

General Debate
Delivered statement by Ms. Israt Ara, Charge d’Affaires ad interim
and Deputy Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN
and other International Organizations in Geneva
(12-16 October 2026)

Mr. Chair,
High Commissioner Mr. Barham Salih,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, let me congratulate **Mr. Barham Salih** on assuming the responsibility of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. We appreciate his steadfast commitment to the Organization’s mandate and his thoughtful reflections on forced displacement, particularly his emphasis on advancing durable solutions through voluntary repatriation.

Mr. Chair,

Forced displacement continues to rise even amid peacetime persecution, persistent conflicts, geopolitical fragmentation and increasing pressure on the international humanitarian system. Bangladesh welcomes the High Commissioner’s call for renewed momentum in implementing the Global Compact on Refugees and looks forward to the Global Refugee Forum in 2027. We also urge for stronger international cooperation, equitable burden and responsibility-sharing, with predictable resources and tangible support for forcibly displaced people and host communities. The 2027 Forum should translate international solidarity into concrete progress towards durable solutions acceptable to host countries.

Mr. Chair, as a country hosting a large number of forcibly displaced Rohingyas, let me highlight a few key points:

First, the continued decline in humanitarian financing is a serious concern. Funding constraints must not determine the level of protection and assistance required and international solidarity must translate into sustained support for displaced populations and host communities. Bangladesh has been hosting over 1.2 million forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals, despite our own economic, social and climate vulnerabilities. The Joint Response Plan sought over USD 934 million in 2025, while the 2026 appeal has been reduced to about USD 710 million, covering only minimum lifesaving needs. This downward trend is untenable. Appreciating the contributions of donors and partners, Bangladesh urges more predictable and sustainable humanitarian assistance while advancing their return to Myanmar.

Second, climate change including extreme weather events, environmental degradation and loss of livelihoods is increasingly compounding the drivers and impacts of forced displacement. We call for enhanced international cooperation and dedicated resources to strengthen climate resilience in countries hosting large displaced populations. Given our own acute climate vulnerabilities, climate finance and international support is particularly important for Bangladesh.

Third, we welcome the High Commissioner's emphasis that humanitarian assistance cannot become the endpoint for people living in displacement for years or decades. As mentioned by our Prime Minister during the recently concluded high-level week of the 81st UNGA (quote) "humanitarian generosity cannot become an excuse for political inaction. Nor can Bangladesh be expected to shoulder this responsibility indefinitely." (unquote) Bangladesh supports renewed attention to durable solutions and addressing the root causes of forced displacement.

Fourth, while taking note of the High Commissioner's vision of "50 by 35," we underscore that reducing aid dependency must not come at the expense of durable solutions acceptable to host countries. Proposals concerning self-reliance, formal education and livelihood opportunities in host countries risk creating conditions for prolonged displacement, may directly contradict national policies, and undermine the prospects for early and voluntary return.

Finally, we appreciate the transformation underway within UNHCR to make the organization more agile, efficient, focused and field-oriented. Bangladesh recognizes the need for effective use of scarce resources and emphasizes that such reforms must preserve UNHCR's mandate, capacity, expertise and field presence necessary to respond to humanitarian needs.

Mr. Chair,

As conflicts and humanitarian needs grow, we call for renewed international solidarity to ensure equitable burden-sharing, strengthen support host countries and advance durable solutions. For Bangladesh, this means enabling the Rohingyas to return to their homeland without further delay. We call upon the international community, ASEAN, the UN and all relevant partners to intensify efforts towards their early and sustainable repatriation. Bangladesh remains committed to working closely with the UNHCR and all partners towards this objective.

I thank you, **Mr. Chair.**

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