

622,000 Rohingyas have taken refuge in Bangladesh, informs PM Sheikh Hasina

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Dhaka: Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Sunday said that 622,000 Rohingyas have already arrived in the country and urged Myanmar to repatriate them immediately.

Rohingya wade through the Naf river after having just crossed over from Myanmar into Bangladesh, near Palong Khali

Sheikh Hasina, who was speaking at the inauguration of the 63rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Dhaka, also urged Myanmar to stop the persecution of the Rohingyas.

"Over 622,000 Myanmar nationals have fled to Bangladesh to escape persecution in recent times," Hasina was quoted by Efe as saying.

"The inhuman persecution meted out on the Rohingya population in the Rakhine state of Myanmar and their forceful expulsion from their homeland have created instability in the region and beyond," she added.

The figure raises the number of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh mentioned in the latest report by the United Nation's Inter-Sector Coordination Group on Thursday, by 15,000.

Bangladesh has given shelter to the refugees on humanitarian grounds, said the prime minister, while reiterating the need for Myanmar to take them back at the earliest.

The Rohingya crisis had erupted on August 25, following a series of attacks by Rohingya rebels on multiple government posts in Rakhine, following which the Myanmar army had unleashed a large-scale military offensive in the region.

According to witnesses and nonprofits, the offensive has killed hundreds of civilians and reduced around 300 villages to ashes.

On Saturday, Simon Henshaw, acting assistant secretary of state for the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration to Myanmar and Bangladesh, said Washington will use sanctions to pressure Myanmar to probe alleged human rights violations against the Rohingyas.

Before the latest crisis erupted, at least 300,000 Rohingyas were living in Bangladesh, out of whom only 34,000 have refugee status.

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