

Myanmar can draw on UN expertise in tackling Rohingya returns, Security Council told

12 December 2017 – The United Nations can help repatriate Rohingya refugees to Myanmar, the Organization's top political official said Tuesday, stressing that the Asian country in democratic transition can also tap the UN's capacities and extensive experience in tackling other challenges.

"We hope Myanmar will draw upon the wealth of expertise the UN can offer," Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman [told](#) the Security Council in his briefing on developments in Myanmar.

The estimated number of refugees who entered Bangladesh from Myanmar since 25 August now exceeds 626,000.

One of the major developments Mr. Feltman highlighted was a bilateral agreement on the issue of returns reached on 23 November between the two countries – a pact that recognizes the need for a comprehensive and durable solution through the safe, dignified, and voluntary return in accordance with international law.

Mr. Feltman said returns must be supported by reconciliation efforts, and central to this is the implementation of the Rakhine Advisory Commission recommendations.

The Advisory Commission, established by Myanmar State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi and led by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, recommends that the Government take concrete steps, such as ending enforced segregation of Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims and ensuring full and unfettered humanitarian access throughout Rakhine state.



Jeffrey Feltman (center), Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, addresses the Security Council meeting on the situation in Myanmar. UN Photo/Kim Haughton

Mr. Feltman said that during his October visit, he explored with the authorities potential UN support in key areas.

"We urge all Myanmar leaders, including in the military, to condemn incitement to racial hatred and violence. We encourage them to adopt measures to defuse tensions between communities and create an environment for safe and dignified repatriation, including through interfaith initiatives," he said.

"The origins and solutions to the Rohingya crisis rest in Myanmar," he said. "Repatriation and reconciliation policies will fail without accountability

and non-discriminatory rule of law and public safety measures to address the fears and distrust among communities in Rakhine.”

Mr. Feltman noted that the 2020 national elections will stand as an important test in the consolidation of the nation’s democratic institutions.

He noted that the General Assembly is expected to approve a resolution that requests the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Envoy for Myanmar. This initiative can strengthen the partnership between the UN and Myanmar, in close consultations with interested Member States in the region and beyond.

Related article: [UN warns of trafficking, sexual abuse in shadow of Rohingya refugee crisis](#)

“We believe we have much to offer in working with Myanmar on a number of challenges the country faces, in full respect of Myanmar’s sovereignty,” he concluded.



Pramila Patten, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, addresses the Security Council meeting on the situation in Myanmar. UN Photo/Kim Haughton

Today’s meeting is a follow-up to the Council’s presidential statement on the situation in Myanmar adopted on 6 November, which requested the Secretary-General to brief on developments 30 days after its adoption.

Also briefing the Council was Pramila Patten, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, who [visited](#) Bangladesh from 5 to 13 November.