

Regulator finds 'trustees placed charitable funds at risk', as it announces inquiry into fund for Rohingya refugees

The Charity Commission has opened a statutory inquiry into a charitable fund for Rohingya refugees, which never registered as a charity, after concerns about how it was operating.

The inquiry was launched in April 2018, after the Commission received information from a partner agency about their separate investigation into the fund's two trustees Mohammed Hasnath and Ruksana Ali. The inquiry could not be announced until now due to the risk of prejudicing that investigation, which the Commission has been informed has now ended.

The fund raised money between July 2017 and March 2018 for the prevention and relief of poverty of Rohingya refugees, via two online donation platforms and through social media.

The fund is not a registered charity but, as it raised money for charitable purposes, it falls within the Commission's jurisdiction.

The Commission has acted to safeguard the fund by making an order under section 76(3)(d) of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act') to freeze a number of bank accounts holding the charitable funds.

The trustees are also ordered under section 76(3)(f) of the Act from undertaking specified transactions in the administration of the fund without prior written approval from the Commission.

The inquiry is examining:

- whether the trustees have properly exercised their legal duties and responsibilities under charity law in the administration, governance and management of the fund;
- whether the trustees have put charitable funds at risk by using them for non-charitable purposes;
- whether the trustees can adequately account for the end use of the charitable funds which have already been applied;
- the conduct of the trustees; and
- the optimal way to apply the protected charitable funds to support the Rohingya refugees who are the intended beneficiaries.

Advice from the Commission on how to donate safely to charities delivering humanitarian aid to people fleeing Myanmar is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were

undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. Reports of previous inquiries by the Commission are available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Ends

Notes to Editors

- While the Commission has been working closely with partner agencies throughout the inquiry, the Commission's case is separate from any other investigation.
- The Commission does not investigate criminal allegations; these should be reported to the police.
- The opening an inquiry is not in itself a finding of wrongdoing.