

Developments related to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh

October 14 - October 20, 2019



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Highlights:

Camp Conditions:

- Bangladesh's refugee commissioner has said thousands of Rohingya living in the Cox's Bazar camps have agreed to move to Bhashan Char island in the Bay of Bengal, despite fears of isolation and flooding. Relocation to the island is set to begin in November.

Accountability:

- On 18 October, a conclave of international experts was held in The Hague to discuss justice and accountability for the Rohingya.
- The Gambia is set to file charges against Myanmar at the International Court of Justice, formally accusing the Myanmar authorities of the crime of genocide.

Repatriation:

- Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said a new list of around 50,000 Rohingyas has been handed over to Myanmar to expedite Rohingya repatriation efforts

High-level Statements:

- Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen spent the last week in Germany, where he called on the government to place pressure on Myanmar to ensure that conditions for the return of Rohingya refugees are met.
- Abdul Majid Khan, Member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee of the Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said at the UNGA that the UN should ensure that Myanmar guarantees the human rights of Rohingyas.
- Speakers at a conference on the Rohingya hosted by the European Parliament urged the international community and the European Union to take stronger action to stop the persecution and atrocities against the Rohingya in Myanmar.

Developments:

[Gambia set to sue Myanmar in the ICJ for Rohingya genocide](#), Dhaka Tribune (20 October)

Gambia is all set to take Myanmar to the International Court of Justice to face charges of genocide against its Rohingya minority. The charges, which will be filed by the Gambian Ministry of Justice's legal team, will be the first time the Myanmar authorities will be formally accused of the crime of genocide at the International Court of Justice.

Similar:

[Genocide: Gambia to file case against Myanmar at ICJ](#), The Daily Star (20 Oct.)

[Bangladesh says thousands of Rohingya agree to relocation to island](#), Al Jazeera English (20 October)

Bangladesh's refugee commissioner has said thousands of Rohingya living in the refugee camps have agreed to move to an island in the Bay of Bengal, despite fears the site is prone to flooding.

Similar:

[Rohingya refugees agree move to Bangladesh island: official](#), France24 (20 Oct.)

[Rohingya Refugees to Move to Flood-Prone Bangladesh Island](#), Voice of America (20 Oct.)

[Thousands of Rohingya refugees to be transported to flood-prone Bangladeshi island](#), The Telegraph (20 Oct.)

[Rohingya refugees agree move to Bangladesh island](#), Gulf Times (20 Oct.)

[Bangladesh to move Rohingya to flood-prone island next month](#), Reuters (20 Oct.)

[Japan: Hold Myanmar to Account for Atrocities](#), Human Rights Watch (19 October)

Human Rights Watch has issued a statement ahead of a conference sponsored by the Japan External Trade Organization at which Aung San Suu Kyi is slated to speak. HRW is calling on the Japanese government to publicly hold Myanmar to account for military atrocities committed against Rohingya and other ethnic minorities. HRW also said that Japan should discourage Japanese investment that would benefit the military or at the expense of minority groups.

[Dhaka to UN: Myanmar must guarantee Rohingyas' human rights for repatriation](#), Dhaka Tribune (19 October)

At the Third Committee meeting of the 74th UNGA, Abdul Majid Khan, Member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee of the Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs, conveyed to the United Nations that Myanmar must guarantee the human rights of Rohingyas and take confidence building measures to create a conducive environment for their return to their place of origin in Rakhine State.

Similar:

[Myanmar must guarantee rights of Rohingyas](#), The Daily Star (20 Oct.)

[Experts call for ending culture of impunity](#), New Age Bangladesh (19 October)

International experts at a conclave in The Hague have underscored the importance of the United Nations, relevant member states and regional bodies, and the role they each play in find a long-term, viable and acceptable solution to the Rohingya crisis. The Hague conclave on justice and accountability for the Rohingya discussed critical issues for the international community to take into consideration and sought steps to end the culture of impunity enjoyed by Myanmar authorities.

Similar:

[The Hague Conclave on Justice and Accountability for the Rohingya held](#), Dhaka Tribune (19 Oct.)

[Rohingya crisis: Experts call for ending culture of impunity](#), United News of Bangladesh (19 Oct.)

[Justice and accountability for Rohingyas](#), The New Nation (14 Oct.)

[Rohingya Repatriation: Dhaka urges Berlin to put pressure on Myanmar](#), United News of Bangladesh (19 Oct.)

Bangladesh has urged Germany to put pressure on Myanmar so that they can start taking back their nationals, noting that not a single Rohingya has been repatriated over the last two years. Foreign Minister Dr. AK Abdul Momen made the call during his meeting with German Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs Heiko Maas in Berlin.

Similar:

[Rohingya crisis: Bangladesh exhorts Germany to put pressure on Myanmar](#), BDNews24 (19 Oct.)

[Dhaka seeks Berlin's support on Rohingya issue](#), Dhaka Tribune (19 Oct.)

[Rohingya Crisis: Dhaka urges Berlin to put pressure on Myanmar](#), Prothom Alo English (19 Oct.)

[Dhaka seeks Berlin's help](#), The Daily Star (20 Oct.)

[Momen seeks German investment in Bangladesh](#), Dhaka Tribune (18 October)

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, on his first official visit to Germany, has invited German enterprises to invest in Bangladesh for a win-win scenario. Momen also explained the Rohingya crisis to the international audience and called for a more active role in solving the crisis urgently.

Similar:

[Foreign Minister calls upon German businesses to invest in Bangladesh](#), The Daily Star (18 Oct.)

[No One Knows International Law's Failures Better Than the Rohingyas](#), The Atlantic (19 Oct.)

[op-ed] In the reams that have been written about the plight of the Rohingyas, chronic and utter disenfranchisement is the most consistent thread. The community is, by and large, on its own, with dwindling numbers of supporters on the international stage, and grandiose talk of worldwide relief and international law and justice accompanied by little to no action. The Rohingyas now have only two real options left: to resign themselves to life here—by some measures the world's densest refugee camp—and rely on global compassion that was eroding, or demand that their rights be upheld in Myanmar (by a government whose army has sought to slaughter them) and then return home.

[Rohingya crisis deepens poverty of local population](#), Prothom Alo English (19 October)

According to the Global Report on Food Crises 2019, local residents of Teknaf and Ukhia upazilas are having to dig deep into their savings for the sake of survival. The influx of Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar has led to forests, drinking water, and cropland being destroyed in the district. Local populations are on the verge of a food crisis. The report was prepared jointly by eight organisations including the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the International Food Policy Research Institute, USAID, World Food Programme, the European Union and UNICEF.

[Rohingyas won't be given forestland: Standing Committee](#), United News of Bangladesh (18 Oct.)

Saber Hossain Chowdhury, chief of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Environment, Forest and Climate Change, said that no more forestland would be given to the Rohingyas staying at camps in the district. "Bangladesh has suffered massive loss because of the Rohingyas. Environment and biodiversity were affected the most and it's not possible to overcome the loss," he told reporters after the eighth meeting of the Standing Committee.

[Rohingya Settlements: 8,000 acres of forests razed](#), The Daily Star (18 October)

Rohingya settlements have severely damaged biodiversity and depleted over 8,000 acres of reserved forest in Cox's Bazar. The damage is equivalent to a loss of over Tk 2,420 crore, said a report of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

Similar:

[Forests of Cox's Bazar: JS body for proper assessment of damage](#), The Daily Star (19 Oct.)

[Committee to determine impact of Rohingya camps on environment](#), Prothom Alo English (19 Oct.)

[JS body for assessment of Cox's Bazar environmental damage](#), New Age Bangladesh (19 Oct.)

[4 killed in separate 'shootouts' with Border Guards Bangladesh, police](#), BDNews24 (18 October)

Four people have been killed in so-called shootouts involving Border Guards Bangladesh troopers and police across Bangladesh. The dead include two suspected yaba traders from the Rohingya community who died in a crossfire between BGB troopers and drug traffickers in Cox's Bazar.

Similar:

[Bangladesh border guards shoot, kill Indian soldier: official](#), Asian Correspondent (17 Oct.)

[Four including two Rohingyas die in 'gunfights'](#), New Age Bangladesh (18 Oct.)

[2 Rohingyas among 4 killed in 'gunfights'](#), Dhaka Tribune (18 Oct.)

[4 'criminals' including 2 Rohingyas killed in separate 'gunfights'](#), The Daily Star (18 Oct.)

[Four killed in 'shootouts' in one night](#), The Daily Star (19 Oct.)

[Feedback center helps Rohingya refugees communicate needs in Bangladesh camps](#), International Organization for Migration (18 October)

Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees have sought shelter in the Cox's Bazar's camps since August 2017 and while conditions on the ground have gradually improved, many have struggled to communicate their needs to the humanitarian community. This has often led to a top-down approach to humanitarian work that has negatively affected service delivery and left beneficiaries under-represented. A newly designed and upgraded Complaint, Feedback and Response Mechanism at IOM-managed camps is addressing this problem by organizing both individual and group feedback meetings and opening kiosks where residents can make their views known.

[UAE-backed project bringing light to lives of Rohingya refugees](#), The National (18 October)

Dozens of solar street lamps have been installed in the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar by Sunna Design, a French company which was among the winners at last year's Zayed Sustainability Prize, an international award to inspire renewable energy projects. A total of 75 lampposts were used to light the streets surrounding 1,500 accommodations inhabited by 8,000 people. It is hoped that the increased lighting will improve security in the camps, as previously many women found themselves prone to abuse and attacks when stepping outside their tents in the dark.

[Systems and patterns are emerging in the Rohingya camps](#), BDNews24 (18 October)

An aerial view of the refugee camps in Bangladesh may look haphazard and chaotic, but specific systems and patterns are developing, especially the positioning of establishments, including shops, mosques, learning centers, and NGO offices. What is alarming is the absence of police and army surveillance in the camps. From 4pm to 8am the next day, there is no police or army patrol in the area. Locals are jittery about the situation, one even going as far as to say, "In the morning it's Bangladesh, in the evening it's Myanmar."

[Early Rohingya return better for Bangladesh](#), The Independent Bangladesh (17 October)

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stressed the need for the quick repatriation of displaced Rohingyas to their place of origin in Rakhine State of Myanmar. The Prime Minister made the remark during the visit of a seven-member delegation of the Asian Development Bank.

Similar:

'Early return of Rohingyas better for Bangladesh', Dhaka Tribune (16 Oct.)

[Rohingyas bypass government ban on mobile services with MPT SIM](#), Dhaka Tribune (17 October)

A significant number of Rohingyas living in the refugee camps of Ukhiya and Teknaf areas in Cox's Bazar have been using Myanmar state telecom's SIM cards for their daily telecommunication needs. Myanmar SIM cards have gained popularity in many areas near Rohingya camps after the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission curtailed 3G and 4G internet services inside the refugee camps.

[Raising awareness of the international human rights of the Rohingya](#), Global News (17 October)

[video] Yasmin Ullah from the Rohingya Human Rights Network tells Global News about the latest in the refugee crisis and persecution in Myanmar.

[USC doctor finds evidence of human rights abuses, alleged war crimes against Rohingya refugees](#), USC News (17 October)

Through interviews with Rohingya refugees who fled Myanmar, USC emergency physician Parveen Parmar and others document brutal attacks against the Muslim minority group.

[Health access denied in northern Rakhine](#), Frontier Myanmar (17 October)

[op-ed] There are many examples of suffering and unnecessary death caused by inadequate healthcare in northern Rakhine. After the crisis of 2017, the situation became critical, but it has worsened further in northern as well as

central Rakhine since fighting escalated this year between the Tatmadaw and the Arakan Army. Much more needs to be done, especially in primary healthcare, reproductive health services, immunization and emergency support, for those in need.

[8 Rohingyas held from Rajbari](#), Dhaka Tribune (17 October)

Police have arrested eight Rohingyas from Goalanda Bus Terminal area at Goalanda upazila of Rajbari. All of them were registered at Kutupalong Rohingya camp in Cox's Bazar.

Similar:

[8 Rohingyas held in Goalanda](#), The Daily Star (17 Oct.)

[A roadmap for sustainable solutions to the Rohingya crisis](#), The Daily Star (17 October)

The Daily Star, in association with North South University, organized a roundtable titled "A roadmap for sustainable solution to the Rohingya crisis". This article provides a summary of the discussion.

[European Parliament calls for stronger international action to end atrocities against Rohingya](#), Kuwait News Agency (16 October)

Speakers at a conference on Rohingya hosted by the European Parliament urged the international community and the European Union specifically to take stronger action to stop the persecution and atrocities against the Rohingya community in Myanmar.

[Rebels dressed as soccer players abduct bus passengers in Myanmar](#), BDNews24 (16 October)

Gunmen dressed in soccer uniforms halted an express bus on a main highway in Myanmar's troubled Rakhine State and kidnapped 31 people, most of them firefighters. The gunmen have been identified as members of the Arakan Army.

Similar:

[Myanmar's Rakhine Conflict Takes Toll on Firefighters, Police](#), Radio Free Asia (15 Oct.)

[Security forces search for 31 seized civilians](#), Myanmar Times (16 Oct.)

[Rebels Dressed as Soccer Players Abduct Bus Passengers in Myanmar](#), New York Times (13 Oct.)

[FM embarks on Europe tour; focus on economic diplomacy](#), United News of Bangladesh (16 October)

Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen has begun his visit to a number of European countries to speak about boosting exports to the European market. The Rohingya issue will also be raised in meetings with European countries.

[How Myanmar covered up ethnic cleansing](#), BDNews24 (16 October)

The Myanmar government allowed a group of New York Times journalists to visit Rakhine state. They visited an internment camp in Sittwe where 120,000 Rohingyas have been stuck since 2012, and Inn Din, where a massacre of 10 Rohingyas took place. During the entire trip the journalists were escorted by minders who "all did their part to try to feed us the official story". They were also provided with a news conference on preparations for Rohingya returns, however the journalists determined that "it was a charade. As we left the building, officials flipped off the lights. A generator juddered to a stop. Men slipped out of their uniforms. The computers, supposedly meant to document all the returning Rohingyas, were never even turned on."

[Myanmar's Arakan Army is Recruiting and Training to Fight Government](#), Voice of America (16 October)

New recruits are joining groups such as the Arakan Army which has set up training camps in Kachin state, home to fellow Northern Alliance member, the Kachin Independence Army. The Arakan Army formed in 2009 and is currently fighting in Rakhine State against government forces in ongoing skirmishes that have escalated in recent months, amid faltering ceasefire talks.



[Myanmar might finally be held accountable for genocide, but the court case must recognize sexual violence](#), The Conversation (15 October)

[op-ed] At the UN General Assembly last month, the Gambia announced it would take the Myanmar government to the International Court of Justice for the genocide of the Rohingya. Myanmar might finally be held accountable, but defending the Rohingya from genocide shouldn't just be left to the global Islamic community. They need to be joined by countries with an interest in reducing the sexual and gender-based violence at the core of the Tatmadaw's genocidal campaign.

[Bangladesh imposes more restrictions on Rohingya refugees](#), Al Jazeera (15 October)

[video] The government of Bangladesh has recently put severe restrictions on Rohingya refugees from Myanmar including that many have had their mobile phones taken away and some Rohingya children have been forced to drop out of Bangladeshi schools.

[Fresh list of 50,000 Rohingyas handed to Myanmar: Foreign minister](#), The Daily Star (15 October)

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen today said a new list of around 50,000 Rohingyas has been handed over to Myanmar to expedite Rohingya repatriation efforts.

Similar:

[Myanmar gets fresh list of 50,000 Rohingyas for verification](#), United News of Bangladesh (15 Oct.)

[New list of 50,000 Rohingyas handed to Myanmar: minister](#), The Independent Bangladesh (16 Oct.)

[Bangladesh hands over list of 50,000 Rohingyas to Myanmar for verification](#), Dhaka Tribune (15 Oct.)

[Bangladesh provides Myanmar with 50,000 names for repatriation](#), The Phnom Penh (18 Oct.)

[Bangladesh gives Myanmar new list of Rohingya refugees](#), Peninsula Qatar (16 Oct.)

[Myanmar denies using landmines along Bangladesh-Myanmar border areas](#), Dhaka Tribune (14 October)

Myanmar has denied all allegations of using landmines along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border areas during a regional commander-level meeting with Border Guard Bangladesh at Regional Headquarters in Cox's Bazar. A memorandum of understanding was also signed during the meeting to keep good relations between the countries intact.

[Mustafa Kamal seeks ADB cooperation for Rohingya repatriation](#), New Age Bangladesh (14 October)

Finance minister AHM Mustafa Kamal said that Bangladesh has sought cooperation from the Asian Development Bank for repatriating Rohingyas to their homeland in Rakhine State of Myanmar. He also said that the government was facing problems in tackling the Rohingyas in a densely populated country like Bangladesh.

[Rohingya youth butchered in Cox's Bazar](#), Dhaka Tribune (14 October)

A Rohingya youth had been butchered at the Ukhiya Rohingya camp in Cox's Bazar. The deceased, 25, was killed over a feud with another refugee over the harassment of a girl.

Similar:

[Rohingya youth killed over stalking of girl](#), New Age Bangladesh (15 Oct.)

[Rohingya man killed in Ukhiya camp](#), The Daily Star (15 Oct.)

[The neglected 'Bihari' community in Bangladesh](#), Deutsche Welle (14 October)

While the international community is focused on the plight of Rohingya refugees, not many in the world are aware of the ordeal of Bihari Muslims, who migrated from India in 1947. According to local NGOs working for Bihari welfare, around 400,000 members of the community live in camps in Bangladesh. Recent data released by the government of Bangladesh revealed that most Biharis are currently housed in 116 camps in the country's 13 different districts. They face many challenges relating to access to documentation, education, work and integration.



[Bangladesh concerned about fallout from India's citizen register](#), The Straits Times (14 October)

India has sought to reassure Bangladesh that the move to update the National Register of Citizens in the eastern Indian state of Assam is its "internal matter". However, it has failed to allay Bangladesh's concerns over potential bilateral and domestic repercussions of the controversial exercise, which may see some of those eventually declared stateless crossing over the border into Bangladesh. "There is widespread apprehension among Bangladeshis that the NRC process is essentially geared towards expulsion of Muslims living in India who are unable to prove their nationality," Mr. Tariq A. Karim, a former Bangladeshi high commissioner to India, told The Straits Times.

Similar:

[Will NRC be a wedge in India-Bangladesh ties?](#), The Telegraph (15 Oct.) [op-ed]

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/>

