

“Life Through Rohingya Eyes” photo exhibit launched by UNHCR and Liberation War Museum

PLACE

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On the occasion of World Refugee Day, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and the Liberation War Museum (LWM) of Bangladesh inaugurated the photo exhibition “Life Through Rohingya Eyes”. Running for three weeks at the museum’s Dhaka location, the exhibition offers an intimate look at life in the world’s largest refugee camp through the lens of nineteen Rohingya refugee photographers.

Juxtaposed with ten photos from the LWM archives showing the lives and stories of Bangladeshis forced to flee and live as refugees during the Liberation War in 1971, the exhibition also draws an empathetic parallel between the lived experiences of Rohingya today and Bangladeshis half a century earlier.

“These photos are a testament to the resilience of refugees and their hopes for the future”, said Johannes van der Klaauw, the UNHCR Representative in Bangladesh. “We hope this exhibition spotlights not only the crisis faced by the Rohingya, but their unwavering courage and the urgent need for solutions. They deserve sustained political and financial support from the international community. We must urgently step up funding for the response to ensure refugees’ protection and assistance”, he added.

“Zindigi Rohingyaar Sukortú” (the exhibition’s Rohingya title) is the vibrant expression of the Rohingyaatographer collective, a refugee-led project empowering Rohingya creative voices, supported by UNHCR. Curated by Rohingyaatographer founder Sahat Zia Hero, Amena Khatun of the Liberation War Museum and Rohingyaatographer mentor David Palazón, the images capture the immense spirit of this community, from the bustling roads to the majestic mountains that provide a breathtaking backdrop to the camps. Two refugee photographers from the collective attended the inauguration, offering visitors a chance to listen to their stories firsthand. An installation of a Rohingya camp shelter complements the photos, helping to visualize the Rohingya community’s social and natural environment.

“We are honoured to collaborate with UNHCR on this exhibition”, said Liberation War Museum Trustee Sara Zaker. “It allows people to learn about the refugee experience from refugees themselves and visualizes how the memories of Bangladeshis uprooted during the Liberation War inspired the generosity of Bangladeshi people today, who now host nearly one million persecuted Rohingya refugees from neighbouring Myanmar”.

The exhibition will be held until 10 July 2023 at the Temporary Exhibition Hall of the Liberation War Museum.

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