

Surge in number of civilians fleeing Myanmar's Rakhine for Bangladesh – UN agencies

5 September 2017 – More than 123,000 people from Myanmar's Rakhine state have fled to Bangladesh since the latest outbreak of violence, the United Nations migration agency today announced seeking \$18 million to urgently help the refugees.

“Clear signs that more will cross into Bangladesh from Myanmar before situation stabilizes,” said the Director of Operations and Emergencies at the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Mohammed Abdiker, on [Twitter](#). “Without more international support, suffering will continue.”

Thousands of people are arriving daily in south-eastern Bangladesh, living in makeshift sites and seeking any space for shelter.

“We are running out of space in the existing settlements and new arrivals are pitching camp wherever they can erect some plastic sheeting to protect themselves from the elements,” said Sarat Dash, IOM Bangladesh Chief of Mission.

“The new arrivals are putting immense strain on the existing support structures. These need to be immediately scaled up to ensure lives are not put at risk,” he cautioned.

With reports of ongoing violence, UN agencies today expressed grave concern about the situation, including reports that some civilians are dying enroute to safety.

“Those who have made it to Bangladesh are in poor condition. Most have walked for days from their villages hiding in jungles, crossing mountains and rivers with what they could salvage from their homes. They are hungry, weak and sick,” a spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Duniya Aslam Khan, [told](#) journalists in Geneva.

Two of the shelter sites Kutupalong and Nayapara camps are at “breaking point,” Ms. Khan said. New arrivals are hosted by refugee families and in refugee schools, community centres, madrassas and covered structures.

“We are running out of available space,” she stressed.

‘I just knew to run to save my life’

IOM and partners today appealed for \$18 million to aid the fleeing civilians over the next three months. The support would go for people like Rohingya Dilara, who reached Bangladesh barefoot, clutching her 18-month son.

My husband was shot in the village. I escaped with my son and in-laws, she [told](#) UNHCR. We walked for three days, hiding when we had to. The mountain was wet and slippery and I kept falling.

Dilara followed other villagers into the Kutupalong camp, which was established in the 1990s along with neighbouring Nayapara camp, and already had a population of some 30,000 people. UNHCR estimates that 20,000 civilians arrived since 25 August, when the fighting in Myanmar flared up.

I don't know where I am ... I just knew to run to save my life, Dilara said.