

Report on the International Conference on the Rohingya Crisis in Comparative Perspective held at University College London (UCL) on 4-5 July 2019

The UCL Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction (IRDR), the UCL Centre for Collective Violence, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, and the Centre for Genocide Studies (CGS) at the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh organised a two-day international conference which was attended by more than 100 participants including academics, policy makers, activists, NGO staff among others and more than 50 presenters. The topics discussed covered diverse areas including Rohingya history in Myanmar and their life in refugee camps in Bangladesh as well as related physical and environmental issues.

We are very grateful to the UCL's QR Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) allocation for 2018/19 for funding this conference through the UCL Centre for Collective Violence, Holocaust and Genocide Studies (CCV) at the Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS).

Welcoming Session

The welcoming session was addressed by Professor **Peter Sammonds** from UCL IRDR and UCL Humanitarian Institute, who first welcomed the participants and spoke about the 69 million people worldwide who are forcibly displaced from their homes as well as the 10 million stateless people with no or limited rights and who in many cases are denied legal refugee status. Among the stateless people are the Rohingya ethnic minority, who under the Citizenship Law in 1982, were stripped of their citizenship rights in Myanmar. Professor **Mary Fulbrook**, Centre for Collective Violence, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, and Department of German, UCL, first welcomed the attendees and then highlighted the importance of a multi-disciplinary approach that included social scientists, psychologists, and physical scientists to understand humanitarian crises such as the Rohingya crisis. She also stated the importance of understanding the past and how it is represented in understanding the future. Professor **Monica Lakhanpaul**, the UCL Pro-Vice Provost, South Asia delivered a welcoming speech and highlighted the importance of partnerships between the UCL and different partners at regional and global levels and stated that the challenging conference programme would generate interesting debates. As a paediatrician by profession, she touched on the future of children and the importance of the environment they live in for their future. Dr **Bayes Ahmed**, a Lecturer at the IRDR and UCL Humanitarian Institute and the organiser of the conference presented the conference agenda and the way forward and spoke about the right of movement for all, urging the conference participants to use their power, strength, and their freedom of movement to challenge those who are against freedom of movement.

Key Note Speakers

This session was chaired by Professor **Peter Sammonds**.

Her Excellency Ms Saida Muna Tasneem, Bangladesh High Commissioner to the UK, Ireland and Liberia and Mr **Christopher Sidoti**, Member, Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar: addressing genocide in the Rohingya perspective were the two prominent speakers who addressed the conference. **Ms Tasneem** spoke briefly about the history of the Rohingya in Myanmar and the violence against them which led to them fleeing Myanmar to Bangladesh. She also highlighted the role of Bangladesh, as a host country as well as the burden associated with it. According to her the situation in camps is not very good, therefore, the government has planned relocation to Bhashan Char. Nevertheless, the Rohingya have a home and they deserve to live in dignity in their own home. **Mr Sidoti** referred to the violence in 2012, 2016 and October 2017. The latter was significant in terms of its brutality. Nevertheless, all led to displacement of the Rohingya. The Fact Finding Mission has found that crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide were committed against the Rohingya.

Day 1: 4th July 2019

Panel 1: Confronting Key Issues

This panel was chaired by Professor **Mary Fulbrook**, UCL IAS.

The first day of the conference had three different panel sessions. The first panel – Confronting Key Issues – had five speakers. The first speaker was Professor **Imtiaz Ahmed**, Centre for Genocide Studies, University of Dhaka who has been involved in the Rohingya issue for so long. He explained how Bangladesh, which has the largest NGO (BRAC) in the world have managed the influx of the Rohingya refugees. He also referred to the genocide and how it should become an international issue rather than a bilateral one – it is an international responsibility not only a responsibility for Bangladesh alone. The second speaker was **Dr Maung Zarni**, Coordinator, Free Rohingya Coalition, who outlined two important documents adopted in 1948 - the Genocide Convention and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. With respect to the Rohingya, he stressed their persecution since 1948 and stated that never again has not been materialised not only in Myanmar but everywhere.

Dr Azeem Ibrahim, Research Professor at the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College and Director at the Centre for Global Policy in Washington DC outlined the root causes of the Rohingya persecution since the Japanese invaded Burma and the accusation that they have ‘manufactured’ the term Rohingya. He also referred to the violence in 2017, which was documented by Human Rights Watch. **Nurul Islam**, Chair of the Arakan Rohingya National Organisation, confirmed that the Rohingya have a history in Arakan and that the Rohingya are not illegal immigrants and then presented the situation in refugee camps where despite humanitarian assistance, more support that includes education for children, security and protection from trafficking is needed. **Deen Mohammed Noori**, Chairman of Arakan Rohingya Organisation UK, started his presentation by referring to the UN statement, which states that the Rohingya are “the most persecuted people in the world” and that the Rohingya are denied education in Myanmar and in Bangladesh children stop education at age 10. He emphasised the importance of education and referred to it as “the backbone of the nation”.

Discussion

Many issues were discussed in this panel including denial of education to Rohingya from a historical perspective and the controversy of teaching Rohingya children Bangla. The suffering of other ethnic minorities in Myanmar was also discussed as well as the role of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Panel 2: Physical and Environmental Issues

This session was chaired by Dr **Bayes Ahmed**, UCL IRDR and UCL Humanitarian Institute.

Professor **A. S. M. Maksud Kamal**, Department of Disaster Science and Management, University of Dhaka explained the risk in Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh, which was a high density camp that accommodated 600,000. He also stated the risk of landslides in the camp and that the UN may relocate the camp residents to Bhashan Char. Professor **Raquib Ahmed**, Department of geography and Environmental Studies, University of Rajshahi, highlighted the vulnerability of Bangladesh as a country that received more than a million refugees and discussed social, financial, economic and environmental impacts of refugee on Bangladesh. The latter include decline of forest areas and pollution. Professor **A.K.M Saiful Islam**, Institute of Water and Flood Management, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, stated that temperatures are rising in Bangladesh and Europe. He then asserted that due to climate change and man-made disaster we are observing more intense and

frequent natural disasters such as cyclones. These disasters can be costly. For instance, cyclone Roanu in 2016 caused 2 billion US dollars' worth of damage.

Dr **Saleemul Huq**, Director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development, Bangladesh, addressed the environmental impact of refugees which was evident in disturbing elephant movement. To deal with this problem, an elephant tower was built to give elephants warning. Collecting fire-wood also had its environmental impact. The solution to this problem would be providing gas for cooking so people do not need to go to forest to cut trees. Dr **Bishawjit Mallick**, Chair of Environmental Development and Risk Management, Technische Universität Dresden, Germany, stressed that migration is an individual choice and that decision to migrate has social, economic and environmental dimensions. However, Rohingya migration is forced and it has consequences on education, security and the livelihood of the host community. In this respect, it is important to understand the perception of the host community in relation to the presence of refugees, as stated by him. **Md. Shahinoor Rahman**, BUET-Japan Institute of Disaster Prevention and Urban Safety, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, has focused on Bhashan Char, an island where the Bangladeshi government has decided to relocate 100,000 refugees. The island appeared in 2003 and continued to expand until it reached its current size in 2019, however, it is difficult to confirm that it will be a stable island. He also outlined the government plan of relocation and the building of cyclone shelter to protect the residence if a cyclone hits the island.

Discussion

The discussion focussed on justification for relocation in terms of the government's perspective, which is mainly due to the large number of refugees in Cox's Bazar, therefore another location is needed. Relocation may not solve the problem but could be "an attempted solution" and people can start building new livelihoods, such as practicing of farming. Another issue that was raised was the possibility of the global engagement in terms of climate change and that the international community can help Bangladesh.

Panel 3: Comparative Perspective on Genocide

This session was chaired by Professor **Stephanie Bird**, UCL.

Professor **Dirk Moses**, Professor of Modern History, University of Sydney started his presentation by asking why advocates and journalists needed more evidence for genocide unlike crimes against humanity, for example? He then outlined discourses genocide perpetrators tended to use to justify their action, such as protection and security of the state from terrorist groups, nevertheless, the Jewish were targeted solely because of their identity – they were not rebels or a security threat to the state. Dr **David Simon**, Senior Lecturer, Department of Political Science, Yale University, focused on the Rwandan genocide and the rhetoric behind it. The Hutu believed that Tutsi were outsiders who came from Ethiopia and therefore, they should be sent back to Ethiopia. He also emphasised the role of the media which was used by the Hutu extremists to fuel the genocide. Dr **Phil Clark**, Reader in Comparative and International Politics, SOAS, University of London, affirmed that the Myanmar judiciary system was ineffective in dealing with the Rohingya case, therefore, the ICC should investigate genocide committed against the Rohingya. He also stated limitations to the ICC, which included a lack of local expertise as the case in Congo, and the denial of ICC team to enter countries in questions (e.g. Sudan and Myanmar) to do their job. This made the prosecutors struggle to build a convincing case.

Professor **Mary Fulbrook**, Centre for Collective Violence, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, and Department of German, UCL, stated that many holocaust scholars were reluctant to compare it with other genocides. She stated that although the holocaust was unique in terms of its organised mass murder in the infamous gas chambers, it can also be comparable.

Comparison is essential to understand history. Another theme which she found interesting, but still was not brought to our understanding, was the role of local collaborators in different areas (e.g. Latvia) in the holocaust, an area which she has started studying recently. **Matthew J. Bowser**, PhD Candidate, Nottingham University, outlined the historical background of Burmese Islamophobia and its link to the early history of Burma and the Indian migrants in Burma in the 1930s and how the Burmese national rhetoric portrayed Islam as exploitive, a perception that affected the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar.

Discussion

Themes discussed here were Islamophobia during the 1930s in Burma and fear that Islam may replace Buddhism, Genocide in Rwanda and its link to geopolitics and international relations. The mass killing of Jewish in Latvia was also among the themes that were further discussed and elaborated. The importance of transitional justice, support activities such as trauma healing should be provided to the displaced people.

Day 2: 5th July 2019

Panel 4: Conflict and Conflict Resolution

This panel was chaired by Dr **Stephanie Rauch**, UCL IAS.

Natalie Brinham, PhD Candidate, Queen Mary University of London, outlined the Rohingya history in relation to identity cards, registration processes and citizenship as well as the systematic removal of the Rohingya citizenship, which she referred to as a crime not a conflict "Myanmar crime". She also stressed that stripping Rohingya from their citizenship did not only start in 1982 after the introduction of the citizenship Law but began in 1978, when many Rohingya fled to Bangladesh. Professor **Amena Mohsin**, Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka, focussed on the 1971 genocide in Bangladesh that was committed by the Pakistani army with local collaborators. She stated that women's experience and narratives in the genocide have been absent in the literature and that during the 1970s the society of Bangladesh was not ready to accept these women who were victims of rape. However, in 1990s some scholars tried to listen to some of these women and to write about what they have gone through during this period.

Dr **Sriprapha Petchamesree**, Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University, Thailand, highlighted the Rohingya crisis in the context of Thailand and that Thailand has been trying to address the issue of trafficking and smuggling as Thailand has become a hub for smugglers and a transit for the Rohingya. She also referred to incidents where the Thai authorities redirected boats carrying Rohingya refugees to Indonesia and Malaysia. This action demonstrated that the Thai government policy was not in favour of Rohingya refugees. **Md Touhidul Islam**, Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Dhaka, highlighted the impacts of the Rohingya refugees on the host community. These impacts, as perceived by the host community, included feeling discriminated against in terms of job opportunities, competition of the Rohingya refugees, as cheap labour in the labour market, feeling of local people insecure in their own land and declining of the quality of education. He then stated that the solution, as seen by the host community, lays in dignifying repatriation of the Rohingya refugees.

Daniel Dyonisius, MPhil Candidate, Oxford University of International Development, started his presentation by stating that Indonesia was not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention nor to the 1967 Protocol. Nevertheless, the arrival of 1,000 Rohingya refugees to Aceh in 2015 led to an agreement between the Government of Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand to accommodate Rohingya refugees. He also referred to tension between old refugees who arrived before 2015 and the new refugees who came after that. The tension was mostly around

the idea that old refugees were not getting what the new refugees were getting, which included resettlement assistance. In relation to the relationship between the Rohingya and the host community, both communities have been able to establish social and cultural ties in Indonesia that included joint celebration of Eid and mixed marriage between the refugees and the locals.

Barrister **Sara Hossain**, a former Member of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Protests in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, outlined the aims of the Commission. These were to look at the protests in the Israeli and Gaza fence, and to investigate alleged violations of international human rights laws and abuses associated with the protests from 31st March 2018 for six months. The investigation team was denied access to Israel and Gaza but was able to speak to individuals outside these two locations. In particular, those living in Jordan. In order to investigate the abuse, the team gathered information from footages (e.g. videos and photographs), listened to testimonies, consulted legal experts and reviewed medical reports. The findings revealed that children, journalists (who were wearing labels showing they were journalists) and health professional (in white coats) were among the dead. In her conclusion Sara stated that the conference was an opportunity to highlight the Palestinian case.

Megan Hirst and **James Kirk** (Barristers, Doughty Street Chambers in London) were both in this panel. **James Kirk** highlighted the ICC process investigation and stressed that it can be seen as successful and may lead to the arrest and prosecution of some of the Myanmar generals who were involved in violations of human rights. Drawing the attention of the international community to the Rohingya crisis and accountability from the victim's perspective can also be regarded as a success. However, the investigation process depends on many issues including cooperation of concerned states in allowing access to relevant locations and ensuring the security of the investigation team. **Megan Hirst** presented three main areas where the ICC could contribute. First, the court provides an opportunity for political pressure. Second, it can provide a platform of support for the victim – a space in which victims can tell their story and be heard. Third, even if there are no immediate arrests people can still have hope, as the situation may change in the future. As an example, she referred to Omar Al-Bashir, the former president of Sudan who is no longer in power.

Discussion

Issues discussed in this session included the ICC and its relation to geopolitics, and factors that would affect ICC investigations and prosecution. The importance of access to relevant places such as Israel and Myanmar in order to interview people, and barriers the investigation team may have, were addressed. Similarities and differences in terms of human rights violation in the two locations were discussed. Questions were raised on the positive side of the Rohingya in camps getting documentation (fake ID), which can be explained by the Rohingya refugees wanting to have access to good education but not for the purpose of settlement. Genocide in Myanmar and the usefulness of fact-finding missions to investigate human rights abuses were discussed further.

Panel 5: Rohingya Voices (Interactive Session)

Chair: Christopher Sidoti, Member, Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar.

Panel members: Dr Maung Zari and **Mabrur Ahmed** (Co-Director and Co-Founder Restless Beings).

Mabrur Ahmed explained the legal status of the Rohingya in Myanmar, where they are denied citizenship, and in Bangladesh, where they are denied refugee status. He touched on the situation of refugees in camps, notably in Cox's Bazar, where refugees are dependent on food.

In Bangladesh refugees get access to education, security and health care. However, they are not legally allowed to work there. Mabur spoke about the aspirations of Rohingya peoples in Bangladesh and the hope some of them had of returning to Burma. They see it as a “motherland” for them. He addressed issues of violence - including sexual and gender-based violence – at the camps. He also highlighted relocation of refugees to Bhashan Char and argued that the government should rethink its re-location plan.

Maung Zarni highlighted several related issues including economic dimensions, genocide, accountability, justice, and the UN Security Council. He stressed the failure of the international community in relation to the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar and emphasised that San Suu Kyi participated in the process of the genocide and should be held accountable. The role of China and Russia in blocking UN actions was explained, with Maung arguing however that the UN leaders could still have done something effective. For instance, by restricting Burma’s access to the EU market. He also stressed that the Rohingya, who have been suffering from more than 40 years, should get compensation. Maung concluded his presentation by saying “...this is will not be the last genocide”. In other words, the violence against the Rohingya is not over yet.

Discussion

Themes discussed in this interactive session included violence, relocation, civil society, freedom of movement and the situation in camps. The latter was described by Maung as “semi famine situation”. The situation of the Rohingya in Myanmar was further discussed. In Myanmar the identity of the Rohingya is ignored and the word Rohingya is not used when referring to them. Another relevant issue that was discussed here is possibility of victims from other genocide areas such as Rwanda and Bosnia to communicate with the Rohingya and to give them support – an area activists could look at. Education of children and their nutritional status at the camps were also explored.

Panel 6: Health, Education, and Wellbeing

This panel was chaired by Professor **Imtiaz Ahmed** (University of Dhaka).

Professor **Hafiz T.A.Khan**, Professor of Public Health and Statistics, University of West London, outlined the work he was doing in Bangladesh with an NGO (YPSA), which focused on older people at refugee camps in Bangladesh. He referred to the influx of refugees in 2017 with about 5,000 elderly people came to the camps. The project aimed to explore the reality and dreams of Rohingya elderly people age 65+, and to find out what support they are getting in terms of health, sanitation, protection and capacity building. The study found that age-friendly places were useful for elderly to get together, and to engage in some activities that promote their mental health and well-being. These places were gendered – separate spaces for women and men. Dr **Taufur Rahman**, Executive Director, Health Management BD Foundation, Cox’s Bazar, focussed on Rohingya children health at refugee camps in Bangladesh. He stated that refugee camps are overcrowded and that health care is provided for children. Education is also provided for children including those who lost their parents. However, female from age 15 are reluctant to go to school. He also highlighted an important health issue for children which is immunisation. He stated that many children were not immunised in Burma against diseases like measles, polio and chicken pox. Some of the children are suffering from skin diseases such as scabies and diarrhoea is more common among the children there.

Dr Animesh Biswas, Technical Officer, Fistula and MPDSR, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Bangladesh, focussed on reproductive age mortality. He stressed that in order to improve the overall maternal health, it is crucial to know causes of the death - why mothers die? He presented a summary of a study that was conducted in 29 camps to find out causes

of death. The research study team included community health workers and midwives. In order to collect information on maternity death from household a data mortality report form was designed and used in 29 camps to survey 192,688 households. The findings show that total death was 2,986. **Matluba Khan**, Institute of Health Equity, UCL, looked at education opportunities for children at refugee camps, as well as challenges and barriers. These children had been through difficult times that included fleeing home. She highlighted her experience on going to the camps to conduct her research and finding that the children, who were once traumatised, seemed to have hope for the future – smiling and coping with their new situation. As an architect, she said the schools were beautiful in terms of architecture - beautiful schools with good bamboo structure. The schools had child friendly spaces, where children can play. However, as stated by her, there were some challenges that included limitation of the curriculum, quality of teachers, threats to female teachers from terrorist organisations and conflict of time between religious and learning centres. Moreover, female students stopped going to school when they reach puberty.

Dr **Amira Osman**, UCL Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction, started her presentation by stating that “Following the Holocaust, the world pledged that ‘never again’ would a similar tragedy take place. Despite this, genocide has happened in different parts of the world including Europe, Africa and Asia”. She then highlighted the usefulness of using an intersectionality approach that includes religion, gender and ethnicity to study motives of genocide in four different countries – Rwanda, Bosnia, Darfur and Myanmar. She stressed that ethnicity was motive for genocide in Rwanda and Darfur whereas, while religion is the main motive of genocide in Bosnia and Myanmar. She also emphasised the relevance of gender in genocide study. **Qareena Khan**, SOAS University of London, highlighted the importance of gender in the context of Rohingya as well as explaining the intersectionality theory and the importance of recognising multiple overlapping identities that contribute to the suffering of individuals. She stated that Rohingya women present multiple identities - ethnic, religious and gender. Many women reported that they were insulted by being Rohingya Muslims. This reveals the intent to target them because of their ethnic, religious and gender identities. Therefore, it is important to recognise the multi-facet identity of Rohingya women that including their ethnicity. She also highlighted the intersectional of genocidal rape as a crime that implicates gender and other identities. **Farhana Rahman**, PhD Candidate, Centre for Gender Studies, University of Cambridge explained her feminist ethnographic fieldwork in Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh and looked at agency of Rohingya women at the camps. She stated that women get to gather and engage in conversation.

Discussion

The discussion has focussed on education of children at the camps and their health. The health assistance refugees received at the camps included health awareness programmes, access to primary health care and medications. Another important related issue is for health workers to keep record of death from diseases (involuntary killing) to add it to genocide killing. Some of the discussants highlighted resilience some women showed at the camps. Despite children at the camps seeming happy, long term impacts of their traumatic experience and fear should not be ignored. That fear may lead to intolerance, and intolerance can produce violence.

Panel 7: Space and Place

This session was chaired by Dr **Christopher Thonfeld** (UCL IAS).

Rudabeh Shahid, PhD candidate, School of government and International Affairs, Durham University, first gave an introduction on the geography of Rakhine (western province of Myanmar) and Assam province in India (North-East India). These regions both border Bangladesh and historically, migration of people in these two regions is seen as a

demographic threat. Rudabeh stated that the Assam census in 1981 showed an increase in Bengali speakers and Muslims, and added that in Nellie 1983 Massacre about 3,000 Bengali Muslims were murdered. She outlined social formation of social capital among Muslim communities in Assam and Rakhine, and presented different theories of social capital and the relation between social capital and ethnicity. **Labib Hossain**, PhD student, History of Architecture, Cornell University, USA, talked about the situation of the Rohingya in the global scope of justice and relocation of the Rohingya refugees to Bhashan Char. He explained chars in terms of their physical characteristics – “neither land not water” – and demarcation. The Bhashan Char can be seen as non-government borderland. Labib stated that in Bangladesh chars are home to nearly 5 million people. These people are mostly political and/or climate refugees. They are at risk of unpredictable environment erosion and that they are often in boats with their belonging in search of habitable land from one char to another.

S.M. Labib, Doctoral Researcher in Geography, School of Environment, Education and Development, University of Manchester, outlined analysis of social media, notably Twitter in order to understand the Rohingya crisis, trends of narratives of the Rohingya and to explore public sentiments. The material mostly came from NLP (Natural Language Processing). He stated that the research result provided some useful patterns. For example, the most commonly word used in tweeting was refugees, genocide and Bangladesh. **Mania Tahsina Taher** PhD Candidate, School of Architecture and Urban Planning (SARUP), University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, highlighted the spatial mapping of Rohingya people in Milwaukee. Seven hundred Rohingya are living there since 2010 under the UNHCR relocation programme. One of her main objectives was to understand the spatial mapping of these people as part of understanding their cultural. She found that these people live below poverty line and faced many challenges to integrate into the American culture. These challenges included learning English and finding good jobs in a segregated environment. Men tended to meet and communicate and that gave them a sense of home and belonging.

Obydullah Al Marjuk, Senior lecturer, Department of Social Sciences and Humanities, Independent University, Bangladesh, outlined the background of ethnic confrontations in Myanmar, the Citizenship Act and the three citizenship categories - ordinary, associate, naturalized. The relationship between this Myanmar nationality law and statelessness, displacement, the 2012 crisis and the 2015 genocide was highlighted. Obydullah stated that the Panglong 21 conference has failed to bring all groups together to consensus. He then discussed the role of the international community and their failure to reach a solution to Myanmar crisis. In his opinion other actors who do not need a security council such as the ICC, civil society or individual member states may provide a solution the crisis.

Colleen Gallagher, Arizona State University, outlined the importance of education and being able to contribute to the economy. She suggested different factors to be considered when designing an educational system - who is involved/stakeholders (in Bangladesh) and what to be done. She highlighted the importance of digital education, and how it could open opportunities such as e-commerce jobs for refugees. Also digital businesses may allow them to engage in the global economy – creating an economy that does not need to take a space. However, she stressed how social media, such as Facebook for example, can lead to hate crime against the Rohingya.

Discussion

Themes discussed further in this panel included the Rohingya crisis in general and the role of the international community in solving the problem. The role of China was discussed as well as the economic ties between China and Myanmar. In this respect, the USA and the UK can be more involved in reaching a solution to the crisis.

Panel 8: Cultural Engagement

Chair Dr **Tasleem Skakur**, Coordinator Knowledge Without Borders.

This session, unlike the others, started with a song by **Louise Mellor**, Actor, Clowns without Borders. Louise learnt the song during her two-weeks stay in Cox's Bazar.

James Byrne, Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing, Edge Hill University, Lancashire, first informed the participants how he edited a book that included different poems by the Rohingya refugees in the camps. He read a poem written by an extraordinary boy age 19 who was a footballer and hoping to go to university, but living in a refugee camp. Professor **Sadequul Islam**, Chairperson, Department of Economics, Laurentian University, Canada, highlighted the role of Canada as a global power – and that other strong countries are not doing enough to solve the Rohingya problem, in fact they are part of the problem. He stated that Myanmar is waging war against the Rohingya as well as against Bangladesh; war on international community and humanity – new Nazism. In this regard what is needed is trade and military sanction. He then stressed the importance of education and employment for the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. **Louise Mellor** (Actor, Clowns without Borders) and **Rahima Begum** (Restless Beings, London) recited poems depicting the misery of the rape victims.

Photographic Exhibition

Concurrently a professional photography exhibition by visual anthropologist, Mr Mohammadur Rahman (Mahmud), provided a narrative of the 2017 Rohingya crisis in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh and, with his most recent images, of current life in the camps.

Media Coverage

The conference was reported on the media by the Guardian and Anadolu Agency (AA).

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/04/un-warns-of-possible-new-war-crimes-in-myanmar>.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/uk-conference-stresses-responsibility-to-help-rohingya/1524820#>.

Conference Web-link:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/risk-disaster-reduction/events/2019/jul/international-conference-rohingya-crisis-comparative-perspective>

Booklet Web-link:

https://www.ucl.ac.uk/risk-disaster-reduction/sites/risk-disaster-reduction/files/rohingya_conference_booklet_2019.pdf



Figure 1. Her Excellency Ms Saida Muna Tasneem, Bangladesh High Commissioner to the UK (left photo) and Mr Chris Sidoti, member UN Human Rights Council's Fact Finding Mission on Myanmar (right photo) is presenting in a session chaired by Professor Peter Sammonds at the UCL Rohingya Conference on 4th July 2019.



Figure 2. Professor Imtiaz Ahmed (left photo) and Dr Bayes Ahmed (right photo) is chairing sessions at the UCL Rohingya Conference on 4th July 2019.



Figure 3. Visual anthropologist, Mr Mahmud, organised a photographic exhibition on the 2017 Rohingya crisis in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh at the UCL Rohingya Conference on 4th and 5th July 2019.