

Developments related to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh

October 7- October 13, 2019



REFUGEE SOLIDARITY
NETWORK

Highlights:

Camp Conditions:

- Two refugees were killed this week in Teknaf, Cox's Bazar by Bangladesh security forces. More than a dozen Rohingya refugees have been killed in recent weeks.

Conditions in Myanmar:

- Myanmar faces calls from rights groups to release 30 Rohingya men, women and children arrested in September while trying to travel from Rakhine state to the city of Yangon. A total of 21 Rohingya face up to two years in jail under Myanmar's Residents of Burma Registration Act.

International Justice and Accountability:

- Experts will meet at an international conclave on the Rohingya crisis to be held in The Hague, Netherlands on 18 October with the intent of bringing the issue of justice and accountability for Rohingyas into focus.

Developments:

[Raise voice for Rohingya repatriation: Finance Minister to ADB](#), United News of Bangladesh (13 October)
Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal has requested the representatives of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to raise their voices for the quick repatriation of Rohingyas. ADB representatives have also visited the Rohingyas camps.

Similar:

[Finance minister to ADB: Raise voice for Rohingyas repatriation](#), Dhaka Tribune (13 Oct.)

[Rebels Dressed as Soccer Players Abduct Bus Passengers in Myanmar](#), The New York Times (13 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 authorities have said. The armed men were identified as members of a rebel group called the Arakan Army.

[Bangladesh forces kill more than a dozen Rohingya refugees](#), Al Jazeera (13 October)
Security forces in Bangladesh have killed more than a dozen Rohingya refugees in recent weeks. Police say they were suspected of being involved in the murder of a politician, but rights groups dispute that claim.

[Two killed in 'gunfight'](#), The Daily Star (13 October)
Two suspected drug peddlers, including a Rohingya man, were killed in a "gunfight" with police in Cox's Bazar early yesterday, hours after their arrest.

Similar:

[Rohingya among 2 killed in Teknaf 'gunfight'](#), Dhaka Tribune (12 Oct.)

[Rohingya drug suspect among two killed in Teknaf shootout](#), BDNews24 (12 Oct.)

[Rohingya man among 2 killed in alleged gunfight](#), Prothom Alo English (12 Oct.)

[A holistic approach to understanding genocide and mass violence](#), Dhaka Tribune (12 October)

[op-ed] The word “genocide” loses its meaning when it is translated into Bengali as “gonohatya”, because if it is retranslated into English it becomes “mass killing”. Imtiaz Ahmed, editor of *Genocide and Mass Violence: Politics of singularity*, sheds light on the fact that these two words carry different meanings in his new book. Divided into three sections for different categories of events—“1971 Genocide”, “Genocide on the Rohingya” and “Preventing Violent Extremism and Radicalization”—this book mainly focuses on how the politics of singularity works to make society and nation intolerant and thus provokes people to carry out violent acts of all sorts, which may lead to “genocide” and “mass killing”.

[International Conclave on Rohingya refugee crisis](#), Dhaka Tribune (12 October)

In an effort to help establish justice and accountability for Rohingya refugees, an international conclave is to take place in the Hague, in the Netherlands, on October 18, 2019.

Similar:

[International conclave on justice for Rohingyas in Hague on 18 October](#), United News of Bangladesh (12 Oct.)

[International conclave on justice, accountability for Rohingyas in Hague](#), United News of Bangladesh (8 Oct.)

[Tackling the global refugee crisis](#), The Daily Star (12 October)

[op-ed] Bangladesh, itself struggling to cope with high levels of poverty and population density, has been hosting Rohingya refugees from Myanmar for nearly three decades. There are more than a million Rohingya refugees in Cox’s Bazar now. The sad reality is that many of the refugees often live in miserable conditions in “prison-like” camps that lack clean water, food and healthcare. They are not allowed to leave the camp and thus find themselves trapped in squalid conditions, suffering from hunger, disease, and desperation. While host countries are trying their best to support, assist and protect them, the attitude of the rich nations regarding responsibility-sharing and refugee resettlement remains a question.

[Rohingya Refugees Who Returned to Myanmar on Their Own Say They Still Face Hardship](#), Radio Free Asia (11 October)

Some of the hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees who fled a brutal military-led crackdown in Myanmar’s Rakhine state in 2017 and sought refuge in neighboring Bangladesh say they have not been able to go back to their original villages after returning to Rakhine of their own volition. About 300 refugees who returned to Rakhine state of their own volition say they still face unfavorable conditions that persecute them and prevent them from being able to live in their original villages, which were burned down during the crackdown.

[Rohingyas should be educated in their mother tongue: Dipu Moni](#), New Age Bangladesh (11 October)

Education Minister Dipu Moni has said the Rohingya people in Bangladesh should be educated in their mother tongue language. She made the comment at a seminar to launch the Global Education Monitoring Report 2019. The report said that among the top 10 countries hosting refugees, all but Bangladesh include the refugees in the national education system. Bangladesh has been reluctant to support non-UN agencies providing language services for Rohingya refugees.

[Myanmar jails 21 Rohingya, detains children, for trying to travel](#), Al Jazeera (11 October)

Twenty-one Rohingya adults in Myanmar were jailed last week for two years under a law that bars using false identity cards after a one-day trial in which they were reportedly denied a lawyer, Human Rights Watch said. The Rohingya, who are mostly Muslim, are frequently arrested for attempting to leave Rakhine state, where tens of thousands have been living in camps since fleeing their homes after communal riots in 2012. Those living in villages outside the camps also face severe restrictions on leaving their townships while their mostly Buddhist-Rakhine neighbors are allowed to move more freely.



Similar:

[Five-year-old boy among 30 Rohingya arrested for travelling in Myanmar](#), The Guardian (10 Oct.)

[Rape in Rohingya camp: Accused soldiers to be sacked, jailed if found guilty](#), Dhaka Tribune (11 October)

“If the army men, who have been accused of raping a Rohingya girl in Cox’s Bazar are found to be guilty, they will not only be sacked, but will also be sent to civil jail,” Bangladesh Army Chief of Staff General Aziz Ahmed has said. “Whatever the army does, it always maintains complete transparency.” He also said seven Rohingya camps would be fenced with barbed wire.

[Bangladesh seeks help on Rohingya refugees repatriation](#), Khmer Times (11 October)

Bangladesh has requested Cambodia’s help to encourage Myanmar to take more proactive steps in repatriating about a million Rohingya refugees who fled the conflict in Rakhine State.

[Congressional Delegation Visits Bangladesh with CARE to See the Impact of US Investments in Nutrition](#), CARE International (11 October)

Representatives Dwight Evans (D-PA) and Andy Levin (D-MI) traveled to Bangladesh with CARE to see how vital US investments in combatting malnutrition and stunting are helping to build more resilient and healthy Bangladeshi and refugee communities.

[End of Rohingya crisis a must for Bangladesh’s development](#), New Age Bangladesh (11 October)

Bangladesh has urged the international community to make ‘proactive steps’ to resolve the Rohingya crisis to enable Bangladesh to carry on its development efforts. “This crisis must be resolved so that we can carry forward our development,” said Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN Masud Bin Momen in New York

[Youth Clubs Help Rohingya Children Cope With Problems in Refugee Camps](#), Forbes (10 October)

UNICEF partner organization CODEC has established youth clubs in order to reach 500,000 Rohingya refugee children. In addition to being platforms through which UNICEF can provide crucial information about some of the dangers of life in the camps, the clubs give children a space to discuss their lives as refugees.

Similar:

[Youth Clubs Help Rohingya Children Cope With Problems in Refugee Camps](#), UNICEF (9 Oct.)

[International community failed to influence Myanmar on the Rohingya crisis](#), Dhaka Tribune (10 October)

At a press meeting organized by the Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Mia Seppo, the UN Resident Coordinator recognized the international community’s failure to influence Myanmar in taking back the Rohingyas and find a sustainable solution to the Rohingya crisis. Seppo additionally said that the “UN alone cannot be blamed; there is a collective failure to influence Myanmar.”

Similar:

[UN says Rohingya crisis down to ‘collective failure’ to influence Myanmar](#), BDNews24 (9 Oct.)

[UN urged to spend more on repatriation, less on probes](#), Myanmar Times (10 October)

The Myanmar government urged the United Nations to spend more money on the repatriation of hundreds of thousands of northern Rakhine refugees from Bangladesh instead of on investigating alleged human rights abuses by the Tatmadaw (military). Daw Hmway Hmway Khyne, Myanmar’s deputy permanent representative to the UN, chided the world body for spending \$35 million on seven bodies investigating Myanmar, including the International Fact-Finding Mission.



[UK pledges a further £87 million](#), The Daily Star (10 October)

The UK has pledged further support of £30 million for mitigating the Rohingya crisis, to help with food, healthcare, sanitation and counselling for victims of sexual violence. The UK's International Development Minister Baroness Sugg announced the aid support, on top of the UK's recent pledge of £87 million, during a visit to Bangladesh last week.

Similar:

[Rohingya Crisis: Another Tk310 crore aid from the UK](#), Dhaka Tribune (9 Oct.)

[International Development Minister announces new UK aid to support 1.2 million people living in Cox's Bazar](#), ReliefWeb (9 Oct.)

[The Rohingya people want to go home, but only when their return can be safe](#), The Times (9 October)

[op-ed] I have just returned from Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. In 2017 more than 700,000 Rohingya fled there from Myanmar to escape violence. Nearly a million people are now living there in refugee camps, and it's hard to imagine a crisis on that scale until you see it for yourself.

[India to stand by Bangladesh in resolving the Rohingya crisis](#), Weekly Blitz (9 October)

During the recent visit of the Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, her Indian counterpart Prime Minister Narendra Modi has assured of helping Bangladesh in initiating greater efforts to facilitate the safe return of over one million Rohingya refugees who fled genocide in Myanmar and taken refuge in Bangladesh.

[Abe meets Myanmar military chief](#), NHK World-Japan (9 October)

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has called on Myanmar's military chief to address allegations of human rights violations against minority Rohingya Muslims. On Wednesday in Tokyo, Abe held a meeting with the Commander-in-Chief of Myanmar's Defense Services, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

[Myanmar: Rohingya Jailed for Traveling](#), Human Rights Watch (8 October)

Myanmar authorities should immediately release 30 Rohingya Muslims detained for attempting to travel from Rakhine State to the city of Yangon, Human Rights Watch said today. The government should lift all travel restrictions on ethnic Rohingya and repeal discriminatory regulations that limit their right to freedom of movement.

Similar:

[Freedom of movement: HRW demands release of 30 Rohingyas held in Myanmar](#), The Daily Star (11 Oct.)

[Detained Muslims should be immediately released – Human Rights Watch](#), BNI Multimedia Group (10 Oct.)

[Detained Muslims should be immediately released – HRW](#), Mizzima (10 Oct.)

[Rohingya crisis deepens poverty among locals: World Bank](#), The Daily Star (8 October)

The influx of Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar has raised poverty rates among the host population by approximately 52 percent owing to reduction in daily wages, said a World Bank report released yesterday.

[A Simple Way To Make Toilets Friendlier For Women in Refugee Camps](#), NPR (8 October)

[op-ed] Last month, I discovered a wonderful innovation in an oppressive place — the Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, I saw latrines that had been thoughtfully constructed to serve another type of user: the toilets met the unique needs of pregnant women.

[UNHCR: Anti-Refugee and Migrant Sentiment Threaten Battle to End Statelessness](#), Voice of America (8 October)

The U.N. refugee agency warns the battle to stamp out global statelessness is being threatened by growing anti-refugee and migrant sentiment, as well as rising nationalism. The UNHCR says solutions are urgently needed for millions without citizenship or at risk of becoming stateless around the world. The scale of the problem is particularly overwhelming for the more than one million Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and millions more still living in Myanmar.



[The Rohingya Plight at the ICC – Overcoming the Current Challenges for a Stronger Court](#), Coalition for the International Criminal Court (8 October)

[op-ed] On September 6 2019, Pre-Trial Chamber (PTC) I of the International Criminal Court (ICC) handed down a majority decision, ruling that the Court may exercise its jurisdiction over the alleged deportation of the Rohingya people from Myanmar to Bangladesh. Following the decision, the ICC Prosecutor filed a request before ICC PTC III, seeking authorization to initiate a formal investigation into alleged crimes committed against the Rohingya people of Myanmar. While the PTC III decision is still pending, a ruling granting the Prosecutor's request not only has the potential of representing a significant milestone for the Court but would also serve as a reminder of the critical challenges currently being faced by the ICC.

[China walks political tightrope in Myanmar](#), Nikkei Asian Review (8 October)

[op-ed] China's realpolitik carries risks. The military's problematic record in handling ethnic conflicts and the Rohingya crisis have deeply alienated the international community. Beijing's steadfast defense of Myanmar -- particularly in the United Nations Security Council -- has enabled China to regain Myanmar's favor, reflected in a slew of new economic projects. In the longer term, however, it could undermine these investments and China's international standing.

[India, Bangladesh call for safe return of Rakhine refugees](#), Myanmar Times (7 October)

The prime ministers of India and Bangladesh have agreed on the need for greater efforts to facilitate the safe return of hundreds of thousands of Muslim refugees from northern Rakhine who have fled violence in Myanmar and taken refuge in Bangladesh.

Similar:

[India, Bangladesh Stress Safe Return of Rohingya Refugees](#), Voice of America (5 Oct.)

[Urgent solutions needed for Rohingyas: UNHCR](#), The Independent Bangladesh (7 October)

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi has said solutions are urgently needed for millions without citizenship or at the risk of statelessness around the world, including Myanmar's Rohingya. Grandi warned that recent advances in the battle to end statelessness -- a leading cause of human rights deprivation for millions of people worldwide -- were being imperiled by a rise in damaging forms of nationalism.

Similar:

[UNHCR: Solutions urgently needed for Rohingya, million others](#), Dhaka Tribune (7 Oct.)

[UNHCR: Global Forced Displacement Crisis Must be Addressed and Resolved](#), Voice of America (7 Oct.)

[UN, NGOs accused of bungling effort to educate Rohingya children](#), Al Jazeera (7 October)

On May 13, a group of Rohingya refugee education leaders had the rare chance to ask some of the questions that had been weighing on their minds for more than two years. For the first time, they were meeting representatives from the United Nations and international NGOs tasked with providing education to about half a million Rohingya refugee children living in camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Minutes of the meeting obtained by Al Jazeera, show how the community leaders questioned the officials about the slow effort to give refugees formal education, the absence of a Myanmar curriculum in the camps, and the lack of consultation with the community.

[‘Dangerous nationalism’ seriously threatens efforts to tackle statelessness: UNHCR chief](#), UN News (7 October)

Discussing the refugee crisis in southern Bangladesh, where around a million mainly Rohingya refugees are sheltering, most after fleeing Myanmar amid a military crackdown and grave rights abuses, the UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Cate Blanchett pointed that the problem had been decades in the making.

[Myanmar is not safe for Rohingyas to return: Lee](#), Prothom Alo English (7 October)

The UN's independent investigator on Myanmar says it's not safe for hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims who fled to Bangladesh to return because Myanmar has failed to dismantle its "system of persecution" of Rohingyas.



[Unwilling and fearful refugees should not be forced to return home](#), The Guardian (7 October)

[op-ed] From Tanzania to Bangladesh, refugees are increasingly under pressure to repatriate even in the face of obvious danger. The notion that repatriation should be voluntary, safe and dignified has been increasingly set aside, with varying forms of coercion being used to ensure that mass repatriation movements take place. As seen with respect to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, Somalis in Kenya, Afghans in Pakistan, Syrians in Lebanon and Burundians in Tanzania, measures used include the threat of camp closures, reductions in assistance levels, the closure of refugee markets and harassment by government officials.

[A broader conversation on the Rohingya](#), Dhaka Tribune (7 October)

[op-ed] As a medical humanitarian organization providing health care to Rohingya in Malaysia, Myanmar, and Bangladesh, MSF witnesses the daily struggles they face. In Bangladesh and Malaysia, the Rohingya do not have refugee status and need some form of temporary legal stay. In Myanmar, they are denied citizenship and treated as foreigners. In Malaysia, MSF treats Rohingya patients who are badly injured in work accidents and are deterred from seeking medical care at public hospitals due to fear of being reported to immigration. Recent research demonstrates that including refugees in the legal workforce could add millions to gross domestic product and tax revenue, as well as create jobs for Malaysian citizens.

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/>