

Developments related to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh

July 22 - July 28, 2019



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Highlights:

Accountability:

- The ICC's Office of the Prosecutor has finished its visit to Cox's Bazar, after meeting with both government officials and Rohingya in the camps.
- Satellite images released as part of a new report from the Australian Strategic Policy Institute show that, despite Myanmar saying it is ready to start repatriation, the country has made "minimal" preparations for the return of the Rohingya.

Country Visits: A high-level delegation from Myanmar visited Cox's Bazar on Saturday to discuss repatriation with leaders of the Rohingya community there. The discussions ended without any major breakthroughs, but both sides have agreed to further dialogue.

International Support: The European Commission has mobilized a new humanitarian funding package worth €10.5 million to assist with response to the ongoing monsoon season in the region. This includes €1.5 million in emergency aid for the victims of ongoing monsoons in India and Bangladesh.

High-level statements:

- The Malaysian Prime Minister has said that Myanmar should treat the Rohingya as Myanmar nationals or they should be given a chance to form their own state.
- Christine Burgener has said that, based on what she saw during her tour of Myanmar, the country is not ready to take back the Rohingya.
- Various Bangladeshi government officials have reiterated requests for support to repatriate the Rohingya to Myanmar to the UN, ASEAN, and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) States this week.

Developments:

[Dr. Mahathir: Treat Rohingyas as Myanmar nationals or give them their own state](#), **Dhaka Tribune** (July 28)

The Rohingyas should be treated as Myanmar nationals or be given a chance to form their own state, said Malaysian PM Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. Dr. Mahathir further said that even though Malaysia generally does not wish to interfere with the internal affairs of other countries, it does so in this case due to the genocide of the Rohingyas in Myanmar.

Similar:

<http://unb.com.bd/category/Bangladesh/end-statelessness-of-rohingyas-mahathir/24597>

[Two-day conference on Rohingya crisis begins at NSU](#), **The Daily Star** (July 28)

A two-day international conference entitled "Rohingya Crisis in Bangladesh: Challenges and Sustainable Solutions", organized by North South University in collaboration with UNHCR, began on the university's Bashundhara campus in Dhaka on Saturday.

[Rohingya crisis: Myanmar govt, Rohingya meeting ends with pledge to initiate dialogue](#), **Dhaka Tribune** (July 27)

The first formal interaction between the government of Myanmar and leaders of the Rohingya communities in Cox's Bazar since the latest exodus ended on Saturday without any major breakthrough. However, both sides have agreed to initiate a dialogue to discuss all the critical aspects of the crisis, especially full citizenship for the Rohingyas. The date and agenda of the dialogue are yet to be fixed, but the Rohingya community leaders want the dialogue to take place as soon as possible.

Similar:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/07/myanmar-officials-hold-repatriation-talks-rohingya-leaders-190727122259329.html>

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/myanmar-fails-to-convince-rohingya-it-is-safe-to-return-11564309711>

<https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/article233233741.html>

<https://www.voanews.com/south-central-asia/myanmar-delegation-holds-repatriation-talks-rohingya-bangladesh>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-myanmar-rohingya-bangladesh/rohingya-tell-myanmar-they-refuse-to-return-without-recognition-idUSKCN1UN0GD>

[Myanmar's real intent now transparent](#), **The Daily Star** (July 27)

[op-ed] It has been quite apparent from the beginning, that the issue of the Rohingya going back to Myanmar was the last thing in the minds of the rulers in Naypyidaw. Expulsion of the Rohingyas was not an accident, as the foreign minister has described the development in Rakhine, but a well-planned and deliberate act. It seems the agreement between the two neighbor states was a ploy by Myanmar to buy time in order to finalize their plans of depopulating the region. The renewed persecution of the Rohingyas under the pretext of anti-insurgency operation against the Arakan army since January this year has reconfirmed that fact. Concrete actions by neighboring countries and the UN are needed to convince the Myanmar government that genocidal acts will not pay in the long run.

[Rohingya repatriation extremely important for stability of Bangladesh, Myanmar](#), **Dhaka Tribune** (July 27)

The repatriation of hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas is extremely important for the stability of Bangladesh (especially the coastal district) and Myanmar. Residents of Cox's Bazar and officials of the government and different law-enforcement agencies have said that different types of crimes involving Rohingyas have been on the rise for past several months, and things are likely to get worse in the coming days if the crisis continues. If the law and order situation gets out of control, not only Cox's Bazar but also Rakhine will be affected with regional and global implications.

[A historical overview of the Rohingya crisis](#), **Dhaka Tribune** (July 27)

[op-ed] Rohingya Muslims have inhabited Rakhine for centuries, and it is high time that Myanmar and its people come to terms with the historical reality of the existence of Rohingya Muslims in the Arakan or Rakhine state. Only then can one expect an honorable solution to this centuries-old problem of internal conflict in Myanmar and discrimination and persecution against the Rohingya.

[Rohingyas impediment to SDG achievement](#), **New Age Bangladesh** (July 27)

Speakers at a roundtable at the National Press Club said the large number Rohingyas have created crisis which will hinder the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. They said the Rohingya people are destroying the environment, putting pressure on the economy, causing security concerns and affecting the health sector.

Similar:

<http://unb.com.bd/category/Bangladesh/rohingyas-to-hinder-sdg-achievement-speakers/24470>

[Poribortok! Community Advocates Bring Positive Change in Rohingya Camps, Cox's Bazar Villages](#),

ReliefWeb (July 26)

IOM and PULSE Bangladesh have created a Community Advocates program among the refugee community in Cox's Bazar. So far, 400 Community Advocates have joined the initiative, which is part of a broader community mobilization to prevent gender-based violence (GBV) and to promote access to GBV services both in the camps and host communities.



Similar:

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/rohingya-crisis/2019/07/27/community-advocates-bring-positive-changes-in-rohingya-camps>

[China to help repatriate Rohingyas](#), *New Age Bangladesh* (July 25)

China will extend all possible cooperation to Bangladesh for the safe and dignified repatriation of Rohingyas to their homeland in Myanmar, said its outgoing ambassador to Bangladesh Zhang Zuo. 'I myself visited Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar. I saw the plight of the forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals and China will provide necessary support for their safe return,' he said during his farewell call on president Abdul Hamid.

[Security tightened as delegation visits Rohingya camps](#), *Deccan Herald* (July 25)

Security at Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh will be tightened during the visit of a high-level Myanmar delegation this weekend for repatriation talks. The delegation will meet with Rohingya leaders this weekend to inform them of measures they have taken for their return to Rakhine. Foreign Minister A.K. Abdul Momen has said he hopes that repatriation will begin in September.

Similar:

<https://www.mmtimes.com/news/myanmar-delegation-visit-coxs-bazar.html>

<https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-asean-team-visit-rohingyas-camp.html>

<https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/bengali/bangladesh-rohingya-07252019185428.html>

<http://www.newagebd.net/article/79792/myanmar-asean-teams-to-meet-rohingya-camps-over-repatriation>

<https://www.malaysiasun.com/news/261858928/myanmar-officials-to-visit-rohingya-camps-in-bangladesh>

<https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/rohingya-crisis/2019/07/26/myanmar-delegation-to-interact-with-rohingyas>

[Work more in Myanmar for Rohingya repatriation: Dhaka to UN](#), *The Independent Bangladesh* (July 25)

Bangladesh has requested the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and UN agencies to work more in Rakhine State of Myanmar to create a conducive environment there, so that Rohingyas can regain confidence to return their place of origin, as opposed to focusing their efforts in Bangladesh. The UN Secretary General and Foreign Minister Dr. Momen had a meeting in New York last week, during which the UN chief and the Foreign Minister discussed a number of specific issues to expedite the efforts of the international community.

Similar:

<https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/news/rohingya-return-rakhine-work-more-create-right-environment-1776760>

[Barred from jobs, Rohingya refugees eat up Bangladesh labour market: Study](#), *BDNews24* (July 25)

The Policy Research Institute (PRI) has published a study titled 'The Rohingya refugee crisis and its impact on the host community' with the support of UNDP, examining the market impacts of the refugee community's impact in Cox's Bazar. The study found that they have lowered wage rates for the local workforce, caused increases in the prices of essentials such as rice, and has increased the area's GDP.

Similar:

<https://www.thedailystar.net/city/news/rohingya-influx-caused-reduction-wages-host-community-report-1776967>

[Govt asks UN to include Rohingya relocation](#), *New Age Bangladesh* (July 25)

The Bangladesh government 'is unlikely to support the UN agencies in accumulating funds' unless they incorporate relocation of the Rohingya people to Bhashan Char in the joint response plan, foreign secretary M Shahidul Haque said at a meeting of the national task force on the Rohingya crisis.

[Foreign minister: Rohingyas staying longer may create political uncertainty](#), *Dhaka Tribune* (July 25)

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen has said that if the Rohingya refugees stay in Bangladesh any longer, it might lead to political uncertainty, including a rise in terrorism and extremism in the region, and that he is optimistic for repatriation to begin soon.

Similar:

<https://www.thedailystar.net/rohingya-crisis/news/rohingya-repatriation-soon-amid-mounting-pressure-myanmar-hopes-foreign-minister-1777276>

<http://www.dailyindustry.news/rohingya-repatriation-begin-un-general-assembly/>

[ICC prosecutor's request to investigate Rohingya atrocities](#), The Daily Observer (July 25)

[op-ed] In examining the recent Authorization Request submitted by the ICC Office of the Prosecutor to the Pre-Trial Chamber on the crimes against the Rohingya, a number of concerns arise. Given the unpredictable nature of the ICC, the future direction of the Authorization Request is not quite clear. The much-criticized recent experience of the ICC Afghanistan Decision makes many doubtful of the future of this Authorization Request. However, the earlier decision on jurisdiction and the relentless efforts of the OTP have made us optimistic of the outcome of the process. There seems to be a light at the end of the tunnel of justice, but the length of the tunnel is still uncertain.

[Satellite images show Myanmar's 'minimal preparations' for Rohingya return: think-tank](#), Reuters (July 24)

According to a new report released by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), Myanmar has made "minimal" preparations for the return of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslim refugees sheltering in neighboring Bangladesh, despite the country saying it is ready to start repatriation. While authorities have promised to resettle the refugees, analysis of satellite imagery shows "no sign of reconstruction" in the overwhelming majority of their former settlements while, in some areas, destruction of residential buildings has continued.

Similar:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/southasia/2019/07/satellite-images-show-ongoing-destruction-rohingya-settlements-190724111501684.html>

<https://nypost.com/2019/07/24/satellite-images-show-myanmar-has-made-minimal-preparations-for-rohingya-return/>

<https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/rohingya-repatriation-myanmars-intentions-under-question-1776577>

<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50627240/myanmar-not-fully-ready-for-rohingya-return-report/>

[Myanmar not ready to take Rohingyas: UN envoy](#), New Age Bangladesh (July 24)

Christine Burgener has been visiting Dhaka after a 10-day tour of Myanmar from July 9-18. She has shared with the foreign secretary that, based on what she saw during her tour, the country is not ready to take back the Rohingya.

[WFP to provide aid to flood-hit people of Bangladesh](#), New Age Bangladesh (July 24)

The World Food Program is working with the government of Bangladesh to help more than 275,000 people affected by flooding in the country's northwest. The government of Bangladesh says that more than 2 million people have been affected in nearly one-third of Bangladesh's 64 districts.

Similar:

<https://www.unb.com.bd/category/Bangladesh/wfp-working-with-bangladesh-to-help-275-lakh-flood-affected-people/24174>

[Rohingya refugees regreen deforested land on Myanmar's border](#), The New Arab (July 23)

Where a year ago there were only the desolate remains of a forest scythed from hills to house hundreds of thousands in the world's largest refugee camp, today there are initiatives underway to rehabilitate the natural environment in Cox's Bazar. These initiatives include micro-farms, established by Rohingya refugees and supported by international organizations (IOs) and NGOs. Additionally, IOs are engaging in a re-greening project, where saplings are planted around the camps in hopes of reducing water run-off. These projects will hopefully reduce the

risk of landslides and floods, and will assist with replenishing the aquifers that provide drinking water to refugees and host communities in Cox's Bazar.

[Deadly floods continue to torment millions as Oxfam responds](#), ReliefWeb (July 23)

Deadly floods and landslides have killed 230 people and forced over 12 million more from their homes in the region. India, Nepal and Bangladesh have experienced some of the worst floods in years, threatening millions more. Oxfam has moved in to support over 360,000 people in these countries with food, clean drinking water, emergency shelter, toilets and hygiene kits. Oxfam has already conducted immediate needs assessments and is now providing emergency assistance in the worst-hit areas.

[ASEAN can no longer turn a blind eye to Myanmar's atrocities](#), AlJazeera (July 22)

[op-ed] ASEAN has had minimal public discussion regarding the Rohingya. Most recently, ASEAN leaders at the 34th ASEAN Summit in Bangkok reaffirmed their commitment to a more visible and enhanced role to support Myanmar in providing humanitarian assistance, facilitating the repatriation process, and finding a comprehensive and durable solution to address the root causes of the conflict. While such a consultative approach has allowed ASEAN to continue engaging with Myanmar, the disconnect between the recent ASEAN report and what is required for repatriation is extremely worrying. For repatriation to work, ASEAN must do more to convince Myanmar to truly collaborate with Bangladesh and UN agencies.

[Humanitarian Aid: €10.5 million for South and South East Asia](#), ReliefWeb (July 22)

To help the most affected communities in South and South East Asia hit by natural disasters and humanitarian crises, the European Commission has mobilized a new humanitarian funding package worth €10.5 million. This includes €1.5 million in emergency aid for the victims of ongoing monsoons in India and Bangladesh. The remaining funds will be provided in Nepal and the Philippines as well as for disaster risk reduction initiatives in the region.

Similar:

<https://news.mb.com.ph/2019/07/25/european-commission-gives-ph-e3-million-worth-of-humanitarian-aid/>
<https://www.outlookindia.com/newsscroll/eu-allocates-85-million-euros-for-people-affected-by-natural-calamities-in-south-and-se-asia/1581970>

[Rohingya crisis: Dhaka seeks Nam, Asean member states' role](#), Dhaka Tribune (July 22)

Bangladesh's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Masud Bin Momen, has urged the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and ASEAN to remain engaged so that Myanmar authorities do not fail to take back Rohingyas at NAM's Ministerial Meeting in Venezuela.

[ICC Delegation Head Wraps up Visit to Bangladesh, Rohingya Camps](#), Radio Free Asia (July 22)

The ICC Office of the Prosecutor has wrapped up a six-day trip to Bangladesh as part of preparations for a potential ICC investigation into alleged crimes against humanity against Rohingya by Myanmar's military. During their visit, the ICC team met with refugees at Rohingya camps.

Similar:

<https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/bengali/bangladesh-rohingya-07222019180837.html>

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/>

