

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 17, 2017

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Prime Minister's Office
Old Sangsad Bhaban
Tejgaon, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh

Dear Prime Minister Hasina:

We want to thank you for your strong leadership and compassion in keeping Bangladesh's borders open and providing assistance to more than half a million Rohingya refugees fleeing horrific violence in Burma. Your government's extraordinary generosity in ensuring their safety and shelter is a beacon of hope as the world watches this crisis unfold.

Your remarks before the United Nations General Assembly on September 22, 2017, urging a cessation of the violence in Burma and support for the full implementation of the Kofi Annan Commission report recommendations were especially welcome. In addition, we commend your call, which we join, that a UN fact-finding mission be granted immediate access to Rakhine State, given the credible evidence of grave human rights violations, including gender-based violence. We understand that the challenges for Bangladesh are significant, given the strain from the pre-existing refugee population. We believe though that despite these challenges, Bangladesh has been a shining example for all countries in supporting fleeing civilians in desperate need of aid.

We also commend your government's decision to work with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) to register new arrivals and provide them with biometric identity cards, which will speed efforts to reach those in need of assistance. In the challenging period ahead, we believe it is vital that your government continue its critical work with international agencies, including UNHCR, which should be the lead agency in this effort, as well as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and their non-governmental partners. This will ensure proper coordination of assistance, including building of appropriate shelters, and adequate provision of food and medical care, as well as psychosocial support to address widespread trauma among the population. We would also encourage your government to accelerate granting permission for NGOs to be able to carry out vital and urgent humanitarian assistance.

We thank you for your courageous efforts to protect the most vulnerable individuals fleeing atrocities in Burma. We remain strongly committed to assisting the government of Bangladesh as you face this difficult and complex challenge.

Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Cory Gardner
United States Senator



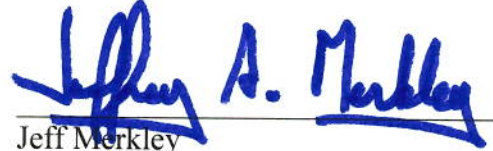
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



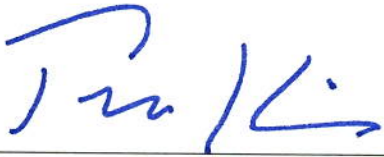
Marco Rubio
United States Senator



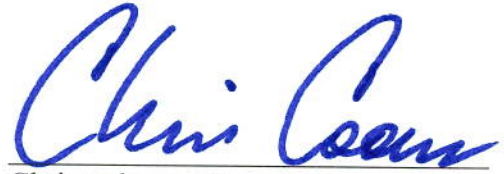
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Jeff Merkley
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator