

Fresh threats loom over 720,000 Rohingya children 'cast adrift, trapped in limbo' – UNICEF

Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya children are threatened in Bangladesh by approaching severe weather or by ongoing violence in Myanmar in their homeland, the United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) warned on Friday, calling urgently for scaled-up assistance ahead of the region's storm season and to address the root causes of the crisis.

"Some 720,000 Rohingya children are [essentially trapped](#) – either hemmed in by violence and forced displacement inside Myanmar or stranded in overcrowded camps in Bangladesh because they can't return home," Manuel Fontaine, UNICEF Director of Emergency Programmes said Friday.

UNICEF's [report](#), *LIVES IN LIMBO: No End in Sight to the threats facing Rohingya children*, marks six months since the start of the latest exodus of Rohingya refugees into southern Bangladesh.

The agency says that floods caused by the forthcoming cyclone season are likely to engulf the fragile and insanitary camps where most of the refugees are living, raising the likelihood of waterborne disease outbreaks and forcing clinics, learning centres and other facilities for children to close.

The report also estimates that some 185,000 Rohingya children remain in Myanmar's Rakhine state, fearful of the violence and horror that drove so many of their relatives and neighbours to flee.

In Bangladesh, there are estimated to be around 534,000 Rohingya refugee children from last year's and previous influxes.

"This is a crisis without a quick fix that could take years to resolve unless there is a concerted effort to address its root causes," stressed Mr. Fontaine.

The report states that the Rohingya are a people cast adrift – chased from their homes and communities, trapped in limbo and deprived of their basic rights – while facing fresh threats to their well-being.

UNICEF calls on the Myanmar Government to end the violence, and to address what it terms a crisis of human rights in Rakhine state, referring to restrictions on Rohingya people's freedom of movement, extremely limited access to health care, education and livelihoods, and consequent dependence on humanitarian support.

According to the report, recognizing the Rohingya people's basic rights would create conditions necessary for the refugees to return to their former homes in Myanmar.

“People won’t go home unless they are guaranteed safety and security, unless they have citizenship, unless they can send their children to school and have a chance of a future,” Mr. Fontaine explained.

Since August 2017, a lack of access to many parts of the Rakhine state has severely restricted the work of UNICEF and other humanitarian agencies.

Immediate and unimpeded access to all children in the state is imperative – along with longer-term efforts to address intercommunal tension and promote social cohesion, said UNICEF.

Aid efforts led and overseen by the Bangladesh Government have averted disaster as local communities have accommodated 79,000 Rohingyas.