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Malaysian Government's Rejection of Rohingya Refugees

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Abstract

Malaysia, like most other Southeast Asian countries, has not signed the refugee convention and protocol and therefore asylum seekers and refugees are considered illegal immigrants by law, although the UNHCR provides assurances that refugees with UNHCR documents will not be arrested by the authorities. This research investigates the situation of Rohingya who are refugees in Malaysia, with a focus on the reasons why Malaysia rejects the increase in Rohingya refugee arrivals. The research method used is qualitative descriptive research using secondary data sources such as books, journals, news articles and other related information. The research results show that the general problems faced by Rohingya refugees in Malaysia include limited access to health services, education, as well as social and economic problems. Refugees face difficulties in obtaining health care due to financial problems and low health literacy. In the education sector, refugee children do not have access to formal academic institutions and rely on community learning centers. Economically, refugees experience difficulties in finding decent work. Nevertheless, the Malaysian government as a member of ASEAN has tried to care for refugees without sacrificing the welfare of its population.

Keywords

Rohingya Refugees, Malaysia, Covid 19, Foreign Policy, UNHCR

1. Introduction

Rohingya refugees are descendants of Muslim Arab, Turkish or Mongolian traders and soldiers who migrated to Rakhine state in the 15th century (Abdul, 2020; Mahaseth & Bag, 2024). In 1981, the Muslim population experienced discrimination when Myanmar abolished citizenship status and rights. This discriminatory treatment takes the form of usurping all property rights of the Rohingya community, including confiscation of materials and property belonging to the Rohingya community. Rohingya community was also faced with physical and verbal harassment by the Rakhine Buddhist community. These heinous acts included mass murder, harassment and destruction of private property and places of worship of the Rohingya community. As a result of this conflict, at least 168,500 Rohingya people from 2012 to 2016 were forced to leave their country (UNHCR, 2016). Rohingya refugees prefer to board illegal smugglers' boats in the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea to seek asylum in other countries (UNHCR, Asia Pacific) (Shukri, 2021; Adiputera & Missbach, 2021).

Table 1. Distribution of Rohingya Refugees 2012-2016

Destination countries for Rohingya refugees	Population
Malaysia	112.500
Thailand	109.000
Bangladesh	43.000
Indonesia	1.000

Source: UNHCR Mixed Movements in Southeast Asia 2016, UNHCR

Malaysia, like most other Southeast Asian countries, has not signed the refugee convention and protocol and therefore asylum seekers and refugees are considered illegal immigrants by law, although the UNHCR provides assurances that refugees with UNHCR documents will not be arrested by the authorities. However, Malaysia is also a member country of the Bali Process international forum (Gorda, 2020).



Source: BBCNews.com

Figure 1. Map of the Distribution of Rohingya Refugees Entering Malaysia

Rohingya refugees reach Malaysia's sovereign territory via the waterway, namely the Andaman Sea. The Langkawi Island region is the area that is the entry point for Rohingya refugees. Then Rohingya refugees who had been allowed to enter

Malaysia chose to occupy several different areas. Most of them are in Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Johor and Malacca (Khairi, 2018; Yusoff et al., 2022; Mawardi & Hanum, 2023). The biggest reason why Rohingya refugees choose Malaysia as their main destination country is because Malaysia is the closest country that Malaysia can reach when it is in the Andaman Sea (Ani, 2021; Sajjad, 2022; Sunam, 2023). Apart from that, Malaysia also has a capital that has various economic activities and development projects taking place. This is certainly an economic opportunity for Rohingya refugees (Athukorala & Narayanan, 2018; Alam et al., 2021). Meanwhile, living conditions, and access to services are also considered as motivations for the subsequent movement of Rohingya from Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh to Malaysia. However, the movement of Rohingya refugees towards big cities in Malaysia also causes security threats for Rohingya refugees who arrive in Malaysia. In addition, they also do not have adequate access to livelihoods, health services, or education, this is because they are not legally permitted to work. Until 2020, within the framework of the 36th ASEAN Summit forum in the Philippines, Malaysia, through Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin, announced that Malaysia could no longer accept Rohingya refugees from Myanmar (Missbach & Stange, 2021; Shukri, 2021).

2. Literature Review

In the first literature review conducted by Emily Ehmer and Ammmina Kothari entitled *Malaysia and the Rohingya: Media, Migration, and Politics in 2020*, it explains the dynamics regarding sovereignty issues and political debates about migration, as well as domestic policies regarding Rohingya refugees in Malaysia. This gives rise to a stereotype among Malaysian people that the Rohingya are a threat to other people, but at the same time the state and government offer humanitarian assistance and protection for Rohingya Refugees. The result of this journal is an explanation of how the media also influences the condition of Rohingya refugees. Where the domestic media seems to make the situation worse by highlighting the Malaysian people's fear of refugees spreading infectious diseases, gangsterism, theft, violence between various groups and involvement in criminal activities. Meanwhile, the author use an international relations perspective to look at the phenomenon of rejection of Rohingya refugees by Malaysia (Wahab & Khairi, 2020).

In the second literature review entitled *Living in the Shadow: Rohingya Refugees in Malaysia* by Mahaseth & Bag (2024), it explains about refugees and their rights which have not received much attention in Malaysia. Malaysia has no formal legislative or regulatory mechanisms to protect asylum seekers and refugees. The reason is because Malaysia is not a party to the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. The Malaysian government has refused to provide security to refugees on its territory, including legal status. This is what makes them often considered illegal immigrants. This research also explains the intersection of refugee law and Malaysian state practice and describes the treatment of Rohingya refugees in Malaysia and examines the shortcomings of the Malaysian legal system regarding refugee protection. The results of this literature review are that even though Malaysia is not a signatory to the Refugee Convention or its accompanying Protocol, Malaysia still allows refugees to stay temporarily in the country before they return to their home country or move to a third country. It is hoped that the Malaysian government can also ratify the Refugee Convention and its accompanying Protocol, or pass a law regulating refugee issues so that refugees get a better guarantee of life in Malaysia in the future (Nordin et al., 2020).

The third literature review is entitled *Rohingya Refugees in Malaysia: Rhetoric VS Reality* by Shimaa Shazana Mohd Ali. Focuses on the issue of Rohingya refugees which is not new in Malaysia. It's been around since the late 1990s. Despite many steps taken by the Malaysian government to strengthen security and border

enforcement to avoid additional Rohingya refugees, Rohingya refugee statistics continue to increase. The Literature Review debates the rhetoric and reality of this issue in the Malaysian context. In this case about how the Rohingya live in Malaysia. Initially, the Rohingya people hoped for a better life than their country of origin, namely Myanmar, but this turned out to be true when they arrived in Malaysia. It turns out that life in Malaysia is not what they expected due to several factors, one of which is because Malaysia has not signed the agreement on the convention regarding refugees. The result of this literature is that the explanation of the Rohingya refugee problem carried out by the Myanmar government never end. Treatment such as oppression and revocation of citizenship results in them living without citizenship and becoming refugees. Out of concern and humanity, the Malaysian government accepted the Rohingya. Even with certain restrictions and restrictions, they can still live in Malaysia without having to be forced to return to Myanmar. However, of course this is also a challenge for the Malaysian government because the arrival of Rohingya refugees certainly result in an increase in the population in Malaysia so that the Malaysian government must find a different way of dealing with the Rohingya problem (Hoffstaedter, 2017).

From the three literature reviews described above, there are several things that show similarities and differences between the three and the journal carried out by the author. The main similarity is in the discussion of the same topic discussed by the author in this journal, namely the issue of the wave of Rohingya refugees and the lives of Rohingya refugees after leaving Myanmar. If the first literature review discusses how the media and Malaysian society highlight the lives of Rohingya refugees in their country. The second literature review discusses the condition of Rohingya refugees who are under social pressure in Malaysian society. Finally, the third literature review briefly discusses the evolution of the arrival of Rohingya refugees and how the government is currently responding to Rohingya refugees during the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, what differentiates the three previous literature reviews from the journal conducted by the author is their focus, namely in this journal the author explain further the life of Rohingya refugees today, namely about the reasons that influenced Malaysia to issue a policy to reject additional arrivals to Malaysia using the decision concept. making.

The concept of decision making was first coined by a political scientist from the United States named Richard C. Snyder. Starting from the end of the Second World War, Snyder felt dissatisfied with the mindset of decision makers in the study of international politics who considered that national power and national interest were the most essential and dominant things to guide in making decisions (Jarrahi, 2018; Mahmood et al., 2019). There are 3 factors that play a role in the decision-making process, namely internal, external settings and the decision makes process. The concept of decision making where the decision-making process must consider internal and external factors (Veale et al., 2018).

In Snyder's view, internal factors are the local people who live in the area where the power holders make decisions (Dorani, 2019; Adjei & Chan, 2023). This includes Non-human Environment, Society and Human Environment Culture Population. The presence of Rohingya refugees is considered a threat by the local Malaysian community. These threats include non-traditional security issues such as threats to environmental security, food security, economic security, energy security, human security, maritime security and so on (Yusoff, et al., 2019; Hossain et al., 2021; Putri & Gabiella, 2022).

External factors are defined as the actions and reactions of other countries and communities in which decision makers act, including non-human environment, other culture, other societies and societies organized and functioning as a state's government action (Ingram et al., 2019; Carrick et al. al., 2023). The decision-making framework includes a series of complex and interdependent social, political and

psychological processes in that Snyder advocates the use of a large number of concepts developed in sociology, social psychology and psychology through which the perceptions, motives, experiences and interactions of decision makers can be analyzed (Bruch & Feinberg, 2017). Snyder says that every decision-making model must include some measure of the efficiency of action for a goal, a measure of value or importance for the goal and a measure of the adequacy or effectiveness of the selection procedure (Robert et al., 2022).

3. Method

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach in explaining the phenomenon of Malaysia's rejection of the increasing arrival of Rohingya refugees. This method allows researchers to investigate in depth the reasons behind the country's policies. By using secondary data sources such as books, journals, papers, news articles and related information, researchers can summarize and analyze the arguments underlying Malaysia's attitude towards Rohingya refugees. This research aims to reveal the political, social, and economic dynamics that influence Malaysia's migration policy, as well as cultural and security factors that may play a role in such resistance. The approach in this research focuses on an in-depth and interpretive understanding of the phenomenon under study. Thus, through careful qualitative analysis, this research is expected to provide valuable insights into the dynamics of Malaysia's migration policy and its implications for Rohingya refugees.

4. Result

The struggle for the Arakan region was the trigger for conflict between the Rohingya and Rakhine ethnic groups in Myanmar, which has now become part of the Rakhine region (Leider, 2017; Dussich, 2018; Zahed, 2021). The movement of Rohingya people leaving Myanmar has occurred since the 1980s.

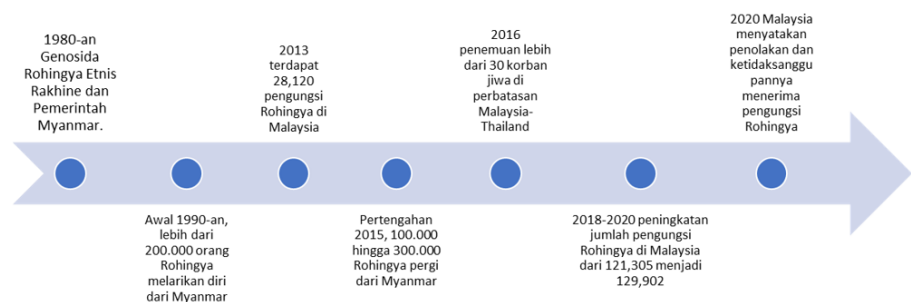


Figure 2. Timeline of the Movement of Rohingya Refugees to Malaysia

This conflict reached its peak in June 2012 which showed that the number of victims from the Rohingya ethnic group was 98 people killed, 123 people injured, 5,338 Rohingya houses were destroyed and around 75,000 people began to flee to nearby countries. Due to the large number of victims and community property facilities being confiscated by force, this has become a humanitarian crisis issue that has received international attention. By the end of May 2015, an estimated 100,000 to 300,000 Rohingya refugees who had traveled to other countries in Southeast Asia from Myanmar and Bangladesh had been rescued or swam to shore, while several thousand others were believed to be trapped with little food or water in boats floating ashore beach sea. In order to seek refuge in nearby countries, the Rohingya traveled by land and sea to Bangladesh, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) invited the governments of the countries attending the Bangkok meeting in May 2015 to overcome the annual migrant crisis in the Asian region. The Southeast Asian countries present at that time agreed to

help humans boats stranded in the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal recorded at least more than 4,000 migrants landing in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar and Bangladesh. IOM (International Organization for Migration) itself coordinated the fight against human trafficking in Cox's Bazar in September 2017, several weeks after hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees fled across the border to escape violence in Myanmar (Apriliyani & Sagena, 2023). Apart from that, to overcome the migrant crisis in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal, a Putra Jaya meeting on Irregular Movement of Persons in Southeast Asia was held on 20 May 2015 by the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. This meeting resulted in a joint statement of commitment from the Governments of Indonesia and Malaysia to implement it by providing humanitarian assistance and temporary protection for one year.

After the Putrajaya meeting was held, Malaysia and Indonesia agreed to allow the refugees to stay temporarily in their country and be provided with assistance in the form of humanitarian needs including water, food and shelter before the repatriation process begins within one year. Meanwhile, Thailand maintains its decision not to accept refugees into its territory and refuses any Rohingya boats that approach their shores. Each of Malaysia and Indonesia hosts at least 7.000 refugees stranded in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal. The implementation of refugee policy for countries that do not participate in signing the convention on refugees explains that countries providing temporary asylum only provide Rohingya refugees with temporary residence that is safe from the threat of expulsion or deportation. Rohingya refugees in Malaysia also feel a bit of peace because they are protected from the threat of expulsion, but the risk of arrest, detention, extortion and physical punishment also often occurs during their stay in Malaysia. Apart from that, Rohingya refugees also still face discrimination in terms of restrictions in the formal economic sector, access to health and basic education, the same as Malaysian citizens. This is because the weak legal status of refugees in Malaysia makes them vulnerable to work-related harassment and exploitation, including low wages, verbal harassment, physical harassment, sexual harassment, arbitrary dismissal and raids in the workplace.

Another thing that makes Rohingya refugees disadvantaged in accessing work, education and health in Malaysia is because of Malaysian laws, namely the 1957 Federal Constitution and the Malaysian Immigration Law 1959/63, which in their contents do not provide legal rights to refugees. To remain in the country, refugees risk exploitation, arrest, and detention. This is proven by the finding that in December 2015 there were 2,498 Rohingya detained in Malaysia. Even though Malaysia is not a country that participates in ratifying conventions and protocols governing refugee rights, it is one of the member countries in the Bali Process. The Bali Process is an international forum founded in 2002 with the aim of developing strategies and cooperation in responding to human smuggling, human trafficking and transnational crime. Consists of 44 member states and 8 international organizations including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The Bali Process is a multilateral forum for 45 governments and four international organizations, including UNHCR, to discuss issues related to people smuggling, human trafficking and related transnational crimes. In March 2016, Bali Process ministers adopted the Bali Declaration, agreeing on the need for a comprehensive regional approach based on burden sharing and collective responsibility. Focusing on the Rohingya refugee crisis, the High Commissioner called on member countries of the Bali Process to consider how they can help Bangladesh assume responsibility hosting more than 900.000 refugees. Malaysia's non-binding to the Convention on the Status of Refugees gives Malaysia quite free choices in determining the direction of their policies. The main reason Malaysia

rejects Rohingya refugees is an attitude that wants to prioritize other important considerations, namely the welfare of its people and the welfare of refugees. Malaysia's main focus changed to fear of inability to deal with the large number of refugees. This certainly affect the welfare of the Malaysian people themselves.

After accepting Rohingya refugees in Malaysia in 2015, there was a rise and fall in the number of Rohingya refugee arrivals in Malaysia. However, from 2018 to 2020 Rohingya refugees began to show an increase in numbers.

Table 2. Data on Rohingya Refugees in Malaysia

Year	Amount
2015	156.342
2016	158.510
2017	152.300
2018	121.305
2019	129.102
2020	129.902

Source: UNHCR 2015, UNHCR 2017

Rohingya refugees have their own reasons for choosing Malaysia as their destination to seek protection and a better life compared to life in Myanmar. This is because Malaysia has an attraction, namely the success of the nation's economic progress and common understanding between cultures in everyday life. With Malaysia's economic progress, Rohingya refugees hope to find a more decent livelihood than in Myanmar or Bangladesh. Although so many things have changed in the last few months, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic. Malaysia has not only criticized Myanmar's attitude towards Rohingya refugees, but they have also rejected and deported the arrival of Rohingya refugees to Malaysia since 2020. The phenomenon of the Covid-19 pandemic has certainly had an impact on the lives of the world community, including activities within world countries. Therefore, the research describe the considerations that made Malaysia choose to reject the return of Rohingya refugees to their country using the theory of Desire Making, in this case Snyder uses internal and external considerations.

Malaysia has been the destination of choice for Rohingya fleeing Myanmar's genocide and more recently a refugee camp in Bangladesh. However, on April 16 2020, the Malaysian Navy intercepted and pushed back two refugee boats containing around 200 passengers in Langkawi. In the same month, Malaysia established a National Task Force (NTF) to better combat the influx of foreigners. Since May. The NTF has denied entry to 22 ships and implemented at least four immigration crackdowns, resulting in the arrest of 2,000 people, including 98 children. The presence of Rohingya refugees is considered a threat by the local Malaysian community. These threats include non-traditional security issues such as threats to environmental security, food security, economic security, energy security, human security, maritime security and so on. This sentiment has only increased with the elevation of Home Minister Muhyiddin Yassin to the post of Prime Minister, and the economic and social impact of the Covid 19 pandemic has developed into marked hostility towards the Rohingya people. Many cases of xenophobia have occurred during this global crisis, as well as the large refugee population which has raised concerns about the welfare of local Malaysian communities in various sectors of social life.

There has been an onslaught of hate speech directed at Rohingya refugees by groups of fundamentalist Malays. This has increased dramatically in the last few days, spurred by increasingly biased reporting in the media painting a picture of the Covid-19 infection being caused by foreigners.

Aside bombarding the comments sections of news articles and Facebook pages with ugly, deeply xenophobic, and hateful comments against the Rohingya people, they have also started several petitions.

The below is one of them. Can you go to the Petition, and mark it as Inappropriate/Hate Speech, please?



Source: Max Walden, X, 2020

Figure 3. Xenophobia against Rohingya Refugees in Malaysia

In the history of refugees in Malaysia, initially the Malaysian government gave work permits for six months to several refugees due to the influx of refugees into Malaysia in 1990 (Human Rights Watch, 2000). However, this permit cannot be renewed so that refugees who arrive later do not receive official work permits. This was done by the government to prevent more refugees from entering Malaysia using the excuse of looking for better job opportunities and of course this was done to prevent security problems and additional costs that would arise from an increase in refugees. Although refugees are not allowed to work, some receive assistance from the government, although the number of refugees who do not receive assistance is also quite high. Refugees still earn a living by taking advantage of manual work even at the risk of facing legal repercussions based on Malaysia's domestic laws, such as the Immigration Law 1959/63, the Employment Law 1995 and the Companies Law 1965.

According to World Health Organization (WHO), the lack of access to health care among refugees in host countries due to their legal status and financial capabilities is common among refugees such as Rohingya refugees in Malaysia. However, in 2015 Malaysia through its Ministry of Health signed a memorandum of understanding or MoU with UNHCR to allow refugees to access public health facilities at half the rate paid by foreigners. In fact, after receiving a reduction in costs from the government, the cost of health access in Malaysia is still considered high for refugees so that health services are still considered relatively inaccessible for some refugees. They also stated that the health services provided by the Malaysian government are mainly offered in areas with high refugee populations such as the Klang Valley, Penang, Negeri Sembilan, and Johor, while in less populated and underdeveloped areas such as Kedah, Terengganu, Pahang, Kelantan, Perak, and Perlis are denied or has limited access to adequate health services.

Education is an important supporting factor in the process of a country's progress, but this does not apply to Rohingya refugee children. Rohingya refugee children born in Malaysia certainly do not have the right of 'ius soli' citizenship, so they are also considered stateless. Because of this legal status they have, state schools are not something that Rohingya refugees are required to get. Refugees and

migrants have limited access to public schools, and most cannot afford the costs of attending private schools (The Equal Rights Trust, 2014). Meanwhile, refugee children who are lucky enough get the opportunity to learn basic education from community-run learning centers, supported by UNHCR, local NGOs and private donors. As of 2020, there are approximately 148 such learning centers in Malaysia. Most Rohingya refugee children do not have access to secondary level education, some young children have difficulty attending school due to financial constraints and inadequate school locations. This is mainly because refugee parents are reluctant to leave their homes in the countryside to send their children to schools, which are mostly located in cities, because they are afraid of being arrested by the authorities. In addition, some parents have no means of transportation, and do not have the time or money to send their children to school.

At the 36th ASEAN Summit which was officially opened in Hanoi, Vietnam. Malaysia, through the then Prime Minister, Muhyiddin Yassin, announced that Malaysia could no longer accept Rohingya refugees from Myanmar. Malaysia is one of the countries that is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol. This is of course influenced by the problems that will be brought by the arrival of refugees to Malaysia. The main reason the Malaysian government has not signed the convention and protocol is because the government is more concerned about dealing with the increasing number of migrant workers and refugees while the number of unemployed local residents is also no less large. These concerns are in the form of direct implications of this signing, namely an increase in foreign workers entering as refugees and asylum seekers. Therefore, this increases the number of illegal immigrants, foreign workers and refugees, these increases cause socio-economic problems. Until 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic brought anti-Rohingya sentiment. According to the government, undocumented migrants have violated immigration laws by entering Malaysia illegally and are now abusing kiosk permits by renting them from Malaysian owners, particularly Rohingya refugees. The Malaysian government also announced a freeze on hiring foreign workers in all sectors until the end of 2020, citing the need to prioritize local residents. This nationwide operation was led by the Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF), together with several law enforcement agencies, to tighten border control and national security.

In 2020, Malaysia has indeed handled the coronavirus pandemic relatively well in its country, but the Rohingya population in the region has experienced quite a bad impact. Malaysia's ability to navigate this moment of crisis can be seen from its leadership response, governance and availability of resources. This condition is exacerbated by the social and economic impact of the pandemic. Malaysia is implementing restrictions on asylum seekers and detaining refugees and migrants. In the midst of the economic and political challenges that Malaysia is currently facing, the Covid 19 pandemic has also hit the most vulnerable group among society, namely Rohingya refugees. Malaysia is obliged to comply with customary international law, which includes non-refoulement, access to asylum, and human rights. If Malaysia continues to implement international law without making these necessary changes, then Malaysia may continue to make mistakes by continuing to refuse Rohingya refugees to come to Malaysia.

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic that has hit the world. Malaysia is now changing its policies and actions towards the Rohingya people that it fought for in the past. His actions have shown that Malaysia, which initially became a helper for the Rohingya refugees who experienced genocide, has now turned into a country that rejects refugees. Initially, one of the main reasons why Malaysia was sympathetic to the condition of the Rohingya people was because of their shared beliefs in Islamic teachings. But interestingly, Malaysia has now decided to change its perception of the Rohingya, whose fate is still very precarious. Of course, one widely reported reason is the fear of contracting Covid-19 through the refugee population.

5. Conclusion

Rohingya refugees in Malaysia face a number of complex challenges in various fields, from health to the economy. The existing problems not only directly affect their well-being, but also highlight the urgent need for comprehensive and sustainable solutions. The health sector is one of the areas most affected. Limited access to health services is a direct result of the financial problems faced by many Rohingya refugees. The costs of medical consultations, medication and other medical procedures are often an unaffordable burden for them. Apart from that, low levels of health literacy are also an important factor that hinders efforts to prevent and treat disease. Medical assistance that should be accessible to all individuals, especially in critical situations, is often inaccessible to Rohingya refugees in Malaysia. In the field of education, refugee children are often marginalized. Limited access to official educational institutions makes them dependent on local community initiatives to obtain basic education. Despite efforts by the government and non-governmental organizations to provide access to education for refugees, there are still significant gaps in providing equitable and quality education services for all children.

The economic situation is also a big obstacle for Rohingya refugees in Malaysia. Limitations in getting decent work and income limit their ability to meet their daily needs. The majority of refugees are forced to work in low-paid and precarious jobs, which often do not provide enough income to support themselves and their families. As a result, levels of poverty and economic uncertainty among the Rohingya community remain high. Despite this, the Malaysian government has tried hard to handle this situation. As a member of ASEAN, Malaysia is committed to safeguarding the welfare of refugees without ignoring the interests and welfare of local communities. However, these efforts are often faced with limited resources and political pressure. Providing basic services such as healthcare and education requires significant investment from the government, while refugees living in Malaysia are legally unrecognized and often ineligible to receive official assistance.

In overcoming this challenge, cooperation between government, non-governmental organizations, international organizations and civil society is very important. Concrete steps must be taken to increase access to health services, education and economic opportunities for Rohingya refugees. This involves efforts to improve health literacy, provide equitable and quality access to education for all children, and create decent work opportunities for refugees. In addition, it is important to strengthen regional and international cooperation in dealing with this refugee problem. Malaysia must not be left to face this challenge alone. Other ASEAN countries, along with the international community as a whole, need to unite to provide necessary assistance and support to Rohingya refugees in Malaysia and across the region. In this way, we can move towards sustainable solutions and realize human rights for all individuals, without exception.

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