Press Release

22 August 2019

The Advance Team of the Independent Commission of Enquiry (ICOE) has visited Dhaka and Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh from 17 to 20 August 2019. The team was co-led by two of the ICOE members namely: Ambassador Kenzo Oshima and Professor Dr Aung Tun Thet. The purpose of the Advance Team visit is to obtain better understanding of the situation on the ground, to prepare the ground work and seek the necessary approvals for the dispatch of ICOE’s Evidence Collection and Verification Team (ECVT) in Cox’s Bazar to interview and collect evidence from those who are residing in the Camps therein.

In Dhaka, ICOE’s Advance Team paid courtesy calls on H.E. Mr. A.K. Abdul Momen, Foreign Minister of Bangladesh as well as Mr. Md. Shahidul Haque, Foreign Secretary. They also met with the Director-Generals of South East Asia Wing, UN Wing and “Rohingya Cell” from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They also discussed with the Additional Secretary of Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and Joint Secretary of Ministry of Home Affairs.

During the courtesy calls and in the meetings with Senior Officials, co-leaders of Advance Team explained the mandate of the ICOE, the work of ECVT to gather and analyse information and evidence crucial for ICOE as a fact-finding mission. They expressed the hope that early approvals will be given by the Bangladesh’s Government.
to the request for ECVT team’s visit as well as the cooperation of the Bangladesh’s Government authorities when that visit takes place.

Bangladesh’s Government has agreed in principle to allow the ICOE’s ECVT to carry out its work in Cox’s Bazar and requested further information and clarification about the ECVT.

In Cox’s Bazar, the Advance Team met with the Commissioner of Refugee, Relief, and Repatriation, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Tourism and Protocol) and Police Superintendent. They also met with the local representatives from UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM respectively.

The Advance Team also conducted a day visit to the Camps in Cox’s Bazar namely: Balukhali, Jamtoli and Kutupalong. The field visits were essential for obtaining a real understanding of the situation on the ground and also for information necessary for the ECVT to make necessary preparations and arrangements.

Advance Team is highly appreciative of the full cooperation received during its visit from the Bangladesh’s Government both in Dhaka and Cox’s Bazar.

Office of the Independent Commission of Enquiry (ICOE)
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22 August 2019