

Joint Statement on the Rohingya Refugee Crisis

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UN Principals call for solidarity with Rohingya refugees

(16 October 2017, Geneva/New York): After violence broke out in Myanmar's Rakhine state on 25 August, more than 500,000 Rohingya refugees crossed into neighbouring Bangladesh in less than five weeks. Tens of thousands of refugees have arrived since, fleeing discrimination, violence and persecution, as well as isolation and fear.

The speed and scale of the influx made it the world's fastest growing refugee crisis and a major humanitarian emergency. The Government of Bangladesh, local charities and volunteers, the UN and NGOs are working in overdrive to provide assistance. But much more is urgently needed. 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.

They are fully dependent on humanitarian assistance for food, water, health and other essential needs. Basic services are under severe strain. In some sites, there is no access to potable water, and sanitation facilities are absent, raising health risks for both the refugees and the communities hosting them.

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. Now a critical Pledging Conference in Geneva on 23 October 2017 is being organized by OCHA, IOM and UNHCR and co-hosted by the European Union and Kuwait. It provides Governments from around the world 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 US\$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.

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

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ensure the conditions that will allow for refugees' eventual voluntary return in safety and dignity. The origins and, thus, the solutions to this crisis lie in Myanmar.

Let us all come together on 23 October at the pledging conference and send a strong message to the Rohingya refugees and their generous hosts in Bangladesh that the world is there for them in their greatest time of need.