

Developments related to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh

March 2 - March 8, 2020



REFUGEE SOLIDARITY
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Highlights:

International support:

- UN agencies and NGO partners have launched the 2020 Joint Response Plan (JRP) for the Rohingya humanitarian crisis, aiming to raise US\$877 million to respond to the needs of approximately 855,000 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar and over 444,000 vulnerable Bangladeshis in the communities hosting them.
- At the launch of the 2020 JRP, the United States and the European Union announced \$94 million in humanitarian assistance for Rohingyas and host communities in Bangladesh and in Myanmar. The United States announced more than \$59 million in additional humanitarian assistance, and the European Commission is releasing €31 million (around \$34 million) in humanitarian aid.

High-level statements:

- At a meeting with the State Minister for Foreign Affairs M Shahriar Alam in Geneva, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet acknowledged Bangladesh's proven track record as a trusted partner of the UN, and lauded the government in particular for allowing education for the Rohingya children.
- Filippo Grandi, head of the UNHCR, made a statement on the sidelines of the 2020 JRP launch, urging Myanmar to take quicker action to help the displaced to return home, highlighting that "the solution continues to be in Myanmar".

Camp conditions:

- Police detained 35 Rohingyas, including 23 women and six children, in Ukhiya upazila of Cox's Bazar while they were preparing to illegally go to Malaysia this week.

Country Visits:

- India's foreign secretary Harsh Shringla was in Dhaka this week, to meet with high-level officials and to assuage some of Bangladesh's concern over the CAA and NRC in India. Shringla will be the first high-level contact with the Sheikh Hasina government since protests against CAA-NRC erupted across India.

Developments:

[Myanmar lawyer details crimes against Rohingyas in 2013 interview](#) The Daily Star (March 6)

It has now come to light that Prof. Schabas, whom the government of Myanmar has hired to defend it at the ICJ, once compared the government's treatment of Rohingya Muslims to Nazi Germany's treatment of Jews during the Holocaust, according to a previously unreleased video footage of 2013 obtained and published by Fortify Rights. The unedited video, filmed for the making of the 2013 Al Jazeera documentary "The Hidden Genocide," includes more than 21-minutes of an interview with Professor Schabas, who elaborates on the possible genocide of Rohingya, references Nazis three times, and characterizes the Myanmar government as a "tyrannical regime" with respect to its treatment of the Rohingya.

[**Myanmar Court Jails 15 Rohingya For Two Years For Trying to Flee Country**](#) Radio Free Asia (March 6)

A court in central Myanmar's Magway region has sentenced 15 Rohingya Muslims to a maximum of two years in prison each for attempting to leave the country illegally, an immigration official said. Authorities in Minhla township arrested the 15 adults and one child for traveling without official proof of identity or travel documents on Feb. 14.

[**UN rights chief recognizes Bangladesh's achievements**](#) United News Bangladesh (March 5)

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet has acknowledged Bangladesh's proven track record as a trusted partner of the UN. She also recognised the country's achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals so far, as well as the government's commitment to uphold the rule of law. Bachelet, during her meeting with State Minister for Foreign Affairs M Shahriar Alam in Geneva, commended Bangladesh's efforts in hosting the forcibly displaced Rohingyas despite scarcity of resources. She lauded the government in particular for allowing education for the Rohingya children. State Minister Alam urged the UN human rights chief to verify information received from alternative sources to avoid exaggeration.

[**US, EU offer \\$93m in humanitarian aid**](#) The Independent (March 5)

The United States (US) and the European Union (EU) have announced \$94 million in humanitarian assistance for Rohingyas and host communities in Bangladesh and in Myanmar. At the launch of the 2020 Joint Response Plan for the Rohingya in Geneva, the US announced more than \$59 million in additional humanitarian assistance. The EU is releasing €31 million (around \$34 million) in humanitarian aid to address the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh and Myanmar. The funds will help address the emergency needs of more than 900,000 refugees in Bangladesh, as well as the needs of the Bangladeshi communities in Cox's Bazar affected by the ongoing crisis.

Similar:

[Rohingya crisis: EU allocates €31 million for Bangladesh, Myanmar](#) Dhaka Tribune (Mar. 4)

[Rohingya crisis: EU allocates €31 million for Bangladesh and Myanmar](#) European Sting (Mar. 4)

[United States Announced New Humanitarian Assistance for Displaced Rohingya and Members of Other Affected Communities in Bangladesh and Burma](#) US Dept. of State (Mar. 5)

[**Momen: India's internal problems affect Bangladesh**](#) Dhaka Tribune (March 4)

At a seminar titled "Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Prudent Diplomacy: A Decade of Bangladesh's Strong Presence in World Scene" put on by the Diplomatic Correspondent Association of Bangladesh at National Press Club in Dhaka, Foreign Minister Dr. AK Abdul Momen claimed that India is facing an internal crisis and the brunt of the problems impact Bangladesh. He said that India and Bangladesh are friends and the two countries are enjoying a golden era of friendship, and urged India not to take any measure that would create a problem in Bangladesh. "We are a political government. We were elected by people's votes. India should not do anything so that we have to answer people for their actions," he said.

Similar:

[Maintain balance in foreign affairs: experts](#) New Age Bangladesh (Mar. 5)

[**Greater progress needed to ensure safe return of displaced Rohingya: UN refugee agency chief**](#) UN News (March 3)

UN agencies together with the Bangladesh authorities have appealed for \$877 million to support hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, where conditions are still not conducive for their safe return, UN refugee agency chief Filippo Grandi said. Speaking on the sidelines of the 2020 Joint Response Plan (JRP) launch, Mr. Grandi urged Myanmar to take quicker action to help the displaced to return home. "The solution continues to be in Myanmar", said the High Commissioner for Refugees. "The problem is that things that need to be done there, to create conditions for refugees to return from Bangladesh into Myanmar, are too slow or not happening yet."

[UN appeals for US\\$877 million for Rohingya refugee response in Bangladesh](#) UNHCR (March 3)

United Nations agencies and NGO partners today launched the 2020 Joint Response Plan (JRP) for the Rohingya humanitarian crisis. Building on the efforts and success of previous years, the appeal aims to raise US\$877 million to respond to the needs of approximately 855,000 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar and over 444,000 vulnerable Bangladeshis in the communities generously hosting them. Vital services and assistance including access to food, shelter, clean water and sanitation, require urgent funding and total 55 per cent of the overall appeal, with food needs alone accounting for almost 29 per cent. Health, protection, education, site management, energy and environment continue to be critical to ensuring the safety and dignity of Rohingya refugees and the well-being of local Bangladeshis. Fostering peaceful coexistence between communities and invigorating the local economy is imperative as this crisis continues.

Similar:

[UN appeals for \\$877m to help Rohingyas in Bangladesh](#) Prothom Alo (Mar. 3)

[UN appeals for \\$877 mn for Rohingya refugee response in Bangladesh](#) United News Bangladesh (Mar. 3)

[UN, NGO partners launch Joint Response Plan for Rohingyas](#) The Daily Star (Mar. 3)

[UN appeals for USD 877 mln for Rohingya refugee response in Bangladesh](#) United News of India (Mar. 3)

[UN Seeks over \\$800M to Support Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh](#) Radio Free Asia (Mar. 4)

[UN appeals for 877 mln USD to help Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh](#) Xinhua News (Mar. 4)

[Rohingya Refugee Crisis has Bangladesh, UN Calling for Help](#) VOA News (Mar. 3)

[UN seeks \\$877m for Rakhine refugees in Bangladesh](#) Myanmar Times (Mar. 4)

[Bangladesh to seek \\$877m from UN for this year](#) The Independent (Mar. 2)

[Joint statement on 2020 Joint Response Plan for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis](#) Norwegian Refugee Council (March 3)

[Press Release] The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Save the Children (SC), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Handicap International (HI), Oxfam and Danish Refugee Council (DRC) are urging donor governments to contribute generously to the 2020 Joint Response Plan for Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis (JRP). SC, IRC, HI, NRC, Oxfam and DRC are calling on all international actors to continue engaging with the Government of Myanmar to facilitate the Rohingyas' voluntary return in safety and dignity. To create the conditions for return, the Government of Myanmar should consult proactively with the Rohingya, including women and youth, to listen to the priorities they outline, including citizenship, recognition of their identity as Rohingya and freedom of movement. They have also called on the Government of Myanmar to ensure that there is justice for the Rohingya and that those responsible for the crimes committed against them are held fully accountable. In the meantime, it is the host community and people of Bangladesh who continue to manage the consequences of the refugee crisis on daily basis. To address this, the Government should work with humanitarian agencies to lay the foundation for a medium term, multi-year plan through a whole-of-society approach that ensures the protection and rights of Rohingya refugees and impacted host communities.

[National Register of Citizens \(NRC\): India reassures Bangladesh](#) The Sentinel Assam (March 3)

India has reassured Bangladesh that the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam will have no implications on its people and the government. During his visit to Dhaka, Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said that the process of updating the NRC in Assam, which has "taken place entirely at the direction and under the supervision of the Supreme Court of India", was completely "internal to India" and will have "no implications for the government and people of Bangladesh". The Indian leadership, he said, has repeatedly confirmed this at the highest level to the Bangladesh government.

Similar:

[India reassures Bangladesh about NRC](#) Outlook India (Mar. 2)

[India moved to assure Bangladesh Assam NRC will not impact Dhaka](#) LiveMint (Mar. 2)

[NRC will not impact Bangladesh, Foreign Secretary Shringla tells Dhaka](#) The Hindu (Mar. 2)



[Bangladesh eyes blue economy cooperation with Norway](#) Prothom Alo (March 3)

Bangladesh and Norway have agreed to work together on achieving ocean-related targets including fighting marine litter and to collaborate in the maritime sector through sustainable development of ocean resources. The countries will also take initiatives to significantly reduce environmental risks and ecological scarcities. Bangladesh and Norway discussed the issues of cooperation at the second political consultations held at state guesthouse Padma. The Rohingya crisis was also high on the agenda. The Bangladesh foreign secretary briefed his Norwegian counterpart about the state of play, particularly in the context of International Court of Justice's order of 23 January 2020 to ensure accountability for atrocities perpetrated on Rohingyas. The Bangladesh side appreciated Norway's political and financial support to the cause of the Rohingyas. Secretary general Hattrem reiterated Norway's appreciation for Bangladesh's continued generosity in hosting the Rohingyas. Bangladesh requested for continued and intensified support of Norway to ensure safe, dignified and sustainable return of the forcibly displaced Rohingyas. Norway reiterated its support for Annan Commission's recommendations and ICJ's provisional measures and called for their full implementation by Myanmar. Norway, currently running for a non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council, vowed to intensify its efforts at the UN to resolve the crisis if elected.

Similar:

[Bangladesh eyes blue economy cooperation with Norway; shares draft MoU](#) United News Bangladesh (Mar. 3)

[The Coronavirus Poses a Big Threat to Refugees and People in Humanitarian Crisis](#) UN Dispatch (March 2)

According to the latest data from the WHO, the Coronavirus outbreak, known as Covid-19, has spread to over 60 countries. The number of cases of coronavirus are increasingly daily. So far, though, most of these cases are in countries with a decent health system, including China and South Korea. But there is increasing concern among health experts about the potential impact of the coronavirus epidemic among populations that live in extremely vulnerable circumstances — including refugees and people displaced by conflict and humanitarian crisis. To understand the potential impact of this coronavirus outbreak on vulnerable populations around the world is Dr. Paul B. Spiegel. Dr. Spiegel explains that he is immediately concerned about the implications of Covid-19 spreading among the densely populated Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh, as well as more broadly the implications of the spread of coronavirus to humanitarian crises and countries with weak health systems, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

[35 Rohingyas held while attempting to go to Malaysia illegally](#) The Daily Star (March 2)

Police have detained 35 Rohingyas, including 23 women and six children, in Ukhiya upazila of Cox's Bazar while they were preparing to illegally go to Malaysia. The detainees will be sent back to their respective camps after identification.

[Rohingya Refugees Call for Greater Say in Running Camps in Bangladesh](#) Nonprofit Quarterly (March 2)

[op-ed] Aid agencies with multimillion-dollar aid budgets to support the Rohingya who are operating outside the city of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, stand accused by the refugees of failing to listen them. The challenge noted by an unnamed spokesperson at the United Nations High Commission for Refugees is that "the Rohingya refugee population in Cox's Bazar is more than 850,000 people. This alone presents a challenge in terms of ensuring that all voices are heard." The irony is that what the Rohingya are calling for is, in fact, widely established as "best practice" in the development field, where conference speakers in the Global North routinely say that local communities and organizations should be centered in all programs, ideas, and projects. However, to do so would require nonprofits and aid agencies alike to stop and actually listen to local partners. Is our sector ready to do that?

[7 'Rohingya robbers' killed in Cox's Bazar 'gunfight'](#) United News Bangladesh (March 2)

Seven suspected members of a Rohingya robber gang have been killed in a 'gunfight' with members of Rapid Action Battalion on a hill in Teknaf upazila. The identities of the deceased could not be known yet.

Similar:

[Seven Rohingyas killed in RAB 'gunfight'](#) Prothom Alo (Mar. 2)

[Bangladesh Police Kill Seven Suspected Rohingya Robbers in Raid](#) The Irrawaddy (Mar. 2)

Myanmar pays rising price for Rohingya crisis Asia Times (March 2)

[op-ed] On February 26, Germany's development minister, Gerd Müller, announced that Berlin was suspending development cooperation with Myanmar because of its "ethnic cleansing" of its Rohingya minority. Müller said the suspension would remain in place until Myanmar delivered on its commitment to "guaranteeing the safe return of the more than 700,000 Rohingya who fled for their lives to Bangladesh in late 2017 and protecting the Rohingya who still live in the country." Although Müller didn't specify the financial cost of that suspension, he simultaneously announced an additional German government contribution of €15 million (US\$16.5 million) to support Bangladesh's Rohingya refugee population. Germany's moves are a stark reminder for Myanmar's government and its de facto leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, that there is growing international frustration with Myanmar's failure to acknowledge its culpability for 2017 slaughter of the Rohingya and to undertake the necessary steps for repatriation of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh who fled that violence.

Rohingya man's bid to obtain Bangladeshi passport foiled United News Bangladesh (March 2)

A Rohingya man was arrested from Khulna while he was trying to obtain a Bangladeshi passport illegally. Officials of the Khulna Divisional Passport Office caught the Rohingya man while he was providing his fingerprint for passport. He had used a fake address and documents.

Committed to support mutually-acceptable solution to enable return of Rohingya refugees: India Outlook India (March 2)

Addressing a seminar in Dhaka on "Bangladesh & India: A Promising Future", Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said India was deeply appreciative of the spirit of humanism that motivated Bangladesh to offer shelter to nearly one million displaced people. Lauding Bangladesh for providing shelter to displaced Rohingya Muslims, India said it is committed to offering the fullest support for any mutually-acceptable solution that will enable earliest possible return of the refugees to their homes in Myanmar's Rakhine state and lead to life of dignity.

Similar:

Committed to supporting mutually-acceptable solution to enable return of Rohingya refugees: India Tribune India (Mar.2)

Committed to Support Mutually-acceptable Solution to Enable Return of Rohingya Refugees: India News18 (Mar. 2)

Foreign secretary in Bangladesh with CAA balm Times of India (March 2)

When foreign secretary Harsh Shringla arrives in Dhaka this week, his primary task will be to assuage some serious hurt feelings among Bangladeshis over both the CAA-NRC controversy as well as some ill-judged comments by Indian politicians. Shringla will be the first high-level contact with the Sheikh Hasina government since protests against CAA-NRC erupted all across India.

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/>