From Displacement to Destabilisation: Crisis as a Threat to Peace

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Abstract

This paper aims to provide a critical analysis of the structural inequalities and geopolitical factors underpinning mass movements of displacement, as well as their catastrophic effects on the people on the move and on the global peace architecture. In this regard, employing a qualitative methodology, such as literature review, policy content analysis, and in-depth key informant and expert interviews, this paper strives to rummage for the possible answers to key research questions. Seeking to enhance understanding of political economy challenges contributing to furthering cycles of conflict, the paper investigates important country case studies, which include the continuing crises of Syria, Yemen and the Rohingya exodus. In doing so, the study finds dilemmas of international cooperation and peacekeeping in the context of refugee movements and calls for an inclusive and sustainable strategy that accommodates refugee protection. Taking a closer look at the roots of the crisis, the paper contends that the refugee crisis cannot be rooted out without a global response based on justice, solidarity, and strategic cooperation among nations and institutions. Finally, connecting forced migration with the larger question of global conflict, inequality, and power, so that urgent reforms in international policy and the peace-building agenda, which may serve to reduce the human cause of displacement and potent peace globally, can be informed, is argued for in the paper.

Introduction

Human migration is a defining issue in the present world. Particularly, refugees and displacement are the critical components of the people of the 21st century. Refugee movements and forced migration dominate the agenda of social protection of human beings within national, regional, and global structures. The world has turned more turbulent, full of chaos and complexity in recent years. During the six-day Arab-Israel war in 1967, around 0.32 million Palestinians fled or were forced to leave Gaza and the West Bank (Masalha, 2003), constituting one of the major refugee crises in the world. The fall of the Berlin Wall, the Kosovo War, and the Syrian conflicts are some of the landmark cases of persecution and war that have created refugees in the world. The European Union, in 2015, for the first time, endured a massive refugee influx from outside of the region. Since then, the UNCHR has been announcing record numbers of displaced people around the world. The shocking image of Alan Kurdi on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, or a five-year-old boy, Omran Daqneesh, in rubble in the Syrian city of Aleppo, ponders a new reality for the world as people have started to call "the new normal". The Rohingya refugee crisis in August 2017 caused a mass exodus to Bangladesh, marking a new episode in the long trajectory of refugee movements in the post-war world. Similarly, the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war and the Israeli-Palestinian crisis have also given rise to a new but grim wave of refugee crisis in the European and Middle Eastern regions.

The continuing refugee crisis in the world has become a major non-traditional threat to peace. The very goal of human society is to pursue the goal of peace, whether it is perceived as a means or an end. Though the human civilisation went through significant progress in economic and technological advancements in the past decades, the world is still characterised by violence, protracted conflicts and disputes. In fact, the highly individualistic approach of the world has been reflexive on self-serving objectives of the people around the world. With a continued focus on geopolitical and economic objectives, states became captives of power politics. In such a crisis, another spectrum of crisis has come to the spotlight with major concern, which is "the global refugee crisis. In this regard, employing a qualitative (literature review and policy-analysis-based) methodology, this paper strives to rummage the possible answers to two research questions: (i) how do structural inequalities and geopolitical factors contribute to the global refugee crisis? And (ii) how does the increasing number of refugees worldwide challenge the global peace architecture and international cooperation?

In this regard, the study is an effort to understand the relationship between the refugee crisis and peace in order to identify strategies for lessening the traumas and sufferings endured by the refugees around the world. The paper has seven sections, apart from the introduction and conclusion. The first section explains some of the key terms of the paper, such as the meaning of a 'refugee', 'refugeehood' and 'peace'. The second section describes the global realities underpinning the current crisis—income inequality, political polarisation and

fragility, and power transition. The third section looks at the refugee crisis of our time, providing data on where they are dispersed and identifying displacement areas. In the fourth section, we have provided an extensive case study of the Rohingya refugee crisis with background on their historical persecution and contemporary humanitarian obstacles. The fifth section identifies triggers of refugee crises, namely: state fragility, conflict and mobility. The sixth section sheds light on refugee flows as drivers of global peace, addressing the danger of protracted refugee situations and radicalisation. The seventh section looks to the future, offering policy reforms, cooperation on world wide scale, and humanitarian relief as solutions to the refugee crisis. Last but not least, the conclusion summarises the results of the previous sections and urges districts of all classes to come together to combat the refugee crisis that has brought great implications to global peace.

Concept and Literature Review

'Refugee', 'refugeehood', and 'peace' are inextricably linked, and the complex nature of all three phenomena offers profound insights for understanding threats to human society. In the first issue of the *Journal of Refugee Studies* in 1988, Zetter (1988, p.1) critically discussed the significance of refugee issues (Cited in Shah, 2000, p.2). However, in the present century, according to Kelley (2022), the term "refugee" has been used more frequently to refer to the millions of people who have been uprooted due to intolerance, conflict and war or other human circumstances pushed them into exile or displaced inside their own countries. Zetter (2007) further argued that the term 'refugee' became a powerful tag to refer to the social differentiation, national and global public policy and humanitarian concerns.

The term 'refugee' is contentious and emotive, although it is widely used in the current world. Refugee is a political, social and legal construction of identity (Drozdzewski and Matusz, 2021). The concept of 'refugee' is entangled with the "fear of persecution by state or government due to political, ethnic and social identity" (Sajjad, 2018). The experience from Holocaust and the Cold War marked the turning point of history when the modern refugee regime was built on. The term, as Melander (2021) argued, has been used to refer to anyone who has been compelled to leave their country, but it has a more precise meaning in international law and politics. It describes a person's legal status, which enables them to enter a nation at government expense and obtain specific public privileges. A large number of conflict refugees are destined to live in camps of a third country. Due to widespread acknowledgement of group vulnerability, they are granted refugee status. People who are displaced and living in camps as refugees have to wait years for a country to accept them for their resettlement. (Bohmer and Shuman, 2008, p.25).

Reference to the 1951 Convention for understanding who is a refugee is critical, which is termed a beacon of hope for refugees in the world. The 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees defines a refugee as "someone fleeing persecution, based on race, religion, nationality, membership of a social group, or political opinion." This kind of interpretation has evolved. However, the core notion was to defend the people whose own authorities have failed or are unable to prevent persecution against them. But according to Zetter, the most

commonly accepted international legal instruments—the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees and its 1967 Protocol—only provide a *de minimis* definition. The causes of cross-border displacement are becoming more complicated, and many of them don't align well with the 1951 Convention. Alexander Betts identifies five major gaps in the refugee regime that need to be addressed, which include: *access, responsibility sharing, markets, survival migration, and people not in need of international protection (Betts, 2015).*

On the other hand, Abu-Laban (2021) argued that 'refugeehood' is a state of being a 'refugee', particularly generated due to 'protracted refugee situations.' Through the lens of more than 60 years of protection, refugee identity has been developed and continuously transformed into a complex and nuanced identity. (Zetter, 2014). Refugeehood refers to both moral and empirical claims that form essential conditions for the existence of a refugee. Persecution is an essential criterion of refugeehood. Many analysts tend to argue that refugeehood results only from acts of persecution. Another factor used to determine refugee status is alienation. What is important is to understand refugeehood in a broader sense. In this sense, a legitimate claim to refugeehood can be made based on persecution, though it is not a prerequisite. Moreover, like persecution, threats to physical security also constitute a legitimate claim to refugee status. (Shacknove, 1985, pp.274-284). The foundation of refugeehood and the total denial of society is the lack of official protection. The same logic that supports the refugee status of those who are persecuted also supports the claims of those who are deprived of all other necessities (Shacknove, 1985, pp. 274-284). Refugeehood is not a territorial relationship between a person and his home country; rather, it is solely a political relationship between the citizen and the state. It denotes a kind of unprotected statelessness. (Shacknove, 1985, pp. 274-284).

A conceptual conundrum stems from the overlapping meanings of refugees, migrants, asylum seekers, and internally displaced. A person may belong to one or more categories simultaneously. An internally displaced person is someone who is compelled to leave their nation but does not cross a border, whereas a refugee is someone who is forced to leave their country because of persecution. A refugee who is seeking protection but whose status as a refugee has not been established by any nation is known as an asylum seeker. A migrant is a person who relocates, usually freely, either temporarily or permanently, to live or work. The individual might or might not cross a border.

The condition of refugeehood is profoundly connected with the state of 'peace'. What is peace? Joudi (2021) argued that 'Peace is a universal quest, but there is no universal definition of peace'. Two World Wars and the Cold War in the 20th century would seem to have settled the basic question of modernity in favour of the 'liberal peace.' But such a type of peace is made up of a victor's peace at its most basic level (Richmond, 2008). Historically, peace has been connected with paradigms and personalities. An Alexandrian peace depends upon a string of military conquests loosely linked together, while a Pax Romana depends upon tight control of a territorial empire, and also included a 'Carthaginian peace' in which the city of Carthage was razed to the ground and strewn with salt to make sure it would not re-emerge (Richmond, 2008). While the Westphalian peace depended on state security and territorial sovereignty norms, an "Augustine peace" depends on the

acceptance and defence of a territorial form of Catholicism and the idea of just war. The Pax Britannica relied on trade, loose alliances with colonial peoples, and British maritime dominance; social fairness is a prerequisite for social peace. (Richmond, 2008).

Spinoza argued that "peace is not an absence of war; it is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence, and justice." The disturbing events following the Second World War, as Albert Einstein asserted,

> The war is won, but the peace is not. The great powers, united in fighting, are now divided over the peace settlements. The world was promised freedom from fear, but in fact, fear has increased tremendously since the termination of the war. The world was promised freedom from want, but large parts of the world are facing starvation while others are living in abundance…Territorial questions and arguments of power, obsolete though they are, still prevail over the essential demands of common welfare and justice (Springer, 2013).

The idea of 'negative peace' and 'positive peace' gives a strong sense to the meaning of peace at different levels—individual, inter-personal, family, local, national, regional and global. These twin terms were idealised by Johan Galtung for the first time in the editorial of the Journal of Peace in 1964. The conceptual distinction between positive and negative peace took shape in the 1950s, when the central focus of peace research was on the use of direct violence, or on ideas like aggression and war. The field of peace research was influenced heavily by the scholars of North America. Against this background, Galtung broadened the ideas of peace and violence and included indirect or structural violence. The contribution of Galtung made it possible to look at peace in different lights. Galtung conceived negative peace as "absence of war or violence" while positive peace as "integration of human societies".

Mahatma Gandhi has also made a laudable contribution to peace and conflict research. According to Gandhi, true and stable peace will prevail only if there is equal opportunity for all. Gandhi's idea of peace and non-violence has close relations with justice, development and the environment. According to a 1909 article written by Gandhi, modern models of development are inherently conflictual. In peace research, Gandhi is revered for detailed work on non-violence and for changing the idea of non-violence from an individual-centric phenomenon to a social action-centric phenomenon and for giving it the shape of a political philosophy. The *Global Peace Index* has defined positive peace "as the attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies".

The idea of positive peace is essentially linked with eliminating the causes of war, conflict and injustice. It is also fundamentally linked with the creation of a peaceful society in a manner that fulfils the promises of positive peace. Positive peace speaks of connection among all living entities. Peace will prevail only when human beings devise and follow a way to solve the existing conflicts peacefully, only when the refugees and displaced persons around the world find opportunities to assert and enjoy their rights.

Methodology

This paper focuses on refugee crisis and displacement, although, if illustrative, examples from other areas of peace, conflict and development are referred to. In this regard, this study employs qualitative methodology, such as literature review, policy content analysis, and in-depth key informant interviews. It is based on about seventy in-depth key informant interviews conducted between May and December 2024. Interviews were supplemented by analysis of secondary sources drawn from both policy and academic literature. Interviews were conducted with policy makers, international development experts, conflict analysts, and critical scholars in the development discourse. Expert interviews were conducted in different cities of Bangladesh in different times, as well as different other research projects helped to contextualize the findings.

The initial findings of this research shared with a group of experts and students in the University of Dhaka and University of Chittagong. The initial findings from in-depth interviews and secondary sources were validated through a couple of focus group workshops in the University of Chittagong, an area of geographically proximate to the Rohingya refugee settlement in Bangladesh.

Discussion and Analysis

Global Reality

The linkage between the refugee crisis and peace is based on a deeper understanding of global reality. How can we define global reality? Three broad aspects are particularly critical. First, the reality is constantly shaped by a variety of structural forces in various areas of global society, including exploitation, discrimination, inequality, deprivation, and injustice. In his last presidential speech in September 2016, Barack expressed: "A world where 1% of humanity controls as much wealth as the bottom 99% will never be stable." Meanwhile, the global inequality index continued to rise high as surfaced in Oxfam's 2024 report, "*Takers Not Makers*" (Phean, 2025):

- The wealth of the five richest men of the world has doubled since 2020, while nearly five billion people have become poorer over the same period (Ewe, 2024).

- In 2024, billionaire wealth increased by $2 trillion, growing three times faster than in 2023. The number of billionaires reached 2,769, and their combined wealth has increased from $13 trillion to $15 trillion in just one year. (Kollewe, 2025).

- Nearly two-thirds of all new wealth has been accumulated by the richest 1% since 2020, which is almost twice as much as the poorest 99%. (Christensen et al., 2023).

- Approximately, 60% of billionaires' wealth comes from crony ties, monopoly power, or inheritance rather than from their own business endeavours. (OXFAM, 2025).

- Despite these wealth increases, since 1990, there has been little change in the number of persons living on less than \$6.85 per day, indicating minimal progress in poverty reduction (OXFAM, 2025).

In the area of global military spending, the total amount of expenditure, the competition for spending more money and disproportionate budget allocation are clearly visible. Some countries have acquired disproportionately higher capacity to engage in military conflicts through superior military strength. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) report, global defence spending has risen for the first time since 2011. In 2024, the world's military spending amounted to an estimated \$2.718 trillion, representing a staggering 9.4 per cent rise over the previous year and the most substantial annual growth ever seen since the end of the Cold War (SIPRI, 2024). The increase reflects long-standing geopolitical tensions, such as the ongoing Russia–Ukraine war and more general European and Middle Eastern instability.

The United States and China were still, by far, the two biggest military spenders, comprising almost 40 per cent of all global military spending (Liang et al., 2025). The US spent around \$997 billion on defence in 2024, whereas China spent approximately \$314 billion. These numbers highlight the outsized role these countries play in global defence spending. Notably, 168 countries increased their military expenditure from the previous year (Liang et al., 2025).

Second, for centuries, actions of certain social and political forces in different corners of the world have led to extremist, racist, intolerant and xenophobic tendencies in society, creating widespread violence in many different forms. With the end of the Cold War and bipolarity, the world witnessed an ephemeral trend towards transnational cooperation and a peace dividend. However, the path to violence, terrorism, animosity and hatred has strongly resurfaced over the past two decades. Ironically, the rise of anti-immigration, racist and far-rightist political forces in the USA, UK, France, Austria, Germany and the Netherlands is a case in point. Leaders like Donald Trump (USA), Nigel Farage (UK), Le Pen (France), Geert Wilders (Netherlands), Norbert Hofer (Austria), Jaroslaw Kaczynski (Poland), Victor Orban (Hungary), and Frauke Petry (Germany) have already done great havoc on liberal, tolerant and multicultural foundations of Western societies.

In an open debate in the UN Security Council in 2016 on threats to international peace and security, the Angolan Foreign Minister emphasized, "Terrorism is a serious threat to international peace and security and an unprecedented challenge, due to the characteristics it has assumed, with ambitions of conquering and administering territories, under a program aimed at bringing the peoples under the yoke of darkness and obscurantism, in total contravention with the norms of civilized coexistence and in total denial of diversity, be it cultural, racial or religious."

Shockingly, the death toll in conflict areas worldwide has been rising as warfare and wars broke out in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Africa, and Asia. The year 2016 has been among the worst years in recent history. Notably, the Ukraine-Russia war has been marked as the most horrific situation the world is facing after WWII. With its pervasive geopolitical,

humanitarian and economic impacts, the war has accelerated the destitute condition for refugees and migrants, threatening global peace and stability. The horrific and tragic bloodshed occurred in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Military analysts observe that there are 22 conflicts around the globe that threaten to erupt into major military standoffs. As of 2024, the total worldwide death toll has risen relatively sharply after several years of decline. The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) released a report covering 1 July 2023–30 June 2024, which recorded one-third more deaths, or an estimated 200,000 deaths globally (Mia, 2024). This increase is due to the escalation of ongoing conflicts and the spread of new violent clashes in several areas, including Ukraine, Sudan, Gaza, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). There was a total of 61 such conflicts, and 11 of them were full wars (i.e., producing at least 1,000 battle-related fatalities), the most in any single year since the end of World War II. This disturbing pattern of increasingly armed violence is repeated throughout the world (Burgess, 2025).

Third, power politics based on zero-sum outcomes in the state and non-state structure of relations dictate the policy milieu. Particularly, superpower and great power interests have traditionally caused threats and insecurities to people, communities and states in the world. The growing number of interstate and intrastate conflicts, the lack of democratic reform of global institutions such as the UN, World Bank, and IMF, and the continuation of disparity and discrimination within the global economic system are largely attributed to power politics. Geopolitical and geo-economic interests take precedence over the questions of humanity, equity, morality and justice. Political and security trajectories in the Middle East over the last fifteen years clearly demonstrate the rule of power politics in an anarchic environment.

Contemporary Refugee Crisis

The number of refugees increases every day in the contemporary world. As of the end of 2024, the estimated global number of forcibly displaced persons was 123.2 million, according to the UNHCR's Global Trends report (UNHCR, 2024). The increase in the trend that has been noticeable for a decade was driven by continuing conflict, persecution and human rights abuses in places such as Burundi, South Sudan and Yemen.

If we were to take into account the cumulative total IDP at the end of 2024, totalling 123.2 million the daily rate of new displacements would be around 337,260 individuals/day That figure is rough and does not carry a time stamp, but it indicates a daily rate of displacement, and serves to illustrate the urgency for holistic solutions to the root problems and support for those displaced (UNHCR, 2024).

The recent years experienced unprecedent surge in the number of refugees across the globe. If current trends continue, the situation will go beyond capacity. The UNHCR, as the global body to deal with the refugees, has identified seven hotspots of refugee emergencies in the current world – the Central African Republic, South Sudan, the Rohingya in Myanmar, Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Nigeria.

The vulnerability of human beings owing to structural, behavioural and emotional actions in the forms of refugees, forced migration, asylum, and displacement has increased in recent years. As summarised by Foreign Policy,

> "The world is entering its most dangerous chapter in decades. The sharp uptick in war over recent years is outstripping our ability to cope with the consequences. From the global refugee crisis to the spread of terrorism, our collective failure to resolve conflict is giving birth to new threats and emergencies. Even in peaceful societies, the politics of fear is leading to dangerous polarization and demagoguery."

In a survey conducted by the World Economic Forum, it was found that people are more concerned about conflicts and governance problems in society (Allgemein, 2025). Moreover, the UNHCR Global Trends Report 2025 of the World Economic Forum found that from 2015 to 2025, forcibly displaced under the UNHCR mandate increased from 40 million to 72 million, refugees from 16 million to 30 million and asylum seekers from 3.2 million to almost 8.3 million (see Figures 1 and 2). Notably, the reasons behind the increase in refugees and asylum-seekers are mostly war and conflict.

Table 1

Refugees, Asylum-Seekers and Displaced People from 2015 to 2025 (in millions)
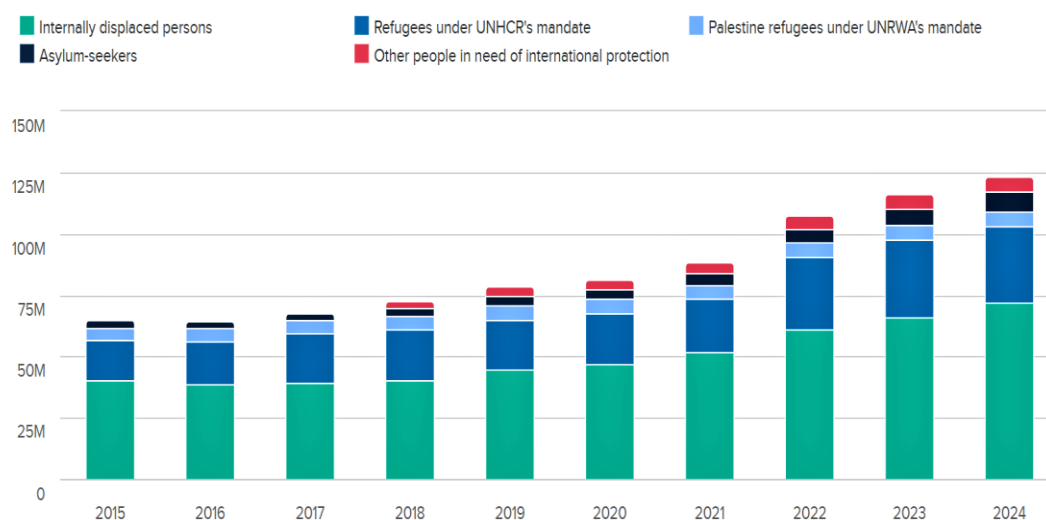

Source: *UNHCR (2025).*

Compared to the 7.4 billion inhabitants on the planet, the overall number of 123–24 million indicates that 01 in every 102 individuals is currently either internally displaced, a refugee, or an asylum seeker. However, half of these migrants are from war-torn countries like

Somalia, Afghanistan, and Syria. Notably, the other half comes from developing countries from the global south that endure various conflicts and humanitarian catastrophes. In the Middle East, more than one in twenty persons (5.6%) are displaced. In the meantime, 1.6% of people in continental Africa—except Egypt, which is also a part of the Middle East—are displaced. (Anthony, 2016). In a single case, 12.5 million Syrians were reported to be displaced in 2016 as a consequence of civil wars in the country. The number of displaced Syrians was about 300,000 in 2011 (UNHCR, 2016; Eurostat, 2016). Europe is now home to one million of these refugees. Among the refugees who entered Europe in 2016, around 60% of them came from the top ten refugee-producing countries, including Syria (23%), Afghanistan (12%), Nigeria (10%), and Iraq (8%). (UNHCR, 2024; 2025).

Figure 2

Number of Asylum Seekers in Europe from Different Countries in 2023
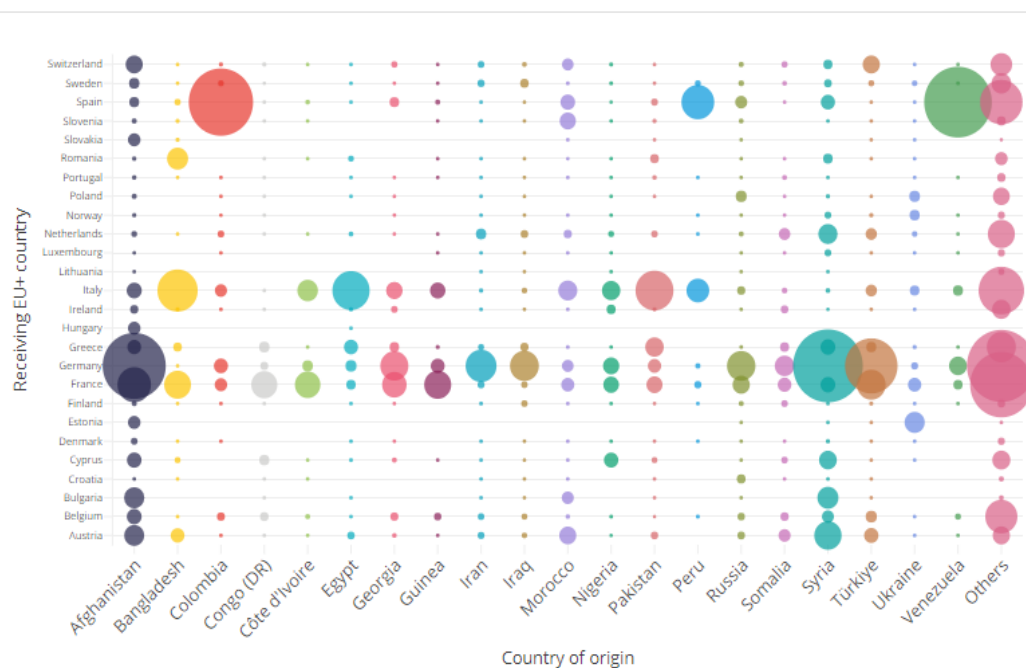
Source*: EU Agency for Asylum (2023)*

The Case of the Rohingya Crisis

The latest addition to the map of displaced and refugee people is the influx of the Rohingyas into Bangladesh. Arrival of the Rohingyas over approximately 9 years following 25th August 2017 has increased the number of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh to nearly 900,000. It has created the biggest refugee crisis for Bangladesh. Particularly, considering the nature of the crisis, it may be the worst in modern history. The UNHCR stated, "Rohingya refugees have been fleeing violence in Myanmar at a staggering rate—and the numbers keep growing. They walk for days through jungles and mountains, or brave

dangerous sea voyages across the Bay of Bengal. They arrive exhausted, hungry and sick—in need of international protection and humanitarian assistance."

However, the Rohingya people have been persecuted in their homeland, Myanmar (formerly Burma), for centuries. They are known as the most persecuted stateless people in recent memory. They had become subjects of discrimination and oppression since the military takeover of power in 1962. The Rohingyas lost their rights to citizenship in 1982 when the military regime in Myanmar enacted a new Citizenship Law. The people of the Rohingya nation were not recognised as an ethnic group according to the law of Myanmar. In addition to legal, administrative and social discrimination and deprivation, the security forces in Myanmar attacked the Rohingya community in 1978, 1991-92, 2012, 2016, and 2017, causing major exoduses on every occasion. The UN, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and global leaders have termed it a case of 'genocide' and 'ethnic cleansing' (Beyrer and Kamarulzaman, 2017).

As of May 2025, an estimated 978,000 Rohingya refugees are living in Bangladesh, mostly in the Cox's Bazar district, and a further 36,000 on Bhasan Char Island (OCHA, 2024). The refugee community is living in 33 cramped camps in Cox's Bazar, with the Kutupalong camp being the largest refugee settlement in the world. These camps are severely overcrowded, have inadequate infrastructure and limited access to basic services. According to the 2025–26 Joint Response Plan (JRP), 1.48 million people require refugees (refugee and host communities) (Operational Data Portal, 2025; IOM, 2025).

The health system is strained by the lack of support and the absence of U.S. government funding, which was suspended in early 2025. This has resulted in the closure of health posts and diminished activity at primary health centres for over 300,000 people. The arrival of the monsoon has further complicated the situation, increasing the threat of waterborne disease and other health concerns (WHO, 2025). Regarding funding, while there is a desperate need for resources, funding is currently inadequate. UNHCR has received only 30% of the $383.1 million needed to maintain the well-being of refugees and local host communities in Bangladesh by May 2025. The lack of resources also makes it difficult to provide sufficient shelter, food, education and protection (UNB, 2025).

However, there has been no progress toward voluntary and safe repatriation of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar. The 2025 JRP underlines the need for a durable solution, with protection, resiliency and the benefit of refugees and host communities. Political and logistical hurdles, nonetheless, constrain progress.

Root Causes of the Refugee

One can identify a host of push and pull factors behind the refugee crisis worldwide; however, the key reasons for the refugee influx from Africa and the Middle East are structural rather than temporary. (Blair, 2016). Two global trends are identified as the root causes of the rising number of refugees in the world: fragility and mobility (Betts, 2015). First, in the post-Cold War era, many states and societies have unquestionably become fragile and persistently unstable. Situations in South Sudan, Somalia, the Central African

Republic, Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Chad, Myanmar, Yemen, Ukraine and Pakistan are worrisome in different degrees. Second, in recent decades, human movement has increased exponentially. The number of international migrants rose from 70 million in 1970 to 243.7 million in 2015. The globalization has increased both the opportunity and desire to mobility (Betts, 2015). The drivers of refugee movements and forced migration may be considered beyond fragility and mobility. People are also forced to flee their country due to widespread violence, natural disasters, and food insecurity. Still, the primary reason of the refugee crisis is war. As reported in the Telegraph, "Today's wars generally create far more refugees than previous conflicts" (Blair, 2016).

The rise in terrorist attacks and ongoing civil unrest worldwide (Institute of Economics and Peace, 2014) have increased by refugees, but this is by no means a novel phenomenon. However, the majority of refugee-producing countries—which are typically conflict-affected nations—are found in the developing world, and the majority of the world's refugee burden is typically borne by their neighbours, the first asylum-seeking nations. About 3.2 million refugees (33%) were protected in the industrialised world in 2003, while 6.5 million refugees (67%) were hosted by the developing nations. Though low-income and least-developed nations account for the majority of the population of asylum seekers and refugees, some high-income OECD nations also host a sizable number of refugees. (Czaika, 2009, pp.25-26).

The Refugee Movements and Peace

This section deals with empirical relations between the global refugee movements and peace. Peace, as defined in section II, is under threat from intrastate and external sources. Whether it is the first or second image of international relations, it clearly demonstrates that peace is inseparable from domestic and global realities. Both the micro and macro domains of peace are constantly facing challenges, violent conflicts, extremism, power politics in the international system, the battle for dominance in the international spectrum, multidimensionality of conflicts, poverty, inequality, underdevelopment, alienation, arms race, increasing military expenditure, environmental catastrophes, an imbalanced social system, priming parochial interests over humanity and others. At the global level, some threats are prominent, such as civil wars, terrorism, nuclear and biological weapons, transnational organised crime, proliferation of small arms and light weapons, bio-threats, cyber-attacks, and climate change.

There is a paradoxical relationship between the refugee crisis and global peace. On the one hand, history has abundantly shown that the absence of peace has caused human suffering over the centuries. More precisely, the above-mentioned threats to peace have been contributing to the creation of refugees every day in different parts of the world. A complex interconnectedness of factors leading to multiple risks and threats to human societies is driving people out of their homes. Figure 4 shows how these factors are interconnected as global risks. Every case of refugee movement is an example of prevailing instability and insecurity at the state, regional and global levels. Narratives of suffering and trauma reflect

persecution and continue to shape the reality that is deeply connected with conflicts and violence in society.

On the other hand, the growing number of refugees is causing new challenges to peace, particularly at the domestic and community levels. Denial of solutions to the root causes of conflicts has created 'protracted refugee situations' in the world. The plight of the Palestinian refugees is a case in point. Anger, dissatisfaction, and rebellious intentions in societies result from statelessness and a depressing state. The Westphalian order causes inherent and possible risk when refugees and displaced people stay in other nations or territories. At the most extremist level, political forces are exploiting the ethnic, religious and racial divisions as we see today in the name of anti-immigration platforms, notably in Europe and North America. However, at another level, people are less welcoming to the protracted presence of refugees. It is maintained that a refugee is, by definition, an alien who is fleeing their country. It is difficult to change a refugee's identity to that of someone who belongs or even has the ability to become an insider. Sovereignty, belonging, and the proper order of things are all threatened by refugees. (Kneebone, Stevens and Baldassar, 2014). Every protracted refugee situation risks the possibility of "radicalisation" among the refugees, as well as trafficking of women and children**.**

Table 1

Top Ten Refugee-Hosting Countries

| Sl	Countries	Number
1	Turkey	3,696,831
2	Jordan	3,027,729
3	Uganda	1,475,311
4	Pakistan	1,438,523
5	Lebanon	1,338,197
6	Germany	1,235,160
7	Sudan	1,068,339
8	Bangladesh	978,000
9	Iran	800,025
10	Ethiopia	782,896

Source: *World Population Review (2023).*

It is also important to focus on where the refugee movements are more visible. Three major geographic areas are vulnerable to refugee movements—the Middle East, Africa and South Asia. In 2023, out of the top ten refugee-hosting countries, three were from Africa, two from the Middle East and two from South Asia (see Table 1). In 2017, Bangladesh joined the

league of top refugee-receiving countries in the world due to the mass exodus of the Rohingyas from Myanmar. Understandably, the largest refugee-producing countries are also from the same regions. However, according to World Population Review, 2025, the top source countries of refugees worldwide include Syria, Ukraine, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Colombia, Myanmar, Sudan, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Somalia, and Yemen (see Figure 3).
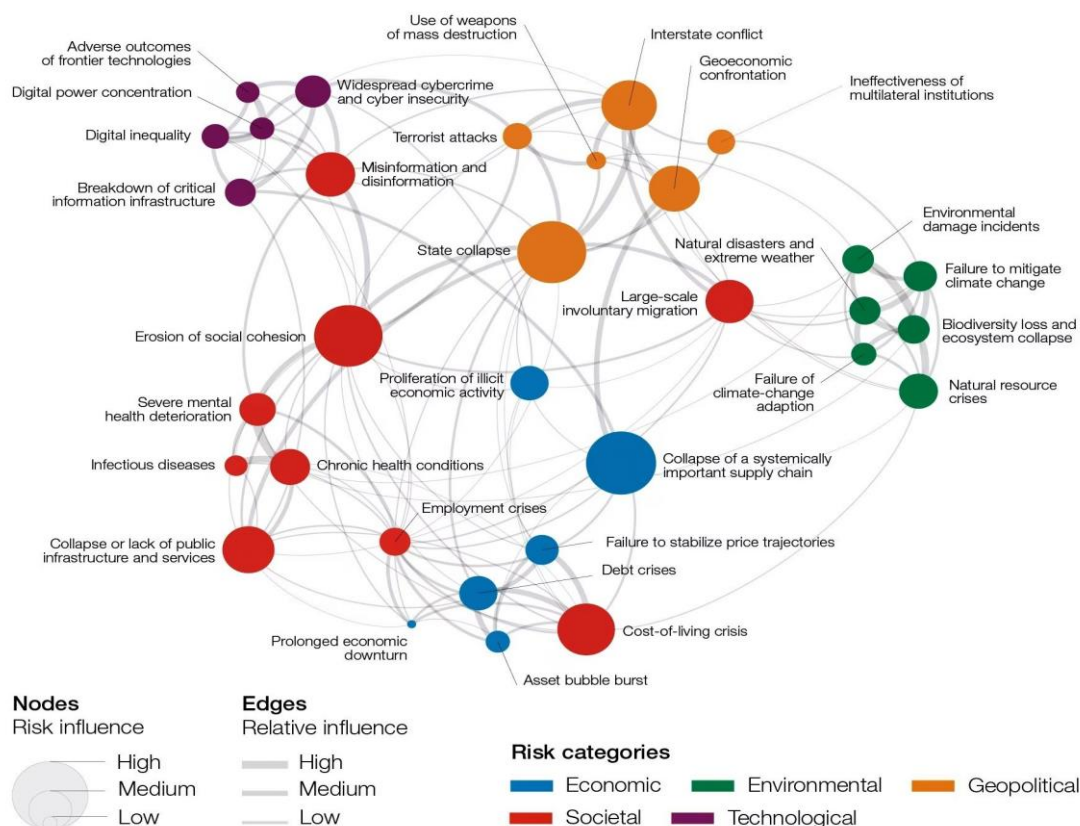
Figure 3

Major Source Countries of Refugees as of 2025
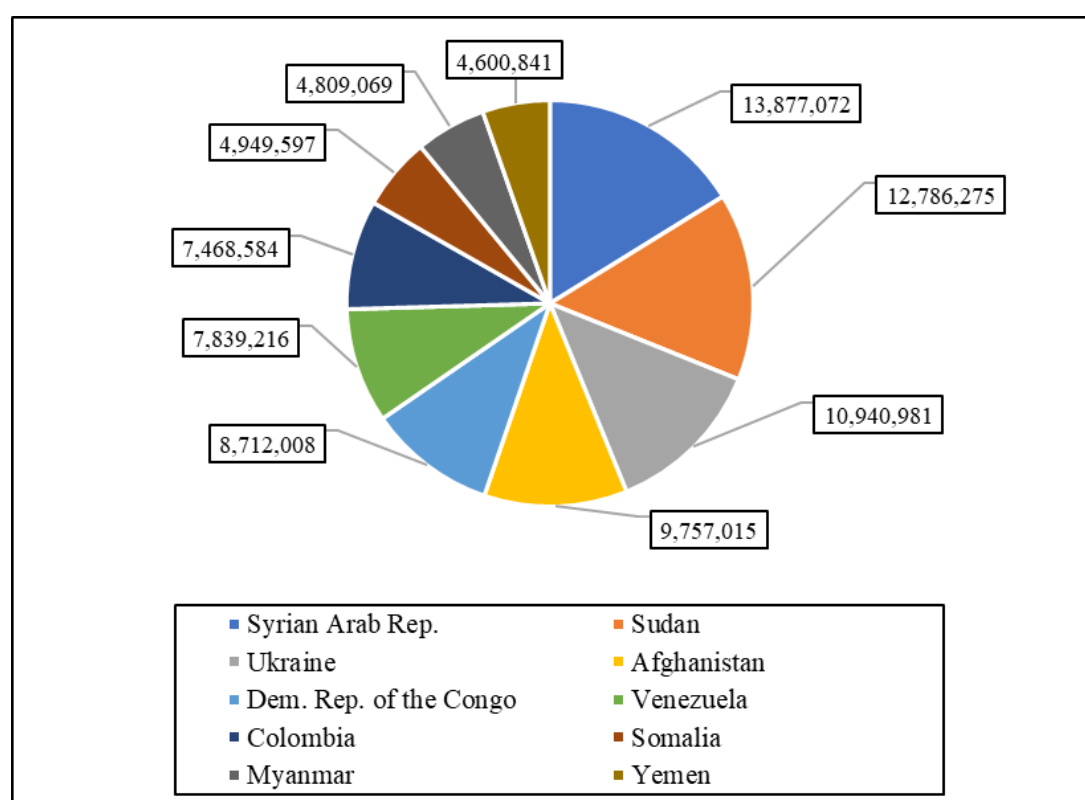
 Source*: World Population Review, (2025.*

Figure 4

Global Risks Interconnections Map

 Source*: World Economic Forum (2023).*

Discussion

Looking Ahead: An End to the Refugee Crisis

It is abundantly clear that refugee movements are constantly raising humanitarian and security concerns about social reality. War, conflicts and persecution create refugees and make societies vulnerable. Eventually, refugee movements also make society vulnerable. It causes threats to stability and security. Therefore, the refugee crisis reflects a number of critical questions in terms of maintaining positive peace in the world. First, it is not rich countries that are taking the burden of refugees worldwide. Developed and developing countries take care of most of the world's refugees. According to an estimation by the UNHCR, developing nations provide asylum to around 90% of the world's refugees. (Refugee Council, 2017). Second, the response of the developed world is poor and disappointing. The UK-based Refugee Council observes, "Given the world is facing the greatest refugee crisis since the Second World War, comparatively few people make it to

Britain in their search for safety. In the year to March 2017, over 1 million people sought safety in Europe. Yet Britain received just 36,846 asylum applications, including dependents—that is a 13% decrease since the year before" (Refugee Council, 2017). Besides, it is critical to find ways to deal with the challenge of the refugee crisis in the current world. In this context, there is a need for combining micro and macro initiatives in a meaningful way.

Firstly, considering the role of peacekeeping operations, there is a need for revamping the UN Peace Operations to stem the refugee crisis. In this regard, the members of the UN should double the global budget for peacebuilding and conflict mitigation in crisis response. *Secondly*, humanity must be given top priority in both state and non-state interactions. Slogans and development paradigms based on 'human security', 'human development', 'basic needs', and 'putting the people first' have advanced modern civilisation, but the cause of humanity remains feeble and less heard. People appear to be hiding from humanity (Nussbaum, 2004). The struggle to establish humanity across the globe needs to go a long way. People and nations must emphasize that people thrive together. *Thirdly,* at the individual level, people must be respectful and responsible to others. The world is the right place to demand respect and ensure the safety and dignity of all human beings. It cannot be achieved without touching the core—respectfulness for and responsibility to others, irrespective of colour, race, religion, creed, class, region, and history. It is an irony that humanity is in deep crisis when more than 65 million people are displaced in the current era of progress and prosperity in human society. Although respect is the core element of human engagement with others, responsibility brings about real change on the ground. *Fourthly,* inclusivity needs to be prioritised in policy planning. Structural factors that create violence, conflict and inequality in societies may be addressed through genuine and equitable inclusion processes. Communities, states and all forms of collectivities need to be inclusive. In his 2012 report Peacebuilding in the Aftermath of Conflict, the former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon emphasised the importance of inclusivity and urged the world community to find avenues for social discourse and inclusion. Inclusivity was defined as 'the extent and manner in which the views and needs of parties to conflict and other stakeholders are represented, heard and integrated into a peace process'. *Fifthly*, peace is a question of social justice and emancipation. Appropriate mechanisms need to be devised to ensure justice and freedom for people in society. *Sixthly*, at the macro level, the global governance structure should immediately be reformed. Reform in international institutions such as the UN, World Bank, and IMF remains long pending. Even regional organisations such as the EU, ASEAN, SAARC and SADC require substantive reforms to allow more people to engage in decision-making and operational processes. *Seventhly,* global peace movements need to be strengthened through the active participation of civil society actors. *Eighthly*, terrorism has been a major cause behind the creation of refugees worldwide, particularly in the Middle East. Besides, counter-terrorism measures also reinforce the conflict situations and violence that force people to flee their homes. In this context, it is extremely important to launch initiatives for preventing and countering violent extremism. It is relevant in the entire world, whether developed or underdeveloped, given the rise of xenophobic and racist political and social forces. *Ninthly,* in general, there is no alternative but to support the displaced and refugees anywhere and everywhere in the world. It is not

only with material resources, but also with compassionate hearts and minds. The UN-launched TOGETHER campaign is a case in point. It is extremely vital in view of existing socio-cultural and political conditions in the world as marked by ultra-nationalism, racism and hatred in many parts of the world. United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has launched this campaign to promote respect, safety and dignity for all as a mark of befitting observance of the World Peace Day in 2017. In his messages to different stakeholders of peace, Guterres has reflected a personal touch and unfathomable devotion to the cause of humanity. *Tenthly*, specifically, resettlement is critical for the refugee crisis issue. For those who flee to escape conflict in pursuit of safety, resettlement offers a secure and orderly path. It allows the most vulnerable refugees to apply immediately from the countries where they are displaced, which is different but complementary to asylum. It entails persons claiming refugee status once they arrive in the nation. As per the statistics, less than 0.5% of people were really resettled in the developed world last year. *Eleventhly,* responsibility sharing as promoted by international non-government organisations such as Amnesty International, is one of the ways to support the refugees worldwide. Lastly, a significant reform is needed in the global humanitarian system. No matter how many refugees are resettled, they will still only make up a minuscule portion of the overall refugee population. Many people will continue to believe that they have no choice but to put themselves in the hands of smugglers until there are other safe and legal ways to get protection. This brings me to humanitarian reform since the rescue effort itself needs to be saved from lethargic, out-of-date propositions and a lack of innovation. There is a debate whether the aid system is "broke" or "broken". In no way is humanitarian aid a system; rather, it is a sector. (Miliband, 2017).

Conclusion

The paper has profusely demonstrated that the world acutely suffers from the most inhuman and brutal forms of pain and woes, including forcible displacements. The scale and magnitude of the refugee crisis portray shortcomings of the global system, which is primarily built on capitalism and power distribution. More specifically, it is the result of intrastate, interstate, regional, and international conflicts and persecution. Great power politics and rivalries in the contemporary era have further deteriorated the conditions of war, instability and crisis. It has generated an environment of impunity for the perpetrators and, at the same time, has substantially weakened the moral and normative structure and values of global society. The UN has been contributing to global peace through its multiple initiatives, including the areas of security, development, culture, and the environment. In its resolution, the UNGA in 1981 declares, members of the UN "…Shall be devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples (UN Documents, 1981)." I would like to reiterate the message of the current Secretary General, António Guterres, who highlights, "Our obligation as an international community is to ensure that everyone forced to flee their homes receives the protection to which they are entitled under international law. Our duty as a human family is to replace fear with kindness (United Nations, 2017)."

Now, there is no denying the fact that the global refugee regime is shifting towards a new era. Conflict, war, crisis, as well as competition and rivalry in the geopolitical and strategic arena, are not only creating uncertainty in the international system, but also complicating the refugee crisis. Global peace and order are facing the most challenging times ever. It is regrettably true that funds from international communities are decreasing continuously, and they are preferring their own crises, which they are facing from a new surge of refugees from Ukraine to Europe. Hence, host countries are facing the burden. In this case, Bangladesh is encountering the toughest challenges of hosting more than 1.2 million Rohingya, including the host communities. To resolve the crisis for maintaining international peace and stability, the international community should come forward and extend political, diplomatic, and financial support.

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