

The bulletin on the activities of the 'Improving Social Cohesion Project'. The project is being implemented by the COAST Trust in collaboration with UNHCR to improve 'Social Cohesion' among Host and Rohingya Communities at Rajapalong, Palongkhali, Whykong, Hnila unions and respective 8 Rohingya camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

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Village police are working to ensure peaceful coexistence.

COAST Trust in collaboration with UNHCR organized four meetings with village police to raise awareness on human rights and how to maintain peaceful coexistence between host and Rohingya community. In the meeting village police said they would work to ensure peaceful coexistence. Meeting on "Importance of Social Connections and Human Rights Awareness of Rural Police" is one of the important activities under the project "Improving Social Cohesion between Rohingya and host community" implemented by the COAST Trust with the support of UNHCR. It can be said that the members of the village police working to maintain peace and order at the village level and stop any criminal activities. In 2017 Rohingya started to come in Bangladesh as Myanmar force them to come. Since then, Rohingya have been interacting with the host community in the local market, on the roadside, in vehicles and many other ways. Sometimes these are creating a kind of negative attitude towards Rohingya among the host community. The village police expected to play a vital role in curbing such hostile attitudes of the host community and raising awareness about humanity, human rights, importance of social cohesion and peacefulness. To this end, in October 2020, 4 meetings were held with 36 village police from 36 wards of 4 unions in Ukhiya and Teknaf. The meeting was held at the Union Parishad Hall room and was attended by the village police as well as the Union Parishad Chairman, Union Parishad members, OCs, journalists and members of the Social Cohesion Committee.



Zakir Hossain, OC, Whykong Highway Thana delivering speech in a meeting with Village Police at Whykong UP. PC-Younos

Nur Mohammad, village police of Ward 3 in Rajapalong Union, said, "Many people in the village have negative views about the Rohingyas and nowadays it's increasing. We should explain to them that peaceful coexistence between the two sides is unquestionable until repatriation and we will work towards this."



*Nur Mohammed sharing his opinion in the meeting at Raja Palong UP Hall Room
Photo-Julfikar.*

In this meeting with village police various issues like, the attitude of the local people towards the Rohingyas, risks in improving social cohesion between the two communities, the gaps in peaceful coexistence and what needs to be done to address it came up. All participants in the meeting expressed the view that, there is a need for peaceful coexistence and enhanced social cohesion between the two sides until repatriation and said that they would continue to work towards this goal.

Rohingyas need to be made aware of the laws of the country: Jahangir Kabir Chowdhury.

Mr Jahangir Kabir Chowdhury, Chairman, Raja Palong Union Parishad, said, "Rohingyas should be made aware of the laws and regulations of this country to maintain peace and order among the host and Rohingyas until they become repatriated." He made the remarks in an interview with COAST Trust's online radio SAIKAT on October 26 as a part of UNHCR-funded "Improving Social Cohesion among Rohingya and Host community People" project.



Zahangir Kabir Chy, Chairman, Raja Palong UP giving interview to Radio Saikat. COAST Trust. Photo-Hannan.

In the interview, to the question of how do you see the issue of peaceful coexistence and increased social cohesion among Rohingya and host community until repatriation? He said, "In 2017 Rohingya come to Bangladesh who was persecuted by the Myanmar government. The host community showed their humanity by giving them shelter, food and clothes. The host community stood by the first and foremost". He also added, " In 1971 many Bangladeshi took shelter in India as a refugee. But after the war, they had to come back in Bangladesh. These Rohingya also have to go back to their country one day. But as long as they do not return to their homeland, we must work to ensure peaceful coexistence".

All religions speak of Peace and Humanity.

Rohingyas have been living in various camps in Ukha and Teknaf since they come to Bangladesh because of the persecution of the Myanmar government in August 2017. Anti-Rohingya sentiment has created among most of the host community for various reasons. COAST Trust, with the support of UNHCR, is working with the project "Improving Social Cohesion among Rohingya and Host community People" to reduce this hostility from escalating. As part of the project activity, COAST Trust held 18 meetings with the management committee of a total of 14 mosques, 3 Buddhist temples and 1 Hindu temple near the Rohingya camps. The meetings discuss the human rights and the importance of social cohesion in ensuring peaceful coexistence between the Rohingya and the host community until repatriation. Besides, a plan was worked out with each management committee at the meeting. According to the plan, during the Friday sermon imams of the mosques, Buddhist monks and Hindu priests will highlight the importance and necessity of increasing social cohesion to the people who attend in the religious prayer to aware people on peaceful coexistence between the Rohingya and the host community. Many participants in the meeting hoped that this would create awareness among



Sha Alam, Khatib, Unchiprang Central Jamia Masjid. Photo-Md.Younos

the host community about peaceful coexistence and improving social cohesion and reduce the risk of possible conflict between the Rohingya and the host community.



Babu Juti Vhikko, Kuto Palong Nobodhoy Bhuddist Bihar.

"Peace and humanity have been spoken of in all religions," said Babu Juti Langkh, a monk in a meeting with Kutupalong Naboday Buddhist Monastery Management Committee.

He added, "Rohingya have come as persecuted people of Myanmar in this country after being tortured by the Myanmar government." The government of Bangladesh has sheltered them for the sake of humanity, host community people have shown humanity towards them and accepted many sacrifices. But the most important thing is that the Rohingya will have to return to their country one day. We both need to live in peace until they repatriated. We need to understand this for ourselves and others".

Activity target and achievement, October, 2020

Sl	Activity Name	Target	Achievement
1	Meeting with Village Police	4	4
2	Meeting with Mosque, Temple and Pagodda Management Committee	24	18
3	Meeting with Bazar M Committee	8	8
4	UP Standing Committee Interaction Visit	4	1

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