

News story: Foreign Secretary's visit to Asia, February 2018

The Foreign Secretary meets Rohingya refugees at Cox's Bazar.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson travelled to Asia on 9 February for a 4-day visit to Bangladesh, Burma and Thailand.

Bangladesh

On first official visit by a Foreign Secretary in 10 years, Boris Johnson met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka to discuss the upcoming Commonwealth Summit, trade opportunities, free and fair elections and gender equality.

The Foreign Secretary also met Foreign Minister Abul Hassan Mahmud Ali to discuss the Rohingya refugee crisis. He visited a refugee camp on the Bangladesh-Burma border near Cox's Bazar to see the conditions of the Rohingya refugees who fled from Burma to Bangladesh.

During his visit, the Foreign Secretary said:

I'm here in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh where I'm looking at one of the biggest humanitarian catastrophes that's happened in the last few decades. The Bangladeshi government have done fantastically well to welcome them, to look after them in this enormous camp that you can see.

Our job as the United Kingdom is to try and work now, with our partners, to do what we can to create the conditions for a safe, dignified return for the Rohingya people.

Burma

The Foreign Secretary spoke with State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi about finding a peaceful solution the humanitarian crisis for the Rohingya to enable them to return to their homes in Rakhine province. He also visited northern Rakhine.

Speaking in Burma, the Foreign Secretary said:

I've been talking to Aung San Suu Kyi who is the leader of Burma, State Councillor Daw Suu and she's in a very difficult position. She's a leader that many people including me greatly admire.

But she needs now, I think, to show some leadership, to work with the international community, work with the UN agencies to give

these people the safety, the security that they need to be able to come back to their homes that have been torched in such huge numbers and to rebuild those homes, and to make it clear to them that they are welcome and that Myanmar is their home.

Thailand

In Bangkok the Foreign Secretary had talks with Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, who confirmed that a government minister from Thailand would attend the London Illegal Wildlife Trade conference this autumn. The Foreign Secretary also viewed illegally trafficked ivory and pangolin scales seized by Thai customs.

He also met the chair of the Advisory Board on the Rakhine Advisory Commission, Surakiart Sathirathai. and visited a transport development to highlight opportunities for UK businesses in the infrastructure sector.

Watch a summary of the Foreign Secretary's visit

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