

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 22, 2020

H.E. Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, MP  
Foreign Minister of Bangladesh  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Segunbagicha, Dhaka 1000  
Bangladesh

Dear Minister Momen:

We are writing to reiterate our thanks to your government and the Bangladeshi people for generously hosting almost a million Rohingya refugees, particularly in light of the global COVID-19 pandemic. As countries around the world work to contain and combat the spread of the coronavirus, ensuring access to timely, reliable information, especially medical information, is critical for keeping people safe.

We are concerned the internet and phone restrictions in Rohingya refugee camps are hampering efforts to fight the pandemic. We encourage your government to work with humanitarian groups to lift these communications restrictions in the camps, ensuring that information and humanitarian assistance continue to flow unimpeded. With the outbreak rapidly spreading, delays in obtaining information about symptoms or prevention methods risk increasing transmission among refugees, the host community in Cox's Bazar, and aid providers.

Moreover, aid workers and community leaders operating in the camps rely on internet-based communication to coordinate emergency health services and conduct crucial "contact tracing" to reduce the virus's transmission. The internet and telecommunication restrictions have kept aid groups from performing their life-saving services effectively and efficiently. The inability to reliably contact loved ones also adds unnecessary stress for everyone navigating COVID-19 related hardships.

We must all work together in these extraordinary times to take care of each other and those most vulnerable to the virus. Even as we recognize that crimes perpetrated by the Burmese military initiated the Rohingya crisis, we urge your government to restore internet and telecommunications services in Cox's Bazar as soon as possible.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

H.E. Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, MP  
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ELIOT L. ENGEL  
Chairman  
House Foreign Affairs Committee



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ROBERT MENENDEZ  
Ranking Member  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee



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CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY  
United States Senator

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ED MARKEY  
United States Senator



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ANDY LEVIN  
Member of Congress

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AMI BERA  
Member of Congress

CC:  
The Honorable Mohammad Ziauddin  
Ambassador  
> Embassy of Bangladesh  
> 3510 International Drive, NW  
> Washington, DC 20008