

JOINT STATEMENT BY THE FOREIGN MINISTERS
OF BANGLADESH AND MYANMAR ISSUED AT THE CONCLUSION
OF THE OFFICIAL VISIT OF THE MYANMAR FOREIGN MINISTER
TO BANGLADESH FROM 23 - 28 APRIL, 1992.

RSP DOCUMENTATION
CENTRE

At the invitation of His Excellency Mr. A.S.M. Mostafizur Rahman, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, His Excellency U Ohn Gyaw, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar paid an official visit to Bangladesh from 23-28 April 1992 at the head of a 14-member delegation which included the Minister for Information of the Union of Myanmar His Excellency Brig. General Myo Thant as Alternate Leader.

2. During his stay the Myanmar Foreign Minister U Ohn Gyaw accompanied by Brig. General Myo Thant, Minister for Information called on His Excellency Mr. Abdur Rahman Biswas, President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The Myanmar Foreign Minister accompanied by Myanmar Information Minister called on Her Excellency Begum Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of Bangladesh. H.E. Brig. General Myo Thant, Minister for Information called on Barrister Nazmul Huda, Minister for Information. The Minister of State for Relief and Rehabilitation of Bangladesh Mr. Lutfur Rahman Khan also called on His Excellency U Ohn Gyaw. Mr. Darioush Bayandor, Chief of Mission of UNHCR in Dhaka called on H.E. U Ohn Gyaw, Minister for Foreign Minister of the Union of Myanmar.

3. Besides extensive tete-a-tete the two Foreign Ministers held two rounds of extensive talks, assisted by their respective delegations. Lists of which are annexed.

4. At the opening session of the official talks, His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh welcomed his counterpart and expressed the hope that his long awaited visit would help in resolving the



outstanding issues particularly the problem of Myanmar refugees not sheltered in Bangladesh. He briefly outlined the present situation of the Myanmar refugees now in Bangladesh and emphasized on four basic elements :

- a) the exodus of people from Myanmar to Bangladesh to stop immediately;
- b) repatriation of the refugees to their original place of residence in honour, safety and dignity;
- c) undertaking of certain confidence building measures such as withdrawal/cutback of troops from border areas/forward position; and
- d) lasting solution of the problem in the sense that there should be no recurrence of such or similar problems in future.

The Foreign Minister proposed the involvement of UNHCR to ensure the above. He mentioned that Bangladesh had all along had a peaceful border with Myanmar except on two occasions 1978-79 and 1991-92 when there were influxes of refugees from Myanmar into Bangladesh.

The Foreign Minister reiterated that Bangladesh was committed to maintain the traditional friendly and good neighbourly relations with Myanmar and was hopeful that through amicable negotiations a peaceful and lasting solution of the problem will be achieved. The Foreign Minister categorically mentioned that Bangladesh had no intention to interfere in the internal affairs of Myanmar. He added that Bangladesh and Myanmar were permanent neighbours which was of overriding consideration and it was in the interest of both the countries to remove the existing irritants through amicable negotiations. The Foreign Minister of Bangladesh then introduced the members of his delegation and handed over a draft agreement to his counterpart for examination. He then invited Myanmar counterpart to put forward their proposals.

5. In reply, the leader of the Myanmar Delegation expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome accorded to him and his delegation by the Bangladesh side and stated that he had brought along the goodwill of the Myanmar leaders and the people to the leaders and the people of Bangladesh. The size and composition of the Myanmar Delegation is indicative of this positive attitude to amicably resolve the issue. Both sides were acquainted with each other and understood what was required to be done. He also confirmed that there exist positive elements on what both sides need to undertake. In conclusion, he stated that Myanmar looked beyond resolving the current issue and expressed his desire that both sides would cooperate more closely in the future.

6. The two Foreign Ministers decided to form a Working Group consisting of senior members of the delegations for detailed discussion on the question of safe and voluntary repatriation of Myanmar refugees presently sheltered in Bangladesh and related issues, and to resolve the problem on a permanent and lasting basis.

7. In the light of the above, both sides exchanged views and agreed as follows :

- i) The two sides reiterated their firm conviction to resolve their problems amicably and peacefully through bilateral negotiations on the basis of mutual understanding, accommodation, trust and goodwill and maintain peace and tranquility on their borders.
- ii) The two sides agreed in full faith to abide by the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence.

- iii) The Government of the Union of Myanmar agreed to take all necessary measures that would halt the outflow of Myanmar residents to Bangladesh and encourage those who had left Myanmar to return voluntary and safely to their homes.
- iv) The Government of the Union of Myanmar in a spirit of cooperation agreed to accept after scrutiny all those people who took shelter in Bangladesh and whose presence had been recorded through Refugee Registration Cards issued by the Government of Bangladesh at their point of entry into Bangladesh and which inter-alia listed available evidence of their residence in Myanmar. On the basis of the scrutiny of the lists provided by the Government of Bangladesh, the Government of the Union of Myanmar agreed to repatriate in batches all persons inter-alia: carrying Myanmar Citizenship Identity Cards / National Registration Cards; those able to present any other documents issued by relevant Myanmar authorities and; all those persons able to furnish evidence of their residence in Myanmar, such as addresses or any other relevant particulars. The Government of the Union Myanmar agreed that there would be no restriction on number of persons so long as they could establish bonafide evidence of their residence in Myanmar. They further assured that the lists provided by Bangladesh closely coincided with those persons verified by the Myanmar authorities.
- v) The two sides agreed that the residents of Myanmar identified in para (iv) above would be received at the borders by the authorities of the Government of the Union of Myanmar in batches from the authorities of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh by a specific Mutual Agreement on physical

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on the Demarcation of the Land Section of the Boundary North of the Naaf River signed at Dhaka on 23 May 1979. Pursuant to Article III of the said agreement, Myanmar side drafted the text of the boundary treaty which was transmitted to the Bangladesh side on 10 June, 1991. The two Governments hereby agree that the Boundary Treaty should be signed at the earliest possible opportunity.

8. The meeting was conducted in a friendly and cordial atmosphere reflecting the traditional friendship existing between Myanmar and Bangladesh. Both sides expressed their appreciation on the positive outcome of the discussions.

9. The leader of the Myanmar Delegation expressed his deep appreciation for the warm hospitality extended to his Delegation by the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh during its stay in Dhaka.

(A.S.M. Mostafizur Rahman)
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Leader of Bangladesh Delegation

(Ohn Gyaw)
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Leader of Myanmar Delegation

DHAKA, 28TH APRIL, 1992

- ix) After completion of the repatriation process from Bangladesh of the Myanmar residents, the two Governments agreed to cooperate for the prevention of illegal border crossings by persons from either side by appropriate controls.
- x) The two Governments agreed to take all necessary measures to enhance security and tranquillity in their borders in full compliance with the Agreement on Border Arrangements and Cooperation (Border Ground Rules) signed by the two countries in 1980. In this context they agreed to take necessary confidence building measures. The two sides agreed to keep regular contacts through flag meetings between the sector commanders of their respective border security forces towards this end.
- xi) Both Governments agreed that they would oppose any form of terrorism, insurgency or unfriendly acts such as smuggling, gun running or drug trafficking directed against their neighbours. They agreed that they would not harbour or support any terrorists or criminals involved in such activities. They also agreed that their respective law enforcing agencies would closely cooperate together to prevent such acts.
- xii) The land boundary North of the Naaf River Sector of the common boundary has been successfully demarcated jointly by the two Governments in accordance with the Agreement between the Government of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the

arrangements for repatriation of Myanmar residents to be agreed upon at the technical level which would include inter-alia time schedules, transport and logistic arrangements, reception procedures, communication systems. Both sides agreed that the process of repatriation should commence within two or three weeks at a mutually agreed date and be completed within six months from the date the first batch is received.

- vi) Both sides agreed that repatriation should be safe and voluntary, that the Myanmar returnees should be settled in their own households and original places of residence to enable them to carry on their livelihood as members of Myanmar society. It was agreed that the Government of Bangladesh would fully associate the representatives of the UNHCR to assist them in the process of safe and voluntary repatriation. The Government of the Union of Myanmar agreed that the services of the UNHCR could be drawn upon as needed at an appropriate time.
- vii) Both sides recognize the role of UNHCR in various stages of repatriation process, facilitating the reduction of international concern in the context of voluntary and safe return of the Myanmar residents. The Myanmar side also assured that on-ground work programme will be drawn up in full consideration of this aspect after consultation with relevant authorities in Myanmar.
- viii) The two Governments agreed to work for a comprehensive and permanent solution of the problem so as to prevent its recurrence in the future.