

Press release: UK announces additional aid for victims of Burma violence

Recognising the unprecedented scale of the crisis in Bangladesh and Burma, Britain is providing an additional £25million to meet the urgent needs in both countries of those affected by the violence.

In Bangladesh, where the majority of the funding will be spent, this will allow us to scale up the critical life-saving assistance that we are already providing – such as food, shelter, water and sanitation – to a greater number of those who have already fled.

In Burma, we stand ready to provide life-saving assistance to those affected in Rakhine State. Improvements in access are urgently needed to allow us to reach those in desperate need.

International Development Secretary Priti Patel has strongly reiterated her call for the violence to stop. She said:

For the second time in a little under a year, the eyes of the world are once again fixed on Burma. I am appalled by the allegations of gross human rights violations against large numbers of Rohingya, including reports of the Burmese military and local militia forcing hundreds of thousands of men, women and children from their homes and villages being burnt.

Latest estimates are that a staggering 370,000 Rohingyas have fled Burma in just over two weeks to seek refuge in Bangladesh, carrying nothing more than a handful of possessions. Innocent people have drowned crossing the border. As each day goes by thousands more pour across the border having left behind their homes, livelihoods and loved ones, uncertain of what their futures hold.

Simply put, the Burmese military must put a stop to the attacks on the Rohingya. Urgently needed humanitarian assistance must be allowed to get to those in need at a far greater scale than has so far been permitted.

Unacceptable intimidation and restrictions on the movement of humanitarian workers must be ended. We also call on the Burmese Government to protect the rights and freedoms that must apply to all people in Burma.

The UK is at the forefront of responding to the plight of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. As a world leader in humanitarian crises, this is what we do best. The issue is a complex one, but the UK has not shied away from its responsibility and we are working hard to provide thousands of displaced men, women and children with the basic essentials like food, shelter and water to

stay alive.

Notes to editors

- In a statement on 8 September, we announced an additional £5m to meet the humanitarian needs of vulnerable Rohingya who have fled into Bangladesh. This is in addition to £5.9m that we had programmed before the latest influx, reaching over 55,000 people. People now arriving in Bangladesh are hungry, injured and highly vulnerable – the majority are women and children. Monsoon rains are ongoing and many people are out in the open.
- UK assistance in Bangladesh will continue to focus on the critical needs of the most vulnerable among new arrivals, and among existing refugees and host communities. We will work inside and outside camps providing lifesaving assistance, including emergency shelter, food and nutrition assistance and safe water and sanitation. Protection activities will be central. This will include safe spaces and support for children, care for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence and dignity kits for women and girls. We will be working closely with our partners on the ground to ensure the specific needs and vulnerabilities of children, women and girls, people living with disabilities and older persons are addressed in all the support we provide. We will continue to invest in strengthening coordination of the whole relief effort, not just our own assistance.
- In Burma, aid workers have been getting British-funded humanitarian assistance to more than 80,000 people in parts of Rakhine State. In the areas affected by the violence, DFID's partners are ready to provide emergency food to a further 30,000 people and to treat more than 3,000 severely malnourished children and pregnant women but have no access. We could provide significantly more assistance but have no current means of doing so.
- In a statement issued on 8 September, the Secretary of State condemned the appalling violence in and called upon the security forces to de-escalate the situation in Rakhine.
- It is important that the recommendations from the Rakhine Advisory Commission are implemented, and we welcome the Burmese Government's appointment of an Implementation Committee on 12 September.