

In Bangladesh, UN refugee chief warns influx of Rohingya outpaces capacities to respond

25 September 2017 – The United Nations refugee chief today called for ramped-up support for an estimated 436,000 Rohingya refugees who have fled to Bangladesh from Myanmar in the last month, warning that the massive influx of people seeking safety far outpaces capacities to respond.

“Their situation remains desperate, and we [risk a dramatic deterioration](#) if aid is not rapidly stepped up,” UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi said in a press release, following a visit yesterday to Kutupalong refugee camp and other areas along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border where people have made their own shelters on tiny slivers of land.

“Despite every effort by those on the ground, the massive influx of people seeking safety rapidly outpaced capacities to respond, and the situation has still not stabilised. More is needed, and fast, if we are to avoid further deterioration,” Mr. Grandi said.

UNHCR has now airlifted three planes loaded with relief items into the country, and is distributing emergency shelter kits, kitchen sets and solar lamps.

Its experts are working closely with the Government of Bangladesh to set up an organised site with water, sanitation and other facilities, and to register the new arrivals. Other international agencies and civil society partners are also on the ground.

Mr. Grandi arrived in Bangladesh on Saturday to see conditions for himself. He spoke with families living in the camp near Cox’s Bazar.

“They had seen villages burned down, families shot or hacked to death, women and girls brutalized. Many of the refugees said they would like to go home, but there needs to be an end to violence, and a restoration of rights inside Myanmar,” Mr. Grandi said.

“Solutions to this crisis lie within Myanmar. But for now, our immediate focus has to be to dramatically increase support to those who are so desperately in need,” Mr. Grandi said, stressing the importance of a proper registration system that could help ensure everyone is eventually able to exercise the right to return.

In the country’s capital, Dhaka, Mr. Grandi was scheduled to meet several senior officials, including the foreign minister as well as the ministers for home affairs and disaster management and relief.

Mr. Grandi thanked Bangladesh for keeping the border open. “In today’s world, that is something that cannot be taken for granted and should be

appreciated.”

Meanwhile, the UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) said yesterday that a consignment of its [emergency supplies](#) for hundreds of thousands of refugee Rohingya children and their families has arrived in Dhaka.

The cargo plane arrived from Copenhagen with 100 tons of supplies comprising water purifying tablets, family hygiene kits, sanitary materials, plastic tarpaulins, recreational kits for children and other items.

“Safe water for drinking and washing is absolutely essential in order to protect them against diarrhoea and other waterborne diseases,” said Edouard Beigbeder, UNICEF Representative in Bangladesh, warning that this is “a very real threat” especially amid the current heavy rains.

Other consignments – consisting of school bags, tents, early childhood development kits, family hygiene and dignity kits, tarpaulin and nutrition materials – were also on their way to Bangladesh.

[UN Secretary-General condemns killing of peacekeepers in Mali](#)

24 September 2017 – [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has condemned today’s attack against a convoy of the United Nations mission in northern Mali that killed three Bangladeshi peacekeepers.

Mr. Guterres reaffirmed the UN’s determination to support efforts aimed at restoring lasting peace and security in Mali and urged the Government and the signatory armed groups to expedite the implementation of the peace agreement, according to a [statement](#) issued by his spokesperson.

Media reports said a convoy of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Mission in Mali ([MINUSMA](#)) hit an explosive device while traveling in the Gao region. At least, three Bangladeshi peacekeepers were killed and five others were seriously injured.

“The Secretary-General recalls that Security Council resolution 2374 of 5 September 2017 provides for the imposition of sanctions against entities or individuals obstructing the implementation of the peace agreement and attacking United Nations personnel,” the statement said.

The Secretary-General extended his condolences to the Government of Bangladesh and to the bereaved families, and wished swift recovery to the injured.

Cluster of extreme weather events leave no doubt climate change is real, Caribbean nations tell UN

23 September 2017 – The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, echoing other senior government officials today and throughout the General Assembly’s annual general debate, questioned how, after the spate of recent catastrophic events in the Caribbean, South Asia and elsewhere, one could deny that “climate change is real, and it is upon us.”

Shifting weather patterns, global warming and rising sea levels are impacts of climate change and, extending his nation’s condolences and solidarity to those affected, emphasized that resources, cooperation and collaboration of the international community will be required to help rebuild and build back better.

“The events of the last months in the Caribbean once more remind us all that small island developing States remain at the forefront of the impact of climate change,” Mr. Moses stated. Yet, in light of their re-categorization based on out-dated formulae of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, Caribbean countries will not qualify for aid and development assistance.

“I join my Caribbean colleagues in calling for a multidimensional approach that takes into consideration real national needs and priorities, “as well as these extraordinary circumstances,” to provide access to development assistance, aid and debt relief, as the Caribbean region embarks on the arduous task of recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction together,” Mr. Moses stressed.

Noting that oceans cover three-quarters of the earth’s surface and contain over 95 per cent of its water, he called “indisputable” the critical importance of its conservation. As an island State, Trinidad and Tobago is highly vulnerable to the unprecedented rate of marine biodiversity loss and the impacts of unsustainable practices on the marine environment.

He also highlighted that Trinidad and Tobago supported multilateralism and is committed to working collectively to find enduring and sustainable solutions to the many global challenges facing the world today. “We must all do our part in this noble endeavour for the good of humanity!” he concluded.

[Full statement available here](#)



Kamina Johnson Smith, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-

second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

After expressing her country's condolences and support for the Caribbean nations affected by the recent natural disasters, Kamina Johnson Smith, Jamaica's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, told the Assembly that for her region, climate change is an existential issue that requires urgent and effective action.

Ms. Smith pointed out that the region's catastrophic events have diminished its ability to strengthen resilience, adaptation and mitigation. Noting that limited resources are dwarfed by the huge sums required for recovery and reconstruction measures, she called on the UN to establish a mechanism to provide support and compensation to vulnerable countries affected by natural disasters.

In recognition of the vulnerabilities of small island developing States and the attendant complexities of their status as middle-income countries, Jamaica supports calls for a climate change vulnerability index to provide a standardized method for characterizing vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change. "This would enable international financial institutions and bilateral donors, to better channel financial and technical resources, towards countries most susceptible to loss and damage from climate change," she said.

Ms. Smith announced that last April Jamaica ratified the [Paris Agreement](#), adding that island States were at the forefront of the negotiations.

Noting that while contributing the least carbon emissions, islands bear the brunt of the damage, pointing to the risks climate change poses to tourism, which plays a critical role in ensuring sustainable and inclusive economic growth and job creation for Jamaica. "We implore all Member States to abide by the commitments of the Agreement," Ms. Smith said.

[Full statement available here](#)



Mark Anthony Brantley, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Aviation of Saint Kitts and Nevis, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Also taking the podium, Mark Anthony Brantley, Minister for Foreign Affairs for Saint Kitts and Nevis, spoke in depth about ensuring a sustainable planet – offering thoughts and prayers for those impacted by the three hurricanes in the Caribbean and the two recent earthquakes in Mexico.

He highlighted the various countries and territories that suffered devastation, noting unimaginable destruction in a wide swathe of the Caribbean. Lives have been lost; homes and infrastructure destroyed; economies reduced to tatters; and years of development wiped out. "Hurricane season for 2017 is not over yet," he warned.

He condemned the “sterile analysis” of GDP per capita that puts the island States in middle and high income countries, locking them out of accessing developmental assistance or affordable financing.

“It is a travesty and a tragedy for the world community to witness such destruction caused by forces entirely outside the control of Caribbean nations and then refuse to allow those nations access to the necessary resources to rebuild,” he criticized, demanding that a vulnerability index be developed as part of the matrix for accessing developmental assistance.

Pointing to “irrefutable” science, Mr. Brantley stated: “Our oceans continue to get warmer due to our continued abuse of our Planet Earth.” He advocated for treating these phenomena not as natural disasters but as the man-made disasters they are, appealing for a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and all other actions that aggravate the effects of climate change. “We cannot continue to abuse our Planet and expect to remain unscathed,” he emphasized.

[Full statement available here](#)



Elvin Nimrod, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Legal Affairs of Grenada, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Also speaking today, Elvin Nimrod, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Grenada told the Assembly, “our hearts and prayers go out to all the victims in our Caribbean region, Mexico and across the world, who are presently suffering adverse effects of climate change and natural disasters.”

Based on recent activities in the Atlantic, he underscored “we just cannot dispute that the climate is changing,” adding: “For those that question the veracity of this science, the cluster of extreme weather events over the last few weeks ought to suffice in sounding the alarm.”

Stressing that such events disproportionately affect the most vulnerable, he advocated that special attention to be paid to women, children, elderly and disabled.

He reiterated Grenada’s commitment to the Paris Agreement, and speaking as Chair of the World Bank’s Small States Forum last June, Mr. Nimrod lamented the withdrawal of key partners from the accord, saying: “We do not know these partners to be unreasonable and, therefore, we encourage them to see their own self-interest within the framework of a successful Paris Agreement.”

[Full statement available here](#)



Yldiz Pollack-Beigle, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Suriname, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

On her part, Yldiz Pollack-Beighle, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Suriname, stressed that in addition to humanitarian aid, the international community must assist in restructuring socio-economic and physical infrastructure for future resilience, saying that “combining forces at a global scale has become crucial.”

The Foreign Minister also joined others expressing concern that Caribbean nations are being graduated into ‘Middle Income Country’ status, with a zero option to obtain concessional loans opening them up to foreseeable natural disasters. “I add my voice to the lamentation regarding the fact that the vulnerability of these countries should be taken into account when classifications are applied,” she stated.

In parallel, Ms. Pollack-Beighle pledged Suriname’s full support and cooperation to the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development. Calling its implementation a “formidable challenge,” she expressed her country’s belief that in addition to domestic resource mobilization, a wide array of financing mechanisms must be accessible to finance development, capacity building, and innovation.

On other matters, she stressed that only through political will, can more women in society excel to the highest echelons of political decision-making and reiterated the importance of youth involvement in decision-making processes.

[Full statement available here](#)

[At UN, Tanzania – ‘as a country of refuge to many’ – stresses importance of regional stability](#)

23 September 2017 – Tanzania has integrated ‘sustainability’ into its development plan 2016-2021, with an eye towards becoming a middle-income country by 2025, its top foreign affairs official told the United Nations General Assembly today.

“Tanzania has set a target growth from an average of 7 per cent in 2015 to 10 per cent by 2020 in order to reach a middle-income status by 2025,” said Augustine Phillip Mahiga, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, during the Assembly’s annual high-level debate.

He said this growth will ensure equity in the society by reducing the unemployment rate from the current 10.3 per cent to 8 per cent and reduce proportion of population below poverty line from the current 28.2 per cent to 16.7 per cent by 2020.

Collaborating with development partners and other stakeholders, the Government has developed frameworks for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), which include communication and dissemination strategies to make the goals understood to everyone, he said.

Dissemination is in both English and Kiswahili, a national language spoken by all Tanzanians, he added.

Tanzania has been a country of refuge to many for decades, actively participating in regional and international peace initiatives including the ongoing Burundi peace process. The peace talks are still on track, and it is encouraging to note that in some parts of Burundi, the security situation has significantly improved to permit the voluntary return of some 12,000 refugees out of almost 250,000 refugees who have been in Tanzania since 2015, he said.

Tanzania has also intermittently for decades been receiving and hosting refugees from pockets of troubled areas in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, he said, expressing hope that the 31 December 2016 Peace Agreement, with its promise of timely elections, is fully implemented.

[Full statement available here](#)

[Sudan has 'turned the page' on conflicts, Foreign Minister tells UN Assembly](#)

23 September 2017 – Addressing the United Nations General Assembly's annual general debate, Ibrahim Ahmed Abd al-Aziz Ghandour, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sudan said his country has "turned the page" on conflicts and has embarked on an era of peace and stability, including through the establishment of a unity Government that includes members of former armed groups.

Expressing the hope that the international community, including the UN Peacebuilding Fund and the World Bank would support the Government's ongoing efforts carry out the national dialogue, he said, and also encouraged the remaining armed groups to join this quest for peace.

Recalling that the Government had extended its unilateral ceasefire until October, he expressed Sudan's deep concern at the lack of strict action by relevant UN entities and the international community vis-à-vis rebel groups operating from Libya and South Sudan.

He went on to say that Sudan opposed the politicization of international justice and considered the International Criminal Court to be an organization

that manipulated the law for political objectives.

The Sudanese Foreign Minister emphasized the Government's efforts to fight terrorism, human trafficking, drug trafficking and cybercrime, as well as its assistance to three million refugees from neighbouring countries and beyond. On a recent visit, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees commended Sudan for opening its borders when others were closing theirs.

Sudan was committed to working with IGAD and the African Union towards peace and security in South Sudan and to help address the humanitarian crisis there. Having met all technical conditions, Sudan looked forward to having its outstanding foreign debt forgiven, in line with the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, he said.

[Full statement \(in Arabic\) available here](#)