

PLACE

Dhaka

DATE

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Renowned Bangladeshi Cartoonist Tanmoy meets and creates art with refugees on Bhasan Char

Cartoonist Syed Rashad Imam Tanmoy has joined hands with UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and its partner Artolution to support Rohingya refugees through art. Tanmoy gathered the refugee community to share their lives and capture them on a large joint mural on the island of Bhasan Char. Through their paintings, Rohingya refugees shared their needs, hardships, hopes and dreams and captured them in a collection of wall paintings.

“Imagine a group of children who have never held a brush in their life. Now imagine, that they come together to paint a 170 feet long painting!”, said Tanmoy in a delighted voice. “The Rohingya refugees created a beautiful mural which can help them tell their stories, express their identities and work towards inner peace.”

Since October 2021, UNHCR and humanitarian partners have been delivering essential services and critical humanitarian assistance on Bhasan Char, following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Bangladesh, setting the framework of cooperation with the Government for response on the island.

Today, there are over 27,000 Rohingya refugees registered on the island. 80 per cent are women and children. Immediate needs have been identified and are being addressed, including health, protection, nutrition, and water and sanitation.

“The project led by Artolution, and our partner Terre des Hommes seeks to provide refugees with an opportunity to heal through art. The refugees have gone through many hardships and painting allows them to reflect and find inner peace,” said Johannes Van Der Klaauw, UNHCR Representative in Bangladesh. “For me it was amazing to see Tanmoy paint together with the refugees. Tears and joy were shared, and reminded us that regardless of our differences, we share the same human emotions, and art has the power to heal the soul.”

Artolution, a community-based public art education organization, has been creating social change through collaborative art with UNHCR in Bangladesh in 17 Rohingya camps in Cox’s Bazar and with Bangladeshis living in the area. Through art, children and families foster their cultural values, promote resilience, and capture their identity, the trauma of the past, the challenges of the present, and the hopes and aspirations for the future.

UNHCR and the UN agencies in Bangladesh continue work on Bhasan Char to complement government’s effort to provide protection and assistance to relocated refugees. UNHCR remains committed to stand by the Bangladesh government to respond to the needs of the Rohingya population on the island. It calls on the international community to continue their support to the response.

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