment Act was discriminatory on the basis of race and citizenship law which also attacked the foundation of Rohingya identity. Under this Citizenship Amendment Act, Rohingyas who came after 1823 were permanently deprived of their citizenship. Not only this, Rohingya Muslims had to obtain permits from the Myanmar government to renovate their mosques, get married and have children, and those who did so without a permit were prosecuted and thrown in jail.

There have been several waves of violence against the Rohingya over the past decades, but the August 2017 violence was far bigger and more dangerous than the previous violence. This movement carried out complete ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya. The entire Rohingya community was forced to flee Myanmar. Violence erupted on 25 August 2017, when the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) attacked police posts in northern Rakhine State. More than two dozen Myanmar soldiers were killed in this ARSA attack. An ARSA spokesman said the attack was aimed at drawing international attention to the plight of the Rohingya minority so that the world would know how poorly the Myanmar military is treating the Rohingya.² Several international organizations have condemned the ARSA attack, and the US has also called on Myanmar's security forces to refrain from using indiscriminate force in retaliation.

The Myanmar government responded to ARSA by giving full autonomy to the security forces. The army burnt down all the Rohingya houses using indiscriminate force; when anyone tried to escape, they were shot.³ Soldiers hurled hand grenades at Rohingya homes, causing many Rohingyas to burn alive in their homes. Apart from this, Buddhist monks from nearby villages helped the soldiers to kill the Rohingya. The army dug several large pits in the villages where the Rohingya bodies were buried so that no evidence of their genocide would be found. Myanmar military forces did not spare women during the Rohingya cleansing campaign. Military forces sexually abused, raped, gang-raped Rohingya women. Women were used as weapons to drive the Rohingya out of Myanmar. Rohingya fled the country to escape persecution and murderous attacks.

Aung San Suu Kyi, who was Myanmar's state councilor, has remained silent on the Rohingya crisis. Her government did not take any concrete steps to stop the violence. It was clearly a propaganda and political game played against the Rohingya community for its own political gain. Suu Kyi's government tried to convince the world that its military operations against ARSA in Rakhine State were a clearance operation necessary for the country's national security. World leaders criticized the Myanmar government for the complete ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya. The international community blamed Myanmar's leader Suu Kyi, who has remained silent on the Rohingya crisis, for the Rohingya crisis.

The Rohingya crisis is a disaster that has caught the attention of all countries in the world. There is no country that has not commented on the Rohingya crisis. The perspective of Western countries on the Rohingya issue is somewhat different from that of Asian countries. The West has blamed Myanmar's head of government Suu Kyi and the military for the Rohingya crisis, which has driven millions of Rohingya from their homes. Western countries have a negative view against the Myanmar government regarding the Rohingya issue. In western countries we will talk about US and UK. These countries have

adopted a variety of sanctions techniques in response to brutal and deadly discrimination against the Rohingya Muslim minority, including economic and military sanctions against Myanmar, issuing press statements condemning the violence, and passing UN resolutions against Myanmar.

Speaking of the US, it is important to note that the US has been one of the most vocal critics of Myanmar's mistreatment of the Rohingya. Since 1988, the US has condemned Myanmar's military government for gross human rights violations of the Rohingya. In September 2017, the Vice President of the US strongly condemned the atrocities, violence, killings against the Rohingya minority. He observed that the brutality of the Rohingya and the enormity of the deaths shocked people of US and around the world. The European Union, like the US has condemned the Rohingya crisis and has often condemned the atrocities and abuses committed against the Rohingya by the Myanmar government and military. The EU has also joined the US in issuing strongly worded statements on the continued violations and abuses of the rights of the Rohingya. The US has imposed the most comprehensive sanctions on Myanmar. The US most extensive sanctions began after the 1988 peaceful protests in which Myanmar's military regime used brutal violence against peaceful protesters. The US has suspended all aid to Myanmar, which is still in effect. The US banned all new financial investments in Myanmar. The main objectives of imposing these sanctions are twofold, firstly to pressure the Myanmar regime to refrain from abusing the rights of the Rohingya and to improve their human rights record and secondly to take the necessary steps to push the Myanmar regime towards the democratization of the country.⁴ Even the US has not appointed its ambassador to Myanmar.

Like the US, Britain has criticized the Myanmar government for its continued violations of the rights of the Rohingya minority, including torture, persecution and killings. Britain brought a resolution against Myanmar in the United Nations, which was supported by many countries. Apart from condemning the humanitarian crisis and imposing sanctions on Myanmar, these two countries also provided humanitarian aid to the Rohingya which is still ongoing and are also trying to resolve the Rohingya crisis. The US and UK say Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi's stance has failed to find lasting solutions to abuses against the Rohingya. Suu Kyi, known as a champion in the fight for democracy, has been accused of gross human rights violations by not speaking out about the violence against the Rohingya minority. As a result of all this, Western organizations have withdrawn several honors and awards from Suu Kyi for her role in the fight for democracy in Myanmar. In 2017, in the immediate aftermath of the Rohingya crisis, Suu Kyi was stripped of seven awards. The University of Oxford removed Suu Kyi's portrait from the wall of St Hugh's College. Earlier, city councils in Glasgow and Sheffield have withdrawn.

The president of the London School of Economics also took a similar step. In late November 2017, Oxford City Council withdrew the Freedom Award from him. In December of that year, Dublin City Council stripped Suu Kyi of her freedom of the city after musician Bob Geldof demanded his honor be returned in protest at Suu Kyi's behavior. On 15 March 2018, the US Holocaust Museum stripped Suu Kyi of its top award for failing to condemn and stop military attacks on the Rohingya.⁵ The approach of these Western countries to the Myanmar government on the Rohingya issue is detailed below.

1. US Negative Perspective for Myanmar

The US has had very good relations with Myanmar for many years. The US has always supported the democratization of Myanmar. The US strongly supported Myanmar's democracy movement under the Aung San Suu Kyi. The US even gave \$18 million in aid to Myanmar during 2015 elections. This aid was given to the National League for Democracy party (NLD) led by Suu Kyi to win elections to establish democratic structures in Myanmar. Interestingly, the magnitude of US influence by providing such assistance greatly propelled Suu Kyi to win the election as Myanmar's leader. After winning the election, Suu Kyi visited the US in 2016 to further improve the good relations between Myanmar and the US. During this visit she met with President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. But US's frustration with Myanmar was seen when the Myanmar government launched a campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya. The US sharply criticized Myanmar over the Rohingya crisis. The US

even tabled a resolution against Myanmar in the UN Security Council over the Rohingya crisis, although China and Russia opposed it.⁶

Therefore, it can also be said that US's stance on Rohingya crisis became negative towards Myanmar government. The US has openly criticized Myanmar over the issue and expressed frustration with head of government Suu Kyi. Even the US severed all ties with Myanmar and imposed international sanctions. The US believes that respect for human rights and democracy is the main pillars of a democratic country. The Rohingya crisis poses a threat to Myanmar's democratization that could undermine regional and global security. From the US perspective, supporting the rights of the Rohingya clearly means supporting the democratization of Myanmar and improving human rights and democracy in parallel. The downfall of the Rohingya people in Myanmar is the downfall of democratization in Myanmar and an invitation to military control in Myanmar.⁷

In September 2017, the Vice President of the US strongly condemned the atrocities committed against the Rohingya minority. He observed that the brutality and violence of the Rohingya massacre shocked people around the world.⁸ The Vice President then stated during a meeting with State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi in Singapore in November 2018 that the US supported humanitarian efforts regarding the Rohingya just as the US supported democratic reforms in Myanmar. Addressing the press, he said that the Rohingya crisis is a tragedy that like the Palestinian crisis, has touched and disappointed millions of Americans. In addition to the Rohingya crisis has also touched the hearts of millions of Muslims around the world. The US ambassador to Myanmar has repeatedly told local Myanmar media that US policy has been consistent in supporting human rights and democracy and human rights violations against the Rohingya will never be accepted. The US has won the hearts of Muslim people around the world by supporting the Rohingya.

1.1. US Sanctions and Criticism to Myanmar

The US government has described Myanmar's military crackdown against the Rohingya as "Ethnic Cleansing" and threatened to impose sanctions on those responsible for "horrendous atrocities".⁹ The US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo demanded accountability from Myanmar for the brutal ethnic cleansing of Rohingya Muslims. Senator John McCain, a member of the upper house of the US, told the House that "I no longer support increased military-to-military cooperation with the Myanmar government in light of the worsening humanitarian crisis and human rights abuses against the Rohingya and Myanmar announces the end of all future military cooperation with". Additionally, the US summoned Myanmar's ambassador on 13 September 2017 to express its displeasure with the Myanmar government. Also, in September 2017, the US provided \$32 million in aid to Rohingya refugees fleeing Myanmar.¹⁰

The US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley criticized Myanmar at UN Security Council meetings in 2017 and 2018, blaming China and Russia for protecting Myanmar because both are protecting Myanmar in the UNSC. The Vice President Mike Pence presented the Rohingya crisis as a global security threat before the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on 20 September 2017, saying that the United Nations should take strong action against Myanmar. He met Aung San Suu Kyi in Singapore on 14 November 2018 and condemned the Myanmar military's crackdown on the Rohingya.¹¹ Former US diplomat Bill Richardson, a close friend of Suu Kyi, resigned from the advisory board on 24 January 2018 over ASSK's position on human rights and advisory board capacity for the "Committee to Implement Recommendations on Rakhine state". Criticizing US-based organizations such as the US the Holocaust Memorial Museum also decided to withdraw its Elie Whistle Award (2012) from Suu Kyi on March 6, 2018.

In addition, the US has imposed sanctions against Myanmar in several areas. The US had already imposed limited sanctions on Myanmar military leaders linked to atrocities against the Rohingya, but when the military overthrew a democratic government in Myanmar on 1 February 2021, the US imposed several new sanctions in response to the coup. The US had already imposed sanctions on several Myanmar military leaders, including the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, for their direct involvement in atrocities against the Rohingya. Most of the

above restrictions are imposed by placing officials and entities on the US Treasury Department's Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) list, which prohibits any US person, company, or financial institution from doing business with a listed person and it also bans them from traveling.¹² These sanctions are typically imposed by the US on actors around the world who engage in criminal activities, corruption, terrorism, and gross human rights abuses.

Separately, a week before the sanctions were implemented, the US state department announced that all direct US financial assistance to the Myanmar government would be cut off under provisions of US law known as the "Coup Clause". It withholds aid to governments whose leaders have committed human rights abuses and toppled democratic governments. The US even imposed restrictions on the export of military, security equipment and training. These restrictions have been in place for years due to human rights abuses by the military against the Rohingya and other ethnic minorities in Rakhine state, particularly in Kachin and Shan states. The US announced that it would also cut off access to \$1 billion in US dollar-denominated assets in the US at risk of being accessed by Myanmar's military leaders.¹³ Myanmar's central bank has now blocked access to its foreign exchange reserves in the US which will have a serious impact on Myanmar's economy in the near future.

1.2 US Action against Myanmar at United Nations

Immediately after the Rohingya crisis, the US along with its allies Britain and France brought UN Security Council Resolution 1674 (Responsibility to Protect) against Myanmar. The purpose of this resolution was to discuss the Rohingya issue and take action against the Myanmar government. On 16 October 2018, nine members of the UNSC, including the United States, wrote a letter to the President of the UNSC requesting that the Chairperson of the IIFFM provide a briefing on torture, abuse, rape and sexual violence against the Rohingya in Myanmar. Contrary to this request, China also wrote a letter to the President of the United Nations Security Council. China objected in clear terms to allowing the IIFFM Chairperson to give a briefing on the Rohingya issue. On 24 October 2018, IIFFM Chairperson, Marzuki Darusman, told the UNSC that "People all over the world are looking to the UNSC to take strong action against Myanmar for its ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya. China and Russia have strongly opposed joining it."¹⁴

The US has been raising the Rohingya issue at the UN even before the 2017 Rohingya massacre. The USA asked Myanmar in July 2017 to allow a UN fact-finding mission to investigate widespread allegations of killings, rape and torture by security forces against Rohingya in Myanmar's Rakhine State. The Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council launched an investigation in March 2017 but Myanmar's de facto leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, rejected the allegations and the fact-finding mission's investigators were denied entry into Myanmar. In response to Suu Kyi, US Ambassador to the United Nations in New York, Nikki Haley, said, "It is important that Suu Kyi's government do its job with this fact-finding mission." Haley added, "The international community we cannot ignore what is happening to the Rohingya in Myanmar. The Myanmar government should fully cooperate with this fact-finding mission," Haley added, adding that "no Rohingya" should be subjected to discrimination or violence because of their ethnic background. The Rohingya are citizens of Myanmar who have been living there for generations.¹⁵

1.3 Humanitarian Aid to Rohingya Refugees

While the US criticized the Myanmar government for the Rohingya crisis, imposed sanctions, the US also freely helped the Rohingya refugee which was appreciated by the whole world. As soon as the Rohingyas started fleeing from Myanmar and coming to Bangladesh, from that day US started giving humanitarian aid and funds to Bangladesh for the maintenance of Rohingya refugees. At the launch of the 2022 Joint Response Plan for the Rohingya humanitarian crisis in Bangladesh, US Ambassador to Bangladesh Peter Haas announced more than \$152 million in additional humanitarian assistance to support the Rohingya people and those affected by Bangladeshi host communities. This funding includes more than \$101 million from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and approximately \$51 million from the US Department of state. With this new funding, total US support for

this response has increased to more than \$1.7 billion since August 2017. This announcement demonstrates our solidarity with the Rohingya refugees and the Bangladeshi communities that host them, as well as our continued commitment to strengthening the international response to the Rohingya crisis. With this new funding, USAID will help affected communities in Bangladesh provide emergency food and nutrition assistance, shelter, safe drinking water, and sanitation and hygiene services.¹⁶ The US is committed to providing assistance to crisis-affected communities in both countries, and it welcome the generous pledges made by other donors to alleviate humanitarian suffering in both countries. However, more support is desperately needed. The US urged other donors to step up to fund continued aid to those affected by the violence in Myanmar. At the same time, US thanked Bangladesh for sheltering so many homeless Rohingyas in their country.

Apart from this, the US, showing a humanitarian heart, gave shelter to the Rohingya refugees in its country. The US has been hosting Rohingya refugees for many years. In 2010, the US resettled approximately 800 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar. Moving forward, the US admitted another 4,071 Rohingya refugees to its country in 2015. Another 3,000 Rohingya refugees arrived in the US the following year. President Trump granted asylum to approximately 593 Rohingya refugees in 2019 during his tenure.¹⁷ Although this number is very less in terms of giving shelter to Rohingya in the US compared to Asian countries, but then US has been giving shelter to the Rohingya.

2. UK Admitted that Rohingya were Ethnically Cleansed

Like the US the United Kingdom also has a negative view of Myanmar over the Rohingya crisis. UK has strongly criticized the Myanmar government for the Rohingya crisis. The UK government admits that ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya has taken place and that what has actually happened is genocide or a serious crime against humanity. The UK has pledged support to refer the Rohingya massacre to the International Criminal Court (ICC) which the Burma Campaign UK welcomed and thanked for the Tier decision to intervene in the case of *Gambia v Myanmar* at the ICC. Commemorating the 5th anniversary of the Rohingya Genocide, 25 August 2022, the UK announced its historic decision.

As the Rohingya crisis outspread, a total of 157 members of the British Parliament called to their government to pressure on Myanmar government to stop violence against the Rohingya. These MPs have written a letter to British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson saying that the scale of human rights abuses in Myanmar and the Rohingya crisis has set an unprecedented precedent in recent history that will be very difficult to overcome and the British government needs full attention. A letter signed by Rushnara Ali, co-chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Democracy in Myanmar, was obtained by Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) news agency.¹⁸ According to the letter, the British MPs expressed hope that, as in the past, the British government said in the letter, "It appears that instead of arresting the terrorists, the Myanmar military is killing them on a large scale." The attack is being used as a pretext to remove the Rohingya population from large parts of Myanmar's northern Rakhine State.

British MPs said that "reports from the United Nations, human rights organizations and Rohingya organizations indicate that the Rohingya people have suffered the worst human rights abuses in Myanmar's history. Citing eyewitnesses, they said: during the Rohingya crisis, Rohingyas were shot indiscriminately. They were lined up and shot in the back of the head and Rohingyas were also beheaded. People were surrounded in buildings and set on fire. Children were shot and killed. Rohingya women were raped and gang-raped. On 14 November 2017, BBC News Night aired a documentary on 'Tula Toli Rohingya Massacre', which described how the Myanmar army killed Rohingya in Tula Toli village, along with women raped and committed 'heinous crimes' by burning people.¹⁹ Hence, this is a major humanitarian crisis that currently exists in Bangladesh." British MPs have urged the UK government to review its current approach to Myanmar's military, which is currently committing serious human rights abuses.²⁰

As evidence, David Mepham, director of the UK's Human Rights Watch, said:

Obviously, what Myanmar's military did to the Rohingya after August 25 has not been brought up anywhere? In recent years, we and others have documented many incidents of violence against the Rohingya. Rohingya have faced incidents of persecution, discrimination and rape for many decades²¹.

In addition, the UK has also contributed to the ICC proceedings against Myanmar. The UK promised in-principle support for the Rohingya massacre to be referred to the International Criminal Court which Burma Campaign UK welcomed and thanks for tier decision to intervene in the case of the Gambia vs. Myanmar at the ICC. The UK announcement came just weeks after the USA made a similar announcement. Burma Campaign UK had been calling to the British government to support an ICC referral for almost 20 years. In response to a written parliamentary question from Rushnara Ali MP, Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Democracy in Myanmar, Foreign Office Minister Jesse Norman MP said: "The UK is very clear that Myanmar is responsibility for the atrocities against the Rohingya. We strongly condemn the ongoing human rights violations by the Myanmar armed forces as well as the historical atrocities against the Rohingya. The UK supports, in principle, efforts to bring these issues before the ICC, where they must be investigated." "This is an important and welcome step by the British government, following on from their announcement that they will join the Rohingya genocide case at the International Court of Justice," said Karin Valtersson, campaign officer at Burma Campaign UK. This is the second announcement by the British government on justice and accountability on Myanmar in which the British government has announced its intention to join the Rohingya genocide case at the ICC. Karin Valtersson added that, "for years the Myanmar military has been allowed to run away in violation of international law." Sooner action to end violence could have helped prevent today's atrocities."²²

2.1 UK Imposed Sanctions on Myanmar

British Prime Minister Theresa May said immediately after the Rohingya crisis that all ties with Myanmar's military would be cut. These ties will remain closed until action is taken against civilians responsible for atrocities against the Rohingya in Rakhine state. Addressing the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Theresa May even said that "the Ministry of Defense will continue to suspend all defense engagements and training of the Myanmar military until Myanmar ends its military operations against the Rohingya." We are very concerned about what happened with the Rohingya in Myanmar. The military operation against them must stop immediately," May said. "We have seen many vulnerable Rohingya people fleeing to Bangladesh and other neighboring countries for their lives. Many of them are stuck on the Rohingya borders. So in view of this, the British government is announcing today that we will continue to address the Rohingya issue. The Ministry of Defense suspends all defense engagements and training of the Myanmar army until the matter is resolved."²³

On 25 August 2022, on the 5th anniversary of the Myanmar army's campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya, Britain announced new measures against Myanmar's armed forces and new sanctions in support of the Rohingya community. New sanctions were imposed against companies linked to the military to target the military's access to weapons and revenue because Myanmar's armed forces were directly involved in sexual violence, serious violations against children, torture and village burning campaigns. Apart from this, Minister of State for Asia, Amanda Milling also confirmed the Britain intention to intervene in the case of Gambia v. Myanmar before the International Court of Justice. The case will determine whether Myanmar breached its obligations under the genocide convention in relation to its military operations against the Rohingya in 2016 and 2017. Our decision to intervene in the Gambia v. Myanmar case and another round of sanctions in 2017 sends a strong signal of our continued support for accountability for atrocities and also restricts the military junta's access to financing and arms supplies. She added that the Britain has always faced those who seek to undermine and destroy our values of freedom and democracy. Five years later, we stand in solidarity with the Rohingya people and condemn the Myanmar Armed Forces' horrific campaign of ethnic cleansing and commit to action to stop and hold the Myanmar Armed Forces accountable for their brutality. The

Britain has now reiterated its call for the scrapping of the 1982 Citizenship Act and the restoration of Rohingya citizenship.²⁴

2.2 UK Provide Humanitarian Aid to Rohingya Refugees

In Bangladesh, UK humanitarian aid and efforts to find a long-term solution for the Rohingya are ongoing. Since August 2017, the UK has committed to providing financial support to Rohingya refugees living in Bangladesh. In the immediate aftermath of the Rohingya crisis, at the Geneva Pledging Conference for the Rohingya Crisis on 23 October 2017, the UK promised \$63,087,248 (£47 million) in funding. This funding was to be provided by the UK alone. The fund exceeded the two largest donors, the EU (\$42.5 million) and the US (\$38 million). The Department for International Development (DFID) reported that since 25 August 2017, following the recent exodus of Rohingya from Myanmar, the UK has announced a total of £59 million in humanitarian aid for the Rohingya crisis.²⁵ The UK's humanitarian aid is to support Rohingya refugees in camps and host communities in the Cox's Bazar district of Bangladesh. This total figure is shown in the table below.

Table : UK provide financial support to Rohingya refugees

Basis of Resource	Amount of Money	Proclamation Date
SHPR existing budget	£5 million	8 September 2017
New funding	£25 million	14 September 2017
UK Aid Match to DEC appeal	£5 million	2 October 2017 (£3 million) 9 October 2017 (£2 million)
New funding	£12 million	23 October 2017
Interim total announced at Geneva Pledging Conference	£47 million	23 October 2017
SHPR existing budget	£4 million	November 2017
New funding	£8 million	27 November 2017
Total UK funding	£106 million	As of December 2017

Sources: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm>.

DFID's 'SHPR' - Strengthening Humanitarian Preparedness and Response for Bangladesh - program was approved in July 2016 for the period 2016 to 2021. Its budget was increased in 2017 due to severe floods in Bangladesh and massive influx of Rohingya refugees. The SHPR program also included emergency funding to respond to emergencies. According to the UK's 8 September announcement, £5m of these existing funds were released to partners for rapid scaling up of support. Additionally, then Secretary of State, Rt Hon Priti Patel MP on 14 September 2017, at the Pledging Conference in Geneva for the Humanitarian Response to the Rohingya Refugee crisis, announced £25 million in new funding for the Rohingya refugee and a further £12 million in new funding for the humanitarian response to the Rohingya refugees. The UK government will also match the £5 million raised by the Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC) appeal, as announced on 2 and 9 October 2017. This then also reflects the total UK committed allocation of £47 million announced by the UN following the Geneva Conference. Further boosting humanitarian aid, on 27 November 2017, the UK new Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP, announced an additional £12 million in further funding to support the humanitarian response. £4 million of this was already included in the SHPR business case and budget. £8 million is new funding from the centrally managed humanitarian response pool.²⁶

Finally, from 2015 to 2020, the UK reached out to organizations dealing with Rohingya women and girls affected by gender-based violence, such as the UN Trust Fund to Minimize Violence against Women (UNTF). This fund supports local, national, regional and interregional programs to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against women and girls in all contexts, including sexual violence in conflict situations. It provides funding for proven, innovative and catalytic multi-year programs, and

seeks to award grants to organizations that place survivors at the center of their interventions. This fund programs are primarily run by civil society organizations with many grants going to small women-led organizations. DFID will provide up to £12 million over the next three years to the fund. This global funding is separate from the £59 million in humanitarian aid for the Rohingya crisis.²⁷

DFID announced a further package of support to Rohingya refugees in October 2019, bringing total funding from last year to £117 million. The fund was allocated to provide assistance to both Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshi host communities including improving education, clean water and sanitation, health services, livelihood support, gender-based violence (GBV) services, meeting basic food needs and other support included. Examples of the impact of this additional funding include:

- The UK provided health services including medical consultation through 25 fixed health posts, 3 mobile clinics, sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services such as family planning and delivery, and emergency health care in refugee camps and one 24/7 clinic established. This support has also been very important during Covid-19.
- UK action to provide clean water and sanitation to over 700,000 Rohingya refugees and members of host communities.
- At least 55,000 vulnerable women, men and children had access to GBV services including GBV information, mental health and psychosocial support, life skills, dignity kits (cleaning supplies such as sanitary pads, underclothes and soap), and included case management services.
- UK distributed cooking gas (LPG) and 375,000 refills to over 49,000 Rohingya families to help prevent further deforestation and environmental degradation. The UK also supported emergency preparations for monsoon and cyclone seasons in Bangladesh, including engineering to maintain drainage, build roads and bridges, and prevent landslides. This will be particularly important for the upcoming monsoon and cyclone season, which the UK met office predicts will be heavier than normal.²⁸
- The UK has also contributed more to providing education to Rohingya refugee children. The UK government is working to provide education for Rohingya children in refugee camps. Education is a high priority for Rohingya refugees, who are deeply concerned about the future of their children. DFID's latest funding aims to provide better education to more than 100,000 children and teenagers from refugee populations and surrounding communities. It also includes increasing enrolment, constructing new classrooms, training teachers and supplying educational materials such as stationery, textbooks, charts and school bags. The UK went on to say that we will continue to work with the government of Bangladesh, the wider international community, and our humanitarian partners to improve access and quality of education.²⁹
- The UK government is also committed to providing skills training to Rohingya refugees and host communities in Bangladesh. Our latest funding in Bangladesh includes livelihood support for more than 119,000 refugees and host communities including skills development, home gardening, and access to markets. The UK believes that as long as they remain in Bangladesh, efforts will be made to prepare Rohingya refugees for a permanent return and reintegration into Myanmar, including learning and skills development.³⁰

CONCLUSION:

The Rohingya crisis is one such disaster of the 21st century that has attracted the attention of all countries of the world. There is no country that has not commented on the Rohingya crisis. The US and UK view on Rohingya issue is somewhat different from Asian countries. They have clearly blamed Myanmar's head of government Suu Kyi and military for the Rohingya crisis, which has displaced millions of Rohingya from their homes. The US and the UK have adopted a variety of sanctions techniques against Myanmar, including economic and military sanctions, in response to brutal and deadly discrimination against the Rohingya Muslim minority. Even resolutions were passed in the United Nations against Myanmar. So finally it can say that US and UK view is negative against Myanmar.

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