

Honorable Foreign Secretary Mr. Masud Bin Momen

Segunbagicha
Dhaka 1000
Bangladesh

September 21, 2020

Re: Request for the Cooperation of the Government of Bangladesh to Facilitate a Visit for Human Rights Groups to Bhasan Char Island

Dear Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen,

We, the undersigned five human rights organizations, would like acknowledge the Government of Bangladesh's efforts to provide humanitarian assistance and emergency shelter to more than one million Rohingya refugees who fled brutal attacks by Myanmar authorities in 2016 and 2017 as well as Bangladesh's role in providing shelter and support to hundreds of thousands of Rohingya who previously fled persecution in Myanmar.

We note that more than 300 Rohingya refugees are currently being housed on Bhasan Char island and that the Government of Bangladesh is moving forward with plans to relocate up to 100,000 Rohingya from Cox's Bazar District to Bhasan Char after the monsoon season.

We recognize the efforts made by the Government of Bangladesh to respond to concerns raised by the United Nations, humanitarian aid agencies, human rights groups, and Rohingya refugees in regards to the facilities and conditions for refugees on the island and whether they meet international humanitarian and human rights standards.

We request the Government of Bangladesh to provide timely access to Bhasan Char, including unfettered access to meet with refugees, for a United Nations protection team, as well as for a United Nations-led technical team to review the sustainability and environmental conditions on the island.

We understand on September 5, a group of 40 Rohingya refugee representatives including *Majhis* visited the island on a "go and see" visit from refugee camps in mainland Cox's Bazar District to see the facilities and the situation on the island.

In this context we also note your comments during an August 24 webinar stating the Bangladesh government "may also arrange the visit of human rights groups and select media to appreciate the facilities created."

We therefore request your government to facilitate and provide us, the undersigned international human rights organizations, with access to Bhasan Char island to conduct a joint assessment of the facilities and conditions for those on the island, at your earliest convenience.

We request the joint visit allow free and unfettered access to the island and ability to speak to Rohingya refugees privately. Our organizations hope to provide the Government of Bangladesh with both public and private recommendations.

We thank you for your attention to these matters, and we welcome the opportunity to assist and support your administration to ensure the protection of Rohingya refugees.

Sincerely,

David Griffiths

Director of the Office of the
Secretary General

Amnesty International

Eric Schwartz

President

Refugees International

Former Assistant Secretary
of State for Population,
Refugees, and Migration

Kerry Kennedy

President

**Robert F. Kennedy Human
Rights**

Matthew Smith

Chief Executive Officer

Fortify Rights

Teddy Baguilat

Executive Director

**ASEAN Parliamentarians for
Human Rights**

Former Member of Parliament
of the Philippines