

## **BRIEF FINDING REPORT, JULY 2023**

### **Rohingya Human Rights Initiative**

This report is an update on the mass detention of Rohingya refugees in Jammu. It covers the latest developments of shootings, tear gas attacks, and violence at the hands of Indian authorities who have illegally detained over 269 refugees without any charges or FIR. All the detained refugees possess UNHCR-verified identity cards. Most refugees are women, with several detainees being old, disabled, or pregnant.

To summarise the previous developments, below is a timeline of the arbitrary detentions and deteriorating human rights of Rohingya refugees in Jammu, India. This report covers the events and developments concerning the arbitrary detentions and deteriorating human rights situation for Rohingya refugees in India.

- **6 March 2021**

168 Rohingya, including women, children, and elderly were detained by the Jammu and Kashmir police. The refugees were rounded up in the Maulana Azad Stadium in Jammu for biometric verification, during which some refugees were randomly chosen by the police and detained. Infants were left alone in the camps as their parents were taken by the police. Out of the 168 detainees, more than ten were above the age of 65, and some of the women were pregnant. The refugees are currently being held in the Hari Nagar Jail in Jammu. An old woman died in detention due to post-COVID complications after which many detainees tested positive, yet had no access to vaccines. It is unclear if anyone in the camp is still vaccinated.

- **11 March 2021**

72 displaced Rohingya from Jammu were detained by the Foreigner Regional Registration Office (FRRO) in Delhi's VIKASPURI while they were camping outside the UNHCR office seeking protection. Later in May and June some families were released considering their medical and other conditions. However, the majority of the families released were again picked up by FRRO in 3rd week of August and sent to the same detention. Fearing re-detention some individuals (including former Rohingya Chairperson of Jammu Samba district) reached out to UNHCR or authorities but found no positive protection responses.

- **22 March 2021**

Hasina Begum, a 36-year-old Rohingya woman, was taken away from Hiranagar Jail. She had been detained there since March 2021, separated from her three children and husband, and lived alongside 237 other Rohingya refugees. Upon her deportation, several media outlets reported on her deportation via Manipur (bordering state of India with Myanmar), despite the Manipur Human Rights Commission's order to hold

her deportation.

- **31 March 2021**

Another batch of 25 Rohingya refugees was detained in Jammu.

- **6 April 2021**

16 families were displaced due to a fire incident at their shelter in Jammu, Marathi Mohollah. The refugee families camped outside the UNHCR office for help and were forced to evict by force.

- **8 April 2021**

The Supreme Court refused to grant relief in a petition challenging the detention of Rohingya refugees in detained in Jammu and the move to deport them back to hostile Myanmar.

- **6 March 2022**

The mass detention was completed one year.

- **1 April 2022**

12 Rohingya refugees detained in Ramban district of Jammu. They had arrived at Dar village in Gool tehsil as part of a Tablighi group, the local police said. However, R4R found that the refugee individuals have had families at Bhatindi and Narwal of Jammu for 8 years.

- **20 April 2022**

Two more families were detained at Hira Nagar sub-jail from Batindi of Jammu.

- **6 May 2022**

Jafar Alam, a Rohingya refugee, was deported to Myanmar. He was also separated from his family like Hasina Begum.

- **6 April 2023**

2 years passed since the mass detention. Three refugees died in detention while two were deported.

- **Late April 2023**

The refugees decided to protest their conditions through a fasting-until-death protest. Their demands were to be freed from the detention centre to live in Jammu, or to be allowed to leave India to meet their family members settled in other countries, or if nothing worked, then to be deported to Myanmar. None of the family members of those detained has been able to meet them since the protest started, with the only exception being on the 28th of June (Eid al-Adha). The authorities said they would take 2 days to give them their verdict, however, there has been no answer yet for 2

months.

- **17 July 2023**

After 2 years of being detained illegally, being forcibly cut from their families, and receiving no answer to their demands, the refugees gathered and tried to leave the detention through force. Around 6-7:00 AM, the police began firing at the open crowd and throwing tear gas at the refugees. Several refugees were injured. Family members of detained refugees approached UNHCR in a state of urgency but UNHCR only issued an ID card, which the detainees already had. The local office manager was absent.

- **19 July 2023**

A 5-month-old was killed in the tear gas attack. The authorities chained the bereaved mother. Many more people are reported to be on their deathbeds due to extreme police brutality. Five refugees were arrested, two women and three men. They also suffered custodial violence.

## **Conclusion**

Community resources report that they have been regularly updating UNHCR and related authorities about the mass detention and atrocities taking place in Jammu. The UNHCR mentioned that they were speaking with the government authorities but no action has been taken to date and two years have come to pass. The refugees expressed grave disappointment and resentment toward UNHCR for allowing the atrocities to take place without intervening or easing the conditions of those detailed extrajudicially.

A source mentioned the authorities are not letting the refugees live in India freely, not letting them leave India to join their families in other countries, and are not even deporting them back to Myanmar. The refugees currently on hunger strike are demanding at least one of the above conditions be met, preferably the first or second one. Currently, all the Rohingya refugee families in India are living under constant fear of getting arbitrarily targeted and detained to protracted detentions.

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