

UN humanitarian officials call for global solidarity ahead of pledging conference on Rohingya refugee crisis

16 October 2017 – Senior United Nations officials are urging the international community to come together in support of a 23 October pledging conference to “send a strong message to Rohingya refugees and their generous hosts in Bangladesh that the world is there for them in their greatest time of need.” Since late August, hundreds of thousands of Rohingya trying to escape discrimination and persecution in Myanmar’s Rakhine state have fled to neighbouring Bangladesh, sparking the [world’s fastest-growing humanitarian emergency](#), according to the United Nations.

“We call on the international community to intensify efforts to bring a peaceful solution to the [plight of the Rohingya](#), to end the desperate exodus, to support host communities and ensure the conditions that will allow for refugees’ eventual voluntary return in safety and dignity,” the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)), the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)) said in a joint statement Monday.

“The origins and, thus, the solutions to this crisis lie in Myanmar,” added the UN High Commission for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, the UN aid chief, Mark Lowcock, the Director General, of IOM, William Lacy Swing.

They underscored that Bangladesh has kept its borders open, offering safety and shelter to fleeing families.

“We have been moved by the welcome and generosity shown by the local communities towards the refugees,” the senior officials stated, while noting their respective agencies have been working in overdrive with the Government of Bangladesh, local charities, volunteers and non-governmental organizations to provide assistance. Still much more is urgently needed.

The refugees are fully dependent on humanitarian assistance for food, water, health and other essential needs as basic services are under severe strain and some sites lack access to potable water and sanitation facilities, raising health risks for both the refugees and the hosting communities.

“The efforts must be scaled up and expanded to receive and protect refugees and ensure they are provided with basic shelter and acceptable living conditions. Every day more vulnerable people arrive with very little – if anything – and settle either in overcrowded existing camps or extremely congested makeshift sites,” the statement continued.

It announced that the ministerial-level [pledging conference](#), set to be held in Geneva on 23 October, organized by OCHA, IOM and UNHCR and co-hosted by the European Union and Kuwait, will provide Governments an opportunity to

show their solidarity and share the burden and responsibility.

“Their further generous support for the [Joint Response Plan](#), which was recently launched by the UN and partners, is urgently needed to sustain and scale up the large humanitarian effort already under way. The plan requires \$434 million to meet the life-saving needs of all Rohingya refugees and their host communities – together an estimated 1.2 million people – for the difficult months to come,” added the statement.