78th UNGA High-Level Side Event

“Have they forgotten us?”
Ensuring continued global solidarity with the Rohingya of Myanmar

21 September 2023, 3.00 – 4.30 PM,
Conference Room 11, United Nations Headquarters, New York

I. Background and Objective

Amidst the multiple crises that the international community presently faces, there is a danger that many survivors and communities are forgotten. This is particularly the case for the Rohingya minorities who have been forcibly displaced from their homeland through a terror campaign launched in August 2017 which was termed by many as ‘textbook example of ethnic cleansing’.

This poses a critical risk. If we are unable to show, through our common efforts, that all human lives matter equally, we risk undermining the foundations of the systems on which so many rely for support.

In Bangladesh, over 1.2 million displaced Rohingya continue to wait for their right to return to be vindicated. In the absence of any substantial improvement in the State of Rakhine where they lived for centuries, as well as lack of political commitment to remedy the injustice inflicted upon them in Myanmar, their presence in Bangladesh is only lingering, taking a toll on both the Rohingyas and the Cox’s Bazaar host community.

Over 52% of this group are under 18, increasing pressures on the services needed to support the children and young adults and also deepening the risk that extremism and other organized crimes. Already victims of persecution and alleged crimes including extensive sexual violence, the situation of the Rohingya now threatens to be compounded by eroding international attention.

Resources provided by the international community are being reduced. Only about 39% of the appeal made in 2023 Joint Response Plan has so far been funded. In March this year, due to a decrease in financial support, humanitarian agencies were forced to cut food support and other critical interventions. With nearly 30,000 new-borns joining the population every year, the condition in the camp is rapidly deteriorating, with significant socio-economic, environmental and demographic implications for Bangladesh.

Engagement and financing are also waning across areas of interventions including the political and justice sectors. Resolutions in General Assembly, Security Council and the Human Rights Council are only adding to the promises made to them, while realization remains elusive.

Against this backdrop, this High-Level Side Event will bring together the States, international and regional organisations, and other stakeholders to ensure that our collective attention remains on the Rohingya, who deserve equitable global solidarity and support of the international community in meeting their humanitarian and accountability challenges as they await safe, sustainable and dignified return to their homeland.
III. Structure and format

The High-Level Side Event will be hosted by Bangladesh, Canada, Gambia, Malaysia, Türkiye, United Kingdom and United States of America.

Opening high-level statements will be followed by keynote addresses providing initial reflections on the challenges in pursuing durable solution to the Rohingya crisis and in providing effective assistance in supporting the Rohingya community in Bangladesh.

Participating States and organisations will then be invited to present their reflections on how best to advance efforts towards increased solidarity in our collective efforts to address the root causes of the Rohingya crisis as well as to meet humanitarian and justice needs of the Rohingya.

Opening Statements
H.E. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh
Mr. Khaled Khiari, Assistant Secretary-General for Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (on behalf of the United Nations Secretary-General)

Keynote Addresses
Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Antonio Vittorino, Director General, International Organization for Migration
Karim A.A. Khan KC, Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court

Intervening States and Institutions
Ministerial / High-Level Representatives of Cosponsoring Countries
Representatives of other member States
International and Regional Organisations including UN Agencies

III. Debate: Key Questions

States and international organisations are invited to structure their interventions along the following areas:

- Effective resource allocation across global crises: How can we ensure continued strong financial and humanitarian support to the displaced Rohingya and the host community in Bangladesh? What are the short-term steps we can take to ensure critical humanitarian assistance is provided to the Rohingya community?

- Delivering accountability: How can we reinvigorate efforts to deliver justice for the Rohingya, including through new and innovative approaches to cooperation across all relevant actors?

- Securing lasting solution for the Rohingya: How to address the challenges faced in creating conditions in Myanmar that are conducive for voluntary, safe and dignified return of the displaced Rohingyas and their sustainable reintegration in Myanmar.