

Developments related to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh

September 16 - September 22, 2019



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Highlights:

Camp Conditions:

- UN human rights experts called for an impartial investigation into the deaths of at least six Rohingya men in gunfights with police after they were named as suspects in the killing of Omar Faruk, a youth wing official of the ruling Awami League. Tensions between locals and refugees have remained high since.
- Bangladesh said it has appointed former judge Reza Tariq Ahmed to advise on how to clear a huge backlog of trafficking cases after coming under international pressure to do more to tackle the crime.

International Organizations:

- The 74th Session of the UN General Assembly begins next week. Leaders from Southeast Asia will gather on the sidelines of the General Assembly to discuss the Rohingya crisis, and Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina may put forward new specific proposals on how to resolve the Rohingya crisis.

International Support:

- The Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar presented its report to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva this week. They reported that 600,000 Rohingya who remain in Myanmar live under the threat of genocide.
- The UN Special Rapporteur on Myanmar has said that Myanmar is committing ongoing gross violations of international law and uses brutal measures to repress ethnic minorities, noting that it is too dangerous for Rohingya refugees to return.
- The European Parliament adopted a resolution calling on the UN Security Council to impose a comprehensive arms embargo and to adopt targeted sanctions against those responsible for human rights violations against the Rohingyas. It also called on the Council to refer the situation in Myanmar to the ICC.

Developments:

[Rohingya couple killed in 'gunfight' with Teknaf police](#), The Daily Star (22 September)

A Rohingya couple was killed in a "gunfight" with police at a Rohingya refugee camp in Teknaf upazila of Cox's Bazar, hours after they were detained by law enforcers.

Similar:

[Rohingya 'bandit' couple killed in Bangladesh gunfight](#), Yahoo! News (22 Sept.)

[What the Rohingya presence means for us](#), Dhaka Tribune (22 September)

[op-ed] In view of the evolving circumstances, it is good that the government has now taken some significant decisions -- (a) identifying those organizations who are instigating Rohingya not to return, (b) banning their entry or operations within the Rohingya camp area, (c) incapacitating the use of the SIMs obtained by the Rohingyas illegally, and (d) building strong barbed wire fences around the camps to stop Rohingya from leaving their camps and becoming a

source of anxiety for the host community. Bangladesh has done enough. It is now the turn of UN, as well as the EU, the US, Canada, and Australia to be more active within Myanmar. Salvation might then appear.

[Suu Kyi lies about Rohingyas, alleges Cameron](#), United News of Bangladesh (22 September)

Myanmar's state counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, during her conversation with former British prime minister David Cameron, claimed that Rohingyas are not from her country but are Bangladeshis.

Similar:

[Rohingyas are Bangladeshi, says Suu Kyi](#), United News of India (22 Sept.)

[24 Rohingyas arrested in Chittagong](#), Dhaka Tribune (21 September)

As many as 24 Rohingya men have been arrested in Chittagong. The police could not confirm if the Rohingya fled from camps in Cox's Bazar. The arrested Rohingya were sued under the Foreigners Act.

[Impose arms embargo on Myanmar](#), The Daily Star (21 September)

The European Parliament has called on the UN Security Council to impose a comprehensive arms embargo on Myanmar and to adopt targeted sanctions against those responsible for human rights violations against the Rohingyas. It also called on the Council to refer the situation in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court. So far, the UN Security Council has been divided over any concrete action against Myanmar due to opposition from veto powers China and Russia.

Similar:

[European Parliament adopts resolution urging UNSC to impose full arms embargo against Myanmar](#), Dhaka Tribune (20 Sept.)

[Estonian MEP: EU must put pressure on Myanmar to end atrocities against Rohingyas](#), The Baltic Times (19 Sept.)

[Palermo protocols: Bangladesh to ratify UN treaty to combat human trafficking](#), Dhaka Tribune (21 September)

Bangladesh has decided to sign the Palermo Protocols, a UN treaty to combat human trafficking. The Palermo Protocols provide countries with an international definition, and guidelines on how they should tackle human trafficking. Every year, thousands of people, particularly women and children, are trafficked from or through Bangladesh.

[Rohingya kids may become a 'lost generation': AI](#), New Age Bangladesh (20 September)

Some half a million Rohingya refugee children living in the camps of Bangladesh risk becoming a 'lost generation' if they continue to be denied an education, Amnesty International UK said as it launched an exhibition featuring artwork by refugee children.

[Myanmar Government checks identity of 200 returnees from Bangladesh](#), Myanmar Times (20 September)

Some 200 people who fled to Bangladesh in 2017 during violence in Rakhine State have voluntarily returned and the Myanmar government is trying to verify their identities. Only after verification will they receive national verification cards. Sources said they were the first refugees to return to Myanmar under the repatriation program with Bangladesh.

[Prime Minister Hasina says Rohingyas are "a burden" for Bangladesh](#), Asia News (20 September)

Speaking to the United Kingdom All-Party Parliamentary Group, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said that Rohingya refugees who fled violence in Myanmar are a burden for Bangladesh.

Similar:

[Rohingya Refugees: Myanmar should take them back](#), The Daily Star (20 Sept.)

[Rohingyas, a big burden for Bangladesh: PM](#), The Daily Star (19 Sept.)

[PM: Rohingyas a big burden for Bangladesh](#), Dhaka Tribune (19 Sept.)

[Southeast Asian leaders must show true leadership on Rohingya crisis](#), The New Arab (20 September)

[op-ed] Southeast Asia's leaders will come together on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly this month and during the ASEAN Summit in November. At this year's General Assembly, the region's leaders must show compassion for the Rohingya and push Myanmar to take steps towards ending the violence.

[UN mission accuses accountability for Myanmar 'genocide'](#), Chicago Tribune (19 September)

A special UN fact-finding mission has urged that Myanmar be held responsible in international legal forums for alleged genocide against its Muslim Rohingya minority as it released a report on Monday, wrapping up two years of documentation of human rights violations by security forces, and determining that counterinsurgency operations against Rohingya in 2017 included "genocidal acts."

[18 suspected Rohingyas with Bangladeshi passports NID cards held in Chittagong](#), Dhaka Tribune (18 September)

Police in Chittagong have detained 18 suspected Rohingyas and two brokers with Bangladeshi passports and national identity (NID) cards. Earlier this month, police arrested three Rohingyas with Bangladeshi passports in Chittagong

Similar:

[Minister talks tough against helping Rohingyas to get passport, NID](#), New Age Bangladesh (19 Sept.)

[Action against those providing passports to Rohingyas: Home minister](#), The Daily Star (18 Sept.)

[Election official, 2 others arrested over Rohingya NIDs](#), Dhaka Tribune (17 Sept.)

[UN expert to Suu Kyi: Feel the sufferings of Rohingyas](#), Dhaka Tribune (18 September)

Yanghee Lee, the human rights Special Rapporteur, told the Human Rights Council that the situation in Myanmar was of extreme concern, and was not what she and others had hoped to see nearly four years after the election of National League for Democracy. Despite international condemnation, Lee added that Myanmar had done nothing to dismantle the system of violence and persecution against the Rohingyas, and that the Rohingyas who remain in Rakhine live in the same dire circumstances that they experienced prior to the events of August 2017.

Similar:

[UN: Myanmar is Not Safe for the Return of Rohingya Refugees](#), Voice of America (16 Sept.)

[Bangladesh does about-face on Rohingya](#), Asia Times (18 September)

[op-ed] Many believe that Sheikh Hasina's decision to take in nearly 750,000 Rohingya refugees was not entirely or even remotely altruistic, nor was it based on concern over the human-rights abuses inflicted on the Rohingya by Myanmar's military. Rather, her decision seems to have been based on her desire for international recognition as a humanitarian, as a savior. Two years on, we are seeing proof of this.

[Japan: World must find a sustainable solution to bring justice to Rohingyas](#), Dhaka Tribune (18 September)

In his farewell address, outgoing Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Hiroyasu Izumi said that "the Rohingya are victims of prevailing egocentric nationalism or populism," adding that the international community must find a sustainable solution to bring justice to the Rohingya.

[Bangladesh to seek expeditious global efforts to resolve Rohingya crisis](#), Dhaka Tribune (18 September)

Bangladesh will seek expeditious global efforts to repatriate Rohingyas to their place of origin in Rakhine State during the 74th session of the UN General Assembly. Briefing the media about Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's participation at the UNGA and high level meetings on various issues, Foreign Minister Dr. AK Abdul Momen said the prime minister's proposals made at the UNGA are still relevant to find solutions to the Rohingya crisis.

Similar:

[Bangladesh to raise Rohingya issue at UNGA for global support](#), The Daily Star (18 Sept.)

[Dhaka for int'l efforts to expedite Rohingya return](#), New Age Bangladesh (19 Sept.)

[Resolving Rohingya crisis: PM likely to place new proposals at UNGA](#), Dhaka Tribune (19 Sept.)



[UN expert: Suu Kyi's role in Rohingya abuses still unclear](#), The Star Tribune (17 September)

A top UN investigator has said “it’s still an open-ended question” about how much Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi could be implicated in human rights violations against Rohingya Muslims. Marzuki Darusman said it was “probably the case” that Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace prize laureate, may not have been “knowledgeable” about a violent crackdown against the ethnic minority that erupted in August 2017.

[JS body for using Thailand's experience in Rohingya repatriation](#), Dhaka Tribune (17 September)

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday recommended that the government consider Thailand's experience to expedite Rohingya repatriation in Myanmar. In February last, the repatriation of forcibly displaced Myanmar refugees from Thailand has got under way and several hundred Rohingya refugees have already been sent back to Myanmar in phases.

[UN experts urge probe of Rohingya killings in Bangladesh](#), Yahoo! News (17 September)

UN human rights experts have raised new concerns about the treatment of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh following a deadly backlash over the killing of a ruling party official. The experts called for an “impartial” investigation into the deaths of at least six Rohingya men in gunfights with police after they were named as suspects in the killing of Omar Faruk, a youth wing official of the ruling Awami League.

Similar:

[Spate of Bangladesh 'Crossfire' Killings of Rohingya](#), Human Rights Watch (18 Sept.)

[Rohingya in Bangladesh face tide of hostility as welcome turns to fear](#), Reuters (17 September)

In Bangladesh, the deterioration of relations between the host community and Rohingya refugees has been so precipitous that some now fear serious violence. Many Bangladeshis accuse the Rohingya of crime, taking jobs and pushing down wages. With tensions between the communities rising, authorities have clamped down, cutting the internet in the camps and trying to confiscate phones, citing security concerns.

[Sending the Rohingya home to die?](#), The ASEAN Post (18 September)

The UN recently warned that the repatriation of the Rohingya already driven out of Myanmar by the Myanmar army remains “impossible,” stating that Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar are already facing a “serious risk of genocide.” A report from a fact-finding mission to Myanmar, set up by the Human Rights Council, said the 600,000 Rohingya still living in Rakhine state remain in deteriorating and “deplorable” conditions.

Similar:

[UN: 600,000 Rohingya Live Under Threat of Genocide](#), Voice of America (17 Sept.)

[UN: Myanmar is Not Safe for the Return of Rohingya Refugees](#), Voice of America (16 Sept.)

[600,000 Rohingya still in Myanmar at 'serious risk of genocide': UN](#), Frontier Myanmar (16 Sept.)

[Rohingya still in Myanmar face 'threat of genocide': United Nations](#), Reuters (16 Sept.)

[UN urges Burma be held responsible for alleged genocide against Rohingya](#), The Star (16 Sept.)

[UN report: Rohingya Muslims still in Myanmar live under 'threat of genocide'](#), Japan Times (17 Sept.)

[Rohingya repatriation: Bangladesh likely to sit with China, Myanmar](#), The Daily Star (17 September)

Bangladesh is likely to sit across the table with representatives of China and Myanmar this month to resolve the much talked about Rohingya repatriation issue. The trilateral meeting will be held on the sideline of the UN General Assembly.

[Arsa: Myanmar's new propaganda front to delay Rohingya repatriation](#), Dhaka Tribune (17 September)

Myanmar claims the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (Arsa) is stopping Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar from returning home. Bangladesh says Arsa does not exist in Rohingya refugee camps. Having failed to create a conducive environment for the Rohingya refugees to return to Rakhine in accordance with the bilateral agreement between the two countries,



Naypyidaw is now running a propaganda campaign holding Arsa responsible for the Rohingyas' unwillingness to return to their homes.

[**Akter, 20, expelled from university for being Rohingya**](#), Al Jazeera (17 September)

Rahima Akter hid her Rohingya identity to enroll at a private university in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar, but her dreams of pursuing higher education were dashed after she was suspended by her university earlier this month. The 20-year-old from Kutupalong refugee camp has become the face of the struggle of Rohingya refugees who want to study, as Bangladesh does not allow Rohingya to enroll in schools or colleges.

[**Swedish team in Cox's Bazar to visit Rohingya camp**](#), Dhaka Tribune (16 September)

A six-member delegation from Sweden reached Cox's Bazar on Monday afternoon to visit the Rohingya camp there.

[**Momen seeks British MPs support for Rohingya repatriation**](#), Dhaka Tribune (16 September)

Foreign Minister Dr. AK Abdul Momen has sought support from British parliamentarians for ensuring the safe and sustainable return of the Rohingya people to their homeland in Myanmar's Northern Rakhine state.

[**Bangladesh: UN experts concerned by crackdown at Rohingya refugee camps**](#), Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (16 September)

UN human rights experts have expressed serious concerns about new restrictions and an increased military presence at Rohingya refugee camps following a massive "Genocide Day" protest last month. Since the demonstration at Cox's Bazar on 25 August, a number of the protest organizers have been questioned and subjected to intimidation. A curfew is now being strictly enforced, mobile phones have been banned and confiscated, and a number of NGOs have also been banned or suspended.

[**The Rohingya Crisis Is Another Colonial Legacy**](#), The Wire (16 September)

[op-ed] The Rohingya crisis should, in fact, be described as a series of crises since Myanmar achieved its independence in 1948. To understand the current predicament, it is important to historically contextualize the issue. The British legacy today in Myanmar is perhaps the longest-running civil war in the world and a humanitarian crisis of gigantic proportions.

[**Bangladesh envoy unable to visit 'reconstructed' Rohingya villages**](#), Dhaka Tribune (16 September)

Bangladesh Ambassador to Myanmar Manjurul Karim Khan Chowdhury was unable to visit "reconstructed" Rohingya villages in Rakhine due to bad weather. The Bangladesh envoy, along with the heads of mission of nine ASEAN member states, as well as China and India, flew to the Rakhine state capital Sittwe on September 10 to see the villages, rebuilt for the return of the Rohingyas who fled their homes to escape the atrocities by Myanmar security forces.

[**Ambassador Miller: US Humanitarian Assistance Supports Bangladeshi Communities Affected by Rohingya Crisis**](#), US Embassy in Bangladesh (16 September)

United States Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl R. Miller travelled to Cox's Bazar September 12-15. During his trip, he met with organizations providing assistance to Rohingya refugees and communities hosting refugees. The United States recognizes the challenges the refugee crisis has posed for local communities and the Government of Bangladesh.

Similar:

[US to continue partnership with Bangladesh, others to address Rohingya crisis](#), United News Bangladesh (16 Sept.)

[**Beijing Offers to Help Arrange Myanmar Visit for Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh**](#), Radio Free Asia (16 September)

China has offered to facilitate a visit by a group of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar's Rakhine state to check the situation there, a senior Bangladeshi official said. Rohingya leaders and authorities in Dhaka have signaled support for the proposal.



Similar:

[China to mediate Rohingya repatriation actively: Envoy, Prothom Alo English \(20 Sept.\)](#)

[China optimistic in solving problems in Rakhine state, Dhaka Tribune \(16 Sept.\)](#)

[Bangladesh appoints ex-judge to tackle backlog of trafficking cases](#), Thomson Reuters Foundation News (16 September)

Bangladesh has said it appointed former judge Reza Tariq Ahmed to advise on how to clear a huge backlog of trafficking cases after coming under international pressure to do more to tackle the crime. More than 4,000 cases are awaiting trial under a 2012 law that criminalized trafficking, and only about 30 people have been convicted so far. Ahmed will travel around the country to assess trafficking cases, identifying gaps in evidence and giving recommendations on how to proceed.

[Time to step up for the Rohingya](#), Bangkok Post (16 September)

[op-ed] As world leaders gather in New York for the United Nations General Assembly next week, it can be expected that the intractable Rakhine situation, along with the equally intractable South China Sea situation, will feature as prominent issues that define Southeast Asia. There are four critical factors to guide efforts to achieve better outcomes in Rakhine: 1) stop looking at the Rohingya refugee situation as an isolated crisis; 2) the people of Rakhine state (Rakhine and Rohingya) should be consulted about the decisions affecting their future and well-being; 3) all actors should establish the facts before they act; and 4) be alert to deception.

[Illegal Migration Bid: 16 Rohingyas held in Teknaf](#), The Daily Star (16 September)

Members of the coast guard detained 16 Rohingyas from Habirchhara in Teknaf upazila when they were trying to go to Malaysia on a fishing trawler. The detainees, including 10 women and two children, are residents of Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar. They had reached Bangladesh from Myanmar around two years ago.

[‘We live like animals’: Refugee leader gives Rohingya a voice](#), Los Angeles Times (16 September)

Former teacher Mohib Ullah who has emerged as a Rohingya leader trying to galvanize international, political and financial support for the refugees, spoke on stage about his homeland on the second anniversary of the start of a slaughter of minority Rohingyas in Buddhist-majority Myanmar's Rakhine state. Ullah and his advocacy group, the Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace and Human Rights, are at the center of a Rohingya political awakening beginning in the relative safety of the refugee camps.

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/>

