

In Myanmar, UN refugee chief calls for solutions to displacement and exclusion

6 July 2017 – Concluding his first visit to Myanmar, the United Nations refugee chief today appealed for inclusive and sustainable solutions to protracted displacement and [statelessness](#).

“These are complex issues but they are not intractable,” [said](#) High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi in a press release issued by his office ([UNHCR](#)).

In Kachin and Rakhine states, some 100,000 and 120,000 people, respectively, have remained displaced for more than five years following the eruption of inter-communal conflict between Buddhists and minority Muslim Rohingya.

In Rakhine state, Mr. Grandi met with displaced Muslims in Sittwe’s Dar Paing camp who expressed their strong desire to return home. He also reached out to Rakhine and Muslim communities north of Maungdaw and listened to their safety and livelihood concerns.

He also met with high-ranking officials in the South-east Asian nation to discuss humanitarian access in Kachin and Rakhine states.

“A crucial first step is to pursue freedom of movement and access to services and livelihoods for all. Accelerated pathways to citizenship are also part of the solution, as are efforts to tackle exclusion and poverty,” Mr. Grandi said, alluding to the country’s denial of citizenship for the Rohingya.

Among the officials he met with were State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi; the Minister of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Min Myat Aye; the Minister of Labour, Immigration and Population, U Thein Swe; and the Minister of Border Affairs, Lt. Gen Ye Aung.

“I was very happy to hear the State Counsellor saying that refugees are welcome back from Thailand,” said Mr. Grandi. “We agreed that returns must be voluntary and sustainable. Refugees should not come back to a situation of dependency but of self-reliance.”

He highlighted that the recommendations of the Advisory Commission of Rakhine State provide an important roadmap for the way forward.

The High Commissioner will next visit Thailand before concluding his regional trip in Bangladesh next week.