

Rohingya crisis side event at the 2022 UN General Assembly: Minister Ford's statement

Your Excellency Prime Minister Hasina; distinguished guests.

Thank you for the opportunity to join you today to remember the tragic events of 5 years ago. And for the chance to press for a durable solution, and to mobilise adequate resources to support the Rohingya until they can return to Myanmar.

Prime Minister Hasina, your government and the people of Bangladesh have our utmost respect. You have generously hosted one million Rohingya refugees for 5 years. And I pay tribute to your leadership and humanitarian values.

Friends and colleagues. Nobody should be forced to flee their home or their country of birth. It is a tragedy that so many have been unable to return to their communities, that so many lives have been stalled, and that there has been no accountability for the atrocities endured.

Confronted by so much pain and hardship, the courage, resilience, and spirit that the Rohingya continue to display is all the more admirable.

I wanted to reiterate our deep concerns by the increasing violence in Myanmar. In Rakhine state, Rohingya communities are caught in the cross fire of recent fighting between the Myanmar Armed Forces and Arakan Army.

I am saddened to hear about the horrendous attack on a school in Sagaing. We condemn the killings. There can be no justification for the killing of children and innocent civilians.

Since 2017, the UK has provided £340 million of support to the Rohingya and neighbouring communities in Bangladesh. And £25 million for the Rohingya and other Muslim communities in Rakhine State. This has provided lifesaving food, water, shelter, healthcare and protection.

We continue to be a major contributor to the core funding of humanitarian agencies, providing £108 million this year, which underpins their ability to respond to the crisis. Our total portfolio of support makes us one of the largest global humanitarian donors.

International Financial Institutions have an important role to play in sustaining the Rohingya response, and we welcome their continuing dialogue with your government.

We will continue to support the Rohingya and, importantly, the local communities around the camps.

Preparing the Rohingya to return to Myanmar, when it is safe and sustainable

to do so, is vital.

So we are pleased that the Government of Bangladesh has endorsed the rollout of the Myanmar Curriculum and a new Skills Framework. This will have a positive impact, and should be followed by expanded livelihood opportunities in Cox's Bazar and on Bhasan Char, to better equip refugees for their sustainable return to Myanmar.

Prime Minister, we agree with you that the international community must play its part to create the conditions for safe, voluntary and dignified returns.

We will continue to work alongside the international community to improve conditions for the Rohingya in Myanmar, and mitigate the risk of further atrocities. This includes using targeted sanctions and building a global coalition of countries committed to tackling the flow arms to Myanmar.

This year we marked 5 years since the military led ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya people. We used the importance of this tragic anniversary to hold to account those responsible for atrocities in Rakhine state.

We have not forgotten what they did, and last month the [UK announced a further round of sanctions](#) to target businesses with close links to the Myanmar military, who funded the clearance operations in 2017.

Accountability for these atrocities is vital to end the cycle of violence, which is why we intend to intervene in the [International Court of Justice case brought by The Gambia](#), of which we are a longstanding supporter.

To achieve true justice for the Rohingya, their citizenship in Myanmar must be restored. The systematic human rights violations they have suffered for decades must end. And Rohingya people must be meaningfully included in future visions of Myanmar society.

We will use all available opportunities, including at the G7 and with our ASEAN partners, to push for a long-term solution to the crisis and its root causes. We will also use our role as penholder to keep the situation in Myanmar on the UN Security Council's agenda, and explore all available Council tools.

We will continue to do all we can to ensure the Rohingya can voluntarily, safely and sustainably return home, when conditions allow. And help the people of Myanmar enjoy the peace, justice and prosperity they deserve.

Thank you.