

Developments related to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh

February 3 - February 9, 2020



REFUGEE SOLIDARITY
NETWORK

Highlights:

Camp conditions:

- The fourth joint response plan (JRP) seeking \$877 million to meet the humanitarian needs of hundreds of thousands of persecuted Rohingya people will be launched in Geneva on March 3.

Accountability:

- During a trip to Bangladesh this week, Phakiso Mochochoko, head of the Jurisdiction, Complementarity and Cooperation Division of the ICC prosecutor's office, announced that the ICC has begun its investigation into alleged crimes against the Rohingya by Myanmar.

International support:

- Italy has pledged to provide an additional €1m through the UNHCR to help the Rohingyas, beyond its existing commitments.

High-level statements:

- During a trip to Brussels, State minister for foreign affairs M Shahriar Alam has requested that the European parliament remain seized with the Rohingya issue through its various monitoring mechanisms and tools towards facilitating the safe, dignified and voluntary return of the Rohingyas to Myanmar.
- Bangladesh has sought support from Singapore to facilitate the negotiation process with ASEAN to convince Myanmar to create a favourable environment for a safe, dignified and sustainable repatriation of the Rohingya.

Developments:

['Bangladesh and Turkey have common understanding on major world issues and the future of the friendship is bright'](#) Dhaka Tribune (February 8)

The outgoing Turkish Ambassador to Bangladesh Devrim Öztürk spoke about different aspects of bilateral issues between Dhaka and Ankara, as well as cooperation between the two countries in the international arena. Regarding the Rohingya, he said: "Unfortunately, the Rohingya community has been trapped in a vicious cycle of violence and forced displacement for decades. Their plight has always been high on Turkey's agenda. A lasting solution to the Rohingya crisis is a priority, both for us and the international community. And clearly, this is only possible with safe and dignified return of Rohingya to Myanmar. There is no other solution to this tragedy. Over two years have passed, but the world is yet to see any concrete steps from Myanmar. The international community should take immediate measures with a view of preventing an oncoming humanitarian catastrophe and alleviating the burden on Bangladesh. The accountability issue is also on our agenda. For the way forward, accountability remains crucial. We are closely following Gambia's case against Myanmar on ICJ."

[Dhaka seeks European parliament's role to help Rohingya repatriation](#) New Age Bangladesh (February 8)
During meetings in Brussels, state minister for foreign affairs M Shahriar Alam has requested the European parliament to remain seized with the Rohingya issue through its various monitoring mechanisms and tools towards facilitating the safe, dignified and voluntary return of the Rohingyas to Myanmar.

Similar:

[Shahriar urges EU Parliament to remain vocal for Rohingya repatriation](#) Dhaka Tribune (Feb. 7)

[When the Rohingya issue takes a back seat](#) Dhaka Tribune (February 8)
[op-ed] Bangladesh watched with great care the recent two-day state visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping to Myanmar. Leaders of both these countries signed 33 agreements shoring up key projects that are part of Beijing's flagship Belt and Road initiative. The joint statement issued on the conclusion of the visit clarified that both countries had agreed to continue to enhance coordination and cooperation in regional and multilateral fora such as the UN, China-ASEAN cooperation, and Lancang-Mekong cooperation platforms. The joint statement mentioned very carefully that the Chinese side supports the efforts of Myanmar to address the humanitarian situation and to promote peace, stability, and development for "all communities in Rakhine state." Myanmar also reiterated its commitment to receive "verified displaced persons" based on the bilateral agreement reached between Myanmar and Bangladesh. China's support of Myanmar's stance on the Rohingya issue will be crucial for Suu Kyi before a general election in November 2020 as the West withdraws or imposes sanctions on that country following the ruling of the ICJ or any decision undertaken by the ICC, the UN General Assembly, or the UN Security Council.

[Rohingya justice: Why the ICJ's public rebuke of Myanmar matters](#) Aljazeera (February 7)
[op-ed] On January 23, the International Court of Justice in The Hague imposed emergency "provisional measures" on Myanmar regarding its actions against and treatment of the Rohingya minority - my people. To the average person this may sound like incomprehensible legalese. But for many Rohingya, who had long been waiting for the international community to take meaningful action to end their suffering, this was some of the best news they had ever received. With this decision, the United Nations' "World Court" effectively instructed the government of Aung San Suu Kyi to respect the requirements of the 1948 genocide convention and bring an end to its military's attacks on the Rohingya. This decision marked the first time that a credible international body said "enough" to the government that for so many decades has abused and oppressed us.

[Stay alert against Rohingyas mixing with locals: Minister](#) United News Bangladesh (February 7)
Local Government and Rural Development Minister Md Tajul Islam asked people to remain alert so that Rohingyas do not get mixed with the local communities in the district. "They're Myanmar's citizens. We're providing them shelter on humanitarian grounds but they must return to their country," he said while talking to reporters at Ukhiya after visiting different government projects. Minister Tajul noted that locals are now upset because of the presence of an excessive number of Rohingyas in the area. He urged the development partners to play a strong role at the international level to facilitate the repatriation of Rohingyas.

[PM seeks continued EU support for Rohingya repatriation](#) The Daily Star (February 6)
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has sought continued support of the European Union to ensure safe and dignified return of the forcibly displaced Rohingya people, according to a nine-point joint statement issued on the outcome of bilateral talks between Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Italian counterpart Giuseppe Conte. The statement further added that both sides welcomed the International Court of Justice's January 23 decision on the Rohingya crisis.

Similar:

[PM seeks EU support for Rohingya repatriation](#) The Independent (Feb. 6)

[Bangladesh PM seeks EU support for Rohingya return](#) New Age Bangladesh (Feb. 7)



[ICC probe will not interfere with repatriation plan, official says](#) Myanmar Times (February 6)

The International Criminal Court's investigation of alleged crimes against humanity by Myanmar in Rakhine State will not interfere with Bangladesh's effort to start the repatriation of refugees under an agreement it has with Myanmar. Phakiso Mochochoko, director of the Jurisdiction, Complementary and Cooperation Division of the ICC Office of the Prosecutor has said.

[Rohingya Boat People to be Returned to Homes in Myanmar's Rakhine State](#) Radio Free Asia (February 6)

Myanmar authorities have confirmed that more than 130 Rohingya Muslims who were part of a larger group detained in December by the Myanmar Navy while traveling to a third country are residents of Rakhine state, a district official has said. The 133 were among the more than 170 Rohingya picked up by coastal forces in the Andaman Sea as they attempted to leave Myanmar. All of them were transferred by boat to western Myanmar's Rakhine state in early January, where immigration officials in the regional capital Sittwe have been working to determine whether they are from northern Rakhine state.

[Stop ignoring us: Rohingya refugees demand role in running camps](#) The Guardian (February 5)

With simple smartphones Rohingya activists have been able to build some kind of Rohingya voice, speaking to the world through WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter. But their efforts have often been frustrated, mostly for a more fundamental reason than the technological barrier in place since August: they believe the aid community sent to help them is not listening. Activist Khin Maung says that despite three decades of Rohingya experience in the refugee camps, their expertise is not tapped by humanitarian workers. "They don't have the interest to develop our children, they just have the interest to implement their [own] projects," says Maung, who heads the Rohingya Youth Association. "They are ignoring us because we are refugees. If they treated us as human beings, they would listen to us." A 2019 study by the Peace Research Institute Oslo said that, despite the barriers imposed on the humanitarian community by the government's education ban, more could have been done to map out the work carried out by Rohingya themselves.

Similar:

[A Voice in Their Future: The Need to Empower Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh](#) Refugees International (Feb. 5)

[UN fails to take measures on order against Myanmar on Rohingya](#) New Europe (February 5)

The United Nations' Security Council has discussed the International Court of Justice's order that Myanmar do all it can to prevent genocide against the Rohingya Muslims, but it failed to agree on a statement. According to diplomats, France, Estonia, Germany, Poland and Belgium urged Myanmar to comply with measures meant to prevent genocide set forth by the court, whereas China and Vietnam opposed issuing a joint declaration by the entire council during the closed-door meeting of the Council.

Similar:

[UN takes no action on order against Myanmar on Rohingyas](#) Yahoo! News (Feb. 4)

[ERC continue providing humanitarian aid to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh](#) Emirates News Agency (February 5)

The Emirates Red Crescent (ERC) has continued providing humanitarian aid to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, upon the directives of the UAE's leadership and the monitoring of H.H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Ruler's Representative in Al Dhafra Region and Chairman of the ERC. The aid includes the distribution of various relief materials that benefitted 45,000 refugees in camps in Cox's Bazar, comprising food parcels, shelter and heating materials, as well as clothes, cleaning materials, food supplements for children, educational materials and school supplies. A delegation of ERC volunteers recently arrived in the Bangladeshi capital, Dhaka, to lead the ERC's relief operations and supervise the aid distribution process. The UAE launched a campaign, titled, "The UAE for Rohingya



Women and Children," which aims to improve their humanitarian conditions. The campaign has supported related Emirati efforts, providing for the basic needs of over 1.2 million refugees, including 720,000 children, 240,000 women and 48,000 elderly people.

[Mapping the Rohingya Diaspora: Lessons from the Camps](#) The Asia Foundation (February 5)

Despite the numbers of Rohingya who have experienced the trauma of dislocation and family separation, no data existed to understand its impact. To clarify the dimensions of this crisis, the Centre for Peace and Justice at Bangladesh's BRAC University, which has been conducting social and policy research on the Rohingya crisis, collaborated with The Asia Foundation on a new study, *Mitigating Hardship with Mobility: The Coping Strategies of Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh*. The research team is currently analyzing the survey results, and we expect to publish our findings in the coming months. The findings will help inform solutions to mitigate the impact of family separation and reduce the perils of illegal travel in pursuit of a better life. This research is part of the X-Border Local Research Network, a partnership between The Asia Foundation, the Carnegie Middle East Center, and the Rift Valley Institute, supported by UK aid, from the UK government.

[Italy pledges to give €1mn for the Rohingyas crisis](#) Dhaka Tribune (February 5)

Dhaka and Rome have agreed to further bolster cooperation in different fields as visiting Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina held bilateral meeting with her Italian counterpart Giuseppe Conte this week. At the meeting, Italy also pledged to provide €1mn for the help of the Rohingyas in addition to the existing assistance. The Italian prime minister described his talks with Bangladesh Premier Sheikh Hasina as fruitful and said it is the beginning of another new chapter in Italy's relations with Dhaka.

Similar:

[Bangladesh seeks Italy's support for Rohingya return](#) News Next Bangladesh (Feb. 6)

[Dhaka, Rome agree to bolster cooperation](#) New Age Bangladesh (Feb. 6)

[Dhaka, Rome, stress intense cooperation between EU, Bangladesh](#) Prothom Alo (Feb. 6)

[Bangladesh wants Singapore's role in Rohingya repatriation](#) Prothom Alo (February 4)

Bangladesh has sought support from Singapore to facilitate the negotiation process in ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) platform to convince Myanmar to create a favourable environment for a safe, dignified and sustainable repatriation of the Rohingyas who fled to Bangladesh amid persecution in Myanmar. Foreign minister AK Abdul Momen discussed the issue when Singapore's non-resident high commissioner to Bangladesh Derek Loh Eu-Tse met him at the foreign affairs ministry this week.

Similar:

[Rohingya Repatriation: Bangladesh wants Singapore's role through Asean](#) United News Bangladesh (Feb. 3)

[ICC officially opens investigation into atrocities against Rohingya](#) Prothom Alo (February 4)

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has officially launched an investigation into atrocities committed against the Rohingya in the Rakhine state of Myanmar. Phakiso Mochochoko, director of the Jurisdiction, Complementarity and Cooperation Division of the ICC prosecutor's office, told newsmen that justice would be delivered for Rohingya victims, though the Hague-based court process would take years to conclude their investigation.

Similar:

[ICC to now investigate Myanmar for crimes against Rohingyas](#) The Daily Star (Feb. 4)

[International Criminal Court gathering evidence of Rohingya genocide](#) The Tribune (Feb. 6)

[International Court Gathering Evidence in Rohingya Case](#) New York Times (Feb. 4)

[Rohingya Case: International Court Begins Gathering Evidence](#) The Diplomat (Feb. 5)



[UNHCR: 2020 plan seeking \\$877m to be launched Mar 3](#) Dhaka Tribune (February 4)

The fourth joint response plan (JRP) seeking \$877 million to meet the humanitarian needs of hundreds of thousands of persecuted Rohingya people will be launched in Geneva on March 3, Steven Corliss, the Bangladesh Country Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, has said.

[Rohingya Robbery Suspect Killed in 'Gunfight' After Refugee Camp Shooting](#) The Irrawaddy (February 4)

A Rohingya refugee suspected of robbery was killed by Bangladeshi police in what the police called a "gunfight" this week. The incident occurred only hours after a dozen other Rohingya refugees were shot and injured in another shooting incident inside the vulnerable Muchuni area of Nayapara Refugee Camp.

Similar:

[Rohingya robber killed in Cox's Bazar gunfight: Rab](#) The Daily Star (Feb. 4)

[Why the ICJ order is not enough to solve the crisis and what we can do about it](#) The Daily Star (February 4)

[op-ed] The International Court of Justice (ICJ) order on provisional measures issued unanimously by a full bench of seventeen Judges on January 23, 2020 in the matter of The Gambia v Myanmar is historically significant and an important development of international law. It recognises and highlights the need for protective measures for the Rohingya residing in Myanmar, and by extension those several hundred thousand Rohingya refugees seeking asylum in Bangladesh. While this preliminary ICJ decision has been applauded by several governments and countless jurists and activists and of course the Rohingya community, it will not solve the Rohingya refugee crisis. Indeed, international justice measures before the ICJ and International Criminal Court (ICC) may paradoxically make finding a return solution more challenging by creating contradictory pressures on the Myanmar authorities. Putting Myanmar and its military leadership on notice that they will be held to account for potential crimes or failure to ensure the human rights protection of the Rohingya may result in the military-as-an-institution digging in and refusing to relinquish power.

[Some Rohingya Return to Myanmar But Find Little There Left For Them](#) Radio Free Asia (February 3)

The more than 600 Rohingya refugees who have returned to Myanmar from Bangladesh of their own volition say they have not yet been able to go back to their original villages and are facing hardship in violence-ridden northern Rakhine state, nearly three years after their expulsion by army troops. A refugee named Chowbi told RFA's Myanmar Service that he returned to northern Rakhine on his own in September 2019. Upon his return to his village of Oodaung, Chowbi found it deserted. Because he cannot afford to rent a home in town, he is now organizing other Rohingya villagers to resettle in their original community. "I really miss my former life whenever I visit Oodaung village," he told RFA's Myanmar Service. "There is no home in the village now. I still want to return to the village."

[Coastguard arrest two Rohingyas with 30,000 yaba tablets](#) United News Bangladesh (February 3)

Bangladesh Coast guard arrested two Rohingya people along with 30,000 contraband yaba tablets from Fishery Ghat of Maddhom Nuniya Chhara in Cox's Bazar district this week. The arrested two Rohingya people along with the yaba tablets consignment and the wooden boat were handed over to the Cox's Bazar police station.

Similar:

[Bangladesh drug kingpins surrender as deadly crackdown continues](#) Outlook India (Feb. 4)

[Education is the answer](#) Dhaka Tribune (February 3)

[op-ed] Children have a right to learn and a right to an education that will support their development, growth and ability to build their future. This right to an education does not end in times of emergency. In fact, it is even more essential that children who have escaped conflict, and witnessed atrocities that no child should ever have to face, have the safe haven of schools and learning opportunities. A space to be with peers, play, learn; a space where their parents know that they are safe. This is why the recent announcement from the Bangladeshi government is immeasurably important. This week they announced that they will provide Rohingya refugee children with access to expanded education opportunities -- including skills training -- based on the Myanmar curriculum. Not only is this an

essential first step at giving Rohingya children back some of the stability they have lost since being forced to flee to Bangladesh, it also prepares them to reintegrate back into Myanmar society for when they are able to return in a safe, voluntary, and dignified manner.

[ICC team in Bangladesh to assess Rohingya situation](#) Prothom Alo (February 3)

A delegation from the office of the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) is now visiting Bangladesh to assess the Rohingya crisis. The delegation is in Bangladesh as part of ongoing activities by the ICC office of the prosecutor (OTP) in accordance with its mandate under the Rome Statute, concerning the Rohingya situation. The Prosecutor's delegation is led by Phakiso Mochochoko, director of Jurisdiction, Cooperation and Complementarity. In November 2019, ICC judges authorised the request by ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda to investigate alleged crimes against humanity committed against the Rohingya people in Myanmar. The general overall purpose of this visit is outreach - to engage with relevant stakeholders and explain the judicial process and the status of the investigation to the public.

Similar:

[Rohingya: ICC team visiting Bangladesh](#) United News Bangladesh (Feb. 3)

In compiling this digest, RSN has attempted to include the most relevant news accounts from the past week concerning Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. From time to time, news beyond Bangladesh or the Rohingya community is included, but currently RSN does not have the capacity to expand the scope. We recognize that some developments may have been overlooked, and that some sources may not be viewed by all as credible or balanced. Inclusion of a news story and its summary does not constitute any kind of endorsement or position taken by RSN, and the text and positions included in the above are solely those of the authors of the respective articles. If you have any comments or feedback for us regarding this digest, please email advocacy@rsn.ngo. For more information about RSN and our work, please visit <https://refugeesolidaritynetwork.org/>

