

Rohingya refugees drown as boat capsizes in rough waters off coast of Bangladesh – UN

31 October 2017 – At least four Rohingyas fleeing unrest in Myanmar drowned when a small fishing boat capsized in rough seas off the Bangladesh coast, the United Nations reported Tuesday, also warning that with thousands of refugees still heading to Cox's Bazar every day, sprawling makeshift camps there are now dangerously congested and overcrowded.

UNHCR [the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees] staff and our partners [rushed to the scene](#) to provide medical support, food, blankets and clothes to the survivors, spokesperson Babar Baloch told reporters at the regular press briefing in Geneva.

According to survivors, six families – 42 people in total, many of them women and children – left on a fishing boat from Gozon Dia south of Maungdaw town in Myanmar's northern Rakhine state around 2 am Tuesday morning. They ran into rough seas and approached shore in the Imamerdail area of Ukhia sub-district in Bangladesh around 8.30 am local time when they ran into rough seas.

A 15-year-old boy died on the spot and 22 were injured, several when they hit the engine. Three were reported to have died *en route* to hospital, Mr. Baloch reported, adding that the remaining 19 injured were taken to UNHCR's transit centre near Kutupalong camp. "We will ensure that families are not separated in the course of the medical treatment."

Meanwhile, the UN International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that although the number of new arrivals is now slowing, people continue to arrive in the makeshift settlements of Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar every day, bringing the total Rohingya population of the district to over 820,000.

The settlements are [dangerously congested and overcrowded](#) and the pressure on sources of clean drinking water and basic sanitation are enormous. Having walked for days without water and food, the refugees arrive to the settlements exhausted and thirsty. Many are ill, IOM stated.

"All of the spontaneous and makeshift sites where the Rohingyas have sought shelter are in urgent need of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) support to prevent diseases and to restore basic human dignity," explained IOM WASH expert Antonio Torres. "Existing [sanitation and hygiene] facilities are not yet sufficient to cope with this number of people," he noted.

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IOM is providing vital relevant services to both the Rohingya and the communities hosting them, while scaling up its work to meet the needs of new arrivals. Since early September, the agency has, among others, constructed around 785 latrines for the refugees. It has also constructed 14 wells with hand pumps providing over 14,000 people with clean drinking water.