



European
Commission

European Civil Protection
and Humanitarian Aid Operations

Bangladesh



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FACTS & FIGURES

Number of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar:
Close to **900 000**

EU humanitarian funding:
€17 million in 2017
€163.8 million since 2017

Introduction

Bangladesh is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, exposed to a variety of natural hazards including cyclones, floods and earthquakes. Its high population density (1,252 people per square kilometres in 2016) exacerbates the impact of disasters. Continuing population growth and environmental degradation may further aggravate the intensity of disasters in the future, contributing to a significant increase in humanitarian needs; malnutrition is also a major concern. Bangladesh is also the setting of two crises: the Rohingya refugees in the southeast and the marginalised ethnic minorities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

What are the needs?

Bangladesh ranked sixth amongst the world's top 10 countries most affected by extreme weather events between 1996 and 2015. Being mostly low-lying and in the confluence of two large Asian rivers (the Ganges and the Brahmaputra), much of the country is prone to seasonal flooding and vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The south-western region, particularly Satkhira district, has witnessed recurring cycles of waterlogging while flooding and saline intrusion have also affected food security and livelihoods.

The country is also host to one of the most intractable refugee crises in the world: the [Rohingya crisis](#). This ethnic, religious and linguistic minority is subject to exclusion and discrimination in their home country [Myanmar/Burma](#), resulting in many of them seeking refuge in neighbouring Bangladesh for the last 30 years. Following major outbreaks of violent incidents in northern parts of Rakhine state in October 2016 and August 2017, almost 700 000 Rohingyas have fled across the border into Bangladesh in search of protection and assistance. The sudden and drastic surge in the number of Rohingya arrivals has put a tremendous strain on existing humanitarian services. The vast majority have not been granted refugee status and are referred to as “undocumented Myanmar nationals” by the government of Bangladesh. Without legal status they are unable to pursue education or formal employment and remain vulnerable to exploitation and serious protection risks. It is estimated more than 900 000 unregistered Rohingyas are currently living in Bangladesh.

How are we helping?

The European Commission's humanitarian aid department has been working in Bangladesh since 2002, both in disaster preparedness and emergency response activities. It continues to fund emergency assistance for people affected by floods and cyclones, and remains committed to providing basic life-saving support to hundreds of thousands of unregistered Rohingya refugees living in the Kutupalong makeshift camp, Leda site, Shamlapur village, Balukhali settlement and the other spontaneous settlements that have developed after the massive influx of new refugees from August 2017.

In 2017, the European Commission has provided €17million to address humanitarian needs as well as to support disaster risk reduction and resilience building in Bangladesh, bringing its total funding since 2007 to €162.6 million. Of this amount, €8 million have been allocated to respond to the newest influx of people since September 2017. This includes basic humanitarian assistance for Rohingya populations, both those who have been living in displacement in Bangladesh for many years and those newly arrived, and host communities living close to the refugee settlements. They receive health care, water and sanitation facilities, nutrition support, and protection services. In response to the ongoing large waves of Rohingya arrivals which started since 25 August following a new cycle of violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state, the Commission immediately allocated an additional €3 million to enable its humanitarian partners to scale up their operations.

In late May, when Tropical Cyclone Mora ripped through parts of Bangladesh and affected nearly three million people, the Commission provided €1 million help the most affected families. The aid focuses on the delivery of water and sanitation assistance and the promotion of good hygiene practices. Cash grants are also provided to allow disaster-impacted people to restore their normal livelihoods.

Disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction, and resilience programming remain key priority areas for the EU in Bangladesh. In this context, partners continue supporting the government in the roll-out and implementation of its Standing Order on Disasters and Disaster Management Act at the community level. This includes supporting locally identified initiatives such as the building of flood-resistant infrastructure and early warning systems, as well as school based disaster preparedness. Together with its partners, the EU is trying to go a step further by ensuring that peoples' livelihoods are more resistant to natural disasters, thereby reducing their level of vulnerability to shocks and stresses. Since 2001, the EU has contributed over €23 million to disaster risk reduction and resilience building activities, including €3 million for 2017.

