

Press release: UK government doubles public donations to the Disasters Emergency Committee appeal for people fleeing Burma

PHOTOS: [UK aid reaching those who have fled the violence to Bangladesh](#)

The UK Government today (Wednesday, 4 October) pledges extra help for the victims of the Burmese military's atrocities by doubling donations made by the British public to the cause.

In the last month alone, more than half a million men, women and children from the country have fled their homeland and made the perilous journey to neighbouring Bangladesh to seek refuge.

The UK Government was quick to recognise the unprecedented scale of the crisis in Burma and the impact it's having on Bangladesh, and has already given £30 million to provide lifesaving food, water, shelter and healthcare to victims of the violence.

Britain continues to take a leading role in responding to the crisis as the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) today launches its emergency appeal for people fleeing Burma.

The UK will double all donations up to £3 million, meaning even more aid is available for those in need.

International Development Secretary Priti Patel said:

I am appalled that more than half a million Rohingya have been forced to flee their homes because of the horrific violence in Burma.

Those who escaped, carrying little or nothing, have had to make the treacherous journey across the border into Bangladesh to seek safety, with countless people dying or losing loved ones.

The relentless denial of aid is a matter of life and death for those still in northern Rakhine. It is utterly intolerable that the military who are responsible for this inhumane catastrophe have not heeded calls for restraint, and pleas to allow those who are now refugees to return safely to their homes.

In this time of crisis, the UK will do everything it possibly can to help and is leading the way internationally to save the victims of this tragedy, who are in desperate need of food, water, shelter and healthcare.

By matching pound for pound public donations to the DEC Appeal, we will double the impact British people can have in helping those who are displaced in Bangladesh or who remain in Burma.

UK taxpayers' money is already making a significant difference to those who have been displaced and the announcement of the DEC appeal will allow more people to receive aid.

The distribution of further lifesaving aid in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh began yesterday (Tuesday, 3 October). Through our partner, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) 10,000 shelter kits, 10,500 mats and 20,000 blankets will be distributed throughout this week. Emergency shelter for up to 26,355 people has already been provided since the first refugees made their way to Bangladesh.

Food for 65,000 of the most vulnerable victims and healthcare for 50,000 people has already been provided through other partners and we are also supporting 7,500 children, many of whom have suffered traumatic ordeals and are at risk of sexual violence and trafficking.

For every £5 the British public donates this could provide a family with clean water for a week, £100 could provide two families with food for a month and £30 could provide emergency shelter for a family, and with the UK Government's further support the impact on the ground will be doubled.

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.

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.

As of Monday, 2 October 507,000 people have fled the violence into neighbouring Bangladesh. Numbers are rising.

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 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.

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.

This lack of access on the Burma side means vital needs will not be met and lives lost. 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.

We have raised the situation in three UN Security Council meetings and led work in the Council to develop an international response. The Foreign Secretary also held a Ministerial meeting of General Assembly members at the UN General Assembly on 18 September to drive this process forward.

Mark Field, Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, visited Burma, including Rakhine State from Monday, 25 – Wednesday, 27 September. He held talks in Burma with State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi to press for an urgent resolution to the crisis in Rakhine.

On Thursday, 28 September Minister Burt and Minister Field hosted a series of high-level talks in Dhaka, Bangladesh with key Government officials and aid agencies to identify how best to provide lifesaving support to the large influx of refugees in Bangladesh.

Britain is ready to support the recommendations of the Kofi Annan led Rakhine Advisory Commission to assist the long-term development of all people in Rakhine state, but right now the immediate action is for the security forces to end the violence and the government of Burma to allow humanitarian access.