

## Connecting the Rohingya Diaspora: Highlighting the Global Displacement

25-26 August 2020







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## International e-Conference on

# Connecting the Rohingya Diaspora:

Highlighting the Global Displacement

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ActionAid Bangladesh



### H.E. Mr. Masud Bin Momen

The Foreign Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Bangladesh

**CHIEF GUEST** 

Ambassador Masud Bin Momen is the Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh. He joined as Foreign Secretary on 31 December 2019. As a career diplomat, Ambassador Masud has long been serving in different capacities at the Headquarters and Bangladesh's Missions abroad. Prior to his appointment as the Foreign Secretary, he had been Bangladesh's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations since 2015. Before that, he served as Bangladesh's Ambassador to Japan from 2012 to 2015. He also served as Ambassador to Italy and Permanent Representative to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP) and International Fund for Agricultural Development from 2008 to 2012. Ambassador Masud served at the Headquarters in different capacities. From 2006 to 2008, he as the Director-General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dhaka and was responsible for matters related to South Asia, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Human Rights and the United Nations. He was Deputy High Commissioner at the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi, India, from 2004 to 2006, prior to serving as Director for Poverty Alleviation at SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu, Nepal, from 2001 to 2004. From 1998 to 2001, he was Director in charge of the Foreign Ministry's United Nations Wing and Foreign Secretary's Office in Dhaka. Ambassador Masud also served as a First Secretary and Counsellor at Bangladesh High Commission, Islamabad from 1996 to 1998. Prior to that, he served at Permanent

Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations from 1992 to 1996. Ambassador Masud Joined at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh as an Assistant Secretary in 1988. He belongs to the Bangladesh Civil Service (Foreign Affairs) 1985 Batch. Ambassador Masud holds a Master's degree in International Relations from Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Boston, USA with GPA 4.0. He received Robert B. Stewart Prize for All Round Excellence from Tufts University. He holds another Master's degree in Economics from University of Dhaka. He also received Bachelor's degree in Economics from University of Dhaka. He achieved 'First Class First' position in both Bachelor's and Master's degrees from his Alma Mater. He went to Dhaka College for his Higher Secondary Certificate and to University Laboratory School for his Secondary School Certificate. Ambassador Masud achieved Chancellor's Award for securing First Class First position in Master's Degree from University of Dhaka. He was also awarded with Rector's Medal from Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) as the best trainee officer of the foundation training course. Ambassador Masud was born in Dhaka on 06 December 1963. He is married and blessed with two children.



#### H.E. Mr. Cherno Marenah

The Solicitor General and Legal Secretary
The Ministry of Justice
Government of The Republic of The Gambia
The Gambia

**GUEST OF HONOR** 

Mr. Cherno Marenah is the Solicitor General and Legal Secretary of the Republic of The Gambia. He was born in The Gambia on the 5 th August 1976. He attended St. Augustine's High School in Banjul before proceeding to the International Islamic University, Malaysia where he obtained an LLB (Hons) in 2002. He was called to the Bar on the 9 th March 2003 and subsequently obtained an LLM (Distinction) in International Trade Law from the University of Essex, United Kingdom in 2007.

Mr. Marenah started his career at the Ministry of Justice in April 2003 as a State Counsel at the Criminal Prosecutions Department. He subsequently worked in the Civil litigation and International Law Department before moving to the Legislative Drafting Department where he served as Principal Legislative draftsperson. He was promoted to the position of Registrar General before being appointed Solicitor General and Legal Secretary in November 2014 until May 2016. He worked as a Private Legal Practitioner from May 2016 to May 2017, and he was re-appointed as Solicitor General and Legal Secretary. Mr. Marenah also served as part time Adjunct Lecturer at the Law Faculty of the University of The Gambia from 2009 to 2017 and is currently a part time Adjunct Lecturer at the Gambia Law School from 2011 to date. Mr. Marenah is a seasoned administrator and has extensive experience in public law, legislative drafting, international trade law, Intellectual Property law, company and commercial law and practice. Mr. Marenah currently serves as the Co- Agent in the case of the Republic of The Gambia vs The Republic of the Union of Myanmar before the International Court of Justice.



## Manzoor Hasan OBE

Executive Director
Centre for Peace and Justice
Brac University

**MODERATOR** 

Manzoor Hasan is a public policy reform specialist with nearly three decades of experience in capacity building and institutional strengthening aimed at strengthening governance in Bangladesh. Barrister Hasan is a lawyer-cum-economist trained at the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn and the London School of Economics & Political Science, London, England.

Mr. Hasan is currently serving as the Executive Director of the Centre for Peace and Justice and Chairperson at ActionAid International Bangladesh. He is also the Institutional Adviser of BRAC Institute of Governance & Development (BIGD), BRAC University, Bangladesh. He was instrumental in establishing BIGD (former Institute of Governance Studies) in 2005 and from 2006 he was the Director of the then IGS. Previously worked as the Deputy Executive Director, BRAC, the largest NGO in the world. He was the Regional Director (Asia-Pacific) of Transparency International, Berlin, Germany and previously the Founding Executive Director of Transparency International Bangladesh. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II awarded the Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) to Mr. Hasan in 2003 for his promotion of transparency in Bangladesh.



## Farah Kabir Country Director ActionAid Bangladesh

**MODERATOR** 

Farah Kabir is a development activist working to protect human rights nationally and internationally. She has been serving as the Country Director of ActionAid Bangladesh (AAB) since 2007. Ms. Kabir is engaged in persistent advocacy for the rights of marginalised and disadvantaged people. Since 2017 Farah Kabir has been leading the initiatives taken by AAB to advocate for the rights of Rohingya people and ensure justice for them- who took refuge in Bangladesh. Despite the controversial and complex nature of the issue, these endeavors contributed to broader constituency mobilization and made an inroad to international advocacy pathway. A few initiatives of AAB led by her include international conference titled "The Rohingya Refugee Crisis: Towards Sustainable Solution" in 2018, international seminar titled "Accountability: International Criminal Court and the Rohingya Crisis" in 2018, the Dhaka declaration in 2018, policy colloquium in 2019, publication of photobook "Rohingya Exodus", graphic novel "Stateless" in 2018 and conference book "The Rohingya Refugee Crisis: Towards Sustainable Solutions". These efforts were successful to draw the attention of national and international policy makers and engage them in the conversations around Rohingya crisis. Ms. Kabir has been actively participating in critical dialogues on Rohingya issue both at national and international level. In 2018 she joined the 21 st International River Symposium in Sydney, Australia and presented a paper titled "Water and Environmental Management Crisis in Rohingya Camps". In 2019 she attended the Rohingya Conclave in the Hague, Netherlands and flagged AAB's Rohingya response work that added value to strengthen the Rohingya refugee advocacy work. Farah Kabir is committed to continue her work for ensuring justice for the Rohingya people in Bangladesh.



## **Dr. Imtiaz Ahmed**

Professor of International Relations Director, Centre for Genocide Studies Dhaka University

**MODERATOR** 

Dr. Imtiaz Ahmed was born in Barisal, Bangladesh, and is Professor of International Relations and Director, Centre for Genocide Studies at the University of Dhaka. Professor Ahmed was educated at the University of Dhaka, The Australian National University, Canberra, and Carlton University, Ottawa. He is also currently Visiting Professor at the Sagesse University, Beirut. Professor Ahmed is the recipient of various awards and honours. He has authored, co-authored, or edited 26 books and 8 monographs. More than 120 research papers and scholarly articles have been published in leading journals and chapters in edited volumes. His recent publications are the following edited books: Genocide and Mass Violence: Politics of Singularity (Dhaka: Centre for Genocide Studies, University of Dhaka, 2019); The Rohingya Refugee Crisis: Towards Sustainable Solutions (Dhaka: Centre for Genocide Studies, University of Dhaka; BRAC University: Centre for Peace and Justice; ActionAid, 2019); and Women, Veiling and Politics (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 2020).



# Azeem Ibrahim Director Center for Global Policy in Washington DC, USA

## PANEL-1 DISCUSSANT

Dr Azeem Ibrahim is the Director of the Displacement and Migration Program at the Centre for Global Policy in Washington DC. He received his PhD from the University of Cambridge after which he completed fellowships at the universities of Oxford, Harvard and Yale. Dr Ibrahim has been researching the Rohingya crisis for over a decade and is the author of the award winning book: "The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Hidden Genocide." To undertake research for his book, Dr Ibrahim made a number of trips to Myanmar and Bangladesh and continues to research and write on the Rohingya crisis with publications in the New York Times, Washington Post, Foreign Policy, Newsweek, CNN and others. In 2019 he received the International Association of Genocide Scholars Engaged Scholar Prize for his pioneering work on the Rohingya.



## Yasmin Ullah Robingya Activist

Rohingya Activist Canada PANEL-1 SPEAKER

The Rohingya Diaspora and the State of Uncertainty

## **Biography:**

Yasmin Ullah is a Rohingya social justice activist born in Northern Rakhine state of Myanmar. She fled to Thailand in 1995 along with parents and remained a refugee in Thailand until 2011. She served as the president of the Rohingya Human Rights Network for two and a half years, alongside activists across Canada in advocacy and raising public awareness of the Rohingya genocide. Yasmin has been engaging with the Rohingya issues through an intersectional lense locally in Canada and internationally. She has worked on various projects such as the Time to Act: Rohingya Voices exhibition with the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, the Genocide Learning Tool with the Montréal Holocaust Museum and the Anthology: I Am A Rohingya where she published her poetry along with other Rohingya poets from around the world. She is currently completing her undergraduate degree in political science.

#### **Abstract:**

Rohingya diaspora is a fairly new settlement of the refugee population in various parts of Canada or North America in general. Many that resettled in the region have previously been afflicted with various human rights abuses in the country of origin, Myanmar as well

as throughout their experiences in exile prior to the resettlement resulting in mostly unresolved transgenerational trauma. Consequently, many young Rohingya as well as the second and third generation of Rohingya find themselves in a state of uncertainty of their cultural identity besides other conventional dilemmas that refugees and immigrants face in a new country. The disconnect further broadens the existing generational gap and further the marginalization of the specific group of Rohingya in pursuit of political recognition and legitimacy within the communal identity as well as in a larger context that can be seen in the decisions to mobilize and monolithic portrayal of one's identity as a Rohingya.



## **Morad Alsahafi**

Assistant Professor Modern Languages and Literature King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia

PANEL-1 SPEAKER

Rohingya Refugees in Saudi Arabia: Historical Background and Current Situation

## **Biography:**

Morad Alsahafi (PhD, University of Auckland) is an Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia. His research interests are in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics, particularly heritage language maintenance and education, bilingualism, language planning (in local contexts), and language teaching and learning. He has most recently published in International journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, and the Internet Journal of Language, Culture and Society. His current research focuses on issues related to heritage/community languages in Saudi Arabia.

#### **Abstract:**

Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar (Burma) represent one of the most persecuted ethnoreligious minorities in the world. Clearly, the increasing global attention to the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar has led to a greater awareness of the large Rohingya refugee populations living in the diaspora. This paper aims to bring attention to Rohingya refugees in Saudi Arabia and offers insights into their history and current situation. The goal of the paper is two-fold: firstly, to provide an overview of the sociohistorical background of the Rohingya refugee community in Saudi Arabia, and secondly, to outline some of the 2 findings of my recent research on the sociolinguistic dynamics amongst generations of Rohingya refugees in the Saudi context.



## Michimi Muranushi

Department of Law Gakushuin University Tokyo, Japan

PANEL-1 SPEAKER

The Rohingya in Japan Reacts to the Japanese Ambassador in Yangon

## **Biography:**

Michimi Muranushi is Professor of International Politics with the Department of Law at Gakushin University, Tokyo. His academic interests include war, genocide, refugees, human rights, nationalism, the alliance between the US and Japan, and the rise and decline of nations. The regions of his interests include Okinawa, Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, India, China, Central Africa and the Middle East. His recent book on Myanmar in Japanese is "The Story of the Rohingya and the Japanese Government," (Seizansha, Tokyo, 2020), focused on Myanmar's behavior in the summer of 2017 and Japan's narrative on the developments in Rakhine. His recent article on the subject in English is "Japan's Defense of Myanmar and the Rohingya Genocide" (October 2019, the Middle East Institute). He also works as the citizen ambassador of the Free Rohingya Coalition. He visited the IDP camp in Sittwe and the camps in Cox's Bazar.

He has held visiting professorships at Shanghai Institute of International Affairs, Fudan University, and Beijing University. He received Bachelor of Law (Public Law) from University of Tokyo, M.A in International Relations and Ph.D. in International Politics from Yale University.

#### **Abstract:**

Shortly before the decision of the ICJ on the provisional measures against the genocide in Myanmar against the Rohingya, the Japanese Ambassador in Yangon made a statement before the press in Yangon that he did not think that there had been genocide in Myanmar. This seemingly unnecessary public statement he made probably without any order from the foreign ministry of Japan triggered repulsion from the Rohingya community in Japan. They made a press conference at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan and demonstration before the Foreign Ministry of Japan, calling for the change of the direction of Japan's policies toward the Rohingya issue. The majority of the Rohingya community in Japan lives in a town about two hours' train ride from Tokyo. They have tried for several years to change the pro- government, pro-Tatmadaw policies of Japan refusing call the Rohingya by its proper name and always abstaining from UN Humam Rights decision denouncing Myanmar. Despite the Japanese language media occasionally covering the Rohingya issue and the Rohingya community in Japan, Japan's foreign policy seems unmoved, without many statesmen trying to spend time for the wishes of the migrants. This paper discusses this day of disappointment and resentment and the preceding efforts by the Rohingya community to mend the Japanese cameraderie with genocidal Myanmar.



## K A M Morshed Senior Director Brac, Bangladesh

## PANEL-2 DISCUSSANT

Mr K A M Morshed leads BRAC's Advocacy, Innovation, Migration, Partnership, and Technology teams. He facilitates BRAC's policy engagements and vivifies technology adaptation to help re-imagine BRAC's internal practices and programme interventions. He is also responsible for fostering partnership between BRAC and the government to help expand BRAC's impact. A seasoned advocate of effective policy influence for positive changes and how innovation can shift the gears of impact, Mr Morshed led Bangladesh's Policy, Innovation and Communication teams at UNDP for more than a decade prior to joining BRAC in October 2015. In that role, he managed UNDP- government partnerships and supervised a range of programme interventions in ICT4D, MDGs, aid effectiveness, trade, and south-south cooperation. Mr Morshed has contributed, in various capacities, in the formulation of a number of policies, including the e-Payment Policy (2005), the Bangladesh ICT Policy (2005, 2010 and 2015), the PPP Policy (2010), Bangladesh Social Safety Net Policy (2015), the 6th and the 7th Five Year Plan. He joined his alma mater as a teacher in 1998, teaching MIS and public/development finance. As a professor and specialist, he led and participated in several notable process reengineering projects. He has published in peer-reviewed journals, newspapers and periodicals. He received both his Master's and Bachelor's degrees with honours from the Department of Finance and Banking of Dhaka University.



## **Kunnawut Boonreak**

PhD Candidate
Faculty of Social Sciences,
Chiang Mai University, Thailand

PANEL-2 SPEAKER

Rebuilding 'Rohingyaness' in Exile: Networks and the Construction of Representation in Thailand

## **Biography:**

Kunnawut Boonreak is a PhD student in Social Sciences at Chiang Mai University and works as an editor at the Thailand Information Center for Civil Rights and Investigative Journalism (TCIJ). He is now visiting the School of International Development, the University of East Anglia for this academic year. His works focus on the Muslim minority networks in Thailand and their representations through media fields. He earned his MA in Social Sciences and Development through the partial scholarship of the SEASREP Foundation. He is also an ethnographic filmmaker concerning ethnic minorities and transnational migrants.

#### **Abstract:**

In recent years, Rohingya arrivals in Thailand have drawn tremendous public attention. While media and academia have been the main sources in representing Rohingya image to the international community, Rohingya themselves are also trying to present their own image through their networks. Since there is more than a single wave of Rohingya migration into Thailand, therefore Rohingya in Thailand are very diverse in terms of social and economic 3 status. Established Rohingya who have lived in Thailand with Thai citizenship and recently arrived Rohingya as refugees have created their own separate,

overlapping networks for different purposes such as trade, religion or humanitarian aid. In the midst of scattered and overwhelming information, Rohingya issues have become a controversy serving religious or political ideals. This seminar will explore Rohingya's network which is active in several fields including Muslim organizations, INGOs, faith-based humanitarian organizations and on social media platforms. This ongoing research employs a multi-sited ethnography approach to investigate how these networks represent the Rohingya who are negotiating with the social phenomenon during the latest Rohingya migration in 2017. Also, the self-representation of Rohingya themselves through archive research and interviews where the Rohingya activists and normal Rohingya families will be explored. The preliminary finding shows the work process of the Rohingya network is using technology and religious beliefs to engage in their own issues with Muslim and non-Muslim actors. This paper argues that the Rohingyas aim to create a new image for themselves by engaging and representing in networks and by countering the reputation of 'being alienated' and 'known as terrorists' which are invented by the Burmese government and some mainstream media.



## Regina Paulose International Criminal Law Attorney USA

PANEL-2 SPEAKER

No Rest for the Weary: The Rohingya People in the United States

## **Biography:**

Regina M. Paulose is an attorney who focuses on international criminal and human rights law. She is the editor of the 2019 volume on People's Tribunals, Human Rights and the Law which featured a chapter on the Rohingya Permanent People's Tribunal.

#### **Abstract:**

This paper will examine the Rohingya diaspora in the United States and how the diaspora is still motivated in finding a solution to the challenges that exist in their home country Myanmar. Further this paper will address the Rohingya diaspora's request and need for accountability and justice, in addition to highlighting other issues that the diaspora is facing in the United States as a result of the ongoing genocide in Myanmar. , this paper will conclude that the United States based Rohingya people are still connected to their families and communities and continue their commitment to finding concrete solutions to ending the genocide, despite the geographic 4 separation of the Rohingya diaspora from the Rohingya in Myanmar and Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.



# Ma Htike PhD Student Queen Mary University of London UK

PANEL-2 SPEAKER

What Policies should the Rohingya Diaspora Pursue to Pressurize Myanmar for Granting Citizenship?

## **Biography:**

Htike is a Rohingya researcher, human rights defender and refugee advocate from Rakhine State, Myanmar. Htike holds a Master's degree (MSc) in "The Politics of Conflict, Rights and Justice" from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), the University of London. Htike will be pursuing her PhD studies in Queen Mary, University of London, in September 2020.

Since 2004, Htike has been involved in community development, humanitarian and protection work with Myanmar civil society, international organisations and the United Nations (UN) in Rakhine State, Irrawaddy Delta region and Yangon, Myanmar. From 2012 to 2018, She was involved with ASEAN grassroots movements for peace and democratisation in the region and she worked with the detainees, and refugees in Thailand and Indonesia. Htike established field-based networks to collect evidence and document human rights violations in Myanmar and Thailand including during the violence and mass displacement of Rohingya communities in 2016 and 2017.

#### **Abstract:**

Deradicalization of Citizenship in Myanmar

A discourse on citizenship becomes central to the protracted ethnic conflict and catastrophe in many parts of post-colonial countries. The colonial divided rules among diverse ethnics left controversial ethnic divisions and issues with belonging which have

resulted in ethnic conflicts, civil wars and genocide around the world. A process of racialisation of citizenship has been used by states as a political strategy to divide the people by selecting a group of people as citizens and to exclude some from a racial version of nation construction. In Myanmar, the Military government drafted the 1982 citizenship law was used to revoke Rohingya citizenship and to segregate them under the designation of "stateless", "illegal migrants" from Bangladesh in western Myanmar. Over the last four decades, different types of temporary identification documents namely Temporary Registration Card (TRC) also known as White Card and then National Verification Cards (NVCs) were issued to Rohingyas in western Myanmar after the revocation of their citizenship status. The enforcement of citizenship processes have caused human rights violation against Rohingya in political, economic and social and cultural rights. The decades long systematic discrimination and structural violence has triggered widespread human rights violations and serious crimes against Rohingyas. Additionally, the Myanmar security forces' "clearance operation" against Rohingya from 2012 onwards has resulted in a "ongoing genocide process".

Among efforts such as law suits against perpetrators through international courts and pressuring Myanmar government to halt the ongoing "process of genocide" and persecution of Rohingya in Myanmar, the human rights activists and scholars, policy makers who has been working to resolve Rohingya crisis have suggested to reform the 1982 citizenship law with an international human right standard and restore Rohingya citizenship rights. Whereas reform of 1982 citizenship law is vital to restore Rohingya citizenship right, there is also an urgent requirement to tackle the deep-rooted and institutionalised racial injustice in the 1982 citizenship law and the its process. Additionally, international law does not a regulate national law on naturalisation requirements and that context remains in the domain of national sovereignty. Thus, this research would suggests Myanmar's citizenship law needs to be deracialised to effectively tackle the Rohingya crisis and its creation of "central" and "periphery" citizens invoking racial injustice and violence against Muslim minorities. this research proposes to deracialise current citizenship rules to a concept of "One" citizenship; without a race and religious identification in order to promote unification in the citizenship discourse.



## **Nickey Diamond**Myanmar Human Rights Specialist Fortify Rights, Myanmar

PANEL-3 DISCUSSANT

Mr. Nickey Diamond, aka Ye Myint Win, is a Human Rights Specialist with Fortify Rights in Myanmar. He joins with Fortify Rights since September 2015. He is a human rights defender and an academic activist. Nickey founded Youth for Social Change Myanmar (YSCM) in 2007 and served as the organization's Executive Director until October 2013. Under his leadership, YSCM became a professional service provider for youth in need of assistance and support. In 2013, he received a scholarship from the Government of Norway to help build the capacity of institutions in Myanmar, and in 2014, he received a President George W. Bush Fellowship and completed the Liberty and Leadership Forum (2014-2015), where he studied leadership, democratization, and political philosophy. Nickey has attended dozens of international conferences, workshops, and seminars in Asia, Europe, Africa, and the U.S. He holds a B.A. in Economics, and a M.A. in human rights from the Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies at Mahidol University in Bangkok, Thailand. Nickey is also a young scholar on hate-speech, non-traditional security, security discourse, socially constructed security, and genocide in Myanmar. Nickey presented his papers and presentations at the various kind of international academic conferences around the world. Currently, he is interested in looking into the issue of nexus between the systematic anti- Rohingya propaganda and the mass atrocity against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar.



## **Tun Khin**

Rohingya Leader , President Burmese Rohingya Organization UK

PANEL-3 SPEAKER

State of the Rohingya Diaspora in the UK

## **Biography:**

Tun Khin was born and brought up in Arakan State, Burma. His grandfather was a Parliamentary Secretary during democratic Period of Burma. Although well-established and respected, alongside a million other ethnic Rohingya, Tun Khin was not recognized as a citizen of Burma. He is co-founder and President of Burmese Rohingya Organization UK which has been a leading voice for Rohingya people around the world.

Tun Khin is the first Rohingya who spoke Rohingya Genocide at US Congress in 2010. Tun Khin has briefed officials on the Genocide committed against Rohingya populations at the British Parliament, Swedish Parliament, Morocco Parliament, Canada Parliament, European Union Parliament, US Senate, US Congress, State Department, the UN Indigenous Forum in NY and the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Tun Khin has been a featured speaker on Rohingya's rights for the BBC, Sky News, CNN, Al Jazeera and many other outlets. He has also published opinion pieces in the Huffington Post, Democratic Voice of Burma, Mizzima Burmese Medias. Aljazeera, Diplomat, Huffington Post, British independent newspaper.

Tun Khin filed Universal Jurisdiction case in Argentina against Myanmar military and civilian government for crimes against humanity and genocide. He received a leadership award from Refuges International Washington DC in April 2015 for his relentless effort working on Rohingya crisis.

#### **Abstract:**

In this paper I will write about how I left Rakhine State, Myanmar, when I was 17 year's old, and how I came to work on the rights of the Rohingya through the Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK (BROUK), based in London, UK. Furthermore, I will write about my fellow Rohingya in the UK and the life they are living here. The Rohingya youth are doing impressive work in the UK. They work hard both to improve their own lives, some going to top universities such as Oxford, UCL and Imperial College, but also to improve the situation for the Rohingya in their homeland and in the refugee camps in Bangladesh. Many of the Rohingya who finishes their studies in the UK want to work to end the genocide of the Rohingya, and fight for justice.

BROUK works together with other community organisations in the UK, such as the British Rohingya Organisation UK. Together, we are pressing the British government to implement tougher policies against the Myanmar government, including sanctions on military owned and controlled companies and a global arms embargo on Myanmar; we push the British government to supply more aid and to put pressure on the Myanmar government to allow unhindered access to journalists, humanitarian workers and human rights observers to Rakhine State. We are also pushing for the restoration of Rohingya citizenship in Myanmar, and that no repatriation of Rohingya can happen until Rohingya are safe and protected in Myanmar.

We are working hard to pursue international justice for the Rohingya, through the International Court of Justice in the Hague, through a Universal Jurisdiction case in Argentina, and through the International Criminal Court.

The Rohingya diaspora in the UK pushes us to do hard work, and we are pushing the British government and the international community to do the same.



## Kawser Ahmed Professor of Political Science

University of Winnipeg
Canada

PANEL-3 SPEAKER

State of the Rohingya Diaspora in Canada

## **Biography:**

Dr. Kawser Ahmed received his PhD in Peace and Conflict Studies from University of Manitoba in 2017. He was an exchange officer with the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK), an observer-Peacekeeper to the United Nations Missions in Western Sahara (MINURSO), and an alumnus at the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA) in Washington DC. He is associated with the Center for Defence and Security Studies (CDSS) as a research fellow, a junior research affiliate with the Canadian Network for Research on Terrorism, Security, and Safety (TSAS), and was an associate with the Canadian Practitioners Network for Prevention of Radicalization and Extremist Violence (CPN-PREV). He leads a Winnipeg based not-for-profit organization named Conflict and Resilience Research Institute, Canada (CRRIC). His research interests are social conflict and peace-building, radicalism, violent extremism, and UN peacekeeping operations. He teaches at the University of Winnipeg and currently he is a Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada's post-doctoral fellow at the same institution. He lives and works in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

#### **Abstract:**

Activiste Sans Frontiere Canadian Rohingya Diaspora came into limelight in the aftermath of August 2017 forced displacements of Rohingyas from Myanmar. As known, the Diaspora group is not a homogenous one and the majority live in the Eastern part of

Canada. Given the geographical non-proximity of various cities of Canada, such groups work semi-independently in advancing its agenda in coordination with a national body known as Rohingya Human Rights Network (RHRN) 8 based out of Ottawa: Having received favorable support from the Federal government on the Rohingya crisis right from the beginning, Canadian Diaspora remains active in four primary domains. a) activism (by arranging demonstration to raise awareness on genocide); b) advocacy (by attending Senate hearing committee and liaison with the Canadian Museum of Human Rights); c) fundraising (by arranging various events to raise funds for the stranded Rohingyas in camps); and d) media and communication (by giving a press release to media). It is also observed that over the past years, a few smaller groups have proliferated parallel to the RHRN indicating a growing interest among Rohingyas in Canada in pursuing various crisis resolution matters. Given this backdrop, the aim of this paper is three-fold: to appraise the structure of Diaspora groups in Canada and its activities within a local-global network; to share the achievements of the groups in the last two years in Canada; and to share a few constraints in advancing crisis resolution agenda in unison. Finally, this paper also aims at pointing out some of the impacts of COVID-19 on the groups' activities and suggests measures to continue building pressure on the international community of which Canada could be a major stakeholder. Data were gathered over the past two and half years through interviews, in- person meetups, seminars, webinars, and by attending numerous presentations in Canada and abroad.



## Miwako Hosoda

Professor & Vice President Seisa University, Japan

PANEL-3 SPEAKER

State of the Rohingya Diaspora in Japan

## **Biography:**

Professor Miwako Hosoda, Vice-President of Seisa University, has been doing her sociological research by observing human relations in the healthcare and environmental ethics field. She graduated from the University of Tokyo, in 1992, and received an MA and PhD in Sociology from the University of Tokyo. After working as a research fellow for The Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, she studied at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health and Harvard School of Public Health. Prof. Hosoda has been President of Sociology of Health of the International Sociological Association, and Board of Trustee of the Japan Foundation of Cancer Research, and President of Asia Pacific Sociological Association.

#### **Abstract:**

This paper describes the current status of Rohingya in Japan and their future challenges. According to the Burma Rohingya Association in Japan (BRAJ), about 230 Rohingya are currently living in Japan, 200 of which live in Tatebayashi, Gunma Prefecture (about 80 kilometers northwest of Tokyo). The Rohingya community in Tatebayashi generally interacts well with the local community and their children's education is provided by local non-profit organizations (NPOs). The Japanese government treats Rohingya as Myanmar nationals. However, most of them are actually stateless because they have been stripped

of their nationality. Japan is a member of the 1951 Convention, but refugee status is generally extremely limited. The Rohingya have sought refugee status from the Japanese government, but they continue to be ignored. In some cases, Rohingya were forced to leave Japan by the Immigration Bureau. The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs refers to Rohingya as "Bengali Muslim Rohingya" At foreign ministers & press conferences, the word Rohingya is avoided and expressions such as " Muslims from the Rakhine State" are used. This is because the Japanese government and industries have strong economic ties with Myanmar. In Japan, conflict exists between Rohingya and Myanmar societies. When the Japan Myanmar Association (then called the Burmese Association of Japan) was established in September 1988, the general secretary of the association was a Rohingya. However, since 2000, the notion that "Rohingya ("Bengali") are not from Myanmar" spread among Myanmar residents in Japan. Subsequently, the Rohingya became excluded from the Myanmar society. In 2017, an anti-Rohingya demonstration was held in Tokyo by Myanmar residents in Japan.facing in the United States as a result of the ongoing genocide in Myanmar., this paper will conclude that the United States based Rohingya people are still connected to their families and communities and continue their commitment to finding concrete solutions to ending the genocide, despite the geographic 4 separation of the Rohingya diaspora from the Rohingya in Myanmar and Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.



## **Wakar Uddin**

Director-General, Arakan Rohingya Union Chairman and Founder Burmese Rohingya Association North America

PANEL-4 DISCUSSANT

Dr. Wakar Uddin is a Rohingya American, born in Maungdaw, Arakan State Burma/Myanmar. He is currently a Professor at The Pennsylvania State University. Dr. Uddin is the Director General of Arakan Rohingya Union, which is a federation of 61 Rohingya organizations worldwide and is recognized by all the of the OIC-member countries and the international community as an official voice of the Rohingya people. He is also the Founding Chairman of The Burmese Rohingya Association of North America, and the President and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Muslim Aid America. He is an expert in epidemiology and management of turfgrass disease, population biology of turfgrass pathogens, host defense response in turfgrass pathosystem and chemical control of turfgrass diseases. He obtained his B.S., IPM and M.S., IPM from the University of Nevada and Ph.D. in Plant Pathology from the University of Georgia. He has more than 30 publications in internationally reputed journals. His area of interests includes epidemiology and management of gray leaf spot of perennial ryegrass turf, induced resistance in turfgrass system through integration of plant defense activators and integrated management of turfgrass diseases.



## Kazi Fahmida Farzana

Senior Lecturer University Utara Malaysia Malaysia

PANEL-4 SPEAKER

State of the Rohingya Diaspora in Malaysia

### **Biography:**

Kazi Fahmida Farzana is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of International Affairs and Research Fellow at the Asian Institute of International Affairs and Diplomacy in University Utara Malaysia, Malaysia. Her teaching and research interests include nationalism and ethnic conflicts, diplomacy, forced migration and statelessness with an emphasis on South and Southeast Asia. She has more than a decade long experience of working with the Rohingya community and has interviewed Rohingya refugees living in the camps in Bangladesh and elsewhere in Malaysia and Thailand and other stakeholders including policymakers. She is currently a British Academy Award Holder (duration Sept 2018 to Dec. 2020) due to her international research collaboration (as a member) with University College London (ULC), in London on a project titled: "Rohingya Journeys of Violence and Resilience in Bangladesh and its Neighbours: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives". As a peace and conflict specialist, Dr. Farzana has published not only several articles in prominent journals in her field, but also book chapters with leading publishers around the world. She also has an authored book titled, Memories of Burmese Rohingya Refugees: Contested Identity and Belonging, New York, US: Palgrave Macmillan (2017).

#### **Abstract:**

The Rohingya ethnic minority community is regarded as one of the most persecuted communities who encounter state-sanctioned structural inequality and systematic violence in the Rakhine state of Myanmar for decades due to their particular religious and ethnic identities. The vast majority of them had fled to other countries in South and Southeast Asia, the Middle East and beyond, to become refugees. Malaysia is one such destination for Rohingya seeking refuge from persecution and violence. Currently, the country is hosting a substantial number of 101,280 Rohingya populations (as of April 2020) which is 56 percent of the total refugees and asylum- seekers in Malaysia. This excludes those who are undocumented (another estimated 30,000- 40,000 Rohingya). Malaysia, unlike many other countries, does not confine the refugees into any particular camp settlements; rather allows them to remain scattered among the local population in urban and rural settings. Although many of them are living here for decades and working in informal sectors, they mostly remain 'invisible' and their status is undetermined. They are being perceived as 'illegal' or 'prohibited' immigrants under the Immigration Act who often encounter various challenges and marginalization. The purpose of this study is to outline the diasporic socio- economic and political life of the Rohingya refugees in Malaysia based on their perspectives. Data for this socio-ethnographic research come from fieldwork conducted in four different states of Peninsular Malaysia from March 2019 until June 2020. This research argues that among the refugees and asylum-seekers, the Rohingya refugee community in Malaysia is arguably the most vulnerable, marginalized, and underprivileged group as they are the not only 'stateless' community who have a lesser chance of return and repatriation, but also their prospect to turn to the Myanmar embassy in Malaysia for any social injustice or protection is out of the question as they are not recognized as citizens in Myanmar.from the Rohingya in Myanmar and Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.



## **Muhammad Badiuzzaman**

Research Coordinator CPJ, Brac University Bangladesh

PANEL-4 SPEAKER

State of the Rohingya Diaspora in Bangladesh

## **Biography:**

Muhammad Badiuzzaman is currently working as Research Coordinator, at the Centre for Peace and Justice, Brac University. His area of research interest includes conflict-poverty nexus, governance, faith-based education, social cohesion, refugee-statelessness, and political economy analysis. Being an economist by training he has proven expertise in applying both quantitative and qualitative research method. He is an award winner of 'Best Research Paper' while pursuing his master's in development research in 2009-10 at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS), Erasmus University Rotterdam in the Netherlands. Currently, he is involved in a few research projects on the Rohingya refugee issues funded by UNDP, DFID, Asia Justice Coalition and The Asia Foundation. Recently, his research works 'Improving Maternal Health Care in a Post Conflict Setting: Evidence from Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh' was published in The Journal of Development Studies. He also co-authored a chapter 'Conflict and Livelihood Decisions in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh' in an edited volume 'Poverty Reduction Policies and Practices in Developing Asia' published by Springer. He co-authored research-books titled 'Local Governance in Bangladesh: Politics and Economics'; and 'Political Economy of Madrassa Education in Bangladesh'. He is a doctoral researcher at the ISS, Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

#### **Abstract:**

Due to the systematic marginalisation, persecution and violent conflict made by Myanmar army, Rohingya population has been taking shelter in Bangladesh since the late 80s. However, the largest influx of Rohingya people into Bangladesh was happened in 2017 to find a safe hideout from the atrocities in Myanmar. Since then the total number of Rohingya people residing in Bangladesh raised to about one million. The Rohingya people living in Cox's Bazar constitute one of the largest Rohingya diaspora who can play a significant role towards achieving their citizenship in Myanmar and helping the ongoing justice and accountability process at the international level. The aim of this paper is to provide a clear picture on the profile and role of Rohingya CSOs in Bangladesh to mobilise and strengthen the Rohingya diaspora network around the world.

Among the Rohingya population in the Cox's Bazar camp estimate indicates that a 52 percent of the population are female. Rohingya population is characterised by young by age structure where 51 percent of population is below 18 years 1. Since 2017, an estimated 100,000 new babies were born in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh 2. In terms of educational profile, both formal and religious education are pursued by the Rohingya population. Study shows that a 76 percent of Rohingya population (15 years and above) reported of having no education, and a 52.6 percent Rohingya children below 15 years were not attending school (Bhatia, et al, 2018) 3. A recent survey revealed that in 82 percent of households, at least one member has attended an academic school where the average

years of schooling is 6.2. It is also found that a 3 percent of households have a member who passed the Myanmar high school matriculation exam, thus qualifying for university admission and another 3 percent attended at least one year of university education 4. Since the mass exodus in 2017, Rohingya community were mobilised around a number of CSOs or CBOs engaged at the political and diplomatic levels, such as advocating for Rohingya rights and justice, mobilising rallies and joining meetings with visiting Myanmar representatives. On 25 August 2019, a big gathering commemorating the second anniversary of exodus from Myanmar in 2017 was not received positively by the camp authorities and resulted a decision of not allowing the grassroots political action that had begun to take shape. As a result, the emergent CSOs are taking a more horizontal approach to community development and advocacy. In this new landscape, a good number of CSOs/CBOs have emerged and engaged with humanitarian 10 response in the camp. Some of these organisations are led by women, and youth working in the area of education. A good number of these organisations are functional 5. The emergent CSOs has been playing various roles in humanitarian response and international accountability and justice mechanisms while capacity development of these organisation could be pivotal to strengthen Rohingya diaspora network around the world.



## Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury

Department of Political Science Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata, India PANEL-4 SPEAKER

The Invisible Life and Times of the Rohingyas in India

## **Biography:**

Dr. Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury teaches in the Department of Political Science, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata, India. He is also the founder Head, Department of Human Rights and Human Development in the same university. His areas of interest include: global and South Asian politics, human rights, and refugee and migration studies. His latest publication is The Rohingya in South Asia: People without A State (Routledge, 2018)

#### **Abstract:**

The postcolonial states of South Asia mostly retained many of the draconian laws of the late colonial period, and laced them with new laws and regulations, thus leading to greater dispossession of people of homes, generating widespread situation of unfreedom, and creating countless refugees, stateless persons, and even migrants, on the whole, forced to survive in sites of precarious life, without any right to have rights. Whereas citizenship of a new nation was supposed to ensure the rights and privileges of the people inhabiting a territorial space demarcated by political boundaries, citizenship laws in postcolonial South Asia have largely been based on the criteria of religion, ethnicity and gender, thereby turning into contraptions in the newer politics of dispossession.

On the other hand, when the contemporary world has been witnessing mixed and massive flows' of population in different parts of the world - refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless population and undocumented migrants - all are moving together for their survival, either for life, or for livelihood. In such a situation, it may be difficult to categorise the forcibly displaced or voluntarily migrating people. Under such circumstances, even the refugees and stateless population are deprived of their basic right to life and shelter. Over and above, the growing securitisation of the refugees and stateless people has, by and large, made them more vulnerable. Therefore, providing them refuge turns into a 'difficult' choice between 'national security' and 'compassion'. In this broader context, we shall attempt to briefly portray the almost invisible life and times of the Rohingyas in

India .



# Hla Myint President Rohingya Intellectual Community Association of Australia

PANEL-4 SPEAKER

International Community has an Obligation to Provide a Sustainable Solution for the Crisis of the Rohingya People

## **Biography:**

Dr. Hla Myint is a leading Rohingya activist in Australia. He has a strong passion for advocating the rights of oppressed Rohingya people in Burma. He immigrated to Australia in 2003 as a political refugee and he has undertaken his post graduate studies, M. Eng and Phd at UTS. He is an academic at UTS. Dr. Myint left Burma in 1997 given his active and creative mindset for the aspiration of democracy and human rights he was compelled to rise against the regime in Burma in the 90's and as a result of his political activities he fled Burma. Dr. Myint obtained his Bachelor's degree in Computer Engineering at the University of Istanbul, Turkey in 2002. Upon his arrival to Australia he has actively involved with advocacy activities for the Plight of Rohingya. Dr. Hla Myint is actively involved with advocacy activities for the Plight of Rohingya. Dr. Myint is a prominent Rohingya activist in the world as well as in Australia. He is involved in several humanitarian projects for the plight of Rohingya. He is a strong supporter of R2P and strong defender of oppressed minorities and defenseless civilian who are often the victims of internal conflict in the world. By profession he is a scientist however by compassion he is a human rights and minority rights defender. There are several prominent figures in Australia who are very supportive to the work and advocacy activities that have been initiated by Dr. Myint.

#### **Abstract:**

Almost three years since the government launched so-called 'clearance operations' in Rakhine State, the defenceless Rohingya populations in Myanmar remain at risk of mass atrocity crimes perpetrated by the security forces and as a result of discriminatory policies and laws. Approximately 600,000 Rohingya still remain in Rakhine, Myanmar are under the threat of genocide. Since 2012 deadly violence, they are surviving in confined villages, ghettos and apartheid-like concentration camps in conditions described by international relief organizations as the worst in the world. Despite the order of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to protect Rohingya, the innocent people are subjected to killings, looting, and criminal atrocities. The Rohingya villagers in northern Rakhine have been caught up in intensified fighting between Myanmar military and Arakan Army (AA). Many people are internally displaced and starving due to blockade of humanitarian assistance. No public figure in Burma will dare criticise what is becoming an active campaign of genocide for fear of what it will mean for his or her popularity. Nobel Prize winner, Aung San Suu Kyi is by far the most popular influence in Burmese politics, but rather than speak out against the violence, she has made comments that endorse the government's deliberate inaction on resolving this crisis. Myanmar does not hide its intention of forcibly removing or destroying the group from the country. The government did not allow the Rohingya to be included in its first census which took place in 2014. Now the term "Rohingya" is banned from use in the country. The Rohingya crisis is first and foremost to be solved within Myanmar. For a genuine long-term solution, the government of Myanmar must recognise and restore full citizenship and ethnic identity of the Rohingya people. All refugees must be unconditionally repatriated to their original villages or places, not to displacement sites in Myanmar, under the supervision of the 12 UN. The political and democratic process in Myanmar should be all-inclusive and Rohingya must be a part of it. Since the Myanmar government refuses to allow the Rohingya the right to self-identify as Rohingya and as nationals of Myanmar, it seems implausible that the Rohingya would have any other redress except via the UN.



## Laetitia van den Assum Former Dutch Ambassador Independent Diplomatic Expert The Netherlands

CLOSING CEREMONY GUEST

Laetitia van den Assum is a diplomatic expert. She served as ambassador of the Netherlands on four continents, including Asia. She was a member of the Rakhine Advisory Commission, chaired by the late Kofi Annan. She is also a former UN staff member.



Lilianne Fan
Chair, Rohingya Working Group
Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network
Malaysia

CLOSING CEREMONY GUEST

Lilianne Fan is Co-Founder and International Director of Geutanyoë Foundation, a regional humanitarian organisation based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Aceh, Indonesia; and Chair of the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network's Rohingya Working Group (APRRN). She is a cultural anthropologist and humanitarian professional with more than 20 years of experience working with refugees, internally displaced persons, and communities affected by conflict and disaster, including in Aceh, Myanmar, Haiti and with Syrian refugees in Jordan, and currently specialises on the situation of the stateless Rohingya in Rakhine State and in ASEAN. She provides regular expertise to a range of institutions and governments including the UN, the World Bank, ASEAN, the Government of Malaysia and the Government of Indonesia. Between 2005 and 2012 Lilianne served in several large-scale post-crisis recovery missions, including with the UN-led humanitarian response in post-earthquake Haiti; as Advisor to the ASEAN Special Envoy on Post-Nargis Recovery in Myanmar; as a member of the Advisory Team of the Governor of Aceh on sustainable development following the Aceh peace agreement of 2005; and as Senior Policy Coordinator for Oxfam International in Aceh and Nias from 2005-2008. She holds an MA in Anthropology from Columbia University, New York.



# Shahidul Haque Senior Fellow North South University Former Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh

CLOSING CEREMONY GUEST

Mr. Md. Shahidul Haque, former Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh, is a senior fellow at the North South University in Dhaka, Bangladesh. He was also the Chair-in-office of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD). He served as an Independent Expert to the Committee on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW) for the term 2014- 2017 and has been re-elected for another 4-year term (2018-2021). He is also a member of the Migration Advisory Board of International Organization for Migration (IOM). Mr. Haque has been actively promoting human rights of migrants and proactively working with NGOs and civil society to advocate rights of migrant workers.

Mr. Haque earlier worked in Bangladesh Missions in London, Bangkok and Geneva. He had also served as Director in various Wings of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, including as the Director of Foreign Secretary's Office (1996-1998). He represented Bangladesh in various international fora. As a Counsellor/Minister at the Bangladesh Permanent Mission in Geneva, he dealt with WIPO, ILO, IOM and IAEA (Vienna).

Mr. Haque obtained an M.A. (International Relations) from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in USA (1988) and was awarded Honourable Mention for Robert B. Steward Prize for high acedemic achievement. He stood First Class First, both in Masters and Honours, in Social Welfare from the University of Dhaka. He was also awarded the Dhaka University Chancellor's Award, the Grants Commission Award and the Chancellor's Gold Medal for his outstanding academic accomplishment.

Mr. Haque's areas of academic interests range from migration, climate change, development, trade and human rights issues. His articles on migration and human trafficking issues were published in various national and international journals. He served in the Editorial Board of the IOM World Migration Report and also contributed to IOM's 3 volume training guide on Essentials of Migration Management (2004) as well as IOM-OSCE Trainers Manual on Labour Migration Management (2010).

## International e-Conference on

## Connecting the Rohingya Diaspora:

Highlighting the Global Displacement

25-26 August 2020

Day 1 - 25.08.20

6:00 – 6:25 PM

**Inaugural Session** 

6:30 – 8:30 PM

Panel 1: Rohingya Diaspora: Canada Saudi Arabia & Japan

8:45 – 10:15 PM

Panel 2: Rohingya Diaspora: UK
USA & Thailand

Day 2 - 26.08.20

6:00 – 7:30 PM

Panel 3: Rohingya Diaspora: UK Canada & Japan

7:45 – 9:15 PM

Panel 4: Rohingya Diaspora: Australia India, Bangladesh & Malaysia

9:30 – 10:00 PM

**Closing Ceremony**