

# Press release: Penny Mordaunt: Extra UK aid gives a future to persecuted Rohingya

On a visit to Cox's Bazar, International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt has announced further UK aid for the Rohingya crisis, as she warns that global funding will start to dry up in 100 days.

Ms Mordaunt pledged that the UK will continue to stand by the Rohingya people and Bangladesh, now and in the future. She met some of the 620,000 innocent men, women and children who have been tragically driven from their homes in Burma and forced to make the treacherous journey to Bangladesh, relying on aid to survive.

Today's announcement of £12 million for the Rohingya crisis is providing urgently needed food now and ensuring more lives are not put at risk when international funding starts to run out in February 2018. This brings the UK's total support to £59 million since 25 August 2017.

She praised the Government of Bangladesh and the local communities for their continued generosity in helping the Rohingya people and also urged other countries to follow the UK's lead by promising longer-term support to avert disaster.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

The persistent persecution of the Rohingya people must stop. It is horrifying that hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women and children have had their homes burnt to the ground, and parents have been forced to helplessly watch as their children die from hunger.

This looks like ethnic cleansing. The Burmese military must end this inhumane violence and guarantee unrestricted humanitarian access so aid can reach those in need in Burma. Any return of families to their homes must be safe, voluntary and dignified.

Global funding to support the Rohingya people will only meet urgent needs for the next 100 days – we cannot turn our backs on those trapped in crisis.

Other countries must follow our lead and do even more to help children overcome the trauma of war, reunite them with their families and give a future to the next generation.

To mark the International Day to Eliminate Violence Against Women and the 16 days of activism, the International Development Secretary is shining a spotlight on the horrifying prevalence of sexual and gender based violence

that Rohingya women and girls have suffered.

During her visit to Bangladesh, Ms Mordaunt heard harrowing stories of brutal abuse and met UK experts delivering life-saving treatment including medical, counselling and psychosocial support to female survivors.

She pledged to help increase protection for Rohingya women and girls against sexual violence and exploitation and announced a separate package of UK aid support (£12 million for multiple countries) that is expected to help around 750,000 women and girls globally over the next three years. Bangladesh could stand to benefit from this.

This will increase access to services such as legal assistance, healthcare for survivors of sexual and gender based violence and help protect women and girls by tackling the root causes of these crimes.

Ms Mordaunt said:

The countless stories of sexual violence I have heard from Rohingya women and girls are truly shocking and the high rates of this crime across the world are a global scandal.

The UK is absolutely determined to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls and we are increasing protection for Rohingya women and girls against sexual violence and exploitation.

We are stepping up our leadership – working closely with women leaders and grassroots charities – to help more survivors in some of the world's poorest countries overcome the traumas of violence.

UK aid is helping to provide:

- Emergency food to 174,000 people
- Lifesaving nutritional support to more than 60,000 children under-five and over 21,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women
- Safe drinking water, emergency latrines and hygiene kits for more than 138,000 people
- Essential items including soap, cooking utensils and water cans for over 131,000 people
- Emergency shelter for over 130,000 people and support to make shelters more resilient to rain and heavy winds for 450,000 people as the cyclone season approaches
- Access to female bathing cubicles and sanitary items for more than 35,000 girls and women
- Counselling and psychological support for over 10,000 women suffering from the trauma of war and over 2,000 survivors of sexual violence
- Medical help for over 50,000 pregnant women to give birth safely.

UK leadership also helped to secure another \$300 million of international support at the landmark Geneva pledging conference on 23 October 2017. This reaches over half of the total funding required to meet urgent humanitarian

needs as set out in the UN appeal. However, the UN appeal only covers the months up to February 2018, and more international pledges are required to meet ongoing desperate need.

## **Notes to Editors:**

1. Today's announcement of UK aid support for the Rohingya crisis includes £8 million of new funding for the Rohingya crisis from DFID's crisis reserve which will help ensure assistance – including helping improve security for women and girls – is sustained after the months covered by the UN appeal, and £4 million for the World Food Programme that has been allocated from DFID Bangladesh's existing budget and is already being used to provide food.
2. DFID will also provide up to £12 million over three years (December 2017 – December 2020) to the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women (UNTF), as announced on Saturday 25 November 2017. This will support local, national, regional and cross-border efforts to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against women and girls in all contexts, including sexual violence in conflict areas. In 2016 around 250,000 women and girls benefitted directly from the Trust Fund's work.
3. The UK is also leading the charge to reform the humanitarian system, to ensure the international community responds efficiently and effectively to crises, pooling resources together rather than competing and working in isolation.
4. The events in Rakhine look like ethnic cleansing. The Burmese authorities need to stop the violence and ensure immediate access into northern Rakhine so that UK aid can provide a lifeline to those still suffering in Rakhine State. Unacceptable intimidation and restrictions on the movement of humanitarian workers must be ended. Burma must work with international partners to put in place the conditions that will allow people to return to their homes safely, with dignity and hope for the future.
5. Recognising the unprecedented scale of the crisis in Bangladesh and Burma, the UK has been a leader in responding – in speed and size – providing an additional £59 million since August 2017 to help meet the urgent humanitarian needs of innocent men, women and children who have been forced to flee the relentless violence and atrocities in Burma, and make the treacherous journey to Bangladesh to seek refuge.
6. This includes the UK Government matching pound for pound £5 million raised by the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Appeal for people fleeing the violence and destruction in Burma, doubling the impact of the public's own donations and ensuring that charities working on the ground can reach even more people in need.