

## Hasina floats five-point peace plan

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has floated a five-point proposal at the United Nations to find a permanent solution to the Rohingya crisis.

Emphasising swift action to resolve the crisis in her speech at the 72nd UN General Assembly (UNGA) in New York on Thursday, she called for immediate steps to end the 'cleansing' of the ethnic Rohingya minority. She was at the centrestage at the UNGA this year, with the Rohingya crisis deepening along Bangladesh's border with Myanmar, a crossing made by over 430,000 refugees fleeing violence in Rakhine State in past over three weeks.

Hasina's five-point proposal says: Myanmar must stop the violence and the practice of ethnic cleansing in the Rakhine State unconditionally, immediately and forever; the UN Secretary General should immediately send a fact-finding mission to Myanmar; all civilians, irrespective of religion and ethnicity, must be protected in Myanmar; for this, 'safe zones' could be created inside Myanmar under UN supervision; sustainable return of all forcibly displaced Rohingyas in Bangladesh to their homes in Myanmar must be ensured; and the recommendations of the Kofi Annan Commission Report must be implemented immediately, unconditionally and entirely.

She said it was the 14th time she was addressing the UN General Assembly, but this time she came with a heavy heart just after seeing the "hungry, distressed and hopeless Rohingya".

"Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya from the Rakhine State are entering Bangladesh to flee violence. As estimated by IOM (International Organisation for Migration), in last three weeks, over 430,000 Rohingya entered Bangladesh. They are fleeing 'ethnic cleansing' in their own country where they have been living for centuries," Hasina said, adding that Bangladesh is currently sheltering over 800,000 Rohingya in all.

She proposed that the UN Secretary-General send a fact-finding mission to Myanmar where 'safe zones' can be built under the UN's supervision for the protection of all civilians, irrespective of religion and ethnicity.

### **'Take them back'**

Before her speech at the UNGA general debate, she cleared Bangladesh's stance over the protracted Rohingya crisis at several meetings at the UN Headquarters in New York. At the OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation) Contact Group meeting on Tuesday, she demanded Myanmar take back the refugees and end 'state propaganda' that labelled the ethnic group as 'Bengalis'.

Hasina thanked UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the Security Council for their attempts to stop atrocities, and bring peace and stability in Rakhine. She added, "We are horrified to see that the Myanmar authorities are laying land mines along their stretch of the border to prevent the Rohingya from returning to Myanmar."

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