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WORLD REFUGEE DAY: ‘REALISTICALLY, REPATRIATION IS NOT POSSIBLE AT THIS TIME’

Hasina Rahman, International Rescue Committee's (IRC) country director in Bangladesh, discusses the ongoing crises at Rohingya refugee camps, fund cuts and Bangladesh's role in preserving their dignity and facilitating repatriation in a conversation with Tamanna Khan of The Daily Star.

What's the situation right now in the Rohingya camps? Do they have what they need?

Right now, over a million Rohingya refugees are living in what has become the world's largest and most crowded refugee settlement in Cox's Bazar. Conditions are getting tougher by the day, especially for women and children, who make up more than half the population. The biggest challenge? Funding. The 2025 Joint Response Plan has appealed for over \$930 million, but so far, below 20 percent of that has been received. That means the response is under enormous pressure, and humanitarian groups can focus only on the most



Hasina Rahman with Rohingya children at a learning centre in a Cox's Bazar camp. PHOTO: MD SHAHADAT HOSSEN/IRC BANGLADESH.

life-saving services. Things like protection, education, and skills development are being pushed aside, not because they are not essential, but because there simply is not enough funding.

With the monsoon being active in full swing, the situation is even more difficult. Flooding and landslides are already affecting camps and surrounding host communities. Many shelters are not strong enough to withstand the weather, and basic infrastructure is fragile. Learning centres are shutting down due to a lack of funds, leaving nearly half a million children without access to education. Older youth have

no formal education, no training, and no jobs, leaving them vulnerable to risky or harmful alternatives. We are also seeing more dangerous trends. Desperate for safety, many refugees are turning to unsafe boat journeys, and tragically, some are losing their lives at sea. Women and girls face growing risks of gender-based violence, even while doing everyday things like collecting water or using toilets. Camp security is deteriorating, and there are alarming reports of forced recruitment by armed groups.

Mental health is another major concern. Many people are dealing with trauma, anxiety, and distress, but with limited funding, access to psychosocial support has become extremely difficult.

And on top of all this, over 1.5 lakh Rohingya refugees have newly arrived in recent months, fleeing fresh violence in Myanmar.

■ Source: thedailystar.net

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A FUTURE BEYOND THE FENCES: RETHINKING THE ROHINGYA RESPONSE

With the commemoration of World Refugee Day, I find myself grappling with a painful question: What kind of future awaits the children and young people living in refugee camps like the one in Cox's Bazar?

By early 2025, more than 120 million people worldwide had been forcibly displaced, often living under precarious conditions.

Conversations with Rohingya refugees this week highlighted core issues faced by refugee families globally, particularly concerning their children's well-being and future. Without access to formal education or employment opportunities, what prospects do these children have?

The number of forcibly displaced individuals continues to rise, underscoring the urgency of these questions for refugees, hosts, and humanitarians alike. We are witnessing a deeply troubling situation with limited prospects for a decent life.

Rohingya parents repeatedly expressed concerns about their children's future, especially their lack of educational opportunities. Despite ongoing denial of legal status, restrictions on education, and limited freedom of movement, their

frustration and determination were palpable.

My colleagues in the camps observed alarming trends in mental health issues, including a near doubling of attempted suicides over two years. Clearly, prolonged containment entails severe psychological consequences beyond physical barriers like security fences.

Despite the determination of both parents and children to make the most of their difficult circumstances, their future remains profoundly uncertain. The Rohingya have endured immense hardship, but mere survival cannot be the limit of our collective response.

Amid these challenges, I witnessed a powerful testament to Bangladeshi solidarity. Our refugee and Bangladeshi staff work side-by-side in clinics, delivering life-saving care not only to Rohingya refugees but also to the host community, which now comprises roughly one-fifth of MSF's patients. This collaboration speaks volumes about our shared humanity.

Additional challenges stem from containment. Colleagues report increasing patient complexity due to persistent hygiene issues, with rising cases of waterborne illnesses and gastroenteritis.

Violence within the camps is escalating, including intimate partner violence and criminal activity. Women, especially, face greater vulnerabilities to gender-based violence, a silent yet urgent crisis within these restricted settings.

Shrinking humanitarian budgets compound this crisis. While MSF continues its work with around \$25 million a year, many organizations are scaling back vital services, threatening already overstretched resources.

This reduction causes genuine fear among the people about what will happen next.

Amidst these challenges, I witnessed the start of a new Hepatitis C test-and-treat program. Over the next two years, MSF aims to diagnose and treat around 30,000 patients, addressing one of the many silent health threats in the camps. This positive step involves door-to-door screenings right inside the camps, and we're optimistic about reaching numerous patients.

Conversations on repatriation occurred, but safe, voluntary, and dignified return to Myanmar remains a distant hope. A bold and humane shift in strategy is needed -- one that moves beyond camp containment and aid dependency.

■ Source: dhakatribune.com

WORLD REFUGEE DAY 2025



Health for All: Solidarity with refugees

On World Refugee Day 2025, the World Health Organization (WHO) stands in solidarity with the over 123 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, reaffirming that health is a fundamental human right, essential to dignity, protection, and inclusion. Under the theme “Solidarity with Refugees,” WHO calls for urgent action to strengthen inclusive, resilient health systems that leave no one behind.

As protracted displacement rises, many fleeing conflict and disasters are spending over a decade awaiting legal recognition. Over 70% are hosted in low- and middle-income countries, often in urban areas, where legal, financial, and structural barriers hinder access to health. Among them are over 47 million children, facing disrupted access to health, education, and protection. Women and newborns’ lives are at heightened risk with disrupted maternal and essential care as barriers to access increase.

■ Source: who.int

TARIQUE RAHMAN SEEKS STRONGER GLOBAL STANCE TO ROHINGYA CRISIS ON WORLD REFUGEE DAY



Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman has called for renewed international attention to the ongoing Rohingya crisis, stressing the urgent need for safe and dignified repatriation of the displaced community.

In a message issued on Thursday night on the occasion of World Refugee Day, Tarique said, "A clear message must be given to the world that the Rohingya problem is very serious." He urged the interim government to intensify diplomatic efforts with Myanmar to create favorable conditions for the safe return of over 14 lakh Rohingya refugees currently residing in camps across Cox's Bazar, particularly in Ukhia and Teknaf.

Highlighted the significance of the World Refugee Day, which observed annually on June 20, he said, "It is observed to respect refugees across the globe and to raise awareness

among international leaders about their inhumane conditions."

He also drew a poignant parallel between the plight of the Rohingya and the historical experience of Bangladeshis during the 1971 Liberation War, when millions were displaced. "The tragic experience of Bangladeshis during the Great Liberation War has not been erased from our memories," he said.

Despite the challenges, he praised the people of Bangladesh for their continued support for the Rohingya population. "This is a shining example of humanity," he said.

Reaffirming to BNP's position, Tarique said the party "expresses full solidarity with the spirit of World Refugee Day" and remains committed to supporting global efforts for the dignity and safe repatriation of forcibly displaced people.

Tarique called on the international community, and various donor agencies to continue to pressure Myanmar to repatriate the Rohingya to their country with due dignity.

■ Source: amaderbarta.net