

Developments related to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh

August 3 - August 9, 2020



REFUGEE SOLIDARITY
NETWORK

Highlights:

Accountability:

- Facebook has objected to a request from the Gambia to release posts and communications by members of Myanmar's military and police for use in the genocide case against Myanmar at the ICC, arguing this would violate US law.

International Support:

- Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has pledged to provide \$329 million in aid to Bangladesh for combating the coronavirus pandemic and has promised to talk with Myanmar to end the Rohingya crisis.

High-level Statements:

- Malaysia Foreign Minister Hishammuddin Hussein said he has requested the US to assist Malaysia in discussions with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees over the Rohingya refugee issue.
- Myanmar's leader Aung San Suu Kyi has formally declared her intention to seek a second term in November's election.

Developments:

[FB rejects Gambian plea to release Myanmar officials' data](#) New Age Bangladesh (August 7)

Facebook has objected to a request from Gambia, which has accused Myanmar at the World Court of genocide against the Rohingya Muslim minority, to release posts and communications by members of Myanmar's military and police. The social media giant urged the US District Court for the District of Columbia on August 4 to reject the demand, which it said would violate US law. Facebook has said it is working to block hate speech. On August 6, a spokesperson said Facebook 'stands against hate and violence, including in Myanmar.'

Similar:

[Facebook rejects request to release Myanmar officials' data for genocide case](#) BDNews24 (August 6)

[Facebook rejects request to release Myanmar officials' data for genocide case](#) Channel News Asia (August 6)

[Facebook rejects request to release Myanmar officials' data for genocide case](#) Reuters (August 6)

[Facebook rejects Gambian request to release Myanmar officials' data for Rohingya genocide case](#) The Globe and Mail (August 6)

[Floods join COVID-19 to batter Bangladesh](#) Anadolu Agency (August 7)

Two more Rohingyas tested COVID-19 positive in the refugee camps in southern Bangladesh on August 7, as the total number of infections in the country topped the 250,000 mark. With the fresh infections, the total virus cases among the persecuted Rohingya community reached 78 with six deaths, said the Government Refugee Commissioner's office. The country of above 165 million people could conduct only 13,253 tests in the last 24 hours due to ongoing floods.

[Malaysia seeks US help in solving Rohingya refugee issue](#) Free Malaysia Today (August 7)

Malaysia Foreign Minister Hishammuddin Hussein said he had requested the US to assist Malaysia in discussions with the UNHCR over the Rohingya refugee issue. He added that Malaysia's relationship with UNHCR was important as Malaysia had previously agreed to take in refugees with the condition that they be repatriated to a third country. "But this has not been done... UNHCR must also be responsible. If they don't cooperate with us, I hope the US can help us voice our concern to the UNHCR," he said, adding that he had raised the issue with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

Similar:

[Malaysia to extend aid to Lebanon](#) The Edge (August 8)

[Malaysia to extend aid to Lebanon](#) New Straits Times (August 7)

[Nominee US Ambassador to Myanmar Hints at Need to Counter China's Influence in Senate Testimony](#) The Irrawaddy (August 7)

When Thomas Laszlo Vajda joined a US Senate videoconference on August 5 to testify in support of his nomination as the US ambassador to Myanmar, he said one of his goals as envoy would be "to advance US interests and values." To achieve this, he told the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, US engagement with Myanmar is "essential" in order to advance the Southeast Asian country's reforms and help defend the country against "malign influences." The nominee said that among other things, the ongoing marginalization of ethnic and religious minority groups, and the involvement of the military in politics and the economy underscore that meaningful change in Myanmar remains an ongoing effort and an ongoing necessity.

[With nowhere else to go, Rakhine Muslim refugees turn to the sea](#) Myanmar Times (August 6)

Undocumented Rakhine Muslim and Bangladeshi migrants have been using the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea to reach other countries in a quest for a better life. In May, the United Nations expressed serious concern about reports of refugees adrift at sea, and warned of the risks of a new crisis such as the one in 2015, when thousands of migrants were stranded in overcrowded boats in international waters. According to the nonprofit Human Rights Watch, at least a dozen boats with Rakhine Muslim refugees have left Bangladesh in recent months. The solution for preventing Rakhine Muslims from making this desperate journey lies in their safe repatriation from Bangladesh to Myanmar, HRW South Asia director Meenakshi Ganguly said.

[Japan pledges \\$329 million in coronavirus aid to Bangladesh](#) BDNews24 (August 5)

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has pledged to provide \$329 million in aid to Bangladesh for combating the coronavirus pandemic. A bill regarding the grant has already been approved in parliament, Abe said during a conversation with his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina on August 5. The prime minister Hasina also discussed the current situation of Rohingya refugees living in Bangladesh and expected Abe's help to solve the crisis. Abe promised to talk with Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi to end the crisis.

Similar:

[Japan to give \\$329 million to Bangladesh to combat Covid-19](#) Dhaka Tribune (August 5)

[Japan to provide \\$329mn to combat corona: Abe tells Hasina](#) United News Bangladesh (August 5)

[Japan to support Bangladesh's coronavirus response](#) NHK (August 5)

[Japan, Bangladesh leaders agree to work together to combat pandemic](#) The Mainichi (August 6)

[Japan to give \\$329m to Bangladesh to fight COVID-19](#) New Age Bangladesh (August 6)

[Discrimination, Lack of Rights Motivate Muslim Candidates in Myanmar Elections](#) Radio Free Asia (August 5)

Muslim candidates will compete in Myanmar's parliamentary elections in greater numbers than they did in the last elections five years ago, with some of the current 25 contenders in November's race openly advocating for Muslim minority rights in the predominantly Buddhist country. The candidates say they aim to tackle discriminatory policies that in many cases deny native-born Muslims citizenship in Myanmar, a country that has seen waves of anti-Muslim

violence in 2012 and 2017 and treats Rohingya as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. However, NUCP secretary Aye Ko said that most of the candidate applications submitted by party members have already been rejected because the contenders said on the forms that they adhered to Islam.

[Rohingya man arrested with 140,000 yaba pills worth 4.2C in Teknaf](#) Dhaka Tribune (August 5)

Border Guard Bangladesh apprehended a Rohingya refugee and seized from his possession around 140,000 yaba pills worth about Tk4.2 crore from Leda khal area in Teknaf upazila of Cox's Bazar. Later, he was handed over to the police station where he was sued under the Narcotics Control Act.

[‘No two countries share this sort of a relationship’](#) Prothom Alo (August 5)

In an interview, Indian high commissioner to Bangladesh Riva Ganguly Das spoke about continued cooperation between India and Bangladesh. As Bangladesh's friend and neighbour, India remains committed to offering their fullest support for any mutually acceptable solution that will enable the earliest return of displaced persons to their homes in Rakhine State and to a life of dignity. This should be done in a manner that is safe, secure and sustainable. To strengthen Bangladesh's efforts, India has provided five tranches of aid to the camps in Cox's Bazar area through the Government of Bangladesh, and are committed to do more. They are also investing in the socio-economic development of the Rakhine area, including housing, power, education etc so that there is an incentive for people to return at the earliest.

[Leveraging International Justice for Lasting Peace in Myanmar](#) Just Security (August 4)

[op-ed] The international community has institutionalized its solidarity with persecuted groups in Myanmar through diverse accountability measures, ranging from U.N. treaties and mechanisms, to international courts, to the creation of investigative bodies. However, these accountability processes are not a panacea for holistic justice and peacebuilding. These processes can take years, with uncertain outcomes which are difficult to enforce. Efforts to secure justice internationally must be linked to grassroots domestic initiatives aimed at strengthening inclusion, nondiscrimination, and the rule of law in Myanmar. International accountability must therefore be viewed as complementary to and not a substitute for long-term solutions.

[Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi confirms contesting for second term](#) BDNews24 (August 4)

Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi on August 4 formally declared her intention to seek a second term in an election in November that is seen as a test of the Southeast Asian nation's tentative democratic reforms. After decades of military rule, Suu Kyi, who won the Nobel Peace Prize for campaigning for democracy, took the reins in 2016 after an electoral landslide, but has been forced to share power with the generals. Her international reputation slumped over Myanmar's treatment of Rohingya Muslims but she remains popular at home, where her image is undented by accusations of complicity in atrocities against the minority.

Similar:

[Aung San Suu Kyi confirms contesting for second term](#) Dhaka Tribune (August 4)

[Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi confirms contesting for second term](#) Asia One (August 4)

[Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi confirms contesting for second term](#) Reuters (August 4)

[Police, Military Troops Killed in Fighting With Arakan Army in Western Myanmar](#) The Irrawaddy (August 4)

Myanmar military officials, soldiers and other personnel were killed in clashes with the Arakan Army (AA) in northern Rakhine State's Rathedaung and Buthidaung townships on August 2 and 3. The AA ambushed border guard police providing security on the Inn Din-Taungpyo road in Rathedaung Township, killing one police officer and injuring others, according to Myanmar military spokesman Major General Zaw Min Tun. The AA said on its website that they were attacked by the Myanmar military and police in Rathedaung, rather than the ethnic armed group having attacked them. Fierce clashes are still going in Rathedaung, Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships in northern Rakhine, as Myanmar prepares to hold its third general election since 2010 in November.

[Rohingya Man Killed, Another Injured in Police Shooting in Rakhine State Capital](#) Radio Free Asia (August 3)

Police officers in Myanmar's Rakhine state shot and killed a Rohingya man and injured another as the two men sped through a checkpoint on their motorbike in the state capital Sittwe on the night of August 2, sources said. When reached for comment, state government and police officials denied the two men had been shot by police, claiming they had been involved instead in a machete fight.

[Rohingya refugees have 'no rights', but children can access education – minister](#) Malaysiakini (August 3)

The Malaysian government insists that while Rohingya refugees have “no rights” in Malaysia, their children are still given access to alternative education. Education Minister Mohd Radzi Md Jidin said children of refugees are accorded the same access to the curriculum of their country of origin, or of a third country via alternative guidance centres as other non-citizen children.

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/>

