

Appendix

Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs Response to HRW Questions¹⁷¹

Lack of quality education available to children:

Bangladesh is currently hosting 1.1 million Rohingyas among them nearly 50 percent are children. From the very beginning of this crisis, Bangladesh has been providing assistance with the help of UN agencies, International and domestic NGOs to fulfill all kinds of basic needs of the Rohingyas. As education is a very essential basic need, the government of Bangladesh has been providing informal education to the Rohingya children. So far, 1,179 education centers have been established and 2,720 teachers have been appointed. In these centers, informal education is being provided to 1, 26,481 Rohingya children in Myanmar & English language. Mentionable, management committees have been formed and activated in 453 education centers. Education assistance kit has been distributed to 78,285 students. Establishment of new education centers and distribution of education assistance kit is continued. However, the ultimate solution of the Rohingya problem lies in the safe, dignified, voluntary and sustainable return of the Rohingyas to their homeland. The international community should impress upon Myanmar to ensure all rights including formal education of the Rohingyas in Myanmar.

Over-populated and unsanitary conditions:

Cox's Bazar district is one of the highly populated districts in Bangladesh. In the district, the people of Unkhiya and Teknaf Upazilas (Sub-district) are the most disadvantaged. According to the last census of Bangladesh, the population of Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazilas are 207,379 and 264,389 with a population density of 680 and 792 per sq. km. respectively. Besides, these two upazilas had been hosting registered refugees and undocumented Myanmar nationals since 1992. However, after the recent Rohingya crisis of 25 August 2017, now the total Rohingya population from Myanmar in these two upazilas are 1.1 million which more than double of the host community population. Before the crisis, we had land shortage of our own population. It was not possible at that time give any land to the Rohingyas for temporary shelter. On humanitarian ground, the government

¹⁷¹ Email from the Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Human Rights Watch, July 28, 2018. Original text.

of Bangladesh has provided 6000 acres of reserve forest for building temporary shelters for the Rohingyas.

With the cooperation of international partners led by UN, the GoB is facilitating water and sanitation facilities for the Rohingyas. As of now 7662 tube wells have been constructed to supply drinking water and 49,137 latrines have been built for sanitation purpose in the Rohingya camps. In addition, 10,342 bathing facilities have been built for ensuring hygiene in the camps. Additional constructions of all these facilities are underway.

However, it is very difficult to ensure all these services to such a huge number of people within in such a small place. Also, presence of Rohingyas is destroying the overall economic, social, environmental situation of Cox's Bazar-the most attractive tourist destination of Bangladesh. For these reasons, the government has building an island (Bhasan Char) to relocate the Rohingyas.

Threats of floods and landslides:

The government was well aware for the monsoon preparedness. The local authorities (RRRC, DC and others) upon instruction from the higher authorities started working with the Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) to chalk out plan for the rainy season. Based on UN's primary assessment and conservative estimate, close to 100,000 Rohingyas had been said to be in need of 'relocation' from the areas that are extremely vulnerable to possible floods and landslides. Besides the GoB also recognizes the need for building enough cyclone shelters for the Rohingyas who are vulnerable to the cyclones.

Probable vulnerable areas have been identified with the help of Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) & University of Dhaka. To shift approximately 50,000 people of this risky area to a safe place, west side of the new camp area of Kutupalong-Balukhali under Ukhia upazila is being extended.

Meanwhile, 34,866 persons (7,882 families) have already been shifted to safe places who were under threat of landslide and flash flood. Rest will be shifted as soon as possible.

Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) is included in working group of disaster preparedness which comprised of IOM, UNHCR and other organizations. 2 CPP volunteers have been placed in each camp. Besides 20 Rohingyas have been provided training of volunteers along with equipment in each camp and gradually this number will be

increased to 100. 3 drills, 2 workshops and 2 rallies on cyclone and landslide preparedness have been conducted in camp areas under awareness building programme. In case of disasters the Rohingyas will be sheltered in school premises. The GoB has designated the schools and colleges in Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazila as possible cyclone shelters for the Rohingyas as and when required. The 1500 learning centres made for the Rohingyas children could also be used as temporary shelters during flood & cyclone. Besides, to protect from possible cyclone, actions have been taken to reinforce 1,90,926 temporary shelters.

To ensure accessibility and facilitate evacuation during emergencies approach road has been constructed. Armed Forces Division has constructed 7.7 KMs of road of planned 10 KMs of main road inside the camp. Also, Local Government and Engineering Department has constructed 11.79 KMs of connecting road of planned 13.5 KMs of road. The GoB has also constructed 3 ring culverts at the Balukhali Point. Construction of some other connecting roads is underway.

Relocation to island of Bhasan Char:

The Cox's Bazar district has already become excessively populated with the Rohingya influx. The government has planned to relocate the Rohingyas to Bhasan Char- a island. Accordingly, the project to make Bhasan Char habitable was finalized on 28 November 2017. The project started in the first week of February 2018. In the first phase, 100,000 Rohingyas will be shifted to Bhasan Char. For these 100,000 Rohingyas, 1,440 houses will be constructed. Almost 40-50% construction works of these houses have already been. To save the Rohingyas to be relocated in Bhasan Char from high tide and wave, embankment (9 feet high) has already been completed. It has been constructed 400-500 meters inside from the shore. The height of the embankment will be increased to 21 feet. In addition, shore protection project has been taken. It will be implemented up to 2.1 kms in the sea from the bank. The relocation of the Rohingyas in first phase is expected to start very soon.