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GREAT GAME REVOLVING AROUND RUSSO-UKRAINIAN WAR AND THE TRENDS OF GLOBAL POWER POLITICS: NAVIGATING CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIC OUTLOOK FOR BANGLADESH

Abstract

The geopolitical landscape of the world has always been shaped and driven by a range of historical incidents, wars and conflicts over time. The Russo-Ukrainian war has created significant impacts on regional and global strategic order leading towards a complex dynamics of world politics. This paper argues that the Ukraine war has changed the nature of power politics and the world's response to war would have decisive role in shaping the political and economic landscape of the globe in the ensuing decades. The paper highlights several strategic impacts of the war, i.e., polarisation in Europe, call for de-dollarisation, weakening of sanction regime, China's growing role as a global negotiator, politics of energy transition and growing security concerns such as arms race, expansion of nuclear weapons, and expansion of NATO etc. The war has also brought multiple economic and strategic challenges for Bangladesh. This paper suggests that Bangladesh should maintain its non-alignment posture and continue to uphold multilateralism as a response strategy to navigate present and future challenges, develop its own priorities and project national interests focusing on economic advancement.

Keywords: Russia, Ukraine, War, Great Game, Power Politics.

1. Introduction

History of human civilisation is the history of rise and fall of empires, shifts in power structure and emergence of new elements and actors in the spectrum of global power architecture. The Peloponnesian War, between Athens and Sparta, led to the rise of Athens as a dominant power in Greece.¹ Similarly, the Punic Wars between

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¹ Donald Kagan, *A New History of the Peloponnesian War* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1987).

Rome and Carthage, and the fall of the Western Roman Empire, marked the expansion of Rome's territory, power, and influence over the Mediterranean, shaping Western civilisation.² The Islamic Conquests, led by Arab and Muslim armies, established the Islamic Caliphate, and expanded the Muslim empire, resulting in the spread of Islam. The Crusades between the Christian and the Muslim brought significant political and religious changes in Europe and the Middle East. The Mongol Conquests led to the unification of Eurasia, facilitating trade and enabling the spread of technologies, ideas, and cultures across the region.³ The Hundred Years' War, Spanish Conquest of the Americas, Thirty Years' War, American Revolution, French Revolution, and Napoleonic Wars—all had a significant impact on the balance of power and the establishment of new nation-states. These events reshaped the political and territorial boundaries of Europe and beyond, leading to the emergence of new global powers and contributing to the rise (and fall) of democracy and nationalism. The impact of these events had been in-depth shaping the modern world in ways that continue to influence international relations and global politics. The First World War brought significant changes in global politics. It carved out the Ottoman Empire leading to the formation of new nation-states and creating geopolitical tensions.⁴ The rise of the United States as a global power was another significant consequence of the war.

The Second World War (WWII) also had a profound impact on the international political landscape. Perhaps the most significant outcome of WWII was the emergence of the United States and the Soviet Union as superpowers. Despite their shared victory against Axis powers, the ideological division between these two powers was profound, with the United States advocating for liberal capitalism and the Soviet Union championing communism.⁵ The establishment of the United Nations and the Bretton Woods Institutions were notable outcome of WWII. The war led to the emergence of new geopolitical alignments, including the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance led by the United States and the Warsaw Pact led by the Soviet Union. Ultimately, the Cold War between the Western and Eastern blocs shaped international politics throughout much of the 20th century. The end of the Cold War and disband of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)

² Harold James, *The Roman Predicament: How the Rules of International Order Create the Politics of Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

³ Nikolay P Kradin, "The Mongol Empire and the Unification of Eurasia," in *The Oxford World History of Empire*, ed. Peter Fibiger Bang (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 507-32.

⁴ Geoffrey Mock, "How the Trauma and Struggles of World War I Helped Shape the Modern World," *Duke Today*, Last accessed April 30, 2023, <https://today.duke.edu/2018/11/how-trauma-and-struggles-world-war-i-helped-shape-modern-world>.

⁵ Donald G. Schilling, "Review: The Second World War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 37, no. 2 (2002): 303–15. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3180688>.

led to the rise of unipolar world under the leadership of the only hegemon, the United States. The conclusion of the Cold War also ushered in new security threats, such as terrorism and cyber-attacks, etc.

Similarly, the Russo-Ukrainian war, started in early-2022, as the paper argues, has the potential to serve as a determining force in reshaping the global order, including the establishment of rules that will guide international affairs in the foreseeable future, as well as the distribution of influence among key global players, shaping regional dynamics and ultimately influencing the balance of power. Thus, the Russo-Ukrainian war has made significant impacts on regional and global strategic order which is also leading the world politics towards a complex dynamic.

The war and the game surrounding it has already left and has possibility to leave more impacts on Bangladesh as well. Therefore, this paper deals with a few questions: How is great game revolving around the Russo-Ukrainian war? How does the war reshape the trend of global power politics? What are the impacts of the Russo-Ukraine war and the great game revolving around it on Bangladesh? What would be the response strategy of Bangladesh? This paper is qualitative in nature based mainly on secondary sources. Books, journals, official documents, online resources, newspaper reports, etc., have been consulted as secondary source. Following the introduction, the second section discusses the nature of great game surrounding the Russo-Ukrainian war; the third section focuses on the impacts of the war on the global and regional power architecture and define the trend of future power politics; the fourth section presents the challenges for Bangladesh and suggests a future outlook to navigate the challenges. The fifth section concludes the paper.

2. Understanding the Great Game Revolving around Russo-Ukrainian War

The term ‘Great Game’ became prominent in the 19th Century. It was used to refer to the 19th century’s political and diplomatic competition between the British and the Russian empires for defining their territory and exerting influence over the Central Asian States.⁶ It started to be used widely after the Soviet’s invasion of Afghanistan.⁷ Later, in the 1990s, the expression ‘New Great Game’ was introduced by the journalists to describe the renewed geopolitical interests in the Central Asia

⁶ Robble Gramer and Jack Detsch, “Foreign Powers Jockey for Influence in Afghanistan After Withdrawal,” *Foreign Policy*, Last accessed August 1, 2023. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/06/24/afghanistan-withdrawal-foreign-power-vacuum>.

⁷ Seymour Becker, “The ‘great game’: The history of an evocative phrase,” *Asian Affairs* 43, no.1 (2012): 61-80.

amid the competition over mineral wealth of the region. However, the term remained at the center of global affairs after the US' invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, and so-called 'War on Terror'. Nevertheless, scholars on international relations and politics are trying to see the distinct features of great game in the 21st century since relationships among the global powers are not within the binary choices what had been seen during the two World Wars and the Cold War period.

Now, the idea becomes more complex with the renewed interests of the regional and global powers, particularly because of the US' Pivot to Asia strategy and the rise of China and India as major economic powers. For example, the US and its allies call for establishing democratic values (their own version), rule-based international order and seeks military bases, transit routes and defense partnerships to protect economic and security interests and contain China's growing influence; while Russia wants to be a dominant influencer and gain back its great power status through exerting influence in the Europe and Eurasian region; also, China has ambition to be a regional and global powerhouse and shape the regional and global order through its own idea of development and cooperation (through BRI, GDI, GSI, GCI, etc.)⁸, while India is trying to pursue its own national interests in the region and become a regional super power to counter China's influence. Again, an important aspect is, playing foreign powers of one another has become a common feature of great game in the present "multipolar world".

In the current context, Russo-Ukrainian war becomes a critical ground for hoovering great game mania in the international politics. To understand the nature of great game revolving around Russo-Ukrainian war, exploring the relationships among the regional and global powers, strategic significance of Ukraine and Russia to the world, and realpolitik behind the reactions of major powers could be helpful. The following sub-sections highlights those aspects.

2.1. The Beginning of the Great Game Mania: Analysing Strategic Relations among the Global and Regional Powers

The relationship between the US and Russia, two nuclear superpowers, is among the most critical and strategic bilateral relationships in the world. Both have shared interests in multiple areas, i.e., nuclear security and non-proliferation, regional security and stability in Europe and Eurasia, countering terrorism, greater stability in

⁸ Alexander Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules: The New Great Power Contest in Central Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 2012), pp.3-15.

the Middle East, climate change issue and exploring outer space, etc. However, for more than two decades, their bilateral relationship is cycling between cooperation and confrontation. After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the relationship reached at the peak of tension. Also, Russia's interference in the 2016 US presidential election, annexation of Crimea with Russian territory, Russia's support for Syria's Bashar al-Assad and Venezuela's Nicolas Maduro have aggravated Russia's relationship with the US.⁹ The US also defined Russia as a major security concern in its National Security Strategy (NSS) as well. Russia and China are maintaining 'comprehensive partnership and strategic interactions', particularly in the areas of trade and energy cooperation. In the last couple of years, trade between the two countries increased by nearly 50 per cent.¹⁰ Again, China is particularly important for Russia as a market for its energy exports, and the transfer of Russian military technology are of strategic importance to China.¹¹ However, though both of the countries expanded trade and defense ties since the last decade, they are not formal allies. Russia's war in Ukraine has exposed the limits of their relationship.¹²

On the other hand, the US considers China as the most consequential competitor (as declared in the NSS 2022) in the Asian region and beyond. Though both the country maintain economic relations, some issues like trade war, Taiwan issue, South China Sea issue and the issue of navigation in the Sea Line of Communication (SLOC), etc. remained as major irritants in the bilateral relationship between the two countries. Earlier, they were tagged to trade war; recently China stopped exporting microchip technology to the US which could raise further tensions. Again, the US policy towards China can be defined from three perspectives- invest, align, and compete.¹³ In contrast, historically India considers Russia as a reliable partner, and they have strong defense cooperation.¹⁴ Both of the countries have trade relations and are discussing to reach a free trade deal. Also, at present, Russia has become India's

⁹ Angela Stent, "Why are US-Russia relations so challenging?" *The Brookings*, Last accessed July 23, 2023, <https://www.brookings.edu/policy2020/votervital/why-are-us-russia-relations-so-challenging/>.

¹⁰ Stefan Wolff, "The Russia-China Relationship: the perils of a friendship with no limits," UK in a Changing World, Last accessed July 26, 2023, <https://ukandeu.ac.uk/the-russia-china-relationship-the-perils-of-a-friendship-with-no-limits/>.

¹¹ Ulrich Jochheim, "China-Russia relations: A quantum leap?" European Parliamentary Research Service, Last accessed May 18, 2023, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/729349/EPRS_BRI\(2022\)729349_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/729349/EPRS_BRI(2022)729349_EN.pdf).

¹² Lindsay Maizland, "China and Russia: Exploring Ties Between Two Authoritarian Powers," Council on Foreign Relations, Last accessed June 18, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-russia-relationship-xi-putin-taiwan-ukraine>.

¹³ US Department of State, *US-China Relations* (Washington D.C.: US Department of State) <https://www.state.gov/briefings-foreign-press-centers/us-china-relations>.

¹⁴ Akriti (Vasudeva) Kalyankar and Dante Schulz, "Continental Drift? India-Russia Ties After One Year of War in Ukraine," Stimson Center, Last accessed March 09, 2023, <https://www.stimson.org/2023/continental-drift-india-russia-ties-after-one-year-of-war-in-ukraine>.

largest supplier of crude oil. However, both the countries are maintaining economic engagement despite West's call to keep distance.¹⁵

Ukraine and Russia share troubled past despite having same cultural roots and both the countries have developed different cultural and political identities over the course of time. However, they used to maintain strong energy, trade and cultural ties. The roots of the current conflicts between the two countries lie in Russia's long-standing ambition to control its periphery.¹⁶ Earlier, Russia used soft coercion, but after Vladimir Putin's accession to power, the country has become more assertive about irredentism and control over its former territories. On the other hand, the US and the NATO allies have intensified relations with Ukraine and have affirmed Budapest Memorandum to ensure Ukraine's territorial integrity. However, after annexation of Crimea with Russian territory, Ukraine's relation with the West has intensified in different critical areas.

The US and India have developed a global strategic partnership based on the increasing convergence of interests in bilateral, regional and global issues. The US is India's largest trading partner.¹⁷ Again, despite economic and trade relations, India and China have long standing border issue and conflicts erupt occasionally. India is also focusing on countering China's dominance in the Asian region and establishing itself as a regional power. Here, the most interesting part is dynamics of relationship among India, China and the US. The US considers India as a key partner in the Indo-Pacific region. The US supports India's emergence as a leading global power and a vital partner in efforts to safeguard free and open, prosperous and secure Indo-Pacific. Hence, India could act as a crucial counterweight to Chinese influence, both in the region and outside it.¹⁸ Since India follows Kautilya's 'mandala' policy and the US considers China as the key challenger to its hegemony, therefore, both of them are partnering QUAD alliance to counter China in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond. In light of the present context, it is imperative to examine the 'mandala policy', emphasising alliance networks for safeguarding national interests. The adage

¹⁵ M.K. Bhadrakumar, "Pivotal moment for India-Russia relations," *Asia Times*, Last accessed May 04, 2023, <https://asiatimes.com/2023/05/pivotal-moment-for-india-russia-relations>.

¹⁶ Orysia Lutsevych and Jon Wallace, "Ukraine-Russia relations," Chatham House, Last accessed May 23, 2023, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/11/ukraine-russia-relations>.

¹⁷ "Strategic convergence between India and US is growing," *Indian Express*, Last accessed May 13, 2023, <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/editorials/express-view-strategic-convergence-between-india-and-us-is-growing-8606364>.

¹⁸ Michael Schuman, "What Limits Any U.S. Alliance With India Over China," *The Atlantic*, Last accessed March 1, 2023, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2023/03/india-relations-us-china-modi/673237>.

“the enemy of my enemy is my friend” is relevant. India’s QUAD participation aligns with these principles, stemming from concerns over China’s assertiveness, regional stability, maritime security, and shared economic interdependence, which resonates with the US interests.

2.2. *Centering Strategic Aspects: Why Russia and Ukraine Matter to the World?*

The complex nature of relationships among the major powers has significant implications for the great game revolving around current Russo-Ukrainian war. All the powers are demonstrating their strategic interests. Russia is one of the world’s largest producers of oil and fuel. On the other hand, Ukraine is one of the key suppliers of world’s food grains and plays a significant role in global supply chain. Russia and Ukraine produce 11 per cent of world’s wheat, and Ukraine is the leading producer of world’s sunflower oil (29 per cent of global production) followed by Russia (22 per cent).¹⁹ Also, Russia has world’s largest gas reserve and accounts for a quarter of world gas production. The country also has the 8th largest oil deposit in the world.²⁰ Moreover, Russia and Ukraine have 195 billion tons of proven reserves of coal (18 per cent of total world reserves).²¹ Russia is the 6th largest producer of uranium, while Ukraine is the 9th largest producer. Besides, Russia and Ukraine are highly enriched with natural resources like phosphate, ammonia, graphite, iron ore, neon and krypton gas, aluminum, etc.

From the strategic perspective, Ukraine bears greater significance to Russia. Before going to that discussion, broader interests of Russia in the region need to be discussed. The broader interest of Russia in the region is to regain its erstwhile predominant position in the post-Soviet space, i.e., East Europe, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. The country came up with multiple enterprises i.e., the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), Union State with Belarus, etc., with a view to promoting integration of countries that emerged after the USSR’s dissolution and exerting influence.²² Under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, Russia became more ambitious and irredentism became an influential narrative in Russia. Under this narrative, Russia considers that the country holds the rights to intervene in other

¹⁹ Seshadri Kumar, “Understanding the Great Game in Ukraine”, *Medium*, Last accessed March 29, 2022, <https://medium.com/@nayakan88/understanding-the-great-game-in-ukraine-330897142aaa>.

²⁰ Kumar, “Understanding the Great Game in Ukraine.”

²¹ Kumar, “Understanding the Great Game in Ukraine.”

²² Mahbubur Rashid Bhuiyan, “Russian Reassertion Efforts in Post-Soviet Space: The Ukraine Dilemma,” *BISS Journal* 44, no. 1 (January 2023): 114.

countries which once belonged to Romanoff Empire and the USSR. It thus legitimised its fight with Georgia and helped secession of two regions, invaded and annexed Crimea in excuse of protecting the ethnic Russians there; and launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.²³

Nevertheless, Russia has strong cultural, political and economic bonds with Ukraine; and Ukraine is central to Rus identity. From socio-religious and cultural perspective, Kyiv is referred as the ‘mother of Russian cities’ in terms of cultural influence on Moscow and St. Petersburg.²⁴ Again, in the 8th and 9th centuries, Christianity was brought to Slavic people in Kyiv; and that Christianity served as the harbour for Kievan Rus (early Slavic state) which has historical lineage with modern days Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. Moreover, ethnic Russians and Russian speakers living in Ukraine have added new dimensions to the importance of Ukraine to Russia. Hence, Russian claims of protecting its ethnic diaspora in Ukraine also worked as the pretext for its assertive actions in Crimea and Donbas region in 2014.

Energy supply is a crucial source of strategic reliance of Russia on Ukraine. Ukraine works as a transit for Russian gas pipelines (Nord Stream pipelines) to supply gas in Central and Eastern European markets. Moreover, as bordering state of Russia, Ukraine always bears significance for Russia’s strategic defence since Russia is concerned about Western influence on its neighbours.²⁵ Kherson region of southern Ukraine (which shares border with Crimea) provides Russia with a land bridge to the Black Sea peninsula.²⁶ Control over Ukrainian peninsula would facilitate huge Russian military force and the Black Sea Fleet to project power into the Mediterranean Sea (access to Black Sea allows access to Mediterranean Sea, a critical trade route for Russia) and the Middle East.²⁷ Moreover, the Kherson region is critical for Russia to be used for the logistic routs and fresh water supply to Crimea.

Considering the above-mentioned strategic calculations, Russia always tried and has been trying to have some sort of political influence on Ukraine as

²³ Bhuiyan, “Russian Reassertion Efforts.”

²⁴ Jonathan Masters, “Ukraine: Conflict at the Crossroads of Europe and Russia,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, Last accessed February 14, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/background/ukraine-conflict-crossroads-europe-and-russia>.

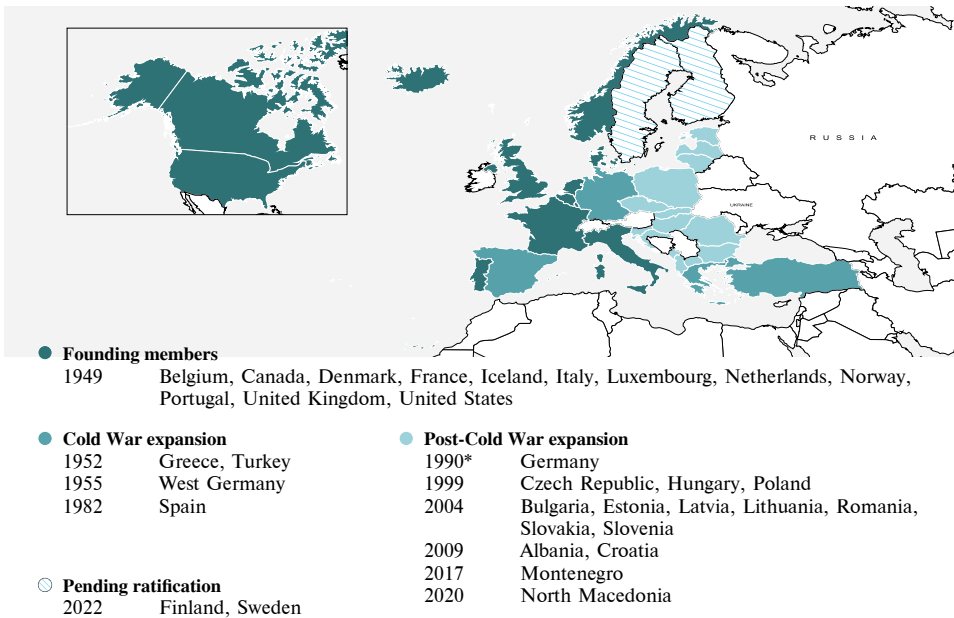
²⁵ “Ukraine’s strategic importance to Russia’s defence,” *CBC News*, Last accessed February 19, 2014, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/ukraine-s-strategic-importance-to-russia-s-defence-1.2544255>.

²⁶ “Strategic Importance of Ukraine’s southern Kherson region,” *Reuters*, Last accessed November 11, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/why-ukraines-southern-kherson-region-is-strategic-prize-2022-10-24>.

²⁷ Christopher Kernan Schmidt, “Evaluating Russia’s Grand Strategy in Ukraine,” *E-International Relations* (July 6, 2020): 1, <https://www.e-ir.info/2020/07/06/evaluating-russias-grand-strategy-in-ukraine>.

well as across the former Soviet spaces. Therefore, Russia intends to bring those leaders into power in the former Soviet states who have strong loyalty; but after the Orange Revolution (Moscow leaning Viktor Yanukovych defeated in 2004 election of Ukraine), Rose Revolution (Georgia in 2003) and Tulip Revolution (Kyrgyzstan in 2005), Russia becomes more concerned about its control over Ukraine and other states in its neighbourhood.²⁸ However, after the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia lost Baltic states to the EU and its influences were curbed significantly across the Balkan states where Russia was once a lone leading power. Therefore, Russia is strongly opposing Ukraine’s leaning to the West. It does not welcome too many EU-member neighbours having sympathies for the NATO in its western border. For example, two Baltic states, Lithuania and Estonia already joined the NATO amid strong opposition of Russia, creating concerns in Putin administration. Russia fears that if Ukraine joins the EU and pro-Russian state Belarus faces continuous pro-democracy protests, Russia’s western front will be volatile and insecure.

Figure: NATO’s Expansion of Membership.²⁹



*German reunification in 1990 resulted in what was formerly East Germany becoming part of NATO. The map shows West and East Germany.

²⁸ Masters, “Ukraine: Conflict at the Crossroads.”

²⁹ Masters, “Ukraine: Conflict at the Crossroads.”

On the other hand, the US is capitalising and advancing its long-term ambition of maintaining global hegemony by utilising the growing chasm between Ukraine and Russia. For example, the US is supporting Ukraine in ongoing war with Russia to shore up sympathy of European nations to the NATO. Despite non-member status in the NATO, Ukraine bears substantial significance for Euro-Atlantic security.³⁰ Moreover, the US and the other western powers remain committed to territorial integrity of Ukraine, and they do not recognise Russia's annexation of Crimea and other regions. Rather, the US always supported a settlement of the Donbas conflict through the Minsk agreements.³¹

Now, to understand the great game hovering around the Russo-Ukrainian war, above discussions could help to realise the trend of reactions and behaviours of the major powers. Their reactions demonstrate the realpolitik agenda and strategic ambitions of those powers. An analysis on the responses and reactions of the major powers reveals a mixed notice. The realpolitik behind the reactions reveals how major powers demonstrate their respective interests making complex relations among the powers and strategic alliance building. The following section will focus on that realpolitik.

2.3. *Realpolitik: Reactions and Beyond*

A strong response came from the US side and some of the European countries. By increasing aids (both financial and military) to Ukraine, putting (new) international sanctions on Russia, the West is trying to pressurise Russia. For example, by the end of February 2023, the US has given Ukraine more than US\$50 billion in aid, including sophisticated military equipment, i.e., tanks, helicopters, drones, and systems for launching rockets and missiles.³² Similar assistance is being given by several NATO nations as well. A large portion of Russia's banking, oil, defense, and technology industries are now subject to international sanctions, which also target the assets of powerful oligarchs and other people of Russia. Additionally, the US government and certain European nations restricted access to Russia's huge foreign reserves, blacklisted Russia's central bank, and expelled some Russian financial institutions from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT). In addition, a large number of significant Western businesses and companies have stopped doing business in Russia.³³

³⁰ Masters, "Ukraine: Conflict at the Crossroads."

³¹ Masters, "Ukraine: Conflict at the Crossroads."

³² Masters, "Ukraine: Conflict at the Crossroads."

³³ Masters, "Ukraine: Conflict at the Crossroads."

The most noticing part is the mixed reactions from the EU amid its dependence on Russia's oil and gas. Germany, France, and Britain, the three major countries in Europe, are taking radically different trajectories while dealing with both Russia-Ukraine war issue and domestic political distractions.³⁴ Also, due to their physical proximity to Russia, heavy reliance on Russian energy supply and historical affinity, other European countries are aligning themselves on varying sides (the divisive behaviour in the EU will be discussed in section three). Here, the key factor is the EU's excessive dependence on Russian energy (40 per cent of its energy requirements comes from Russia)³⁵ which has barred some countries to take more forceful and assertive actions against Russia. Besides, amidst skyrocketed price of energy across Europe due to a global gas supply shortage, many European governments are concerned that further increase of price during the winter could demean their domestic political prospects and electoral supports. Therefore, the realpolitik and divisive behaviour within the EU countries also resulted in ineffective impacts from sanctions imposed.

China's position regarding Russo-Ukrainian war remained mixed. On one hand, it has laid the blame on the expansion of the NATO, which Russia has cited as the cause for the starting of the war.³⁶ On the other hand, it has emphasised its long-standing foreign policy approach of the inviolability of borders, and non-interference in the affairs of sovereign states, and urged to protect Ukraine's territorial integrity.³⁷ Interestingly, at the UN, China did not condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine and has abstained during United Nations votes on the war in Ukraine. While due to sanctions, Russia's trade with the West reduced significantly, China became the top trading partner of Russia. For example, Russian exports to China climbed by 43 per cent (US\$114 billion), while imports from China rose by 13 per cent (US\$76 billion). Also, in comparison to the previous year, Russia sold twice as much liquid petroleum gas (LPG) to China in 2022.³⁸ However, there are some strategic purposes behind China's balancing behaviour which will be discussed in the upcoming sections. Again, India, the biggest democracy in the world, major rival of China in Asian region and US's strategic partner, has been maintaining strategic neutrality regarding

³⁴ Liz Sly, "A divided Europe confronts Russia with conflicting goals on Ukraine," *The Washington Post*, Last accessed January 23, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/01/23/europe-divided-ukraine>

³⁵ Sly, "A divided Europe."

³⁶ Sheena Chestnut Greitens, "China's Response to War in Ukraine," *Asian Survey* 62, no. 5–6 (2022): 755.

³⁷ Patrick Wintour, "Ukraine: what will China do? There are signs it is uneasy about Putin's methods," *The Guardian*, Last accessed February 27, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/27/ukraine-what-will-china-do-there-are-signs-it-is-uneasy-about-putins-methods>.

³⁸ "Ukraine war: What support is China giving Russia?" *BBC*, Last accessed March 20, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/60571253>.

the Russia-Ukraine war and has refrained from outright blaming Russia for the crisis' origin.³⁹ India has continuously abstained from UN votes on the war and refused to denounce Russia for the invasion and join Western sanctions while increasing its purchase of Russian fuel at a reduced price.⁴⁰ Rather than condemning Moscow, New Delhi strengthened ties with it by expressing concerns on spiking price of food and energy. To the dismay of the US, India has increased its purchases of cheap Russian oil while Europe abandons Russian oil and gas. In addition, India keeps placing orders for weaponry made in Russia.⁴¹ Also, the country has consistently abstained from votes in the UN Human Rights Council, General Assembly, and Security Council that denounced Russian aggression.⁴² Therefore, India is pursuing its strategic interests by taking leverage from the Indo-Pacific geostrategic realities and its new venture of strategic autonomy.

Above discussions on geopolitical competitions, relations among the major powers, relations between Russia and Ukraine, reactions and politics of major powers revolving around the Russo-Ukrainian war demonstrate great power rivalry and great game in the European space and beyond. Such game leaves great impacts on the regional and global order and power relationships among the states. The next section explains the impacts of Russo-Ukrainian war in global and regional order and highlights some future trends of global power politics due to the war.

3. Impacts of Russo-Ukrainian War on Regional and Global Power Architecture

The entire span of human civilisation has gone through the grim realities of the rise and fall of empires, shifting of the center of gravity of global powers marked by the rise and decline of lone superpowers and its changes thereafter. History testifies multiple events (Annex-1) that influenced the global power architecture throughout history and led to changes in political boundaries, social structures and cultural norms.

³⁹ Ashley J. Tellis, "What Is in Our Interest: India and the Ukraine War," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Last accessed September 27, 2023, https://carnegieendowment.org/files/202204-Tellis_The_Ukraine_War_and_India1.pdf.

⁴⁰ Stanly Johny, "Positing India's stand on the Ukraine war," *The Hindu*, Last accessed March 23, 2023, <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/positing-indias-stand-on-the-ukraine-war/article66573033.ece>.

⁴¹ Lauren Frayer, "A year into the Ukraine war, the world's biggest democracy still won't condemn Russia," *NPR*, Last accessed February 20, 2023, <https://www.npr.org/2023/02/20/1156478956/russia-india-relations-oil-modi-putin>.

⁴² Tellis, "What is in Our interest."

Similarly, the Russo-Ukrainian war has had significant repercussions on the regional and global strategic scenario. The war has the potentials to serve as a determining force in reshaping the regional and global order. First force is the instance that Russia established by violating Article 2(4) of the UN Charter that prohibits the use of force. This violation of international legal principle by Russia might serve as the inspiration for other authoritarian systems to violate international legal principles.⁴³ Besides, Russia's attack on nuclear sites, i.e., attack on Zaporizhzhia, has violated international humanitarian law (Protocol II of Geneva Convention in which Russia is a party) which prohibits attacking nuclear power plants if it causes severe harm to the civilian population. Russia's choice to defy this norm increases the likelihood that states may target nuclear facilities in the future.⁴⁴ Second, the war is shifting alliances by creating political constellations of three groups: sided with Russia, pledged support to Ukraine, and non-aligned nations resisting involvement or hedging their bets.⁴⁵ African nations partially shifted from their default position what they followed in the Cold War because 51 per cent of abstentions on voting condemning Russia's invasion came out from the African nations. On the other hand, Asian nations widely rejected the Western narrative that the conflict is a struggle between right and might.⁴⁶ Third, Russia's invasion bolstered NATO's deterrence posture and enhanced its forward presence in Eastern Europe. In a historic move, Finland and Sweden, two nations that have previously avoided joining the NATO to avoid enraging Russia, are now expected to do so. Besides, the US' backing for the NATO also seems to improve after the invasion.

Fourth, the risks of nuclear Armageddon reached its peak amid the fear of losing US-Russia arms control, particularly after Russia's withdrawal from the New START. Fifth, a transformative vibe has been felt⁴⁷, i.e., (i) the invasion refuted the fundamental tenet of the post-Cold War order, namely, that, in contrast to the Soviet Union, Russia would no longer pose a threat but rather would be a partner in addressing shared security concerns. Hence, this will lead West's grand strategy toward Russia based on containment, deterrence, and defense; (ii) European governments will gear

⁴³ Oona A. Hathaway, "How Russia's invasion of Ukraine tested the international legal order," *Brookings*, Last accessed April 03, 2023, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-russias-invasion-of-ukraine-tested-the-international-legal-order>.

⁴⁴ Kelsey Davenport, "Russian Attacks Test International Norms," Arms Control Association, Last accessed June 30, 2023, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2022-06/news/russian-attacks-test-international-norms>.

⁴⁵ Stuart Coles et al., "Seven ways Russia's war on Ukraine has changed the world," Chatham House, Last accessed February 20, 2023, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2023/02/seven-ways-russias-war-ukraine-has-changed-world>.

⁴⁶ Coles et al., "Seven ways Russia's war on Ukraine has changed the world."

⁴⁷ Marcin Terlikowski, "A Transformative Moment for World Order," Council of Foreign Relations, Last accessed February 22, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/councilofcouncils/global-memos/invasion-shook-world>.

up underinvested defense capability as they will no longer enjoy the benefits from the peace dividend brokered from the collapse of the Soviet Union; and (iii) Along with China, the US will have to face Sino-Russian axis that many nations in the Global South are implicitly supporting. In its strategic orientation, the US assumed China as the only contender of its global posture of power but from now the US might have to remain committed to both Europe and the Indo-Pacific if Russia and China are to be contained.

However, above discussions show that the Ukraine war and the world's response to it will have a major role in determining the political and economic landscape of the world in the coming decades. This section will discuss how Russo-Ukrainian war and the behavior of the major powers affect the global power structure and what would likely be the trend of global and regional order in future.

3.1 *Polarisation in Europe*

The war in Ukraine has provided the US with the opportunity to mend and strengthen its Euro-Atlantic Security alliances and bolster partnerships with the EU countries. Critics argue that, inside the EU, the anti-Russian cum pro-American wing is being led by Poland. Because of the war in Ukraine, Europe's center of gravity has shifted both eastward and westward, toward the United States.⁴⁸ Additionally, Finland and Sweden, two Nordic states that had no majority support for membership in the NATO previously, have pushed to join, bolstering the alliance's position in the Baltic Sea and near Russia's border. But the other side of the coin manifests the grim reality of the alliance, particularly, in the case of indecisiveness regarding the effective imposition of sanctions, divisiveness on providing military assistance (some EU countries opposed the US' sending of cluster bombs to Ukraine), trade imperatives with Russia, supply of energy, etc.

There exist some sharp rifts between Western and Eastern Europe regarding the Russo-Ukrainian war. Western Europe, especially France and Germany, is thinking about an inclusive future European security architecture that involves Russia in some capacity.⁴⁹ For East Europeans, security means self-defense against Russia. Therefore, they want Ukraine to win over Russia in the war. For them, Russia's invasion of

⁴⁸ Kyle Bailey, "Washington Is Using the Ukraine War to Rebuild Its Global Power," *Jacobin*, Last accessed, May 31, 2023, <https://jacobin.com/2023/05/us-nato-russia-war-ukraine-washington>.

⁴⁹ Judy Dempsey, "The War in Ukraine Highlights European Rifts," *Carnegie Europe*, Last accessed December 20, 2022, <https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/88670>.

Ukraine poses a threat to the security and stability of Europe, and Russia's win could create further threats.⁵⁰ That also explains why East Europeans advocates for the EU and the NATO to come forward in defending Ukraine. Moreover, how people view Ukraine's struggle for independence and sovereignty, is greatly influenced by their own historical and cultural experiences of living under the Soviet communist system. George Pagoulatos, the director of the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, rightly argued:

“[Germans] lead this tendency in the EU to try to integrate Russia into some sort of security architecture which would make sure Russia does not repeat its aggressions against other countries and would seek to reactivate economic relations after the war has ended.”⁵¹

Moreover, due in part to this, Germany had refused to transfer German tanks to Ukraine or enable other nations that owned them to do so. Another important drawback from the Europeans is divisive behaviour on sanctions. Due to their trade and energy imperatives, they failed to act unitedly. Diplomats argue that the tensions inside the EU will make it much more difficult to renew the more comprehensive sanctions targeting many facets of the Russian economy. It is true that the sanctions regime has resulted in a sharp decline in European exports to Russia but at the same time the volume of trade between Russia and nations like Turkey, Armenia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan have increased.⁵² Critics argue that by evading sanctions and supplying Russia with commodities that are subject to sanctions, European companies and third countries are supporting Russia's war efforts. For example, Germany and Lithuania respectively appeared to be the first and second largest exporters of sanctioned goods to Russia while half of the Western commodities that Moscow shouldn't have access to are supplied by these two countries.⁵³ European companies, particularly German ones, export their goods to Russia through third countries. In early 2022, western exports of sanctioned items to Russia fell swiftly, while to Russia's neighbour, the amount jumped high.⁵⁴ The majority of this 'parallel

⁵⁰ Dempsey, “The War in Ukraine.”

⁵¹ John Psaropoulos, “Is Europe really united in backing Ukraine and isolating Russia?” *Aljazeera*, Last accessed February 24, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/2/24/has-the-ukraine-war-strengthened-europe-or-weakened-it>.

⁵² Kenneth Rogoff, “Why the Russia Sanctions Are Missing the Mark,” *Project Syndicate*, Last accessed March 3, 2023, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/why-western-sanctions-failed-to-devastate-the-russian-economy-by-kenneth-rogoff-2023-03>.

⁵³ Berit Lindeman and Ivar Dale, “Sanctions on Russia may not be working, we now know why,” *Aljazeera*, Last accessed June 2, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2023/6/5/sanctions-on-russia-may-not-be-working-we-now-know-why>.

⁵⁴ Lindeman and Dale, “Sanctions on Russia may not be working.”

export' is routed through Kazakhstan, with the remaining portion going to Georgia, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, and other countries. For example, Lithuania has also been selling commodities subject to sanctions to Russia, but through Belarus.⁵⁵

However, such kinds of rifts in the EU could drive away the EU from its long-cherished agenda of strategic autonomy. Russo-Ukraine war is creating a new push for the EU countries to build a strong EU under security pillar within the NATO.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the EU will not be torn apart by these rifts, but deep resentment would be created between Western and Eastern Europe unless and until both sides fail to create awareness about their historical experiences and their perceptions of threats, security, and Russia.⁵⁷

3.2 *Call for De-dollarisation*

The US dollar has reigned as the undisputed ruler of the financial world since the end of WWII. The global dominance of dollar is undisputable as a world's reserve currency, which accounts for 58 per cent of all foreign exchange reserves and 88 per cent of all international transactions.⁵⁸ Critics have been alleging the US for weaponising dollar as a tool of sanctions and exerting its hegemony around the world. While nations have long attempted to unseat the dollar as the world's reserve currency for a variety of reasons, recent years have seen an increase in these endeavors following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. However, given the ongoing crisis between Russia and Ukraine, several nations have started looking into alternatives to the dollar as a trading currency. Moreover, geopolitics has recently been accelerating two significant shifts: first, moving away from the dollar as the world's reserve currency, and second, focusing on bilateral currency swaps for trade.⁵⁹

De-dollarisation is the process whereby other currencies take the place of the US dollar as the world's reserve currency. In the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year, efforts to de-dollarise have accelerated. Many countries have viewed the US' imposition of sanctions that restricted the use of the dollar to buy oil and other

⁵⁵ Lindeman and Dale, "Sanctions on Russia may not be working."

⁵⁶ Psaropoulos, "Is Europe really united in backing Ukraine."

⁵⁷ Dempsey, "The War in Ukraine."

⁵⁸ Mihaela Papa, "BRICS currency won't dislodge the dollar but is a threat," *Asian Times*, Last accessed June 23, 2023, <https://asiatimes.com/2023/06/brics-currency-wont-dislodge-the-dollar-but-is-a-threat>.

⁵⁹ Mustafizur R. Khan, "De-Dollarisation in a multipolar world - what is Bangladesh's strategy?" *The Daily Star*, April 6, 2023, <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/de-dollarisation-multipolar-world-what-bangladeshs-strategy-3290696>.

products from Russia as an effort to weaponise the currency.⁶⁰ After invasion in Ukraine, the US has launched a series of financial sanctions on Russia and removed Russia's major banks from SWIFT- an interbank communications service which is essential for facilitating international payments. As a result, it impacted Russia's international transactions whereby other countries having trade relations with Russia have faced challenges to complete payments. This created a new push for thinking for an alternative financial mechanisms for Russia, China and other countries.⁶¹ Russia, China, and Brazil have increased their usage of non-dollar currencies in cross-border transactions over the past year. The United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq all are actively looking at alternatives to the dollar. Additionally, central banks of different countries are trying to invest more of their currency reserves in gold rather than the dollar.⁶² Interestingly, the value of the petrodollar is waning as Saudi Arabia has expressed a desire to diversify and hedge its security by mending relations with its neighbors. Additionally, China recently agreed to settle a portion of the oil transaction in yuan in order to diversify away from the dollar (China purchases 25 per cent of Saudi oil export).⁶³ Critics argue that this trend of transactions would increase since countries like Russia and India has started thinking of oil trading in ruble or rupee.

On the other hand, the trends of currency swaps between trading blocs and between bilateral trades are gaining momentum to curtail dependency on US dollar. Eighteen countries including Germany, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Singapore, the UK, Malaysia have agreed to trade in Indian currency, rupee. China has been encouraging its trading partners to use yuan in their trading and transactions. For example, China has negotiated agreements for the yuan for clearing bilateral trade with forty-one nations so far. In March 2023, in similar vein, Brazil and China agreed to accept trade settlements and investments in yuan. On March 28, 2023, the China National Offshore Oil Corporation and Total Energies of France completed their first transaction using renminbi. Since 2022, China and Saudi Arabia have been considering the idea of adopting the yuan for payment for some oil shipments. China's central bank has made a proposal to Bangladesh Bank for a currency swap arrangement. It would allow the pricing and settlement of bilateral trade to be done in renminbi and taka. In September 2022, the central bank of Bangladesh permitted Bangladeshi banks to keep accounts

⁶⁰ Prashanth Perumal J., "De-dollarisation: the race to attain the status of global reserve currency," *The Hindu*, May 3, 2023, <https://www.thehindu.com/business/Economy/de-dollarisation-the-race-to-attain-the-status-of-global-reserve-currency/article66805365.ece>.

⁶¹ "China, Russia de-dollarization efforts explained," *FAIR*, Last accessed July 06, 2023, <https://fairbd.net/china-russia-de-dollarization-efforts-explained>.

⁶² Papa, "BRICS currency won't dislodge the dollar."

⁶³ Khan, "De Dollarisation in a multipolar world."

in Chinese yuan for the purpose of processing payments for international trade.⁶⁴ Moreover, on 11 July, 2023 Bangladesh and India reached a landmark agreement on cross-border trade settlement mechanism which enables the use of Indian rupees instead of US dollar. Under this agreement, invoices, payments, and settlements for Indian exports and imports can be made in the rupee.⁶⁵ Besides, earlier, Bangladesh had faced difficulties to make payment to Russia. It was struggling to find means to pay the US\$110 million in repayments for the under-construction Rooppur power facility due to US and EU sanctions against Russia.⁶⁶ Finally, it decided to pay Russia in Chinese yuan. Payments to Russia will be made through China's Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS), a yuan-driven alternative to the dollar-dominated SWIFT system.

Again, in its trading with other members of the Eurasian Economic Union and beyond, Russia has been encouraging the usage of the ruble. Russia is planning to use Chinese yuan both for transactions with China and as a means of payment for trading with countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Russian energy firms like Gazprom and Rosneft are aiming to accept non-dollar payments for particular specialised grades of Russian oil. After western renewed sanctions imposed in 2022, Russia has been tilting more towards yuan for trading. The yuan made up 48 per cent of all Russia's foreign exchange transactions in November 2022.⁶⁷ Besides, China and Russia have been boosting their investment in gold. For example, Russia is planning to reset the composition of its National Wealth Fund (NWF). The new composition will phase out the euro while keeping only gold, the Chinese yuan, and the Russian ruble.

Importantly, this approach is becoming more intense in regional trading blocs with bolstered trade relations. In that context, the emergence of powerful trading blocs like Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) etc. have created new urges for alternative transactions medium. For example, the BRICS bloc is expanding rapidly. Several countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Algeria, Bahrain, Argentina, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, and Bangladesh are

⁶⁴ Khan, "De Dollarisation in a multipolar world."

⁶⁵ "Era of trade in rupee begins," *The Daily Star*, 12 July 2023, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/era-trade-rupee-begins-3366596>.

⁶⁶ Umang Sharma, "De-dollarisation: Bangladesh ditches dollar, to pay Russia in Chinese yuan for nuclear plant," *The First Post*, Last accessed April 18, 2023, <https://www.firstpost.com/world/de-dollarisation-bangladesh-ditches-dollar-to-pay-russia-in-chinese-yuan-for-nuclear-plant-12470042.html>.

⁶⁷ "China, Russia de-dollarization efforts explained," FAIR.

exploring the options for joining the bloc. This bloc is aspiring to form a currency union which may curtail dependency on the US dollar. South Africa will organize the BRICS summit in August 2023 and the key agenda of the summit would be the creation of BRICS currency.⁶⁸ Moreover, Russia and China dropped dollar as the most favored currency of trade. They have agreed on using national currencies- yuan and the ruble, particularly in trading with SCO member countries.⁶⁹

All of the aforementioned changes point to a world transitioning from a unipolar to a multipolar system. The US and the international financial system may be affected by Russia and China's de-dollarisation efforts. If successful, these initiatives might result in a decline in the dominance of the US dollar. If there is less demand for the dollar, its value could drop, possibly resulting in inflation in the US leading to global financial instability. Critics argue that as strong economies like China and Russia are diversifying their currency reserves and use of alternative currencies rises, the US' hold on the world financial system may erode. Moreover, Chinese renminbi and Indian rupee will play a large part in regional trade, at least in Asia, as the world moves away from the US dollar and toward a basket of global currencies.⁷⁰ But future concern would be that the US dollar's position as a safe haven asset and a source of global liquidity may be threatened if a new reserve currency or multipolar currency system emerges, which might lead to financial shock and instability across the globe.

3.3 *Fainting Sanction Regimes*

Sanctions and counter-sanctions has become an issue of critical analysis while discussing the Russo-Ukrainian war and Russia's relations with the West. Russia is already under heavy economic sanctions of the West, and the hammer of the sanctions has become more confiscating owing to the ongoing war in Ukraine. Since ongoing sanction regimes by the West 'failed' in de facto, questions appeared before the world community whether the sanction regimes could work as an important arsenal for manipulating world politics or dominating the power structure of global politics or even bringing international peace and force the authoritarian regimes to accept status quo or comply with the existing regional and global financial and geopolitical order.

⁶⁸ Yehuda Lukacs, "The Ukraine War and De-Dollarization," *DC Journal*, Last accessed June 01, 2023, <https://dcjournal.com/the-ukraine-war-and-de-dollarization>.

⁶⁹ Ritu Sharma, "SCO Summit: Russia's Isolation Hastens 'De-Dollarization'; 'Chinese Yuan & Russian Ruble Gain Momentum for SCO Trade,'" *Eurasian Times*, Last accessed July 04, 2023, <https://www.eurasiantimes.com/sco-summit-russias-isolation-hastens-de-dollarization>.

⁷⁰ Khan, "De-Dollarisation in a multipolar world."

The EU, the US, and other nations immediately adopted a range of extensive diplomatic and economic sanctions in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The sanctions include the exclusion of Russia from Council of Europe, voting out Russia from the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), expelling Russian diplomats from different western countries, travel ban on Russian politicians and oligarchs, freezing assets and expelling Russian banks from the SWIFT system, sanctioning half of the Russian foreign reserves (roughly US\$315 billion), and introducing strong export control.⁷¹ They restricted the travel of wealthy and powerful Russian citizens and froze their assets. They placed restrictions on the export of Russian energy and raw materials and worked to keep away Russia from obtaining information and defense technologies. Additionally, they slapped economic sanctions on Russian banks and limited Russia's access to international finance and financial markets.⁷²

Despite sanctions, Russia is still at war in Ukraine. Additionally, Putin's hold on power in Russia itself is still solid, at least for the time being. That means impact of sanctions on Russia is less than actually hoped for, though there are signs of significant pressure on Russian economy. To analyse the factors behind Russia's well management of sanctions, few points need to be focused. The policy reaction of Russia, its size, its commercial position, and the significance of non-aligned nations in the global economy, etc. contributed to limiting the effectiveness of international sanctions.

First, Fortress Russia Policy, an effective defense against the sanctions has been strategized by the Russian Central Bank. At the beginning of the sanctions, Russian central bank's reserves fell to 40 per cent.⁷³ However, the bank managed well, and continued to hold a good amount of foreign currency, amounting nearly US\$300 billion, in case it needs to intervene in the currency and debt markets. Moreover, despite losing access to the SWIFT, Russian banks still appear to be able to obtain the funds they require to function, as they are still able to communicate with the outside world through a variety of other channels. Second strong point is Russia's pivot to new markets for export and import. Russia's economy is less dependent on imports

⁷¹ Dmitri Lovetsky, "Are the West's sanctions against Russia actually working?" *The Conversation*, Last accessed September 19, 2022, <https://theconversation.com/are-the-wests-sanctions-against-russia-actually-working-190424>.

⁷² Paddy Hirsch, "Why sanctions against Russia aren't working — yet," *NPR*, Last accessed December 6, 2022, <https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2022/12/06/1140120485/why-the-sanctions-against-russia-arent-working-yet>.

⁷³ Hirsch, "Why sanctions against Russia aren't working."

than the majority of other developed economies and emerging markets, but some sectors became vulnerable, particularly those that produce transportation equipment, chemicals, food goods, and IT services.⁷⁴

Despite initial shocks from the sanctions, Russia pivoted hastily and started importing from China, Turkey, Belarus, etc. and from those countries which are not a part of the sanction regime. That means, Russia has been barred from a number of markets when it comes to importing essential materials, but it has subsequently discovered alternative markets to fulfill many of its demands. Another factor that made sanctions less successful is reaping benefits from the roaring inflation because while several nations have stopped purchasing specific products from Russia, the supply of essential commodities has mostly continued unabated. According to a report of Bruegel, a Brussels-based economic think tank, due to higher prices, Russia's export revenue has increased by more than 40 per cent to almost US\$120 billion.⁷⁵ The largest portion of this revenue came from gas, which unlike coal, oil, and other petroleum goods has not been sanctioned and is still in great demand throughout Europe.

Russia continues to purchase fresh fruits from Israeli exporters and sell oil to China and India. Additionally, a significant amount of trade involves 'transshipments'. It is true that the sanctions regime has resulted in a sharp decline in European exports to Russia. The volume of trade between Russia and nations like Turkey, Armenia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan has increased at the same period. As a result, the sanctions have not had the expected adverse effects on Russia's economy.⁷⁶ Moreover, Russia's swelling of exports and shrinking of imports has brought healthy trade balance. Prior to the invasion of Ukraine, Russia enjoyed huge trade surplus, so it still has abundant access to hard money for imports, even though it has to pay extra for rerouting them and reduce the variety of commodities it can purchase.

Third, the ruble showed strong resilience. At the initial stage of the sanction, the rate of ruble dropped significantly. But it bounced back impressively. The dynamics of the current account, along with declining trading volumes and capital

⁷⁴ Hirsch, "Why sanctions against Russia aren't working."

⁷⁵ Maria Demertzis, Benjamin Hilgenstock, Ben McWilliams, Elina Ribakova, and Simone Tagliapietra, "How have sanctions impacted Russia?" *Bruegel*, Last accessed October 26, 2022, <https://www.bruegel.org/policy-brief/how-have-sanctions-impacted-russia>.

⁷⁶ Kenneth Rogoff, "Why the Russia Sanctions Are Missing the Mark," *Project Syndicate*, Last accessed March 3, 2023, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/why-western-sanctions-failed-to-devastate-the-russian-economy-by-kenneth-rogoff-2023-03>.

controls, have all contributed to the ruble's support. Now, Russia is trading with ruble in the Eurasian economic region and trying to strengthen ruble and calling for de-dollarisation through introducing separate currency within the BRICS countries. Fourth, oil and gas exports appear to be a strength. The sanctions have not prevented Russia from selling oil, one of its main commodities. Though the production of crude oil decreased slightly than before the invasion, crude oil production is still above 10 million barrels per day.⁷⁷ Again, when it comes to gas, no sanctions was imposed. Therefore, Russia weaponised its gas exports to European countries which fell to 20 per cent of their 2021 levels.⁷⁸ Here, it is to be mentioned, around 60 per cent of Russia's gas exports go to the EU and the UK.

Thus, fainting situation of sanctions reveals the future trend of global power politics. It could not be an arsenal for exerting influence on the international relations any longer. It reflects that sanctions will not be a solution in the multiplex world. Russo-Ukrainian war would lead Western powers to re-think about the effectiveness of imposing sanctions in near future.

3.4 *Flagging of China's New Sail of Mediation and Its Growing Global Role*

China's interest to maintain its current status as a regional power and ambition to emerge as global power resonates its recent activities and reactions regarding the Russo-Ukraine war. The country is trying to make its global image more significant before the global audience. The world is experiencing gradual transition of power-polarity from unipolar to multipolar world system. Hence, China is emerging as a significant stakeholder in global power matrix. The country emerged as a strong negotiator in the global space with a number of initiatives, i.e., the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the Global Security Initiative (GSI) and the Global Development Initiative (GDI) etc. Thus, the country seems to be determined to take on the role of lead negotiator during this shift to a multipolar international order. China has turned its focus to Ukraine after succeeding in sidestepping the United States and mediating a reconciliation between Iran and Saudi Arabia.⁷⁹ The agreement reached by Saudi

⁷⁷ Simon Constable, "Sanctions on Russia Still Aren't Working," *Forbes*, Last accessed February 25, 2023, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/simonconstable/2023/02/25/sanctions-on-russia-still-arent-working/?sh=631ce7221717>.

⁷⁸ Hirsch, "Why sanctions against Russia."

⁷⁹ Ronald Suny, "The view from Moscow and Beijing: What peace in Ukraine and a post-conflict world look like to Xi and Putin," *The Conversation*, Last accessed March 22, 2023, <https://theconversation.com/the-view-from-moscow-and-beijing-what-peace-in-ukraine-and-a-post-conflict-world-look-like-to-xi-and-putin-202323>.

Arabia and Iran to re-establish diplomatic and economic ties signals a crucial geopolitical shift in the Gulf region.⁸⁰ Since 2020, China has been outspokenly advocating for a change in the regional security structure in the Persian Gulf. Now, the question is- why China is interested in the Gulf region? China assumed leadership role as a direct mediator. Iran and Saudi Arabia, as Chinese understanding reveals, are the pivotal countries whose political, economic, and military prowess make them crucial allies for Beijing. Therefore, striking a balance between the two countries could be consequential for the GSI and GDI strategy of China.⁸¹ Both the countries are the largest trade partners of China, though trade imbalance exists. Again, from the strategic perspective, the Gulf plays a significant role in China's economic and energy needs, two of its main concerns.⁸² Therefore, Beijing has elevated Tehran and Riyadh to the highest level of its partnership diplomacy in the Middle Eastern region- the comprehensive strategic partners.

On the other hand, China's role in Russo-Ukraine war and its peace offering agenda drew renewed attention of the global community which signifies its bolstering commitment to expand its strategic frontiers around the globe. China has skillfully created several principles that other countries would happily accept with its peace offering on Ukraine. China's diplomatic philosophy towards the war and end of the war reflects its eleven-point principles. It has called for upholding sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all countries. All countries, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are to be equal members of the international community.⁸³ This philosophy entails two directions at once. Defending sovereignty appears to be targeted at Russia, as it violated the sovereignty of neighbouring Ukraine. Also, this position can be applied to the dispute over Taiwan. This is not coincidence, rather sensitise US' recent tough stance to defend Taiwan in case of any invasion from Chinese side, though the US officially acknowledges Taiwan and mainland China as one country.⁸⁴ China's proposal also rejected Putin's nuclear saber-rattling by urging- the threat or use of nuclear weapons should be opposed. The peace proposal also emphasises nations' rights to enhance their security but not at the expense of others. Russia considers expansion of the NATO as an existential threat to Russia's security interests. However, this proposal of China echoes Russia's argument

⁸⁰ Mehran Haghirian and Jacopo Scita, "The Broader Context Behind China's Mediation Between Iran and Saudi Arabia," *The Diplomat*, Last accessed March 14, 2023, <https://thediplomat.com/2023/03/the-broader-context-behind-chinas-mediation-between-iran-and-saudi-arabia>.

⁸¹ Haghirian and Scita, "The Broader Context Behind."

⁸² Amrita Jash, "Saudi-Iran Deal: A Test Case of China's Role as an International Mediator," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* (June 23, 2023) <https://gjia.georgetown.edu/2023/06/23/saudi-iran-deal-a-test-case-of-chinas-role-as-an-international-mediator>.

⁸³ Suny, "The view from Moscow."

⁸⁴ Suny, "The view from Moscow."

behind the invasion of Ukraine, that is NATO's expansion into Eastern Europe and its commitment to 'continue expansion' by admitting Georgia and Ukraine. Again, China instated on a cease-fire immediately and the beginning of talks, a demand that Washington adamantly rejected as a concession that would serve as 'diplomatic cover for Russia to continue to commit' war crimes.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, Russia welcomed the peace proposal. Hence, some of the critics argued that the Russo-Ukrainian war has made Russia a 'junior partner' of China and opened new spaces for China to play role in the ongoing war situation.⁸⁶ Besides, China appears to be playing the role of mediator in pressing issues in South Asia like Rohingya repatriation issue.

China's drive for mediating regional and global crisis bears great significance on its growing role in global affairs and in near future, it will continue to play such roles for its strategic expansion. China's growing involvement in conflict mediation offers opportunity to assess its vigilance, dedication to negotiating long-term peace agreements, and financial capacity.⁸⁷ Recent role of China, particularly in Ukraine war as a mediator denotes more significant diplomatic and security role and engagement of China in world affairs whether it is in Europe, Africa, Middle East or Asia. It indicates a wider re-adjustment of Chinese foreign policy's overall move toward a more active global role.⁸⁸ Also, it is argued that those Chinese efforts are a win-win application of GSI which signals China's intention to use diplomatic success as a springboard to boost itself in the non-western world.⁸⁹

3.5 *Politics of Energy Transition and Technology Transfer*

The world has experienced serious threats on energy security since the war brought disruptions in energy supply chain, which is also plagued by the disruptions emanating from sanctions. Russia's invasion of Ukraine had a significant impact on world energy prices. The energy crisis has been worsened by price volatility and supply constraints. The call for shifts to renewable energy has been strengthened as a result, and the call for clean energy transitions have accelerated. Since the EU has suffered most due to its overdependence on Russia's energy, it has been trying to reduce its dependence on traditional energy mix and moving towards renewable energy.

⁸⁵ Suny, "The view from Moscow."

⁸⁶ Iliya Kusa, "China's Strategic Calculations in the Russia-Ukraine War," Focus Ukraine, Last accessed June 21, 2022, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/chinas-strategic-calculations-russia-ukraine-war>.

⁸⁷ Ahmed Aboudouh, "China's mediation between Saudi and Iran is no cause for panic in Washington," Atlantic Council, Last accessed March 21, 2023, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/chinas-mediation-between-saudi-and-iran-is-no-cause-for-panic-in-washington>.

⁸⁸ Haghirian and Scita, "The Broader Context Behind."

⁸⁹ Haghirian and Scita, "The Broader Context Behind."

Countries are aiming to speed up structural changes and looking to enhance or diversify oil and gas supply. They are creating realistic plans to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.⁹⁰ For example, the US Inflation Reduction Act, the EU's Fit for 55 package and REPowerEU, Japan's Green Transformation (GX) initiative, Korea's intention to boost the amount of nuclear and renewables in its energy mix, as well as aspirational clean energy goals in China and India, are some of the most significant responses.⁹¹ Besides, the EU has declared to reduce its gas imports by two-thirds by the end of 2022 and reduce to zero by the end of 2030⁹² and envisions a massive ramp-up of the green hydrogen economy. By 2035, Germany wants to have an entirely renewable energy supply. The British Security of Supply Strategy emphasizes domestic energy sources.⁹³

Critics, however, argue that for energy transition in the EU and other countries, new infrastructures, new strategy and increased investments in clean energy is required. Here, technology transfer and investment in the clean energy would be the main areas of concern in the coming days. The countries having technological superiority in clean energy and financial capability may take the leverage to create strategic influence in the regional and global geopolitical competition. For example, the US and China might entangle in an intense competition. The US is trying to mend its Euro-Atlantic alliances and contain China's influence in Europe. Here, it is a dilemma for the EU countries to uphold its strategic autonomy agenda, contain influence of China and bring smooth energy transition. Because China has become a global leader in the manufacturing of clean technology, and it is home to world-class clean technology production clusters that have developed over many years. Along with investing heavily in clean energy, China continues to play a significant role in the vital minerals that support these systems.⁹⁴ Therefore, whoever controls technology and raw materials, possesses enough capitals to invest on clean energy sector, will dominate the energy transition regime. Thus, technology transfer and

⁹⁰ Ewan Thomson, "6 ways Russia's invasion of Ukraine has reshaped the energy world," World Economic Forum, Last accessed November 8, 2022, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/11/russia-ukraine-invasion-global-energy-crisis>.

⁹¹ "World Energy Outlook 2022 shows the global energy crisis can be a historic turning point towards a cleaner and more secure future," IEA, Last accessed October 27, 2022, <https://www.iea.org/news/world-energy-outlook-2022-shows-the-global-energy-crisis-can-be-a-historic-turning-point-towards-a-cleaner-and-more-secure-future>.

⁹² Valérie Besson, "The Ukraine/Russia conflict: an accelerator to the energy crisis," KMPG, Last accessed September 8, 2022, <https://kpmg.com/fr/fr/blogs/home/posts/2022/03/how-the-russia-ukraine-crisis-impacts-energy-industry.html>.

⁹³ Morgan Bazilian and Andreas Goldthau, "Russia's War in Ukraine: Green Policies in a New Energy Geopolitics," Wilson Center, Last accessed May 9, 2023, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/russias-war-ukraine-green-policies-new-energy-geopolitics>.

⁹⁴ Bazilian and Goldthau, "Russia's War in Ukraine."

investments in energy transition would create intense strategic competition among the major powers in the coming days.

3.6 *Growing Security Concerns and New Flashpoints*

Russo-Ukrainian war has generated security concerns among the developing nations as well as countries in the global south and will leave tremendous impacts in the future security arrangements both in global north and global south. Global supply chains have been damaged severely due to the war which led to inflation in commodity prices across the world. Food security stumbled since warring countries are the topmost suppliers of global crops and food staffs. Besides, the global energy supply chain was also hampered. For example, due to Russia's control over the Black Sea, a route for Ukraine to export its grains, Ukraine used to export its grains via alternative methods of road or rail through Poland or by canal and river through Romania which was difficult and insufficient to supply enough as per the global demands. As a result, the Black Sea Grain Deal was negotiated among Turkey, the UN and Russia in July 2022 to ensure that Ukraine's grain could leave its southern ports via the Bosphorus.⁹⁵ Grain prices had decreased by 35 per cent as a result of the agreement.⁹⁶ However, after a year, Russia pulled off the deal potentially destabilising the global supply chains and engendering food security threats. Russia accused the West for not holding up a parallel agreement to allow payments, insurance and shipping for Moscow's own agricultural exports.⁹⁷ This withdrawal of Russia, for the time being, led to higher food prices, particularly in Asian region and in Europe. Thus, the global community is being pushed to think about alternative innovation to avoid further catastrophe in food supply chains, and that alternative could be a major game changer in the future global politics. Potential Expansion of the NATO would be another concern. Critics argue that the war has pushed other eastern European countries to legitimise their cause for entering into the NATO arrangements drawing examples from Ukraine case. Despite warnings from the Russian side, Finland received membership of the NATO and Sweden's membership is under process, while Ukraine is seeking membership in both the EU and the NATO.

⁹⁵ Patrick Wintour, "What was the Black Sea grain deal and why did it collapse?" *The Guardian*, Last accessed July 20, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jul/20/what-was-the-black-sea-grain-deal-and-why-did-it-collapse>.

⁹⁶ Joanna Partridge, "Grain prices rise after Russian pullout of Black Sea deal sparks food crisis fears," *The Guardian*, Last accessed July 20, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/jul/20/rising-grain-prices-russia-pullout-black-sea-deal-food-crisis-fears>.

⁹⁷ Max Seddon, Henry Foy and Adam Samson, "Russia pulls out of Black Sea grain deal," *The Financial Times*, Last accessed July 18, 2023, <https://www.ft.com/content/c0c62c3c-54fa-49c7-9d5c-53deb91bf989>.

Ukraine war also worsened the state of international affairs by driving possibility of nuclear proliferation and fueling arms race.⁹⁸ President Putin has announced to suspend Russia's participation in New START, a nuclear arms control deal, which places restrictions on the strategic nuclear arsenals of the US and Russia.⁹⁹ The West, Russia and China also joined new arms race. Russia has already stationed a first batch of tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus.¹⁰⁰ The US is being accused of covertly modernizing its nuclear weapons stationed in five NATO countries.¹⁰¹ The NATO is considering the "weapons are – in fact – the way to peace"¹⁰² and declared to increase defence budget. Again, European countries are increasing military expenditures, for example, Germany, which stayed out arms race after WWII, has declared to establish a US\$113 billion defense fund.¹⁰³ On the other hand, Russia has projected a 2023 defense budget of roughly US\$84 billion, which is an increase of 40 per cent from the budget projection made in 2021. Of course, that is only 10 per cent of what the US will spend on its military in 2023. Poland has declared expansion of its military in response to full-scale invasion by Russia of its neighbor Ukraine. By 2035, it will increase 0.3 million soldiers and under new national defense law, military spending will reach 3 per cent of its GDP in 2023.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, China and Japan also joined the race with an increase in military spending. For example, Japan has declared to increase its defence spending to 2 per cent of GDP by 2027.¹⁰⁵

Therefore, this arms race (reinvigorated by the Ukraine war) will destabilise the global security and create more concerns for the security of the small states in near future. This hype of increasing arms race may drive more countries like Iran, Japan, and South Korea to go for nuclear weapons, trample on non-proliferation efforts and imitate Pakistan, India, North Korea and Israel. Again, after the beginning of Russia-Ukraine war, new tensions arose regarding the Taiwan issue. The Ukraine

⁹⁸ Bishara, "The world after the Ukraine war."

⁹⁹ Holly Ellyatt, Amanda Macias, and Emma Kinery, "Biden calls nuclear treaty suspension a 'big mistake'; Putin courts Beijing ahead of Xi trip," *CNBC*, Last accessed February 23, 2023, <https://www.cnbc.com/2023/02/22/live-updates-latest-news-on-russia-and-the-war-in-ukraine.html>.

¹⁰⁰ "Ukraine war: Putin confirms first nuclear weapons moved to Belarus," *BBC*, Last accessed June 17, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-65932700>.

¹⁰¹ Bishara, "The world after the Ukraine war."

¹⁰² Bishara, "The world after the Ukraine war."

¹⁰³ Bishara, "The world after the Ukraine war."

¹⁰⁴ Sławomir Sierakowski, "The Strongest Army in Europe?" *Project Syndicate*, Last accessed August 24, 2023, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/poland-pis-populist-government-military-procurement-by-slawomir-sierakowski-2023-08?barrier=accesspaylog>.

¹⁰⁵ Gearoid Reidy, "The fight to build up Japan's military is just beginning," *Japan Times*, Last accessed December 15, 2022, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2022/12/15/commentary/japan-commentary/japan-defense-budget>.

war created more pressure on Taiwan, as critics argue, Chinese dream of unification of Taiwan with mainland China has revived. As a result, new tensions arose in the Taiwan Strait when US house speaker Pelosi visited Taiwan. However, Taiwan would remain a major flash point between China and the US in future which may create more tensions in the South China Sea and Asian region.

Above discussion draws the attention to the fact that the Russo-Ukrainian war is going to create a major shift in future power politics across the globe. Bangladesh, being an important stakeholder in the Bay of Bengal region, is not out of jerks brought in by the war. Since, the Asian region became a hub of strategic competition while Indo-Pacific popping up as a crucial ground for collaboration and competition, Bangladesh needs to navigate the competition and uphold its national interests. The next section will discuss how Bangladesh can navigate the challenges emerged from the war and move forward.

4. Navigating Challenges and Strategic Outlook for Bangladesh

Over the last few decades, the Asian region became a hub of competition and strategic rivalry among the regional and extra-regional powers. With the US' intense focus in the Indo-Pacific region, Russia's re-orientation to Asia and China and India's growing stake in the region created challenges for the countries locating in the region to navigate. Previous discussions of the paper reveal growing interests of the US in the region, now, it might be helpful to discuss Russia's specific interests in the region to see how great game hoovering around Ukraine war and beyond is facilitating complex strategic calculations among the powers and impacting emerging countries in South Asia, particularly Bangladesh.

Russia's influence in its southern frontier has declined. Though, historically Moscow considered Central Asia as chessboard and considered itself a crucial player in the great game for exerting influence, with the move of China with its BRI project, this game has changed and China has emerged as the biggest player in the region. This brought both opportunities and challenges that led Russia to find a suitable place in what Kremlin refers to 'Greater Eurasia'.¹⁰⁶ Again, during third presidential term of President Putin (2012-2018), Russia's most recent 'pivot to the East' was announced.¹⁰⁷ This policy brought three key directions: first, more

¹⁰⁶ Fyodor Lukyanov, "Putin's Foreign Policy: The Quest to Restore Russia's Rightful Place," *Foreign Affairs* 95, no. 3 (May/June, 2016): 35.

¹⁰⁷ For more on the "pivot," see Alexander Korolev, "Russia's Reorientation to Asia: Causes and Strategic Implications," *Pacific Affairs* 89, no. 1 (2016): 53–73.

economic development in Russia's Far Eastern region; second, rekindling of ties with former Soviet republics through Eurasian integration; and third, bolstering deeper political alignment with East Asian countries and China (though debate is there on how Russia manages its relations with China without becoming a junior, dependent partner).¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, Russia's foreign policy framework and China's Global Civilisation Initiative (GCI) are complementary since both argue for multipolarity in international relations, the necessity to fight hegemony, and the value of respecting other civilisations.¹⁰⁹

However, Russia's growing engagement in South Asia, after the flagging of Ukraine war, is a part of its greater ambition to amass diplomatic support from the Global South amid the growing sanctions and criticisms from the US allies. Russia's policy towards Asia is driven by economic and strategic interests. South Asian countries, particularly India became the largest oil export destination for Russia. Moreover, Russia considers that energy poor countries in this region could be a potential market for its energy export and niche specialties like nuclear technology.¹¹⁰ Besides, Russia has maintained its role as a major arms supplier to the countries of this region, most notably selling the advanced S400 surface-to-air missile to India in 2018.¹¹¹

Again, there are some strategic purposes. Russia has increased its appearance in the region, and enhanced its cooperation with China to curtail US' dominance in the region.¹¹² Most recently, US' intense engagement in the Indo-Pacific region drew more attention of Russia. While his visit to Dhaka on the eve of G20 on 7 September 2023, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that the goal of the US and its allies is both to contain China and isolate Russia in this region. He also added that Moscow will thwart any attempt by the US and its allies to impose their will and interfere in this region.¹¹³ Even while it disagrees with New Delhi on America's preeminence in the Indo-Pacific, Moscow has utilised China's rise, the Sino-Indian border dispute, and the convergence of Pakistani and Russian interests in Afghanistan to increase

¹⁰⁸ David Lewis, "Strategic Culture and Russia's Pivot to the East: Russia, China, and Greater Eurasia," *European Center for Security Studies*, no. 34 (July 2019).

¹⁰⁹ Oleg Yanovsky, "Russia looks East to trade," East Asia Forum, Last accessed May 9, 2023, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2023/05/09/russia-looks-east-to-trade>.

¹¹⁰ Yanovsky, "Russia looks East to trade."

¹¹¹ Stephen F. Burges, "Russia, South Asia, and the United States: A New Great Game?" *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* (2019): 09.

¹¹² Burges, "Russia, South Asia, and the United States."

¹¹³ "Will work in unison to stop US 'dictates'," *The Daily Star*, September 8, 2023, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/diplomacy/news/will-work-unison-stop-us-dictates-3413466>.

its influence in South Asia.¹¹⁴ Lavrov's series of visits to New Delhi, Islamabad and Beijing portrays Moscow's clout in this region. Moreover, owing to US' backlash in Afghanistan, accepting India's improved ties with the US, Russia, in partnership with China, is simultaneously a competitor to the US in this region.¹¹⁵

Due to its rapid economic advancement and its centrality at the Bay of Bengal (BoB), major powers' attentions are increasingly concentrating on Bangladesh, a littoral of Bay, a key geopolitical hotspot of Indo-Pacific strategic competition. Therefore, Bangladesh has to correspond and balance the domestic development impulses with the external competitions and rivalry which became a challenging task. The Russo-Ukrainian war and great game revolving around it left significant spill-over effects on Bangladesh. Bangladesh faced economic challenges – an increase in foreign trade deficit and a fall in the value of the taka against the dollar, resulting in uncontrollable inflation and rising prices of daily necessities, including fuel.¹¹⁶ Moreover, US' Rebalancing Strategy and its continued engagement in the region through different initiatives like Indo Pacific Strategy (IPS), the rise of China and India as a key stakeholder in the Indo-Pacific region, Sino-Indian and Sino-US rivalry, etc. are dragging Bangladesh towards strategic dilemmas. Bangladesh will need to navigate those challenges to achieve its development goals and uphold national interests.

India is the biggest neighbour of Bangladesh which has always stretched the hands of friendship, China-Bangladesh relations reached at strategic one and China is investing heavily in the infrastructure connectivity of Bangladesh while the US remains the largest RMG market. On the other hand, the strength of Bangladesh-Russia relation lies in cooperation and support since former's liberation war. Russia is assisting Bangladesh in constructing its first ever nuclear power plants. However, Russia-Ukraine war brought some dilemmas for Bangladesh, i.e., dealing the voting issue in the UN, the issue of payment and the Russian ship anchoring issue. Thus, the war left further concerns for Bangladesh in balancing and navigating without hurting national interests. Bangladesh-US relations are going through some critical strains like sanctions on Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and introduction of visa policy amid the ongoing debates surrounding next parliament elections. However, Bangladesh is

¹¹⁴ Anita Inder Singh, "Russia's Asia diplomacy," *The Interpreter*, Last accessed April 16, 2021, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/russia-s-asia-diplomacy>.

¹¹⁵ Singh, "Russia's Asia diplomacy."

¹¹⁶ Syeda Sharmily Noshin, "Russia-Ukraine War: Wreaking Havoc in Bangladesh's Economy," *Modern Diplomacy*, Last accessed March 14, 2023, <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2023/03/14/russia-ukraine-war-wreaking-havoc-in-bangladeshs-economy>.

trying to portray its non-alignment postures and commitments for multilateralism, regional peace and economic progress, reflected in the recently published Indo-Pacific Outlook (IPO).

At the UN, during the first resolution condemning ‘Russia’s invasion’ of Ukraine, Bangladesh along with China, India, Iran and Pakistan (among total 32 abstentions) abstained from voting. Later, Bangladesh had to explain its position claiming that the resolution was “not meant to stop the war but to blame somebody.”¹¹⁷ In official response, by exposing its non-aligned position, Bangladesh sent a different message on Russia-Ukraine war and other future potential conflicts; particularly emphasising on the necessity of ‘restraint’, ‘dialogue’ and ‘peaceful resolution’. But in the second resolution, Bangladesh along with other South Asian countries like Bhutan, Nepal, Afghanistan, Myanmar, except India voted for UN resolution against Russia. In its explanation of vote, Bangladesh highlighted the socio-economic cost of war, sanctions and counter-sanctions and global economic implications of the conflict in Ukraine; and called for respecting territorial integrity under the UN charter.¹¹⁸ This approach reflects Bangladesh’s balancing capability and multilateral approach towards global peace and security.

Again, Ukraine war has made things complicated with Moscow-Washington rivalry serving as a test for Dhaka’s non-aligned foreign policy. Proactive activities of the US on Bangladesh’s domestic affairs and Russia’s counter statement signifies the complexity and tricky balancing act of Bangladesh. For example, on 14 December 2022, US Ambassador to Dhaka visited the house of opposition leader and met with the family members of ‘enforced disappearance’. This resulted in an intense debate between the US and Russian embassy. Russian embassy issued a statement accusing the US for interfering the internal affairs of Bangladesh, while both the embassy joined an online battle in their official social media platform posting countering statements and cartoons against each other. Besides, due to the US sanctions, a Russian ship (Ursa Major) bringing supplies for the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant Project was denied entry into Bangladesh. The US accused that the ship was not Ursa Major, but Sparta 3, which faces the US sanctions.¹¹⁹ As a result, Ministry of Foreign

¹¹⁷ Hassan Ahmed Shovon, “Decoding Bangladesh’s Response to the Ukraine Crisis,” *The Diplomat*, Last accessed March 15, 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/03/decoding-bangladeshs-response-to-the-ukraine-crisis>.

¹¹⁸ “India abstains, Bangladesh votes for UN resolution against Russia,” *The Business Standard*, October 13, 2022, <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/ukraines-territorial-integrity-bangladesh-among-143-who-voted-favour-un-resolution-512902>.

¹¹⁹ “Russian ship returning without offloading Rooppur equipment,” *The Daily Star*, January 19, 2023, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/russian-ship-returning-without-offloading-rooppur-equipment-3225141>.

Affairs summoned the Russian ambassador. Again, Bangladesh government recently blocked the entry of Russian ships in line with the US and EU sanctions. This created more challenge to conduct trade with Russia and construction of Rooppur project. This resulted in summoning of Bangladesh's ambassador by Russian foreign ministry and citing possibility of adverse impact on cooperation in various fields.¹²⁰ Critics argue that both Russia and the US are trying to use Bangladesh as proxy for their tug of war and geopolitical rivalry. To Bangladesh, both the countries' proactivity and statements are like interference to its internal affairs. Here to be mentioned, Bangladesh also faced challenges in payment due to blockage of Russian Banks from SWIFT and had to make payment through Chinese yuan.

Now, what should be the strategy of Bangladesh to navigate the challenges emerging from the Russia-Ukraine war and growing competitions among the powers? First, Bangladesh should stick to its non-alignment position and 'friendship to all' dictum. This would allow Bangladesh to work as a conduit for the contending powers and could enable to engage all the stakeholders. This would also serve Bangladesh's national interests as well, particularly in connectivity, infrastructure development, trade and people to people communication. Second, Bangladesh should continue to promote multilateralism as a response strategy towards the regional and global problems. This would help Bangladesh to come out from the compulsion of binary choices of friends, and would rather help to create a shared responsibility towards international issues. For example, the UN became a key platform for Bangladesh to clarify its position regarding the Ukraine war, and promote its vision towards the global and regional peace. Moreover, multilateral platforms, i.e., BRICS, BIMSTEC, etc. could provide Bangladesh with leverage to advance its economic ambition. Bangladesh needs economic partnerships, not any security alliances if it wants to continue the development trajectory after its graduation from LDCs. Therefore, prime focus should be drawing FDI, signing FTAs, joining regional connectivity, etc. Third, Bangladesh needs to explore its soft power capability and enhance strategic autonomy by bolstering economic diplomacy, strengthening voices in regional and global humanitarian issues, climate change, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Fourth, Bangladeshi diaspora needs to be engaged in more constructive way. Bangladeshi missions abroad could inspire the diaspora to work together for the greater interests of Bangladesh. Diaspora should not be divided in line with the domestic political affairs, rather they should work together beyond personal political agenda. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Bangladeshi diaspora played a crucial role in securing vaccines.

¹²⁰ Sheikh Rafi Ahmed & Jannatul Naym Pical, "Russia upset as Bangladesh blocks entry to sanctioned ships. What's next?" *The Business Standard*, February 23, 2023, <https://www.tbsnews.net/features/panorama/russia-upset-bangladesh-blocks-entry-sanctioned-ships-whats-next-589302>.

Therefore, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh and missions abroad should undertake measures to bring diaspora under single umbrella through arranging briefings, social gatherings for the diaspora, and even using social media to send the message on national interests, so that they could be informed and act accordingly. Fifth, to project its national interests in the Indo-Pacific region and avoid geopolitical rivalry among powers, Bangladesh should stick to its IPO and needs to be aware about projecting and channeling its national interests through the IPO. Bangladesh should work out an implementation mechanism of IPO. Bangladesh should be careful so that the agenda of Rohingya repatriation does not lose attention amid the chaos of Ukraine war, US-Russia rivalry and Sino-US competition. Sixth, Bangladesh needs more focus on agriculture and food production to avoid future turmoil in food supply chains. Bangladesh should explore agriculture and food production in Africa which may help achieve self-sufficiency and avoid excessive dependence on food imports. Besides, Bangladesh should focus on expanding export baskets (beyond RMG, like ICT products) and exploring new destinations (beyond Europe and US, explore Asian markets) for exports; search new markets for outsourcing of raw materials like cotton; explore domestic energy potentials and try to make a balance with imports, explore new markets for energy imports, for example, Bangladesh signed a 25 years agreement to import 40MW electricity from Nepal. Such kind of opportunity should be explored further. Finally, Bangladesh should define its own priority in the Bay of Bengal and Indo-Pacific region and move forward with that priority.

5. Conclusion

The Russo-Ukrainian war has the potential to play a decisive role in redistribution of influence among important international players, reshaping the regional dynamics. A great game mania has been manifested among the powers surrounding the war. Complex bilateral relations among the major powers and geopolitical competitions, importance of Russia and Ukraine in Euro-Atlantic security and in the global supply chains, and realpolitik behind the responses of the global powers to the ongoing war—all created multiple dynamics to that great game. The war has been putting multi-dimensional impacts on the global power architecture. The US-Russia rivalry gained new momentum and Ukraine war emerged as proxy ground, while other major powers like China, India are careful about their national interests while expressing their reactions to the war. For example, China is leveraging Russia's 'junior partner' status, while India being US' key ally, is buying Russian oil at a cheaper rate. Despite US' pressure to take sides in the Russian war in Ukraine, nations in the Global South are only concerned with protecting their own interests. As

a result, they have remained neutral regarding Russian war in Ukraine. This created a complex balancing game.

However, the war has made significant impacts on the global power architecture. The war has created rifts between East and West Europe- while East is advocating the NATO to defend Ukraine, the West is promoting inclusive security architecture involving Russia. A greater call for de-dollarisation has come out. Countries and blocs are searching for alternative currency to reduce the dominance of dollar in financial market, and their searching is accelerated due to the war, sanctions and counter-sanctions dynamics. The sanction regimes imposed by the West became more or less ineffective which signals weakness of sanctions as a tool and will drive newer innovations regarding sanctions. The war has shunned China's role as global negotiator and significantly increased its global image along with its newly launched Security Initiative. The war has been facilitating the energy transition towards renewable energy where growing Chinese investment in clean energy and its mastery on technology would become an issue of politics and competition between the two consequential competitors- the US and China. Also, the war has created some new tensions which may influence the future trend of power politics and security agenda like nuclearisation and arms race, fear of NATO expansion, vulnerability of grain supply chains, and tensions over Taiwan Strait, etc.

The war has created economic and strategic concerns for Bangladesh as well. Energy price got high, the value of Bangladeshi currency fell against dollar, foreign trade deficit increased, balance of payment became volatile, and food imports from Ukraine and Russia stumbled. Bangladesh faced challenges for the payment of the logistics of nuclear power plant and had to pay in yuan. Moreover, keeping national elections ahead, both the US and Russia started to interfere in the domestic issues and it seemed they started a tug of 'proxy war' in Bangladesh as a spill-over effect of Ukraine war. However, Bangladesh is successfully navigating the challenges and it needs further assessment of its strategic outlook regarding the impacts of the war. Bangladesh should continue its non-alignment posture and continue balancing; should continue to promote multilateralism; focus on economic partnership than security alliance and enhance economic diplomacy; explore soft power capability and engage diaspora; find an implementation mechanism for IPO; focus more on food production and explore and expand the agriculture sector; expand export baskets and export destinations; explore domestic energy potentials and new markets for energy imports. Finally, Bangladesh should promote its own priorities and justify those priorities in line with its national interests and its commitments towards the regional stability and peace.

Annex 1

Table 1: Determinant Events That Shaped World Order¹²¹

Events	Year(s)	Countries/Empires Involved
Peloponnesian War	431–404 BCE	Athens, Sparta, various city-states
Punic Wars	264–146 BCE	Rome, Carthage, various Mediterranean powers
Fall of the Western Roman Empire	476 CE	Various barbarian tribes, Roman Empire
Islamic Conquests	622–750 CE	Arab and Muslim armies, Byzantine and Sassanian Empires, Ottoman Empire
Crusades	1096–1270 CE	Various Christian and Muslim powers
Mongol Conquests	1206–1337 CE	Mongol Empire, various Eurasian powers
Hundred Years’ War	1337–1453 CE	England, France, various European powers
Spanish Conquest of the Americas	1492–1572 CE	Spain, various Indigenous American civilisations
Thirty Years’ War	1618–1648 CE	Various European powers
American Revolution	1775–1783 CE	Thirteen Colonies (later United States), Great Britain, various European powers
French Revolution	1789–1799 CE	France, various European powers
Napoleonic Wars	1803–1815 CE	France, various European powers
Congress of Vienna	1815 CE	Various European powers
World War I	1914–1918 CE	Various European powers, United States, Japan
Russian Revolution and Civil War	1917–1923 CE	Bolsheviks, various anti-Bolshevik forces, Soviet Union, European powers
World War II	1939–1945 CE	Axis Powers (Germany, Japan, Italy) vs. Allied Powers (United States, Soviet Union, Great Britain, France, and others)
Cold War	1947–1991 CE	United States vs. Soviet Union
Gulf War	1990–1991 CE	United States and coalition partners vs. Iraq
War on Terror	2001–2020 CE	United States and coalition partners fight against terrorism
Russia-Ukraine War	2022- Present CE	Russia (allies) vs. West (Ukraine)

¹²¹ Compiled by the authors.

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VIOLENCE AND ATROCITY-LED DISPLACEMENT AND POTENTIAL OF INTOLERANCE IN THE DESTINATION PLACE: ROHINGYA EXODUS FROM MYANMAR TO BANGLADESH

Abstract

Violence and atrocity committed by any country or actor for any reason force many innocent people to cross the border to save lives, as displaced Rohingyas, the Forcefully Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMNs), did in 2017. Drawing on host community data collected through micro-narratives, interviews, FGDs, and wider secondary sources, this study examines the extent to which genocidal violence faced by the Rohingyas in Myanmar and their subsequent influx into Bangladesh has caused potential of intolerance in the host communities. This paper develops a five-staged pyramid model of host-refugee relations and argues that when the locals cannot afford the adverse effects of refugees that gradually endangers their relations and creates potential conditions for intolerance. The inauspicious effects of the 2017 Rohingya influx developed a local reserved perception towards the FDMNs, which has been far different from the initial generous position. To a great extent, the actions of many, of course not of all Rohingyas, like engaging in criminal, aggressive, and unlawful activities, are as responsible as new evolving security challenges exacerbated by other realities created by different armed groups and entities. Those actions have created a restrained perception of them and forced the locals to maintain as much distance as possible from them. The locals also felt a sense of deprivation generated by service providers. Therefore, narratives of difference have developed against them, while the locals live in anxiety and tension. No large-scale violence happened between them due to the active roles of the state and its agencies; yet, when the very survival of locals and entities feel threatened, no one can rule out the potential of further complicated condition. Therefore, the concerned stakeholders, including the state and international community, must re-strategise to meet the needs of local people and develop a locally based joint early warning system to detect and prevent any unwanted situation.

Keywords: Atrocity-led Displacement, Host community, Forcefully Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMNs), Tension, Intolerance, Violence.

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1. Introduction

Large scale violence worldwide is considered to be one of the leading causes of massive population displacement. The Rohingya ‘ethnic cleansing’ in Myanmar¹ led to the fifth largest population displacement—from one country to another, Myanmar to Bangladesh, in 2017.² As a Muslim minority community in Myanmar, Rohingyas experienced systemic violence and atrocities, leading more than 850,000 of them to leave their homes in the Rakhine state of Myanmar and take shelter in 34 camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf, Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh.³ Bangladesh, which is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, sheltered them on humanitarian grounds but has recognised them as the Forcefully Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMNs). Many claimed that the post-independent governments of Myanmar systematically denied various rights of the Rohingyas. Such denial became more profound once the 1982 Citizenship Act was enacted; systematic and occasional physical violence became part of their lives, forced them to cross the border occasionally—whenever they faced atrocities and human rights violations.⁴ Most of the Rohingyas who crossed the border during the earlier 1978-1979 and 1991-1992 movements returned to Myanmar.⁵ However, including the old registered and unregistered Rohingyas and newly arrived FDMNs, more than one million people live in the temporary camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf.

¹ “UN Human Rights Chief Points to ‘Textbook Example of Ethnic Cleansing’ in Myanmar,” UN News, Last modified July 2, 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/09/564622-un-human-rights-chief-points-textbook-example-ethnic-cleansing-myanmar>

² UNHCR, *Global Trends, Forced Displacement in 2019*, Last accessed on January 5, 2021, <https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2019/>

³ UNHCR, *Refugee Response in Bangladesh*, Last modified January 5, 2021, https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/myanmar_refugees

⁴ Md Rafiqul Islam and Umme Wara, “Conflict Potential of the Rohingya People in Bangladesh and Beyond,” *Journal of ASEAN Studies* 10, no. 1 (2022); Abu Salah Md. Yousuf, “Securitization and Ethnic Violence: Military, Monks and Rohingya Minorities in Myanmar,” *BISS Journal* 41, no. 2 (2020); Maung Zarni and Natalie Brinham, *Essays on Myanmar’s Genocide of Rohingyas (2012-2018)* (Dhaka: Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit, 2019); Imtiaz Ahmed., *The Plight of the Stateless Rohingyas: Responses of the State, Society and the International Community* (Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 2010); Eleanor Albert and Lindsay Maizland, “The Rohingya Crisis,” *The Council of Foreign Relations*, Last accessed January 20, 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/backgroundunder/rohingya-crisis>; Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK, “Myanmar’s 1982 Citizenship Law and Rohingya,” Last accessed January 2021, <https://burmacampaign.org.uk/media/Myanmar%E2%80%99s-1982-Citizenship-Law-and-Rohingya.pdf>,

⁵ C. R. Abrar, *Repatriation of Rohingya Refugees* (Colombo: UNHCR’s Regional Consultation on Refugee and Migratory Movements, 1995); Sultana Yesmin, “Policy towards Rohingya Refugees: A Comparative Analysis of Bangladesh, Malaysia and Thailand,” *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (Hum.)* 61, no. 1 (2016).

Multiple reasons, like increased armed conflict,⁶ constraining political options in domestic affairs,⁷ identity-based conflicts⁸, and associated other factors,⁹ have made forced migration an inevitable phenomenon in the contemporary world. Once a massive population movement happens, it affects the host country and puts displaced people under numerous strains and complexities, including security challenges,¹⁰ racism,¹¹ and violence, at worst. Displaced and hosting communities endure specific impacts in their daily lives since they live with various limitations. Many literatures suggest potential risks of civil conflict in the host country involving refugees and their associations.¹² Refugees living in the camps can mobilise and start rebellions and recruit associate fighters.¹³ Some focus on the traditional conflicts wherein the refugees produced a civil war-like situation as the Palestinian refugees did in Jordan in 1970.¹⁴ Others see patterns of violence that engage displaced people and non-state actors, such as the local population and their organisations.¹⁵ These conflicts are linked with various causes, such as land distribution, inequalities, and controlling available resources and opportunities.¹⁶ Therefore, it is not unlikely for the locals to develop a negative attitude towards displaced people and create conditions of intolerance as hosts could find it challenging to accept foreigners into their country for a long period.

⁶ V. Chetail, "Armed Conflict and Forced Migration: A Systematic Approach to International Humanitarian Law, Refugee Law, and International Human Rights Law," in Andrew Clapham and Paola Gaeta (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of International Armed Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

⁷ William. B. Wood, "Forced Migration: Local Conflicts and International Dilemmas," *Annals of the Association of American geographers* 84, no. 4 (1994): 607-34.

⁸ Lucy Hovil, "The Inter-relationship between Violence, Displacement and the Transition to Stability in the Great Lakes Region," Centre for the study of violence and reconciliation (Johannesburg, 2008).

⁹ Alex Braithwaite, Idean Salehyan, and Burcu Savun "Refugees, Forced Migration, and Conflict: Introduction to the Special Issue," *Journal of Peace Research* 56, no. 1 (2020).

¹⁰ Gil Loescher, "Blaming the Victim: Refugees and Global Security," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 58, no.6 (2002): 46-53.

¹¹ Dionisio Camacho, "The Social, Economic and Industrial Issues Specific to Migrant Workers over 45 Years of Age Seeking Employment, or Establishing a Business, Following Unemployment (A Quantities Approach)," A paper for House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Work Place Relations, Australia, Last accessed June 25, 2020, http://www.aphref.aph.gov.au_house_committee_ewr_owk_subs_sub33.pdf,

¹² Tobias Böhmelt, Vincenzo Bove and Kristian S. Gleditsch, "Blame the Victims? Refugees, State Capacity, and Non-state Actor Violence," *Journal of Peace Research* 56, no. 1 (2019): 73-87.

¹³ Aristide R. Zolberg, Astri Suhrke and Sergio Aguayo, *Escape from Violence: Conflict and the Refugee crisis in the Developing World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989)

¹⁴ Zolberg, Suhrke and Aguayo, *Escape from Violence*.

¹⁵ Böhmelt, Bove and Gleditsch, "Blame the Victims?"

¹⁶ Hanne Fjelde and Gudrun Østby, "Socioeconomic Inequality and Communal Conflict: A Disaggregated Analysis of Sub-Saharan Africa, 1990–2008," *International Interactions*, 40, no. 5 (2014): 737-62.

Literature on the Rohingya influx into Bangladesh shows that the FDMNs have outnumbered the locals in Ukhiya and Teknaf, altered the demographic condition, and threatened the hosts in various ways.¹⁷ Both are trapped in ‘an uncertain’ relationship.¹⁸ The social fabric of these areas has eroded too.¹⁹ They have developed different relationships influenced by their cultural and religious proximities. Despite the restrictions set by Bangladesh,²⁰ there have been events of inter-community marriages.²¹ An anti-displaced people attitude grew among them mostly due to ‘economic instability’, ‘unequal access’ to the labour market, and ‘uneven distribution’ of humanitarian resources.²² Rohingyas are at risk of being targeted and recruited by a variety of transnational organised groups that engage in a variety of illegal activities, which in turn undermines the national security of Bangladesh.²³ The host has potential links them as funds to socio-economic aspects, livelihood and local safety and security.²⁴ Some argued that ‘Myanmar’s civil conflict had spilled over into Bangladesh and created concerns for its non-traditional security, livelihood and safety of locals.’²⁵ The ‘political uncertainty’ of their repatriation contributed to such a perception.²⁶ A dearth of knowledge exists on the potential of intolerance in the displaced Rohingya hosting areas. This paper aims to address this literature gap by examining the extent to which atrocity-led mass population displacement from one country to another creates a condition of intolerance in the destination place. With

¹⁷ Kudrat-E-Khuda, “The impacts and challenges to host country Bangladesh due to Sheltering the Rohingya Refugees,” *Cogent Social Sciences*, 6 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2020.1770943>; Md. Touhidul Islam et al., “The 2017 Rohingya Influx into Bangladesh and its Implications for the Host Communities,” *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 10, no. 2 (2022): 487-512, doi: 10.18588/202211.00a294.

¹⁸ Lailufar Yasmin and Sayeda Akther, “The Locals and the Rohingyas: Trapped with an Uncertain Future,” *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*, XX, no. X (2019): 1-17.

¹⁹ Verena Hölzl, “Between Envy and Fear: In Bangladesh, Tensions between Locals and Rohingya Refugees are Raising,” *DW Akademie*, <https://www.dw.com/en/between-envy-and-fear/a-56930931>, Last accessed on June 25 2021.

²⁰ Afrose Jahan Chaity, “Ban on Bangladeshis Marrying Rohingya: Justified or A Human Rights Violation?” *Dhaka Tribune*, Last accessed June 20, 2021, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/opinion/special/2018/01/02/ban-bangladeshis-marrying-rohingya-justified-human-rights-violation>.

²¹ Relief Web International, *Rohingya Influx Since 1978*, Assessment Capacities Project & Needs and Population Monitoring, 2017, Last accessed November 21, 2020, <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/thematic-report-december-2017-review-rohingya-influx-1978>.

²² Anas Ansar and Abu Faisal Md. Khaled, “From Solidarity to Resistance: Host Communities’ Evolving Response to the Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh”, *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*, 6, no. 1 (2021): 1-14; Ashish Banik, “Strengthening Complementarity in the Humanitarian Response to the Rohingya Refugee Crisis,” *Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh: The Humanitarian Response*, *Humanitarian Exchange*, 73 (2018).

²³ Islam and Wara, “Conflict Potential of the Rohingya.”

²⁴ A. Hoekstra, “Rohingya Crisis: Overpopulated Bangladesh Bearing the Burden,” *DW*. Available at <http://www.dw.com/en/rohingya-crisis-overpopulated-bangladesh-bearing-theburden/a-40673062>, Accessed on September 22, 2021; Islam and Wara, “Conflict Potential of the Rohingya.”

²⁵ Islam and Wara, “Conflict Potential of the Rohingya.”

²⁶ Ansar and Khaled, “From Solidarity to Resistance.”

a focus on the case of the presence of FDMNs in Bangladesh, the paper, based on the perceptions and opinions of the host population and wider secondary resources, answers the question about how the presence of displaced Rohingyas has created conditions of potential intolerance in Ukhiya and Teknaf in Bangladesh.

In order to fulfill its aim and answer the research question, this paper has been structured in a way that connects its theoretical, methodological, and case-specific issues well. The methodology and the analytical framework are discussed in detail. The analytical framework explains factors and issues of tolerance and intolerance between refugee and host communities. It is a five-staged pyramid model that uses instances from different contexts of the world for analysing the process of evolving intolerant attitudes and behaviours of refugees and hosting communities. The following section, with various sub-sections, explores these five stages in the case of hosting FDMNs in Bangladesh and analyses how they have been contributing to developing a different situation in places where they are now. In line with the research aim and question, the final section summarises the main findings of this study.

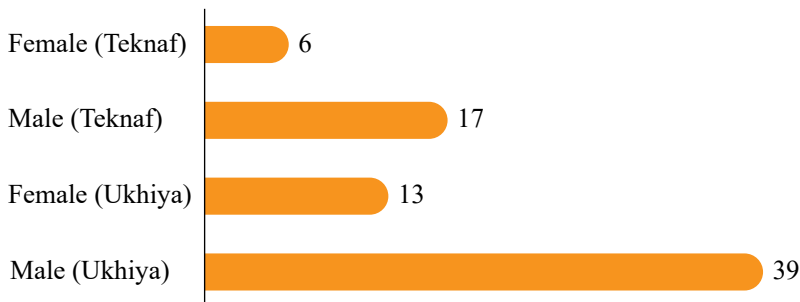
This paper, in the pyramid model, claims that systematic violence and organised atrocity against a section of a country's population causes mass displacement from one country to another, and neighbouring countries that host them for different reasons have to bear the brunt. However, when the influx of displaced people is massive and often difficult to manage, it can gradually create conditions of potential intolerance in the refugee-hosting areas, as the locals develop a sense of deprivation and negative attitudes toward the refugees. In that case, the state's capacity and approaches to manage the refugee crisis are fundamental to avoid such situation. In the case of FDMNs, it is argued that hosting them has been costly for Bangladesh, as their presence has influenced local people and society negatively in various ways. Therefore, apprehension persists among the locals in Ukhiya and Teknaf, whom the FDMNs have numerically outnumbered. The locals are having a feeling of deprivation and discrimination in terms of accessing basic services from the state and availing some opportunities. Hence, narratives of differences have developed when their unreserved solidarity has transformed into an anti-displaced people sentiment. Various questionable, unlawful, and suspicious activities of different Rohingya groups have been a severe concern for the locals, displaced Rohingyas, and Bangladesh. Although there have not been many large-scale confrontations between the host population and FDMNs, a sense of distrust, dissatisfaction, and grievance has gradually developed amongst the former group against the latter. Subtle anxiety

covertly passes across the host population that existing conditions could create potential tensions if not large-scale violence, had the displaced Rohingyas not been repatriated to their home country, Myanmar, and other concerns of needs, safety, and security are adequately addressed by the state and institutions in due mechanisms.

Research Methodology

The paper is based on qualitative research that follows an inductive approach to understand the host population’s perspectives regarding the FDMNs that Bangladesh has been sheltering since August 2017 and explores various factors that could contribute to tension and intolerance in the locality. It undertook a combined approach for data collection and applied multiple methods, including a collection of micro-narratives of the locals living in Ukhiya and Teknaf, in-depth interviews of local socio-political elites, focus group discussions (FGDs) with local stakeholders and consultation of secondary sources, including newspaper reports, articles and reports of different organisations working in Rohingya camps. Collecting micro-narratives is an approach that allows the storyteller to share what s/he feels about a phenomenon. It is a dialectic process that continues between the storyteller and the story collector, thus creating meanings.²⁷ Micro-narratives can be collected from anybody living in a context, irrespective of the differences but having the knowledge and perspective on the subject of study.²⁸ The authors collected 75 micro-narratives from the residents of Ukhiya and Teknaf over six months—from November 2019 to April 2020. Their opinion, insights, and perspectives helped to solidify the understanding, perceptions, and observations about the effects of the 2017 Rohingya influx and its relation with potential intolerance.

Figure 1: Gender ratio of storytellers in Ukhiya and Teknaf*



²⁷ Imtiaz Ahmed, *The Method Matters: An Introduction to Micro-narratives*, (Dhaka: University of Dhaka, 2019).

²⁸ Ahmed, *The Method Matters*.

* Author’s creation

More than 55 storytellers were male, around 20 were female, and they were mostly from lower-income groups. The majority (52) were from Ukhiya, a sub-district hosting the largest numbers of Rohingyas in temporary settlement camps (Figure 1). Almost all were Muslim (71), three storytellers were Buddhist, and one was Hindu. Most storytellers were at the age of between 20 and 50. The respondents were chosen conveniently by local enumerators trained to collect micro-narratives. Before going to the field, they were trained in a three-day workshop on understanding the Rohingya crisis and its associated issues. However, the participation of storytellers was voluntary. Before starting a narrative collection, an enumerator stated the aim and objectives of the study and the participant's rights. Once a storyteller gave oral consent to participate, an enumerator started collecting the story.

Besides the micro-narratives, in-depth interviews with local social, economic, and political elites and FGDs with various local community stakeholders have provided rich data. Between December 2020 and March 2021, the authors conducted nine interviews and four FGDs in Ukhiya and Teknaf. Interviews were conducted individually, allowing respondents to freely share their thoughts and ideas. FGDs were held in a community space like a school or a community meeting place. Two FGDs were with female community members, including homemakers, businesswomen, students, teachers, and NGO workers. The other two were with male participants, including imams, teachers, drivers, barbers, students, NGO workers, small business entrepreneurs, and day labourers. One FGD was with the male group in each sub-district, and the other was with female community stakeholders. Various observations, insights, and opinions came from these participants, who experienced the influx differently under different circumstances. Then authors processed their views and thoughts with the principles of confidentiality and anonymity.

The authors could not talk with the displaced Rohingyas due to different limitations. It was impossible to discuss with them as they often are reluctant to discuss critical issues due to fear and insecurity. Therefore, they consulted broader secondary resources, including books, journal articles, national and international organisations' reports, local and international newspaper reports, and other researchers' data and findings. To develop an argument, this paper carried forward a thematic analysis approach. These themes were generated in line with the analytical framework—a pyramid model of understanding issues and factors of tolerance and intolerance between the host and refugee communities. This analytical model, that has used examples from other refugee-hosting contexts, has significance in analysing any refugee situation and examining gradual relations between the refugee and host communities and how that could lead to intolerance and tension if not violence. Tolerance and intolerance as political discourses are rooted in every society. However,

prejudice does not develop suddenly but gradually. Therefore, it follows some stages that this pyramid model explains. The model explains how intolerance advances between the host and refugee communities. Although refugees are by-products of armed conflicts and violence, they can generate apprehension, tension, and violence in the receiving nations. This is specially true when states and institutions do not pay adequate attention to manage a refugee crisis properly.²⁹

2. Tolerance and Intolerance between the Refugee and Host Communities: Global Experience

Amidst the different sets of challenges and issues, intolerance is a phenomenon that can exacerbate tensions between host-refugee communities. Tolerance is a broader term that allows certain rights (e.g., liberty, freedom of expression, and peaceful co-existence) to people with dissimilarities in various aspects like custom, religion, race, gender, etc.³⁰ In other words, tolerance emanates a meaning related to respect and co-existence, despite having differences between groups/people. In the refugee hosting context, refugees and host communities often have differences and similarities on various issues, such as nationality, religion, culture, language, and ethnicity. Such similarities could cause dissimilarities, and differences could become causes of unity, although these depend on the context where refugees are located and sheltered. Therefore, anytime any problem could originate from such attributes and lead to intolerance at any level—individual to state levels when parties have incompatible goals or positions.³¹ Social intolerance encompasses various issues associated with ‘political prejudice’, ‘ideological rigidity’, ‘cultural insensitivity’, and ‘religious dogma’ against an opponent.³² Besides actual discrimination, any perceived difference, if felt by any of the parties, can set off the ground for evolving intolerant behaviour of the parties.³³

When a community hosts refugees, populist leaders often make it an issue to strengthen their political power by using discourses that profoundly target refugees

²⁹ Adrian Martin, “Environmental Conflict between Refugee and Host Communities,” *Journal of Peace Research* 42, no. 3 (2005): 329-46.

³⁰ Anna Elisabetta Galeotti, *Tolerance as Recognition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Barbara Pasamonk, “The Paradoxes of Tolerance,” *The Social Studies* 95, no. 5 (2004): 206-10.

³¹ Bassem Jamil Kheireddine, Ana Maria Soares and Ricardo Gouveia Rodrigues, “Understanding (In)tolerance between Hosts and Refugees in Lebanon,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 34, no. 1, (2021); Petter Wallensteen, *Understanding Conflict Resolution: War, Peace and the Global System* (London: Sage Publications, 2002).

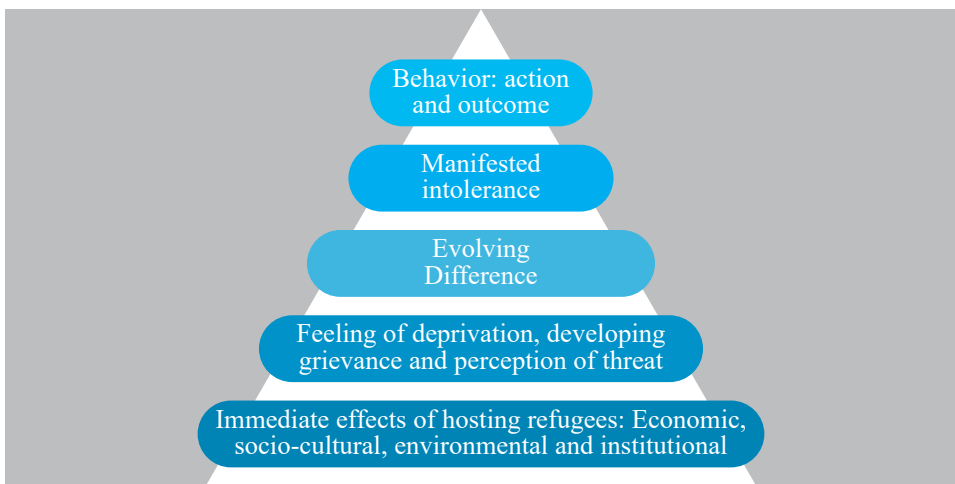
³² Mohammad S Alam and Tanzina Rahman, “Rise of Social Intolerance, Extremist Attitude and Support for Terrorism: Perspective of Youth from Bangladesh,” *Bangladesh Police Academy Journal* 2, no. 02 (2020): 38-66.

³³ Evan P. Apfelbaum et al., “From Ignorance to Intolerance: Perceived Intentionality of Racial Discrimination Shapes Preferences for Colorblindness versus Multiculturalism,” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 69 (2017): 86-101, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2016.08.002>.

and propagate anti-refugee sentiments.³⁴ Various decisive factors like religion,³⁵ culture,³⁶ and politics³⁷ come into play to expose such sentiments and feelings. People, who clutch on these issues, perceive others as threats to their identities and create grounds for intolerance. Prejudice gradually develops and follows some stages to advance to making intolerance between the host and refugee communities.

The paper proposes five inter-connected stages that the host and refugee communities could pass through to get to the point of an inevitable behaviour wherein both parties could involve in intolerant attitudes and actions (Figure 2). The host population feels various actual and perceived differences and discrimination that create responsible complexities for developing a negative attitude towards ‘the other’, the refugees. However, such a negative attitude is not always accountable for violence. Once the minority group feels a sense of ‘relative deprivation’, it contributes to developing a mindset against the other.³⁸ When refugees and host populations maintain a strained relationship, an anti-refugee sentiment is not uncommon amongst the hosts, especially when they feel the former is causing an enormous burden for the latter.

Figure 2: Host-refugee issues, tension, and intolerance: A pyramid model*



³⁴ Sarah Deardorff Miller, “Xenophobia toward Refugees and Other Forced Migrants”, *World Refugee Council Research Paper*, No 5 (2018).

³⁵ Evan Stewart, Penny Edgell and Jack Delehanty, “The Politics of Religious Prejudice and Tolerance for Cultural Others”, *The Sociological Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (2018): 17-39.

³⁶ James L. Gibson, “The Political Consequences of Intolerance: Cultural Conformity and Political Freedom”, *The American Political Science Review* (1992): 338-356.

³⁷ Amy Katnik, “Religion, Social Class, and Political Tolerance: A Cross-national analysis”, *International Journal of Sociology* 32, no. 1 (2002): 14-38.

³⁸ Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (London: Routledge, 1971).

* Source: Authors’ creation.

The first stage of this pyramid focuses on the effects refugees bring into a host society. Refugees are generally seen as threats to the economy, environment, and security³⁹ due to growing complexities related to resources, work, etc., between refugees and locals. Moreover, the international community's humanitarian assistance is directed towards the refugees without considering much of the host population and their needs.⁴⁰ It creates an immediate imbalance in terms of who receives what and as a result, various opinions emerged about migrants. In Kakuma camp in Kenya, for example, refugees were blamed for the economic hardship of locals.⁴¹ As long as the locals perceive them as burdens, other limited benefits refugees bring to the host community become less valuable. It is an early stage of forming a tacit grievance against refugees that continues if the host state does not address deprivation issues.

If capable enough to convince the international community, the state can balance assisting and supporting both the refugee and host population. It depends upon how much they can share resources and facilities for both communities.⁴² The host government and international community artificially generate an exceptional cooperative approach. However, it declines when international support reduces significantly, if not ends, after a certain period when they channel funds to a new context where another crisis evolves.⁴³ Nevertheless, having some support does not always satisfy the host population, who instead see the immediate impacts of refugees on their lives and society. For instance, a negative perception of Syrian refugees developed amongst the local Jordanians when the former shared jobs and received government assistance, including other benefits.⁴⁴ Once the locals face such a financial burden, it can lead to protest movements against the refugees. Such protests are signs of intolerance towards the refugees because the hosts feel threatened by refugee presence and other apparent reasons, including environmental stress,⁴⁵ increased criminal activities,⁴⁶ and adverse socio-cultural and economic effects.⁴⁷

³⁹ Murray Goot and Ian Watson, *Immigration, Multiculturalism and Australian Identity: Australian Social Attitudes: The First Report* (Wales: University of New South Wales Press, 2005).

⁴⁰ Alexander Betts, "Development Assistance and Refugees: Towards a North-South Grand Bargain?" Forced Migration Policy Briefing 2, Refugee Studies Centre: University of Oxford, 2009.

⁴¹ Ekuru Akot, "It Is Better to Be a Refugee Than a Turkana in Kakuma": Revisiting the Relationship between Hosts and Refugees in Kenya," *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees* (2003): 73-83.

⁴² Martin, "Environmental Conflict between Refugee."

⁴³ Susan F. Martin et al., "International Responsibility-Sharing for Refugees: Perspectives from the MENA Region," *Geopolitics, History and International Relations* 11, no. 1 (2019): 59-91.

⁴⁴ Nafez Ali and Saeb F. Al Ganideh, "Syrian Refugees in Jordan: Burden or Boon," *Research in World Economy* 11, no. 1 (2020): 180-94.

⁴⁵ Martin, "Environmental Conflict between Refugee."

⁴⁶ Idean Salehyan and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, "Refugees and the Spread of Civil War," *International Organization* 60, no. 2 (2006): 335-66.

⁴⁷ Oliver Walton, "Helpdesk Research Report: Preventing Conflict between Refugees and Host Communities," *Governance and Social Development Resource Centre*, 2012.

This pyramid's second and third layers are vital to explain the development of a distinct and differentiating feeling between the communities, developing due to various deprivation feelings and consequent grievances. These have connections with actual threats and perceived issues. The treatments and services refugees receive from the international community and the host country are often considered unfair by the host population, original inhabitants of the land, who may often lack such support.⁴⁸ They see that they do not get the benefits that the refugees receive. It contributes to developing the locals' sense of deprivation. Moreover, they may face various threats, which are not only attached to the state's security but also have multi-dimensional aspects—from the danger of losing one's livelihood (including economic opportunity) to risks of getting mugged, robbed, and attacked. Based on some disproportionate benefits that some locals receive, it segregates the locals themselves too. Cultural threats also emanate from refugees as they have scopes to intermingle with the locals, which can endanger their societal safety and security.

Therefore, despite having some proximities in language, religion, and ethnicity, a sense of differences, grows when the hosts see their lives, security, and livelihoods jeopardised due to refugees' presence. Such a negative perception of refugees could sustain in the minds of the host population. When deprivation, grievances, and such feelings of difference interact, it creates a complex puzzle for locals. Moreover, a sense of threat and fear separates hosts from refugees, helps to endure such a differential attitude amongst the locals, if not the refugees, and forces them to stay separate.⁴⁹ Not only do ordinary people engage in this process, high-profile persons from the host country can also negatively represent refugees, as was the case of Croatia where the president had created a negative representation of refugees as 'others'.⁵⁰

Engagement of high-profile individuals in such refugee discourses may encourage xenophobic and populist rhetoric and boost anti-refugee and anti-immigrant stances.⁵¹ Therefore, movements for stopping refugee flow are common in receiving countries which are infused by negative stereotyping of the refugees.⁵²

⁴⁸ Aukot, "Revisiting the Relationship between Hosts."

⁴⁹ Rahela Jurković, "Political Discourse on Refugees Compared to Refugees' Individual Stories: The Case of Croatia," *Us vs. Them in Central and Eastern Europe: Populism, the Refugee Other and the Re-consideration of National Identity*, (Central European University: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and Center for EU Enlargement Studies, 2018).

⁵⁰ Jurković, "Political Discourse."

⁵¹ Miller, "Xenophobia toward Refugees."

⁵² "Anti-Immigrant Protests Grow as Thousands of Refugees Flood European", ABC News, Last accessed January 25, 2022, <https://abcnews.go.com/International/anti-immigrant-protests-grow-thousands-refugees-flood-europe/story?id=35888428>.

Despite some similarities, the perception of danger to the host country and local feelings of deprivation infuse a narrative that segregates refugees from the locals. It can be exposed through an intolerant attitude of one or both parties, although their power dynamics determine actions.

The attitudinal manifestations of differences could be in various forms, like racism, sexism, and religious and identity differences. Expressing parties' attitudes to each other could be non-violent or violent.⁵³ The former, generated in the form of prejudice, originates from xenophobic discrimination.⁵⁴ Some inherent factors that develop over the period, like a negative perception about refugees, due to real and perceived threats, and their engagement in unlawful activities, influence the manifestation of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against the 'other'.⁵⁵ In other words, locals could develop a tendency to reject and vilify foreigners who are not a part of the community, identity, or nationality. Racial and ideological differences, once exposed, could lead to violent actions against the other. A construction of others, who are foreigners to the core local identity and have external attributes and biases to their nation and identity, makes a fundamental difference in manifesting their tension and anxieties.

Their behavioural response, either violent actions or rejection, could be different on a contextual basis. As a part of an anti-refugees protest, a series of demonstrations, for example, developed in early 2017 in India against the Rohingyas to expel them from Jammu and Kashmir.⁵⁶ On the other hand, in 2014, hundreds of people protested against the rising number of Syrian refugees in Turkey for economic reasons.⁵⁷ Such protests also happened in 2019 when initiatives were taken for naturalising Palestinian and Syrian refugees in Lebanon.⁵⁸ These examples mean that attitudinal manifestation could be non-violent when the locals avoid the refugees. In contrast, it could be aggressive when they face severe threats to identity and security.

⁵³ Allison C. Aosved, Patricia J. Long and Emily K. Voller, "Measuring Sexism, Racism, Sexual Prejudice, Ageism, Classism, and Religious Intolerance: The Intolerant Schema Measure," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 39, no. 10, (2009): 2321-54.

⁵⁴ Kheireddine, Soares and Rodrigues, "Understanding (In)tolerance."

⁵⁵ Allison C. Aosved and Patricia J. Long, "Co-occurrence of Rape Myth Acceptance, Sexism, Racism, Homophobia, Ageism, Classism, and Religious Intolerance," *Sex Roles* 55, no. 7 (2006): 481-92; Aosved, Long and Voller, "Measuring Sexism."

⁵⁶ Böhmelt, Bove and Gleditsch, "Blame the Victims."

⁵⁷ S. Sarten, "Anti-refugee Sentiments in Turkey at All-time High," *Info Migrants*, Last accessed May 15, 2020, <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/18466/anti-refugee-sentiments-in-turkey-at-all-time-high>.

⁵⁸ Yurou, "Lebanese Protest against Refugees' Naturalization in Lebanon," *Xinhua*, Last accessed November 29, 2019, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-11/29/c_138593483.htm.

At the top of this pyramid, it represents the natural behavioural outcome of parties—what actions parties undertake under the circumstances and what types of results could lead are critical to understanding the host and guest relationship. Release of aggression, anger, and intolerance of the communities, is exposed at this level. These are actions undertaken by parties meant to oppose the other, aiming to alter or forgo their goals.⁵⁹ However, actions or behavioural outcomes do not always mean being violent. Anything aimed at the other party is considered conflict behaviour. However, outcomes like ‘compromise’, ‘retreat’, avoidance, or direct actions create an advantageous or disadvantageous situation for the opponent.⁶⁰

Despite having observable differences, growing prejudice, and hatred that develop towards refugees, host community people do not go for direct action unless it is required to protect them from any attacks. Their level of engagement often remains latent. A situation only alters when there are threats to the survival and severe safety and security concerns for the state and its citizens. Existential threat determines how and what approaches the host would undertake against a refugee population. They usually tolerate each other as long as state institutions and agencies maintain fundamental aspects of law and order.⁶¹ States accept refugees and provide essential protection for saving the lives of persecuted people,⁶² although they have the right to choose approaches, strategies, and policies for refugee management. Their management strategies and policy-making, however, depend ‘on the size’ of the refugee community, their population, and the geo-strategic issues of the states involved in the refugee management process.⁶³

Nevertheless, fear persists amongst the host, and so does among the refugees. None of the parties quickly act upon or be aggressive unless the action is for their survival.⁶⁴ Although, the behavioural outcome of the refugee-hosting community depends on a critical variable—the way they perceive refugees. Violent tension

⁵⁹ Christopher Mitchell, *The Structure of International Conflict*, (Springer: 1989).

⁶⁰ Mitchell, *The Structure*,

⁶¹ Brahm Eric, “Conflict Stages,” *Beyond Intractability*, Last accessed May 18, 2021, https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/conflict_stages;; Böhmelt, Bove and Gleditsch, “Blame the Victims?”

⁶² Dany Bahar, “Why Accepting Refugees is a Win-Win-Win Formula,” Last Accessed June 18, 2023, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/refugees-are-a-win-win-win-formula-for-economic-development/#:~:text=Thus%2C%20accepting%20refugees%E2%80%94providing%20the,lives%20in%20their%20host%20countries>.

⁶³ Gerasimos Tsourapas, “The Syrian Refugee Crisis and Foreign Policy Decision-Making in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey,” *Journal of Global Security Studies* 4. no. 4 (2019): 464-481, doi: 10.1093/jogss/ogz016

⁶⁴ Leonard Berkowitz, *Aggression: Its Causes, Consequences, and Control* (Philadelphia: Mcgraw-Hill Book Company, 1993).

does not occur all of a sudden. When an anti-refugee protest movement evolves, violence could be a part of it, or protest results in violence. For example, a protest against Rohingyas in Jammu and Kashmir ended with reported violent attacks on the refugees, creating a problematic situation and challenging perspective for Rohingyas.⁶⁵ However, the capacity of the host country has a determining role in reducing the risk of violence between the communities and groups.⁶⁶ A behavioural outcome—an engagement of the parties in violent action(s), either occasionally or sporadically, or not, can be more persistent if the state does not address such a situation correctly and with care. Weak states may handle refugee situations inappropriately, while strong states have strict refugee management strategies.⁶⁷ As the host state's capacity is vital in dealing with tension, conflict, and violence, it has the leverage to employ approaches and techniques to defuse tensions. The state can close a camp due to the locals' burden, relocate refugees to another location to avoid uncertainties and insecurities, prevent the ruthless section with sticks and apply and continue various conflict management strategies involving non-state actors working with refugees and host communities to prevent any unwanted situation.⁶⁸ A solid refugee management approach prevents any problem exploited by refugees, host communities, or any other opportunist leading to confrontation.

3. Violence and Atrocity in Myanmar and FDMNs in Cox's Bazar: Sources of Tolerance and Intolerance

The world knows how Rohingyas, a Muslim minority group in Myanmar, have been treated by their country in the postcolonial nation-building process. Rohingyas were active in the politics and governance of Myanmar as they had representatives in parliament,⁶⁹ but over the period, they were made stateless, in which one cannot rule out the role of the state and others. The exclusionary political practices and systematic violence in Myanmar made them the world's most persecuted minority.⁷⁰ The state authority in 1989 introduced colour-coded Citizens Scrutiny Cards: pink, blue, and green, respectively, for full, associate, and naturalised citizens, which

⁶⁵ Böhmelt, Bove and Gleditsch, "Blame the Victims?"

⁶⁶ Böhmelt, Bove and Gleditsch, "Blame the Victims?"

⁶⁷ Böhmelt, Bove and Gleditsch, "Blame the Victims?"

⁶⁸ Alfet Hadulu Jillo, *Non-State Actors and the Management of Refugee-Host State Conflict: A Critical Examination of the Kenyan Experience*, (MA Dissertation: University of Nairobi).

⁶⁹ Azeem Ibrahim, *The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Hidden Genocide* (London: C Hurst and Co Publishers Ltd, 2017).

⁷⁰ Kaveri and S. Irudaya Ranjan, "The Politics of Statelessness, refugeehood, and humanitarianism of the Rohingyas", *Frontiers Human Dynamics* 4 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fhumd.2022.921461>

deliberately excluded Rohingyas.⁷¹ There was a claim that when the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) issued the Temporary Registration Card without indicating nationality or place of birth to Rohingyas in 1995, it brought zero validity for claiming their nationality and citizenship in Myanmar.⁷² The generations of negligence of the Myanmar government towards Rohingyas and the nexus between the military and radical monks, who continued “unrestricted ‘hate speeches’” contributed to escalating violence in recent times.⁷³ The atrocities, torture, and violence that the Tatmadaw carried against the Rohingyas in 2017 left no option for those persecuted and traumatised people other than leaving the country and taking shelter in neighbouring Bangladesh.

After the influx of around a million Rohingyas into Bangladesh, acting as a generous host, the government and local people sheltered them in 34 temporary makeshift camps in the hilly forest terrains of Ukhiya and Teknaf. Although Bangladesh opened its border to shelter FDMNs on humanitarian grounds, the country and local people have experienced the situation differently in the last five years. Living in confined and fragile conditions made the FDMNs susceptible to different security risks, both as causes and consequences. However, the majority experienced the impacts of their presence adversely, which created a different perception about the displaced Rohingyas who took refuge in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh.⁷⁴ Based on the analytical pyramid model, this section analyses how various issues and concerns faced by the locals could contribute to developing a different perception of Rohingyas and how that could create conditions of intolerance if the state and other concerned actors do not undertake appropriate measures.

3.1 Socio-economic and Institutional Impacts

The 2017 massive influx has brought an array of impacts to the host communities. Local people of Ukhiya and Teknaf described the pros and cons of the 2017 influx, wherein the disadvantages outweighed the benefits. From a four-dimensional (e.g., economic, socio-cultural, environmental, and institutional) perspective, the paper finds that adverse effects seriously hit each aspect, and the

⁷¹ AKM Ahsan Ullah, “Rohingya Refugees to Bangladesh: Historical Exclusions and Contemporary Marginalisation,” *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 9, no. 2, 139-61, DOI: 10.1080/15562948.2011.567149.

⁷² C Lewa, “Asia’s New Boat People,” *Forced Migration Review* 30 (2008): 40-42, doi: 10.1097/01.COT.0000311433.90702.c7; Kaveri and Ranjan, “The Politics of Statelessness”, 2022

⁷³ Yousuf, “Securitization and Ethnic Violence.”

⁷⁴ Islam et al., “The 2017 Rohingya Influx into Bangladesh.”

local people have undertaken various coping strategies under the circumstances they have been through.

The economic impact of the influx is more observable than other aspects. A segment of the host communities, mainly the low-income population, endured hardship as their income dropped significantly.⁷⁵ Many of them lost job opportunities or had to work with low pay compared to their earlier wage rates because many locals employed displaced Rohingyas. The latter sell labour at a cheaper rate than the local labourers used to charge.⁷⁶ Rohingyas, who are not entitled to go outside the camps and work legally,⁷⁷ have been engaged in the labour force informally, creating pressure on the local labour market. Hence, a significant portion of local people either lost their jobs or experienced decreased income.⁷⁸ Some new job opportunities opened when Rohingyas arrived; those have been availed by educated people who work in various NGOs and other agencies involved in the humanitarian industry or have connections to work in the supply chain and do some business. However, Cox's Bazar is one of the poorest districts, and headcount poverty increased in Ukhiya and Teknaf after the influx.⁷⁹ According to some locals, daily commodity prices have increased two to three times compared to the pre-influx period, affecting low-income groups and people below the poverty line.⁸⁰ Losing sources of income has been a source of distress for many, while others lost access to their land, which have been used for setting up temporary makeshift camps.⁸¹ However, many locals have taken up various negative coping strategies to overcome such crises in their daily lives.⁸²

On the ecological front, cutting of hills and trees to establish makeshift camps, has contributed to declining forest resources making collecting firewood from

⁷⁵ Save the Children et al., *Self-reliance Situation of Host Communities in Cox's Bazar*, Dhaka: Undated.

⁷⁶ Shared by a service holder whose micro-narrative was collected on 16 November 2019, a local newspaper editor, interviewed on 1st March 2021, and community members in an FGD, conducted on 2nd March 2021.

⁷⁷ Verena Holzl, "Start-up: The Rohingya Entrepreneurs Eking Out a Living in Refugee Camps," *The New Humanitarian*, Last accessed April 30, 2021, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/feature/2019/04/29/Bangladesh-rohingya-entrepreneurs-eking-out-living-refugee-camps>.

⁷⁸ UNDP, *Impacts of the Rohingya Refugee Influx on Host Communities*, (UNDP: 2018).

⁷⁹ A. F. Lemma et al, Bangladesh Economic Dialogue on Inclusive Growth: *Strategies for Inclusive Growth in Cox's Bazar*, Asia Foundation, UKAID and ODI, 2018, Last Accessed May 22, 2022, <https://think-asia.org/handle/11540/9323>.

⁸⁰ Reflected by various storytellers in Teknaf and Ukhiya and discussed widely in an FGD, conducted in Ukhiya on March 01, 2021; "Rohingya Crisis Deepens Poverty Among Locals: WB", *The Daily Star*, Last accessed on June 23, 2022, <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/rohingya-crisis-deepens-poverty-among-locals-wb-1810873>.

⁸¹ International Rescue Committee, *Access to Justice for Rohingya and Host Community in Cox's Bazar* (2019).

⁸² Highlighted by a housewife, story collected on 10 March 2020, and referred by a development worker, interviewed on 2nd March 2021.

the forests difficult for all, including locals.⁸³ The temperature of the camp areas has unusually been high due to the presence of many people and associated deforestation. Overcollection and overuse of freshwater by many Rohingyas through many newly installed tube wells has caused water scarcity for locals as the layers of water went down.⁸⁴ The biodiversity of the Ukhiya and Teknaf areas has been affected too. For example, the movement of wild elephants was obstructed by the establishment of Rohingya camps, resulting human-elephant conflict with casualties.

Despite government-enforced limitations on integration, informal communication and interaction between the Rohingyas and the local community continues due to socio-cultural and religious similarities.⁸⁵ The condition of local women deteriorated as the number of host-Rohingya marriages increased, creating family problems, leading to domestic violence and destabilising peace.⁸⁶ Human trafficking has increased, and so has the drug trafficking. Various other social ills such as drug use, polygamy, and child marriage have increased and adversely affected local culture and society. In a patriarchal society, when local men get attracted to Rohingya women, that is nothing but men's psyche of fulfilling their masculine culture, creating problems in families and society. Rohingya women and adolescent girls also face insecurity and violence in the camps.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, the locals maintain caution in interacting with Rohingyas. Locals often avoid them due to their nature and involvement in unlawful activities. Sometimes, they create a contentious relationship when they share a common space, like the Kutupalong market, and locals want to avoid them.

Once Bangladesh welcomed Rohingyas on humanitarian grounds, the state and its agencies had to undertake various measures to manage the Rohingya crisis in Cox's Bazar. Some aspects of such procedures affected locals' lives. Hence, mixed feelings have developed among them, and implicit dissatisfaction has grown towards the administration.⁸⁸ Due to the 2017 crisis, displaced Rohingyas received massive

⁸³ Sharif A. Mukul et al., "Rohingya Refugees and the Environment," *Science* 364, no. 6436 (2019): 138; UNDP, "Impacts of the Rohingya".

⁸⁴ Highlighted by a local government representative of Ukhiya, interviewed on 01 March 2021.

⁸⁵ ACAPS and NPM Analysis Hub, *Rohingya Crisis: Host Communities Review*, Last accessed on October 22, 2022, <https://www.acaps.org/special-report/rohingya-crisis-host-communities-review>.

⁸⁶ This issue was referred by local inhabitants in FGDs, interviews and micro-narratives.

⁸⁷ Md Rafiqul Islam et al., "An Assessment of the Sustainability of Living for Rohingya Displaced People in Cox's Bazar Camps in Bangladesh," *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work* (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41134-022-00212-5>.

⁸⁸ Referred by a local driver, story collected on 10 March 2020, and both male and female participants of FGDs, held in Ukhiya on 1st March 2021, shared their experience in this regard.

attention from the state and international community, which the locals have perceived negatively.⁸⁹ They felt neglected. However, as a part of the Rohingya management process, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) deployed security forces, who have applied different approaches like fencing the camps and setting up security checkpoints so that Rohingyas cannot go outside and integrate with locals and disperse across Bangladesh.⁹⁰

Activities like security checks in designated posts on the main highway and checking the locals' original national identity (NID) have created a reserved perception of security providers.⁹¹ Security checks have been stressful for locals, who had to show NIDs every time to prove their citizenship in Bangladesh, although they had no other option but to comply with the duty officers' approach.⁹² Sometimes they felt harassed, a by-product of hosting Rohingyas. Besides these, not much development happened in repatriating Rohingyas to their country, which concerns locals who think the effects they have experienced may endure for an uncertain period. The temporary FDMNs could stay longer and diffuse with the locals in the future.

Local people of Ukhiya and Teknaf perceived that the effects of hosting Rohingyas have made them think twice about having them anymore, although the government cannot send them back until a repatriation process begins. The presence of FDMNs in various ways influenced their life and livelihood. These may not lead to hostility between the host and guests as long the state and its agencies are responsible for managing the Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar. However, a sense of considering Rohingyas differently has developed amongst the host population as long as Rohingyas have priority over the locals in many aspects.

3.2 *Local's feelings of deprivation and perception of threats*

The impacts of hosting Rohingyas have generated a feeling of discrimination in multiple dimensions amongst the locals when getting inadequate attention from the state institutions and other support providers exacerbates such a sense. However, a sense of deprivation originates not just from reality; a perception generated through the facts

⁸⁹ Indicated in the story of a local service holder, micro-narrative was collected on 3rd March 2020.

⁹⁰ R. A. Rahman, "Home Minister: Barbed Wire Fencing Underway Around Rohingya Camps," *Dhaka Tribune*, January 15, 2022, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/rohingya-crisis/2020/02/15/home-minister-barbed-wire-fencing-underway-around-rohingya-camps>.

⁹¹ Discussed broadly by all female members participated in an FGD, conducted in Ukhiya on 01 March 2021.

⁹² Reflected by a local business person of Teknaf, story collected on 15 March 2020.

also contributes to risks and deficiency of opportunities and services. All collectively contribute to developing a cognitive scenario in the minds of community members who host displaced people. Since Rohingyas' arrival, the hosts in Ukhiya and Teknaf have identified several sources of deprivation in their everyday lives, making many of their lives hazardous. As discussed earlier, underprivileged people have lost work or are forced to work at a low wage. Many lost lands, while others lost sources of income and resorted to alternative income methods. In addition, the government imposed various restrictions, including restricting mobile networks for better management of the crisis.⁹³ Therefore, many locals, if not all, have been deprived of multiple tangible and intangible services and benefits.

The direct assistance that Rohingyas as 'refugees' received in different forms from the international community created a sense of dissatisfaction among the locals.⁹⁴ Although they are not supposed to get such benefits, the presence of FDMNs make them think that they should also have access to such assistance. Upon the direction of GoB, the Joint Response Plan (JRP) revised policies to assist Rohingya-hosting local communities in overcoming their disadvantages. However, there have been complaints that not everyone gets such assistance, or those who get it have inadequate support. A development worker argues that the help of tangible and intangible natures perhaps covers 60 per cent of affected people but is not enough.⁹⁵ Host families who live inside the camps feel deprioritised by the concerned actors. For example, they rarely received gas cooking stoves, while Rohingyas received them to meet their cooking needs, although a shortage of cooking firewood affected both communities.⁹⁶ Electric-powered cookers and deep tube wells were provided to Rohingyas, while the host's tube wells were 150 to 200 feet deep, inadequate and inappropriate to collect fresh water from lower water layers.⁹⁷

There has been a claim that FDMN's presence has restricted the freedom of movement of locals who have to show NID at security posts. While showing NID

⁹³ Shared by local storyteller of Ukhiya, micro-narrative collected on 11 November 2019; H. K. Bhuiyan, "3G, 4G Internet Restored in Rohingya Camps," *The Daily Star*, September 22, 2020, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/rohingya-crisis/2020/08/28/3g-4g-internet-restored-in-rohingya-camps>.

⁹⁴ Reflected by a local representative and local business person of Ukhiya, both interviewed on 1st March 2021.

⁹⁵ Reflected by a development worker, interviewed on 1st March 2021.

⁹⁶ Jessica Olney, Muhammad Badiuzzaman and Mohammad Azizul Hoque, *Social Cohesion, Resilience and Peace Building between Host Population and Rohingya Refugee Community in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh*, (Dhaka: BRAC and UNDP, 2019).

⁹⁷ Olney, Badiuzzaman and Hoque, *Social Cohesion, Resilience and Peace*.

is considered a hassle by the locals, failing to show cards adds to their hassle.⁹⁸ They often had to wait for hours to pass the check post or communicate at home for someone to bring the card and show it to the security personnel.⁹⁹ Sometimes they become highly emotional that they have to prove their nationality to the administration (e.g., security providers).¹⁰⁰ This gives the locals a gusting feeling of mistreatment that questions their nationality which they believe is caused by the presence of the FDMNs. They, therefore, perceive the FDMNs to be responsible for their loss of fundamental freedom.

However, a section of locals has intensified this complicated process. A syndicate developed after the 2017 crisis, which started arranging fake NIDs, birth certificates and Bangladeshi passports for Rohingyas.¹⁰¹ Due to administrative weaknesses, it has been an issue of lack of good governance, as many Rohingyas accessed Bangladeshi passports to go to other countries.¹⁰² However, those who were in Saudi Arabia with Bangladeshi passports were given passports ‘under special arrangements in the OIC agreement’ to arrange ‘asylum’ for Rohingyas there.¹⁰³ Once the issue of fake passports availed by Rohingyas came to the surface after the 2017 influx, the GoB put restrictions and a wide range of conditions on issuing these documents that affect the locals who live in Cox’s Bazar district.¹⁰⁴ Claims go on that they cannot get birth certificates from local councils, as they do not issue certificates due to state restrictions. Without such a certificate, young children struggle to enroll in local schools. Such administrative regulations and legal limits contributed to a sense of questionable freedom, which looked unfair to the locals, generated only because of the presence of FDMNs. A local driver from Teknaf echoed the voice of many host people by saying.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁸ Shared by a local business person of Teknaf, story collected on 6 March 2020; Discussed by female-participants of an FGD, conducted in Ukhiya on 1st March 2021.

⁹⁹ Discussed by female-participants of an FGD, conducted in Ukhiya on 1 March 2021.

¹⁰⁰ Shared by a local story teller, micro-narrative was collected on 17 November 2019, and FGD participants of Teknaf, conducted on 2nd March 2021.

¹⁰¹ F.M. Mizanur Rahaman, “Syndicate Helps Rohingyas Get NID, Passports,” *The Daily Star*, June 22, 2021, <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/syndicate-helps-rohingyas-get-nid-passports-1796749>.

¹⁰² Tarek Mahmud, “250,000 Rohingyas Went Abroad with Bangladeshi Passports,” *Dhaka Tribune*, September 19, 2018, <https://archive.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2018/09/19/250-000-rohingyas-went-abroad-with-bangladeshi-passports>.

¹⁰³ “Bangladesh will not Issue Passports to Rohingyas in Saudi Arabia,” *The Business Standard*, May 03, 2023, <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/migration/bangladesh-will-not-issue-passports-rohingyas-saudi-arabia-625546>.

¹⁰⁴ Discussed widely by FGD participants of Ukhiya and Teknaf, held on 1st and 2nd March 2021.

¹⁰⁵ Micro-narrative of this person was collected on 10 March 2020.

“After the influx, we are deprived of legal, administrative, and other services. What can the local government do? Before, we could go anywhere without fear, and after the influx, we felt harassed in the check posts ... This is shameful for us. Where is our freedom?”

Increased road traffic, accidents, associated injuries, and deaths on the Ukhiya and Teknaf highways have put local lives at risk. People had never experienced such high traffic on this road. The number of cars plying on this highway has increased for carrying goods, rations, and other materials for the Rohingyas. Having such high traffic on the street, many locals stopped sending children to schools alone. Also, the education system has been seriously jeopardised by the presence of Rohingyas in Ukhiya and Teknaf.¹⁰⁶ Once the influx originated in 2017, many students and teachers joined the humanitarian aid industry to earn quick money which is depriving the students of proper education as well as making their education incomplete.¹⁰⁷

The host’s feelings of deprivation and risks have become multifaceted—ranging from everyday routine life to particular aspects of their lives. Although this sense of deprivation also affects their relationship with other concerned stakeholders, its liability goes to the presence of FDMNs in their locality. It carries an implicit feeling of intolerance against them. A Teacher from Ukhiya mentioned: “The Rohingyas have many opportunities, but the locals are suffering and are deprived of every opportunity.”¹⁰⁸ Amongst the host population, a sentiment is growing that the FDMNs have made them ‘foreigners’ in their land, as unwanted guests statistically outnumber them in Ukhiya and Teknaf.

Besides being a minority in its land, a future scenario concerning perceived threats and real insecurities continues to develop among the host community. The locals mention a number of instances about how a section of Rohingyas have been involved in various crimes and unlawful activities, such as robbery, theft, murder, sexual harassment, fighting, gun running, drug dealings, etc. A local service holder working in Ukhiya stated:¹⁰⁹

“I work in the camps. Sometimes we are given our salaries in hand. When we bring back the salaries from the camp, we feel insecure. We fear that

¹⁰⁶ Islam et al., “The 2017 Rohingya Influx into Bangladesh.”

¹⁰⁷ Islam et al., “The 2017 Rohingya Influx into Bangladesh.”

¹⁰⁸ The story of this person was collected on 15 November 2020.

¹⁰⁹ Micro-narrative collected from Ukhiya on 17 November 2020.

organised Rohingya groups might steal from us. Because things like this have happened, that is why we feel afraid. Rohingyas have become desperate, like hungry tigers. They do not even hesitate to kill the locals now. That is why our safety is at risk.”

By statistics, the number of crimes has been on the rise since the arrival of Rohingyas in Cox’s Bazar. Their involvement in various criminal and unlawful activities not only put the locals under threat but also create a hostile and stereotyped label of the Rohingyas. Many recognise them as ferocious and dangerous, who went through various conflicts in life and lacked various behavioural capacities to live in.¹¹⁰ Thus, the whole Rohingya community is portrayed negatively due to unlawful and unacceptable activities of some sections, although the role of local drug lords who use the vulnerability of displaced Rohingyas to meet their unlawful interests cannot be overlooked.¹¹¹ Statistics show that since 2017, Yaba (a stimulant drug) smuggling has increased, and it is claimed by many that small shops inside Rohingya camps are being used as a storehouse and centres of Yaba trade.¹¹² Drug syndicates have spies across the camps and are ‘organised and ruthless’; therefore, ordinary Rohingyas remain highly scared to discuss this. Both old Rohingyas and FDMNs without legal work permission earn currency from drug trafficking.

The drug trade are attracting greedy locals too, who use Rohingyas for illegal business. The more drug consignments enter Teknaf and Ukhiya by crossing the Naf River, the larger the number of local groups involved in such illegal business. It is not only a worry of local people but also a concern for national security —as these drugs, especially Yaba, is routed to different parts of the country, including Dhaka. The Myanmar-Bangladesh trafficking route arguably links with the adjacent Golden Crescent, Golden Triangle drug cartels.¹¹³ Statistics show those involved in drug trafficking connect with other criminal activities, such as gun running, abduction, ransom collection, smuggling, murder, rape, human trafficking, etc.¹¹⁴ While crime

¹¹⁰ Reflected by local male community members in FGDs in Ukhiya and Teknaf, conducted on 1st and 2nd March 2021, respectively.

¹¹¹ Islam et al., “The 2017 Rohingya Influx into Bangladesh.”

¹¹² Tarek Mahmud, “Crime on Rise in Cox’s Bazar Camps,” *Dhaka Tribune*, 1st September 2018, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/2018/09/01/crime-on-rise-in-cox-s-bazar-camps>.

¹¹³ Anjum Iffat, “The Crux of Transnational Yaba-Trafficking Nexus in Bangladesh: Explaining the Reasons and Advocating Counter-Strategies,” *International Journal of Research and Scientific Innovation (IJRSI)*, Vol. 7, No.2, 2000, pp. 13-20.

¹¹⁴ Muktadir Rashid, “Many Rohingyas Get Involved in Crimes,” *New Age*, August 25, 2020, Available at <https://www.newagebd.net/article/114440/many-rohingyas-get-involved-in-crimes>; Accessed on May 22, 2022; A. Aziz, “Rohingya Crisis: 115 Murders Reported in Camps in 5 years,” *Dhaka Tribune*, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/rohingya-crisis/2022/08/25/rohingya-crisis-115-murders-reported-in-camps-in-5-years>. Accessed on 22 September 2022.

rates increase, many Rohingyas become the target of human traffickers who take life risks to migrate to other countries through the sea.¹¹⁵

Statistics show that between August 2017 and August 2022, 2,438 criminal cases were filed over violence in camps against 5,226 displaced people due to their involvement in criminal and unlawful activities.¹¹⁶ More than one hundred Rohingyas were murdered in the camps during this period.¹¹⁷ Although these numbers may look less proportionate to the total FDMNs, such incidents cause serious worries for the state and people. Law enforcement agencies undertook a hard approach to control such criminal and illegal activities, and neutralised many in crackdown operations.¹¹⁸ A section of the unemployed Rohingyas get involved in criminal activities, making some earnings and fighting to establish control inside the camps.¹¹⁹ Another reason for the growing resentment among Rohingyas is that they find their situation hopeless in terms of prospect of returning home. Their repatriation process has not progressed satisfactorily, making them frustrated and ‘unruly’.¹²⁰ It cannot be denied that amongst the sub-districts of Cox’s Bazar - Ukhiya and Teknaf have experienced the most incidents of violence and crime, abduction, assault, gunfights, clashes, etc., since the arrival of the Rohingyas.¹²¹

The organised Rohingya group, Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), also known as Harakah al-Yaqin, is claimed to be a concern for local communities due to its involvement in various questionable activities. Though ARSA claims that its activities have been “confined to Myanmar”, it arguably recruits fighters from the Rohingya camps, “often through coercion,” and ordinary camp dwellers fear reprisal if they talk against it.¹²² It is a source of tension and anxiety for camp dwellers and locals. The Al-Yaqin, an infamous and fearful organisation led by Abdul Hakim, alias Hakim Dakhat, has been active in the camp and adjacent areas. Reports say it has

¹¹⁵ Ruma Paul, Sudipto Ganguly and Krishna N. Das, “Surging Crime, Bleak Future Push Rohingya in Bangladesh to Risk Lives at Sea,” *Reuters*, January 24, 2023, Available at <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/surging-crime-bleak-future-push-rohingya-bangladesh-risk-lives-sea-2023-01-24/#:~:text=Police%20arrested%20%2C531%20Rohingya%20and,on%20police%20and%20human%20trafficking>.

¹¹⁶ Rashid, “Many Rohingyas Get Involved.”

¹¹⁷ Aziz, “Rohingya Crisis.”

¹¹⁸ Rashid, “Many Rohingyas Get Involved.”

¹¹⁹ Mahmud, “Crime on Rise in Cox’s Bazar.”

¹²⁰ Mohammad Al-Masum Molla, “Refugee Camps: Crime Spikes while Rohingyas Despair,” *The Daily Star*, May 17, 2019, <https://www.thedailystar.net/rohingya-crisis/news/refugee-camps-crime-spikes-while-rohingyas-despair-1744768>.

¹²¹ Bangladesh Peace Observatory, <http://peaceobservatory-cgs.org/#/division/upazilla>, Last accessed on May 05, 2021.

¹²² Paul, Ganguly and Das, “Surging Crime, Bleak Future Push.”

many members, including females, in Rohingya camps in Kutupalong and Balukhai areas.¹²³ Besides establishing control in the camps by fighting with other groups, such as the Munna group, Anas group, Mahad group, Salman Shah group, Hafez Ahmad group, Nure Alam Bahini, and Zakir group, its members are engaged in drug and human trafficking, abduction and ransom collection.¹²⁴ A recent defense ministry report that was presented to the parliamentary standing committee states that eleven armed groups are active in the camps and are engaged in extortion, drug, and human trafficking.¹²⁵

After kidnapping ordinary Rohingya and local people, they take them into uninhabited hills and release them once they get money—otherwise, mercilessly torcher and even kill them.¹²⁶ Money that they generate through such activities is used for buying firearms.¹²⁷ They torture and rape ordinary Rohingyas in front of their family members, thus creating a reign of terror inside the camps.¹²⁸ On the other hand, the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO), which focuses on ‘representing and advocating for the rights of Rohingya refugees in Myanmar’ has re-emerged and has been engaged in conflicts with the ARSA, which could create critical conditions for the rights and dignity of displaced Rohingyas and locals.¹²⁹ The fights these groups carry forward to establish control in certain areas could be fatal and increase hostility inside the camps, as six Rohingya people recently were killed in a clash between these two rival groups.¹³⁰ None can say that such activities would not have any domino effects on the host population and host country.

Due to growing insecurity and threats, inside and outside of the camps, the GoB fenced some camps to regulate Rohingya movements, built watchtowers, and

¹²³ Abdur Rahman and Jashim Uddin, “অপহরণ-ধর্ষণে ভীতির সৃষ্টি: কক্সবাজারের মূর্তিমান আতঙ্ক ‘আল-ইয়াকিন’ (Creating a reign of terror through abduction and rape: Al Yaqin is a visible fear in Cox’s Bazar), *Dhaka Post*, <https://www.dhakapost.com/exclusive/43355?fbclid=IwAR3eAsUXPGSgVRSIAjIP5AFZXxE5zrPLHVjOSxnbeCBnG0hJ6z0yQsM05PA>.

¹²⁴ Rahman and Uddin, “অপহরণ-ধর্ষণে ভীতির সৃষ্টি.”

¹²⁵ Riadul Karim, “Defence Ministry Report: 11 Active armed Groups in Rohingya Camps,” *Prothom Alo (English)*, February 27, 2023, <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/crime-and-law/sbyhp2noh4>

¹²⁶ Rahman and Uddin, “অপহরণ-ধর্ষণে ভীতির সৃষ্টি.”

¹²⁷ Rahman and Uddin, “অপহরণ-ধর্ষণে ভীতির সৃষ্টি.”

¹²⁸ Rahman and Uddin, “অপহরণ-ধর্ষণে ভীতির সৃষ্টি.”

¹²⁹ “Questions raised about audio recording urging mass killing,” *Dhaka Tribune*, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2023/02/26/rohingya-leaders-audio-urging-mass-killings-sparks-concerns>.

¹³⁰ International Rescue Committee, “*Access to Justice*”; Al Jazeera, “At Least Six Rohingya Refugees Killed in Bangladesh Camp Clashes,” July 07, 2023, Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/7/7/several-rohingya-refugees-killed-in-bangladesh-camp-clashes>.

set up surveillance cameras to oversee the camp condition, though some argued that such initiatives could undermine camp-dwellers' rights to freedom of movement.¹³¹ One could not discard camp-based extremist groups; the police and Rapid Action Battalion, a specialised wing of Bangladesh police, carried out some operations from time to time in the uninhabited hills.¹³² Denying such a group's presence and activities could considerably complicate the situation as displaced and local people become the targets and victims of their unlawful tasks and violence.

Fear of losing control over land, property, and particularly a part of the territory of Bangladesh goes around. A sense of anxiety, apprehension, and animosity engulfs the host because of various rumors such as Rohingyas have claimed 'both sides' of Arakan,¹³³ i.e. they want to establish control over the Myanmar side of Arakan, and Cox's Bazar, including the Teknaf and Ukhiya regions of Bangladesh, which they claim as their original territory.¹³⁴ A 45-year-old man from Teknaf expressed concern:¹³⁵

"We only want them to be sent back to their country. Just think about what will happen to us if they stay here for the rest of their lives. When I think about it, I get the shivers. What if we have to escape the country in the future?"

Many ordinary people living in rural areas and people of various classes and positions also worry about their future. Another rumor goes around plans to take over the region, from Cox's Bazar to Feni district.¹³⁶ It could be a rumour but has an imminent threat perspective linked to the survival of the local population and protection of the region and Bangladesh. A person who works in Teknaf explained the dangers of having Rohingyas super-critically:¹³⁷

¹³¹ International Crisis Group, *A Sustainable Policy for Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh*. Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2019; Human Rights Watch, "Bangladesh: Halt Plans to Fence-In Rohingya Refugees: Barbed Wire, Guard Towers to Deny Freedom of Movement," 2019, Available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/09/30/bangladesh-halt-plans-fence-rohingya-refugees>, Last accessed on June 23, 2023.

¹³² Rahman and Uddin, "অপহরণ-ধর্ষণে ভীতির সৃষ্টি."

¹³³ Olney, Badiuzzaman and Hoque, *Social Cohesion, Resilience and Peace*.

¹³⁴ Olney, Badiuzzaman and Hoque, *Social Cohesion, Resilience and Peace*.; Rahman and Uddin, "অপহরণ-ধর্ষণে ভীতির সৃষ্টি."

¹³⁵ A local driver of Teknaf; narrative was collected on 07 March 2020.

¹³⁶ Shared by FGD participants of Ukhiya, conducted on 1st March 2021.

¹³⁷ Interview conducted on 2nd March 2021.

“The locals have already become the minority... We feel alarmed ... In the future, they can declare independence. Because in the future, they will become members and Chairmen. They [many of them] have already acquired [fake] NID cards and passports. Maybe they will rule over us 8-10 years or 20 years later. Everyone is frightened over this.”

Threats and fears are not always physical or directly observed; some are associated with locals’ feelings. The feeling of bearing the burden of hosting FDMNs is natural; a massive wariness is unseen and unobserved. Although some strategies like vigilance of security forces and fencing the camps with razor/barbed wires have kept the observable threats minimum, locals feel that many organisations have a Rohingya-prioritised policy over the interests of the locals. Once dissatisfaction develops with security checks and a feeling of deprivation, threats, risks, and associated anxieties linked to livelihoods, security, and survival of the local population, a questionable relationship between the host and FDMNs will not be uncommon. Intolerance could loom out of fear, apprehension, and frustration. Thoughts of being chased away by the same Rohingyas they once had provided refuge and shelter could be a critical source for seeing them differently.

3.3 Narratives of Difference

The concept of differentiating, which has a complex meaning in a crisis, plays an inflexible role in perceiving the opponent from a specific lens that exposes differences of concerned groups in everyday narratives. Once such differentiating narratives, consciously or subconsciously, influence peoples’ thinking, that can tacitly excuse an existing relationship that binds groups—like sympathy to the other group for any reason or accepting them in works.¹³⁸ Religious proximity was one of the reasons that allowed the host people to welcome the FDMNs since the latter experienced and endured persecution, atrocities, and torture in Myanmar. A middle-aged unemployed person from Teknaf explained:¹³⁹

“I did not stop welcoming Rohingyas in my orchard from where every year I collected firewood. They have sought refuge because they are in trouble. If we do not help them, where will they go? If I help people in need, Allah will do the same for me. If I do not help people in need, what type of Muslim am I? Islam says that every Muslim is a brother to other Muslims”.

¹³⁸ Joshua Greene, *Moral Tribes: Emotion, Reason, and the Gap between Us and Them*, Penguin, 2013.

¹³⁹ Micro-narrative collected on 07 November 2019.

The sympathy and empathy that encouraged the host community to shelter Rohingyas on religious and humanitarian grounds have changed over time. Over the period, locals have perceived significant differences with the FDMNs on different grounds despite having religious proximity. One of the main reasons for such change is their ‘attitudes and behaviour’ to the environment and locals. Local FGD participants perceived Rohingyas as orphans when they arrived, but their nature has evolved differently from theirs.¹⁴⁰ Religious proximity does not work much to glue their relationship. Actual and perceived differences have made the distinctions clear to them. An FGD participant argued:¹⁴¹

“They do not have knowledge of Islam over its entirety. They just give importance to prayer (Namaz) and fasting (Roza), and nothing else. They will make you a promise but will not give importance to it. Lying means nothing to them ... They do not consider breaking promises as a bad thing.... Lying and breaking promises are forbidden in Islam.”

This excerpt portrays how host people have distinguished between them, specifying through religious rituals, practices, and normative aspects of religion, although both the communities are Muslims who have religious commonness. Rohingyas are Muslim, saying their prayers in mosques available in the camps and practicing Islamic rituals like other Muslims.¹⁴² With this distinction, the locals may show reluctance to a shared duty that encouraged them to shelter the FDMNs in 2017.

Both communities have some similarities in local dialects. By indicating cultural dissimilarities (e.g., use of different words, dress patterns, etc.), the locals distinguish themselves from the Rohingyas. A teacher of Teknaf exquisitely pointed out the cultural differences between the two. On the language issue, the person stated Rohingyas use the word “mui” (meaning I/me), whereas Bangladeshis use the word “ami” (indicating I/me).¹⁴³ A day laborer in Ukhiya depicted this difference further by saying: “We address them as ‘Apni’ (you), but they use the word ‘Tui’ (you) when they speak to everyone. This is in their language.”¹⁴⁴ The dressing pattern of Rohingyas and Bangladeshis is another distinguishing factor. Rohingyas dress like

¹⁴⁰ Reflected by FGD participant in Ukhiya , conducted on 1st March 2021.

¹⁴¹ Reflected by FGD participant in Ukhiya , conducted on 1st March 2021.

¹⁴² Islam et al., “An Assessment of the Sustainability of Living for Rohingya.”

¹⁴³ The person was interviewed on 2 March 2021.

¹⁴⁴ Story of this person was collected on 11 November 2019.

they tuck their shirts inside their ‘lungis’, which Bengalis do not do.¹⁴⁵ Rohingya girls also dress differently. They wear ‘thamis’, whereas Bengali girls wear salwar and kamij or shari.¹⁴⁶ Rohingyas lacked the technical know-how to use gas cylinders for cooking¹⁴⁷ and lacked interest in using family planning products.¹⁴⁸

This distinction process has emerged over the period, distinguishing Rohingyas from the locals and creating a different narrative of the FDMNs that goes beyond the earlier sympathetic portrayals. Locals distinguish them from the FDMNs based on linguistic differences, the practice of language, and access to modern amenities used in everyday life. These cognitive differences depict Rohingyas with another dimension which may have contributed to perceiving and framing them otherwise due to their distinctive socio-cultural practices and habits.

3.4 *Attitudinal manifestation of tolerance and intolerance*

When a society experiences dissatisfaction and deprivation and has differences from another community on various grounds, those may help develop a sense of difference or lead to direct intolerance. In hosting such an influx of Rohingyas, locals in the last five years’ experience have silently developed a reserved perspective about them, mixed with distrust. Due to various aspects and activities of different sections, Rohingyas have been labeled with multiple connotations, such as dishonest,¹⁴⁹ selfish,¹⁵⁰ greedy,¹⁵¹ liars,¹⁵² gamblers,¹⁵³ ignorant,¹⁵⁴ goons,¹⁵⁵ stubborn¹⁵⁶, etc. Although one can claim that they earned these titles through the activities of different sections of Rohingyas, one cannot ignore that they went through systematic deprivation and direct violence that forced them to leave their country with trauma. That is a reality; they are waiting to return home. Participants of an FGD, however, analysed traits and argued that some Rohingyas’ violent mentality and nature of involvement in unlawful activities, including abduction and murders, have made

¹⁴⁵ Story of this person was collected on 11 November 2019.

¹⁴⁶ Shared by a housewife of Ukhiya, story collected on 12 November 2019.

¹⁴⁷ Mentioned by male FGD participants, conducted in Ukhiya on 1 March 2021.

¹⁴⁸ Shared by a local driver of Ukhiya, story collected on 15 November 2019.

¹⁴⁹ Shared by housewife in Teknaf; micro-narrative collected on 10 March 2020.

¹⁵⁰ Shared by a businessman in Teknaf whose story was collected on 09 March 2020.

¹⁵¹ Stated by a housewife in Ukhiya, narrative collected on 05 November 2019.

¹⁵² Stated by a business person in Teknaf; whose micro-narrative was collected on 08 March 2020.

¹⁵³ Stated by a local business person in Teknaf; micro-narrative was collected on 06 March 2020.

¹⁵⁴ Stated by a housewife in Ukhiya; micro-narrative was collected on 10 November 2019.

¹⁵⁵ Stated by a service-holder in Ukhiya; micro-narrative was collected on 17 November 2019.

¹⁵⁶ Stated by a pharmacist in Teknaf; micro-narrative was collected on 15 March 2020.

locals fearful.¹⁵⁷ Once such characteristics are exposed, local Bangladeshis see them differently and point out that Rohingyas, due to systematic violence in Myanmar, have brought violence from the other side of Naf to their locality.

Locals describe how they and their forefathers grew up in an atmosphere without fear and intimidation. They rarely experienced fighting, murder, and killing. Therefore, locals have created their version of explaining the characteristics of the Rohingyas. Instead of sympathising with FDMNs' struggles in a violent situation and how Myanmar treated them, some locals use that to describe their engagements in violent activities.¹⁵⁸ Although some attached various attributes to FDMNs, not all are as mischievous as many have projected.¹⁵⁹ Special interest groups operate inside the camps, and their involvement in atrocities, murder, and unlawful activities has secured such titles and attached negative attributes to all. Nevertheless, the unity of Rohingyas is a positive attribute that is not constructively perceived due to various issues. A 34-year-old businessman from Teknaf argued despite having multiple struggles in their life, Rohingyas are united, a source of their courage, which allows them to address any problem.¹⁶⁰

Due to those negative attributes, most people are afraid of interacting with FDMNs. The locals tend to avoid them and do not want to get into trouble with Rohingyas.¹⁶¹ Without seeing much progress in the repatriation process, fear of having them for an unknown period has lurked amongst the hosts.¹⁶² However, some locals take advantage of employing Rohingyas with low wages, whereas some local criminal gangs may exploit and engage them in unlawful activities. These happen due to the greed of profit-seeking locals. Some believe that the experience of torture and atrocity in Myanmar, made the Rohingyas develop a warrior mentality and exercise aggressive behaviour.¹⁶³ This view creates grounds for validating discriminatory behaviour against them. A 52-year-old housewife from Ukhiya argues:¹⁶⁴

“I could not imagine the Rohingyas being this evil. I thought about doing them a favour. That is why I let them stay on my land. And now they want to take control of my land We should not have let them seek refuge here.”

¹⁵⁷ FGD conducted in Ukhiya on 1 March 2021.

¹⁵⁸ Shared by male FGD participants in Teknaf, conducted on 2 March 2021.

¹⁵⁹ Shared by a local business person in Teknaf; micro-narrative was collected on 06 March 2020.

¹⁶⁰ Shared by a local business person in Teknaf; micro-narrative was collected on 06 March 2020.

¹⁶¹ Reflected by a service-holder in Ukhiya ; narrative was collected on 3rd March 2020.

¹⁶² Stated by a service-holder in Ukhiya ; narrative was collected on 14 November 2019.

¹⁶³ Interview with a local government representative in Ukhiya , interviewed on 1st March 2021.

¹⁶⁴ Narrative was collected on 10 November 2019.

There are three dominant attitudes of the locals towards them. Firstly, a group wants quick, dignified repatriation, as suggested by many.¹⁶⁵ The second group holds a mixed feeling, which tends to justify why the Rohingyas behave the way they do in the camps and adjacent areas. These two groups sympathise with religious proximity and the torture they experienced in Myanmar but develop reservations due to the involvement of some sections of Rohingyas in unlawful activities and their effects on local society. Having such a space and mixed perception of FDMNs does not mean the situation cannot change. The third perspective speculates an unwanted situation and changes towards more negativity.

3.5 Behavioural Responses

Behavioural responses are actions, reactions, and counter-actions of concerned parties that can escalate a latent situation to a violent event involving them physically. Once some core issues of the state and society are threatened, an unexpected situation could develop. Fear and threats create frustration that could lead to intolerant behaviour as the perception of Rohingyas has changed much from the 2017 welcoming approach. There are issues of tension and anxiety. Despite various concerns and issues of dissatisfaction, deprivation, fear, and lack of freedom, most local people try not to interact with the Rohingyas except for essential interactions in shared spaces like the market. They stay alert as much as possible. A shopkeeper from Ukhiya stated her apprehensions:¹⁶⁶

“After the Rohingya escaped with my husband’s money, I do not feel like interacting with them. I feel angry when I see them. But, since they are different, I try to interact with them, with caution, of course. So, I do not get betrayed. Even my husband is cautious now. If there is a Rohingya customer, he sells things after observing everything.”

Once they are present, distrust and disrespect can make it easier to escalate a situation. It depends on a triggering factor or a series of events that develop over time involving parties in such a relationship. Although there have not been many large-scale incidents where they engaged in direct violence, there have been minor-scale skirmishes, quarrels, and hostile engagements. Most such incidents occurred between

¹⁶⁵ Bayes Ahmed et al., “Sustainable Rohingya Repatriation in Myanmar: Some Criteria to Follow,” in Nasir Uddin (ed.) *The Rohingya Crisis: Human Rights Issues, Policy Concerns and Burden Sharing* (London & New Delhi: Sage, 2022): 301-333.

¹⁶⁶ Narrative of this person was collected from Ukhiya on 18 February 2020.

them either because of petty reasons or the aggressive attitudes and behaviour of the parties.¹⁶⁷ Once a few Rohingyas sat in a paddy field in the evening. After prayer, a host community person returned with his sons and found some people sitting in their paddy field; light from their torch fell on them and angered them. He was tortured and kidnapped and later rescued with the administration's support.¹⁶⁸

On another occasion, participants of an FGD¹⁶⁹ stated that children of both communities played and engaged in quarrels and fights, which Rohingyas used for a clash and disturbed the locality. There are latent tensions between the communities, although the host is not engaging in violence for various reasons, including religious sympathy for Rohingyas and the government's approach to temporarily host them until they repatriate. Ordinary Rohingyas, in general, are not violent, as they have taken refuge in Cox's Bazar to save lives. Given the complexity of the Rohingya crisis, the locals, however, avoid them and maintain a distance from them. Nevertheless, state control is one of the critical factors that keeps parties separate as much as possible and addresses issues quickly when anything happens between them. A local service holder from Ukhiya pointed out why they live peacefully with them:¹⁷⁰

“The local people are surviving because the government and the NGOs/INGOs are helping them. The government has employed members of the security force for the safety of the locals. That is why there has not been any large conflict between the locals and Rohingyas. This is why the locals have survived.”

The government sheltered Rohingyas, cooperated with the international community to provide humanitarian assistance, and undertook various other initiatives to ensure the security and safety of displaced and local people. Hosting more than a million displaced people has evolving security concerns for any host country like Bangladesh.¹⁷¹ With the help of the UNHCR, the GoB completed the biometric registration of Rohingyas for better management of the crisis.¹⁷² The GoB

¹⁶⁷ FGD 1, conducted with local community people in Ukhiya on 1st March 2021.

¹⁶⁸ Islam et al., “The 2017 Rohingya Influx into Bangladesh.”

¹⁶⁹ FGD 1, conducted in Ukhiya on 1st March 2021.

¹⁷⁰ Narrative of this person was collected on 3rd March 2020.

¹⁷¹ Md. Sohel Rana and Ali Riaz, “Securitization of the Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* (2022):1-17, DOI: 10.1177/00219096221082265.

¹⁷² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), “More than half a Million Rohingya Refugees Receive Identity Documents, most for the First Time,” 2019, Last accessed July 16, 2023. <https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing-notes/more-half-million-rohingya-refugees-receive-identity-documents-most-first-time>.

has set up watchtowers and fenced the camps to overcome security risks and establish control of the camps.¹⁷³ Army and police check posts have also been set up on the roads to prevent Rohingyas' movement towards towns and other cities and maintain public order. Special battalions of police—the APBn 14 and APBn 16—have been deployed to ensure security and undertaking measures in Rohingya camps.¹⁷⁴ Besides this, the government, with better facilities and amenities, started relocating around 100,000 Rohingyas to Bhasan Char to reduce pressure in Cox's Bazar camps.¹⁷⁵ One could look into those matters differently, either as a part of the securitisation of the Rohingya issue or influencing their rights to freedom of movement;¹⁷⁶ yet, the government approach has been to manage the displaced Rohingyas in a manner that could reduce challenges to the security of the state and its citizens.

Law enforcement agencies have effectively maintained order and stability in the region, even after several years of a massive influx. However, out of apprehension, the host communities have taken some cautionary measures, like forming small local organisations, to prevent any potential attacks that can work in association with the administration to avoid any unwanted situation. The GoB has offered some support to reduce local people's hardship and thus minimise their grievances created by the influx. Sending gifts to local people by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh was a policy approach to keeping them calm.¹⁷⁷

Nevertheless, Rohingyas' involvement in intra-community clashes inside the camps¹⁷⁸ and other unlawful activities have domino effects on the host population.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷³ Human Rights Watch, "Bangladesh is not My Country": The Plight of Rohingya Refugees from Myanmar," 2018, Last accessed July 22, 2023, https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/bangladesh0818_web2.pdf; Daniel P. Sullivan, *Fading Humanitarianism: The Dangerous Trajectory of the Rohingya Refugee Response in Bangladesh*, (Refugee International: 2021).

¹⁷⁴ Mohammad Ali Jinnat and Mohamad Jamil Khan, "Armed Police Battalions take charge of Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar," *The Daily Star*, July 02, 2023, <https://www.thedailystar.net/city/news/armed-police-battalions-take-charge-rohingya-camps-coxs-bazar-1923689>.

¹⁷⁵ Md. Didarul Islam and Ayesha Siddika, "Implications of the Rohingya Relocation from Cox's Bazar to Bhasan Char, Bangladesh," *International Migration Review* 56, no. 4 (2022): 1195-1205; Md. Rafiqul Islam et al., "Is Bhasan Char Island, Noakhali District in Bangladesh a Sustainable Place for the Relocated Rohingya Displaced People? An Empirical Study," *SN Social Sciences* 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-021-00281-9>.

¹⁷⁶ Rana and Riaz, "Securitization of the Rohingya"; Human Rights Watch, "Bangladesh is not My Country."

¹⁷⁷ Abdul Aziz, "PM's Eid Gifts worth Tk10cr for Rohingyas Being Distributed in Cox's Bazar," *Dhaka Tribune*, June 12, 2018, Last accessed March 23, 2020, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/2018/06/12/pm-s-eid-gifts-worth-tk10cr-being-distributed-in-cox-s-bazar>.

¹⁷⁸ Abdul Aziz, "Tensions High in Rohingya Camps as Casualties Mount from Internal Clashes," *Dhaka Tribune*, October 07, 2020, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/2020/10/07/tensions-high-in-rohingya-camps-as-casualties-mount-from-internal-clashes>.

¹⁷⁹ International Rescue Committee, "Access to Justice."

When local community issues are at stake, keeping patience becomes difficult. Following the murder of a local Jubo League leader by a group of Rohingyas in August 2019, local youths attacked Jadimura Rohingya shanties in Teknaf.¹⁸⁰ Besides hitting the camps, they vandalised billboards and signboards of various NGOs working inside the Rohingya camps.¹⁸¹ Local youths have grievances originated from the fact that instead of locals, outsiders – Rohingyas, formers as well as district outsiders occupy most of the jobs of the NGOs.¹⁸² There were instances when they protested and blocked roads. The murder of a local political leader sparked other resentments. Such an expression of growing anger is not uncommon when their leaders are threatened, attacked, and killed. Yet, it has become more of a security matter for local people who have suffered from the influx and already started disliking Rohingyas for various reasons.

However, pressure for existence and survival is quite visible amidst the host population—as hosting Rohingyas poses a covert threat to Bangladesh.¹⁸³ Being outnumbered in Ukhiya is a reality; it has psychological pressure on the host population, as anything could happen at any time. Since various Rohingya groups are active inside the camps and target displaced and local people to abduct and collect ransom, leading to torture and death, the residents live in fear; they do not generally come out to attack members of those Rohingya groups.¹⁸⁴

As mentioned, state capacity matters in hosting FDMNs and addressing refugee-centric problems and challenges. Bangladesh welcomed them primarily on humanitarian grounds, and undertook a bold approach to hosting them as PM Sheikh Hasina, in a visit to the Rohingya camps in 2017, stated, “We can feed 160 million people of Bangladesh, and we have enough food security to feed the 700,000 refugees.”¹⁸⁵ The state wanted to return them through a bilateral repatriation

¹⁸⁰ Masum Billah, “Bangladeshi Hosts in Cox’s Bazar Running out of Patience with Rohingya Refugees,” *Bdnews24.com*, August 24, 2019, <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2019/08/24/bangladeshi-hosts-in-cox-s-bazar-running-out-of-patience-with-rohingya-refugees>.

¹⁸¹ Billah, “Bangladeshi Hosts in Cox’s Bazar.”

¹⁸² Highlighted by a local pharmacist in Ukhiya ; micro-narrative was collected on 08 March 2020; Abdul Aziz, “Cox’s Bazar Locals Seek Jobs in Charities Working for Rohingyas,” *Dhaka Tribune*, March 04, 2019, <https://archive.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/rohingya-crisis/2019/03/04/cox-s-bazar-locals-demonstrate-for-ngo-jobs-in-rohingya-camps;>; *bdnews24.com*, “Bangladeshis Protest against Foreign NGOs Employing Rohingya,” 28 December 2020, <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/bangladeshis-protest-against-foreign-ngos-employing-rohingya>.

¹⁸³ Interview with a Buddhist religious leader, interviewed on 1st March 2021.

¹⁸⁴ Interview with a local government representative in Ukhiya, interviewed on 1st March 2021.

¹⁸⁵ “If We Can Feed 160m, We Can also Feed 700,000 Rohingya Refugees,” *Dhaka Tribune*, September 12, 2017, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2017/09/12/bangladesh-can-feed-700000-rohingya-refugees>.

agreement, which did not materialise yet; therefore, the state and society expressed rigidity for not accepting more Rohingyas from Myanmar.¹⁸⁶ The stricter policy the GoB undertook for Rohingya management, including the fencing around the camps, was to deter the “criminal activities” of some Rohingya groups and keep others safe.¹⁸⁷ The country had to rule over criticism of the strict management policy and decision to relocate Rohingyas to Bhasan Char to ensure their safety and protect its population.¹⁸⁸ However, the political uncertainty of the repatriation process made the situation more complicated.

On pressing issues like drug dealing, the GoB undertook a hard approach and started an anti-drug raid in May 2018.¹⁸⁹ Besides this, it opened a soft rehabilitation approach for local drug dealers; as a result, more than a hundred ‘Yaba godfathers’ surrendered to law enforcement agencies.¹⁹⁰ Bangladesh had been pragmatic in addressing the border issues with Myanmar. The Foreign Minister of Bangladesh stated:

“We will never kill a single person at the border. We don’t want to open fire on the Bangladesh-Myanmar border. But from now on, we’ll resort to firing to stop illegal activities.”¹⁹¹

Bangladesh undertakes these measures to establish control over the unlawful happenings in Bangladesh-Myanmar border areas. It undertook actions to ensure things do not go out of its hands, nor does the host population engage in disputes with the FDMNs.

¹⁸⁶ Hannah Ellis-Petersen, “Rohingya Crisis: Bangladesh Says it will not Accept any more Myanmar Refugees: Foreign Secretary tells UN the Country Paying the Price for ‘showing empathy to a persecuted minority,” *The Guardian*, March 01, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/01/rohingya-crisis-bangladesh-says-it-will-not-accept-any-more-myanmar-refugees>.

¹⁸⁷ “Bangladesh: On Track to Complete Barbed-Wire Fence Around Rohingya Camps by Mid-2021,” *Radio Free Asia*, June 01, 2021, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/fence-01062021181747.html>.

¹⁸⁸ Amy Mackinnon, “Ignoring Criticism, Bangladesh Begins Resettling Rohingya: Human Rights Groups have already Voiced Serious Concerns about the Plan to Move Thousands of Refugees to an Uninhabited Island,” December 07, 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/12/07/ignoring-criticism-bangladesh-begins-resettling-rohingya-bhasan-char-coxs-bazar-camp/>.

¹⁸⁹ Arun Devnath, “Bangladesh’s War on Drugs, Far from Over,” *The Hindu*, February 23, 2019, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/bangladeshs-war-on-drugs-far-from-over/article26352447.ece>.

¹⁹⁰ Hasan Al Javed, “Yaba Smuggling Continues even as ‘Godfathers’ Surrender,” *Dhaka Tribune*, August 22, 2020, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/2020/08/22/yaba-smuggling-continues-even-as-godfathers-surrender#:~:text=On%20May%204%2C%202018%2C%20Bangladesh,encounters%E2%80%9D%20with%20law%20enforcements%20agencies>.

¹⁹¹ “Firing on the Border, if Necessary, to Stop Drugs, Arms Smuggling from Myanmar: Momen,” *bdnews24.com*, October 06, 2021, <https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2021/10/06/firing-on-the-border-if-necessary-to-stop-drugs-arms-smuggling-from-myanmar-momen>.

Whatever policy and approaches the GoB undertakes, to what extent it would reduce local people's existential threats in Ukhiya and Teknaf remains a question. Concerns over the Rohingya repatriation process are real too. The locals fear offering them excessive scopes may not facilitate this process; instead, it could solidify their presence. Their movement to the Chattogram Hill Tracts could undermine local religious composition and increase social tensions.¹⁹² A sense of destabilisation in the region developed when Myanmar arguably attempted to divert the Rohingya issue into an inter-state issue. Immediately after the 2017 influx, there were provocations as Myanmar's drones and helicopters repeatedly violated Bangladesh's airspace, although the latter avoided the situation by showing self-restraint.¹⁹³ While fighting with separatist groups inside Myanmar, their mortar shells landed and exploded inside Bangladesh, creating tension and panic amongst locals in the Ghumdum border in Bandarban.¹⁹⁴ Perceiving a deteriorated situation and possible immigration, Bangladesh took a cautious stand and wanted to avert Myanmar provocation that could benefit them unilaterally.¹⁹⁵

Violent activities and unlawful actions of some FDMNs have generated fear among the host population. Under these circumstances, hosts' avoidance of Rohingyas has helped them not to respond to anything violently, except occasional engagement in dispute. Despite experiencing various concerns, anxiety, threats, and risks, they continue to shelter them due to the state policy. The locals, who have sheltered and undertaken different adaptive strategies, bear the brunt and restrain themselves from undertaking any actions, setting off a situation of escalating tensions between them. However, provocations could be a source of significant uncertainties, encourage actions and counter-actions inside and outside the camps, and undermine inter-state relations. Intolerance could destabilise the region if the state parties developed a complex relationship. The more days displaced Rohingyas stay in Ukhiya and Teknaf, the more complex and costlier it would become for Bangladesh.

¹⁹² "Prolonged Rohingya Crisis will affect the Economy", *The Daily Star*, December 11, 2022, <https://www.thedailystar.net/supplements/oxfam-human-rights-day-special-magazine-2022/news/prolonged-rohingya-crisis-will-affect-the-economy-3193686>.

¹⁹³ Anisur Rahman, "Sheikh Hasina Accuses Myanmar of Provoking 'War' over Rohingyas," October 07, 2017, <https://www.livemint.com/Politics/nNpc9VK4hOarzrgxn0CJIK/Sheikh-Hasina-accuses-Myanmar-of-provoking-war-over-Rohing.html>.

¹⁹⁴ "1 Killed as Six Myanmar Mortar Shells Explode at Ghumdum," *The Business Standard*, September 16, 2022, <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/rohingya-youth-killed-several-injured-myanmar-mortar-shells-hit-bangladesh-border-497654>; Star Digital Report, "BGB on High Alert as Mortar Shells from Myanmar Land in Bangladesh," *The Daily Star*, September 17, 2022, <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/asia/news/bgb-high-alert-mortar-shells-myanmar-land-bangladesh-3121406>.

¹⁹⁵ S. Bashu Das, "Myanmar Aircraft Cross Bangladesh Border, Fire Shells," *Dhaka Tribune*, September 03, 2022, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/nation/2022/09/03/2-shells-from-myanmar-warplanes-land-in-bangladesh>.

4. Conclusion

The Rohingya crisis is a perennial problem for Bangladesh. Being a next-door neighbour of Myanmar, Bangladesh had been a quick point of shelter for Rohingyas when they experienced atrocity and hostility at their homes in Rakhine state. Theoretically, this paper, through a pyramid model that explains the progression of relations between refugees and host communities, leading to tension and intolerance, argues that atrocity-led displacement from one country to another, to a considerable extent, can generate tensions, if not large-scale violence, in the destination place, which though depends upon various factors, including the state's capacity to address emerging issues of intolerance. Tension and anxiety develop steadily influenced by the changes refugees bring to the local context dynamics. Once the hosts experience the disadvantages and adverse effects of hosting refugees, they generate differences in perception and change locals' mindsets towards displaced people. However, whether an evolving tension remains invisible, latent, or becomes exposed to invite actions, reactions, and counter-actions of the parties is determined by the context where refugees are hosted. The means and approaches authorities, especially the host state and supporting actors, apply to maintain order and security are vital for managing anxieties and preventing unwanted situations. A physical confrontation between the host and refugees may not occur when tensions are covert. The state, overtly or covertly, can address any evolving problem. Yet, a problem could go out of control if the host state, due to its weaknesses, cannot deal with issues of meeting the needs and demands of the hosts and managing a crisis prudently.¹⁹⁶

On the Rohingya exodus to Bangladesh and their presence in Ukhiya and Teknaf, this paper argues that the unfavourable effects of the 2017 FDMN influx developed a local reserved perception towards them. The generosity that encouraged the locals to welcome them when the GoB sheltered them during their days when they experienced genocidal atrocity and threats to their lives in Myanmar has not been the same after five years but has turned into suspicion for various reasons. The hosts felt a sense of deprivation, insecurity, and anxiety, indicating an evolving complex social puzzle with proximity and plausibility of tension. The FDMNs are seen as a furuncle with different social tension tipping points, as many, but not all, are involved in anti-social, unlawful, and illegal activities. The existence of various armed and criminal groups and their unlawful activities such as drug dealing, abduction, murder, human trafficking, and fighting among themselves inside the camps has engulfed the locals

¹⁹⁶ Böhmelt, Bove and Gleditsch, "Blame the Victims.?"

in fear. All these contributed to developing a threat perspective to the locals, which generated narratives of differences against Rohingyas, which goes beyond their religious proximity.

Nevertheless, one cannot rule out the issues of state security and survival of the hosts, who are numerically outnumbered in their locality. The local version of the attitudes of various groups of Rohingyas towards them is alarming, although the latter maintain self-restraint for many reasons, including the state's policy of hosting them on humanitarian grounds and various other strategies the state has applied so far for Rohingya crisis management. No large-scale violence evolved between them, but the potential for intolerance exists. One could question the securitised and restrictive policies of the government; but the law enforcement agencies' presence has been vital to maintaining the region's law and order situation and keeping tension at a minimum level. However, locals want Rohingyas to return to their country, Myanmar, without which existing tensions could lead to a physical confrontation that could endanger the locals' safety and the state's security. Therefore, as a host state, Bangladesh and other relevant actors must consider some issues strategically so that any potential threats and risk factors can be identified and addressed quickly. Primarily, it is crucial to empower locals and meet their needs through diversified employment and livelihood opportunities to overcome the deprivation created by the presence of FDMNs. The state could re-strategise deploying competent forces to tackle unlawful and criminal activities that endanger the security and peace of locals, camp people, and locality. Moreover, there must be approaches to develop a locally-based joint early warning system to detect and prevent any potentially unwanted situation. Finally, the state must emphasise bilateral and trilateral, if not multilateral, negotiation processes to expedite the repatriation process of FDMNs to Myanmar.

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Segufta Hossain

FINANCING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS: BROKEN PROMISES AND THE LOSS AND DAMAGE FUND CONUNDRUM

Abstract

In spite of having several financial mechanisms of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for providing financial supports to the climate vulnerable developing countries, the loss and damage (L&D) issue received less priority in climate negotiations. The demand of the vulnerable developing countries to establish a separate mechanism to address climate change induced L&D got momentum in Conference of Parties (COP)27 with the decision of establishing a separate L&D Fund. Although the decision of establishing a separate L&D Fund was taken, the operational modalities of the fund are still not finalised and a transitional committee has been formed for recommending the functionalities of the proposed fund before upcoming COP28. Hence, the present paper aims to find out the reasons of the failure of existing financial mechanisms in supporting L&D which instigated the L&D issue to come forefront and identify the challenges that exist with the proposed L&D Fund which could hinder the functions of the fund. Climate vulnerability of Bangladesh has made her aspirant for getting the benefits of the L&D Fund. The paper provides some recommendations on how to overcome the challenges for ensuring the smooth functioning of the Fund as well as how Bangladesh can get the best benefits from the L&D Fund.

Keywords: Climate Finance, Paris Agreement, Global Environment Facility, Adaptation Fund, Loss and Damage Fund (L&D Fund)

“Loss and Damage is happening right now. We can’t adapt to the loss of our cultures, the loss of our identities, the loss of our histories. We can’t adapt to extinction or to starvation. We cannot adapt to loss and damage.” —Vanessa Nakate, Climate activist from Uganda¹

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¹ “Looking forward: Achieving the 2030 Agenda for people and planet (High-Level Leadership Dialogue),” UN Environment Programme, Last accessed April 20, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/clip/UgkxgQHleN6klOZMWOIOK33rMQtjfeXQnToA>.

1. Introduction

Climate change is one of the most crucial challenges that the earth is facing and its widespread impacts placing a burden on mainly the developing and underdeveloped countries around the globe. The real-life consequences of climate change such as higher temperature, sea level rise, unprecedented rainfall events, extreme cyclones and tornedos, etc. are faced by millions of people around the world. The United Nations (UN) has defined climate change as natural long-term shifts in temperature and weather patterns, but human activities became major reason of climate change since the 1800s.² Many countries and communities of the developing world have faced the devastating impacts³ which result into Loss and Damage (L&D) that can be divided into economic losses and non-economic losses⁴. The unprecedented and widespread threat imposed by climate change places a disproportionate burden on the vulnerable countries and people, nature and infrastructure are already facing the devastating effects of climate change.

The increased intensity and frequency of negative climate change impacts highlight the need for significant financial investments for climate actions. But for many developing countries investing for climate actions to achieve these climate goals is difficult due to lack of resources and technological know-how. Climate finance is necessary for both mitigating the greenhouse gas emissions and helping the vulnerable communities and economies for adopting the climate change related inevitable impacts. It was decided in the Paris Agreement that developed countries would take lead in providing financial support to the developing vulnerable countries for meeting their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), paying for adaptation and mitigation, and mobilising more climate finance. Although the international community has agreed upon the necessity to channel funds, the vulnerable countries have apprehensions about lack of clear distinction between development finance and climate finance. At the same time, the issue of L&D was absent in climate change discussions. L&D is the term that is used to describe the manifestation of the impacts

² “What is Climate Change?” United Nations, Last accessed March 05, 2023, <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/what-is-climate-change>.

³ The affected countries and communities have faced loss of lives and livelihoods, harm to human health and mobility, land degradation and land loss, damage to crops and infrastructures, loss of cultural heritage and indigenous local knowledge, socio-cultural identity, loss of biodiversity and ecosystem.

⁴ Economic losses and damages are those which affect resources, goods and services that are commonly traded in markets and which can be on a national or a local scale, such as impacts on individual farmers or communities. Non-economic losses include the incalculable toll of losing family members, the disappearance of cultures and ways of living, or the trauma of being forced to migrate from ancestral homes which can be the most devastating.

of climate change which cannot be avoided by adaptation and mitigation efforts. The issue was first introduced around 1991 in UN climate negotiations when proposal was given to create an insurance scheme for countries vulnerable to the impacts of rising sea levels. The L&D Fund was established after decades of demand, pressure and a long discussion with the aim to provide financial support to the countries that are most vulnerable and impacted by climate change and it was termed by many as the highlight of the COP27. Bangladesh is considered as one of the most vulnerable countries to the impacts of climate change and it is listed as the 7th most climate vulnerable country in the world despite having very little contribution to the global warming. In spite of various government initiatives, the country is in need of international financial support to overcome its climate change induced negative impacts. The establishment of the L&D Fund has ushered new expectations for the country for getting financial support to address the climate change induced L&D of the country. To summarise, the lack of recognition of the L&D issue in climate negotiations and unfulfilled promises of the developed countries in financing for climate change impacts have instigated the climate vulnerable developing countries to demand for a separate L&D Fund which was finally established in COP27. As the previous financial mechanisms of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have not been successful in addressing the L&D issues properly, the L&D Fund has immense importance for the climate vulnerable developing countries including Bangladesh. Therefore, finding out the existing challenges of the L&D Fund is necessary for the smooth operationalisation of the fund.

There is a dearth of literature on L&D Fund. To fulfil the objective of the research, the study has reviewed the literatures on climate finance to find out whether the existing support mechanism is sufficient to manage climate change induced impacts or not. Literatures have been reviewed to see how the issue of L&D Fund evolved over time gradually and how the issues of climate change impacts, L&D and L&D Fund have been portrayed by the scholars. Literatures on climate finance⁵ portray the poor financial support mechanisms for climate change impacts, depict the necessity of financing for managing climate change induced impacts and point out that due to the lack of proper definition, the climate finance debate has faced

⁵ Nicholas Stern, *Stern Review: The Economics of Climate Change* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Richard N. Cooper, "Financing for climate change," *Energy Economics* 34, Supplement 1(November 2012): S29-S33, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eneco.2012.08.040>; Harrison Hong, G. Andrew Karolyi and José A. Scheinkman, "Climate Finance," *The Review of Financial Studies* 33, no. 3 (March 2020): 1011–1023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/rfs/hhz146>; Ryo Fujikura, "Financing in Climate Change Adaptation," in *Financing Investment in Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation: Asian Perspectives*, eds. Mikio Ishiwatari and Daisuke Sasaki (Singapore: Springer Singapore, 2022), 19-35, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-2924-3>; Mizan R. Khan and Sirazoom Munira, "Poor Adaptation Finance: A Proposal for Turning Around," *BISS Journal* 42, no. 2 (April 2021): 131 – 51.

various challenging discourses.⁶ Scholars argue that ‘L&D’ issue has the potential to reinvigorate the existing mitigation and adaptation efforts⁷. Terming ‘L&D’ as a subject of contentious debate in international climate politics, scholars observe that like climate finance, there is a lack of clear definition and measurability of ‘L&D’.⁸ Being a new issue, L&D Fund is still absent in academic publications. The available literature on L&D Fund are mainly on how the fund was established amidst strong opposition from the developed countries.⁹ At the same time, scholars warn about delay in disbursement of the fund owing to the arguments over “contested science”.¹⁰

⁶ Sirazoom Munira, Raisa Bashar, Tahmid Huq Easher and Mizan R. Khan, “Climate Finance in the UNFCCC Negotiations: Bridging Gaps with Lessons Learnt,” in *Climate Change in Bangladesh*, eds. Md. Jakaria and Md. Nazrul Islam (Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2021), 1 – 24; Paul Bodnar, Caroline Otta, Rupert Edwardsb, Stephan Hoche, Emily F. McGlynn and Gernot Wagnere, “Underwriting 1.5°C: competitive approaches to financing accelerated climate change mitigation,” *Climate Policy* 18, no. 3 (2018): 368–382, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14693062.2017.1389687>; Richard B. Stewart, Benedict Kingsbury and Bryce Rudyk, “Climate Finance: Key Concepts and Ways Forward,” *Public Law & Legal Theory Research Paper Series*, Working Paper No. 09-69, Harvard Project on International Climate Agreements, 2009, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1517973>; Armen Papazian, “Towards a General Theory of Climate Finance,” Last modified February 10, 2021, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3797258>.

⁷ Saleemul Huq, Erin Roberts and Adrian Fenton, “Loss and Damage,” *Nature Climate Change* 3 (2013): 947–949; Rachel James, Friederike Otto, Hannah Parker, Emily Boyd, Rosalind Cornforth, Daniel Mitchell and Myles Allen, “Characterizing Loss and Damage from climate change,” *Nature Climate Change* 4 (2014): 938–939; Emily Boyd, Rachel A. James, Richard G. Jones, Hannah R. Young and Friederike E. L. Otto, “A typology of Loss and Damage perspectives,” *Nature Climate Change* 7 (2017): 723–729; Lisa Vanhala and Cecilie Hestbaek, “Framing Climate Change Loss and Damage in UNFCCC Negotiations,” *Global Environmental Politics* 16, no. 4 (November 2016), doi:10.1162/GLEP_a_00379.

⁸ Emily Boyd, Brian C. Chaffin, Kelly Dorkenoo, Murray Scown, Joyce Soo and Rupert Stuart-Smith, “Loss and Damage from climate change: A new climate justice agenda,” *One Earth* 4 (October 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2021.09.015>.

⁹ Arthur Wyns, “COP27 establishes Loss and Damage fund to respond to human cost of climate change,” *The Lancet Planetary Health* 7, no.1 (January 2023): e21-e22, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196\(22\)00331-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196(22)00331-X); Elisabeth Mahase, “COP27: Countries agree “Loss and Damage” fund to help poorer countries hit by climate disasters,” *The BMJ* (2022):379, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.o2814>; Olivia Serdeczny and Tabea Lissner, “Research agenda for the Loss and Damage fund,” *Nature Climate Change* (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-023-01648-x>; Serdeczny and Lissner, “Research agenda for the Loss and Damage fund,”; Julie-Anne Richards, Liane Schalatek, Leia Achampong and Heidi White, *The Loss and Damage Finance Landscape* (Washington: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 2023); Tom Athanasiou, Sivan Kartha and Christian Holz, “Loss and Damage Finance: Who pays? For what? In which countries?” *EcoEquity*, Last accessed May 10, 2023, <https://www.ecoequity.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2023-02-03-Fair-LD-Discussion-Paper-v1.1-1.pdf>.

¹⁰ According to the UNFCCC, climate change means “a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.” In contrast, the IPCC defines it as “a change in the state of the climate that can be identified by changes in the mean or the variability of its properties and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer.” “The framework convention definition of climate change refers specifically to changes in climate that result from the emission of greenhouse gases. What this means is that in order to identify loss and damage under the framework convention definition, you have to be able to attribute whatever portion of losses have occurred to the emission of greenhouse gases,” Pielke said. “So, the narrow definition of climate change, which has bureaucratic and political reasons, makes loss and damage compensation subject to contested science, and in the real world, it places it out of reach.” See for details, Elisabeth Mahase, “Climate Change: “Loss and Damage” fund payouts could take decades, scientists warn,” *The BMJ* (2022), <https://www.bmj.com/content/bmj/379/bmj.o3050.full.pdf>.

Against the above-mentioned problem statement and research gap, the objective of the present study is to identify the challenges¹¹ that exist with the 'L&D Fund'. The study seeks to find answers to the following questions: How the existing financial mechanisms have failed to support the climate vulnerable countries? How and why the L&D issue came forefront in climate negotiations? What are the probable challenges the L&D Fund may encounter while executing the activities of the Fund? and why Bangladesh needs the support from the L&D Fund?

The present study is qualitative in nature in which both primary and secondary data have been used. As the issue of L&D Fund is in a very nascent state, Key Informant Interviews (KII) with relevant stakeholders have been conducted for collecting the primary data as the basic source of information. The secondary sources like books, journal articles, policy documents, reports and newspapers have been used for collecting information on the gradual evolution of the L&D Fund. The paper is divided into six sections including introduction and conclusion. The second section of the paper deals with the genesis and broken promises related with climate change finance. The evolution and development of the L&D issue is highlighted in section three. Section four deals with the establishment and the conundrum related with the L&D Fund. The necessity of the L&D Fund for Bangladesh is discussed in section five and section six concludes the paper with a few recommendations.

2. Financing for Climate Change: Genesis and Broken Promises

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned that due to the 'locked-in' level of warming, in spite of effective actions to global temperature rise, climate change induced losses and damages cannot be prevented.¹² Against this background, it is imperative for all the countries to take necessary actions for reducing their emissions, adapting to climate change and investing on achieving the overarching climate goal to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C.

It is necessary to have significant financial investment for climate actions as clean energy systems and infrastructures are expensive. Countries need to reduce

¹¹ In the title the term 'conundrum' has been used and according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary the meaning of conundrum is a confusing problem or question that is very difficult to solve. In the case of L&D Fund, all the issues related with the fund are still not clear which has made puzzles which need to be resolved.

¹² "Loss and Damage: A moral imperative to act," United Nations, Last accessed March 01, 2023, <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/adelle-thomas-loss-and-damage>.

their emissions and adapt to climate change, but due to lack of necessary resources and technology, it is not possible for many developing countries to do so. As climate change is the most urgent and intricate crisis faced by humanity, the issue is a major concern for the parties taking part in climate negotiation processes.

2.1 *Climate Finance and UNFCCC Financial Mechanisms*

Climate finance refers to financing climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts. According to the UNFCCC, ‘climate finance’ refers to local, national, or transnational funding which can come from public, private or alternative sources for supporting mitigation and adaptation measures to address the effects of climate change.¹³ The UNFCCC has provided legal framework and guiding principles for climate governance in the world as well as established financial mechanisms for providing financial supports to the developing climate vulnerable countries. Sufficient financial resource allocation is necessary to combat the impacts of climate change. The UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement demanded developed countries for providing financial assistance to resource lacked climate vulnerable developing countries.

The idea of climate finance was first announced in 1992 at the first UNFCCC meeting held in Rio de Jenerio.¹⁴ Although it was not clear about the type of economic system for supporting the climate vulnerable countries, the declaration acknowledges the necessity of supporting the climate vulnerable countries. Article 11 of the Kyoto Protocol¹⁵ further emphasised on the necessity to provide new and additional financial resources to cover the developing country parties’ agreed upon

¹³ “Introduction to Climate Change,” United Nations Climate Change, Last accessed March 01, 2023, <https://unfccc.int/topics/introduction-to-climate-finance>; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, *UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance* (Bonn, Germany: United Nations Climate Change Secretariat, 2014).

¹⁴ “Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,” Last accessed July 7, 2023, https://culturalrights.net/descargas/drets_culturals411.pdf.

¹⁵ The Kyoto Protocol was signed in December 1997 to lower the amount of greenhouse emission in the atmosphere. The Kyoto Protocol has introduced three market based mechanisms for limiting or reducing greenhouse gas emission targets which include: Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) which involves investments in emission reduction and removal enhancement projects in developing countries which contribute to their sustainable development, Joint Implementation (JI) that enables developed countries to carry out emission reduction or removal enhancement projects in other developed countries and Emissions Trading (ET) which allows countries, having unused spare emission units, to sell their excess capacity to countries which are over their targets.

full expenses.¹⁶ In accordance with their obligations, developed country parties are required under Article 9 of the Paris Agreement¹⁷ to provide financial supports to assist the vulnerable developing country parties with both adaptation and mitigation.¹⁸ The Bali Action Plan¹⁹ recommended extended efforts for providing financial supports as part of a new climate change agreement and setting the parameters for fresh climate change negotiations.²⁰ The Copenhagen Accord mentioned about scaling up of new, additional, predictable, adequate funding according to the provisions of the UNFCCC for the developing countries.²¹ The biggest achievement of COP15 was the commitment of the developed countries to mobilise US\$100 billion per year by 2020 for climate actions in developing countries. The parties came to a consensus in COP21 that the operating financial instruments will also serve the Paris Agreement. Particularly, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), along with the Green Climate Fund (GCF) are designated to serve the Paris Agreement. Through resolutions 13/CMA. 1 and 1/CMP. 14, parties at COP24 decided that the Adaptation Fund (AF) would also support the Paris Agreement under the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA) with regard to all Paris Agreement topics.²²

The existing climate finance mechanisms for supporting the developing countries are as follows.

¹⁶ See for details, “Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,” United Nations, Last accessed May 29, 2023, <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/kpeng.pdf>.

¹⁷ The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change which was adopted by 196 parties in COP21 in Paris in December 2015.

¹⁸ “The Paris Agreement,” United Nations Climate Change, Last accessed May 25, 2023, <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement>.

¹⁹ In December 2007, the Bali Road Map was adopted which included Bali Action Plan. The Bali Action Plan was divided into five main categories which include shared vision, mitigation, adaptation, technology and financing. See for details, “Bali Road Map Intro,” United Nations Climate Change, Last accessed May 05, 2023, <https://unfccc.int/process/conferences/the-big-picture/milestones/bali-road-map>.

²⁰ Erik Haites, “Climate change finance,” *Climate Policy* 11 (2011): 963–969, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/14693062.2011.582292?needAccess=true&role=button>.

²¹ The Copenhagen Accord which was drafted in 2009 at the 15th session of COP in Copenhagen mentioned about scaling up of new, additional, predictable, adequate funding and its improved access in accordance with the relevant provisions of the UNFCCC to the developing countries for enabling and supporting mitigation, adaptation, technology development and transfer and capacity building for enhanced implementation of the UNFCCC. See for details, Section 8, “Draft decision -/CP.15,” United Nations, p.3, Last accessed May 16, 2023, <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/cop15/eng/107.pdf>.

²² “Adaptation Fund,” United Nations Climate Change, Last accessed June 01, 2023, <https://unfccc.int/Adaptation-Fund>.

2.1.1 Global Environment Facility (GEF)

Since the inception of the UNFCCC, the GEF²³ has been serving as the operational unit of the financing mechanism, and at the same time, the GEF has also promoted market-based mechanisms that lead to the adoption and dissemination of climate friendly technologies. GEF provides financial support to the country-driven Climate Change Mitigation (CCM) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) projects too.²⁴ GEF has funded US\$6,813.4 million for 1,035 climate change mitigation projects, including GEF project grants, Project Preparation Grants (PPGs) and agency fees in 166 countries.²⁵ The GEF concluded the 8th replenishment of its Trust Fund (July 2022 – June 2026) and the financing framework for the GEF-8 was agreed to a replenishment level for programming in the amount of US\$5.33 billion.²⁶

Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF)²⁷ and Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF)²⁸, established in 2001, were mandated to serve the Paris Agreement and were to be managed by the GEF. Funding for both the SCCF and LDCF comes from the developed countries and multilateral development banks including the World Bank group, ADB, the European Investment Bank, etc. In the 34th meeting of the LDCF/SCCF council, six projects were approved to boost climate resilience and it was decided that LDCF and SCCF will deploy US\$63 million in urgent funding for the climate vulnerable countries.²⁹

²³ Being the operating instrument of the UNFCCC, the GEF plays important role in mobilising and providing financial support for climate change adaptation and mitigation. The focal areas of GEF include biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, international waters, chemicals and waste management and land degradation. GEF provides financial supports to the projects designed by the countries for addressing specific objectives and developed in accordance with the guidance from the UNFCCC. The use of GEF grants has evolved over the years from multi-focal area to integrated approaches depending on country-specific needs reflected in the design of projects and programmes.

²⁴ “Report of the Global Environment Facility to the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,” Global Environment Facility, Last accessed June 02, 2023, <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/GEF%20Report%20to%20COP27%20UNFCCC%20Reporting%20Period%20July%202021-%20June%202022.pdf>.

²⁵ Mohammad Abu Yousuf, “Accessing climate finance from GCF & GEF: Hurdles and Way Forward,” *The Financial Express*, July 25, 2022.

²⁶ “GEF-8 Replenishment,” Funding, gef, accessed September 03, 2023, <https://www.thegef.org/who-we-are/funding/gef-8-replenishment>.

²⁷ Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) was established for financing projects related to adaptation, technology transfer and capacity building, energy transport, industry, agriculture, forestry and waste management and economic diversification was established under the UNFCCC.

²⁸ Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) was also established in 2001 for providing fund to the least developed countries in preparing and implementing the National Adaptation Programmes of Actions (NAPA).

²⁹ “LDCF and SCCF provide new targeted support for vulnerable states,” gef, Last accessed June 29, 2023, <https://www.thegef.org/newsroom/news/ldcf-and-sccf-provide-new-targeted-support-vulnerable-states>.

2.1.2 *Adaptation Fund (AF)*

In order to provide funding for specialised adaptation projects and programmes in developing countries susceptible to the negative consequences of climate change, the AF was formed in 2001. AF is funded by a portion of proceeds from the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) project activities as well as commitments from governments, NGOs and individual contributors. In COP26, one of the top goals was to enhance adaptation ambition and AF received unprecedented support with an amount of US\$356 million as new pledges from a record of 16 contributors which include USA, Canada and Qatar as well as an amount of €100 million from the European Union (EU).³⁰ Recently, the increasing shares of the fund's resources come from voluntary contributions. Until June 30, 2022, the AF has received an amount of US\$211.80 million from the monetisation of certified emissions reductions (CERs), US\$982 million from contributions and US\$41.26 million from investment income of the Trust Fund balance.³¹

2.1.3 *Green Climate Fund (GCF)*

An innovative global platform called the Green Climate Fund (GCF) was created with the purpose of assisting vulnerable societies in adapting to the unavoidable effects of climate change and with the mandate to make a significant contribution to the coordinated global response to climate change.³² GCF was established with the aim of raising fund for investments in low-emission and climate-resilient development, at the same time, to allocate funds to support a paradigm shift in the international response to climate change and it pays special attention to the necessity of societies which are extremely vulnerable to its effects, particularly in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and African states. GCF is mandated to provide 50 per cent of its financial support for

³⁰ "Adaptation Fund: Key Achievements of 2021 and Entering 2022 with promise," Adaptation Fund, Last accessed June 16, 2023, <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/adaptation-fund-key-achievements-of-2021-and-entering-2022-with-promise/>.

³¹ "Adaptation Fund," United Nations Climate Change.

³² The Copenhagen Accord mentioned about the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund which was formally established during COP16 in Cancun as the Green Climate Fund (GCF) within the UNFCCC framework and the governing instrument was adopted in Durban, South Africa in COP17. GCF used to follow a country-driven approach in which developing countries lead GCF programmes and its implementation. It operates through a network of more than 200 accredited entities and delivery partners for project designing and implementation. see for details, "About GCF," Green Climate Fund, Last accessed March 16, 2023, <https://www.greenclimate.fund/#>.

mitigation and 50 per cent for adaptation by combining grants, concessional debt³³, guarantees of equity instruments to leverage blended finance³⁴, and crowd-in³⁵ private investment for climate action in developing countries.³⁶ GCF has made substantial progress in delivering its funds to low emission and climate resilient development projects and programmes and between August 2021 to July 2022, GCF has provided US\$2.06 billion for 23 climate projects to the developing countries around the world.³⁷

2.2 Supporting Climate Vulnerable Countries: The Fiasco of Existing Financial Mechanisms

Although several dedicated climate funds have been established till now, international financing for mitigating and adapting climate change impacts have been very limited. The reasons why the climate finance initiatives are not becoming successful are discussed below.

2.2.1 Futile Promise of US\$100 Billion Fund

At COP15 in Copenhagen, the delayed actions of the developed nations in reducing the emissions created dismay among the climate vulnerable countries. The vulnerable countries demanded a promise of funding to cope with the impacts of climate change. In response, the developed countries collectively commit for an amount of US\$30 billion for the period 2010-2012 for new and additional resources with balanced allocation between adaptation and mitigation.³⁸ The developed nations

³³ Concessional debt is defined as loans with an original grant element of 35 per cent or more, International Debt Statistics, World Bank, Last accessed September 29, 2023, , <https://databank.worldbank.org/metadataglossary/international-debt-statistics/series/DT.DOD.ALLC.ZS#:~:text=Concessional%20debt%20is%20defined%20as,to%20total%20external%20debt%20stocks>.

³⁴ Blended finance refers to the strategic use of public sources of capital to attract private investment in developing countries. See for details, Timothy Randall, “How can ‘blended finance’ help fund climate action and development goals?”, Last accessed September 30, 2023, <https://www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/explainers/how-can-blended-finance-help-fund-climate-action-and-development-goals/#:~:text=What%20is%20blended%20finance%3F,development%20financiers%20with%20private%20capital>.

³⁵ When an increase in government spending/investment leads to an expansion of economic activity (real GDP) which in turn incentivises private sector firms to raise their own levels of capital investment and employment, Tutor2u, Last accessed June 16, 2023, <https://www.tutor2u.net/economics/topics/crowding-in>.

³⁶ “Overview,” Green Climate Fund, Last accessed June 19, 2023, <https://www.greenclimate.fund/about#key-features>.

³⁷ Green Climate Fund, Eleventh report of the Green Climate Fund to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate change, Last accessed May 20, 2023, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/GCF_Eleventh%20report%20of%20the%20GCF%20to%20the%20COP%20of%20the%20UNFCCC.pdf.

³⁸ “Draft decision -/CP.15,” Conference of the Parties, Fifteenth Session, Copenhagen, 7-18 December 2009, Last accessed May 20, 2023, <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/cop15/eng/107.pdf>, P.3.

made a significant pledge and committed to a goal of mobilising jointly an amount of US\$100 billion per year by 2020 for the most vulnerable developing countries such as the LDCs, the SIDS and African nations to help them in adapting to the impacts of climate change and mitigate further temperature rises. The Copenhagen Accord mentioned about a wide variety of sources of fund which include public and private, bilateral and multilateral and alternative sources of finance.³⁹ However, the commitment to provide US\$100 billion annually by 2020 had significant flaws. The statistics of the pledge for 2020 are not yet in and the parties participated in the negotiations for the pledges do not agree on the counting methods. According to a report published in the Guardian, the UK government intends to abandon its prominent £11.6 billion (US\$14.7 billion) climate and nature funding pledge to meet the global US\$100 billion a year commitment to the developing countries⁴⁰. At the same time, the government advisers of the Climate Change Committee in a report pointed out that the government has missed the majority of its climate targets and “lost the leadership” on climate action shown at COP26 in 2021.⁴¹ Earlier in 2022, the UK missed its deadline for providing US\$288 million to the GCF fund as well as a separate US\$20.6 million pledges to the AF.⁴²

Although it was clearly mentioned in the climate accords of COP16 that the US\$100 billion fund may include financial support from public as well as private sources, the proportion of finance from these sources was not specified, at the same time it was not indicated how the financial instruments would be counted.⁴³ The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in their analysis mentioned about the failure of the richer countries in their promise to pledge US\$100 billion a year to the developing nations to support them to achieve their climate goals.⁴⁴ According to OECD, in 2020, an amount of US\$83.3 billion was given to the poorer countries in climate financing which was 4 per cent increase from the previous year,

³⁹ “Draft decision -/CP.15,” Conference of the Parties, 2009.

⁴⁰ Helena Horton and Patrick Greenfield, “Revealed: UK plans to drop flagship £11.6bn climate pledge,” *The Guardian*, Last accessed July 04, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/jul/04/revealed-uk-plans-to-drop-flagship-climate-pledge-rishi-sunak>.

⁴¹ Fiona Harvey, “UK missing climate targets on nearly every front, say government’s advisers,” *The Guardian*, Last accessed June 28, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/jun/28/uk-has-made-no-progress-on-climate-plan-say-governments-own-advisers>.

⁴² Karen McVeigh, “UK criticized for failing to pay \$300m in promised climate funds ahead of COP27,” *The Guardian*, Last modified November 01, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/nov/01/uk-criticised-for-failing-to-pay-300m-in-promised->.

⁴³ “Delivering on the \$100 Billion Climate Finance Commitment and Transforming Climate Finance,” The Independent Expert Group on Climate Finance, Last accessed May 24, 2023, https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2020/12/100_billion_climate_finance_report.pdf, December 2020, p. 7.

⁴⁴ Wanjohi Kabukuru, “Richer nations fall short on climate finance pledge,” *AP News*, Last modified July 29, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/climate-and-environment-bca94ba396ba954cba3560e5f2f9fd6e>.

but it was still short of the proposed goal.⁴⁵ But the commitment of pledging US\$100 billion per year that was originally given to support climate vulnerable countries has never been fulfilled. Oxfam in a Briefing Note mentioned that according to their analysis the actual value of climate assistance provided to the developing countries is around US\$21-24.5 billion which is only one-third of the pledged amount (US\$83.3 billion). They also found that the recent increase in funding has mainly come in the form of loans not grants.⁴⁶ For example, in 2018, climate related loans have increased to US\$24 billion which was US\$13.5 billion in 2015.⁴⁷ Mentioning about how the contribution would be counted, the Briefing Note pointed out that there has been a jumble of accounting standards and a prevalence of methods which overstate the value of provided supports by a huge margin.⁴⁸

2.2.2 Huge Gap Between Projected and Actual Financial Support

There is a huge gap between the projected and actual financial support. The difference between the statistics of projected and actual financial supports of the developed countries is mainly due to counting all the financial instruments (loans, grants, investments, insurance, etc.) in their reports to the UNFCCC. Covid-19 pandemic and global financial recession has also exacerbated the situation. There is a subtle risk that economic recovery stimulus packages which have been designed to revive economic condition could undermine the environmental issues and climate finance. Funding for climate change impacts and future planning has become difficult as the agencies supporting climate actions are underfunded and require pledges from the developed countries to be replenished. Climate vulnerable developing countries have limited decision-making power on their climate related development planning due to financial lacuna. The pledge of mobilising US\$100 billion per year by 2020 by the developed countries has been central to all the climate accords since 2009 and it was also a symbol of trust. To secure progress and meet the goals of the Paris Agreement, the US\$100 billion fund was considered by the developing countries.⁴⁹ The failure to fulfil the promised pledges is likely to lead to further deterioration of trust between climate vulnerable developing countries and the developed ones who promised to support the vulnerable countries.

⁴⁵ Kabukuru, "Richer nations fall short."

⁴⁶ OXFAM, "Climate Finance Short-Changed – The real value of the \$100 billion commitment in 2019-20" (Oxford, UK: Oxfam GB, October 2022) 3.

⁴⁷ Kabukuru, "Richer nations fall short."

⁴⁸ OXFAM, "Climate Finance Short-Changed."

⁴⁹ "Delivering on the \$100 Billion," The Independent Expert Group on Climate Finance, 12.

2.2.3 Countries Failed to Get Benefit of Adaptation Finance

In spite of having financial mechanisms for providing financial resources to the developing countries, the countries are not receiving necessary benefits out of it. Although adaptation finance saw several developments since December 2018,⁵⁰ the Adaptation Gap Report 2022 has found the progress on adaptation as “slow and spotty.”⁵¹ UN Secretary General António Guterres mentioned that, “Adaptation needs in the developing world are set to skyrocket to as much as US\$340 billion a year by 2030, yet adaptation support today stands a less than one-tenth of that amount.”⁵² Studies have found that most vulnerable countries have missed out on finance for adaptation through GCF and the major reasons behind it is the lengthy and complicated processes to access these funds; in some cases countries cannot access these critical funds at all.⁵³

2.2.4 Mitigation Gets Priority in Private Sector Engagement

Climate change negotiations have focused on private sector engagement in financial investment for climate change induced impacts, but this also raises queries about the effective types of private finance. Covid-19 pandemic has also reduced the delivery of private climate finance. At the same time, there is no centralised institutional mechanism to ensure private finance for climate vulnerable developing countries. According to an OECD report, during 2016-18 developed countries mobilised private climate finance focusing only on climate mitigation (93%) which targeted mainly the energy sector that is 60 per cent of the total amount and it mainly benefitted the middle-income countries (69%), whereas, adaptation, the agriculture sector and low-income countries accounted for much lower shares.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ “Why adaptation finance matters: Hundreds of millions of people exposed to climate change risks,” IISD, Last accessed March 15, 2023, <http://sdg.iisd.org/news/why-adaptation-finance-matters-hundreds-of-millions-of-people-exposed-to-climate-change-risks/>.

⁵¹ “More funding needed for climate adaptation, as risks mount, UN News,” United Nations, Last accessed March 16, 2023, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/11/1130142>.

⁵² “More funding needed,” United Nations.

⁵³ Avantika Goswami, “Most vulnerable countries unable to access Green Climate Fund for adaptation,” DownToEarth, Last modified January 28, 2022, <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/climate-change/most-vulnerable-countries-unable-to-access-green-climate-fund-for-adaptation-81314>; Jyotsna Puri, Martin Prowse, Emma De Roy, David Huang, “Assessing the likelihood for transformational change at the Green Climate Fund: An analysis using self-reported project data,” *Climate Risk Management* 35 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crm.2022.100398>; Matthias Garschagen, Deepal Doshi, “Does funds-based adaptation finance reach the most vulnerable countries?,” *Global Environmental Change* 73 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2021.102450>.

⁵⁴ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Climate Finance Provided and Mobilised by Developed Countries in 2013-18* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2020).

2.2.5 *Impacts of Global Recession and Domestic Compulsions of the Developed Countries*

Developing countries need the support of the developed countries for achieving their NDCs and mobilise necessary climate finance for meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement. The socio-economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic have compelled many countries to design stimulus economic activities which sometimes undermined climate financing. Climate finance was also not sufficient before the Covid-19 pandemic. According to a report in 2019, the total climate fund which was provided and mobilised was US\$79.6 billion.⁵⁵ International climate financial support saw a declining trend during the pandemic too. The percentage of ODA for projects with climate as a principal objective declined from 18 per cent to 14 per cent, while the percentage of projects with climate as a significant focus declined from 25 per cent to 17 per cent.⁵⁶ Some countries also announced ODA climate related cuts which will gradually reduce climate finance flows. Mention can be made of the British Conservative government’s decision to reduce overseas aid from 0.7 to 0.5 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI) in 2020 in order to fund domestic spending during the Covid-19 pandemic.⁵⁷ Another example is the Russia-Ukraine war. Apart from the negative impacts on climate, the Russia-Ukraine war is also affecting the global climate financing mechanism. Aid to Ukraine and debt relief contributed to the drop of climate and nature funding pledge of the UK by the amount £11.6 billion (US\$14.7 billion).⁵⁸ According to a Guardian report, the commitment of £11.6 billion (US\$14.7 billion) was made before the Covid-19 pandemic when 0.7 per cent of GDP was spent on international aid. The commitment of aid for Ukraine has created additional pressure to the aid budget making the fulfilment of climate pledge more difficult.⁵⁹

2.2.6 *No Funding for Addressing L&D*

Although discussion about climate change induced L&D started from 1991, the issue did not get much attention before. The existing climate finance mechanisms

⁵⁵ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Climate Finance Provided and Mobilised by Developed Countries: Aggregate Trends Updated with 2019 Data* (Paris, France: OECD, 2021).

⁵⁶ Development Initiatives (DI), “Aid Data: 2019–2020: Analysis of Trends before and during COVID,” February 2021, Last accessed August 08, 2023, https://devinit.org/documents/905/Aid_data_2019-2020_Analysis_of_trends_before_and_during_Covid.pdf.

⁵⁷ Lin Tylor, “Britain’s foreign aid: Where does the money go?” Context, Last accessed August 02, 2023, <https://www.context.news/socioeconomic-inclusion/britains-foreign-aid-where-does-the-money-go>

⁵⁸ Horton and Greenfield, “Revealed: UK plans to drop.

⁵⁹ Horton and Greenfield, “Revealed: UK plans to drop.

have failed to address the L&D issue even though the GCF was mandated by the UNFCCC to address the L&D issue. The proposed US\$100 billion fund also did not focus on the climate change events which have already taken place and for which mitigation and adaptation efforts have been proven to be ineffective. The climate vulnerable developing countries are repeatedly affected by climate catastrophes, but there was a lack of facility for financing climate change induced L&D, particularly for these vulnerable countries which have very minimal role in climate change. Developed industrialised countries who are mainly responsible for global warming and climate change have always been reluctant in committing financial support for the climate vulnerable countries. This is due to their concerns over becoming legally liable for the impacts of climate change.

3. The L&D Issue: Evolution and Development

3.1 Defining L&D

The term ‘L&D’⁶⁰ has been used generally in UN climate related negotiations to refer to the climate change induced consequences which have gone beyond the adaptation capacity of people. It is estimated that L&D will cost between US\$1,745 billion to US\$2,684 billion annually by 2050 in the developing countries.⁶¹

Table 1: L&D Estimates (Billion US\$ per year)⁶²

Year	Low estimates	High estimates
2020	179	671
2030	447	894
2040	850	1, 567
2050	1, 745	2, 684

⁶⁰ The term exactly means the negative consequences that arise from the unavoidable risks of climate change like rising sea levels, prolonged heatwaves, desertification, the acidification of the sea and extreme events such as bushfires, species extinction and crop failures. See for details, “What you need to know about the COP27 Loss and Damage Fund,” UN Environment Programme, Last accessed March 19, 2023, <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/what-you-need-know-about-cop27-loss-and-damage-fund#:~:text=What%20does%20it%20mean%20exactly,species%20extinction%20and%20crop%20failures>.

⁶¹ Richards, Schalatek, Achampong and White, *The Loss and Damage Finance Landscape*, 34.

⁶² Richards, Schalatek, Achampong and White, *The Loss and Damage Finance Landscape*, 34.

The L&D issue is a matter of grave concern for the vulnerable developing countries and financing for L&D is thought to be the third pillar of climate action along with mitigation and adaptation. But the major challenges which have impeded a successful progress on the L&D discussion was the confusion about the L&D concept, sources of necessary funding and the developed countries' fear about becoming legally responsible for global warming and providing the financial compensation for that.

As the UNFCCC has no official definition of L&D, developing and developed countries have different views about it and consequently the urgency has also been undermined. Although L&D is considered to be a single concept, it consists of two different types of harms which include irreversible damage including loss of lands for sea level rise and reversible ones such as damages to infrastructure. All of these effects result into L&D which can be divided into economic losses and non-economic losses, the latter being incalculable and in cases more devastating. Although it is difficult to quantify L&D, it is evident that the extent of global L&D is large and with increasing global warming the situation will worsen in future.

3.2 L&D Discussion in Climate Negotiations

The issue of L&D and mobilising financial support for addressing L&D is a priority in the UN climate negotiations for many climate-vulnerable developing countries as they are severely facing the consequences of the negative impacts of climate change. Vanuatu initially coined the phrase in 1991 when advocating for the establishment of an insurance programme for countries susceptible to the effects of sea level rise on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

3.2.1 Bali Action Plan and the Initiation of L&D Issue

The Bali Action Plan, which called for more action on adaptation and discussed catastrophe risk reduction as well as addressing L&D in developing countries, brought the subject of L&D to the fore in 2007.⁶³ A work programme on L&D was developed at COP16 with the goal of improving international collaboration and knowledge for comprehending and minimising L&D.⁶⁴

⁶³ Paragraph 1c (iii) of the Bali Action Plan has mentioned “Disaster reduction strategies and means to address Loss and Damage associated with climate change impacts in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change”. See for details, “Report of the Conference of the Parties on its thirteenth session, held in Bali from 3 to 15 December 2007,” United Nations, p. 4, Last accessed July 02, 2023, <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2007/cop13/eng/06a01.pdf>.

⁶⁴ “Loss and Damage Online Guide,” United Nations Climate Change, Last accessed April 02, 2023, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Online_guide_on_loss_and_damage-May_2018.pdf.

3.2.2 *Establishment of Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) for L&D*

With the establishment of the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) for L&D associated with climate change impacts, which institutionalised a policy to address the negative effects of climate change, the subject of L&D gained momentum in COP19. WIM is considered to be the primary tool in the UNFCCC process for addressing the L&D in the vulnerable developing countries in a comprehensive, integrated, and coherent manner in order to promote dialogue, filling knowledge gaps, and improve action and support for those experiencing L&D. However, the WIM lacked a finance mechanism to assist the vulnerable nations in managing L&D. Santiago Network on L&D (SNLD) was founded as part of WIM at COP25 in 2019 in Madrid in order to catalyse technical support for averting, minimising, and addressing L&D in developing countries.⁶⁵

3.2.3 *The Paris Agreement and the L&D Issue*

The Paris Agreement, which was adopted at COP21, designated L&D as a separate pillar of climate policy besides mitigation and adaptation. According to Article 8 of the Paris Agreement, the Parties have acknowledged the significance of addressing L&D related to the negative effects of climate change.

3.2.4 *COP26 and Establishment of 'L&D Financing Facility (LDFF)'*

The G77 and China jointly called for the establishment of a 'L&D Financing Facility (LDFF)' during COP26 in Glasgow. The industrialised developed countries rejected the developing countries' proposal to establish a Finance Facility for L&D (FFLD). The agreements made at COP26 recognised the significance of L&D and established the Glasgow Dialogue on Finance for L&D to discuss about the financing options. The governments also decided to finance SNLD in order to offer technical assistance to developing nations. The Glasgow Dialogue was designed to give parties and non-party stakeholders the chance to discuss issues in an open, inclusive, and non-prescriptive manner. However, the developing countries compared the first session, which took place in Bonn, Germany in June 2022, as a 'talk-shop' due to its disconnection from formal negotiations or decision-making processes.

⁶⁵ "Santiago Network," United Nations Climate Change, Last accessed March 20, 2023, https://unfccc.int/santiago-network?gclid=Cj0KCQjwxMmhBhDJARIsANFGOSv7ZrOqLwZB0hIonbeU8OrXTqDSzWqH69-z8Lxf-GimdQMr4QEGftYaApizEALw_wb.

3.2.5 *Other Initiatives to Support L&D*

The Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) and Vulnerable 20 (V20) Group of Finance Ministers called for establishing a separate dedicated funding mechanism for the L&D crisis-level adaptation action. Scotland and the government of Wallonia⁶⁶ announced about their plan to pledge £2 million (US\$2.54 million) and €1 million (US\$1.1 million) respectively to address L&D outside the formal negotiations of COP26, whereas five philanthropic organisations⁶⁷ also pledged dedicated funding. Several other developed countries including Austria, New Zealand also pledged financial support for L&D to provide support to the vulnerable people and communities.

4. **The L&D Fund: Establishment and the Conundrum**

4.1 *Establishment of the L&D Fund*

The IPCC Working Group II Report is the most extensive assessment of L&D which has highlighted that the current financial, governance and institutional arrangements have not addressed the L&D issue comprehensively and at the same time, the existing international, national and sub-national approaches are also insufficient to address the L&D of the vulnerable developing countries.⁶⁸

‘L&D’ was the main topic which was addressed during the negotiations of COP27 summit as mitigation and adaptation efforts have fallen short apart to prevent L&D emanated from the negative impacts of climate change. From the beginning of COP27 there was a call for establishing a dedicated L&D Fund or financial facility from G77, China and regional groups like LDC group and AOSIS. ‘L&D’ is linked with adaptation and mitigation as the issue has come up when the mitigation efforts like reducing the emission are not ambitious enough and the adaptation efforts are not successful. UN climate change executive secretary Simon Stiell said, “We have determined a way forward on a decade’s long conversation on funding for L&D—deliberating over how we tackle the impacts on communities

⁶⁶ Wallonia is a region of southern Belgium.

⁶⁷ The Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), the European Climate Foundation (ECF), the Hewlett Foundation, the Global Green Grants Fund and the Open Society Foundation (OSF) announced funding of US\$3 million for strengthening resilience in climate vulnerable countries.

⁶⁸ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, (IPCC), *Climate change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2022), doi:10.1017/9781009325844; “Climate Action,” United Nations, Last accessed March 23, 2023, <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/adellethomas-loss-and-damage>.

whose lives and livelihoods have been ruined by the worst impacts of climate change.”⁶⁹

Initially the developed countries refused the demand of establishing a separate new fund for addressing L&D. Instead, they wanted to launch a process for identifying the appropriate funding arrangements with decision or outcome to be delivered later. The developed countries expressed their desire to redirect the existing funds to serve the purpose. However, over the course of the conference, the EU stated that they would support the establishment of the L&D Fund with the condition that the fund will be for the most vulnerable countries and the countries known as big economies and big emitters who are classed as developing countries should not get the benefit of the fund, rather they should be included as potential donors. Finally, after two weeks’ fraught and bitter negotiations, the Summit ended with a deal for creating a new fund termed as ‘L&D Fund’. It was described as historic and monumental achievement which would benefit the climate vulnerable developing countries and communities of the globe who are the frontliners of the climate crisis. The decision of establishing the L&D Fund was agreed after a number of relentless extreme climatic events. The year 2022 itself has seen the devastating effects of a series of climate change induced extreme weather events all through the globe. The number of extreme weather events as well as costs related with it is growing at a very fast pace. UN Secretary General António Guterres while closing COP27 mentioned, “This COP has taken an important step towards justice.”⁷⁰ A new initiative titled ‘the Global Shield against climate risks’ was launched by G77 and V20 jointly on November 14, 2022, with a focus on the household and the (sub) national level to enhance financial protection for L&D. A 24-member⁷¹ transitional committee was formed to recommend on the operationalisation of the new financial arrangements for consideration and adoption in the next COP summit to be held in Dubai in 2023.

⁶⁹ Mahase, “COP27: Countries agree “Loss and Damage.”

⁷⁰ “COP27 ended with announcement of historic Loss and Damage fund,” UN Environment Programme, Last accessed March 21, 2023, <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/cop27-ends-announcement-historic-loss-and-damage-fund>.

⁷¹ Among the 24 members, ten members are from Developed Country Parties and fourteen members are from Developing Country Parties. The 14 members of the Developing Country Parties will be nominated in line with the following geographical representation – three members from Africa including a representative of the President of COP27, three members from Asia and the Pacific including representative of the incoming President of COP28, three members from Latin America and the Caribbean, two members from Small Island Developing States (SIDS), two members from the Least Developed Countries (LDC), one member from a Developing Country Party not included in the categories previously listed.

4.2 *The ‘L&D Fund’: The Conundrum*

Although it has been decided that a separate L&D Fund will be established, some of the issues related with the fund are still not clear.

4.2.1 *Lack of Appropriate Definition*

L&D Fund needs proper definition and delineation of its scope which would distinguish it from existing climate finance instruments. The lack of an agreed definition could mislead the climate finance flow. Due to similarities between some of the aspects of climate finance and development finance, the term climate finance is often interchangeably used with development finance. For this, there is a tendency to integrate climate finance and development finance. Developed countries sometimes report their development finance as climate finance as the climate finance contributions of the developed countries can qualify as development finance.⁷² Thus, lack of proper definition of L&D and L&D Fund could mislead the funding mechanism.

4.2.2 *Source of the Fund*

The source of the L&D Fund is another concern that is yet to be confirmed. The financial contributions of the developed countries for climate change impacts are not only inadequate, but they have also consistently failed in their efforts in undertaking mitigation actions. For this, the developed countries have moral responsibilities to ensure substantive financial contributions for the L&D Fund. Developed countries should provide their fair share of finance for the L&D Fund as grant in addition with their existing ODA and other climate finance commitments. According to a report, USA’s fair share of public L&D financing was calculated as US\$20 billion in 2022 which could rise to about US\$117 billion annually by 2030 and sum up to more than US\$600 billion cumulatively over the period 2021 to 2030.⁷³

Traditional financial arrangements like social protection, contingency finance, catastrophe risk insurance and catastrophe bonds could be used for L&D immediately

⁷² The Commonwealth and Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub, *Accessing Development and Climate Finance – Issues and Challenges in the Commonwealth Countries* (United Kingdom: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2023) https://production-new-commonwealth-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-05/Accessing_Development_and_Climate_Finance_UPDF.pdf

⁷³ Oscar Reyes et al., “United States of America Fair Shares Nationally Determined Contribution,” A civil society model document for the US climate action pledge submission to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change under the Paris Agreement, April 2021, Last accessed July 27, 2023, https://foe.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/USA_Fair_Shares_NDC.pdf

after any disaster.⁷⁴ However, a broad donor base and innovative financing arrangements are needed for establishing the L&D Fund. Some of the developed countries have already committed to pledge for the L&D Fund. It is necessary to ensure that the existing ODA or other climate finance commitments are not redirected to the L&D Fund. For increasing necessary financial flow for the L&D Fund, it is imperative to ensure funds from alternative sources apart from the grants of the developed countries.⁷⁵ Alternative new sources of funding must meet the principle that they should be raised fairly and promote redistribution of wealth. Alternative sources of fund sometimes have been referred as innovative finance which meets the criteria of being fair and equitable and is expected to reduce the amount of the required contribution of the countries though it should not lead the countries to forego in meeting their overall climate finance commitments.⁷⁶ Alternative innovative sources of finance are new, fair, redistributive, polluter-pays and public-base which may include climate damage tax,⁷⁷ windfall tax,⁷⁸ aviation/frequent flyer levy,⁷⁹ international shipping levy,⁸⁰ global wealth tax,⁸¹ financial transaction tax⁸² etc. Developed countries need to play greater contributing roles to ensure that the overall goal is fulfilled. At the same time, the biggest emitters should also pay for their carbon production. International Monetary Fund (IMF) has also pointed out that the companies which emits high greenhouse gas should pay a carbon price of US\$75 per tonne of carbon dioxide they produce to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement.⁸³

4.2.3 *Beneficiaries of the Fund*

The selection of the vulnerable countries eligible for the fund is also not out of question. The L&D financial arrangement provision should be based on the needs of recipient country and community, not on the preference of the contributing

⁷⁴ UN Environment Programme, “What you need to know about,”

⁷⁵ Information collected from interview with expert.

⁷⁶ Richards, Schalatek, Achampong and White, “The Loss and Damage Finance Landscape”.

⁷⁷ A charge on the extraction of coal, oil and gas based on the climate pollution that will likely be emitted when used. See for details, Richards, Schalatek, Achampong and White, The Loss and Damage Finance, 44.

⁷⁸ Windfall taxes are often considered short-term which are taken on high profits of the fossil fuel industries. ; Richards, Schalatek, Achampong and White, The Loss and Damage Finance, 44.

⁷⁹ A tax on international airfares proposed by LDC.

⁸⁰ A levy on greenhouse gas emissions from international shipping in order to fund climate action.

⁸¹ A tax based on market value of assets owned by a taxpayer.

⁸² A levy on financial instruments or contracts like bonds, stocks, options and derivatives.

⁸³ Fiona Harvey, “High greenhouse gas emitters should pay for carbon they produce, says IMF,” The Guardian, Last modified June 18, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jun/18/high-greenhouse-gas-emitters-should-pay-for-carbon-they-produce-says-imf#:~:text=High%20greenhouse%20gas%20emitters%20should%20pay%20for%20carbon%20they%20produce%2C%20says%20IMF,-This%20article%20is&text=Companies%20with%20high%20greenhouse%20gas,of%20the%20Paris%20climate%20agreement.>

countries. At the same time, it is also necessary to ensure that the financing decisions are made at the most local level possible so that they can participate in the decision-making process about selecting the priorities and identifying the requirements for ensuring the best use of the financial support. There are several country groups who are categorised as climate vulnerable, and they play active roles in climate negotiations. In the current global scenario, unprecedented climatic catastrophes are seen and countries, which were not considered as climate vulnerable earlier, are becoming devastated by these climatic catastrophes.⁸⁴ The World Resource Institute (WRI) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) have analysed where climate crises are likely to emerge and have identified ten countries⁸⁵ most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change despite making minimal contribution to its cause.⁸⁶ Some of the new disaster affected countries and probable countries at risk to climate disaster are not members of any particular vulnerable group. The case of Pakistan can be taken as an example. Pakistan suffered unprecedented flooding last year, but the country is not a member of any vulnerable countries group. For this, selection of the eligibility of any country for getting benefit of the L&D Fund will need sharp scrutiny. The L&D Fund should be distributed equitably, adequately and directly to the developing countries and communities who are considered to be the most vulnerable.

4.2.4 *Management of the Fund*

Management of the L&D Fund is also a contentious issue. It is necessary to decide whether the L&D Fund will be managed by any existing financial mechanism, or a new management system will be established specifically for this fund. As the L&D Fund is supposed to disburse funds quickly after any climatic disaster, it is better to have a separate governing body. The L&D Fund governing body needs to develop coordination with other relevant UNFCCC bodies. It is necessary for the L&D Fund board to be responsible for all funding decisions to be taken in line with the principles and policies of UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. Due to the urgent necessity of the fund just after any disaster, the management mechanism of the fund needs to have ultimate decision taking capability without any lengthy process. For proper management of the fund, equitable representation from both

⁸⁴ The major disasters of 2022 ranged from floods in Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, China, Europe, India, Pakistan and Thailand, drought in China, Kiribati and Tuvalu, typhoons Megi and Nalgae in the Philippines, heatwaves in India, Japan and Pakistan, combination of extreme winter temperatures and hurricanes in USA, earthquakes in Afghanistan, Fiji and Indonesia.

⁸⁵ The ten countries that are at risk of climate disaster includes Somalia, Syria, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan, Yemen, Chad, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Nigeria, Ethiopia.

⁸⁶ 10 countries at risk of climate disaster, Rescue.org, Last accessed June 12, 2023, <https://www.rescue.org/article/10-countries-risk-climate-disaster>.

the developing and developed countries would be preferable where the majority of representatives should be from the developing countries. Representation from the affected communities particularly from vulnerable population groups having gender and region balance should be ensured for the best outcome of the fund. Local actors should also have involvements in the decision-making process such as steering committee or governing bodies of the fund.

4.2.5 *Type of the Fund – Grant or Loan*

The financial supports provided to the climate vulnerable countries to address the adverse impacts of climate change mainly come in the form of loans. Although it is not still clear what type of fund the L&D Fund would be, but it is necessary to ensure that the fund to address L&D must come in the form of grants instead of loans as climate loans would create extra burden on the climate vulnerable developing countries. For example, on August 22, 2022 the Government of Nepal signed a US\$100 million “Concessional Financing Agreement” with the World Bank for supporting ‘Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development (GRID)’, but activists in Kathmandu launched a series of protests arguing that given its minimal contribution to global climate change, Nepal should receive climate finance in the form of grants not loans. The funds provided to address L&D should be untied from any kind of political and trade related favouritism.

4.2.6 *Accessibility of the Fund*

Some climatic catastrophes hit immediately and cause L&D instantly. Although there are financial instruments for supporting climate change impacts, they have significant barriers to immediate access which results in obstructing the vulnerable countries to take immediate action when necessary. Before the establishment of the L&D Fund, GCF was mandated for financing to address L&D.⁸⁷ But, according to an evaluation of the Independent Evaluation Unit of the GCF, more than the half of

⁸⁷ Para 21 of COP Decision 12/CP.25 has mentioned “Continue providing financial resources for activities relevant to averting, minimizing and addressing Loss and Damage in developing countries to the extent consistent with the existing investment, results framework and funding windows and structures of the Green Climate Fund, and to facilitate efficient access in this regard, and in this context to take into account the strategic workstreams of the five year rolling workplan of the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts”, See for details, “Decision 12/CP.25, Report of the Green Climate Fund to the Conference of the Parties and guidance to the Green Climate Fund, Report of the Conference of the Parties on its twenty-fifth session,” United nations, Madrid, December 02 - 15, 2019, Last accessed July 14, 2023, <https://unfccc.int/decisions?f%5B0%5D=body%3A1343&f%5B1%5D=session%3A4274&search2=&page=1>

LDCs have not accessed for Project Preparation Facility (PPF) due to lengthy and resource-intensive process.⁸⁸ The GCF is unable to respond to immediate necessity of the vulnerable countries and on an average, it takes more than five years for an LDC which is not yet accredited to GCF in receiving finance directly to address L&D.

The quality and accessibility of climate finance was a highly discussed issue in COP26. Climate justice could also be ensured for the effected vulnerable countries and communities through easy accessibility of climate finance. It was recognised that the existing climate finance architecture is not successful enough to operate efficiently and fairly to speed and scale up necessary financial support to the climate vulnerable countries. According to a UN report, the SIDS mainly face challenges in effectively accessing development and climate finance due to their lack of human and capital capacity to meet the proposal standard and reporting requirements of the donors.⁸⁹ AOSIS also flagged their concerns about the accessibility of the climate funds. It is necessary for the L&D Fund to ensure the easiest and immediate accessibility of the fund to the climate vulnerable countries. For providing rapid financial support just immediately after any disaster, contingency fund should be established. The structure of the World Bank’s Community-Driven Development (CDD) initiative can be taken as an example which has enhanced direct access approach for the local communities and decision-makers to have direct control over their financial resources which are provided mostly as block grants.⁹⁰

4.2.7 *Quantifying the Non-economic Losses*

Non-economic losses and damages of climate change impacts refer to those negative impacts which cannot be quantified easily. There is still neither a widely agreed definition of L&D nor of non-economic L&D. Non-economic losses are losses of values which cannot be traded in markets but have high relevance for those affected such as loss of life, biodiversity and cultural heritage.⁹¹ Non-economic losses may also include loss of health, mobility, loss of territory, indigenous or local

⁸⁸ Independent Evaluation Unit, Green Climate Fund, *Independent evaluation of the relevance and effectiveness of the Green Climate Fund's investments in the Least Developed Countries* (Songdo, South Korea: Independent Evaluation Unit, Green Climate Fund, 2022).

⁸⁹ “Accessing Climate Finance: Challenges and Opportunities for Small Island Developing States,” United Nations, Last accessed July 20, 2023, <https://www.un.org/ohrlls/sids%20climate%20financing%20report%202022>.

⁹⁰ Richards, Schalatek, Achampong and White, “The Loss and Damage Finance”.

⁹¹ Olivia Maria Serdecznaya, Steffen Bauerband and Saleemul Huq, “Non-economic losses from climate change: opportunities for policy-oriented research,” *Climate and Development* 10, No. 2 (2018): 97-101, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17565529.2017.1372268>.

knowledge societal or cultural identity and loss of ecosystem services. Discussion on non-economic L&D was initiated by the SIDS due to their pertinence with issue as they are threatened existentially by climate change. Apart from SIDS, other climate vulnerable countries have also emphasised their L&D issues too.

COP26 established the Glasgow Dialogue for discussing the funding arrangement to avert, minimise and address L&D associated with the negative impacts of climate change. The second dialogue of the Glasgow Dialogue took place in Bonn in June 2023 and focused on the operationalisation of the funding arrangements, support structure for different phases of L&D and capacities of existing institutions to address L&D.⁹² L&D has received attention after the decision of establishing a new L&D Fund in COP27. Now it is important to identify appropriate and necessary measures for addressing L&D, especially the non-economic L&D. As the nature of non-economic losses of climate vulnerable countries are not similar, the concept of non-economic loss needs to be clarified beforehand which will enable to take decisions properly. OECD organised a workshop for assessing climate change induced losses and damages⁹³ and suggested three basic methods for assessing climate change induced L&D which include econometric approaches⁹⁴, integrated assessment models⁹⁵ and bottom-up modeling approaches.⁹⁶ Apart from these methods, the workshop also suggest some other methodologies including place-based approaches, ecosystems, ‘Migration, Conflicts, Crime’, health and intangible losses, etc.⁹⁷ The UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ECLAC) in 1972 initially developed the ‘Damage and Loss Assessment (DaLA) methodology’ for capturing

⁹² Bonn Climate Conference – June 2023, *Summary Report*, 5 – 15 June 2023, Last accessed July 20, 2023, <http://enb.iisd.org/bonn-climate-change-conference-sbi58-sbsta58>.

⁹³ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), “Ways and means of assessing losses and damages from climate change,” *Background Document*, Workshop on Assessing socio-economic losses and damages from climate change, Last modified January 13, 2021, <https://www.oecd.org/environment/cc/Background-document-first-workshop-climate-losses-and-damages.pdf>.

⁹⁴ Econometric approaches use past data to estimate the effects of climate variability and change on various quantifiable outcomes, such as GDP, mortality and agricultural yields. See for details, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), “Ways and means of assessing losses and damages from climate change.”

⁹⁵ A model in which the drivers are explicitly described in an aggregate framework which not only examines the effect of climate on the economy, but also explicitly model the effect of the economy on climate. See for details, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), “Ways and means of assessing losses and damages from climate change.”

⁹⁶ Bottom-up models are motivated by the fact that the impacts of climate change are determined by the socio-economic context as much as by climate conditions. See for details, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), “Ways and means of assessing losses and damages from climate change.”

⁹⁷ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), “Ways and means of assessing losses and damages from climate change.”

the closest approximation of disaster induced L&D.⁹⁸ Participatory methodologies can also ensure the comprehensiveness and inclusion of local information.⁹⁹

5. Bangladesh and the L&D Fund

The climate vulnerability of Bangladesh is well known to the globe. Due to the low-lying coastal landscape and heavily populated delta, the country has become highly vulnerable to climatic catastrophes. According to Global Climate Risk Index 2021, from 2000-2019 Bangladesh was the seventh among the ten countries most affected in the Long-Term Climate Risk Index (CRI) and economic losses incurred during this period from 185 extreme climate events was US\$1,860.04 million.¹⁰⁰ According to studies, over 7.1 million people were displaced in Bangladesh due to climate change impacts in 2022,¹⁰¹ while up to 30 million people might be forced to be displaced by 2100 if sea level rises to projected 80 cm or above¹⁰². Women and girls are disproportionately affected by climate change induced negative impacts and globally women are more vulnerable to the negative impacts than men. A study has revealed that 90 per cent of women are adversely affected by the impacts of climate change in coastal regions of Satkhira and Bagerhat.¹⁰³ United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in a report mentioned that lives and future of more than 19 million children in Bangladesh are under threat due to climate change impacts and the country has ranked 2nd among South Asian

⁹⁸ The DaLA Methodology bases its assessments on the overall economy of the affected country. It uses the national accounts and statistics of the country government as baseline data to assess damage and loss. See for details, “Damage, Loss and Needs Assessment – Tools and Methodology,” GFDRR and The World Bank, Last accessed August 09, 2023, <https://www.gfdr.org/en/damage-loss-and-needs-assessment-tools-and-methodology#:~:text=The%20DaLA%20Methodology%20bases%20its,to%20assess%20damage%20and%20loss>.

⁹⁹ Participatory methodologies include particular efforts to ensure the effective participation of women and marginalised community members to ensure that strategies are developed based on a comprehensive and inclusive understanding of local context. Teresa Anderson and Harjeet Singh, “Participatory Methodologies enable communities to assess climate-induced Loss and Damage,” *APN Science Bulletin* 10, no. 1 (2021), <https://www.apn-gcr.org/bulletin/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/17-CAF2015-RR02-CMY-Singh.pdf>.

¹⁰⁰ David Eckstein, Vera Künzel and Laura Schäfer, *Global Climate Risk Index 2021* (Bonn: Germanwatch e.V., 2021), https://www.germanwatch.org/sites/default/files/Global%20Climate%20Risk%20Index%202021_2.pdf.

¹⁰¹ Savio Rousseau Rozario and Madiha Chowdhury, “Climate Induced Displacement in Bangladesh through the Lens of ‘Loss and Damage,’” *Researching Internal Displacement*, Last accessed August 09, 2023, <https://researchinginternaldisplacement.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Rozario-Chowdhury-LD.pdf>.

¹⁰² Prabal Barua, Syed Hafizur Rahman and Morshed Hossan Molla, “Sustainable adaptation for resolving climate displacement issues of southeastern islands in Bangladesh,” *International Journal of Climate Change Strategies and management* 9, no. 6 (2017): 790-810, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCCSM-02-2017-0026>.

¹⁰³ “Study: 90% of coastal women’s lives, livelihoods affected by climate change,” *Dhaka Tribune*, March 09, 2023.

countries and 15th globally where climate crisis have imposed extremely high risks for children.¹⁰⁴

Being a climate vulnerable country, Bangladesh always needs to be prepared for sudden climatic disasters which need sufficient funds. Till now, Bangladesh has a number of projects with GEF, among which ‘Building climate resilient livelihoods in vulnerable landscapes in Bangladesh (BCRL)’ is an important project. Since 2015, Bangladesh, being one of the most climate vulnerable countries, has received approval of seven GCF projects and out of these seven projects five are exclusively for Bangladesh and two are parts of global projects. According to Climate Budget Report (2021–22), Bangladesh government has identified 48 potential climate projects worth US\$3.17 billion and expecting that 72 per cent of the cost would be provided by the GCF.¹⁰⁵ The country has also accessed to funds from GCF, LDCF, AF and other bilateral and multilateral funds and among the allocations US\$200.20 million are grant, US\$250 million is loan from GCF and US\$747.22 million is co-financed.¹⁰⁶ Bangladesh mainly focused on adaptation projects earlier and till 2022 the country has only been able to manage to access US\$1.2 billion from various climate funds which indicates the country’s inability to meet its adaptation finance needs which require funding of US\$230 billion between 2023 to 2050.¹⁰⁷

Bangladesh has taken commendable efforts in streamlining regulatory and institutional arrangements for climate resilient sustainable development by taking required plans and policies. Bangladesh has adopted several policies targeted at reducing the risks of disasters and increasing resilience with the aim of strengthening the capacity of communities, institutions and organisations for effectively responding and managing disasters. In 2014, the country adopted Climate Fiscal Framework (CFF) for providing comprehensive resource mobilisation and expenditure strategy for fighting climate change. The framework was updated in 2020 but the implementation of CFF has been only to a very limited extent. Over the last seven years, climate related allocations have been doubled which is from US\$1.44 billion in FY 2015-16 to US\$2.96 billion in FY 2021-22 which is 0.73 per cent of GDP for

¹⁰⁴ Rummana Foisal Nafiu, “UNICEF: Children in Bangladesh at extremely high risk from climate change,” *Dhaka Tribune*, August 20, 2021.

¹⁰⁵ Haseeb Md Irfanullah, “Sourcing funds for climate action,” *The Financial Express*, December 07, 2022.

¹⁰⁶ “Climate Change Initiatives of Bangladesh,” Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, 5; Information collected from interview with expert.

¹⁰⁷ Anannyo Samayel, “How to meet Bangladesh’s Climate Finance Needs,” *The Business Standard*, July 07, 2023.

2021-22.¹⁰⁸ The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has adopted a plan to spend US\$230 billion over the next 27 year as an effort to save Bangladesh from the negative impacts of climate change.¹⁰⁹ However, the extent of the negative impacts of climate change is so vast that these financial supports are still insignificant. The establishment of the L&D Fund has ushered new expectations for financial support for developing countries like Bangladesh.

The wake of frequent sudden natural calamities has compelled the country to shift to the L&D demand. Bangladesh needs to continue its efforts in highlighting importance of the effective application of the L&D Fund for the climate vulnerable developing countries. On the other hand, Bangladesh is categorised as an LDC, but the country has met the pre-conditions to graduate to developing country status and is set to graduate out of the LDC group in 2026. Bangladesh used to take part in the climate negotiations as a member of LDC group. Therefore, after graduating as developing country, Bangladesh might not be eligible to participate in the negotiations as LDC member. The eligibility of Bangladesh for getting the benefit of the L&D Fund after graduating from the LDC group would depend on the specific criteria that have been established for the fund.¹¹⁰

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The developing climate vulnerable countries have long been demanding a dedicated L&D financing arrangement. After more than 30 years of the first initiation of the discussion on L&D, in COP27, the longstanding demand was fulfilled with the decision of establishing a L&D Fund which is thought to be a vital step forward towards climate justice. The decision has been termed as the biggest breakthrough of COP summit as the developed countries have long been hindering the discussion of L&D. The existing climate finance arrangements have failed to support the climate change induced L&D which have triggered the demand of establishing a separate dedicated financial arrangement. The L&D Fund is considered as the third pillar of global climate finance instrument along with mitigation and adaptation. The operational modalities of

¹⁰⁸ “Climate Change Initiatives of Bangladesh – Achieving Climate Resilience,” Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, p.4, Last accessed July 30, 2023, https://moef.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/moef.portal.gov.bd/page/8401345e_0385_4979_8381_801492e3b876/1.%20Brochure%20on%20CC%20Initiatives%20of%20Bangladesh%20-%20Final_compressed.pdf; Information collected from interview with expert.

¹⁰⁹ Zafar Ahmed, “Bangladesh is set to adopt \$230bn plan to mitigate impacts of climate change,” *bdnews24.com*, Last modified October 09, 2022, <https://bdnews24.com/environment/iqpdqtq56io#:~:text=The%20Ministry%20of%20Environment%2C%20Forest,awaits%20approval%20from%20the%20Cabinet.>

¹¹⁰ Information collected from interview with expert.

the L&D Fund will be finalised in the upcoming COP28, meanwhile the transitional committee is working on developing the operational modalities of the proposed L&D Fund. Bangladesh is widely considered as one of the major victims of climate change impacts in spite of its negligible contribution to global warming. The country is sincerely trying to shift its vulnerability towards resilience for which a huge financial support is necessary. Bangladesh government has also invested billions of dollars to reduce the negative effects of climate change, but more is needed. Being one of the most vulnerable countries to the negative consequences of climate change, Bangladesh deserves financial support from the L&D Fund.

Although the establishment of the L&D Fund has given momentum to climate finance, the operational modalities are still under scrutiny. The present paper would like to suggest following recommendations for the smooth operationalities of the L&D Fund:

- The first and foremost concern is to ensure that the L&D Fund meets the immediate need for any climate disaster genuinely. It is imperative for the fund to be in line with the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement principles of common but differentiated responsibilities which take into account historic responsibilities and respective capabilities, equity, human rights, feminism and gender equity, etc. It is necessary for the funding and implementing instruments to work closely with the grassroot levels for the accessibility and proper utilisation of the fund.
- It is necessary to make sure that the existing climate finance and other development finances are not diverted as L&D Fund. The L&D Fund needs to be a new separate fund which should be rights-based and responsive towards the affected communities and vulnerable groups while having a balance of gender and religion.
- The L&D Fund should not be in the form of loans, it must be provided as grants in which developed countries and other polluting and fossil fuel industries need to have significant contributions. Alternative sources of funding are necessary for the L&D Fund.
- The multilateral and bilateral financial support providers have their own requirements, procedures and processes which sometimes place significant

burdens on the recipient vulnerable developing countries as well as create difficulties in accessing the fund. Easy accessibility to the L&D Fund is a prerequisite for getting the best benefit of the L&D Fund.

- The adequacy and accessibility of the existing climate funding under GEF, GCF and other climate finance arrangements is questionable particularly in addressing the issue of L&D. Studies have found that although the GCF is mandated to address L&D issue, it is not suitable for funding immediately after any disaster. Some of the losses and damages such as slow onset events or non-economic losses are not addressed through the existing climate finance mechanisms at all. These issues need to be taken into consideration while making the operational arrangement of the L&D Fund.
- Quantification and assessment for climate change induced L&D are immensely important. It is easier to assess the valuation for the economic losses, but, the baseline of quantification and evaluation of non-economic losses and long-term slow onset events need a mutually agreeable common methodology.
- A rights-based approach results in better outcomes and more sustainable climate action¹¹¹ and thus a rights-based approach in the L&D financing is a moral imperative for ensuring the basic necessities and rights of the recipients that include the rights of women and marginalised gender groups, indigenous peoples, youth, elderly and persons with disabilities.
- The L&D Fund should have a separate governance mechanism so that it could easily and immediately provide fund after any natural disaster. The governance structure of the L&D Fund should have proper representation of both climate vulnerable developing countries as well as developed countries which would ensure transparency and accountability of the L&D Fund.
- Climate justice reshapes climate actions in an approach to address human rights and social inequality.¹¹² The L&D Fund is expected to ensure climate justice as it would provide financial support for the climate vulnerable

¹¹¹ A human-rights based approach to climate change, Last accessed July 10, 2023, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/OHCHR_Presentation_SN.pdf.

¹¹² Josh Gabbatiss and Ayesha Tandon, "In-depth Q&A: What is 'climate justice'?" CarbonBrief, Last accessed August 21, 2023, <https://www.carbonbrief.org/in-depth-qa-what-is-climate-justice>.

countries to address the immediate necessity after any disaster. As the previous financial arrangements of the UNFCCC have failed to address L&D issues properly, the necessity of addressing the climate justice issue has become more urgent.

- Climate migration, a consequence of both extreme climate events as well as slow onset events, is a neglected issue in climate negotiations and existing UNFCCC financial arrangements. The L&D Fund should take the climate migration issue into consideration for ensuring climate justice.

Bangladesh being one of the aspirants for getting the benefit of the L&D Fund should focus on the following issues:

- Bangladesh needs to have proper updated scientific data of the negative consequences of climate change which is affecting the country adversely. Ensuring the availability of local climate data through extensive research and other means is necessary.
- As Bangladesh is vulnerable to various types of disasters and different disasters have different types of consequences, the country needs to have data of the impacts of different disasters separately.
- As climate change impacts affect women, children and marginalised people disproportionately, the distribution of climate related funds should be gender specific. Impacts on children and marginalised peoples should also be taken care of and proper representation of the climate victims in the global summits is needed.
- The country needs to present its vulnerability to the world in a holistic manner. It is important to present before the global leaders the tragic consequences of climate change in Bangladesh through side events and other means. It is important to showcase the ongoing climate resilient development in Bangladesh. At the same time, it is also important to show how scarcity of fund is hindering such development efforts.
- In spite of graduating from the LDC group, Bangladesh's vulnerability to the climate change impacts will not be reduced. The country needs to develop

international mechanism as a climate vulnerable country, so that after its graduation from the LDC, it still gets the benefit of financial support from climate funds.

- It is necessary for Bangladesh to concentrate on climate diplomacy which will eventually put pressure on the developed nations to make up for the losses and damages the nation is undergoing due to climate change and to promise sufficient funding for adaptation and resilience building. Bangladesh should prioritise climate change in its diplomatic efforts since it is now inextricably linked to security concerns.
- As a climate vulnerable country, Bangladesh needs to establish its demand to the global leaders and make them understand the urgency of necessary actions regarding the L&D Fund. It is necessary for the country to advocate strongly for fair global action for climate change impacts. For this, Bangladesh can participate as a member of Like Minded-Group of Developing Countries (LMDC) and also can utilise the CVF and V20 groups for participating in the climate negotiations after its graduation from LDC group.
- It is necessary for Bangladesh to explore alternative and new international climate funding sources like Multilateral Development Banks (MDB), bilateral sources and private sector investment.

Imtiaz Pervez

THE POTENTIAL FOR GLOBAL SOUTH-LED UNPKO GOVERNANCE IN A CHANGING WORLD ORDER: BANGLADESH PERSPECTIVE

Abstract

The UNPKO has expanded its outlook, scope and mandate over time to concur with different shifts in global politics since its inception. After the Cold War, the UNPKO is standing on the verge of another transitional shift, particularly in a changing world order characterised by regional tensions, global security crises and non-traditional security threats. Moreover, the North-South divide in the UNPKO governance mechanism is once again relevant, especially for pushing towards a meaningful role of the South in a changing world order. The paper lays out a picture of the domination of the global north in terms of policymaking in the peacekeeping mission. It argues that the global South is performing a significant role in the UNPKO security governance, particularly in the context of changing world order. Using qualitative research methods, the paper contends that the global South, through its leadership, interest-based regional coordination and common security imperatives, can facilitate an inclusive model of UNPKO governance while also reducing the North-South gap in terms of the decision-making process. The paper also analyses Bangladesh as a representative of the global South to explain the implications of such South-led security governance for the country. It argues that Bangladesh, among many other countries of the global South, posits a significant potential for such governance paradigm with regional and global leadership implications.

Keywords: UNPKO, Global South, Changing World Order.

1. Introduction

UN peacekeeping has been one of the key instruments in the post-World War II (WWII) era with an aim to end global armed conflict, facilitating peacebuilding and

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peacemaking in a post-conflict environment. For over 74 years, UN peacekeeping operations (UNPKO) has served more than 70 missions and has deployed over a million personnel in different conflict-ridden regions of Africa, Europe and Asia.¹ The importance of peacekeeping has only increased over time by expanding not only to post-conflict peacemaking and peacebuilding but also to multidimensional engagements such as laying out comprehensive peace agreements, sustainable peace practices, institutionalising rule of law, and disarming and reintegration of former belligerents.² The UN peacekeeping has been playing the principal role in the world's peacekeeping enterprises accumulating over US\$6.45 billion yearly budget while operating 12 missions in different regions with the deployment of 70,000 troops and personnel.³

Several factors such as the rapid development of a technology-driven world economy, climate change impact, the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic as well as highly volatile regional instability steamed by the Russia-Ukraine conflict are making peacekeeping mandate a very complicated issue. The UN has been playing the role of authoritative guiding body in security governance, which enjoys certain power derived from its universal membership, capacity and legitimate role in defining global norms, directing the rules of guidelines and formulating decision-making principles.⁴ The global character of the UN's legitimacy has enabled it to sustain its pragmatic relevance from the twentieth century to the twenty-first century. The Department of Peace Operations (DPO) has been functioning as an integral institution for maintaining stability, managing conflicts and assisting ceasefires and armistice as a form of global security governance since the Cold War era.⁵ However, the twenty-first-century's security governance is based on the ideological precepts of the twentieth century, and the results would not be without disastrous consequences. This can be seen in the growing challenges that UNPKO is facing in the United Nations Assistance Mission

¹ "Our Peacekeepers," United Nations Peacekeeping, Last accessed October 20, 2022, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/our-peacekeepers>

² Spencer Feingold, "Who Are the Blue Helmets? UN Peacekeeping, explained," World Economic Forum, Last accessed September 21, 2021, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/09/who-are-the-blue-helmets-un-peacekeeping-explained/>

³ Daniel Forti, "The 2022 UN Peacekeeping Budget: Signs of Progress or a Fleeting Moment of Consensus?" *IPI Global Observatory*, Last accessed July 20, 2022, <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2022/07/2022-un-peacekeeping-budget/>; "Our History," United Nations Peacekeeping, Last accessed October 26, 2022, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/our-history>

⁴ Heikki Patomäki, *The Political Economy of Global Security: War, Future Crises and Changes in Global Governance* (London: Routledge, 2008).

⁵ S. Krishnan, "UN Peacekeeping, Responsibility to Protect and Humanitarian Intervention," *India Quarterly* 76, no. 1 (2020): 120–35, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0974928419901198>.

for Rwanda (UNAMR), the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM I), the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH).⁶

These developments surged the concern that the UN peacekeeping missions in a changing world order, for example in the drag-on missions in Darfur, Syria and Sudan have shown very little progress in reaching a convincing reconciliation.⁷ Aside from the external impediments, internal inconsistency stemming from the power gap in the UNPKO governance structure has been one of the major concerns in UN peacekeeping operations. Even in a shrinking budget contribution trend, dominant powerful countries such as P5 members along with Canada and Japan hold a significant stake in the financial contribution in the UN peacekeeping. In contrast, countries from the global South including Asia, Africa, and Latin America are providing 92 per cent of troops for all the UN missions.⁸ This disparity in finance and troops' contribution has a spillover effect on the peacekeeping decision-making process and policy-making executive roles usually dominated by the top financial contributors.

Since 1988, Bangladesh has been extensively engaged in various UN Peace Support Operations. From its first engagement in the United Nations Iran-Iraq military observer group mission (UNIIMOG), Bangladesh has participated in over 54 peacekeeping operations in 40 countries with a contribution of around 146,000 troops from the Armed Forces division.⁹ The number is even quite higher, combining all of the uniform personnel standing around 175,000 troops. The country has secured first position in troops' contribution to the UKPKO for the consecutive years 2021 and 2022. Currently, Bangladesh has 5896 peacekeepers deployed in 9 countries in different capacities.¹⁰ This paper delineates future implications of the South-led UNPKO governance for small countries by analysing the case of Bangladesh.

The paper has taken cues from Emmanuel Wallerstein's distinction of North and South in terms of developed vs developing countries. In broader terms, the

⁶ Alex J. Bellamy and Charles T. Hunt, "Twenty-First Century UN Peace Operations: Protection, Force and the Changing Security Environment," *International Affairs* 91, no. 6 (2015): 1277–1298, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24539055>.

⁷ Kai Michael Kenkel and Conor Foley, "Responding to the Crisis in United Nations Peace Operations," *Contemporary Security Policy* 42, no. 2 (2021): 189-196.

⁸ Thomas G. Weiss and Giovanna Kuele, "The Global South and UN Peace Operations," E-International Relations, Last accessed December 26, 2022, <https://www.e-ir.info/2019/02/03/the-global-south-and-un-peace-operations/>.

⁹ "Bangladesh in UN Peace Operation," *Armed Forces Division*, Last accessed October 26, 2022, <https://afd.gov.bd/un-peacekeeping/bangladesh-in-un-peace-operation>.

¹⁰ Rashed Uz Zaman and Niloy Ranjan Biswas, "Contributor Profile: Bangladesh," *International Peace Institute*, 2013, https://www.ipinst.org/images/pdfs/bangladesh_biswas-rashed_130524.pdf.

North refers to North America, most of Europe, Japan and Australia, while the South refers to the rest, mainly covering much of Asia, Africa and South America.¹¹ Global North possesses greater influence and dominance over the knowledge management, policy research and decision-making process of the peacekeeping upper echelon.¹² Scholars also think that the division between global North and South is strategic and epistemological in which the South is socially, economically, financially, politically, culturally, and academically marginalised through the history of colonialism and neocolonialism.¹³ In terms of peacekeeping and peacekeeping governance, the idea also represents a dominance of the P5 countries of UN Security Council (UNSC): the United States (US), China, France, Russia and the United Kingdom (UK).¹⁴ To reduce this gap, emerging powers from the global South including China, Brazil, Indonesia are trying to assert their ambitions to play a more active role in the UNPKO decision-making process.

Against the backdrop of a changing world order and contested power relations in the UNPKO governance nexus, the paper asks the followings questions: what role does the global South play in UNPKO governance? And, how can the global South lead the UNPKO governance in a changing world order? In line with this, the paper also investigates two further contending questions- What challenges do the top contributing countries face in the UN peacekeeping? What will be the possible implication of global South-led UNPKO governance for Bangladesh? The primary reason to take Bangladesh as a case study in this paper is that-in the existing literature, there has been a wide debate and discussion on India and Brazil's peacekeeping cooperation in North-South dynamics but very few of them have addressed Bangladesh's position in this regard.

This paper relies on qualitative research method. It uses both primary and secondary data. Primary data has been collected by employing KII. Secondary data has been collected from books, journals, newspapers, magazines, working papers, and documents of various government institutions.

¹¹ Immanuel Wallerstein, *Modern World-System in the Longue Durée* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

¹² Cedric de Coning, "UN Peace Operations and Changes in the Global Order: Evolution, Adaptation, and Resilience," in *United Nations Peace Operations in a Changing Global Order*, ed. Cedric de Coning and Mateja Peter (London : Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 297-317.

¹³ Damtew Teferra, "The irrelevance of the re-configured definition of internationalisation to the Global South," *International Journal of African Higher Education* 7, no. 2 (2020).

¹⁴ Philip Cunliffe, *Legions of peace: UN peacekeepers from the Global South* (London: CH Hurst & Co., 2013).

2. Literature Review

2.1 *The UNPKO Governance in a Changing Global Order*

The political landscape of the post-Cold War era in which the UNPKO operates, has gone through tremendous changes. Especially in the twenty-first century, the world has been observing a fast paradigm change in global security governance structure, shifting power balance among major superpowers, a contested multipolar world, and a resurgence of intra-state conflicts along with the emergence of other non-traditional conflict sources.¹⁵ The dichotomy between high politics and low politics is being called into question by this dynamic shift, as high politics was historically defined by the powerful ones' prescriptive policies that established the fundamentals of high politics.¹⁶ In contrast, this paper acknowledges the experience of witnessing both a concentrated form of power—driven primarily by financial globalization—and a more diffused form of power—driven primarily by technological globalization—in a world where the United States, a former hegemon, no longer plays the same historical role.¹⁷

Several initiatives have been taken to address the issue of adaptiveness of UNPKO in a changing global context. Such attempts include the United Nations High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (HPTCC) of 2003, the Report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) of 2015, and also two reports from the Secretary-General.¹⁸ Both reports effectively address complex security challenges and the political dimension of peace sustainability. However, none of the mentioned reports as well as the recent two reports by the Secretary-General provides the updated means to deal with the persistent North-South security gaps, complex traditional and non-traditional security threats and their relevance with the UNPKO.¹⁹ Thus, a complex theoretical approach shows that the centrality of the UN peacekeeping agenda should be rethought in a principled adaptation mode

¹⁵ J. Emil and James Kirchner, *Global Security Governance: Competing Perceptions of Security in the Twenty-first century* (London: Routledge, 2007); Emilian Kavalski, "The Complexity of Global Security Governance: An Analytical Overview," *Global Society* 22, no. 4 (2008): 23–443.

¹⁶ Shahar Hameiri and Lee Jones, "Probing the Links between Political Economy and Non-Traditional Security: Themes, Approaches and Instruments," *International Politics* 52, no. 4 (2015): 371–388.

¹⁷ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *Introduction. Global Security Governance: A World of Change and Challenge* (Stockholm: 2005), <https://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2005/introduction>.

¹⁸ Alex J. Bellamy and Charles T. Hunt, "Twenty-First Century UN Peace Operations: Protection, Force and the Changing Security Environment," *International Affairs* 91, no. 6 (2015): 1277–1298.

¹⁹ Justin Morris and Nicholas J. Wheeler, "The Security Council's Crisis of Legitimacy and the Use of Force," *International Politics* 44, no. 2 (2007): 214–231, <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.ip.8800185>.

towards the novel security challenges.²⁰ In this mode, the UNPKO is likely to adapt its traditional means of external intervention, legislative framework, and integrative approaches to the twenty-first century complex security needs.

The nature of the UNPKO missions, troops deployment and contribution pattern, as well as mission scope and agendas, have changed since the early 1990s. During the Cold War, troops deployment in UN peacekeeping was limited in number. Only 13 peacekeeping operations were deployed between 1948 and 1988 concentrating on conflict monitoring and ceasefire observation using light armed operations. After the Cold War, the approximate number of UN operations has increased to over 57 indicating a dynamic phase shift.²¹ These operations are now focusing on a range of issues including intra-state conflicts, assisting in comprehensive peace agreements, monitoring ceasefires, sustaining peace initiatives, socio-economic developments, supporting peacebuilding and peacemaking process, supporting justice process etc. In the 1990s, the global political power balance was dominated by the US which gave the UN the primary impetus in intervening conflict regions as well as assisting post-conflict peacebuilding and peacekeeping.²² The trend has not changed but opened numerous opportunities in the new century in a new environment where numerous new actors are trying to influence the UNPKO structure and decision making processes.

In the UNPKO governing body, financial contribution and decision-making power are reciprocally interlinked. Countries from the global North hold the largest shares of the peacekeeping budget contribution (Figure 1). The greater financial leverage enables them to become the primary stakeholder in peacekeeping policy formulation, country selection and decision making.²³ On the other hand, countries from the global South such as Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Pakistan, Egypt, Ghana and Rwanda contribute highly in troops contribution. This global North-South divide in the UNPKO troops and funding disparity is strongly evident in the UNPKO governance and decision making nexus.

²⁰ Cedric de Coning, "The Future of UN Peace Operations: Principled Adaptation through Phases of Contraction, Moderation, and Renewal," *Contemporary Security Policy* 42, no. 2 (2021): 211–224.

²¹ Ryan Rappa, "Reversing the Trend: UN Peacekeeping in 2017," *Global Peace Operations Review* 27, (March 2018), <https://peaceoperationsreview.org/thematic-essays/trends-un-peacekeeping/>

²² Oliver P Richmond, "UN Peace Operations and the Dilemmas of the Peacebuilding Consensus," *International Peacekeeping* 11, no. 1 (2004): 83–101.

²³ Cedric de Coning, "UN Peace Operations and Changes in the Global Order: Evolution, Adaptation, and Resilience," *United Nations Peace Operations in a Changing Global Order*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019): 297-317.

Figure 1: Top Financial Contributors of the UN Peacekeeping Operations (2020-21)²⁴

	Country	Budgetary Contribution
1	United States	27.89%
2	China	15.21%
3	Japan	8.56%
4	Germany	6.09%
5	United Kingdom	5.79%
6	France	5.61%
7	Italy	3.30%
8	Russian Federation	3.04%
9	Canada	2.73%
10	Republic of Korea	2.26%

The list provides the assessed financial contribution of the countries to peacekeeping fund. Most of the listed countries are from global North.

The decision-making power is deeply ingrained within the UNPKO governance structure and any type of rebalancing of the mechanism would involve a less normative and more inclusive peacekeeping mandate formation. Until now, the UN peacekeeping has been operated within a normative top-down framework; any sort of changes would encourage bottom-up approach towards peacebuilding in conflict regions using more localised and adaptive self-determining models in peacekeeping approaches.²⁵ Active rebalancing ambition of the global South will also pose a systemic transition of the existing neo-liberal peacekeeping agenda and will prompt moving toward a more robust approach-oriented peacekeeping mission while engaging multiple actors in policy formulation.²⁶

There has also been a noticeable trend of responsibility and burden sharing shifting from the more powerful countries to the less powerful ones. This trend is largely observed in the case of the US as well as in various middle powers such as

²⁴ United Nations Peacekeeping, “How We Are Funded,” *United Nations Peacekeeping*, 2022, Last accessed October 26, 2022, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/how-we-are-funded>.

²⁵ Cedric de Coning and Eli Stammers, *UN Peacebuilding Architecture: The First 10 Years* (Routledge, 2016).

²⁶ Alex J. Bellamy and Charles T. Hunt, “Twenty-First Century UN Peace Operations: Protection, Force and the Changing Security Environment,” *International Affairs* 91, no. 6 (2015): 1277–1298, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24539055>.

India, Brazil and South Korea.²⁷ Though the definition of ‘powerful’ countries is itself contested in the International Relations discourse, ‘power’ in international relations, is determined by the national interests. It is also a means of capability and capacity by which one nation-state tries to influence other nation-states in world politics.²⁸ After the Second World War, the US has taken larger shares of responsibility in the UN security ventures to protect global security. In this century, the Trump administration’s budgetary cut in the peacekeeping fund denotes a phase shift of responsibility sharing in the UNPKO. At the same time, middle powers such as South Korea are increasing their involvement in missions and operations as a means to gain greater diplomatic leverage in international politics.²⁹

The question of the relevance and efficacy of the UNPKO is still debated among scholars, academicians, and policy-makers given the acceptance, resource and executive challenges faced in the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR). Moreover, newer complex challenges of global security require a profound reassessment of the current capacity and capability of the UN peacekeeping operations.³⁰ The HIPPO report of 2015 aside from providing recommendations also provides a ten year review of the UN peacebuilding architecture for adaptation processes. The report also reviews the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.³¹ These reviews altogether provided a first-hand reassessment of the UN peacekeeping agendas and operations for a changing decade which proves that the UNPKO has entered a complex phase of peacekeeping. They also prove that peacekeeping approaches, post-conflict peacebuilding and human security agendas are intertwined and cannot be discussed separately.

²⁷ Terence Roehrig, “South Korea, Foreign Aid, and UN Peacekeeping: Contributing to International Peace and Security as a Middle Power,” *Korea Observer* 44, no. 4 (2013): 623–645, <https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/files/publication/roehrig-korea-observer-winter-2013.pdf>.

²⁸ Tuomas Forsberg, “Power in International Relations: An Interdisciplinary Perspective,” *International Studies: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011): 207-227, https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230342934_8.

²⁹ Brendan M Howe, “Korea’s Role for Peacebuilding and Development in Asia,” *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 5, no.2 (2017): 243-266, <https://s-space.snu.ac.kr/handle/10371/138433>.

³⁰ Jaïr van der Lijn et al, *Progress on UN Peacekeeping Reform: HIPPO and beyond* (Clingendael: Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 2017), https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Progress_on_UN_peacekeeping_reform.pdf.

³¹ Cedric de Coning, “UN Peace Operations and Changes in the Global Order,” 297-317.

2.2 *The role of the Global South in the UN Peacekeeping*

Despite an ingrained security gap and policy divide between the global North and South in peacekeeping architecture, global South continues to be an integral part of the UNPKO by providing their ‘boots on the ground’ active participation and troops contribution. Countries from the global South especially Bangladesh, India, Brazil, and Ethiopia are extending their contribution by providing large shares of troops, military and technical efforts. In their efforts, they have also accepted the existing division of labour existing in the UNPKO. Why does the global South contribute even more to the UNPKO despite this division?

Primarily contributing troops, the South cooperation has increased in different phases and it has gained its momentum in the twenty-first century. The increased troop contribution from African countries, especially Ethiopia and Rwanda’s generous involvement suggests that African regional interests played a key role in this enhanced UNPKO cooperation.³² Similarly, South American cooperation on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) suggests that providing troops can foster bilateral cooperation and engage countries to improve regional defense infrastructure.³³

Global South’s motivation for joining the UNPKO comes from a variety of interests including solidifying their national images, garnering international prestige, mitigating regional tension, and pursuing strategic ambition.³⁴ South Asian countries like Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan along with China currently constitute half of the top ten troops and police-contributing countries (T/PCC).³⁵ This high level of Asian engagement in the UNPKO stems partly from the regional conflict in Kashmir through the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) and also from the desire of solidifying their respective national image

³² Weiss and Kuele, “The Global South and UN Peace Operations,” 2019.

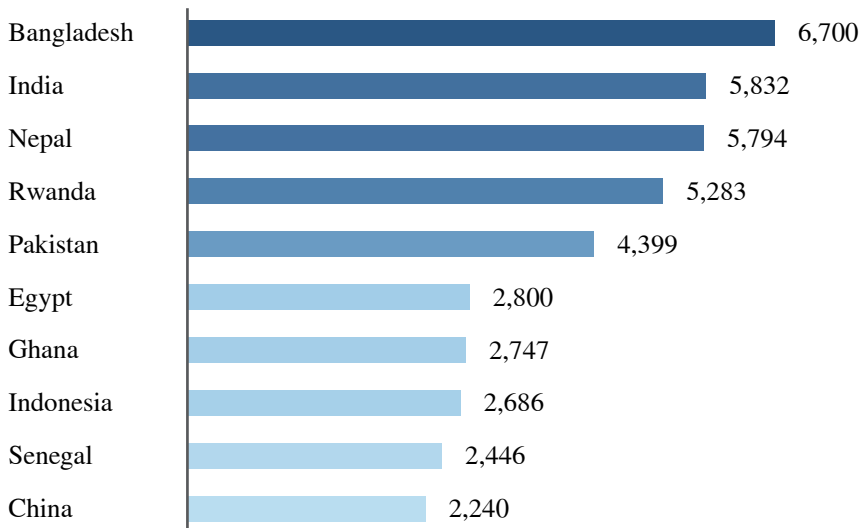
³³ Carlos Chagas Vianna Braga, “MINUSTAH and the Security Environment in Haiti: Brazil and South American Cooperation in the Field,” *International Peacekeeping* 17, no. 5 (November 2010): 711–722, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2010.516979>.

³⁴ Thomas G. Weiss and Giovanna Kuele, “The Global South and UN Peace Operations,” *E-International Relations*, 2019, Last accessed October 28, 2022, <https://www.e-ir.info/2019/02/03/the-global-south-and-un-peace-operations/>.

³⁵ United Nations, “Troop and Police Contributors,” *United Nations Peacekeeping*, 2022, Last accessed October 26, 2022, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors>.

in the international arena.³⁶ Also in Africa, Brazil strives to engage more of its troops in an attempt to strengthen its case for a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) permanent seat.³⁷ Greater engagement through troops contribution to peace operations provides the global South countries a strong platform to advance their national and foreign policy ambitions. Figure 2 shows the ranking of the top ten T/PCC contributors as of 2022.

Figure 2: Troops and Police Contribution Countries (T/PCC) ranking as of mid-2022³⁸



Previously, financial benefits and gains in troops training were thought to be the primary motivations behind global South’s joining in the UNPKO. The weaker economies could capture potential financial opportunities through involvement in peace operations. However, high-level engagement also strengthens the country’s international image and creates a potential base for further foreign investment in their economies. The contributor countries may also treat peace operations as beneficial

³⁶ Kabilan Krishnasamy, “‘Recognition’ for Third World peacekeepers: India and Pakistan,” *International Peacekeeping* 8, no. 4 (November 2007): 56-76, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13533310108413920>.

³⁷ Kai Michael Kenkel, “South America’s Emerging Power: Brazil as Peacekeeper,” *International Peacekeeping* 17, no. 5 (November 2010): 644–61, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2010.516958>.

³⁸ United Nations, “Troop and Police Contributors,” *United Nations Peacekeeping*, 2022, Last accessed October 26, 2022, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors>.

for their military infrastructure as they often offer high-level troops training and standardisation of military equipment.³⁹

However, contemporary scholarship, despite giving a comprehensive critical overview of the global South engagement in the UNPKO does not explain how or in what ways the global South could be a powerful catalyst in the UNPKO governance if given the right platform. UNPKO governance, here, refers to a type of security governance through collective approach⁴⁰ under the UN umbrella which includes coherent supervision and guidance.⁴¹ As mentioned before, in the present paper, the global South refers to a meta-category consisting of countries of a more political nature belonging primarily to Africa, Latin America and Asia. In the existing literature, very few discussions have been made on these countries, with the exception of Brazil and India, to consider how such South-led intervention in the UNPKO architecture would benefit the future security governance dealing with complex challenge. It is worth investigating how the leaders of the global South countries, their experts or force commanders can exert significant influence in the peacekeeping policy equation.⁴²

When it comes to coordinating with the UN peacekeeping, the global South countries face a complex situation resulted from differentiated mission priorities. Finding a middle ground in security cooperation becomes difficult for the global South countries given their distinct national interests and regional conflicts. In contrast, the European Union, because of their interdependence, has been successful in formulating an effective regional security cooperation framework. Nonetheless, it is important to investigate the role of interest-based regional cooperation based on the global South. In the 1980s and 1990s, the UN peacekeeping has gone through a series of debates on creating a more robust global agenda for an effective UNPKO.⁴³ The need for a global security imperative has gained momentum in the event of the recent COVID-19 pandemic and growing backlashes of climate change. Hereby, a South-led discussion on security governance also needs to reconsider the global

³⁹ Kabilan Krishnasamy, "Recognition' for Third World peacekeepers: India and Pakistan," *International Peacekeeping* 8, no. 4 (November 2007): 56-76, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13533310108413920>.

⁴⁰ Emil J. Kirchner, "Regional and global security: Changing threats and institutional responses," in *Global Security Governance* (London: Routledge, 2007), 21-40.

⁴¹ Elke Krahnmann, "Conceptualizing security governance," *Cooperation and conflict* 38, no. 1 (2003): 5-26.

⁴² Christoph Harig and Nicole Jenne, "Whose Rules? Whose Power? The Global South and the Possibility to Shape International Peacekeeping Norms through Leadership Appointments," *Review of International Studies* 48, no.4 (2022): 646-667, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210522000262>

⁴³ Roger A. Coate and Donald J. Puchala, "Global Policies and the United Nations System: A Current Assessment," *Journal of Peace Research* 27, no.2 (1990): 127-140.

security imperatives in its framework for a practical global approach towards a more cooperative, engaged and inclusive peacekeeping agenda.

3. The UNPKO Adaptation in a Changing Global Order

After the Cold War, the UNPKO has followed cautious steps in its mission involvement, with particular emphasis on stepping out from the overlapping between peacekeeping operations and peace enforcement. Previously, peacekeeping engagement was more norm-based, the one idea that the North countries took frequent advantage of. However, as the complexities of the post-Cold War security area are emerging, the UNPKO cannot be beholden to its traditional principles based action approaches such as non-use of force, impartiality and consensus mechanism. Now the operation regions are becoming the geopolitical hotspot for international actors. Examples of Somalia, Rwanda and Yugoslavia operations can be mentioned in this regard.⁴⁴ Geopolitical context led to the creation of two or more blocs, mainly, Western and Russian. For example, in Somalia, Russian and the US forces' involvement to counter al-Shabaab militants has been following competitive means. Previously, Russia's increased interest made the US reluctant towards lifting embargo on Somalia. Again, when the US engagement increased in Somalia, the probability of Russia-Somalia cooperation reduced.⁴⁵ Scholars have also noted that, the increase or decrease in troop contribution is sometimes dedicated to outnumbering the contributions of the adversaries. In Somalia's case, the US was looking at both Russia and China.⁴⁶ Russia has also recently used the 1999 "Yugoslavia scenario" to defend their actions in Ukraine, referring to the bombing by the NATO and its humanitarian interventions.⁴⁷ The UN mission in Congo also saw how UN peacekeepers had to deal with electoral conflicts, local politics and regional political actors to fulfill their mission. This applies not only to the UN missions but also to joint operations. For example, the NATO-United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Serbia and Bosnia shows how impartial

⁴⁴ Emily Paddon Rhoads, *Taking Sides in Peacekeeping: Impartiality and the Future of the United Nations*, Swarthmore College, Last modified 2016, <https://works.swarthmore.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1600&context=fac-poli-sci>

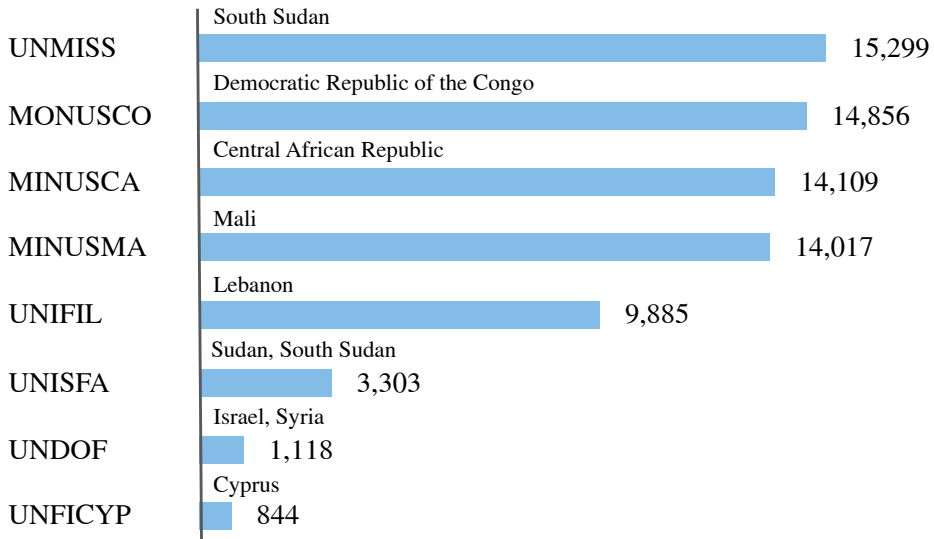
⁴⁵ "A Surprising Shift: Is Somalia choosing Moscow over Washington?" Future for Advanced Research and Studies, June 14, 2023, <https://futureuae.com/en-US/Mainpage/Item/8302/a-surprising-shift-is-somalia-choosing-moscow-over-washington> ; "Russia Offers Military Support to Somalia," *Voice of America News*, May 26, 2023, <https://www.voanews.com/a/russia-offers-military-support-to-somalia-/7111117.html>

⁴⁶ US re-entry into Somalia aims at Russia, China, *Asia Times*, Last accessed June 6, 2022, <https://asiatimes.com/2022/06/us-re-entry-into-somalia-aims-at-russia-china/>;

⁴⁷ "The 'Yugoslavia Scenario': How Russia Intends to Use an Anniversary in Its Ongoing Information War," *Kyiv Post*, Last accessed March 22, 2023, <https://www.kyivpost.com/opinion/14673>

missions could be deployed for partial political interests.⁴⁸ The newer peacekeeping operating modules need to revisit how peacekeeping principles should be applied under a less-cooperative and more violence-prone operation condition.

Figure 3: The Largest UN Peacekeeping Operations in 2022⁴⁹



In this period of changes, however, the demand for the UNPKO has only increased whereas contraction is forcing the peacekeeping operations to underperform. The demand for recruiting personnel in high-budgeted and large-in-scope UN peacekeeping is emerging in many UN peace operations (Figure 3). To deal with this, several proposals have been on the agenda table which include prioritising the task approach for peacekeeping mandates, taking adaptive approach in mission planning and management and ensuring digital technology usage capacity in a mission.⁵⁰ However, it is less probable that the UNPKO will go through a robust, large and costly reformation which will require heavy engagement. To tackle medium-term challenges, peacekeeping operations might go through a conservative phase. A good example would be the UNPKO’s transformative shifts in special political missions,

⁴⁸ Emily Paddon Rhoads, *Taking Sides in Peacekeeping: Impartiality and the Future of the United Nations*, 2016.

⁴⁹ Katharina Buchholz, “The Largest UN Peacekeeping Operations in 2022,” *Statista* (blog), Last modified May 30, 2022, <https://www.statista.com/chart/24939/personnel-involved-in-the-largest-peacekeeping-operations/>

⁵⁰ Cedric de Coning, “The Future of UN Peace Operations: Principled Adaptation through Phases of Contraction, Moderation, and Renewal,” *Contemporary Security Policy* 42, no. 2 (2021): 211–224.

for example in United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS), UN Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA) and UN Verification Mission in Colombia (UNVMC).⁵¹ This suggests that the UNPKO will be adapting to its new role while maintaining its core principles under various coexistence forms. In future, the UNPKO would be supporting political missions more and expressing itself as the ‘visible symbol of international cooperation’.

4. Adapting Role of the Global South-led UNPKO Governance

4.1 Global South leadership in peacekeeping operations

An exclusive look into the intra-organisational politics within international organisations such as the UN shows that appointment of leaders both in civilian and military echelons is characterised by power disparity of the member states. The UN appoints leaders for its peacekeeping operations on the basis of three prioritising factors: satisfying the powerful member states, recognising the member states with outstanding contributions to the organisation and picking the best leaders possessing the best skills required for particular missions.⁵² However, the multiple hierarchical structures of the UN peacekeeping informally exhibit the North-South divide.⁵³ For example, western members dominate the civilian decision-making posts like SRSG (Special Representative of the Secretary-General) whereas P/TCC dominates the military executive posts like FC (Force Commander).⁵⁴ In a broad sense, the nationality of a leader plays a crucial role in his/her appointment in the UNPKO.

Lack of participation of the global South at the policy level causes “free-riding” and “commitment gaps” on the part of the global North. Despite dominating the policy level leadership and the decisions, the troop contributions of the Western countries have gradually become low. Even the countries themselves are debating regarding these issues. Gerame Yong has shown how Canada’s lack of involvement in the field level has created a discontent among the US policymakers, despite the

⁵¹ Coning, “The Future of UN Peace Operations.”

⁵² Kseniya Oksamytna et al, “Leadership Selection in United Nations Peacekeeping,” *International Studies Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (March 8, 2021): 16–28.

⁵³ Sukanya Podder and Giuseppe Manzillo, “Reflection on Labour Hierarchies in Peacekeeping: A Study on the Operational Experiences of Military Peacekeepers,” *International Peacekeeping* 28, no. 5 (August 2021): 701–31.

⁵⁴ Christoph Harig and Nicole Jenne, “Whose Rules? Whose Power? The Global South and the Possibility to Shape International Peacekeeping Norms through Leadership Appointments,” *Review of International Studies* 48, no.4 (2022): 646–67, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210522000262>.

two countries are known to be in close ties between the two countries.⁵⁵ On the other hand, the participation of European countries is also staggering. According to Thierry Tardy,

*“All European states are under some pressure from the UN Secretariat because of their absence from UN operations, and critiques are formulated by some of the main troop contributing countries, notably around the issue of the so-called ‘commitment gap’ by which Northern states would design the mandates of the operations but abstain from contributing.”*⁵⁶

While deciding about the posts of SRSO and FC, respective country’s prowess in the UNSC are taken into consideration. Especially, those countries that are crucial for norms and rules implementation within the UN, are given more preferences. The linguistic and cultural skills of a civilian or military leader are also taken into consideration while judging if a candidate is suitable for a conflict region’s local context. Peacekeeping leaders are more likely to be appointed from countries that are highly integrated into the global political processes, contributors of a large number of troops and strategically or geographically proximal to the conflict region.⁵⁷ Global South countries such as Brazil, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Ethiopia have been the largest provider of FC posts in Africa and Asia UN missions from 1991 to 2017. Only a few cases such as South Korean diplomat Choi Young-Jin and Japanese diplomat Yasushi Akashi have been appointed as SRSO in Côte d’Ivoire and Yugoslavia.⁵⁸ However, countries like Brazil, Mali, India, Nigeria and Nepal are increasingly being more assertive in demanding more representative posts to influence decision making in the peacekeeping operation realm.

Leaders’ appointment in peacekeeping operations provides an exclusive opportunity for the respective countries to implement their foreign policy goals, and exercise discretion and autonomy in policy formulation and determination of action. It also provides a good ground for norms contestation in the international level. What would be the global South’s opportunity in this regard? Brazil’s engagement

⁵⁵ Graeme Young, “Political decision-making and the decline of Canadian peacekeeping,” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 25, no. 2 (2019): 152-71.

⁵⁶ Thierry Tardy, “France: the unlikely return to UN peacekeeping,” *International Peacekeeping* 23, no. 5 (2016): 610-629.

⁵⁷ Sukanya Podder and Giuseppe Manzillo, “Reflection on Labour Hierarchies in Peacekeeping: A Study on the Operational Experiences of Military Peacekeepers,” *International Peacekeeping* 28, no. 5 (August 2021): 701–731.

⁵⁸ Podder and Manzillo, “Reflection on Labour Hierarchies in Peacekeeping.”

in the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) provides a good example of this. It was the UN's first explicit 'stabilisation' operation where leadership from the global South posited significant alternative turns in exact non-enforcement places.

India and Rwanda provide two strong cases of robust approaches to the UN peacekeeping emphasising more on the operational necessities. There have been 19 FC missions attended by the officers from India of which seven were justified by the Chapter VII mandate. General Chander Prakash's command of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) illustrates a successful norm contestation in this regard. Despite repetitive calls from their Western counterparts to use forceful measures, Prakash took a traditional and reactive attitude against the use of force and implemented the mandate as per his state's policy objectives.⁵⁹ Similarly, Rwanda has been very vocal about a robust multilateral peacekeeping approach to conflicts. As an original promoter of Kigali Principles, the country follows a strong mandate on the protection of civilians. Patrick Nyamvumba, former FC of the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (2009) acted as a determined norm implementer in his mission favouring a more robust peacekeeping approach, an expression of his government's formal position.⁶⁰

Cases like Brazil, India and Rwanda suggest that the global South countries are now applying significant norm contestation at micro level implementation with a furthering effect on modifying core functions of international organisations such as the UN. This also means that leadership from the global South, if succeeded to the level of 'mission capture', can have a significant alteration of power stratification within the United Nations.

4.2 *Interest-based regional coordination with the UNPKO*

After 1990, the United Nations has increasingly focused on bolstering and incorporating regional frameworks and mechanisms into its peacekeeping mandates, especially in the African and Balkan regions. Since then, a rising number of regional organisations are facilitating peacekeeping operations in dynamic capacities. Such regional or sub-regional arrangements include the European Union, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Commonwealth of Independent

⁵⁹ Harig and Jenne, "Whose Rules?"

⁶⁰ Harig and Jenne, "Whose Rules?"

States (CIS), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), African Union (AU) etc. For example, ECOWAS was involved in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Ivory Coast; CIS engaged itself in Tajikistan and Georgia.⁶¹ The EU and the AU jointly ventured operations in Africa's Burundi (AMISOM). The UN headed directly the peacekeeping mandates of this regional coordination by providing a framework, and guidelines and supervising the conflict resolution mechanism.

As Birger Heldt observes, the UN peacekeeping and regional organisation have thrived together and has proved to be significant in contemporary times despite the surge of a growing concern about personnel and resource shortage in the UN-EU-AU missions.⁶² However, the UN Charter's Article VIII and Cooperation Framework between the UN and Regional Organisations/Arrangements for Peacekeeping (1999) explicitly discusses the principles and mechanisms for such regional arrangements.⁶³ Any regional organisation/arrangement must have consistency with the UN principles/guidelines, non-enforcement mechanism, and full communication with regards to informing the Security Council of any action/operation/strategy undertaken. This framework provides the backbone of the UN's guiding principles regarding regional cooperation in peacekeeping.

In recent times, the UN peacekeeping has shifted to mandating robust peacekeeping in conflict-prone regions through regional organisations or agencies. It is the first priority for any mission to check if any regional organization/framework/agency exists in the conflict area beforehand and if there is any possibility of joint cooperation in the operation venture. There are two types of partnership among the UN peacekeeping and regional organisation: 'subcontracting' involves regional organisation as the primary onus of peacekeeping authorised and monitored directly under the Security Council and 'partnering' refers to an interconnected network of peacekeeping partners, frequently observed in NATO-UN ventures.⁶⁴ The partnership trend shows that the global South countries especially in the African region use subcontracting for UN peacekeeping ventures whereas in Balkan areas a more

⁶¹ Hikaru Yamashita, "Peacekeeping Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional Organisations," *Review of International Studies* 38, no. 1 (2012): 165–186.

⁶² Birger Heldt, "Trends from 1948 to 2005: How to View the Relation between the United Nations and Non-UN Entities," *Peace Operations: Trends, Progress, and Prospects*, Georgetown University Press, 2008, pp. 9-26, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt2tt36w.7>.

⁶³ United Nations, "Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional Organizations/Arrangements in a Peacekeeping Environment," *United Nations: Department of Peacekeeping Operations*, 1999.

⁶⁴ Hikaru Yamashita, "Peacekeeping Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional Organisations," 165–186.

nanced form of partnership exists between the UN and the EU, especially in the Joint UN-EU Planning Coordination Group.

From the early 1990s, the global-regional peacekeeping partnership, in particular with the AU, also shifted from capacity building to institutional operational linkage. This is partly because African countries have mutual geopolitical and security interests that combine their voice for a greater decision-making role. Hence the AU Commission insisted on proposing the framework of the African Standby Force (ASF) in the early 2000s. Engaging this type of multidisciplinary peacekeeping formation has two benefits: Firstly, a global-regional peacekeeping partnership brings forth the credibility of the UN peacekeeping mechanism within the regional organisation. Secondly, the partnership also brings acceptance of the regional organisation to the host population. Thus, a neutral form of conflict resolution mechanism facilitates host community cooperation faster.

However, this form of engagement is relatively absent in South Asian, Northeast Asian and East Asian counterparts. Despite Bangladesh-India-Pakistan-Nepal robust engagement in the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), a broad-based capability development of this region within a larger cooperative framework seems a far-fetched idea.⁶⁵ A short-term ad-hoc basis strategic cooperation is possible, given South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)'s inactivity in facilitating regional interests under one umbrella.⁶⁶ Such initiatives may include joint regional cooperation at bilateral or multilateral level, building peacekeeping troops training facilities, involving peacekeeping think tanks' expertise from different regions, a more collective role in peacekeeping mandates based on mutual interests, etc.

While working on the issue, the global South also has to consider the pitfalls of collaborative actions and learn from the existing examples. The Mali example and the decision to withdraw United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) peacekeepers show how complicated it is to maintain interregional collaborations in peacekeeping governance. It also depends on the contributor country's internal dynamics. In April 2023, Germany planned to withdraw

⁶⁵ Rashed Uz Zaman and Niloy Ranjan Biswas, "South Asian Regionalism and UN Peacekeeping Missions: A Case of and Never the Twain Shall Meet?" *Peacekeeping and the Asia-Pacific* (Brill: Nijhoff, 2017): 52–75.

⁶⁶ Also supported by respondent from Bangladesh Police (DIG Rank), June 17, 2023.

its soldier earlier than planned, based on the decision of German parliament.⁶⁷ Since this kind of collaborations depend principally on a member country's willingness, it is hard to maintain the equal level of engagement for a longer period of time. Sometimes, there is lack of concern unless the issue takes place in a proximal zone.⁶⁸ On the other hand, other regional security governance initiatives have not been proven successful in their own plans and actions. The ECOWAS members' intervention in Liberia based on regional paradigm led by Nigeria not only became a failure but also led to chronic problem including creation of the black market. A common issue here is the budgetary concern for which even the NATO had to struggle in Bosnia. Undoubtedly, the only organisation that can successfully lead a regional security governance scheme is the UN and it should make the best use of it.

4.3 *Common Security Imperatives in the Peacekeeping Mandate*

The scope and aptitude of the UN peacekeeping have extended beyond traditional security imperatives, the ones upon which UN peacekeeping was first established. Example can be mentioned of how the first mission of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) was mandated in 1964 under the 'Pacific Settlement of Disputes' provision of Chapter VI. Those primary missions had a basic focus on observation and monitoring of ceasefire preventing further escalation of conflict from both groups. The end of the Cold War expanded the UN peacekeeping into broader and more geopolitically risky intra-state conflicts where peacekeepers needed to accept challenging roles beyond engaging in buffer zones.⁶⁹ The nature of peacekeeping intervention is again at a great shift, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic which showed that crises do not necessarily tie the world together.

The UN peacekeeping can offer suitable cooperation mechanisms in global common security imperatives. Peacekeepers have proved this stance in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic when they extensively engaged themselves in supporting the local/national authorities to fight back against the pandemic while providing medical equipment, vaccine roll-outs, giving health facilities such as PCR lab, providing training to the local communities, supporting education and awareness campaigns,

⁶⁷ Antonio Cascai, "Mali's MINUSMA peacekeeping mission: A foreseeable disaster," Deutsche Welle, Last accessed July 4, 2023, <https://www.dw.com/en/malis-minusma-peacekeeping-mission-a-foreseeable-disaster/a-66110603>

⁶⁸ Walter Dorn, "Regional Peacekeeping is not the way," *Peacekeeping and International Relation* 27, no.2 (1998):1.

⁶⁹ Wolfgang Biermann, "Old' Un Peacekeeping Principles and 'new' Conflicts: Some Ideas to Reduce the Troubles of Post- Cold War Peace Missions," *European Security*, Vol 4, no. 1 (1995): 39–55.

etc.⁷⁰ African missions such as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) continued supporting civil society and local actors ensuring similar support for disproportionately affected people.

Global public health crises like the COVID-19 pandemic strongly exhibited the need for peacekeepers to tackle socio-economic challenges that traditional peacekeeping mechanisms cannot provide and at the same time exposed inherent tensions within UN peacekeeping.⁷¹ As these crises often have regional security implications, it is very important to provide the host community with their basic need and support in urgency and continue mobilising them and this was done by the UN peacekeepers very effectively during the pandemic time.

Security implications of climate change are increasingly making their appearances day by day. The consequence of climate change is widespread affecting all states, all nations and citizens without discrimination. As the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) report shows, 48 per cent of the current UN missions are situated in areas that are most vulnerable to climate change among which 60 per cent of operations are high budgeted and big in scope.⁷²

Climate security threats are appearing as geopolitical concerns in the present mandate of the Climate Security Mechanism of 2021 joined by the UN Department of Peace Operations.⁷³ It was once believed that regions in the global South would be the ones most affected by changes in the environment. However, the present context of disrupting weather anomalies are affecting the global North

⁷⁰ Alexander Gilder, "The Role of UN Peace Operations in Countering Health Insecurity after COVID-19," *Global Policy*, Vol 13, no. 2 (May 2022): 271–280; Charalampia Armpounioti, "7 Examples of UN Peacekeeping's Response to COVID-19," UN Peacekeeping, Last accessed March 13, 2022, <https://unpeacekeeping.medium.com/7-examples-of-un-peacekeepings-response-to-covid-19-4891f5d2cb62>.

⁷¹ Katharina P. Coleman, "COVID19 and UN Peacekeeping: Posing Existing Global Governance Questions with New Urgency," Weinberg College Center for International and Area Studies, Last accessed October 26, 2022, <https://wccias.northwestern.edu/covid-19-research/covid19-and-un-peacekeeping-posing-existing-global-governance-questions-with-new-urgency.html>

⁷² Florian Krampe, "Why United Nations Peace Operations Cannot Ignore Climate Change," *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*, Last modified February 22, 2021, <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-backgroundunder/2021/why-united-nations-peace-operations-cannot-ignore-climate-change>.

⁷³ United Nations, 'Progress in Strengthening the United Nations' Capacity to Address Climate-Related Security Risks,' *United Nations | Climate Security Mechanism*, Last modified May 2021, https://dppa.un.org/sites/default/files/csm_progress_report_2021_final.pdf.

and South altogether, as seen by the extreme heat waves that Europe is now and often experiencing.⁷⁴

Therefore, it is important that the global North and South work together to deal with climate change concerns and public health concerns especially when these common global issues contain potential security challenges both at the regional and global level. The UN peacekeeping mandate is now standing at a crucial linkage between traditional and non-traditional security issues and it is the right time to reconsider the possible ways of incorporating peacekeeping operations to engage more effectively with such climate and public health challenges while traditional peacekeeping missions keep running.

5. Implications and Policy Options for Bangladesh

Participation in the UN peacekeeping operations by countries from the global South, in which personnel are shared, contributions are made, and countries take part in a variety of missions, is seen as an effective means of making a country's presence felt in the global arena. Countries from South Asia such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal are thought to be the primary beneficiary of the UN peacekeeping participation in terms of international image, prestige and other institutional and financial benefits.⁷⁵ However, this well-known perception of the T/PCC countries might change in the future where countries like Bangladesh and India would be exquisitely vocal about their strong presence in the UNPKO governance. Over the last decade, Bangladesh has topped the list of troops and personnel contribution indicating the country's active and high-level engagement in the UN peacekeeping (Figure 4). The country's troops have proved themselves remarkably resilient in challenging mission areas such as Cambodia, Somalia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Darfur, MONUC etc. Mostly stationed in the African region, Bangladesh has lost 161 army officers in the UN peacekeeping missions including the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), the United Nations Operation in Libya (UNAMIL), the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) etc.⁷⁶ There have been seven Force Commanders from Bangladesh Army.

⁷⁴ Henry Fountain, 'Why Europe Is Becoming a Heat Wave Hot Spot,' *The New York Times*, July 18, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/19/climate/europe-heat-wave-science.html>.

⁷⁵ Asri Salleh and Asmady Idris, *Malaysia's United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (1960–2010)* (Singapore: Springer Singapore, 2021).

⁷⁶ United Nations, "Fatalities," Last accessed August 31, 2022, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/fatalities>

Figure 4: The Ranking of Bangladesh as T/PCC from 2012 to 2022⁷⁷

Year	Position of Bangladesh
2022	1 ST
2021	1 ST
2020	2 nd
2019	3 rd
2018	2 nd
2017	2 nd
2016	4 th
2015	1 st
2014	1 st
2013	2 nd
2012	2 nd

A global South-led UNPKO governance structure can benefit Bangladesh profoundly. In terms of regional leadership, Bangladesh’s armed forces have proved themselves in higher echelons in different difficult missions. Based on the confidence coming from good international image garnered through continuous troops contribution, the appointment of Force Commanders from Bangladesh is increasing over time. In this regard, it is important to devise comprehensive national policy goals with regard to the UN peacekeeping detailing its strategic objectives. National strategic policy framework would also help the country to clearly distinguish its aim and objectives in future UN peacekeeping participation.

A respondent from Bangladesh Police highlighted the fact that both Bangladesh Army and Bangladesh police have become experienced over the years and have established their reputation in the field of peacekeeping.⁷⁸ They have also maintained consistency in terms of performance. According to him, top officials including UN Police advisor Luís Carrilho have praised Bangladesh’s contribution publicly. Newspapers of both contributing and affected countries like Ghana, Congo

⁷⁷ Bangladesh Army, “Position of Bangladesh in UN Peace Operation in Terms of Troops Contribution,” *Armed Forces Division*, Last accessed October 26, 2022, <https://afd.gov.bd/un-peacekeeping/position-of-bangladesh-in-un-peace-operation>.

⁷⁸ In-person Interview, Rank: DIG, Bangladesh Police, June 17, 2023.

and Sudan have published repeated articles on the contribution of Bangladeshi peacekeepers.⁷⁹ According to him, these show that there is a consensus among the peacekeeping country to accept and applaud Bangladesh's leadership.

Bangladesh can effectively promote future regional peacekeeping coordination in South Asia. Being the chief initiator of the SAARC, Bangladesh already enjoys an edge in promoting such regional cooperation frameworks. The country is not discouraged by the apparent inactivity of the SAARC. Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT) regularly facilitate world class training to peacekeeping army officers of SAARC countries. Such institutional exchange programs and training arrangements provide a greater platform for future regional peacekeeping partnerships.

Bangladesh has proved itself a successful humanitarian model for certain global causes. For instance, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been awarded the UN's highest environmental accolade- Champions of the Earth for her outstanding contribution to turning the country's natural disaster-prone situation into a greater cause for investing more in climate action.⁸⁰ Also, the country's economy successfully recovered from the periodic upsets of COVID-19 pandemic.⁸¹ As for humanitarian causes, Bangladesh is proactive in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in areas like poverty, unemployment, climate change etc. This positive attitude of Bangladesh will be a great asset for a future UNPKO governance nexus led by countries like Bangladesh from the global South.

Experts have opined that Bangladesh should emphasise on its leadership on the basis of South-led values and honor coming from the shared history of human rights and demands for justice. President of Bangladesh Police Women Network (BPWN), during her in-person interview, said that, besides highlighting the number of women peacekeepers from Bangladesh, one should also see how Bangladesh is helping in the development of women's position in peacekeeping mission.⁸² Bangladesh co-hosted the first ever UN peacekeeping ministerial meeting on the theme "Women in UN

⁷⁹ Phone Interview, Brigadier General (Retd.), Bangladesh Army, June 13, 2023.

⁸⁰ "Hasina Receives Champions of the Earth Award," *The Daily Star*, Last modified September 28, 2015. <https://www.thedailystar.net/country/hasina-receives-champions-the-earth-award-148582>.

⁸¹ World Bank Group, "Bangladesh Economy Shows Resilience Amid Global Uncertainty," Last accessed April 13, 2022, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/04/13/bangladesh-economy-shows-resilience-amid-global-uncertainty>

⁸² In-person interview, DIG (Protection & Protocol), Special Branch & President, BPWN, Bangladesh Police, June 11, 2023. (The respondent has agreed to share her designation)

Peacekeeping” with Uruguay and Canada. Bangladesh, as the only Asian or South Asian country, carries the flag of its leadership on this much needed theme.

Regarding the domain of technology, experts suggested looking more into technical and associated fields where Bangladesh is improving day by day. On this issue, experts⁸³ highlighted that there is a general understanding that the global South lags in technical and scientific arena. However, recently, a contingent of 258 engineers in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) were awarded for their contributions to the infrastructural development and rebuilding of the damaged elements. Bangladesh can utilise these developments and widen the role of the global South lead UNPKO governance.

6. Conclusion

The importance of peacekeeping operations has increased over time and the rapid surge of mission numbers as well as their scope are proving this fact. However, the transition and post-transition phases are important historical points to consider the evolution of UNPKO through time. After the Cold War, the transition of peacekeeping operation and mandates were directed by the superpowers such as the United States and other Security Council members. As the paper argues, the UNPKO is on the verge of another transition in the twenty-first century characterised by the intense level of intra-regional conflicts, geopolitical rivalry, global public health crises and global climate change.

This article provides empirical evidence of how the global South has proven itself to be plausible actor in UNPKO governance. It argues that the South’s experience and success in terms of operations and leadership, interest based regional coordination, and common security imperatives should make ample space for it to be in policymaking positions. Bangladesh, in particular, is a glaring example of South-based leadership. The article looks forward to bringing a change to the conventional North-dominated understanding of UNPKO governance in the security studies literature. The paper is expected to work as a foundation for future theoretical and policy-based discussion from the global South on peacekeeping agenda, policy structure and future regional initiatives or concerns.

For a better adaptation to the newly emerging challenges, the UNPKO is expected to evolve in the coming days. In this new transition, a principled guideline

⁸³ Zoom Interview, Professor, International Relations, University of Dhaka, June 10, 2023.

would follow UNPKO operations but with a greater focus on reducing North-South divide in the decision-making echelon. As the paper argues, regional leadership, interest-based regional coordination and global security imperatives constitute three level entrance points of the global South to have a more influential and facilitatory role in UNPKO security governance. A renewed focus on the South-led governance apparatus in the UNPKO would also have positive implications for South Asian small countries like Bangladesh in the international arena.

As the global future security landscape is getting increasingly complex and difficult to stride through, any new conception of the global security governance must take into account the global South's contribution not only from troops contributing but also from a more assertive decision making role that they can play in mitigating global challenges. The UN peacekeeping architecture is the key institution for making such arrangements. It is only time that would tell how the global South could reap the best opportunities to be the global leader in the future UNPKO-led security governance.

Sufia Khanom

CLIMATE DIPLOMACY OF BANGLADESH: LESSONS LEARNED FROM COP27 AND WAY FORWARD

Abstract

This paper seeks to understand Bangladesh's climate diplomacy and identify its strengths and challenges based on its participation in United Nations Climate Change Conferences (COP). The COP27 Summit was a significant turning point for the climate-vulnerable countries like Bangladesh due to its declaration on loss and damage funds. This paper aims to provide insights into Bangladesh's climate diplomacy based on its activities in four pillars: mitigation, adaptation, climate finance, and loss and damage fund. Considering global climate diplomacy, the paper explores the existing strengths of and challenges for Bangladesh. It follows qualitative approach for data collection and analysis. The paper finds some nuance implications for diplomatic efforts in the upcoming COP28 and suggests potential avenues for cooperation in disaster risk reduction, technology transfer, and climate change funding. Overall, this research enhances the scope of the growing literature on climate diplomacy of Bangladesh and sheds new light on an unexplored area of the country's diplomatic engagement in COPs.

Key Words: Climate Diplomacy, Conference of Parties, Locally Led Adaptation, Loss and Damage.

1. Introduction

The 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference, widely known as the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), also abbreviated as COP27, was the 27th United Nations Climate Change Conference, held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt in November 2022. It was presided over by the Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sameh Shoukry, and was attended by more than 92 heads of state and an estimated 35,000 delegates from 190 countries.¹ It was the 5th African climate summit. Different groups from around the world set up pavilions to highlight and showcase the initiatives regarding

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¹ COP 27, available at: <https://cop27.org/#/presidency#about>, Last accessed 29 April 2023.

the reduction of greenhouse gases (GHGs), curbing global warming, and addressing various challenges of climate adaptation of the world. Showcasing their efforts through those pavilions also had an objective - arranging side events as a way to bring everyone together and put pressure on the formal negotiators to reach the climate goals. Since the first UN climate agreement in 1992, the conference has been being conducted annually (with the exception of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic). In the 27th COP, the world leaders gathered to emphasise and reach a consensus to reduce GHG emissions and ensure climate change funds for vulnerable countries to establish justice. The conference resulted in the establishment of the first loss and damage fund.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) on March 20, 2023, as a leading report for the COP summit's declaration. It concluded an eight-year effort by the world's most authoritative scientific body on climate change. Using the findings of 234 scientists on the physical science of climate change, 270 scientists on the impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability of climate change, and 278 scientists on climate change mitigation, this IPCC synthesis report provides the most comprehensive and accurate scientific assessment of climate change that is currently available. According to the IPCC, global temperature has risen by 1.1°C and is headed towards 1.5°C. Half of the world's population could be exposed to life-threatening heat and humidity if the temperature rise 1.7° to 1.8°C above 1850s levels. The annual United Nations (UN) climate summits serve as a platform for states to collectively establish measures aimed at mitigating the global temperature increase. The parties refer to the participating nations that ratified the initial United Nations climate agreement in 1992.

If COP26 was the conference that 'kept 1.5 alive', then COP27 had the difficult task of refocusing the world's attention on the critical issue of CO₂ emissions and limiting global warming in the face of numerous political and economic distractions. The Russia-Ukraine war was not an official negotiation topic, but it frequently came up in the conversation. According to a Global Climate Change Analysis (Emissions Gap Report 2022) compiled by the UNEP for the conference, there is a high possibility that the increase in temperature will be between 2.5° and 2.8°C. During the first seven months of the conflict, additional GHG emissions amounted to at least 100 million metric tons of CO₂. The authors of the study titled "Climate Damage Caused by Russia's War in Ukraine" estimate that this is equivalent to the Netherlands' emissions during the rapid industrialisation era. This has reshaped the fossil fuel market and introduced structural changes to the entire energy sector

in the short term.² Nonetheless, each passing year brings the world closer to a level of CO₂ in the atmosphere that will drive the post-industrial temperature rise to and beyond 1.5°C, resulting in increasing climate change impacts. Climate diplomacy has become essential for all spheres of government since the Paris Agreement on Climate Change was signed in 2015 at COP21,

At the national level, Bangladesh has made significant progress in integrating all departments and ministries in domestic climate change actions. For example, the National Adaptation Plan (NAP), Eighth Five Year Plan, Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan (MCP), Perspective Plan 2041, and Delta Plan 2100 are important policy measures of Bangladesh to address the climate change impacts. In addition, over the last several years, the Ministry of Finance has allocated budget to relevant departments to initiate projects for combating climate change. No nation in the world received considerable funding in the 2022 climate change budget whereas Bangladesh allocated approximately 8 per cent of the overall national budget for climate change.³ This kind of national approach includes combined efforts to prepare for disasters, and to take adaptation measures and assess the losses and damage caused by climate change. At the same time, it also finds ways to help people who are affected by both sudden and slow-onset disasters. According to the NAP, the key climate risks and vulnerabilities for Bangladesh involves water resources, food security, livelihoods, ecosystem, infrastructure, health, and biodiversity. It has been estimated that “the number of internal climate migrants might reach 19.9 million by 2050, comprising half of those in the entire South Asian region. The current rate of annual loss of gross domestic product (GDP) of approximately 1.3 percent due to climate-induced disasters might rise to 2 percent by 2050 and over 9 percent by 2100 under extreme scenarios. Therefore, Bangladesh will spend US\$8.5 billion annually for developing climate resilience which is seven times more than the current spending for adaptation purpose. In this context, Bangladesh has received US\$6 billion from external sources such as development partners, donors, and multinational companies. Only strong diplomatic initiatives of Bangladesh could ensure climate justice and the flow of funds for proper climate actions.

The most successful diplomatic achievement in the COP27 was the commitment to loss and damage funds by the developed countries. Even though the negotiations on how to set up the loss and damage fund will continue until COP28,

² Klaus-Dieter Borchardt, “European climate policy in context of Ukraine war and its impact on COP27,” *Forum*, no. 13, (October 2022).

³ “Synthesis Report of the Sixth Assessment Report,” IPCC, last accessed 19 April 2023, https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6syr/pdf/IPCC_AR6_SYR_LongerReport.pdf

the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and other vulnerable countries have a lot of work to do to prepare their governments and citizens to deal with the negative effects of climate change. Once the global fund is up and running, it will be important for a country to be able to show that it has its processes in place to deal with loss and damage. Against this backdrop, climate diplomacy of Bangladesh needs to be analysed critically for future successful negotiations on issues relevant to adaptation, mitigation, climate fund, and recently committed loss and damage fund. Therefore, the country should focus on understanding the politics around climate negotiations, core elements, and challenges of climate diplomacy ahead of the COP28.

Against this context, the main objective of the paper is to analyse the climate diplomacy of Bangladesh with a special focus on the COP27 and present a way forward for the upcoming COPs. In doing so, the paper will attempt to answer the following questions: i) What were the major diplomatic achievements and expectations of Bangladesh in terms of mitigation, adaptation, climate finance, and loss and damage in the COP27? ii) What are the strengths and challenges of climate diplomacy in Bangladesh? and iii) How Bangladesh can overcome the challenges of climate negotiations in the upcoming COPs? The research is qualitative in nature and collects both primary and secondary data from various sources. The primary data has been collected from in-depth key informant interviews and secondary information has been collected from relevant academic journals, books, newspaper reports, and websites. This article is divided into six sections including introduction and conclusion. Evolution and elements of climate diplomacy have been discussed from conceptual aspects in section two. The third section discusses the major achievements of Bangladesh at national and global level at COP 27. Section four focuses on the weakness of Bangladesh's climate diplomacy. The Fifth section suggests some policy recommendations for overcoming the challenges in the COP28.

2. Climate Diplomacy: Evolution and Elements

Climate diplomacy has no universal definition. This can be defined as the practice and process of creating the international climate change regime and ensuring its effective operation. The European Commission defines four strands of climate diplomacy: a) committing to multilateralism in climate policy, particularly to the implementation of the Paris Agreement; b) addressing implications of climate change on peace and security; c) accelerating domestic action and raising global ambition; d) enhancing international climate cooperation through advocacy and outreach.⁴

⁴ Nick Mabey, Liz Gallagher and Camilla Born, "Understanding Climate Diplomacy: Building Diplomatic capacity and system to avoid dangerous climate change," *Third Generation Environmentalism*, (2023).

The interface between national interest debates and international cooperation is the key feature of climate diplomacy. It assures an accurate assessment of the interests and intentions of nations and identifies potential areas of agreement. Therefore, the evolution of climate diplomacy precedes and influences the development of the climate regime. Climate diplomacy has shifted from a relatively limited focus on the UNFCCC process to a discipline that engages new constituencies and incorporates broader geopolitical discussions.⁵ This is a sign of the regime's increasing effectiveness and relevance to a broad spectrum of actors. To counter this increasing diversity of stakeholders, which tends to complicate the basis of international cooperation, a deeper and more intensive diplomacy at the international level is required. To increase the legitimacy and credibility of the climate threat, it is crucial to empower new actors and advocates.

Climate diplomacy began in 1985 by climate scientist Villach.⁶ This led to two significant climate conferences, the creation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 1988, and the formation of UNFCCC. The Rio Earth Summit opened the UNFCCC for signing after negotiations. The parties were expected to maintain emissions at the level they were at in 1990 by the year 2000. Europe sought required obligations, but the US resisted as the second largest emitter. The G-77 was divided: small islands wanted swift and robust action, oil producers wanted to secure their economic prospects, and giant rising nations, headed by India, did not want growth limits. The UNFCCC's "common but differentiated responsibility" approach underpins China, India, and other developing nations' negotiations. Bangladesh joined the climate negotiation from the very beginning of the formation of the UNFCCC in 1992. The country actively participated from the first COP1 which took place on March 28 to April 07, 1995, in Berlin, Germany, and the subsequent COPs since then. There are evolutions in terms of the formation of groups and sub-groups of climate negotiations in the COPs. Bangladesh is engaged with two groups: G-77 and China group and Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC) under the non-Annex group. Bangladesh joined the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) in 2009 as one of the founding members with other climate-vulnerable countries. Although CVF is not a formal negotiation group, this group has significant influence over formal negotiation through para-diplomatic initiatives. Bangladesh's climate diplomacy is more connected with the activities of LDC and Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) groups.

⁵ Amandine Orsini, "Environmental Diplomacy," in *Global Diplomacy: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*, ed. Thierry Balzacq, Frédéric Charillon, and Frédéric Ramel, (Belgium: Palgrave Macmillan), 239-52.

⁶ Nitin Desai, "Reflections on International Climate Diplomacy," *Indian Society for Ecological Economies* 1, no. 1, (April 2018).

When the objectives of mitigation were not fulfilled, tougher demand led to the Kyoto Protocol, in which industrial nations agreed to enforceable carbon reductions by 2008-2012. The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) indirectly included poorer nations in mitigation. The Kyoto Protocol was a market-based arrangement that distributed mitigation effort between industrial countries, depended on negotiating skills and stressed on independent criteria. In December 2007, Bali hosted a new round of discussions to conclude Kyoto. Climate diplomacy had transformed after that. China, whose fast expansion and coal use have increased emissions, was the focus. Concern about China's emissions increase puts pressure on India. Any acceptable objective for permitted temperature rise is unreachable unless the great developing economies join the mitigation effort.

Each country's GHG emission determines climate diplomacy's 40:40:20 power structure. Because any mitigation pact would be worthless without the two greatest emitters, the US and China, the first 40 per cent has de facto veto power. The second 40 per cent includes the European Union (EU), a 10 per cent power; Russia, Japan, and India, each 5 per cent; and a string of 2 per cent powers like Brazil, South Africa, Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, etc. The Association of Small Island States (AOSIS) and the African Group influence the remaining 20 per cent of the smaller states.⁷ A successful climate change agreement should set a temperature rise limit. The Paris Agreement contains a GHG budget to distribute global emissions amongst nations and a GHG emission time profile that meets the target. It leaves mitigation to each country's voluntary efforts. The agreement no longer contains flexibility mechanisms but rather has a binding clause. However, it addresses forestry and land use changes, supports adaptation, and commits to financial and technological transfer.

As previously discussed, climate diplomacy has both influenced and been influenced by the evolution of the international climate regime. As can be seen from the diagram in Annex II, the regime has expanded far beyond the UNFCCC, although the UNFCCC remains the linchpin institution in terms of establishing objectives, aligning efforts, mobilising assistance, and assessing risk. The diagram provides a functional framework for organising the bewildering array of different alliances, processes, and initiatives that comprise the four main "layers" of the climate regime: formal negotiations, para-negotiations, near negotiations, broader international

⁷ Anna Maria Augustyn, Giulia Sofia Sarno, Marie-Eve Ciparisse, *Boosting international subnational climate diplomacy ahead of COP27 and COP28*, Commissions for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs, (EU: 2022).

climate regime (information, implementation, integration, and representation). All these layers influence diplomacy and are not confined to the COP meetings only (See Annex I and II).

Climate Diplomacy is still a relatively new practice and the climate regime is developing very sharply. It requires ownership across governments and institutional reform and more investment in resources and skills. In short, the practice of climate diplomacy requires three core capabilities such as ‘know yourself’, ‘know the other’, and ‘capacity to influence’. On the contrary, there are various structural challenges as the landscape evolves into a more complex and comprehensive regime both inside the UNFCCC and broader international climate regime, for example, the absence of political conditions for agreement; failure to construct a fair political agreement; failure to capture the highest ambition possible; and failure of implementation. Along with the usual climatic challenges, COP27 was overshadowed by a multitude of global financial and geopolitical crises. Inflation on a global scale, coupled with food and energy crises, has had a devastating impact on all nations, compelling many countries to abandon their previous climate commitments. In addition, the impending risk of a recession has increased governments’ reluctance to increase funding for climate change-related initiatives. Based on the relevant documents, decisions made during COP summits, and the activities taken by the Ministry of Environment, forestry and Climate Change of Bangladesh, the climate diplomacy of Bangladesh can be divided into several elements.⁸ Considering the above-mentioned facts and factors, this paper will analyse the climate diplomacy of Bangladesh based on the four pillars such as adaptation, mitigation, climate finance, and loss and damage.

3. Bangladesh at COP 27: Expectations and Achievements

The Bangladesh delegation for COP27 was led by the minister of the environment, forest, and climate change, and the Bangladesh pavilion hosted sessions throughout the day, every day, in which various ministries and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) shared information about what is occurring in Bangladesh. It demanded that developed nations should double their collective adaptation finance contributions by 2025, as agreed upon at COP26 in Glasgow, and assist vulnerable

⁸ Siblee Nomani and Tofajjel Hossain Tuhin, “Bangladesh in global environmental politics: Focus on climate diplomacy,” *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Science* 11, no. 3, (2022): 415-76; Mohammad Tarikul Islam, “Climate Change Diplomacy- Apparatus for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation: Reflection in the Context of Bangladesh” *British Journal of Environment and Climate Change*, 4(1), (2014): 115-32.

nations in implementing the NAP. The countries most responsible for the GHG emissions should share responsibility for safeguarding those most susceptible to climate change. Bangladesh is an unwitting victim of climate change. Studies indicate that by the end of this century, 12 to 17 per cent of Bangladesh, an area larger than many small island nations, will be submerged due to sea level rise. On October 31, 2023, Bangladesh submitted its NAP to UNFCCC. In the NAP of Bangladesh, 113 actions were identified for eight vulnerable sectors that will require an additional US\$230 billion over the next 27 years.⁹ In the past decade, Bangladesh implemented 850 climate-resilience initiatives using its own resources. Over the past eight years, the country's annual allocation for climate-related work increased from US\$1.4 billion to US\$3.1 billion for climate adaptation and resilience-building through the construction of sea dykes, cyclone shelters, development of stress-tolerant varieties, and coastal afforestation and reforestation.¹⁰

Bangladesh demanded the annual mobilisation of US\$100 billion for the Global Climate Fund (GCF) from 2023 until 2025, as well as finalisation of the financing mechanism for the period after 2025.¹¹ In addition, the country demanded the establishment of a financial mechanism to address climate-related losses and damages as a member of the LDC group. The following are the specific achievements of Bangladesh at COP27.

Bangladesh won Community-Led Adaptation Awards

Bangladesh and four other nations received the Local Adaptation Champions Awards. The Rangamati Hill District Council project, which worked with five villages in Juraichari Upazila to help locals fight escalating droughts, landslides, and flash floods, won the award.¹² The community works for establishing solar-powered safe water supply infrastructure and provision of safe drinking water during emergencies with assistance from the the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). Local efforts that try to adapt to the detrimental consequences of climate change are recognised with prizes

⁹ "COP27: Bangladesh wants climate finance doubled by 2025," *The Daily Star*, November 6, 2022, <https://www.thedailystar.net/environment/climate-crisis/news/cop27-bangladesh-wants-climate-finance-doubled-2025-3170696>

¹⁰ Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, *National Adaptation Plan*, (Bangladesh: 2023).

¹¹ "COP27: Bangladesh wants climate finance".

¹² "Bangladesh wins COP27 award for UNDP-supported community-led initiative," UNDP, last accessed 30 June 2023, <https://www.undp.org/bangladesh/press-releases/bangladesh-wins-cop27-award-undp-supported-community-led-initiative>.

given out by the Global Climate Adaptation Alliance (GCA). These projects are honoured in four categories: inclusive leadership, capacity and knowledge, financial governance, and local innovation. India, Nepal, and Kenya are the other three of the 170 countries that have been also recognised. Each winner received €15,000 to support the work they are undertaking in accordance with the principles of Locally-led adaptation (LLA).

Bangladesh receives Global Shield funding at first round

According to a joint press release from the Vulnerable 20 (V20), the G-7, and the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Bangladesh has been named as one of the first countries to receive financial support from Global Shield to address the country’s climate concerns. Around 170 million euros from Germany and more than 40 million euros from other nations make up the initial contributions of the fund. Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Fiji, Ghana, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Senegal are among the first beneficiaries of Global Shield kits. The Finance Ministers of the V20 and the G7 officially inaugurated the Global Shield. The Global Shield uses pre-arranged financing that disburses swiftly and reliably before or shortly after disasters occur to solve present inadequacies in the financial protection mechanism in climate-vulnerable nations. The Global Shield is funded by InsuResilience Solutions Fund, the Global Shield Financing Facility at the World Bank, and the CVF & V20 Joint Multi-Donor Fund.¹³ The achievements depend on the proper utilisation of diplomatic tools and measuring and minimising the flaws within the process.

Receiving the Global Shield funding and the community-led Adaptation Award are two examples of Bangladesh’s successful manoeuvre. Climate change implications surpass national-level security concerns, as they have global consequences. In the context of UNFCCC, states engage in negotiations not as individual entities, but rather as coalitions. Bangladesh engages in negotiations with states classified as least developed, small island, and African nations. Bangladeshi negotiators have acquired valuable insights from their participation in international conferences on climate change. Currently, the negotiators representing Bangladesh have assumed the role of leading negotiators within the coalition of least-developed states. Bangladesh’s participation in the climate change negotiations as part of a coalition is driven by collective interests rather than just national concerns. In order to

¹³ “The Global Shield Against Climate Risks,” UNFCCC, last accessed July 23, 2023, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Presentation_Global_Shield_SJA_TC_Workshop.pdf,

address climate change, Bangladesh favours adaptation over mitigation. Developing nations can benefit from adaptation since they are currently experiencing the effects of climate change. Coalition negotiators from the least developed states concentrate on financing for adaptation. Bangladesh is among the founding members of the CVF, which is comprised of small islands, African republics, and least-developed nations, and they decided to negotiate the Paris Agreement together as a group.

4. Climate Diplomacy of Bangladesh: Strengths and Weaknesses

Bangladesh is one of the countries hardest hit by climate change, although contributing only 0.5 per cent of global emissions. From 2000 to 2019, Bangladesh was the seventh most affected country in the world by climate change, according to the Global Climate Risk Index (GCRI) 2021. The latest IPCC assessment warned that the country could lose 2 to 9 per cent of its annual GDP to climate change between now and the end of the century. The analysis predicted that the country will likely experience extreme weather, which would lead to the displacement of roughly four million people and have a profoundly negative effect on the country's economic growth and development in the near and far future. The analysis also predicted that by the year 2030, climate change will have contributed to a net rise in poverty in Bangladesh of almost 15 per cent. Furthermore, by 2050, an estimated 13.3 million people will become climate migrants. Another issue of concern is the predicted decline in freshwater river area in coastal Bangladesh from 2012 to 2050, the rate of decline ranging from 17.1 to 40.8 per cent depending on the scenario of sea level rise. The water and food security of the country would suffer greatly as a result, and millions of people would be forced to relocate. The following are some key attributes of the climate diplomacy of Bangladesh:

4.1 *Climate Diplomacy of Bangladesh: The Strengths*

Bangladesh has a large number of expertise: The Department of Environment (DoE) retains a number of negotiators with extensive experience and their expertise is often recognised by the LDC group in climate negotiations. Simultaneously, the government benefits from a group of non-government experts who have been following various agendas for many years and provide official delegates with expert advice. As global leaders fail to adequately address the losses and damages caused by human-caused climate change, it is particularly important for the global youth organisations to campaign on this issue. Various youth-led organisations in

Bangladesh, for example, Eco-Network, Youth Net, etc. are aligned with the ‘Fridays for Future movement’ for school children, YOUNG GO, and other youth alliances in climate negotiations. This is the greatest long-term investment for Bangladesh’s future climate diplomacy both domestically and internationally.¹⁴

Knowledge hub for locally led adaptation: The Global Centre on Adaptation (GCA) has its headquarters in the Netherlands and has already grown into a significant platform dedicated to aiding nations in adapting to the negative effects of climate change. It has previously established regional centres in China and Africa, and it is working with the government of Bangladesh and has opened the regional centre for South Asia in Dhaka.

Bangladesh is an example for other countries of how to create a national adaptation plan using a whole-of-society perspective, which is necessary for any plan to be successfully executed. Incorporating preparations for adaptation to climate change into national development initiatives is nothing new for Bangladesh. The MCPP and the NAP are the most recent iterations of this, and both put a strong focus on LLA investment as a means of achieving transformational adaptation over the coming years. Bangladesh is already known as the leader of LLA practices. Different ecosystems can be built using this site-specific Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EBA) in conjunction with LLA, and the lessons learned can be shared with other nations that have comparable ecosystems.¹⁵ Other vulnerable developing nations can benefit from this information. Having knowledge on how to combat climate change is valuable on a global scale, so climate-vulnerable communities may take lessons from Bangladesh.

Paradigm shifts from vulnerable to resilient: Another key strength of the climate diplomacy of Bangladesh is that it gives importance to creating top-down national plans while also making investments to enable bottom-up contributions from the most disadvantaged areas to ensure that the plans are successfully implemented. Therefore, there is a paradigm shift: “Rather viewing the vulnerable communities of Bangladesh as merely targets or recipients of support from above, they are considered as the agents of change who know best what needs to be done, and those who wish to support them must first listen to them.”¹⁶ These concepts are part of the eight principles of LLA, which have been accepted by numerous countries, donor organisations, and non-state actors. These ideas must now be put into practice. Building young girls’ and

¹⁴ Expert interview with the researcher from ICCCAD in December 2022.

¹⁵ Expert interview with the employee of GCA in May 2023.

¹⁶ Expert interview with director of ministry of environment and climate change in May 2023.

boys' capacity and putting women at the centre of LLA are important components of this state of resilience.

Bangladesh may serve as a global hub for climate change research: Bangladesh has earned a reputation as a development success story over the past 50 years for reducing poverty, promoting girls' education and employment, and maximising the potential of the private sector in the fields of banking, industry, and commerce. The human-induced climate change will also put a great strain on our development investments over the course of the next 50 years, creating a new, massive global emergency. Thus, if the country wants to succeed in the ensuing decades, the country must incorporate climate change mitigation strategies into its growth plans. Hence, the government formulated different policies, for example: NAP, MCPP, Delta Plan 2100, Ninth Five Year Plan, etc. to deal with the impacts of climate change.

Special envoy's visit to Bangladesh: Ian Fry, UN Special Rapporteur on Climate Change and Human Rights, visited Bangladesh for two weeks to witness the actual losses and damages endured by residents of the Sylhet and Satkhira regions. Before leaving Bangladesh to deliver his report to the United Nations General Assembly in New York, he made it clear that the suffering of the people of Bangladesh was caused by the polluters, and that the time has come to demand the polluters compensate their victims.¹⁷ Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) also organised an interactive talk session with the UN Commissioner for Human Rights, H E Michelle Bachelet, on climate justice in August 2022. Representatives from various grassroot youth-led organisations shared their experiences of how the impacts of climate change are a human rights issue for a climate-vulnerable country like Bangladesh and urged for establishing climate justice. US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry also visited Bangladesh in 2021. During his visit, a multi-year project of up to 17 million has been allocated for Bangladesh Advancing Development and Growth through Energy (BADGE).¹⁸ He also reiterated US support for the CVF and the V20. Bangladesh has been able to showcase its vulnerabilities and climate actions to the wider audience for better assistance and support. These

¹⁷ Mohammad Golam Sarwar, "Developed countries should accept responsibility to establish a loss and damage fund," *The Daily Star*, September 23, 2022, <https://www.thedailystar.net/law-our-rights/news/either-the-developed-countries-accept-responsibility-establish-loss-and-damage-fund-or-they-must-3126231>.

¹⁸ "Special Presidential Envoy for Climate Jhon Kerry Visit to Bangladesh and Meetings with Prime Minister and Top Officials in the Government of Bangladesh," The US Department of State, last accessed June 23, 2023, <https://www.state.gov/special-presidential-envoy-for-climate-john-kerrys-visit-to-bangladesh-and-meetings-with-prime-minister-and-top-officials-in-the-government-of-bangladesh/#:~:text=U.S.%20Special%20Presidential%20Envoy%20for,and%20representatives%20of%20foreign%20governments>

visits depict that Bangladesh has successfully convinced the global community about the climate vulnerability and resilience capacity of the country. These types of visits are a continuous process and result of Bangladesh's diplomatic initiatives.

4.2 *Climate Diplomacy of Bangladesh: The Challenges*

Climate diplomacy typically proceeds at a snail's pace. It can take years to negotiate, and it can be difficult to reach a consensus among a large number of countries with diverse interests. This sluggishness can impede prompt action on climate change, an urgent global issue. Numerous climate agreements are non-binding, which means that there is no effective mechanism for enforcing conformance. The Paris Agreement, for example, relies on the voluntary commitments of nations for enforcement. Even when countries commit to reducing emissions, they may not face significant repercussions if they fall short of their goals. This dearth of enforcement can result in countries not carrying out their commitments in full. According to the expert's interviews, the following are some of the challenges of climate diplomacy in Bangladesh:

Inadequate historical database: Bangladesh lacks historical scientific and evidence-based data that is needed to showcase Bangladesh's vulnerability and resilience in climate change negotiation platforms.

Not prioritising many commonalities that climate change shares with other major foreign policy issues: Although the foreign policy of Bangladesh pursues a neutral and moderate way, the country heavily relies on multi-national diplomacy or multilateralism i.e. UN or the World Trade Organization (WTO). Climate change affect the people in the Global South without the minimum contribution to GHGs. According to the foreign policy of Bangladesh, the state shall support the oppressed people throughout the world. Bangladesh does not emphasis adequately to the commonalities of climate change policies with foreign policy issues. According to Salemul Huq, "Our diplomats have to do more in this regard. It is not enough to join only in annual conferences. Indeed, every diplomat in Bangladesh embassies across the world now needs to make efforts to tackle climate change as a core issue of bilateral discussion."¹⁹

¹⁹ "Bangladesh needs to make core issue of climate diplomacy: Experts," *The Business Standard*, October 04, 2022, <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/environment/climate-change/bangladesh-needs-make-climate-change-core-issue-diplomacy>

No dedicated ministry for climate change: Bangladesh is a climate-vulnerable country and has produced effective climate change policies in the last couple of years. Unfortunately, there are very few numbers of manpower under the Ministry of Forest, Environment and Climate Change (MoEFCC) that do the major tasks for climate diplomacy. In addition to that, the Multilateral Economic Affairs Wing of MoFA is in charge of working with the MoEFCC for climate diplomacy. Bangladesh needs a separate ministry where people from different and relevant ministries will work together for climate diplomacy. For example: Pakistan was not very vocal in climate diplomacy even a few years back. After the devastating flood in 2022, the country established a climate change ministry and was able to establish its vulnerabilities through strong diplomacy. As a result, Pakistan secured its position in the Loss and Damage Transnational Committee. However, Bangladesh did not secure its position yet, although the country was much more vocal from the very beginning of the generation of loss and damage concept in the process of UNFCCC.

Grassroot NGOs and compatibility for Green Climate Fund (GCF)²⁰: One of the major global climate funds is the GCF, despite being the youngest financial vehicle within the UNFCCC. However, due to the strict accreditation requirements set by the GCF governing board, the extremely high transparency, and the fiduciary standards they uphold only 19 per cent of direct businesses receive this funding. A problem then arises because the organisations that are most adept at securing these resources are frequently not those that are most adept at carrying out project activities at the local level. However, they only receive a small percentage of the money set aside for climate action, which is insufficient for them to perform to their full potential. A trickle-down methodology is used to disperse funding from international and local organisations. A minimal amount is left over after covering overhead expenditures at various levels in order to accomplish the intended aims at the ground level. Due to their lack of funding, grassroot organisations also struggle to attract and retain employees because they cannot match the pay and benefits provided by multinational NGOs.

Why are the donors unable or unwilling to directly sponsor these local organisations? Reasons include: i) they argue that local organisations frequently lack the ability to meet their demands and make wise financial decisions ii) multilateral and bilateral organisations favour routing the money through a selected group of reliable partners since it has fewer risks and is more in line with their own regulations iii) Due to their strong anti-money laundering regulations, it is also challenging for

²⁰ Expert interview with the Environment Specialist in Palli Karma-Shayak Foundation (PKSF) in May 2023.

such organisations to route donations directly to the local NGOs, and these NGOs frequently lack the competence to maintain the kind of openness and accountability that such donors demand iv) Local groups usually may not have the appropriate level of technical know-how in order to properly demonstrate the worth of their work. As a result, their financing requests are frequently rejected in open bidding.

Climate agreements are politically controversial: Climate agreements are politically controversial as they require explicit local government decisions for reforms, often in line with the political economy. The interplay between public opinion and domestic politics has the potential to significantly impact a nation's inclination to participate in climate diplomacy and undertake commitments in this regard. Political leaders may encounter opposition from their voters or interest groups who hold opposing views on specific climate initiatives. A nation's posture on climate issues is frequently influenced by domestic politics and economic factors, which can result in inconsistent policies and delayed action. According to some climate experts, Bangladesh's graduation to LDC would affect negatively to receive an appropriate share of climate funds from the developed countries. They believe that the country could declare their graduation status 5 to 10 years later to curb the benefits in a better way.²¹

Common but differentiated responsibilities of countries and their respective capabilities: There are huge, powerful asymmetries around the negotiation table in terms of geopolitics and resources, hence engender potential problems during the negotiation processes. Developing nations frequently contend that they have contributed less to the problem of climate change and are consequently disproportionately affected by its effects. They may perceive that climate diplomacy is biased in favour of developed nations, which exacerbates tensions and impede cooperation. Divergent priorities and obligations between developing and industrialised nations provide a significant obstacle in achieving mutually satisfactory accords. The priorities and vulnerabilities change over the years. Therefore, static attributions of responsibility are unfair. Moreover, interventions of new technologies during negotiation and uncertainties in estimating future costs of climate actions are major challenges for climate diplomacy.

No social media presence: This is the era of social media. Bangladesh's climate diplomacy has no official social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, or any other social media. Individual climate expert and negotiator of Bangladesh maintains their social media accounts personally. The country needs official social media pages to inform its position, and demands and maintain networks with like-minded groups.

²¹ Expert interview with the employee of GCA in May 2023.

Lack of coordination among ministries: Different ministries of Bangladesh are connected for example the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority, Department of Disaster Management and Relief, Department of Public Health Engineering, Department of Women and Children Affairs, local government and engineering department, etc. have lack of coordination among themselves.

Lack of technical knowledge among diplomats: Climate diplomacy is dominated by politicians. However, the understanding, assessments, forecasting, monitoring mitigation, and adaptation tools for the impacts of climate change need scientific/or technical interventions. This is a huge drawback for climate diplomacy. The scientists rely on scientific facts and are committed to working together but the politicians are not. It can be difficult to formulate effective policies when negotiators lack the requisite knowledge to completely comprehend the scientific and technical details.

Lack of regional cooperation: The impacts of climate change do not follow the national boundaries. South Asia has been identified as a climate hotspot. However, it lacks regional coordinated efforts. National interests get priority in the climate negotiation. They belong to different negotiation blocks like the African Union Group. India belongs to the Brazil, South Africa, India and China (BASIC) group and Like-Minded Developing Countries under the G77 and China group. The emission rate is higher than any other developing country in South Asia. So, any commitment to the reduction of the GHG emissions hinder the country from working jointly with other South Asian countries. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, and Nepal have joined the CVF and do the para diplomacy through this forum where India and Pakistan are absent.

Corruption in climate change fund: One of the main obstacles to Bangladesh's infrastructure development for climate adaptation is corruption. Since 2010, the government and NGOs have implemented over 100 climate projects, and one of the international NGOs monitored these projects' progress and documented corruption in the sector. It estimated that, on average, 35 per cent of funds allocated to climate projects are misused, based on an analysis of 38 projects for which that organisation provided detailed information.²² Examples of misappropriated project funding,

²² Mushtaq Khan, Mitchell Watkinsa, Salahuddin Aminuzzamanb, Sumaiya Khairband Muhammad

breaking procurement laws, subpar buildings, and abandoned projects have been included in the document. These incidents are linked to a lack of openness, community involvement, and oversight. There is concern that the climate fund should not be used to set up mere solar street lamps, for constructing foot over bridge, or even establish a safari park. The standing committee also raised the issue.²³ The mismanagement and corruption in climate change funds diminish the image of Bangladesh.

International politics and loss of momentum: Conflicts between nations can cross over into climate negotiations and impede progress. Climate cooperation can be diverted by disagreements over trade, territorial claims, and other geopolitical issues. Powerful interest groups, such as the fossil fuel industry, can exert considerable influence over climate policies in certain nations. This can hinder the creation of effective climate agreements. When significant parties withdraw or modify their commitments, climate negotiations can lose their momentum. The United States’ withdrawal from the Paris Agreement during the Trump administration is an illustration of how political upheavals can destabilise climate diplomacy.

Despite these limitations, climate diplomacy remains an indispensable instrument for addressing the global problem of climate change. It provides a forum for nations to collaborate, exchange ideas, and seek collective solutions. In the fight against climate change, it is a must to continue the efforts to fix the fault lines and strengthen climate diplomacy. If climate justice and equity do not become fundamental to international climate negotiations, there will be no real progress on climate action. The good news is that parties already know what nations must do to limit the most hazardous climate impacts on all communities. In early June 2023, there was an inter-sessional negotiations in Bonn which was a crucial opportunity for negotiators to set the stage for the COP28.

5. Road to COP28: Some Policy Suggestions

Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of numerous weather-related disasters and reducing the resilience of exposed communities that

ZakirHossain Khan, “Win-win: designing dual-use in climate projects for effective anti-corruption in Bangladesh,” *Climate and Development* 14, no. 10, (2022): 921–34, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17565529.2022.2027741>

²³ Ashraful Haque, “Our main goal is to protect the lives and livelihoods of climate-vulnerable people,” *The Business Standard*, June 15, 2023, <https://www.tbsnews.net/features/panorama/our-main-goal-protect-lives-and-livelihoods-climate-vulnerable-people-650050>

depend on arable land, water, and stable mean temperatures and rainfall. Climate change may potentially alter weather-related hazard distribution, creating new risk patterns. The impacts of climate are the existential threats to many nations of the world. Four years of extreme inundation have submerged two-thirds of the South Sudan by the end of 2022, causing over 1 million people to face severe food insecurity. In March 2023, Cyclone Freddy brought heavy rains to Malawi, Mozambique, and Madagascar, destroying croplands, overburdening health centers, and impacting the livelihoods of over 2 million people. Vanuatu was struck by two cyclones within three days around the same time in the South Pacific, affecting 80 per cent of the nation's population. Cyclone Mocha in 2023 devastated coastal communities in Myanmar and Bangladesh, marking one of the deadliest cyclones in the past 15 years and killing hundreds. After the Global Stocktake at the COP28 in Dubai, UAE, it will be determined how much progress the international Paris Agreement on climate change has made in the fight against the climate crisis and what additional measures are required to accelerate climate action. The following are some policy guidelines suggested by the various experts in Bangladesh for overcoming challenges on mitigation, adaptation, climate finance, and L&D issues that might be applicable for the upcoming COP28:

5.1 Operationalising Loss and Damage Fund:

Bangladesh can initiate global loss and damage framework: Bangladesh can initiate the other LDCs by establishing a public-private partnership National Mechanism for Loss and Damage (NMLD) under the MoEFCC, DRR, Finance, and Planning. Bangladesh can lead the development of a national climate change loss and damage mechanism involving private sector actors like insurance companies, civic society, and researchers. A national framework might combine catastrophe preparedness and adaptation to reduce climate impacts and resolve losses and damages. The Transitional Committee on L&D Funding met three times before COP28 in 2023 to advise negotiators on how to operationalise the funding structure. In June in Bonn, Germany, the second Glasgow Dialogue on L&D allowed governments and experts to discuss the COP28 topics. The Summit for a New Global Financing Pact in France in June 2023 also committed to make a difference for the planet and against poverty. The issues that need to be discussed include where the funds will come from, how much is needed, who will handle them, who can get them, etc. Thus, UNFCCC must work with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). A loss and damage envoy should link the UNFCCC, UNOCHA, and vulnerable communities/countries.

5.2 *Climate Finance*

Need more knowledge on climate finance: Bangladesh's participation in international climate negotiations, such as the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, has helped it obtain access to bilateral funding sources for climate change mitigation, such as the Department for International Development (DFID), UNDP, the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The country is also supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Collective Investment Fund (CIF), and Green Climate Fund (GCF), among other funding sources. However, Bangladesh still encounters obstacles in gaining access to climate finance due to its limited institutional and financial resources. In addition, Bangladesh has created the Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF) and implemented a NAP in order to raise domestic funds for climate action. The country needs to create investment strategies for adaptation that are intended for the long-term implementation rather than just short-term projects. The financiers must take a longer-term programming strategy in order to finance this. However, even if financing is given to the short-term projects, it is still important to focus on what the projects will leave behind rather than just what is accomplished while they are being implemented. Investments in climate change adaptation should therefore be viewed as investments in long-term capacity building.²⁴

*Grassroot NGOs and compatibility for Green Climate Fund (GCF):*²⁵ The local organisations need to: i) proper documentation of their field knowledge, track their developments, and publish quality news stories in peer-reviewed journals to receive attention from global audiences and donors; ii) institutional capacity-building through creating a national and international network; iii) keeping and maintaining the names of donors which are accessible for Bangladeshi organisations; iv) keep align with the ruling party's development agenda.²⁶

²⁴ Expert interview with an Assistant Secretary of Bangladesh Climate Trust Fund, Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change in October 2022.

²⁵ Expert interview with the Environment Specialist in Palli Karma-Shayak Foundation (PKSF) in May 2023.

²⁶ Recently, even the donors have begun to acknowledge the efficiency of regional organisations and are putting more of an emphasis on "localisation" in the aid industry. Major bilateral donors have mandated that multinational NGOs and other organisations collaborate with local NGOs and contribute 25 per cent of the project budget to them. International organisations are likewise focusing on enhancing the capabilities of their local partners. Potentially, Bangladesh might use this idea to fight climate change.

Scaling up and scaling out the climate change pilot projects: The country may urgently address climate change by scaling up²⁷ and scaling out²⁸ the pilot project lessons. A coordination mechanism is needed among the ministries, departments, NGOs, and corporate sectors similar to the Prime Minister's Office's (PMO) coordination of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) goal number 13. Ministry of Finance (Climate change budget), Ministry of Water Resource and Ministry of Agriculture (Adaptation), Ministry of Education (climate change in national curriculum), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (climate diplomacy), Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) (track local climate efforts), Ministry of Power and Energy and Ministry of Industry (mitigation), Ministry of Disaster Management (L&D), private sector (renewable energy and loss-and-damage insurance), civil society (scale up effective LLA examples) and finally, Ministry of Environment must support all other ministries. Scaling up and scaling out requires more funds from the government's budget and assistance from development partners like the World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB). This involves moving away from a project-by-project model with budgets of tens of millions of dollars for each project, which has a higher transaction cost and is too sluggish given climate action urgency. Since Bangladesh will no longer be considered an LDC after 2026, the country will no longer be eligible to receive grant-based bilateral financing from developed nations.²⁹

Initiatives of the Bangladeshi Diaspora: The Bangladeshi diaspora can contribute to the fight against climate change and foster ties with persons and organisations of Bangladesh. The Bangladeshi diaspora in the UK took a great initiative in 2022 to work together to address the global climate catastrophe. Mr. Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London organised an annual week-long London Climate Action Week (LCAW) throughout the summer. The week consists of a series of various activities organised by various organisations and hosted throughout London with an emphasis on addressing climate change. This effort has been a hugely effective means of bringing attention to the diaspora community. Currently, Centre for Climate Change and Environment Research of BRAC University is conducting research with the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) to assess the likely benefit of engaging the diaspora in climate diplomacy.

²⁷ Scaling up means incorporating lessons from successful programs into national planning, such as the Planning Commission's Ninth Five-Year Plan (9FYP)

²⁸ Scaling out entails replicating successful pilot initiatives at numerous new locations nationwide.

²⁹ Expert interview with the Director of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in June 2023.

5.3 *Adaptation*

Bangladesh must negotiate for legal climate-vulnerable migration: Bangladesh is the “epicenter” of climatic calamities. Due to its position, major weather events like high floods and tropical cyclones often displace hundreds and thousands of people. Additionally, the global climatic implications of even a one-meter sea level rise in Bangladesh’s low-lying coastal regions will render the country more vulnerable and bring it to the edge of huge calamities. Finally, millions of people, especially in low-lying coastal areas, may have to move despite attempts to assist them in adapting. Climate change-related human relocation has been neglected. By 2050, the southern delta will be permanently flooded, displacing 20 to 30 million people. Bangladesh can advocate this problem by implementing national and local steps and participating in international talks, notably at the forthcoming COPs.³⁰ This is another UN Security Council-worthy human security issue. Bangladesh can pursue the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration’s (GCM) goals of legalising the international migration³¹ of climate-induced displaced people.

Branding climate diplomacy of Bangladesh through climate action: At COP25 and COP26, branding Bangladesh was facilitated by the Bangladesh pavilion. The pavilion served as a venue for meetings and showcased activities by both government and non-government actors from Bangladesh. It was proved to be quite effective and should be repeated in every future COP. Climate change is a global issue and is no longer limited to once-a-year gathering. Rather, it is an issue that has daily impacts somewhere in the world. Therefore, climate diplomacy must be incorporated into the training of foreign service officers so that they become aware of climate change issues. Indeed, this is an asset for “Branding Bangladesh” in which we should invest as much capital as feasible.³²

³⁰ Expert interview with the Director of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in June 2023.

³¹ Even at the 2015 UN Conference of the Parties (COP21) in Paris, also known as the Paris Agreement, which focused on carbon emission reduction targets and environmental issues, climate-displaced refugees were barely mentioned. COP22 (Marrakesh, Morocco 2016) and COP23 (Bonn, Germany 2017) were similar. However, the 2018 COP24 in Katowice, Poland, recognised “climate-displaced peoples” and promised aid to climate refugees. Delegates from Bangladesh, India, the United States (Alaska, Louisiana, Washington State), Vanuatu, Kiribati, Tuvalu, and other Pacific island nations claimed that rising temperatures, sea levels, and weather disasters threatened their lands, cultures, and livelihoods and demanded recognition of the rights and needs of climate-displaced people. The problem-solving task force’s framework report was adopted at COP24 in Poland. The report advised countries to pass laws and policies to prevent people from leaving their homes due to climate change and to help them relocate and minimise negative effects if they do. The COP24 framework will allow vulnerable communities seek legal and political protection for safer travel and relocation in the absence of a climate refugee treaty. The two new UN Global Compacts signed by 160 nations in September 2018—one on safe, orderly, and regular migration and one on refugees—offer critical opportunities to help and ensure safety, dignity, and lasting solutions for climate-displaced or at-risk people.

³² Expert interview with the Director of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in June 2023.

Cooperation among South Asian countries: It is important to coordinate efforts among South Asian nations. As each nation has expertise that can be shared with the other nations, this may and should also involve sharing knowledge on how to address the various climate issues. Bangladesh, for instance, may impart its knowledge on cyclone preparation and warning, as well as locally driven adaptation in its coastal areas. While Pakistan has experience in managing droughts, Nepal and Bhutan have experience in adapting to mountain ecosystems, and India has knowledge in both urban adaptation and heatwave adaptation.³³ By strengthening knowledge exchange across the region through regional organisations like SAARC and SACEP, much may be accomplished.

Peer-to-peer exchange: Bangladesh can share knowledge with other nations through peer-to-peer exchange visits, conferences, seminars, and workshops on LLA and Resilience. The country can undoubtedly take the lead in LLA globally if all parties involved collaborate efficiently and adopt a whole-of-society perspective.

5.4 Mitigation

Engaging private sector on community resilience: The private sector of Bangladesh must move as early as possible from small-scale to larger-scale investments in mitigation measures, such as use of renewable energy resources. Investments in adaptation are also required so that businesses can profit from helping communities to cope with the negative effects of human-caused climate change. The vibrant private sector in our country has the capacity to lead the globe and sell its expertise outside, but this potential is still untapped. The proportion of renewable energy is below 4 per cent. It is needed to acknowledge that it is a failure. There are complaints that there is not enough land, etc. but advanced technologies might solve this issue. Now, Bangladesh's priority is the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan.³⁴ Using grid resilience and modernisation, the country intends to reach 40 per cent renewable energy by 2040. These objectives must be reflected in the future policies, such as the Integrated Energy and Power Master Plan.

Taxing air travel may help the victims of climate change: To create a framework to operationalise the L&D facility, to be adopted at COP28, COP27 established a 24-member Transitional Committee. The techniques, mechanisms, and funding

³³ Expert interview with the Professor of BRAC University in August 2022.

³⁴ Haque, "Our main goal."

sources for this financing facility are expected to be included in the framework.³⁵ Additionally, the LDCs proposed a small international air passenger adaptation levy (IAPAL) at COP14 back in 2008. Another idea put forth by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) was a multi-window institution specialising in insurance and rehabilitation programs. However, the UNFCCC negotiators rejected both of these proposals. Some developing nations, notably the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), objected, arguing that a tax on air travel would probably have a severe effect on the tourist sector, which is the principal source of foreign income for many of those nations.

The increased demand for travel tax will probably wipe out any potential negative effects on demand. Additionally, the UNFCCC parties' initial objection to this fee may no longer hold true given their shared desire to raise money for an L&D facility. Therefore, in light of the shifting political and economic landscape on a worldwide scale and the growing perception of a climate emergency, the LDCs once again propose to reactivate the IAPAL. The prior proposal estimated that the levies of US\$4 and US\$40 on economy class and business/first class, respectively, would generate a total revenue stream of roughly US\$10 billion. The proposal calls for an in-depth investigation into the most recent advancements in air travel and the possibility of raising additional funding for the L&D center from this particular industry.³⁶

In Bangladesh, the Department of Environment also proposed imposing a tax on vehicles based on their emissions rather than their engine displacement. Polluting vehicles will pay more. The 'polluter pays' principle will be applicable here.³⁷ Public transportation such as metro rail, can be included in this tax imposition for emissions.

Youth should hold an "Accountability COP": Fridays for the Future and many more national, regional, and global youth platforms are examples of the numerous international youth platforms that are already thriving throughout the world. These

³⁵ It should be noted that Article 3.1 of the UNFCCC—the idea of "common but differentiated responsibility based on respective capabilities" (CBDR+RC)—remains the cornerstone for addressing climate impacts. The polluter-pays principle (PPP), which ought to be the fundamental tenet of raising funds to address the effects of climate change, is tacitly implied by this idea. The neoliberal market-based economic system serves as the foundation of the climate regime. However, internalising the emission externalities that contribute to climate change is the most essential remedy within this very system. Many nations, both developed and developing, are implementing this in the form of carbon pricing, either by enacting a tax or emissions trading. There are currently well over 70 of these programs in existence worldwide.

³⁶ Expert Interview with the Directors from ICCCAD in December 2022.

³⁷ Expert interview with the Director of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in June 2023.

young activists need to stop asking for permission to attend the UNFCCC COP and instead of that, they need to hold their own Accountability COP. They need to demand that every national government and any organisation or entity that has publicly committed to taking climate change seriously, should come before the youth and report on their progress toward fulfilling their commitments. Many think tanks will simultaneously present their analyses on how governments and others are performing. The main justification for having the Accountability COP organised by the youth is that they are the ones to whom we are all ultimately responsible. The opportunity for the youth to act as well as meet and converse may also be included in such an event. As a result, the Accountability COP would also serve as an Action COP.³⁸ The bottom line is that all players who have pledged to take action urgently need to examine their progress in a more methodical manner and be held accountable. It could be a good idea to hold an annual Accountability COP before the UNFCCC COP, which would be attended by young people from all around the world.³⁹ Bangladesh should put more emphasis on developing the skills of young people in order to make them climate-literate citizens and even shape them into future climate champions.

6. Conclusion

Bangladesh's climate diplomacy has emerged as a critical and influential aspect of the nation's foreign policy, driven by the urgent need to address the multifaceted challenges posed by climate change. As the COP28 approaches, the debate over what we must do versus what we are prepared to do intensifies. Bangladesh has strategically leveraged its vulnerability to climate change, positioning itself as a global leader in advocating for L&D, adaptation, and mitigation efforts in the previous COPs notably in COP27. Through participation in international forums such as the COPs and the CVF, the country has effectively highlighted the disproportionate burden it faces due to the GHGs emissions, successfully pushing for more significant attention to adaptation measures.

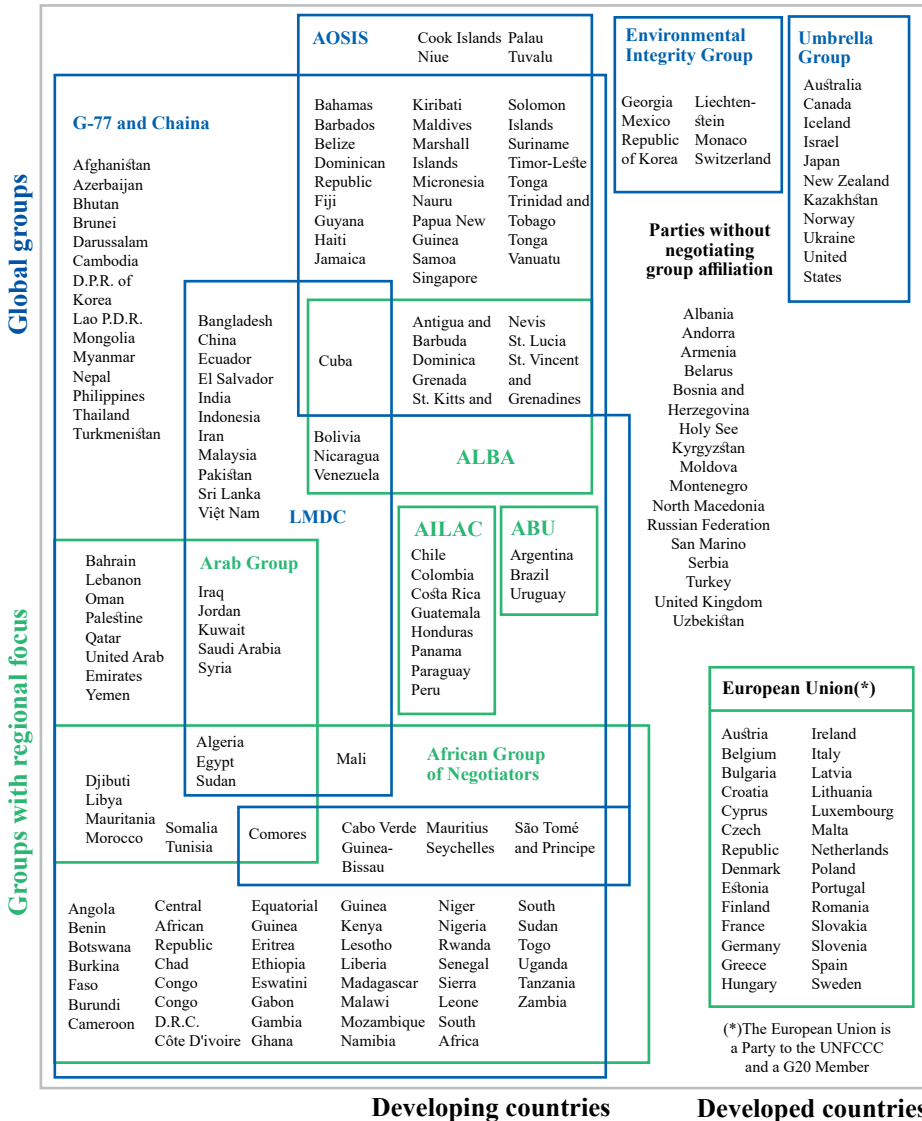
³⁸ The annual Accountability COP should undoubtedly be organised in a low-emission manner. This would entail using a hybrid format, with perhaps a small number of youth leaders from each country meeting in person and the majority participating online from their own locations without having to travel across the globe. Organising such an event shouldn't be difficult given our recent experience working online during the pandemic's peak. In reality, the Global Youth Leadership Center (GYLC) recently hosted the Youth Climate Summit in Khulna, Bangladesh, with the participation of many younger people (like myself) who participated online. The following year, they would have their next summit in Africa. In one of Bangladesh's most vulnerable regions, the initiative involved taking the young people to help local communities that are climate sensitive grow mangrove saplings.

³⁹ Expert interview with the representatives from Eco Network and Youth Net in December 2022.

The nation's commitment to green and sustainable development has also earned its recognition, with investment in climate trust funds, effective policy initiatives, and climate-resilient adaptation. These efforts not only contribute to national climate goals but also serve as an example for other developing countries. However, challenges persist in the realm of climate diplomacy of Bangladesh. The nation still grapples with its climate governance, resource constraints, and technological limitations, which impede its ability to adapt and mitigate effectively. Additionally, there is a need to continue fostering international cooperation, securing continuous financial and technological support, and strengthening diplomatic ties to achieve its climate goals. Finally, Bangladesh's climate diplomacy is a testament to its proactive stance in addressing the pressing global issue of climate action. While facing considerable challenges due to its vulnerability, Bangladesh has emerged as a voice for climate-vulnerable nations and a proactive participant in international efforts to combat climate change. As the world is combating the ever-increasing threat of climate change, Bangladesh's role in climate diplomacy remains crucial in the upcoming COPs, and its efforts to secure a sustainable and climate-resilient future are commendable.

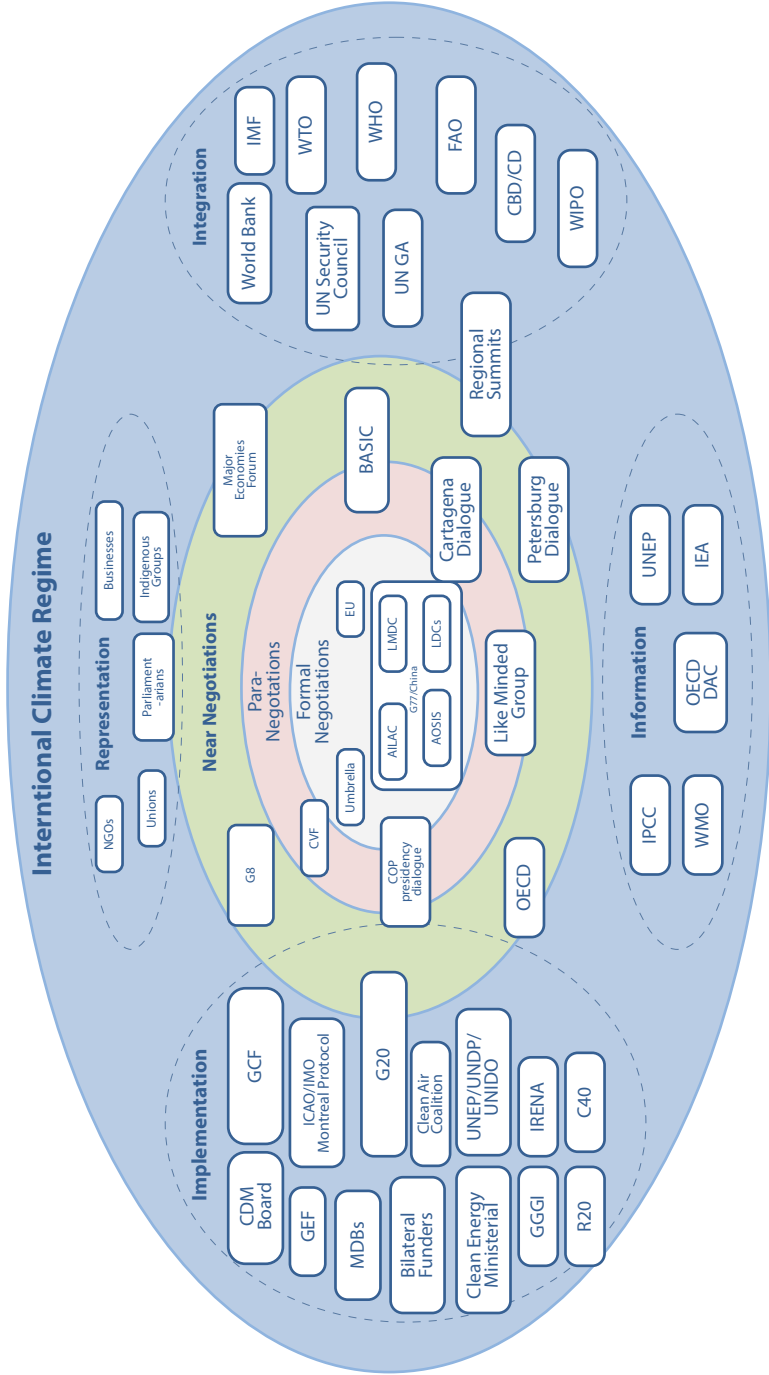
Annex I

Figure 1: Group Affiliation of UNFCC Parties⁴⁰



⁴⁰ Lorenz Moosmann, Cristina Urrutia, Anne Siemons, Martin Cames, Lambert Schneider, "Study "International Climate Negotiations - Issues at Stake in View of the COP25 UN Climate Change Conference in Madrid," European Parliament (Luxembourg: 2019), chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnpkcepmjccolcflcfndmkaj/https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2019/642344/IPOL_STU(2019)642344_EN.pdf

Figure 2: The structure of international climate regime⁴¹



⁴¹ Author's recreation from Robert Koehane and David Victor, "The Regime Complex for Climate Change The Harvard Project on International Climate Agreements," *The Harvard Project on International Climate Agreements*, (2010): 5.

Annex III

List of Key Informant Interviewees

1. Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
2. Director (Climate Change and International Convention), Department of Environment
3. Assistant Secretary, Bangladesh Climate Change Trust (BCCT), Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
4. Director, International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD)
5. Deputy Director, International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD)
6. Professor Emeritus, BRAC University
7. Representative from Global Climate Adaptation (GCA), South Asia.
8. Project Manager, Gender Responsive Coastal Adaptation, UNDP
9. Environment Specialist in Palli Karma-Shayak Foundation (PKSF)
10. Eco Network, Bangladesh.
11. Youth Delegate in COP27 and Vice-Chair at Commonwealth YouthClimate Change Network.

• **Books**

- South Asian Regional Cooperation: A Socio-economic Approach to Peace and Stability (1985)
Nation Building in Bangladesh: Retrospect and Prospect (1986)
The Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace (1986)
The Security of Small States (1987)
ASEAN Experiences of Regional and Inter-regional Cooperation: Relevance for SAARC (1988)
Development, Politics and Security: Third World Context (1990)
Bangladesh and SAARC: Issues, Perspectives and Outlook (1992)
Bangladesh: Society, Polity and Economy (1993)
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Chandabaji Versus Entrepreneurship: Youth Force in Bangladesh (1999)
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National Security of Bangladesh in the 21st Century (2000)
Civil Society and Democracy in Bangladesh (2002)
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Confidence Building Measures and Security Cooperation in South Asia : Challenges in the New Century (2002)
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Democracy, Governance and Security Reforms: Bangladesh Context (2008)
Whither National Security Bangladesh 2007 (2008)
National Security Bangladesh 2008 (2009)
Human Security Approach to Counter Extremism in South Asia: Relevance of Japanese Culture (2010)
National Security Bangladesh 2009 (2010)
Energy Security in South Asia Plus: Relevance of Japanese Experience (2016)
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Glimpses on Bangladesh : A Country of Hope, Love, Courage and Resilience (2022)

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- Pakistan: Haunting Shadows of Human Security (2009)
- Human Security in India: Discourse, Practices and Policy Implications (2010)
- Human Security Index for South Asia: Exploring Relevant Issues (2011)
- Ethnicity and Human Security in Bangladesh and Pakistan (2012)

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