

[Aid agencies face 'life threatening' funding crisis as monsoon rains barrel towards Cox's Bazar camps – UN](#)

The lives of tens of thousands of Rohingya refugees hang in the balance as monsoon and cyclone seasons threaten camps in southern Bangladesh, the United Nations migration agency warned Friday, appealing for urgent financial support to prepare the area against floods and landslides.

Without new funding, tens of thousands of people who poured into the camps, fleeing violence triggered in Myanmar last August will be at risk, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) cautioned.

“We cannot wait for funding to come in after the emergency is over and possibly [preventable tragedies have occurred](#),” said John McCue, IOM’s Senior Operations Coordinator in Cox’s Bazar.

“We need to be able to act now if lives are to be saved,” he added.

Almost a million Rohingya refugees live in the Cox’s Bazar district under tarpaulins, on steep, sandy slopes – 25,000 of whom have been identified as at the highest risk of landslides.

Without aid, numerous will have to remain in these hazardous locations and hundreds of thousands of others will also be at risk if roads become impassible, blocking access to aid supplies and medical services.

“Tarp stocks are also rapidly running out and IOM, which oversees shelter distribution, reports that by mid-May supplies will fall below critical levels,” maintained Mr. McCue, noting that without more funding, neither new shelters nor replacements would be available to those who lost homes during storms.

He also pointed out that other risks included safe water supply systems, which if collapsed could put hundreds of thousands of refugees in jeopardy of waterborne diseases.

Only nine per cent of a \$951million joint agency response plan has been secured. Of that, \$182 million allocated to provide Cox’s Bazar with assistance through December 2018 is facing a shortfall of almost \$151 million.

Aid staff on the ground are working to improve shelters, secure key access roads and have emergency response services ready should the worst happens, “but the harsh truth is that we cannot keep doing that if we do not have the funds,” said Mr. McCue stated.

IOM, the [World Food Programme](#) and the [UN refugee agency](#) are working alongside

the government of Bangladesh and others to manage the scale of the response in Cox's Bazar – the world's biggest refugee settlement.

“If significant funding is not secured in the next few weeks to keep operations running, there is a high likelihood that many children, women and men may die, when they could have otherwise been saved,” concluded Mr. McCue.