

Stung India slams 'inaccurate' UN reports

Seething anger: Protesters stage a rally in Kolkata against the persecution of Myanmar's Rohingya Muslim minority. AP

Angered by criticism from the UN's Human Rights Council on the issue of Kashmir, cow vigilante violence and Rohingya refugees, India on Tuesday accused the High Commissioner of the body, Zeid Raad Al Hussein, of passing "tendentious judgments made on the basis of selective and even inaccurate reports" in his comments on Monday.

"India is proud of its independent judiciary, freedom of press, vibrant civil society and respect for rule of law and human rights. A more informed view would have not only recognised this but also noted, for example, that the Prime Minister himself publicly condemned violence in the name of cow protection," said India's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva Rajiv Chander, during the ongoing Human Rights Council in his reply.

'Incidents extrapolated'

The government said Mr. Hussein's reference to the killing of journalist Gauri Lankesh and other references to people displaced in the Sardar Sarovar-Narmada Bachao Andolan, and "mob attacks against people under the pretext of protecting the lives of cows" and other instances of "rising intolerance" in India, were "individual incidents extrapolated to suggest a broader societal situation".

On Monday, while giving his update to the Council's reports on 40 countries, Mr. Hussein had "deplored" the government's recent decision to deport approximately 40,000 Myanmarese Rohingya refugees.

"India cannot carry out collective expulsions, or return people to a place where they risk torture or other serious violations," Mr. Hussein had said, referring to the principle of non-refoulement, after calling the Myanmar government's policies against the refugees as a "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing".

Security challenges

"Like many other nations, India is concerned about illegal migrants, in particular, with the possibility that they could pose security challenges. Enforcing the laws should not be mistaken for lack of compassion," Mr. Chander said, without referring directly to the Rohingya or Myanmar.

On the issue of human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir that the UN Human Rights Chief had referred to in the written reports as well, India said the assessments overlooked "the central role of terrorism" there.

Reacting to Mr. Hussein's statement, Union Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijiju had said on Monday that the government had not firmed up a plan to deport the Rohingya yet and had only asked the State governments to identify the illegal immigrants and initiate action as per the established procedure.

India is concerned about migrants; law enforcement should not be mistaken for lack of compassion

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