



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Deputy Assistant Secretary for Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) Richard Albright Visit to Bangladesh**

**Dhaka, November 15, 2018** – Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) Richard Albright visited Bangladesh from November 10 to 15. DAS Albright visited Rohingya refugee camps and host communities in Cox’s Bazar from November 11 to 13 to assess conditions and speak directly with Bangladeshis and refugees, including some who had just recently arrived from Myanmar. While in Cox’s Bazar, DAS Albright, accompanied by the USAID Mission Director Derrick Brown, visited the Kunapara Border crossing, Rohingya camps including the UNHCR Transit Center, as well as a number of facilities providing services such as medical care, food distribution, and nutrition services, implemented by U.S. government partners, including WFP, UNICEF, the Red Cross Movement, and IOM. This visit was part of PRM’s regular travel to monitor humanitarian assistance programs and meet with key government, United Nations, and non-governmental organization stakeholders.

The U.S. has provided more than \$345 million to assist Rohingya refugees and host communities in Bangladesh since the start of the current crisis in August 2017. In addition, the U.S. has contributed 40 percent of the total contributions to-date to the 2018 Joint Response Plan.”

The United States commends the Government of Bangladesh’s generosity in keeping its borders open to Rohingya refugees and in hosting the more than 700,000 that have arrived since the outbreak of violence in Rakhine State in August 2017. The United States also appreciates Bangladesh’s continued efforts to ensure humanitarian assistance reaches the affected population.

The United States is following developments closely regarding joint plans of Bangladesh and Myanmar to repatriate approximately 2,000 Rohingya beginning November 15. We agree with

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UNHCR's assessment that conditions in Myanmar are not yet conducive for returns. Full access to Myanmar is needed to understand the conditions in the areas of return and to allow refugees and internally displaced persons to make an informed choice about returning. We welcome the Bangladesh government's continued commitment to informed, voluntary, safe, and dignified returns and to giving UNHCR the lead in the repatriation process.

In his meetings with government officials, DAS Albright emphasized the value of go-and-see visits, as recommended by UNHCR, to enable Rohingya refugees to visit their villages of origin and the transit facilities in Myanmar so that they and their families can make informed choices about voluntary returns.

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