

UNHCR appeals for protection of Rohingya currently trapped on Myanmar-Bangladesh border

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UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is concerned about the safety of a group of vulnerable Rohingya women, men, and children from Myanmar, who have been living in a so-called "no man's land" near the border between Myanmar and Bangladesh since the end of August 2017. UNHCR is closely following the developments after they were reportedly ordered to vacate the area by the Myanmar authorities.

UNHCR underscores that everyone has the right to seek asylum, just as they also have the right to return home when they deem the time and circumstances right. People who have fled violence in their country must be granted safety and protection and any decision to return must be voluntary and based upon a free and informed choice.

UNHCR also reiterates that conditions are not yet conducive to the return of Rohingya refugees. The causes of their flight have not been addressed and we have yet to see substantive progress on addressing the denial of their rights. Pursuing the conditions that will address these causes and enable their voluntary and sustainable return is critical.

In this regard, UNHCR continues to request to the Government of Myanmar to allow humanitarian access to UNHCR and partners throughout Rakhine State. This will be essential to promote coexistence among all of communities; to support the government towards their commitment to implement the Rakhine Advisory Commission's (RAC) recommendations; and for UNHCR to monitor protection conditions, provide independent information to refugees, and accompany returns as and when they take place.

In Bangladesh, the Government and people continue to generously receive refugees and to provide them with protection and support. Nearly 700,000 refugees have now sought refuge in the country since violence broke out in the northern part of Myanmar's Rakhine State in late August of 2017.

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