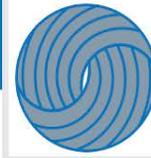


Developments related to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh

August 19 - August 25, 2019



REFUGEE SOLIDARITY
NETWORK

Highlights:

Repatriation: The government of Myanmar announced that it has cleared 3,450 refugees to return to Myanmar from a list of more than 22,000 people provided by Bangladesh. The returns were scheduled to begin on 22 August. Thus far, no refugees have indicated that they wish to return. Following the announcement of the repatriation plan, refugees held protests in the camps, and many international human rights groups have indicated that repatriation plans should be suspended, as conditions in Myanmar are not safe for Rohingyas.

Anniversary: 25 August marks two years since the Myanmar military launched a violent campaign on the Rohingya Muslim minority in Rakhine State, which caused more than 730,000 Rohingyas to flee to Bangladesh. The anniversary has prompted protests and calls for accountability among the Rohingya and advocacy groups.

Accountability: The UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar reported that they have reasonable grounds to conclude that crimes committed by the Myanmar against the Rohingya may amount to the gravest crimes under international law, including crimes against humanity, war crimes, and ethnic cleansing. The report also documents the use of sexual and gender-based violence by the Tatmadaw, and indicates that actions by the Myanmar military demonstrate genocidal intent.

Developments:

[‘Genocide Day’: Thousands of Rohingya rally in Bangladesh camps](#), AlJazeera (25 August)

Thousands of Rohingya refugees have marked the second anniversary of their exodus into Bangladesh by rallying and praying as they demand Myanmar grant them citizenship and other rights before they agree to return. Almost 200,000 Rohingya participated in a peaceful gathering, which was attended by UN officials, at the Kutupalong camp in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar.

Similar:

<https://news.yahoo.com/200-000-rohingya-rally-mark-genocide-day-bangladesh-081122388.html>

<https://www.voanews.com/east-asia-pacific/rohingya-refugees-protest-exodus-demand-rights-myanmar>

<https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/article234360832.html>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-asia-49464431/rohingya-mark-two-years-in-refugee-camps>

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/asia-pacific/rohingya-refugees-mark-two-years-since-brutal-crackdown-in-myanmar-1.3996700>

[US to stand beside Bangladesh in Rohingya repatriation efforts, says Ambassador Miller](#), BDNews24 (25 August)

US Ambassador Earl Robert Miller has said that the United States will stand beside Bangladesh in its efforts to repatriate the forcibly displaced Rohingyas to Myanmar. Miller also announced the contribution of \$100,000 from the US government to help the Bangladesh government in its endeavour to combat the flood situation in the region. The contribution, implemented through CARE Bangladesh, will provide assistance to over 4,900 people from more than 1,200 households.

Similar:

<https://www.thedailystar.net/city/news/us-will-continue-push-voluntary-safe-return-rohingyas-1790044>

[Myanmar blames Rohingya repatriation failure on Bangladesh](#), Channel News Asia (23 August)

The government of Myanmar has blamed its second failed attempt to repatriate Rohingya refugees on Bangladesh. Myanmar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs claimed that Bangladesh failed to distribute the correct paperwork. Bangladeshi Foreign Minister A.K. Abdul Momen said the no-show by refugees was "very disappointing."

Similar:

<https://www.nst.com.my/world/2019/08/515428/myanmar-blames-bangladesh-2nd-failed-rohingya-repatriation>

<http://www.uniindia.com/bangladesh-not-to-repatriate-any-rohingya-forcibly-fm-momen/world/news/1706305.html>

[Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh warned to be wary with human trafficking rising](#), Reuters (23 August)

IOM has identified 420 cases of human trafficking of Rohingyas between December 2018 and June 2019, a fourfold increase from the previous 14 months. Most people were trafficked to Chittagong or nearby beach towns. As more reports emerge of human traffickers preying on Rohingya refugees, authorities and aid groups have ramped up activities in the camps to warn people of the risks.

[Dhaka seeks strong global response to resolve Rohingya crisis](#), Dhaka Tribune (23 August)

After the failed repatriation attempt this week, Foreign Minister A.K. Abdul Momen has said that Bangladesh will take a tougher position over the Rohingya issue saying the global leadership must resolve it quickly to ensure greater peace and stability in the region. "We tried our best, we worked as per your suggestions but finally it (repatriation) did not happen. We will make our position stronger," he said.

Similar:

<https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/news/200798/%E2%80%98Dhaka-will-take-tougher-stance-over-Rohingya>

[‘Not a single Rohingya wants to go back’: Buses back to Myanmar left empty as refugees mark second year since fleeing ‘genocide’](#), The Independent (22 August)

A second attempt by the Myanmar government to repatriate Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh has failed to attract a single volunteer, almost two years after the start of a campaign of persecution that a UN Fact-Finding Mission has said may constitute genocide. Preparations for the repatriation plan sparked protest and anxiety among some Rohingya refugees, who say they want to return home to Rakhine State as long as they are guaranteed citizenship, safety and the right to move and work freely.

Similar:

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/22/asia/rohingya-repatriation-myanmar-concern-intl-hnk/index.html>

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/rohingya-still-fear-safety-in-myanmar-repatriation-unlikely/repatriation-unlikely/slideshow/70784911.cms>

<https://www.dw.com/en/rohingya-refugees-steer-clear-of-planned-repatriation-to-myanmar/a-50131192>

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/rohingya-repatriation-to-myanmar-unlikely-to-begin-as-scheduled>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/21/not-without-our-rights-rohingya-refugees-refuse-to-return-to-myanmar>

<https://www.npr.org/2019/08/21/753014809/bangladesh-tries-again-to-repatriate-rohingya-to-myanmar>

<https://www.mmtimes.com/news/refugees-decline-latest-repatriation-myanmar.html>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/08/empty-buses-bangladesh-rohingya-turn-repatriation-190822055219357.html>

<https://www.france24.com/en/video/20190822-rohingya-muslims-bangladesh-reject-repatriation-plan>

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/08/23/asia-pacific/social-issues-asia-pacific/rohingya-shun-repatriation-myanmar-want-guarantee-safety-citizenship/#.XWVTCfIKhMA>

<https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2019-08-19/rohingya-muslims-refugees-myanmar>

<https://www.dw.com/en/repatriation-plans-stir-fear-among-rohingya-refugees-in-bangladesh/a-50112512>



[UNHCR Statement on Voluntary Repatriation to Myanmar](#), UNHCR (22 August)

UNHCR has been assisting the Government of Bangladesh in surveying the 3,450 Rohingya refugees who have been cleared for return to Rakhine State, Myanmar on whether they wish to return to Myanmar and to confirm the voluntariness of any individual decision to do so. So far, none of those interviewed have indicated a willingness to repatriate at this time. UNHCR has agreed with the governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar that any repatriation of refugees must be voluntary, safe and dignified. Many refugees have stated that they hope to go home to Myanmar as soon as conditions allow and assurances regarding citizenship status, freedom of movement, and security in Myanmar are settled.

[The two-year Rohingya crisis in three timelapse satellite GIFs](#), The New Humanitarian (22 August)

Timelapse satellite GIFs offer a bird's eye view of how the Rohingya refugee crisis has evolved over the last two years. The three GIFs featured in this article show (1) the massive footprint of the refugee settlements in Bangladesh; (2) what has become of former Rohingya land in Myanmar; and (3) the construction of a controversial island camp on the Bay of Bengal.

Similar:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/years-rohingya-refugees-bangladesh-190825072929471.html>

[Myanmar: Crimes Against Rohingya Go Unpunished](#), Human Rights Watch (22 August)

On the two-year anniversary of the 2017 “clearance operations” in Rakhine State by the government of Myanmar, Human Rights Watch has said that the government of Myanmar should stop obstructing international efforts to investigate widespread crimes committed against Rohingya Muslims. Any returns of Rohingya refugees should be voluntary, safe and dignified, but as it stands, conditions for voluntary, safe and dignified return of Rohingya refugees to Rakhine State do not exist. Human Rights Watch also called on the government of Myanmar to “amend its discriminatory 1982 Citizenship Law to provide Rohingya equal access to Myanmar citizenship”, and has said that the UN Security Council should refer the situation in Myanmar to the ICC.

Similar:

<https://theintercept.com/2019/08/24/aung-san-suu-kyi-rohingya-genocide/> [op-ed]

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/08/myanmar-two-years-since-rohingya-crisis/>

[Massacred at Home, in Misery Abroad, 730,000 Rohingya are mired in hopelessness](#), New York Times (22 August)

Following Myanmar's unilateral announcement for repatriation, not a single Rohingya boarded the five buses and two trucks that were prepared to repatriate refugees back to Myanmar. An expert with the UN Fact-Finding Mission indicated that conditions were not conducive for the return of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar, citing satellite imagery of northern Rakhine, where not a single village stands. The Myanmar government has claimed it has put measures in place for the Rohingya to return, but conditions on the ground show that the government of Myanmar has done little to reassure the Rohingya that things have changed.

[UN Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar calls for justice for victims of sexual and gender-based violence](#), United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (22 August)

The UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar released a new report on 22 August documenting the extent to which sexual violence perpetrated by Myanmar's military was “part of a deliberate, well-planned strategy to intimidate, terrorize and punish a civilian population.” Many of these acts amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and acts of genocide. The report consists of conclusions and recommendations directed at the government of Myanmar and the international community. [[Full report here](#)]

Similar:

<https://news.yahoo.com/un-report-condemns-sexual-violence-150233161.html>

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/08/1044811>

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/08/24/asia-pacific/no-peace-myanmar-no-military-prosecutions-u-n-expert-says/#.XWmZvuhKjIU>



[For the fourth time, Facebook removes accounts linked to Myanmar's military](#), CNN (22 August)

For the fourth time in less than a year, Facebook has removed 89 Facebook accounts, 107 pages, and 15 groups, as well as five Instagram accounts linked to the Myanmar military for “engaging in coordinated inauthentic behavior.” Facebook has taken down suspicious networks linked to Myanmar’s military three other times in the past year. Activists have said that Facebook and its platforms are used to spread misinformation and hate speech, particularly against the Rohingya Muslim minority.

[Rohingyas get \\$0.52 million from UN Refugee Zakat Fund](#), Dhaka Tribune (22 August)

The United Nations refugee agency’s Refugee Zakat Fund has disbursed around US\$522,530 to benefit around 670,000 Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. The UNHCR said the distribution was in progress. The Refugee Zakat Fund surpassed its \$26 million target for 2019, raising \$38.15 million from contributions in the first half of the year.

[Rights Groups Urge Bangladesh, Myanmar to Suspend Rohingya Returns](#), Radio Free Asia (21 August)

International rights groups called on Myanmar and Bangladesh to suspend their second attempt to repatriate some hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslim refugees who fled a brutal military campaign in 2017, until the members of the minority group are guaranteed a safe and voluntary return and are granted full citizenship and other basic rights.

Similar:

<https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/threats-repatriation-again-loom-over-rohingya-refugees>
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/08/20/myanmar/bangladesh-halt-rohingya-returns>

[Tensions flare as Bangladesh tries to send Rohingya home](#), The New Humanitarian (21 August)

Protests erupted in parts of Bangladesh’s Rohingya camps as authorities attempted to restart controversial plans to begin sending refugees back to Myanmar. Community leaders in the camps are demanding full rights and citizenship before any returns. Hundreds of camp residents signed or marked with thumbprints a statement denouncing the planned returns.

[‘Conditions here are inhumane’: Rohingya in Bangladeshi camps](#), Al Jazeera (21 August 2019)

Two years have passed since more than 700,000 Rohingya refugees arrived in Bangladesh, after fleeing violence by the Myanmar military. These camps along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border have become the most populated in the world. While the camps are still considered by the Bangladesh government and aid officials to be temporary, many of the residents say their concerns have switched from everyday survival to longer-term concerns.

Similar:

<https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/rohingya-people-still-trapped-two-years-exodus-oxfam>
<https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/rakhine-crisis-two-years-struggle-safety-privacy-and-dignity>
<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/rohingya-crisis-rakhine-bangladesh-timeline-11835214>
<https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/rohingya-crisis/2019/08/25/after-two-years-we-need-to-focus-on-the-local-community>

[61 NGOs warn of worsening crisis in Myanmar, call for refugee's engagement on safe, voluntary returns](#),

International Rescue Committee (20 August)

Nearly one million Rohingya are still waiting for justice and a say about their future, two years after being forced from their homes by mass atrocities in Myanmar, and are struggling for safety and dignity in Bangladesh as refugees. In a joint statement released today, 61 local, national and international NGOs working in the two countries called for human rights for all to be recognized in Rakhine State and for Rohingya refugees to have a role in decision-making about their own lives, including conditions for their return to Myanmar.

Similar:

<https://www.nrc.no/news/2019/august2/ngos-warn-of-worsening-crisis-in-myanmar-call-for-refugees-engagement-on-safe-voluntary-returns/>

<https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/two-years-rohingya-deserve-justice-place-table>

[ICC seeks views from victims](#), The Daily Star (20 August)

The International Criminal Court is seeking views of the Rohingya victims on the crimes committed against them in Myanmar. According to the ICC's legal framework, the victims of alleged crimes have the right to submit 'representations', i.e. to provide their views, concerns and expectations, to the ICC judges who are considering the prosecutor's request to launch an investigation. The Victims Participation and Reparations Section (VPRS) of the Registry at the ICC has prepared a template victim representation form, which is available on the ICC website. The deadline for submitting victim representation forms to the ICC is October 28, and the process of submitting representations is voluntary and free of charge.

[Bangladesh seeks to repatriate 3,000 Rohingya to Myanmar](#), Al Jazeera (20 August)

Of a list consisting of more than 22,000 Rohingya refugees provided by Bangladesh to the government of Myanmar, Myanmar has cleared 3,450 people for return to Myanmar. Bangladesh has expressed that it will work with UNHCR to determine if the more than 3,000 Rohingya refugees will accept Myanmar's offer to return home. There are serious concerns that such repatriations would be premature.

Similar:

<https://theglobepost.com/2019/08/19/bangladesh-repatriate-rohingya-myanmar-2/>

<https://www.npr.org/2019/08/21/753014809/bangladesh-tries-again-to-repatriate-rohingya-to-myanmar>

<https://www.mmtimes.com/news/myanmar-attempt-repatriation-process-again-august-22.html>

<https://theowp.org/myanmar-and-bangladesh-agree-to-start-repatriation-effort/>

<https://www.thedailystar.net/rohingya-crisis/news/rohingya-repatriation-will-begin-anytime-foreign-secy-1786879>

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/rohingya-crisis/2019/08/19/rohingya-repatriation-no-definite-word-from-govt-yet>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-myanmar-rohingya/bangladesh-unhcr-to-survey-rohingya-regarding-return-to-myanmar-idUSKCN1V916L>

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/>

