

UN chief applauds Bangladesh for 'opening borders' to Rohingya refugees in need

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has applauded Bangladesh for giving a safe haven to hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees driven from their homes in Myanmar by systematic and widespread violence.

On mission in Bangladesh, the [Secretary-General](#) praised the country for keeping its borders open and receiving those in need of international protection.

“In a world where so many borders are closed, [the people and Government of Bangladesh] have opened their borders and received their brothers and sisters coming from Myanmar and from the terrible events there,” said Mr. Guterres in capital Dhaka on Sunday.

The UN chief also praised the World Bank for its recently announced multi-million-dollar [grant](#) for Bangladesh to support both refugees as well as communities hosting them.

In his remarks, the Secretary-General also noted the development progress made by Bangladesh since its independence and highlighted the country's integration of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its national planning frameworks as an “example that many others can follow.”

If one looks at the low areas, close to the sea, we understand how vulnerable Bangladesh is to the impact of climate change –
Secretary-General Guterres

Mr. Guterres also warned of the impacts of climate change, particularly for countries such as Bangladesh, where much of the land lies close to sea-level.

He called for greater political will to realize the commitments made under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and urged greater efforts as well as raised ambitions by all actors if global temperature rise is to be contained within the limits agreed there in.

In conclusion, the UN chief also underscored the importance of empowering women for achieving peaceful, inclusive and prosperous societies as well as the role that youth can play provided they are given sufficient opportunities and necessary skills.

The Secretary-General arrived in Bangladesh early on Sunday (local time) as

part of a joint trip with the President of the World Bank Group, Jim Yong Kim.



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Secretary-General António Guterres (centre) and World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim (left) with Sheikh Hasina (right), the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, at the Prime Minister's office in Dhaka.

On Sunday, Mr. Guterres and Mr. Kim also met with Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, where they discussed collaboration between the two institutions under the leadership of the Government to address the [complex Rohingya crisis](#).

They also spoke about a double approach of creating conditions conducive for return in Myanmar of the Rohingyas while, at the same time, improving the conditions for the refugees.

"By hosting the Rohingya, Bangladesh has done a great service for the world. We will support this effort any way we can," said Mr. Kim in a tweet after the meeting.

The Secretary-General and the World Bank Group President also visited the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum which was the house of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the first President of Bangladesh and father of the current Prime Minister.

It was in that house that Bangabandhu and other members of his family were assassinated in August 1975 by a group of soldiers.



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Secretary-General António Guterres (right) and World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim (left) at the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The museum honours the legacy of the country's first President, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who was assassinated in 1975.

Later in the evening, the Secretary-General and his delegation were hosted for an official dinner by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

On his mission, Mr. Guterres is also accompanied by number of senior UN officials, including the High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, and the Executive Director of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), Natalia Kanem.

On Monday, they are due to travel to Cox's Bazar in southern Bangladesh to visit Rohingya refugee communities and humanitarian workers, and advocate for increased donor support.

Since late August 2017, violence against Myanmar's mainly-Muslim minority Rohingya, forced hundreds of thousands to flee their homes in Rakhine state and seek refuge across the country's border, in Bangladesh. Prior to that, well over 200,000 Rohingya refugees were sheltering in Bangladesh as a result of earlier displacements.

Even though the number of new arrivals has tapered off, and an agreement has been reached between the UN on the ground and the government, over establishing conditions in Myanmar to allow refugees' voluntary and safe return, UN agencies there have reported that such conditions have not yet materialized.

As of 24 May, there are an estimated 905,000 [refugees](#) in Cox's Bazar. To address the ongoing and increasing needs, the UN launched a [Joint Response Plan](#) in March, urging \$951 million to provide life-saving assistance the refugees and host communities. However, the appeal remains only 18 per cent [funded](#).