

Press release: Boris Johnson meets Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson has today (10 February) visited Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh, where over a million Rohingya Muslim refugees are living in crowded and unsafe refugee camps

Over 688,000 people have fled from their homes in Burma's Rakhine State into Bangladesh since August 2017, joining around 340,000 Rohingya who had previously fled.

The Foreign Secretary toured a camp which is home to 500,000 refugees – equivalent to a city the size of Leicester.

He met Rohingya families and community leaders to learn about the persecution they have suffered, and hear first-hand about the challenges that life in the camps presents. He listened to their views, heard about their hopes for the future, and the conditions they believed needed to be put in place for any return to take place.

Mr Johnson visited a UNICEF child-friendly site where he saw the efforts being made to keep young people safe. He sat down with some children on the site to talk about their drawings. He was also briefed on gender-based violence by caseworkers.

Tomorrow (11 February) Mr Johnson will hold talks with Aung San Suu Kyi to discuss the crisis and press for the end to the suffering in Rakhine and the safe and voluntary return of the refugees.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

I have seen for my own eyes the horrendous living conditions the Rohingya people are having to endure and it has only further strengthened my commitment to working with international partners to improve the lives of these people in 2018.

I pay tribute to the hospitality and compassion shown by the government of Bangladesh, who are facing an enormous challenge in providing humanitarian assistance to the Rohingya community.

While I welcome steps by both the Burmese and Bangladeshi governments towards ensuring that these people can return home, it is vital that the Rohingya refugees must be allowed to their homes

in Rakhine voluntarily, in safety and with dignity, under international oversight, and when the conditions in Burma are right.

Notes to editors

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