

Influx of Rohingya into Indonesia triggers resentment



<https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/videos/20240408202216449/>

Rohingya Muslims, an ethnic minority persecuted in Buddhist majority Myanmar, have been fleeing the country since 2017 to escape a military crackdown. Nearly 1 million now reside in refugee camps in neighboring Bangladesh, but life there is harsh. They're seeking asylum in other parts of southeast Asia, including Indonesia. NHK World's Ito Urara has the story.

Refugees on a capsized boat called for help, they are Rohingya people who drifted to the western Indonesian province of Aceh in March. Seventy-five people were rescued out of one hundred and fifty that were reportedly on board. More than 1,800 Rohingya made their way to Indonesia over the 3 months through February. Some live in an underground parking lot that serves as a makeshift shelter. 20-year-old Muhammad Ridwan arrived in Indonesia in December. He spent more than a month on a boat with almost no food and limited water. Ridwan says he fled the camp in Bangladesh because he felt he was in danger due to poor security. The UN says more than 1,400 cases of murder, kidnapping, and sexual violence has been reported in the camps from January to September last year. Ridwan says his father paid a broker to bring him to Indonesia.

We have no future. We came here to live, study, and realize our dream of becoming productive people.

Indonesia is a Muslim majority country and has been accepting Rohingya refugees over the years, but the recent surge has sparked tensions among Indonesians. University students in December stormed the shelter where Ridwan lives. They tried to drive the Rohingya out accusing them of demanding only aid.

I thought no one liked us. We can't endure anymore hardships. We have no home or country. Why do people oppress us?

Fake information on social media is also behind the growing backlash. In Sabang, in Aceh province, a video was posted claiming the Rohingya were throwing away relief food. The video triggered protests. The locals

say the well-being of residents should be the priority.

People say the Rohingya need to be given food and decent housing, but many residents here are living below the poverty line. They are the ones who should be helped. They deserve it.

With little prospects of returning to Myanmar. Rohingya refugees in Indonesia are trapped in a state of limbo. An isolated life with no exit in sight.

Source: (NHK World News)

Now discuss the questions with a partner.

1. What is your opinion of the Indonesian woman's comment?
2. Can you think of any solution? Where should the Rohingya people go? What should they do?
3. If you had to flee your country, where would you try to go?
4. If Japan accepted Rohingya refugees, what rights and benefits should be given to them?
5. Before this lesson, did you know about the genocide of the Rohingya people? How can we raise awareness?