

# Developments related to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh

August 24 - August 30, 2020



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## Highlights:

### Accountability:

- August 25 marked the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the flight of 740,000 Rohingya from Myanmar to Bangladesh in 2017. Many NGOs, states, and other entities made statements on the anniversary calling for support, accountability and repatriation.

### Camp conditions:

- 3G and 4G internet has been restored to the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar as of August 28, after nearly a year of internet restrictions.
- The Rohingyas arranged the silent protest to commemorate the third anniversary of the day hundreds of thousands of them fled their homeland in Myanmar

### International Support:

- The United Arab Emirates has announced an assistance package for UNHCR to support an aid shipment to Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh, following recent floods that struck the camp.

## Developments:

### [High-speed internet in Rohingya camps restored](#) New Age Bangladesh (August 29)

Mobile phone operators in Bangladesh have restored high-speed internet connectivity in Rohingya camps in Tekhnaf and Ukhiya of Cox's Bazar nearly a year after restricting the services. Posts and telecommunications minister Mustafa Jabbar said that the telecom operators were allowed to restore 3G and 4G services based on the instruction from the relevant government authorities. The 3G and 4G mobile network was restored in the refugee camps about 11:00am, the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner Shamsuddoha confirmed.

#### *Similar:*

[Rohingya Camps: 3G, 4G mobile services resume after a year](#) The Daily Star (August 29)

[3G, 4G internet restored in Rohingya camps](#) Dhaka Tribune (August 28)

[Bangladesh Restores Internet to Rohingya Camps](#) BenarNews (August 28)

[Bangladesh to restore internet in Rohingya refugee settlement](#) WION News (August 29)

[Internet, mobile network restored for Rohingya refugees](#) Yeni Safak (August 29)

[Govt restores 3G, 4G network at Rohingya camps](#) The Financial Express (August 28)

[Internet, mobile network restored for Rohingya refugees](#) Anadolu Agency (August 29)

[Bangladesh to Restore Mobile Internet In Cox Bazaar After International Criticism](#) Republic World (August 30)

### [Bangladesh invites more Swiss investment](#) The Independent Bangladesh (August 27)

New Swiss Ambassador to Bangladesh Nathalie Chuard met Foreign Minister Momen at the State Guest House Jamuna on August 26. Dr Momen requested the new Swiss Ambassador to encourage Swiss investors to invest in the Hi-tech

parks of Bangladesh, invited Swiss investors to set up manufacturing factories in the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and invest more in Bangladesh. Appreciating Switzerland's continued support to resolve the Rohingya crisis, and Foreign Minister sought the international community including Switzerland's stronger role in ensuring sustainable repatriation of Rohingyas at the earliest. The issue of justice for the victims and accountability for the atrocities committed was also highlighted by Dr. Momen. The Swiss Ambassador assured him of her country's strong commitment in this regard.

*Similar:*

[FM urges Swiss ambassador to encourage investment in Bangladesh](#) New Age Bangladesh (August 27)

[Bangladesh seeks more Swiss investment](#) The Financial Express (August 27)

[Bangladesh invites more Swiss investment in SEZs](#) United News Bangladesh (August 27)

[Global community's strong commitment sought to resolve Rohingya crisis](#) United News Bangladesh (August 27)

The Centre for Genocide Studies, University of Dhaka issued a Dhaka Declaration 2020 on August 27, at the end of a two-day international E-Conference on 'Connecting the Rohingya Diaspora: Highlighting the Global Displacement'. It recognised that the Rohingya people have the right to return to their homeland. The declaration also calls upon the United Nations and all members of the international community to use diplomatic channels to provide enough humanitarian assistance and other support to ensure protection and rights of all the Rohingya people and other vulnerable groups.

*Similar:*

[Rohingya crisis resolution hinges on citizenship issue](#) The Financial Express (August 27)

[Rohingya crisis: FM seeks Nigeria's stronger role in int'l forums](#) United News Bangladesh (August 27)

Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen urged Nigeria to continue playing stronger role in the UN and in other forums to stop the torture of Rohingyas and expedite repatriation to their place of origin in Rakhine State. He made the request while virtually jointly releasing a commemorative stamp marking the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with his Nigerian counterpart Geoffrey Onyeama.

[UAE announces aid for a million Rohingya refugees in flood-hit Bangladesh](#) MENA FM (August 27)

The United Arab Emirates has announced assistance to the UNHCR to support it in delivering an aid shipment to Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh, following recent floods that struck a camp housing more than a million Rohingya refugees. Reem bint Ibrahim Al Hashemy, Minister of State for International Cooperation, stressed the importance of this ongoing support, especially in light of the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, the role that the UAE plays in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, and its absolute commitment to the concepts and objectives of the organisation.

*Similar:*

[UAE sends humanitarian aid to Bangladesh following recent floods](#) Gulf Today (August 27)

['ICJ judgment may put powerful pressure on Myanmar'](#) Anadolu Agency (August 26)

A judgment against Myanmar from the ongoing genocide lawsuit at the UN's highest court can be an effective tool to put "powerful" pressure on State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi administration to speed up the peaceful and dignified repatriation of Rohingya to their home country, said a top legal expert. The legal expert, who now teaches law at the Trinity College Dublin, Ireland, said that the final judgment from international court may encourage global actors to act against Myanmar, adopting harsh measures including imposing economic sanctions. He further said that the final judgment of ICJ may lead even multinational companies to review their relations with Myanmar.

[UN chief put emphasis on addressing root cause of Rohingya crisis](#) New Age Bangladesh (August 26)

United Nations secretary-general Antonio Guterres has called for greater attention to the Rohingya refugee crisis and addressing its root causes. He said that conditions for the safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable return of all refugees needed to be created. In a statement issued by his spokesperson, Guterres said that the UN would continue to stand in solidarity with all those affected by the crisis, and that it was committed to working with all stakeholders, including regional actors, towards a future of sustainable development, human rights and peace in Myanmar. He called for greater urgency to the crisis by addressing the root causes of the conflict and creating the conditions for the safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable return of all refugees.

[Many Rohingyas get involved in crimes](#) New Age Bangladesh (August 25)

The number of arms and drug-related cases has increased sharply over the last three years against Rohingyas living in Cox's Bazar camps in comparison to other crimes, according to official statistics. The statistics also show that 2019 saw the highest number of murders and involvement of human trafficking-related crimes in the camps while the law enforcement agencies launched a crackdown against such crimes resulting an increasing number of deaths in the reported incidents of 'gunfights'. The Cox's Bazar police headquarters statistics showed that Between August 2017 and August 20, 2020, a total of 725 criminal cases involving Rohingyas have been filed against 1,664 individuals.

[Myanmar must accept int'l solution for safe return of Rohingyas](#) The Daily Star (August 25)

The Myanmar government has failed to ensure that nearly one million Rohingya refugees can safely return home three years since fleeing their country, Human Rights Watch has said in a statement. The statement pointed out that the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in January imposed provisional measures on Myanmar to prevent genocide while it adjudicates alleged violations of the Genocide Convention, and the International Criminal Court (ICC) in November 2019 began an investigation into Myanmar's forced deportation of Rohingya and related crimes against humanity. "[But] Myanmar has not complied with these international justice measures, has not permitted the United Nations to investigate grave crimes inside the country, nor conducted credible criminal investigations of its own into military atrocities ... Myanmar needs to accept an international solution that provides for the safe, voluntary return of Rohingya refugees, while an understandably stretched Bangladesh should not make conditions inhospitable for refugees who have nowhere to go," the statement concluded.

[Educo calls for increased support for Rohingya children amid pandemic](#) Dhaka Tribune (August 25)

Educo, a global development NGO focused on education and child protection, has called for increased support to help Rohingya children access quality remote learning alternatives amid school closures brought about by the coronavirus pandemic. The child rights organization made the plea for help in a press release. A recent survey led by local organization SKUS with support from Educo found that the majority of Rohingya children have been coping with school closures by learning on their own without adequate learning materials or very little guidance from educators.

*Similar:*

[Rohingya children bearing brunt of COVID disruptions: UNICEF](#) United News Bangladesh (August 24)

[Myanmar frustrating repatriation efforts](#) The Daily Star (August 25)

In the face of Myanmar's strategy of doing nothing about restoring normalcy in Rakhine, Bangladesh is demanding the international community to create basic services, safety, security and livelihood options for the Rohingyas who would return to Myanmar. Myanmar is doing what's needed to frustrate repatriation efforts, Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen told a webinar on the Rohingya Crisis: Western, Asian, and Bilateral Perspectives. Center for Peace Studies (CPS) of South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) at North South University organised it in partnership with the High Commission of Canada to Bangladesh ahead of the third anniversary of Rohingya influx on August 25.

*Similar:*

[Myanmar apathy almost stalls repatriation process](#) New Age Bangladesh (August 25)

[No single Rohingya repatriated in three years](#) The Financial Express (August 27)

[In the world's largest refugee camp, a female cleric tackles coronavirus myths](#) Reuters Foundation News (August 25)  
Walking door to door through the world's largest refugee settlement in Bangladesh, Ashmida Begum is on the front lines of efforts to dispel entrenched and lethal myths about the coronavirus. Begum, a cleric in her 30s from Myanmar, spends her days battling rumours about the disease that could help it flourish in the crowded camps of Cox's Bazar where social distancing is impossible. Sitting with refugees in their homes, Begum educates women and children - who account for a majority of the camp's population - about the virus. Women like Begum, trusted in the community, are able to effectively reach women in the camps many of whom rarely leave their homes and lack access to the internet.

['UN not addressing actual condition of Rohingya'](#) Anadolu Agency (August 25)

A senior India analyst and an expert on ethnic conflicts has said that the UN's long-term strategy to tackle the Rohingya crises does not address their actual condition. "UN-led process is focused on a long-term strategy of bringing prosperity to the Rohingya areas, but this long-term strategy does not take into account the actual conditions of human right abuses and poverty, rampant amongst the Rohingya refugee population," said Namrata Goswami, who has worked on ethnic and intrastate conflict. On India's role, she said as a regional and global player, New Delhi should take a more proactive stance in ensuring a safe repatriation program for the Rohingya refugees. Asked about the solution to the Rohingya crisis, Goswami said, the Myanmar government has to take responsibility for the crisis.

[Pressuring Bangladesh to do more will not help the Rohingya](#) AlJazeera (August 25)

[op-ed] The conversations surrounding the fate of the Rohingya are curiously focused not on Myanmar, but Bangladesh. The international community, seemingly convinced that Myanmar cannot be forced to change its ways and accept the Rohingya, are putting pressure on Bangladesh to ameliorate the living conditions of the refugees it hosts and counter the growing intolerance against them in the country. It is undeniable that the relations between the locals and the Rohingya refugees are rapidly deteriorating in Bangladesh. Nevertheless, it is hypocritical to expect a developing nation that has been hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees with little help from the international community for many decades to continue to do so with enthusiasm for the foreseeable future. Today, as we commemorate the third "Rohingya Genocide Memorial Day", we need to understand that the Rohingya problem cannot be resolved merely by sending aid to Bangladesh and pressuring it to do more to help the refugees it hosts. The international community needs to stop focusing on temporary fixes and start looking for a way to help the Rohingya refugees return home to Myanmar safely. If it fails to do so, there will be no end to the suffering of the Rohingya.

[Rohingya repatriation: Myanmar doing little while Bangladesh facing challenges](#) The Daily Star (August 25)

When Bangladesh continues to bear the brunt of sheltering more than a million Rohingyas, Myanmar is doing little for their repatriation amid the silence of global powers though the Southeast Asian country faces a genocide case, experts and officials said. Bangladesh hastily signed a repatriation deal with Myanmar in November 2017. The next year, UNHCR and UNDP signed a tripartite deal with Myanmar on creating conducive conditions for Rohingya return. However, none of the demands of the refugees -- guarantee of their safety, basic rights and citizenship -- has been met Myanmar. As a result, two repatriation attempts -- one on November 15 in 2018 and the second on August 22 last year -- fell flat. Even the provisional order issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in January this year has failed to help make any headway. Dozens of Rohingyas, along with hundreds of Rakhines, were killed and thousands were displaced as fighting between Myanmar military and Arakan Army raged in the recent months. With no repatriation in sight, Bangladesh is counting losses.

[Rohingyas shut shops, houses commemorating 3 years of exodus](#) Dhaka Tribune (August 25)

The Rohingyas arranged the silent protest to commemorate the third anniversary of the day hundreds of thousands of them fled their homeland in Myanmar on August 25. The Rohingyas refer to the day as "Rohingya Genocide Remembrance Day." The camps looked deserted as over a million Rohingyas remained in their houses and kept their shops closed. The roads in all the 34 camps in Teknaf and Ukhia under Cox's Bazar were completely devoid of people. "Today [Tuesday], we request the international community to first recognize what happened to us as genocide, and second, repatriate us with guarantees of international security," Mohib Ullah, chairman of the Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace and Human Rights, said. "Third, take our case to the International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court for ensuring justice," he told this correspondent at his office in the camp. He also urged the



international community to ensure that the Rohingyas could exercise their rights in the forthcoming elections in Myanmar.

*Similar:*

[Rohingya hold 'silent protest' on anniversary of exodus to Bangladesh](#) Reuters (August 25)

[Rohingya mark genocide anniversary with silent prayers](#) The Nation (August 26)

[Rohingya protest silently on anniversary of killings](#) Taipei Times (August 26)

[Rohingya mark genocide anniversary with silent prayers](#) Anadolu Agency (August 25)

**[Rohingya relocation to Bhashan Char island may start after Monsoon: B'desh Foreign Secretary](#)** DD News (August 24)

Bangladesh is planning to start the process of relocating Rohingya refugees from the crowded camps of Cox's Bazar to the newly built facility at Bhashan Char island after the monsoon session. Announcing this in Dhaka during a webinar, the Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh Masud Bin Momen said that the government is planning to take relatives of the 306 Rohingya refugees already settled there and other representative to show the facilities available on the Bhashan Char for the people to be settled there. He said, if they find the place better than the cramped Cox's Bazar, the initial transfer of Rohingyas may commence after the Monsoon season. Refuting the concerns of some Human rights groups, environmentalists and NGOs about the fragility of the Bhashan Char, the Foreign Secretary said that the recent Amphan cyclone has proved the durability of the Bhashan char island and the strength of the structures built there.

*Similar:*

[Rohingya relocation to Bhashan Char island may start after Monsoon: Bangladesh Foreign Secretary](#) All India Radio News (August 24)

**[Bangladesh to lift Rohingya internet ban as anniversary nears](#)** Reuters (August 24)

Bangladesh will lift internet restrictions imposed on nearly a million Rohingya refugees, a senior official has said, ahead of the third anniversary of their exodus from Myanmar. The Bangladesh government has been under pressure from the UN and aid groups to end the restrictions over fears they are hampering efforts to curb the spread of the coronavirus and provide a basic education to thousands of children. "Responding to requests from our friends ... we have taken a decision on lifting the restriction," said Masud Bin Momen during a webinar on the crisis, referring to pressure from the United Nations and human rights groups.

*Similar:*

[Bangladesh to lift Rohingya refugees internet ban 'very soon'](#) France 24 (August 24)

[ARTICLE 19 hails decision to allow mobile network, internet facilities at Rohingya camps](#) The Financial Express (August 27)

**[Three years on, Rohingya repatriation still uncertain](#)** Dhaka Tribune (August 24)

August 25 marks three years since the day hundreds of Rohingyas fled their homeland following a crackdown by the Myanmar military in northwest Rakhine. It is Bangladesh who provided shelter in Cox's Bazar to the Rohingyas, often described as one of the world's most persecuted communities. Since August 25, 2017, about 740,000 Rohingyas have arrived in Bangladesh. Despite limited resources, Bangladesh has given the refugees shelter and security. The arrivals after August 25, 2017, are in addition to 80,000 Rohingyas who took shelter in 2016, and nearly 300,000 who have been living in Bangladesh for decades. Now, the country continues to bear the burden of over one million Rohingyas from the Rakhine state of Myanmar. Three years has passed, but still no one really knows when the displaced Rohingyas will be able to return to their homes in Rakhine, even though repatriation should have been complete by now as per a bilateral instrument signed between Bangladesh and Myanmar.

*Similar:*

[Three years pass since Rohingya fled to Bangladesh](#) NHK World (August 25)



Bonded by Crisis, Adversity and Hope: The Rohingya influx, three years on UN Population Fund (August 25)  
Three years on, the Rohingya are still waiting for a justice that may never come Independent (August 26)  
The plight of the Rohingya The International News (August 28) [op-ed]  
Future for Rohingya: Refugees refuse to lose hope World Food Program (August 24)  
Rohingya crisis needs lasting solutions renewed commitment amid COVID-19 pandemic Modern Diplomacy (August 25)  
Rohingya refugees remain in limbo three years after mass exodus MSF (August 25)  
Three years since their genocide began, the Rohingya remain desperate for help The Washington Post (August 30)  
Anniversary of Genocide Attacks on Rohingya Reminds Us They Are Still at Risk Just Security (August 28)  
What can Bangladesh do to resolve the Rohingya crisis? Prothom Alo (August 25) [op-ed]  
OPINION – What solidarity means for Rohingya survivors of Myanmar Genocide? Anadolu Agency (August 27) [op-ed]  
Genocide: The term that fits the crime in Myanmar The Washington Times (August 26) [op-ed]

*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](mailto:advocacy@rsn.ngo). For more information about RSN and our work, please visit <https://refugeesolidaritynetwork.org/>*