

## **Refugees, Asylum and Threat perceptions: The Recent Cases of Rohingyas in South Asia and Syrian Refugees in Europe**

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It is well-known that the “well-founded fear of persecution” forces a person to flee his/her home. This present study seeks to understand that is there any role of threat perception on the part of asylum givers towards the refugees. Fear seems like a double-edged sword also creates a perception of threat for the asylum givers and that shapes the asylum policy of the care giving countries for the people who are on the move. As the number of asylum seekers has risen, governments of all political leanings have implemented policies designed to deter asylum seekers from entering their countries for the purpose of seeking legal protection as refugees.<sup>1</sup> Threat plays a vital role in the mind of asylum givers which manifested in whom to give asylum and whom to deny.

Ensuring the physical safety of refugees is one of the greatest concerns of UNHCR and its allies. Refugee protection regime was created with aim of giving protection to those fleeing ones who lives are under direct threat. It means that the refugee protection has always been related to larger security issues which in turn influence the willingness of the states to provide asylum to refugees, they also determined the quality of refuge provided. Added to this, a sense of “otherness”—cultural, racial, political, religious—of the refugees play a significant role in the mind of the people of host country which obliges the state to reframe its asylum policy. At another level, insecure environments weaken the ability of UNHCR and allied humanitarian agencies to assist and protect refugees—and thus to uphold their basic rights.<sup>2</sup> In contemporary time one of the primary concerns of UNHCR’s operation is the security concerns within the global refugee protection regime which motivate state responses to refugee flows. Keeping the environmental calamities aside for a moment, refugees are often been a by-product of war/civil war, ethnic cleansing. Hence, there is a nexus comprised national and international security concerns and humanitarian assistance and asylum.

The recent refugee crises in Europe and South Asia has drawn our attention on to this very aspect when a large number of refugees from both the region denied adequate asylum. Russian authorities approved only half of the temporary asylum applications they received from Syrian nationals in 2017.<sup>3</sup> However, in the context of south Asia recent ethnic cleansing in Myanmar resulted in statelessness of a mammoth number of people called Rohingya. While neighbouring country Bangladesh decided to provide asylum to them, India which has been bearing a humble history of providing asylum, is seeing Rohingya as a threat to national security and decided to deport close to 40,000 Rohingyas. Muslims live in India after fleeing Myanmar over the past decade. Nearly 15,000 have received refugee documentation, according to the United Nations, but India wants to deport them all<sup>4</sup> viz-a-viz the majority of European believe that influx of refugees across the continent has led to an increase in the likelihood of terrorism. According to a survey by the Pew Research Centre, in eight of the ten European countries surveyed at least half are concerned about the terror threat.<sup>5</sup> In this present context this study shall seek to understand the various forms of threat and the link between threat and state asylum policy. In this study it will also be pursued that what causes a particular community to be a bearer of threat to the host ones?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5287414/>

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/4444afc80.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/07/03/russia-denies-syrians-asylum>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-myanmar-rohingya-india/india-calls-rohingya-refugees-threat-to-national-security-idUSKCN1BP24M>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/refugee-crisis-asylum-seekers-europe-terrorism-terror-threat-brexit-immigration-migrants-a7132256.html>