

# The Rohingya Digest

## January 2022

A monthly collection of selected news on the Rohingyas



**Bangladesh pushing for the return of the Rohingyas**

4 January 2022

Bangladesh has asked for the immediate, voluntary, safe, and dignified return of Myanmar nationals who have been temporarily hosted in the country. The government has stated its willingness to collaborate in order to strengthen Myanmar's relationship while also assuring the early repatriation of Rohingyas to their homeland in Rakhine State.

Bangladesh has been tenacious in creating mutually beneficial connections with Myanmar's people, and the two countries will work together to further the partnership promoted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Republic of the Union of Myanmar's Independence Day. Bangladesh sent wishes and felicitations to Myanmar's people, wishing them peace and prosperity.

Source: [The TBS News](#)

**Another 700 Rohingyas leave for Bhasan Char from Ukhia**

05 January 2022

In the ninth phase of relocation, a number of 705 more Rohingyas from Ukhia and Teknaf camps in Cox's Bazar have left for Bhasan Char. On Tuesday, 15 buses carrying Rohingyas departed the transit point at Ukhia Degree College in two shifts for the Naval Jetty in Chattogram. Covered vans carrying goods and products and the required convoys of security personnel were also on route to

Chattogram till the evening. Referring to the government's decision to relocate one lakh Rohingyas to Bhasanchar, Cox's Bazar Relief and Refugee Repatriation Commissioner, Shah Rezwan Hayat, said that nobody is being forced to relocate. "Only those who are willingly agreeing to relocate after learning about the facilities there, are being taken to the island." "The relocation process will continue until the one lakh target is met," added Mr. Rezwan. According to Rohingya camp leaders, Rohingyas willing to relocate to Bhasan Char submit their names to the respective camp in-charge offices. Then the relocation process is accomplished through registration. This is the second time the Rohingyas are being relocated to the southern island since the government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for refugee management in Bhasan Char. Earlier, on 17 December, 550 Rohingyas left Ukhia camps in the eighth phase and reached Bhasan Char the next day. The relocation process was suspended since last April owing to inclement sea weather in the monsoon season. Since December last year, around 20,000 Rohingyas have been taken to Bhasanchar in eight phases.

Source: [The TBS News](#)

**Military coup prolongs: Miseries for Rohingyas increased**

06 January 2022

Myanmar's generals dispatched military personnel to Rakhine State, summoning leaders from the predominantly Muslim Rohingya minority in Buthidaung Township to a conference on the banks of the Mayu River. The country's persecuted Rohingya minority is looking vulnerable once again, amid fears that the political crisis sparked by the February 1 military coup will devolve into civil war, and as a truce in the restive northern state continues to fray. In November of last year, there were mass arrests of Rohingya Muslims attempting to flee Rakhine, as well as new draconian restrictions on their freedom of movement and threats from military officials about the dangers of cooperating with the AA, which is primarily made up of ethnic Rakhine Buddhists. Ethnic Rakhine people have also been exposed to heightened travel checks after the coup.

It has long been illegal for Rohingya to travel outside of the state, with those who breach the rules risking a two-year prison sentence. But the deteriorating situation means more are trying. In late November, the Myanmar navy seized a boat near the state capital, Sittwe that was travelling from Maungdaw to Malaysia arresting the more than 200 Rohingya who were on board, including 33 children.

Earlier that month, 55 Rohingya were arrested after making it as far as Yangon, Myanmar's biggest city. The military leadership appears to be introducing harsher punishments, with local media reporting on December 15 that a court sentenced the Rohingya arrested near Sittwe to five years in prison for breaching the law, rather than two.

Source: [Al Jazeera](#)

### **Turkey assists to repatriate the Rohingyas**

8 January 2022

Turkey is working to repatriate Rohingyas in the country, said the Minister of State for Disaster Management and Relief. Md. Enamur Rahman said that Turkey will talk to different countries of the world so that Rohingya can be returned to Myanmar with dignity. Turkish Interior Minister Solaiman Soylu, who is visiting Bangladesh, said they would continue that effort.

The state minister was speaking to reporters after a meeting with Turkish Interior Minister Solaiman Soylu at the Hotel Intercontinental in the capital on Saturday (January 6th). The Minister of State for Relief said that the Minister of Interior of Turkey said that he had talked to different countries of the world so that the forcibly displaced Myanmar citizens could return to their homeland with security and dignity. He also said that he will continue his efforts.

Praising Turkish Home Minister Sheikh Hasina, the state minister said he praised Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for providing shelter and humanitarian assistance to about 1.1 million Rohingya in the country. He expressed hope for any kind of cooperation from his government and said that the ongoing cooperation would continue. We wanted to share the experience of the two countries in disaster management and we agreed. As a result, in the future we will be able to cooperate with each other in dealing with disasters.

The state minister also said that a memorandum of understanding would be signed between the two countries in this regard. On the other hand, Turkish Interior Minister Solaiman Soylu was accompanied by Deputy Minister of Interior Ismail Chatakalu, Deputy Minister of Health Khalil Bal Damir, two Turkish MPs, and Turkish Ambassador to Bangladesh Mostafa Osman Turan.

Source: [Somoynews](#)

### **Fire in Rohingya refugee camp leaves thousands homeless**

09 January 2022

Thousands of Rohingya people have been displaced after a fire ravaged their refugee camp in southern Bangladesh, according to authorities. On Sunday, Kamran Hossain, a spokesperson for the Armed Police Battalion, which oversees security in the camp,

estimated that about 1,200 dwellings were destroyed by the fire.

Thousands of Rohingya have been left homeless after a fire gutted parts of their refugee camp in southeastern Bangladesh, police said. About 850,000 of the persecuted mostly Muslim minority, many of whom escaped a 2017 military crackdown in Myanmar that the United Nations investigators concluded was executed with "genocidal intent", live in a network of camps in Bangladesh's border district of Cox's Bazar.

The fire erupted at Camp 16 and spread quickly through bamboo and tarpaulin shelters, displacing almost 5,000 people. Rescue workers have got the fire under control, according to Mohammed Shamsud Douza, a Bangladesh government officer in care of refugees. In March last year, 15 people died and about 50,000 were left homeless in Bangladesh after a huge fire destroyed Rohingya homes in the world's biggest refugee settlement. Mohammad Yasin, 29, bemoaned the lack of fire safety equipment in the camps.

Source: [Al Jazeera](#)

### **Dhaka expressing worries about regional stability**

13 January 2022

Bangladesh has expressed worry about the displaced Myanmar residents' increasing

vulnerability to militancy, extremist, trans-border criminality, human trafficking, and drug smuggling in Bangladesh. Bangladesh believes that these issues have severe regional security consequences. Bangladesh has called on Vietnam and ASEAN to participate actively in finding a long-term response to the Rohingya situation. Lauding the growing trend of bilateral trade between Bangladesh and Vietnam, he urged Vietnam to further increase their imports from Bangladesh in order to reduce the trade gap. Momen mentioned about the 100 Economic Zones and the High-Tech Parks and encouraged the Vietnamese investors and business community to invest in Bangladesh by availing very attractive and liberal investment packages in Bangladesh for the mutual benefit of the two friendly countries. Both the foreign ministers agreed to work in close collaboration in the regional and multilateral forums by extending mutual support in various election processes. The two foreign ministers exchanged greetings of the New Year and extended invitations to each other for visiting Dhaka and Hanoi. The discussion took place in a very cordial, free and frank atmosphere.

During a phone discussion with his Vietnamese counterpart, Bùi Thanh Sơn, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen requested cooperation for a rapid, safe, and dignified repatriation of Myanmar's forcibly displaced

people to their homes. He expressed concerns for the Rohingya refugees. Bangladesh's socioeconomic status has been severely strained as a result of the crisis. He asked Vietnam to use its positive influence to persuade Myanmar to return its people as soon as possible.

Source: [The New Age](#)

### **ICJ Hearings on Rohingya genocide**

14 January 2022

Representatives of Myanmar's junta are expected to challenge the jurisdiction of the World Court to hear allegations the country committed genocide against its Rohingya minority in a fresh round of hearings from Feb. 21, the attorney general of Gambia, which brought the case, told Reuters on Friday. A hybrid hearing is set to commence on the 21st of February, 2022 urged by Gambian Attorney General Dawda Jallow. He added that Aung San Suu Kyi, who led Myanmar's defense at the first public hearings in 2019 but has since been deposed by the military, had been formally replaced as its top representative in the case.

More than 730,000 Rohingya fled Myanmar after a military-led crackdown in 2017, and were forced into squalid camps across the border in Bangladesh. U.N. investigators concluded that the military campaign had been executed

with "genocidal intent". An ICJ spokesperson declined to confirm dates for a new hearing had been scheduled. In December 2019 Nobel peace prize laureate Suu Kyi, then Myanmar's civilian leader, personally attended hearings at The Hague to ask judges to dismiss the case.

She was deposed in a 2021 coup and has since been sentenced to six years in detention and faces a slew of further charges. Sources close to the case say the junta has been engaging with the court to submit court-ordered reports every six months on the situation with the Rohingya. The reports are not public. The next step in ICJ proceedings is Myanmar's challenge to the jurisdiction of the court. The question if genocide was committed in Myanmar will be dealt with in later hearings.

Source: [The Reuters](#)

### **Rohingya armed group leader arrested**

16 January 2022

Bangladeshi authorities have detained the brother of a well-known rebel commander whose group is accused of killings and drug trafficking in Rohingya refugee camps. Since the gang was accused of killing key Rohingya community leader Mohibullah, the arrest of the ARSA member has been the most high-profile issue. The arrest of the ARSA member is the most high-profile since the group was accused of murdering

influential Rohingya community leader Mohibullah.

Amnesty International has called for a thorough investigation into Mohibullah's death, as well as collaboration between Bangladeshi authorities and the UN refugee agency to ensure the safety of those living in the camps, which it claims are facing an alarming trend of violence linked to illegal drug regulation. Commanding officer Naimul Haque told the AFP news agency that Ali had admitted his links with ARSA and that "Ataullah was in regular contact with him". He also said police had rescued one person kidnapped by Ali, without giving further details.

The country is home to about 850,000 members of the stateless mostly-Muslim minority, who live in overcrowded settlements after fleeing systemic discrimination and violence in neighboring Myanmar. Rohingya refugees are caught in the middle of violence by armed groups within the community and a police crackdown. ARSA, formerly known as Harakatul Yakeen, says it is fighting on behalf of the dispossessed Rohingya community, which has been denied the most basic rights, including citizenship. Myanmar authorities have accused its group members of being Muslim "terrorists".

Ali's capture was the most high-profile arrest of an ARSA member since the group was accused of murdering

influential Rohingya community leader Mohibullah in September and killing seven others at an Islamic seminary soon after.

Source: [Al Jazeera](#)

### **Cambodia, as ASEAN Chair, confirms efforts on sustainable Rohingya solution**

18 January 2022

Cambodia has assured Bangladesh of its best efforts in bringing a sustainable solution to the Rohingya problem as ASEAN chair. The assurance was made during a telephone conversation between foreign minister Dr AK Abdul Momen and Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Prak Sokhonn today, a foreign ministry press release said. Applauding the 'big heart' demonstrated by Bangladesh in sheltering 1.1 million displaced Myanmar people, Sokhonn expressed his full understanding of and sympathy for the difficulties faced by Bangladesh. Dr Momen congratulated his Cambodian counterpart on Cambodia's accession of ASEAN Chairmanship and on the latter's appointment as the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair to Myanmar. Bangladesh foreign minister observed that Cambodian Chairmanship of ASEAN provided a great opportunity for them to facilitate the safe and dignified return of the forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals, currently

being sheltered in Bangladesh on humanitarian grounds.

Source: [BSS News](#)

### **Rohingya criminal gangs breaking social order in Bangladesh**

23 January 2022

Rohingyas fleeing Myanmar's military operation were given asylum in Bangladesh on humanitarian grounds. However, he has to pay the compensation of humanity to Bangladesh at interest. The narrow-mindedness of Myanmar's military junta is undoubtedly responsible for inciting small ethnic groups to revolt. They are practically creating challenges for the law and order of the country. According to experts, the Rohingyas will become a threat to the country if they do not stop the crime. Drugs are being used on Rohingya men as well as women and children as a carrier of trafficking. Although they have been arrested, they have not been able to name the culprits, leaving the main culprits out of reach.

Originally, Rohingyas agreed to a career for less money, and even if they were arrested, they would not be able to provide much information about drug lords. That is why Rohingya women and children are being used extensively as drug carriers. There are 34 Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar. One or more terrorist

groups have formed in each block. Each of the hundreds of small and large groups has 50 to 100 members. These groups control block-based criminal activity. Rohingyas are getting involved in crime by going abroad with fake passports.

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Source: [Bangladesh Pratidin](#)

### **Foreign Minister Dr. Momen urged UK parliament to press for Rohingya repatriation**

23 January 2022

Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen has urged the UK government and British parliament to bolster their efforts in early repatriation of

forcibly displaced Rohingya to their Myanmar. He said, "We urge the British government and parliament to continue to press for the safe, dignified and voluntary repatriation of the forcibly displaced Rohingya from Myanmar to their homeland soon". Dr Momen reiterated the urge at a meeting at foreign service academy with the British Parliamentary delegation on the eve of the latter's visit to the Rohingya camps in Kutupalong and Bhashan Char on Saturday. The MPs from UK Conservative Party, Thomas Patrick Hunt and Paul Bristow met the Rohingya leaders and visited various facilities in these camps. They reiterated their solidarity with the Rohingya and assured them of their legitimate demands for citizenship, security and freedom in Myanmar.

The Delegation noted that the British people, particularly the British Muslims, felt strongly about the Rohingya situation, and that the international community had a responsibility to stand by this large group of people generously supported by Bangladesh. Bristow recalled the UK's humanitarian assistance to the tune of 320 million GBP since 2017 and said that they would continue to raise the issue of further improving the living conditions of the Rohingya while they awaited their repatriation.

Source: [The Dhaka Tribune](#)

### **Dhaka seeks UN's effective role in resolving Rohingya crisis**

26 January 2022

Bangladesh has urged the United Nations (UN) to play an effective role in a durable solution to the protracted Rohingya crisis. The urge was made at a virtual meeting between Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen and newly appointed UN's Special Envoy on Myanmar Noeleen Heyzer on Tuesday, a foreign ministry press release said here today. During the meeting, the foreign secretary expressed disappointment that in the fifth year of the crisis, Bangladesh is still grappling with multiple challenges of hosting more than a million forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals. The prolonged presence of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh is creating security problems such as human and drug trafficking with ramifications across the region, he added. Masud emphasized that the office of the special envoy should work towards creating conducive conditions in Myanmar for the return of the Rohingyas in safety and security. Commending Bangladesh's exceptional humanitarian gesture, the special envoy conveyed her sincere thanks and gratitude to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for demonstrating the highest level of humanity by hosting more than a million persecuted Myanmar nationals.

Source: [BSS News](#)

## **Bangladesh and Myanmar resumed talks on Rohingya repatriation**

27 January 2022

After an evident halt in direct communications after the coup attempt of Myanmar on February 1, 2021, Bangladesh and Myanmar have begun negotiations on repatriation of displaced Rohingyas back to their homeland. The newly constituted technical level Ad-Hoc Task Force for Verification of Displaced Persons from Rakhine met online. Both parties stated that they are eager to continue working together. The negotiations were conducted by Bangladesh's Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), Shah Rizwan Hayat, and Myanmar's Deputy Director General of Immigration and Population Ministry, Ye Tun Oo.

The February 1, 2021 coup in Myanmar visibly forced postponement of a scheduled tripartite working group meeting among Bangladesh, China and Myanmar scheduled for February 4 last year. The date was fixed as Naypyidaw showed a positive gesture in returning the Rohingyas during a secretary level tripartite virtual talk held on January 19 in 2021 just days before the military takeover. Since August 25 in 2017, Bangladesh is hosting over 1.1 million Rohingyas and most of them arrived there after a military crackdown at their homeland which the UN called a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing"

and dubbed by most rights groups "genocide".

According to the statement, Hayat reminded the Myanmar side of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's humanitarian initiative in providing improvised shelter to a large number of displaced people from Rakhine despite Bangladesh's severe limits and problems. According to Hayat, resolving issues and loopholes in pending verification will prepare the path for the sustainable repatriation of Rohingyas to begin as soon as possible. Bangladesh has submitted biometric data for 8,30,000 Rohingyas to Myanmar, but just 42,000 of them have been validated so far.

Source: [BSS News](#)

## **Tatmadaw should not be allowed at ICJ**

27 January 2022

The International Court of Justice is continuing the legal proceedings brought by the Gambia against the state of Myanmar for the alleged Rohingya genocide in Rakhine state. Normally, this would be very welcome news, and we are all expecting the perpetrators of the genocide to be brought to justice as soon as possible. Unfortunately, it looks like the court will accept as representatives of the Myanmar state emissaries of the incumbent junta government, the Tatmadaw. This would be a critical mistake. Allowing this

would imply that the ICJ recognizes the Tatmadaw as the rightful representatives of the Myanmar state, thus inadvertently legitimizing the military regime under the UN system and international law.

Tatmadaw is de facto in charge of the central government in Naypyitaw, plus it stands accused in terms of both individuals and the principal institution of the state that carried out the genocide in dispute. If the ousted civilian government cannot present its representatives before the court, one might argue that someone who can appear before the court should be allowed to represent the accused.

However, such a move is both shaky on legal grounds and hugely problematic on political grounds. This is because it would mean that the court appeared to be taking a position in the ongoing civil war in Myanmar about who is entitled to legitimately represent the state in the international system and who is recognized as such by international law. On the legal front, no other international body recognizes the junta that now de facto governs (most of) Myanmar as the legal and legitimate government of the state of Myanmar. For example, the state of Myanmar continues to be represented at the UN by the ambassador appointed previously by the civilian government of Suu Kyi. And it is not for the ICJ to unilaterally

decide who the legitimate government of any country is.

On the political front, the coup carried out last year by the Tatmadaw continues to be actively contested in Myanmar, not just by the deposed civilian government but by ongoing grassroots civilian groups, which in recent months have been forced to take up arms against the Tatmadaw so as to resist its brutal crackdowns on pro-democracy protests and demonstrations. For the ICJ to accept representation from the unrecognized junta government would be to effectively wade into this civil war, because doing so would give the appearance that the court is implicitly changing the legal status quo of that central dispute: From civilian pro-democracy demonstrators fighting against an illegitimate and unrecognized government on behalf of their legitimately elected civilian government to rebels resisting the legitimate government of Myanmar under the Tatmadaw.

Source: [Arab News](#)

**Japan promises \$ 2 million for the Rohingyas**

28 January 2022

Of the 2 million in aid to the Rohingya in Bhasanchar, 1 million will go to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). And one million dollars will be given to the World Food Program. The money received by the two organizations will be spent for the Rohingyas of Bhasanchar. Ito Naoki, Japan's ambassador to Dhaka, said resolving the Rohingya crisis was important for peace and stability in the region. The initiative taken by the Bangladesh government with the international community for the protection of Rohingyas is commendable. He also hoped that the UN would play a role in improving the living standards of Rohingyas in Bhasanchar.

Source: [Bangladesnews24.com](#)

**Another group of the Rohingyas reached Bhashanchar**

31 January 2022

1,287 Rohingya migrants arrived at Bhashanchar, Noakhali, bringing the total number of refugees on the island to 20,949. After arriving on the island, the Rohingyas were escorted to their respective cluster houses, according to Mohammed Moazzam Hossain, additional refugee relief and repatriation commissioner. In addition, there were 65 Rohingyas on the island as guests. He claimed that they were on the same boat as the 1,287 Rohingyas. At about 1 p.m. on Sunday, a total of 13 buses transporting Rohingyas left the transit station at Ukhiya Degree College towards Chittagong. In the ninth round, 705 Rohingyas were transferred to Bhashan Char on January 5.

Source: [The Dhaka Tribune](#)





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