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**United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees calls on Foreign Minister**

Dhaka, 8 July :

Foreign Minister A H Mahmood Ali urged the UNHCR to call upon the Government of Myanmar to take meaningful measures to ensure return of all Myanmar nationals staying in Bangladesh to their homeland in Rakhine State.

The Foreign Minister made this request to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi during a meeting between the two today. Grandi is currently visiting Bangladesh and will have a mission to Cox’s Bazar on Monday (10 July 2017) to meet Myanmar refugees.

During the meeting, the Foreign Minister apprised the UN Refugee Agency Chief of the measures taken by the Government of Bangladesh to provide humanitarian assistances to Myanmar refugees and the undocumented Myanmar nationals. He also informed the High Commissioner that as many as 236,599 Rakhine Muslims had been repatriated till 2005. He thanked the UNHCR for providing valuable support throughout the process of repatriation of this huge number of Myanmar nationals. However, the Foreign Minister expressed concern over unilateral halt of the repatriation process by the Government of Myanmar since 2005 even though 10,820 refugees had been cleared by both countries through verification process. He stressed that constant presence of the huge number of Myanmar Nationals in Cox’s Bazar district has created a number of adverse effects on the overall socio-economic, political, demographic, environmental and humanitarian and security situation of Cox’s Bazar and adjacent districts.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees commended the Government of Bangladesh for being benevolent to host a large number of Myanmar nationals for long time as well as for providing the humanitarian assistances to them. He underscored that the root cause of the instability in Rakhine State lies in the expropriation of citizenship of the Rakhine Muslims.

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