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RECEIVED 31 October 2025
ACCEPTED 10 November 2025
PUBLISHED 26 November 2025

CITATION
Siddiqi B and Khan NN (2025) Editorial:
Refugees and humanitarian support in the
Global South: challenges in repatriation and
social cohesion. *Front. Hum. Dyn.* 7:1736799.
doi: 10.3389/fhumd.2025.1736799

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Editorial: Refugees and humanitarian support in the Global South: challenges in repatriation and social cohesion

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KEYWORDS

refugee, Rohingya, humanitarian support, social cohesion, repatriation, Global South

Editorial on the Research Topic

[Refugees and humanitarian support in the Global South: challenges in repatriation and social cohesion](#)

Refugee and humanitarian support in the Global South is currently facing significant challenges, particularly in the areas of repatriation and social cohesion. Furthermore, the number of forcibly displaced people continues to increase significantly every year. At the end of 2024, a staggering 123.2 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide, representing a 6% increase from 2023. Approximately 42.7 million people were classified as refugees globally (UNHCR, 2025). The same report also shows that low- and middle-income countries hosted 73% of these refugees, and 67% were in neighboring countries (UNHCR, 2025). Sheltering such a high number of refugees and displaced populations places immense pressure on low- and middle-income countries, as most of them struggle with their own development challenges (Siddiqi and Kamruzzaman, 2025). Due to such difficulties, the displaced population in host countries often does not lead a dignified life.

When examining the global refugee problems, repatriation is considered the most desirable, dignified, and sustainable solution. However, the present reality of the refugee population across the world shows that repatriation is also the most challenging solution to achieve. Given the complexities of repatriation, it is often viewed as a 'myth' in many refugee contexts (Siddiqi, 2022). This put the lives of the refugees in further vulnerability with a depressed and uncertain situation. This becomes a huge problematic issue for the children living in refugee camps who do not have a vision of a bright future and live without a national identity. Living with an identity crisis is a harsh reality for them (Chowdhory and Mohanty, 2020).

Hosting the refugees for a longer time puts stress on several areas of the refugee-hosting countries that, in many cases, create social tensions between host and refugee communities, as seen with the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and neighboring countries (Kamruzzaman et al., 2024). However, there are cases where refugees have been treated well in the host community situation; Jordan is a notable example in this context (Kamruzzaman et al., 2025). Refugee-hosting countries, especially the low and middle-income countries that face significant challenges in hosting and managing refugees, may learn from cases like Jordan. This will also be treated as a South–South collaboration in the refugee management system, as refugee issues often take a long time to reach a sustainable solution.

Funding constraints further exacerbate these challenges, making it difficult for these countries to manage the influx of refugees effectively. Despite these hurdles, there is potential for social integration to improve living conditions, although peaceful coexistence between host and refugee communities remains a pressing concern. Countries like Bangladesh do not endorse the idea of social integration of the Rohingya refugees, nor do they officially recognize them as refugees; instead, they term them as 'Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMNs)'. This illustrates the diverse approaches to refugee management in different regions, which often fail to ensure a dignified life for refugees in camps. Learning from the cases of refugee management from different regions can be a positive approach. This justifies the need for more comprehensive research to address the gaps in understanding the dynamics of refugee management in the Global South.

Under such complex circumstances, we aimed to bring together authors to contribute to the literature on these issues, so that scholars in different countries can learn from one another, acknowledging the challenges and difficulties. The topic of the special volume was thus to explore the critical and challenging areas of refugee management from the perspectives of the Global South. The key themes considered in this Research Topic are the experiences and challenges faced by these communities in managing the largest forcibly displaced population worldwide. This provided us with the opportunities to identify and address the needs and gaps in refugee management in the Global South, ultimately contributing to more effective and sustainable solutions. The Research Topic covered the following themes in six articles, including repatriation and its challenges, contemporary challenges such as COVID-19 in refugee communities, border crises, blockchain-based solutions to the refugee crisis, social cohesion and peaceful coexistence, and the need for welfare institutions at the camp level.

This volume demonstrates that forced displacement, particularly in the Global South, presents persistent legal, social, and humanitarian challenges that necessitate innovative approaches to refugee management. Through diverse perspectives and historical analysis, it traces the evolution of displacement, demonstrating how current crises mirror past events. For instance, [Khan and Wara](#) compare the Biharis trapped in Bangladesh after its independence in 1971 with today's Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN), highlighting how the 1982 Myanmar Citizenship Act echoes the Bihari situation, leaving people in legal limbo and forced to seek refuge. In another article, [Khan](#) focuses on present-day issues, such as mounting tensions in refugee management and the consequences for host communities, including prolonged refugee presence, conflicting socio-economic interests, and declining social cohesion. [Siddiqi and Khan](#) examine the external shocks, including the COVID-19 pandemic and sudden migration emergencies, which exacerbate these challenges by hindering aid access and reducing job opportunities in camps. [Pari-Bedoya](#) examines the case of the Peru-Chile border crisis, using these examples to illustrate broader management crises and

institutional barriers. Importantly, the Research Topic advances evidence-based methodologies for refugee management, including innovative tools like blockchain for transparent and accessible resource allocation, as [Abraha](#) pointed out in his article. [Bhuiyan](#) critiques the prevailing notion of temporary encampment and argues for a proactive, life-course perspective that moves beyond survival toward lasting wellbeing for refugees and greater harmony with host communities.

Although these analyses from the cases of the Global South supply scholars with rigorous research and evidence-driven recommendations to address modern humanitarian crises among displaced populations worldwide, global communities also need to pay attention to the ongoing challenges in hosting and managing the refugee population in these countries. In addition, global scholars and researchers need to bring more cases from various other places across the Global South to develop South–South collaboration and exchange learning for better refugee management, ensuring a peaceful and cohesive environment.

Author contributions

BS: Conceptualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Investigation. NK: Validation, Visualization, Writing – review & editing, Conceptualization.

Conflict of interest

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