

Developments related to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh

June 1 - June 7, 2020



REFUGEE SOLIDARITY
NETWORK

Highlights:

Accountability:

- An Argentinian court has taken a step forward toward pursuing the case against Myanmar's leader Aung Sang Suu Kyi and senior officers in the military over the genocide and persecution against the Rohingya community by asking the ICC for information to ensure that a case in Argentina would not duplicate other justice efforts.

Camp Conditions:

- The first Covid-19 related death of a Rohingya refugee in the camps was reported on June 2.
- Bangladesh has declared areas of Cox's Bazar as "red zones" to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus. These areas will be under complete lockdown from midnight on June 7 to midnight on June 21.
- There are reports that Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh with symptoms of Covid-19 are not coming forward to get tested because they fear being separated from their families and held in isolation.

High-level statements:

- The Bangladesh Foreign Minister has again expressed deep concern that there has been no progress on the repatriation of Rohingyas to Myanmar, and has urged the European Union to exert more pressure on Myanmar.

International support:

- The World Bank has committed another USD \$35 million to provide work opportunities and community services to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, including flood assistance support as part of the Covid-19 response.

Developments:

[Rohingya-inhabited areas in Ukhia and Teknaf declared red zones](#) The Daily Star (June 7)

Three unions under Ukhia upazila and Teknaf municipality in Cox's Bazar district -- areas inhabited by Rohingya refugees from Myanmar -- have been declared red zones to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The directive will come into effect from June 7 midnight till June 21 midnight -- during this period, the respective areas will be placed under complete lockdown.

Similar:

[Bangladesh: Rohingya refugee camp area in Cox's Bazar declared red zone after Coronavirus cases rise sharply](#) OpIndia (June 6)

[Cox's Bazar city declared as 'red zone'](#) Prothom Alo (June 5)

[Bangladesh declares Cox's Bazar areas near Rohingya camps coronavirus red zone](#) BDNews24 (June 5)

[Cox's Bazar city declared as 'red zone'](#) United News Bangladesh (June 5)

[Bangladesh reinforced virus lockdown on Rohingya camps](#) Arab News (June 7)

[Amid rising COVID-19 cases, Bangladesh imposes lockdown in Cox's Bazar Municipality which houses Rohingya refugee camps](#) India Blooms (June 6)

[B'desh declares areas near Rohingya camps COVID-19 red zone](#) Outlook India (June 6)

[Rohingya man killed in alleged shootout with police in Cox's Bazar](#) BDNews24 (June 7)

A Rohingya refugee with alleged ties to crimes has been killed in a so-called shootout with police in Cox's Bazar's Teknaf Upazila, according to law enforcers. The dead man has been identified as 26-year-old Md Sharif.

Similar:

[Rohingya 'robber' killed in 'gunfight'](#) The Daily Star (June 8)

[Fear stops Rohingyas getting tested as virus hits refugee camps](#) BDNews24 (June 5)

Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh with symptoms of the novel coronavirus are not coming forward to get tested because they fear being separated from their families and held in isolation, community leaders and aid workers say. Aid workers fear the coronavirus may be spreading faster through the world's largest refugee settlement than the 29 cases confirmed since mid-May would indicate. Only 339 tests have been carried out in the camps, partly because people were simply not going to health facilities to get checked. "Camp hospitals are empty and illegal doctors' shops are full," said 23-year-old refugee Mujef Khan, a community organiser, referring to pharmacies in the camps run by refugees where people buy pills to treat themselves.

Similar:

[Myanmar Rohingya refugees running scared from coronavirus tests](#) The Star (June 5)

[Fear stops Rohingya getting tested as virus hits refugee camps](#) Reuters (June 5)

[Rohingya refugees running scared from coronavirus tests](#) The Straits Times (June 4)

[Rohingya Refugees Running Scared From Coronavirus Tests](#) The Globe Post (June 4)

[Thailand urged to protect Rohingyas from forced return, indefinite detention](#) United News of Bangladesh (June 5)

The government of Thailand should prevent the indefinite detention or forced return of Rohingya refugees and possible survivors of human trafficking, Fortify Rights has said in a statement. Thai authorities are detaining at least 35 Rohingya men, women, and children in the Tak Immigration Detention Center and threatening to return them to Myanmar, where they face certain persecution.

[Pandemic poses enormous risk to around 1.2mn people in Cox's Bazar: IOM](#) United News of Bangladesh (June 5)

The coronavirus pandemic poses an enormous risk to around 1.2 million people in Cox's Bazar including over 860,000 Rohingyas, IOM has said. Amid this pandemic, the Interactive Voice Response tool has been helping in disseminating key information and collecting community feedback throughout the crisis. Dubbed the 'COVID Info Line', the system uses pre-recorded information and messaging through phone networks to share critical information in the refugees' local language across the camps. The COVID Info Line also allows users to record questions, comments and share concerns with IOM that may be replied to - holding IOM more accountable to beneficiaries.

Similar:

[IOM: Pandemic poses enormous risk to 1.2 million people in Cox's Bazar](#) Dhaka Tribune (June 5)



[**Two ARSA Fighters Killed on Myanmar-Bangladesh Border: Military**](#) The Irrawaddy (June 5)

Two alleged Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) fighters died in a clash with security forces on the evening of June 4 on the Bangladesh border, according to Myanmar's military spokesman Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun. "Troops undertaking border security duties clashed with around 30 ARSA troops at around 4 pm on June 4. We found two bodies and two guns with them," said Brig-Gen Zaw Min Tun.

[**WB supports resilience activities for Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar**](#) Prothom Alo (June 4)

The Bangladesh Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief is partnering with the WFP to support community resilience in the Rohingya camps, with a contribution of US\$35 million from the World Bank. The US\$35 million grant will go toward providing work opportunities and community services to Rohingya. This includes flood assistance support to 700,000 people as part of the COVID-19 humanitarian response in the camps. Post COVID-19 restrictions, the project will scale up self-reliance opportunities for extremely vulnerable families in the camps and target young people with volunteering opportunities to promote social cohesion.

Similar:

[WFP to implement \\$35m project for Rohingya refugees](#) The Daily Star (June 5)

[WB provides \\$35m as help for Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar](#) Dhaka Tribune (June 4)

[WB gives \\$35mn for community resilience in Rohingya camps](#) United News Bangladesh (June 5)

[**Argentina eyes Suu Kyi probe**](#) The Manila Times (June 4)

An Argentine court has moved one step closer to opening a historic investigation against Myanmar's military and civilian leadership over the genocide against the Rohingya people, the Burmese Rohingya Organization UK (BROUK) said. The court in Buenos Aires on May 29 overturned a previous decision not to pursue a case against State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and senior officers in the Myanmar military. The court has instead now requested more information from the International Criminal Court (ICC) to ensure that a case in Argentina would not duplicate other justice efforts, BROUK said in a statement on June 3. The Argentine court's progress comes in addition to the ICC investigation and the Gambia's case filed in November last year against Myanmar for violating the Genocide Convention with the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Similar:

[Argentinian court decision brings hope for Rohingya](#) Anadolu Agency (June 2)

[**Rohingya Man Tests Positive for COVID-19 After Returning to Myanmar Illegally From Bangladesh**](#) The Irrawaddy (June 4)

A Rohingya man who returned illegally from Bangladesh to Myanmar's Rakhine State has tested positive for the coronavirus, according to local authorities. He was part of a five-member family who illegally returned from a Bangladeshi village to their village in Rakhine State's Maungdaw Township on May 30. Maungdaw authorities, upon receiving a report about their return, went to the village and took the family to the Hla Poe Khaung transit camp for quarantine. They were tested for the coronavirus and the 38-year-old man, the family's breadwinner, tested positive, said Maungdaw district administrator U Soe Aung.

Similar:

[1st Rohingya in Myanmar tests positive for virus](#) Anadolu Agency (June 4)

[Bangladesh urged to submit Rohingya docs to ICC](#) The Daily Star (June 4)

Speakers at a seminar in Dhaka on June 4 urged the government to submit its observations and documents relating to Rohingyas forced out from Myanmar to the International Criminal Court (ICC) within the given timeframe and assist ICC in building pressure on Myanmar on this issue. The Prosecutor of the ICC sought a ruling on the question of jurisdiction that "whether the court may exercise jurisdiction over the alleged deportation of the Rohingya people from Myanmar to Bangladesh." The Prosecutor argued that even though Myanmar is not bound by the Rome Statute, the ICC may nonetheless exercise jurisdiction over the alleged crime because an 'essential element' of it, the enforced crossing of an international border, occurred on the territory of Bangladesh, a state party to the statute. The ICC requested the Bangladesh government to submit written observations on the issue of jurisdiction by June 11 this year, while June 20 has been set for hearing.

[EU urged to exert more pressure on Myanmar over Rohingyas](#) Prothom Alo (June 3)

Bangladesh has urged the EU countries to exert more pressure on Myanmar so that it takes Rohingyas back, easing the burden on Bangladesh and its economy. "The situation has become untenable for us," said foreign minister AK Abdul Momen. Momen discussed the issue during a recent telephone conversation with Irish deputy prime minister and foreign minister Simon Coveney. The Bangladesh foreign minister said the EU countries should step forward and share the responsibility. He expressed deep concern that there was no progress in repatriation of Rohingyas to Myanmar.

Similar:

[Rohingya repatriation: Bangladesh urges EU for more pressure on Myanmar](#) The Daily Star (June 4)

[Momen: Rohingya situation is now untenable for Bangladesh](#) Dhaka Tribune (June 3)

[Rohingya Repatriation: EU urged to exert more pressure on Myanmar](#) United News of Bangladesh (June 3)

[UN lauds countries open borders, hearts for refugees](#) New Age Bangladesh (June 3)

Antonio Guterres, United Nations secretary-general, has lauded the developing countries that have opened their borders and hearts to refugees and migrants, despite their own social, economic, and now health challenges, adding that it was essential that these countries were provided increased support and full solidarity. Referring to the countries, the UN chief said they offered a moving lesson to others in a period when doors were closed. 'Let us remove unwarranted barriers, explore models to regularize pathways for migrants and reduce transaction costs for remittances,' he said. Bangladesh, which is hosting over 1.1 million Rohingyas, recently received more Rohingyas who were found floating in the deep sea.

Similar:

[Grateful to countries that opened borders, hearts to refugees, migrants: UN chief](#) United News Bangladesh (June 3)

[Myanmar and the Rohingya: time for a domestic reckoning](#) Frontier Myanmar (June 3)

[op-ed] Hate speech against the Rohingya on social media gave the military cover as they went from village to village in northern Rakhine, committing acts that even the government-appointed Independent Commission of Enquiry has said included war crimes, and which United Nations investigators said could amount to genocide. If anyone who has been named for using hate speech wants to correct the damage that their comments have inflicted, then the path is clear: an unequivocal public retraction. This would require a huge amount of courage and humility, but it could be just what is needed to prompt a broader reckoning in society about the events of 2017. In the absence of deeply uncomfortable conversations held in public, such a reckoning may never happen.

[Displaced Rohingyas at Sea: Scourge of Human Trafficking](#) Observer Research Foundation (June 3)

[op-ed] According to police records, 529 Rohingyas were rescued from trafficking in 2019 at the camps near Cox's Bazar. According to humanitarian organizations, this may just be the tip of the iceberg as the numbers for people that still remain under the clutches of human trafficking networks are unknown. The ongoing trafficking crisis has shown how little the region is prepared and equipped to deal with such a movement of displaced people from one state to another. There have been efforts to strengthen domestic legislation as well as regional agreement to address the crisis.

[First Rohingya death reported in Cox's Bazar camp](#) New Age Bangladesh (June 2)

A Rohingya man in his seventies died of COVID-19 in a Cox's Bazar refugee camp on May 31. Camp officials said he was admitted to a MFS field hospital in Ukhia upazila of the district on May 31 with COVID-19 symptoms and his infection was confirmed on the night of June 1. The officials of the Cox's Bazar-based Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner said they traced the contacts for who might be infected and they had put a dozen people in isolation.

Similar:

[Coronavirus: First Rohingya man's death reported in Bangladesh camp](#) United News Bangladesh (June 2)

[First Rohingya refugee dies from coronavirus in Bangladesh](#) Al Jazeera (June 4)

[Bangladesh reports first virus death in Rohingya refugee camp](#) BDNews24 (June 2)

[First Rohingya dies of Covid-19 in Cox's Bazar](#) Dhaka Tribune (June 2)

[First Rohingya man dies of COVID-19](#) Prothom Alo (June 2)

[Bangladesh records first COVID-19 death after 71-year-old dies in Rohingya Refugee camp](#) New Indian Express (June 2)

[Bangladesh Records First Rohingya COVID-19 Death](#) Radio Free Asia (June 2)

[ARU: Civilian casualties rise as armed conflicts continue in Rohingya areas](#) Dhaka Tribune (June 2)

The Arakan Rohingya Union (ARU) has said armed clashes in the Arakan state of Myanmar have been on the rise in the past few days, marking a rise in civilian casualties. The ARU also placed eight demands before the international community to push the Myanmar government to protect the ethnic minority group, including immediate implementation of the agreement for safe, dignified, and voluntary return of the Rohingya refugees to their original homes in Arakan with full citizenship and basic rights with security and unconditionally, expansion of the lifting of the internet blackout in Northern Arakan, and making healthcare and emergency services accessible to all Rohingya there.

[Suspected Covid-19 positive Rohingya refugee escapes Tg Rambutan quarantine centre](#) The Star (June 1)

A Rohingya refugee suspected of having Covid-19 has escaped from a quarantine centre in Tanjung Rambutan in Malaysia. The man and two others had been stopped at a roadblock and investigated for defying the movement control order and immigration-related matters. He was given police bail and sent to the hospital because he had complained of shortness of breath and showed symptoms of Covid-19. He was sent to the Slim River Hospital and initial tests came back negative and was sent to Tanjung Rambutan to be quarantined for 14 days.

Similar:

[Malaysia's Immigration Depots: COVID-19 Hotspots?](#) The Asean Post (June 2)

[Rohingya refugee, possibly with Covid-19, disappears from quarantine centre](#) New Straits Times (June 1)

[Suspected Rohingya drug dealer killed in 'gunfight' with BGB](#) Dhaka Tribune (June 1)

A suspected drug dealer has been killed in a reported gunfight with Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) in Naikhongchhari upazila, Bandarban. The deceased, Abdur Rahman, 25, supposedly a Rohingya, was a resident of the Kutupalong



Rohingya Camp and died early morning June 1 near Baishfari area of Ghumdhum union of the upazila.

Similar:

[Rohingya 'drug peddler' killed in Cox's Bazar gunfight](#) New Age Bangladesh (June 1)

[UN Women and Rohingya women at the frontline of COVID-19 response](#) UN Women (June 1)

The world in lockdown has created a 'profound shock to our societies and economies, and women are at the heart of care and response efforts underway. Primarily as caregivers, women are not just sustaining families, but also serving as front-line responders, mainly in the health and service sector. In Cox's Bazar, where the world's largest refugee camp lies, Rohingya women face further increased gender-based violence due to the heightened tension within households and within the camp. This heightened tension is often caused from restrictions on income generating activities needed to sustain families. Despite these odds, Rohingya women are serving as front-line workers to protect their families and communities. One unique way they are doing this is by producing masks to fill a significant gap of personal protective equipment (PPE) in the market. Over 50,000 masks are being produced and the manufacturing is being managed by partners in UN Women's five multi-purpose Women's centers in the camps, engaging 163 Rohingya women and girls with 46 families run as single female headed households.

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/>

