

International donor conference for urgent humanitarian support for Rohingya refugees

The United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will bring the international community together this month to address the Rohingya crisis.

At a virtual conference, they will urge countries to increase assistance for Rohingya refugees, host communities, and internally displaced people in Myanmar, more than three years since the latest phase of the crisis began in August 2017.

The UN has appealed for more than \$1 billion in aid to meet the humanitarian needs of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh this year, but so far less than half has been contributed. This leaves a significant funding gap, made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The conference, which will take place on 22 October, aims to raise urgently needed funds to help vulnerable displaced Rohingya living in and outside of their native Myanmar. The funds raised are also expected to support critical services in host communities throughout South and Southeast Asia.

The conference will be an opportunity for the co-hosts to reiterate that any sustainable solution to this crisis must include the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of Rohingya refugees and other displaced people to their homes or to a place of their choosing. In this respect, the co-hosts will repeat the UN Secretary General's call for a global ceasefire and the cessation of fighting to enable safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to all communities in need of assistance.

Stephen E. Biegun, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, said:

The United States is proud to stand with the UK, the EU, and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees as partners in leading this call to sustain the international crisis response to assist Rohingya refugees and other displaced people, as well as strengthen investment in affected host communities. As the world's most generous donor, we are a catalyst for the international humanitarian response and call on others to contribute to this cause – both longstanding partners as well as new and aspiring donors.

The UK's Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

The Rohingya people have faced horrific brutality and were forced

to flee their homes in the worst circumstances imaginable. We have taken action against the architects of this systemic violence, including through sanctions and we will continue to hold those responsible to account.

The UK has also been a leading donor since 2017 to alleviate humanitarian suffering of the Rohingya. The world must wake up to the severity of their plight and come together now to save lives.

Janez Lenarčič, European Commissioner for Crisis Management, said:

The Rohingya refugees have the continued full support from the EU at this critical time. Humanitarian partner organisations on the ground and host communities have responded with true solidarity to the plight of the Rohingya refugees. We are committed to step up our support to pledge further humanitarian, development and stabilisation assistance. The international community must strengthen its shared efforts towards reaching a sustainable solution – one that cultivates conditions for voluntary, safe and dignified return of Rohingya refugees.

Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, said:

Solidarity with the Rohingya people means more than just meeting their basic needs. Refugees, like everyone else, have a right to a life of dignity and the chance to build a safe and stable future.

Since the latest displacement of Rohingya during the exodus from Myanmar in August 2017, the overwhelming majority have been hosted in camps in Bangladesh. There are currently 860,000 Rohingya in camps in Cox's Bazar, the world's largest refugee settlement, while other countries in the region host up to an additional 150,000 Rohingya refugees. An estimated 600,000 live in Myanmar's Rakhine State.

Across South and Southeast Asia, many displaced Rohingya continue to live a life on the margins with no access to basic healthcare, clean drinking water, a reliable food supply, or meaningful work and educational opportunities. The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened living conditions, made access to services even more challenging, increased the risk of sexual and gender-based violence, and exacerbated the risk of infectious diseases for displaced Rohingya living in crowded camps, such as those in Cox's Bazar and in Rakhine State.

Notes to editors

- The conference will run from 8:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Washington; 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Geneva; and 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Bangkok on October 22, 2020 and will be live-streamed on www.rohingyaconference.org.

- Funds raised at the conference will go to international organisations and non-governmental organisations working to alleviate the crisis on the ground in Myanmar, throughout the region, and as specified by the UN-led Joint Response Plan (JRP) in Bangladesh