

# **Rohingya Repatriation Only Viable Solution to Crisis: Chief Adviser**

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus has said that the repatriation of more than one million Rohingya refugees to their homeland in Myanmar's Rakhine State remains the only viable and sustainable solution to the crisis. He urged the UN refugee agency to continue its active engagement to facilitate their safe return.

The Chief Adviser made the remarks late Wednesday when the newly appointed country representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Ivo Freijsen, paid a courtesy call on him at the State Guest House Jamuna in central Dhaka.

During the meeting, the UNHCR representative highlighted the "dramatic decline" in aid for Rohingya refugees living in camps in Bangladesh's southeastern district of Cox's Bazar and stressed the need for greater self-reliance and livelihood opportunities in the settlements.

Professor Yunus said the Rohingya crisis was not receiving the attention it deserved, despite the Interim Government of Bangladesh organizing a series of high-profile events over the past year, including a visit by the UN Secretary-General to the camps during Ramadan, which helped draw international focus to the humanitarian issue.

He said prolonged stay of the Rohingyas in the camps could never be a solution, as it had already created tensions with host communities, and called for renewed international efforts to ensure repatriation.

"The problem began in Myanmar, and the solution must also come

from there. A frustrated and angry young generation is growing up in the camps, with access to technology. This is not good news for anyone. Our job is to make sure they return to their homeland in peace and dignity,” the Chief Adviser said.

The meeting also covered the Rohingya situation in Bhasan Char, the upcoming general elections and referendum, and the country’s democratic transition. Professor Yunus noted that many refugees had fled shelters on Bhasan Char island and blended into the mainland population, creating new challenges for the country.

Ivo Freijsen said that Barham Salih, the newly appointed UNHCR chief, has expressed keen interest in visiting Bangladesh in the near future and is expected to travel to the Rohingya camps. His predecessor, Filippo Grandi, visited the camps several times since 2017.

Professor Yunus said Bangladesh was fully prepared to hold free, fair and festive elections.

“We want to set a new standard in conducting elections. All our efforts are focused on ensuring a credible and well-conducted poll. For first-time and new voters, we want the process to be enjoyable and to create a festive and inclusive atmosphere,” he said.

Lamiya Morshed, SDG Coordinator and Senior Secretary to the government, was also present at the meeting.