

Developments related to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh

January 20 - January 26, 2020



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Highlights:

Accountability:

- The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has ordered measures to prevent the genocide of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar. The panel of 17 judges at the ICJ voted unanimously to order Myanmar to take "all measures within its power" to prevent genocide.
- An independent panel created by the Myanmar government has concluded that government security forces committed war crimes against Rohingya Muslims but that they did not commit genocide against the ethnic minority.

In Myanmar:

- Two women were killed, and seven other people injured, after Myanmar troops shelled a Rohingya village on Saturday.

High-level statements:

- Newly-appointed Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Naoki Ito has said Japan is ready to extend any kind of assistance in resolving the Rohingya crisis, as the country wants a sustainable solution to the problem.

Country visits:

- A delegation from Australia visited Bangladesh this week.
- UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Yanghee Lee, conducted her final visit to Bangladesh under her mandate this week, issuing a number of statements regarding the situation in Myanmar at the end of her trip.

Developments:

[China, Russia require revising Rohingya strategy](#) New Age Bangladesh (January 26)

The claim of jurisdiction by the International Court of Justice in Rohingya genocide case would require concerned countries, especially Russia and China, to revise their strategies over Rohingya issue, said immediate-past foreign secretary M Shahidul Haque at a discussion at North South University in Dhaka this weekend. UN Security Council members China and Russia were now expected to act as responsible states, said Shahidul, currently senior fellow at North South University's Center for Peace Studies. Bangladesh would also require setting a new balance between national interests and international obligation as a humanitarian state, he said.

[2 Rohingya women killed as Myanmar army shells village](#) Dhaka Tribune (January 25)

Two women, one pregnant, has been killed, and seven other people injured after Myanmar troops shelled a Rohingya village, two days after the UN's highest court ordered the country to protect the minority. Maung Kyaw Zan, a national

member of parliament for Buthidaung township in northern Rakhine state, said shells fired from a nearby battalion hit Kin Taung village in the middle of the night. Government troops have been battling ethnic rebels in the state for more than a year. "There was no fighting, they just shot artillery to a village without a battle," he said, adding it was the second time this year that civilians had been killed. The military denied responsibility, blaming the rebels who they said attacked a bridge in the early hours of the morning.

Similar:

[Two Rohingya women killed in Myanmar shelling](#) New Age Bangladesh (Jan. 25)

[Warning that Rohingya refugees are becoming a 'forgotten people'](#) SBS News (January 25)

A delegation of Australian politicians has witnessed "heartbreaking" scenes in the world's largest refugee camp. Among the Australian parliamentarians is Labor MP Anne Aly. Ms. Aly said the big fear now is that this humanitarian crisis could become a generational and cultural catastrophe. Shadow Home Affairs Minister Kristina Keneally said she's found herself to be inspired by stories of resilience and optimism visiting learning centres and health clinics funded by Australian aid.

[The persecuted Rohingya now have legal protection, but will it amount to anything?](#) The Guardian (January 24)

[op-ed] The ICJ's ruling on Myanmar's treatment of the Rohingya requires that Myanmar produce periodic reports detailing the protective measures it is now obliged to enforce, ensuring that whatever the military does from now on will remain under the close scrutiny of the court. The ICJ ruling is a bright point in an otherwise woeful international response to the internment of Rohingya and the organised violence against them – a process that began long before the violence of 2017 – but its powers are limited. International law has yet to devise effective mechanisms to bring actors protected on the UN Security Council by powerful countries – in Myanmar's case, China – before a judge. The likelihood that the architects of the genocide – chief among them Min Aung Hlaing, head of Myanmar's military – will face trial is slim.

[Myanmar already protecting Rohingya, ruling party says after world court's order](#) Reuters (January 24)

Myanmar has put in place measures to protect Rohingya Muslims, a spokesman for the ruling party has said, shrugging off an order from the International Court of Justice to stop genocidal acts against the ethnic minority. "The government is already doing most of the orders," Myo Nyunt, a spokesman for the ruling National League for Democracy, said without elaborating. "One more thing we need to do is submit reports," he said, referring to one of several measures approved by the court requiring Myanmar to write regular summaries of its progress. But he said the civilian government, who rule jointly with the military in an awkward constitutional arrangement that reserves great powers for the commander-in-chief, could not control troops.

Similar:

[Myanmar Foreign Ministry Acknowledges ICJ Ruling, Repeats Denial of Genocide Against Rohingya](#) The Irrawaddy (Jan. 24)

[Spike in illegal migrants returning to Bangladesh: BSF](#) Deccan Herald (January 24)

The number of illegal Bangladeshi migrants apprehended while trying to return to their country has increased since December last year, Inspector General of BSF (South Bengal Frontier) Y B Khurania has said. The development comes days after the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) was enacted. He also said that in 2019, BSF apprehended 2194 illegal Bangladeshi migrants, a majority of whom were nabbed while trying to sneak into India.

[Music video seeks solidarity for educating Rohingya refugees and host children](#) Dhaka Tribune (January 24)

In honor of the International Day of Education, Amnesty International has released a music video making an appeal to people around the world to support education for all children in the Rohingya and host communities in Bangladesh. Bangladeshi hip-hop lyricist and musician Mahmud Hasan Tabib and child artist Rana Mridha, who became popular on YouTube for their songs promoting education of underprivileged children in the country, lent their voices to the song.



Amnesty International has also launched a petition in major countries across the globe in a movement calling on governments to support Bangladesh in educating the Rohingya refugees and host community children. The global petition also calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to ensure that quality education in the appropriate language and accredited curriculum protects the diversity of social, cultural, and linguistic identity of both communities.

Similar:

[Amnesty's music video seeks support for Rohingya children's education](#) Prothom Alo (Jan. 24)

[A 'lost generation' of Rohingya will have nowhere to go](#) The Daily Star (Jan. 24) [op-ed]

['Rohingya drug dealer' killed in Cox's Bazar 'gunfight'](#) United News Bangladesh (January 24)

An unidentified Rohingya man, suspected of being a drug dealer, was killed in a reported gunfight with Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) in Teknaf upazila. After a skirmish, BGB found an unidentified man injured with gunshot wounds at the spot. He was taken to Teknaf Health Complex.

Similar:

[Rohingya man killed in 'gunfight'](#) The Daily Star (Jan. 20)

[Suspected Rohingya drug dealer shot dead in Bangladesh](#) Northeast Now (Jan. 20)

[Another Rohingya killed in 'gunfight' with BGB](#) New Age Bangladesh (Jan. 25)

[Myanmar Rohingya: World court orders prevention of genocide](#) BBC (January 23)

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has ordered measures to prevent the genocide of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar. The decision comes despite de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi defending her country against the accusations in person last month. The ICJ case, lodged by the African Muslim-majority nation of The Gambia, called for emergency measures to be taken against the Myanmar military until a fuller investigation could be launched. The panel of 17 judges at the ICJ voted unanimously to order Myanmar to take "all measures within its power" to prevent genocide, which they said the Rohingya remained at serious risk of. These include the prevention of killing, and "causing serious bodily or mental harm" to members of the group, as well as preserving evidence of possible genocide that has already occurred. Presiding judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf said Myanmar should report back within four months on how it was implementing the ruling. The measures are binding and not subject to appeal, but the court has no means of enforcing them.

Similar:

['Justice served': Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh hail ICJ ruling](#) AlJazeera (Jan. 23)

[ICJ ruling on Rohingya crisis](#) The Financial Express (Jan. 25)

[ICJ orders Myanmar to protect Rohingya from genocide](#) The Japan News (Jan. 24)

[Roundup: Rohingya ICJ ruling steps up pressure on Myanmar](#) The New Humanitarian (Jan. 24)

[Rohingya hail UN ruling that Myanmar act to prevent genocide](#) Associated Press (Jan. 23)

The United Nations' top court's ruling has been met by members of the Muslim minority with gratitude and relief but also some skepticism that the country's rulers will fully comply. Yasmin Ullah, a Rohingya activist who lives in Vancouver and was in court for the decision, called it a historic ruling. But asked if she believes Myanmar will comply, she replied: "I don't think so." Rohingya refugees living in camps in Bangladesh welcomed the order, which was even supported by a temporary judge appointed by Myanmar to be part of the panel. "This is good news. We thank the court as it has reflected our hope for justice. The verdict proves that Myanmar has become a nation of torturers," 39-year-old Abdul Jalil said by phone from Kutupalong camp in Cox's Bazar. However, he too expressed doubts that Myanmar would fully comply. Rights activists have also welcomed the decision.

Similar:

[Rohingya, Bangladesh welcome ICJ's genocide prevention ruling](#) Arab News (Jan. 23)

[Yanghee Lee: An international tribunal should be set up for Rohingya genocide](#) Dhaka Tribune (January 23)

At a press conference to brief about her mission carried out between January 15-23 in Thailand and Bangladesh, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Yanghee Lee, has said the UN should set up an “International Adhoc Tribunal” for the Rohingya genocide in Myanmar. Lee said it is very shameful that China and Russia, being UN security council members, have not taken any action against Myanmar about the Rohingya genocide. “China cannot be a global leader if it ignores such atrocities,” she added.

Similar:

[Myanmar: UN expert says ‘lost optimism but still hopes for promised democratic transition’](#) ReliefWeb (Jan. 23)

[Top UN Official Says Myanmar Must Follow Order on Rohingya](#) The New York Times (Jan. 23)

[Rohingya genocide case against Myanmar: ICJ delivers order on Thursday](#) Dhaka Tribune (January 23)

The eyes of the Rohingya community, Bangladesh, Myanmar and the rest of the world are on the International Court of Justice (ICJ) as it delivers its order on Thursday on the request for the indication of provisional measures made by The Gambia in the case filed against Myanmar for allegedly violating the genocide convention. The ICJ rulings are binding on the member states. The Gambia asked for six provisional measures to be ordered by the court, including a halt to acts with genocidal intent by Myanmar and crucially granting of access to, and cooperation with, all UN fact-finding bodies that are engaged in investigating alleged genocidal acts against the Rohingya. Officials from Bangladesh are expected to be present during the issuance of the order, among others.

Similar:

[Rohingya refugees pray for justice as court to rule in genocide case](#) Reuters (Jan. 22)

[ICJ ruling today on interim measures](#) New Age Bangladesh (Jan. 23)

[Dhaka awaiting UN green light to relocate 100,000 Rohingya to \\$275m island](#) Arab News (January 22)

Authorities in Bangladesh are still awaiting the green light from UN inspectors to start the controversial relocation of 100,000 Rohingya refugees to a newly built \$275 million island camp. Although Dhaka has insisted the tiny island of Bhasan Char is ready to begin receiving families, UN technical experts have yet to carry out health and safety checks. A UN team had been scheduled to visit the island in November last year to assess the safety of facilities and amenities on offer, but the inspection was postponed after Bangladesh asked the UN to explain the reasons for the checks.

[Myanmar Panel: War Crimes But No Genocide Committed Against Rohingya](#) VOA News (January 21)

An independent panel created by the Myanmar government has concluded that government security forces committed war crimes against Rohingya Muslims but that they did not commit genocide against the ethnic minority. The findings were included in a report by the Independent Commission of Inquiry released this week. The commission, established by the government in July 2018, says it was “tasked to investigate allegations of human rights violations and related issues” after terrorist attacks in 2017 by a Rohingya insurgent group in Myanmar’s Rakhine state.

Similar:

[Myanmar panel: No evidence of genocide against Rohingya](#) Deutsche Welle (Jan. 20)

[Myanmar Probe: Security Forces Likely Committed War Crimes](#) VOA News (Jan. 20)

[Security forces likely committed war crimes, caused fleeing of 700,000 Rohingya Muslims: Myanmar panel](#) Hindustan Times (Jan. 21)

[Myanmar panel denies genocide, finds war crimes against Rohingya](#) Jurist (Jan. 22)

[Myanmar: Government Rohingya Report Falls Short, Says HRW](#) Eurasia Review (Jan. 23)



[China struggles in new diplomatic role, trying to return Rohingya to Myanmar](#) Reuters (January 20)

In a sharp departure from its official policy of non-interference in other countries' affairs, China has positioned itself as the key mediator in resolving the protracted crisis. But like the Indonesian and UN envoys who previously sought to mediate, China is finding the business of diplomacy tough going, with few signs that the crisis will be resolved soon. Over the past two years, Chinese officials have brokered three meetings between leaders of Bangladesh and Myanmar, made multiple visits to the sprawling refugee camps housing the Rohingya in Bangladesh, hired cattle trucks to bring returnees home and even offered cash inducements, all to little avail. Still, China says it has made progress, even if only a few hundred Rohingya have returned home so far. The issue received fresh attention when President Xi Jinping visited Myanmar for a two-day state visit.

Similar:

[China's economic links with Myanmar](#) The Daily Star (Jan. 20) [op-ed]

[China supports Myanmar despite Rohingya genocide accusations](#) New Europe (Jan. 20)

[China finds diplomacy to be tough going](#) The Japan News (Jan. 22)

[Dhaka must double down efforts in Rohingya repatriation](#) New Age Bangladesh (Jan. 21) [op-ed]

[Japan ready to help resolve Rohingya crisis, its envoy tells PM](#) Dhaka Tribune (January 20)

Newly-appointed Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Naoki Ito has said Japan is ready to extend any kind of assistance in resolving Rohingya crisis, as the country wants a sustainable solution to the problem. He said this when he made a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her parliament office. The Japanese envoy said Bangladesh is the longest and largest development partner of Japan, and Japan wants smooth and speedy implementation of the projects taken by Japan in Bangladesh.

Similar:

[Japan ready to help Bangladesh solve Rohingya crisis, envoy tells PM](#) Prothom Alo (Jan. 20)

[Japan ready to help Bangladesh solving Rohingya crisis](#) The Independent (Jan. 20)

[Japan ready to help resolve Rohingya crisis, its envoy tells Hasina](#) United News Bangladesh (Jan. 20)

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/>