



3. Dezember 2020

# HALT RELOCATION OF ROHINGYA REFUGEES TO REMOTE ISLAND

## Bangladesh

In response to the relocation of hundreds of Rohingya refugees to the Bhashan Char, a remote island in the Bay of Bengal, Amnesty International's South Asia Campaigner, Saad Hammadi, said: "The authorities should immediately halt relocation of more refugees to Bhashan Char, return those on the island to their families and community in mainland Bangladesh, and follow due process including the full and meaningful participation of refugees in any plan for their relocation.

"The relocation of so many Rohingya refugees to a remote island, which is still off limits to everyone including rights groups and journalists without prior permission, poses grave concerns about independent human rights monitoring. It is crucial that the Bangladeshi authorities must let the UN, rights groups and humanitarian agencies carry out independent assessments of Bhashan Char's habitability first before taking any steps to relocate people there. No relocation plan, either to Bhashan Char or to another location, can be undertaken without the full and informed consent of the individuals involved. Some refugees already on the island have shared their anxiety with Amnesty International at being cut off from their families and community."

"Bangladesh and other members of the international community have a critical role not only in protecting the rights of the Rohingya people but also in ensuring their full and meaningful participation in decisions that affect them."

## Background

The Bhashan Char – which in English translates to "floating island" – is a silt island developed by the Bangladesh Navy, where the Bangladeshi authorities plan to relocate 100,000 Rohingya refugees.

Amnesty International obtained a partial list of the Rohingya families that the government of Bangladesh identified for relocation to Bhashan Char. In interviews with Amnesty International five family members, who represent 23 refugees on the list for relocation, said that they signed up to relocate to Bhashan Char out of compulsion rather than choice.

In September 2020, Amnesty International released the briefing "Let Us Speak for our Rights", which outlines how exclusion from decision-making is impacting the human rights of Rohingya refugees. The briefing includes a section on the conditions for Rohingya in Bhashan Char.