



PHOTO: REUTERS

ensuring their dignity, respect and right. If the Rohingyas are kept isolated in the so-called safe zones, repressions on them will continue. The fact remains that Myanmar had launched aggression against Bangladesh by forcibly pushing its citizens into our country," he said

### Rape victims

In Cox's Bazar here, doctors in makeshift clinics have reported rape and horrific sexual abuse of Rohingya women who fled from Rakhine. Doctors at a clinic run by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) treated many women with injuries from violent sexual assaults. In clinics run by the Bangladesh government, 19 cases of rapes were reported. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Filippo Grandi, who visited Rohingya camps in Bangladesh, described their exodus as the "most urgent refugee emergency in the world. People have fled unspeakable violence and their needs are enormous". Grandi was thankful to the Bangladesh government which kept its borders open to facilitate the arrival of the suffering Rohingyas. "In a world that is hostile to refugees, Bangladesh has shown exemplary character. Just like the causes of the influx are in Myanmar, clearly the solution is in Myanmar as well. The Rohingyas need a permanent solution to ease their immediate suffering. Though the UNHCR and the World Food Programme have their presence in Rakhine, our movements are restricted," admitted Grandi.

He said the solution to the crisis lay in the refugees returning voluntarily to Myanmar from Bangladesh. "In order for this to happen,

conditions have to be changed in Rakhine state. The issues are citizenship, violence, discrimination and poverty. Myanmar should do the registration of all such people who fled it and went to Bangladesh. The international community should come out with multiple aids as Bangladesh alone cannot cope with the situation," he added. Intellectuals in Bangladesh have demanded invoking Responsibility to Protect (R2P) against Myanmar. R2P is a global commitment endorsed by all.

UN member states to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Mir Aftabuddin Ahmed, a scholar at international relations at the University of Toronto, said: "The Bangladesh government has recognised the Rohingya crisis as being under the category of ethnic cleansing. As a norm, it demands that national governments essentially do not take sovereignty for granted. R2P is based on the principle that sovereignty requires a responsibility to protect all population from mass crimes and human rights violations. The Myanmar government's failure to protect the Rohingyas makes a strong case for an intervention by the international community, either through taking measures stated in the R2P framework or by involving regional powers like China and India."

That is easier said than done.



*Prakash Bhandari is a veteran Indian journalist, formerly with The Times of India.*