

Press release: Priti Patel will double the next £2 million of public donations to the Disasters Emergency Committee appeal for people fleeing Burma

In response to the staggering public support for the [Disasters Emergency Committee \(DEC\) Appeal](#) for people fleeing the violence and destruction in Burma, the UK Government will match pound for pound the next £2 million raised, the International Development Secretary Priti Patel announced during a visit to the DEC today (Thursday 12 October).

This is in addition to the £3 million in public donations already matched by the UK, which has helped Britain raise £9 million.

The new support will double the impact of the public's own donations and ensure that charities working on the ground can reach even more 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.

Moved by the scale of the crisis and the generosity of the British public, Ms Patel visited the DEC headquarters today where she met with British aid workers who have recently returned from Cox's Bazar where they have been helping to save the lives of Rohingya victims of persecution and brutality.

International Development Secretary, Priti Patel said:

The generosity of the British public and the speed in which they have responded to this appeal is overwhelming. Every penny raised is making a significant difference for victims of the ethnic cleansing being inflicted by the Burmese military.

The UK Government is working at every level to ensure that lifesaving aid reaches those in dire need right now. Thousands of shelter kits, sleeping mats and thermal blankets have already been distributed in Cox's Bazar and more aid is on the way to support the half a million people forced to leave everything behind in Burma and make the perilous journey to Bangladesh.

The British public has played a remarkable role and they should know that their donations are saving lives. Malnourished children on the brink of death will now be able to eat, families who have been forced to live out in the open after their villages were burned will get shelter and much needed clean drinking water will

be provided to help stop the spread of disease.

It has been a privilege to meet brave British aid workers who have returned from Cox's Bazar, supporting innocent people who are grieving the loss of loved ones and are uncertain what their futures hold.

The humanity they and the British public have shown is a stark contrast to the inhumanity of the Burmese authorities. They need to stop the inhumane violence, allow people to return to their homes safely and ensure immediate access into northern Rakhine so that UK aid can provide a lifeline to those suffering.

This brings the UK's contribution to £5 million over the course of the DEC appeal and will provide vital and life-saving emergency supplies. Today's new support is on top of support that the UK is already providing to people who are in desperate need of food, water and shelter.

Notes to editors

- The DEC brings 13 leading UK aid charities together in times of crisis: ActionAid, Age International, British Red Cross, CAFOD, CARE International, Christian Aid, Concern Worldwide, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Oxfam, Plan International UK, Save the Children, Tearfund and World Vision; all collectively raising money to reach those in need quickly.
- As of Wednesday 11 October, £9 million has been raised of which £3 million has been aid matched by the UK Government. DFID aid matches public donations from British taxpayers, but others can contribute including non-British taxpayers and businesses.
- The UK is appalled by the violence taking place in Rakhine State, particularly by the hundreds of thousands of people fleeing that violence and the reports of grave human rights violations taking place. Britain urgently calls upon the Burmese military to end the violence in Rakhine and the Government of Burma to allow immediate and full humanitarian access and support for the people and communities affected.
- As of Sunday 8 October, 519,000 people have fled the violence into neighbouring Bangladesh as a result of Burmese military and militia violence. This looks like ethnic cleansing; we need to see these people able to return to their homes in Burma safely. The Burmese and Bangladeshi authorities are discussing a refugee return process. But we will need to see this agreed and implemented and the Burmese authorities need to show the Rohingya will be safe when they return.
- The UK has been a leader in responding to the crisis – in speed and size – to help meet the urgent humanitarian needs of vulnerable men, women and children in both Bangladesh and Burma.
- Prior to the latest violence which began on Friday, 25 August 2017, we committed £5.9 million to meet the needs of the most vulnerable refugees and the host communities who support them. In response to the latest influx we have provided a further £30 million of humanitarian support.
- Our existing work in the region meant that we were already in position

to provide life-saving support when the crisis flared – without this, aid would have taken much longer to reach those in need. And we are sending more aid to Bangladesh.

- Through our partner, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) 10,000 shelter kits, 10,500 mats and 20,000 blankets were distributed recently. Emergency shelter for up to 26,355 people has already been provided since the first refugees made their way to Bangladesh.
- In Rakhine State in Burma, aid workers have been getting British-funded humanitarian assistance to many tens of thousands of people. DFID's partners are ready to provide emergency food to 30,000 people and to treat more than 3,000 severely malnourished children and pregnant women, but the Burmese authorities must stop refusing to grant access.

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