

# Global community steps up relief efforts

## US commits about \$32m to meet urgent needs of the Rohingya refugees

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations and the international community are ramping up relief operations for the Rohingya refugees.

The US is providing an additional nearly \$32 million in humanitarian assistance to address the urgent needs of Rohingyas as well as internally displaced people in Rakine and host communities in Bangladesh.

"We applaud the Government of Bangladesh's generosity in responding to this severe humanitarian crisis and appreciate their continued efforts to ensure assistance reaches people in need," Office of the Spokesperson of US Department of State in Washington DC yesterday.

Also, Saudi King Salman Bin Abdul Aziz yesterday allocated \$15 million for the Rohingya refugees fleeing a military crackdown in Rakine.

Saudi Arabia said it would deploy a humanitarian relief team to

Bangladesh to help the refugees urgently in need of aid.

South Korea also yesterday announced humanitarian aid of \$1.5 million for emergency relief operations for a large number of Rohingyas.

The US said the rapid influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees has strained resources and overwhelmed humanitarian agencies and local authorities.

Through this support, the US will help provide emergency support to more than 400,000 displaced people in Myanmar and Bangladesh.

"The US calls upon all parties to allow for unfettered humanitarian access to people in Rakine State, Burma, and we also encourage other donors to join us in providing additional humanitarian assistance for those affected by the crisis," according to a statement of the spokesperson's office.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 3



Finding no other means of taking her to the medicals, an ailing Rohingya woman's son and grandson put her inside a lungi and carry her on a muddy path in Kutupalong.

PHOTO: PINKAY ROY

ROHINGYA CRISIS

# Int'l people's tribunal reveals horrific details of atrocities

NEW STRAITS TIMES, Kuala Lumpur

A woman from Laung Don village fled her house when Myanmar soldiers came into the village, leaving behind her sister who had just given birth and her newborn baby.

Later, upon her return to the village, she found their bodies. said Razia Chittana, a human rights activist and Chittagong-based lawyer who visited the Kutupalong Refugee Camp on December 21-24 last year and interviewed the woman along with 20 other female refugees.

The women told her that altogether 16 of their children had been killed, injured or declared missing.

Razia revealed the details in her evidence presentation on the second day of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal held at the Law Faculty of Universal Malaysia today.

"Two of their babies were burned alive, one had his throat cut while

# Unite, act now

FROM PAGE 1

The state-sponsored propaganda to identify Rohingyas as Bangalis must stop and the Muslim brotherly countering help Bangladesh with urgent humanitarian assistance till they return to Myanmar."

She said military operations by the Myanmar authorities have created havoc in Rakine State and has caused the recent exodus of Rohingyas of all ages.

Over 400,000 Rohingyas have fled Myanmar since August 25 and 60 percent of them are children. "It's an unbearable human catastrophe. I myself have visited them and listened to the stories of their grave sufferings, particularly of women and children."

Hasina invited OIC leaders to visit Bangladesh to hear from Rohingyas whom they fled the persecution in Myanmar.

She said Bangladesh had already been hosting another 400,000 Rohingyas for the last three decades. "We altogether we're hosting about 800,000 Rohingyas in Bangladesh. Despite space and resource constraints, we're providing them with shelter, food and other emergency services."

The PM said although Myanmar claims that the Rohingyas are "illegal immigrants from Bangladesh", all the historical records suggest that they have been living in Rakine for centuries.

"Myanmar is forcibly driving out the Rohingyas Muslims through a planned and organised process. First, they have been excluded from the list of recognised ethnic groups of Myanmar. Then

in 1982, they were denied their right to citizenship. Later, they were sent to IDP camps in their own country."

Hasina said the OIC members might have also seen in the media that Myanmar is planting landmines along their stretch of the border to stop return of Rohingyas to their homeland.

**TAKE BACK ROHINGYAS: OIC**  
The OIC has urged the Myanmar government to take urgent steps for the sustainable return of Rohingya refugees and internally and externally displaced Rohingyas to their homeland.

In safety, security, dignity and with ensured livelihood.

The heads of state and government of

the OIC member states recently held a meeting to discuss the current situation in Myanmar's Rakine.

The meeting was held on the sidelines of the 1st OIC Summit of Science and Technology in Astana, Kazakhstan, at the initiative of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the chair of the OIC Summit, the Bangladesh foreign ministry said yesterday in Dhaka.

The OIC expressed grave concern over the recent systematic brutal acts perpetrated by security forces against the Rohingyas Muslims in Myanmar, which constitute a serious and blatant

dispersion and discriminatory practices against Rohingyas Muslims, as well as the continuous attempts to obliterate their Islamic culture and identity, including desliding them from household lists.

The OIC leaders stressed that the Myanmar government should eliminate the root causes, including the denial of citizenship based on the 1982 Citizenship Act which has led to statelessness and deprivation of the rights of the Rohingyas Muslims, and to continued oppression and discrimination against them.

The organisation urged its member states to extend necessary support to Bangladesh to enable it to face the flow of refugees into its territories.

The meeting called on the OIC members to provide support for the implementation of these recommendations. It invited OIC member states to join the efforts of the international community towards lifting all restrictions on freedom of movement in Rakine and ensuring an inclusive and transparent citizenship verification process that leaves no individual unregistered and renders their access to essential social services, including education and health care.

**MALAYSIA WARNS OF REGIONAL INSTABILITY**

Malaysia and its neighbouring Asian countries would bear the brunt of serious regional instability if the grave situation in Rakine was not addressed, said Malaysian Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman, reports Malaysian Digest.

"We was addressing the meeting of the OIC Contact Group in New York."

"The precarious situation provides a fertile breeding ground for recruitment of extremists," he said, adding it is a well-known fact that the Islamic State is now seeking to make South East Asia and South Asia as its nest and bedrock.

He stressed that the Myanmar government must ensure the return of internally displaced people and restore the status of the Rohingyas.

"We must act now. We must move beyond rhetoric. We must save lives. We must ensure that the ancestor land of the Rohingyas is restored."

PHOTO: BAS

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a meeting of Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on Rohingya crisis at the UN headquarters on Tuesday.

The organisation reiterated its call to the Myanmar government to revive the agreement to open an OIC office for humanitarian affairs in Yangon after signing a Memorandum of Cooperation with the OIC to that effect.

The purpose of the OIC office was to provide pure humanitarian assistance without distinction between the victims of violence.

The OIC leaders said Myanmar should take all necessary measures to restore peace and inter-communal

# Yunus meets Macron

## Calls for help over Rohingya crisis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday met French President Emmanuel Macron on the sidelines of UN meetings and urged him to play an active role as a permanent member of the UN Security Council to mount pressure on the Myanmar government to end the Rohingya crisis.

They met following the Head of Government Climate Meeting at the United Nations headquarters in New York. Yunus also told Macron, said a press release from the Yunus Centre.

Yunus thanked Macron for supporting Bangladesh on the Rohingya crisis. He said the French president should take the circumstances forcing hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas to flee Myanmar and come to Bangladesh in the past few weeks. He urged the French president to stop the ethnic cleansing and grant Rohingyas full citizenship after taking them back from Bangladesh.

Macron assured him of doing his best to end the Rohingya crisis. Prof Yunus also told Macron about the upcoming Global Social Business

SEE PAGE 13 COL 3

# Medical facilities stretched to limit

FROM PAGE 1

When queried on the kind of service for pregnant women, Jamshed said there were currently two maternity wards especially set up for Rohingya women in two upazila health complexes.

Those in serious conditions are usually sent there and may be referred elsewhere as needed.

A couple of days ago, UNB reported that Health Minister Mohammad Nasim said some 70,000 women out of the Rohingyas people who have taken shelter in Bangladesh in the face of persecution by Myanmar forces in Rakine State are pregnant.

According to Coast Trust, a local NGO, 120 babies have been born in no-man's land. Alarmingly, an aid worker for the organisation added that many women are opting for home birth over visiting distant medical centres.

In a local upazila complex, 78 children have already been born.

But health may not be a priority for the refugees. An aid worker said that the rain and the mud has meant many refugees have lost their shelter and are, now looking for a home and food, forgoing health care.

A woman, Hazera, in Kutupalong camp 1, is one of them. "My children are sick. But we are not looking for medicine. We need food first," she says. She has three children with her and they all have fever.

She wraps her arms around them and then begins to sob.

Underlying the overwhelming number

of people needing care, an officer at Coast Trust informed that the organisation dealt with over 4,000 patients in one day.

Since they began operations on the 8th of September, Coast Trust has received around 31,208 patients. Since yesterday, most of the patients have come with back ache, sore throat, pneumonia and diarrhoea. The prevalence of diarrhoea is most among the children.

"We are trying our very best to ensure the provision of the best healthcare for the refugees," the Directorate General of Health, Dr Mohammad Abul Kalam, said.

"We do not have enough doctors. Doctors don't want to leave their posts and come here," said Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, executive director of Coast Trust.

He added that the serious nature of the injuries mean they need a lot of attention.

"We have a 250 bed capacity but there are more than 500 patients. Of that, we now have 100 beds are occupied by Rohingyas patients in two blocks bearing serious injuries such as cuts, bullet wounds, broken legs etc. one block is for males and another for females. But we are steadily getting overburdened," Superintendent of the hospital, Dr Puwson said.

He added that the serious nature of the injuries mean they need a lot of attention.

# Suu Kyi denies

FROM PAGE 1

forces, drawing cool international responses.

"We've never changed our stand," Suu Kyi said in an interview with Radio Free Asia, when asked if she had softened her stance on the military, which she challenged for years in her campaign for democracy.

"Our goal has been national reconciliation from the very beginning. We have never criticised the military itself, but only their actions. We may disagree on these types of actions."

She cited her unsuccessful bid in parliament to change a military-drafted constitution, which bars her from the presidency and gives the military responsibility over security and a veto over charter reform.

"We'll continue to bring changes within the parliament. I've stood firm with the military before, and still do now," she told Radio Free Asia.

She again did not refer to the accusations that the military is engaged in ethnic cleansing.

Suu Kyi, the daughter of Myanmar's independence leader who founded the army, has for years been cited in the West as a champion of democracy during years of military rule and house arrest.

But the Nobel Peace laureate has faced growing criticism for saying little about abuses faced by the Rohingyas.

Rights monitors and fleeing Rohingyas say the army and Rakine Buddhist vigilantes have mounted a campaign of arson aimed at driving out the mostly stateless Muslim population.

The UN rights agency said it was "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing". Western diplomats and aid officials have been hoping she would issue an unequivocal condemnation of violence and hate speech in her first address on the Rakine State conflict.

They welcomed the message, as far as it went, but some had been hoping for a stronger stand.

**DESTROYING REPUTATION**  
Suu Kyi condemned all rights violations

and said she was committed to the restoration of peace and the rule of law.

On the return of refugees, she said Myanmar was ready to start a verification process under a 1993 arrangement with Bangladesh and "refugees from this country will be accepted without any problems."

She also said diplomats could visit the conflict zone.

In a phone call to Suu Kyi, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson welcomed Myanmar's commitment to allow the return of refugees, but urged it to facilitate aid to those affected by the violence and to address "deeply troubling" rights abuses, the State Department said.

US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Patrick Murphy is in Myanmar this week. He will travel to Sitwe, the capital of Rakine State, to meet government officials and representatives of different communities, but is not seeking to travel to the conflict zone.

China, which has close economic and diplomatic ties with Myanmar, has called for understanding of the government's efforts to protect stability.

Britain said it had suspended its military training programme in Myanmar and French President Emmanuel Macron condemned "unacceptable ethnic cleansing."

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told the General Assembly: "The authorities in Myanmar must end the military operations, allow unhindered humanitarian access, recognise the right of refugees to return in safety and dignity."

Twenty-two members of the US Congress wrote to Tillerson calling for a "strong, meaningful" response and "a clear line" from the US State Department's Foreign Relations Committee, Bob Corker, said Suu Kyi risked "destroying" her reputation as a force for positive change.

"She has yet another opportunity today to stand up for the Rohingya minority ... but instead refused to acknowledge the military's role in the ongoing atrocities," he said.

Western governments that backed Suu Kyi in the ongoing struggle to rule still see her as the best hope for Myanmar's political and economic transition.

# UK trade union suspends Suu Kyi's award

## Bristol University also reviewing its award

STAR REPORT

Amid growing criticism over Aung San Suu Kyi's inaction to the Rohingya crisis, Union, one of Britain's largest trade unions, has suspended an award given to her while she was a political prisoner.

Besides Union, a number of British institutions have said they are either reviewing or removing honours bestowed on Suu Kyi during her campaign for democracy under Myanmar's oppressive military junta, The Guardian reported yesterday.

The move came hours after the UK's suspension of an educational training course for Myanmar military which is accused of burning Rohingya villages and killing the Muslim minority in Myanmar.

"The situation facing the Rohingya of Myanmar is appalling," Margaret McKee, president of Union, told The Guardian.

"Aung San Suu Kyi's honorary membership of Union has been suspended, and we hope that she responds to international pressure." The British universities that awarded honorary degrees to Suu Kyi during her time in opposition, also said it was

reviewing its award, the report added.

"The university shares the growing concern about the ongoing situation in Myanmar," a spokesperson was quoted by The Guardian.

Myanmar's de facto leader and a Nobel laureate Suu Kyi has been suspended of her honorary membership of the British universities (ASEAN) over the last three decades Suu Kyi has been awarded with honorary degrees from several UK universities including Glasgow, Bath and Cambridge.

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"We will be actively removing Aung San Suu Kyi's honorary presidency as a symbol of our opposition to her current position and inaction in the face of genocide," said its General Secretary Michael Pasha.

"Over the last three decades Suu Kyi has been awarded with honorary degrees from several UK universities including Glasgow, Bath and Cambridge."

ASEAN LAWMAKERS SHELVE RESOLUTION ON ROHINGYA  
Lawmakers of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) failed to adopt a unified stance on the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5