

Developments related to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh

August 17 - August 23, 2020



REFUGEE SOLIDARITY
NETWORK

Highlights:

Within Myanmar:

- Four more Rohingya men seeking to run in Myanmar's upcoming general elections have been disqualified over questions about their parents' citizenship.

Camp conditions:

- IOM has inaugurated a new 120-bed Severe Acute Respiratory Infection Isolation and Treatment Facility (SARI ITC) in Cox's Bazar.
- It is reported that the RRRC wants sole responsibility to administer the NGOs working in the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar, and that RRRC Mahbub Alam Talukder wrote to the NGO Affairs Bureau in June seeking that control.

High-level statements:

- Three years on from the latest exodus of Rohingya refugees who fled Myanmar and sought sanctuary in Bangladesh, UNHCR is calling for renewed support and solutions for displaced and stateless Rohingya communities both within and outside of Myanmar.
- Bangladesh has issued multiple statements this week requesting support for early repatriation of the Rohingya to Myanmar.
- At a virtual seminar marking World Humanitarian Day, a network of 50 local NGOs, the Cox's Bazar CSO NGO Forum (CCNF), insisted the government strengthen its efforts to repatriate Rohingyas.

Developments:

['Facebook had role in violence in Myanmar forcing Rohingyas to flee'](#) Dhaka Tribune (August 23)

Facebook played a role in the violence in Myanmar that forced hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas to flee their homes to Bangladesh, four groups of the persecuted people have claimed, stressing that it is now the responsibility of the online social media platform to help them get justice. Representatives of the Voice of Rohingya (VOR), Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace and Human Rights (ARSPH), Rohingya Youth for Legal Action (RYLA), and Rohingya Women for Justice and Peace had a call this week with Facebook Director for Human Rights Miranda Sissons, and her colleague Alex Waraofka. Facebook's director for human rights says the online social media platform is working with the independent investigative mechanism for Myanmar to identify the information that can be used in legal cases.

[Local Covid-19 outbreak in Myanmar sparks fears for Rohingya camps](#) Dhaka Tribune (August 23)

Rohingya in Myanmar's conflict-wracked Rakhine state have expressed fears of a coronavirus outbreak reaching their overcrowded camps, after a spate of infections sent the state capital into lockdown. Nearly 130,000 Rohingya Muslims live in what Amnesty International describes as "apartheid" conditions in camps around Sittwe. The city has recorded 48 cases in the past week, making up more than 10% of the about 400 cases so far registered in Myanmar.

[Bangladesh wants immediate Rohingya repatriation](#) Kyodo News (August 22)

Bangladesh is demanding an immediate meeting with Myanmar on the repatriation of Rohingya refugees to their homeland in Rakhine State, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen has said. "Myanmar is delaying to take back the Rohingyas citing the coronavirus pandemic and an election in that country in October as reasons," Momen said. The foreign minister expects to sit down with the Myanmar government on the issue sometime after September.

Similar:

[Bangladesh wants immediate Rohingya repatriation](#) The Mainichi (August 22)

[As other doors close, some Rohingya cling to hope of resettlement](#) The Daily Star (August 21)

On the third anniversary of a mass exodus of Rohingya to Bangladesh, prospects look bleak for about 1 million members of the Muslim minority from Myanmar living in bamboo and plastic shelters in refugee camps. Two attempts to get a repatriation process going, in 2018 and 2019, failed as the refugees refused to go back to Buddhist-majority Myanmar, where they are denied citizenship and considered outsiders, fearing violence. Some take the dangerous option of travelling with people-smugglers by boat to Southeast Asia. Scores of people have been killed in recent years as their over-crowded rickety boats have capsized or run out of water and food. But even that perilous route is getting more difficult now as countries like Malaysia shut their borders, threatening to push boats back out to sea, to protect jobs and resources amid novel coronavirus lockdowns. Some Rohingya are clinging to the hope of a third option - resettlement in a rich country.

Similar:

[As Other Doors Close, Some Rohingya Cling to Hope of Resettlement](#) The New York Times (August 21)

[As other doors close, some Rohingya cling to hope of resettlement](#) Dhaka Tribune (August 21)

[As other doors close, some Rohingya cling to hope of resettlement](#) BDNews24 (August 21)

[UNHCR: Rohingya crisis needs lasting solutions](#) UNHCR (August 21)

UNHCR is calling for renewed support and solutions for displaced and stateless Rohingya communities both within and outside of Myanmar. Three years on from the latest exodus of Rohingya refugees who fled Myanmar and sought sanctuary in Bangladesh from August 2017 onwards, challenges persist and continue to evolve. The COVID-19 pandemic has added additional complexities. The international community must not only maintain support for refugees and their host communities, but adapt to critical needs and expand the search for solutions. Bangladesh has demonstrated a profound humanitarian commitment to Rohingya refugees. It has ensured their protection and extended life-saving humanitarian support, and now hosts nine out of ten Rohingya refugees registered in the Asia-Pacific region. This generosity must be acknowledged through continued investment in both Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshi host communities. Ultimately, the solution to the plight of the Rohingya lies in Myanmar, and in comprehensively implementing the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, to which the Government of Myanmar has committed.

Similar:

[Rohingya crisis needs lasting solutions, says UNHCR](#) Prothom Alo (August 21)

[Rohingya crisis needs lasting solutions: UNHCR](#) The Daily Star (August 21)

[UNHCR calls for lasting solutions of Rohingya crisis](#) Dhaka Tribune (August 21)

[New solutions needed three years after Rohingya crisis: UN](#) Yeni Safak (August 22)

[Rohingya Crisis Needs Lasting Solutions Amid Coronavirus Pandemic: UN](#) Urdu Point (August 21)

[Three years on, Rohingya refugees yet to return to Myanmar](#) Deutsche Welle (August 17)

[World Humanitarian Day: UN recognizes 4 Bangladeshi youths as Real Life Heroes](#) The Daily Star (August 20)

The United Nations has recognised four Bangladeshi youths as "Real Life Heroes" to acknowledge their contribution to humanitarian services. The honours were given by the UN marking the World Humanitarian Day on August 19. The



four are architect Rizvi Hassan, Dhaka University student Tanbir Hasan Shaikat, translator Sifat Noor and mask-maker Akhi. Bangladeshi architect Rizvi Hassan was recognised as being the driving force behind the construction of a safe space for Rohingya women and girls in Cox's Bazar, the world's largest camp for displaced people, and home to around a million Rohingya refugees who fled from Myanmar, the UN said in its website.

Similar:

[UN recognizes four Bangladeshi youths as 'Real Life Hero' Prothom Alo \(August 20\)](#)

[UN features Bangladeshi architect Rizvi as 'Real Life Hero' The Daily Star \(August 20\)](#)

[UN features Bangladeshi architect Rizvi as 'Real Life Hero' United News Bangladesh \(August 20\)](#)

[Real Life Heroes: building a safe space for Rohingya women refugees UN News \(August 18\)](#)

[Timeline: Three years on, a look at the Rohingya crisis](#) Reuters (August 20)

This month marks the third anniversary of the fleeing of more than 730,000 Rohingya from Myanmar's Rakhine State to Bangladesh after a military-led crackdown in response to an attack by Muslim militants on Myanmar security posts. This article contains a timeline of events in the crisis.

Similar:

[Timeline: Three Years on, a Look at the Rohingya Crisis](#) The New York Times (August 20)

[RRC wants sole responsibility to oversee NGOs working in Rohingya camps](#) Dhaka Tribune (August 20)

The office of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), the government body based in Cox's Bazar to deal with the Rohingya issue, wants sole responsibility to administer the NGOs working in 34 camps inhabited by the persecuted people from Myanmar, multiple sources concerned have said. They also said that RRRC Mahbub Alam Talukder had written to the NGO Affairs Bureau under the Prime Minister's Office in June seeking control over the NGOs. At present, the NGOs are controlled by the deputy commissioner and local administration.

[Dhaka again seeks Delhi's support for Rohingya repatriation](#) Dhaka Tribune (August 19)

Bangladesh has again asked for India's support for the early repatriation of hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas, who have taken refuge in Bangladesh after escaping brutal persecution in Myanmar. "We are concerned about the Rohingya issue. In the past, we have tried for many times so that a resolution [on repatriation] can get a passage in the UN Security Council. "However, we failed because of reservation from some permanent members. Now we are seeking India's support," Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen said. He made the remarks while talking to reporters after a meeting with his Indian counterpart Harsh Vardhan Shringla.

[Rohingya cry for justice deserves to be heard](#) Financial Times (August 19)

[op-ed] Every August 25, Rohingya observe what they call "Genocide Day", the anniversary of violent attacks led by the Myanmar military against them in 2017. But the Bangladeshi authorities have banned their planned gathering, citing Covid-19. Rather than crack down on the right to peaceful assembly, authorities should ensure Rohingya can safely exercise their right to mark the date. Governments everywhere have adopted restrictive measures to slow the spread of the disease. In Bangladesh, all public events are banned until at least August 31. Yet public health is not merely the responsibility of governments. Rohingya know this. Some in the camps say they want to gather, but only with strict health measures in place and ideally with face masks.

[Rise of the Rohingya: How Refugees Can Survive the Genocide in Myanmar](#) The National Interest (August 19)

[op-ed] Almost three years ago, the Myanmar government unleashed a campaign of violence forcing the majority of the Rohingya population to flee. Now is the time to call these crimes what they are: genocide. The U.S. government has called Myanmar's attacks on the Rohingya ethnic cleansing and documented a series of abuses it describes as "well-planned and coordinated" and "extreme, large-scale, widespread, and seemingly geared toward both terrorizing the population and driving out the Rohingya residents." Yet, it has fallen short of calling these abuses "crimes against



humanity” and “genocide.” The failure of the United States and other governments to do so impedes both accountability efforts for past crimes and solutions to current challenges.

[Factbox: 3 years on, Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh camps](#) The Daily Star (August 19)

August 25 marks the third anniversary of attacks by Rohingya Muslim insurgents that triggered military retaliation and led to the exodus from Buddhist-majority Myanmar over following days and weeks of about 730,000 Rohingya to Bangladesh. Here are some facts about the camps in Bangladesh's southeastern coastal district of Cox's Bazar, based on information from the UNHCR, Bangladesh government and the International Organization for Migration.

Similar:

[Three years on, Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh camps](#) Prothom Alo (August 18)

[Factbox: Three years on, Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh camps](#) Reuters (August 18)

[Factbox: Three Years on, Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh Camps](#) The New York Times (August 18)

[Local NGOs for bolstering Rohingya repatriation efforts](#) United News Bangladesh (August 18)

A network of 50 local NGOs, the Cox's Bazar CSO NGO Forum (CCNF), has insisted the government strengthen its efforts to repatriate Rohingyas. Speakers at a virtual seminar marking the World Humanitarian Day, the NGOs also urged UN agencies and international NGOs to put political mobilisation for dignified return of Rohingyas. Rashedul Islam, the director general of NGO Affairs Bureau who attended the seminar as chief guest, said that dignified return of Myanmar nationals is the best response to the issue. He appreciated the efforts of local NGOs and sacrifice of front line workers in Covid-19 situation.

Similar:

[Rights groups call for return of Rohingya refugees](#) Anadolu Agency (August 18)

[Rohingya rights body slams Myanmar's 'racist' election](#) Anadolu Agency (August 19)

[On First Trip Since Pandemic Began, Foreign Secy Shringla Meets Bangladeshi PM](#) The Wire (August 18)

Indian foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla has met with Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, on his first foreign trip after COVID-19 pandemic spread and stopped all international travel in March. This was reportedly the Bangladesh PM's first meeting with an overseas visitor in months. According to official sources, Prime Minister Hasina had raised the issue of Rohingya issue with Shringla and the need for their early repatriation. There has been no progress in the voluntary repatriation process of the Rohingya to Myanmar, with their safety and security in their villages in Rakhine still a matter of concern for various agencies.

Similar:

[Shringla's visit to Dhaka more than vaccine diplomacy](#) Prothom Alo (August 21)

[Shringla meets PM; Delhi proposes air bubble arrangement](#) United News Bangladesh (August 18)

[Teesta, CAA, NRC issues not discussed during Shringla's meeting with PM Hasina](#) The Daily Star (August 20)

[On mission Dhaka, foreign secretary hands over PM Modi's message to Sheikh Hasina](#) Hindustan Times (August 18)

[Will finish pending projects by next year, India assures Bangladesh](#) The Tribune (August 20)

[Govt officials: No existence of ARSA in Rohingya camps](#) Dhaka Tribune (August 18)

Several Indian media outlets recently published reports that the ISI is backing ARSA in Myanmar and aiding a Bangladeshi terrorist outfit to train militants. Government officials in Bangladesh have dismissed Indian media reports stating that the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) is active in the Rohingya camps, and training activities are being conducted with the backing of Pakistan's intelligence agency. The officials categorically said that there was no existence of ARSA in the camps, so questions could not arise about their activities, including training militants.



[Election Authorities Reject Four More Rohingya Candidates in Rakhine State](#) Radio Free Asia (August 17)

Four more Rohingya men seeking to run in Myanmar's upcoming general elections have been disqualified over questions about their parents' citizenship, including a party leader who won a seat in parliament in 1990 but was jailed by the former military-run government, the candidates have said. Kyaw Min, founder of the Rohingya-led Democracy and Human Rights Party, and two other DHRP candidates running for seats in the western state of Rakhine were rejected on August 17. Rights activist Nickey Diamond from Fortify Rights said the rejection of Muslim candidates manipulate existing laws to persecute the Rohingya.

Similar:

[Myanmar Bars Rohingya Candidates from Elections, Again](#) Human Rights Watch (August 18)

[IOM opens SARI ITC facility in Cox's Bazar Rohingya Camp](#) Dhaka Tribune (August 17)

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has inaugurated a new Severe Acute Respiratory Infection Isolation and Treatment Facility (SARI ITC) in Cox's Bazar to help Rohingyas cope better with the challenges posed by the Covid-19 crisis to the community. The 120-bed facility--installed on Monday via a collaborative effort by the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) and IOM-- was opened at Rohingya Camp No-20 (Extension) inside the Kutupalong camp in Cox's Bazar.

[Solving the unending problem of Rohingya crisis](#) The Independent Bangladesh (August 17)

[op-ed] Myanmar authorities are not paying any heed to the call of taking back these refugees to their country who became the victim of ruthless mass murder. The UN and its organ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees are pretty much concerned about this huge crisis but the crisis remains unsolved because of not providing any constructive solution to way out of this unending predicament. There are some probable ways that the authorities can take up to ease down the current situation and move towards the solution of the Rohingya crisis: political negotiation, making treaties, resettlement, influence of major powers, and military intervention. The crisis needs immediate intervention by international organizations like the United Nations because it is getting worse day by day.

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/>

