



New Zealand NGOs come together to respond to humanitarian crisis in Bangladesh and Myanmar

22nd November 2017

New Zealand's aid agencies and the government are coming together to respond to the world's fastest-developing refugee emergency on the Myanmar border of Bangladesh.

“We welcome the announcement from Foreign Minister Winston Peters that the New Zealand government will contribute a further \$2.5 million for humanitarian assistance in help of Rohingya refugees seeking safety in Bangladesh,” **says Mark Mitchell, Chair of the Council for International Development’s humanitarian network, the NDRF.**

More than 600 thousand people have fled conflict in Myanmar in the last three months, most arriving in neighbouring Bangladesh urgently needing help with the basics for survival. There are thousands of new arrivals in Bangladesh **every day, and the United Nations Refugee Agency’s (UNHCR) two refugee camps in Bangladesh are now completely overcrowded.** Many other informal camps are being established, none have sufficient basic services such as water and sanitation and the impact on the surrounding environment is unsustainable. The lack of safe shelter in the increasingly crowded conditions leads to risks of abuse or violence, especially towards women and girls and persons with disabilities.

The Government is working with New Zealand NGOs and will match dollar for dollar, up to \$1 million for funds raised from the New Zealand public to help people affected by this crisis.

“New Zealanders wanting to help are urged to donate to any of our NGOs active in the region, listed below. While the refugees wait to see if they can return safely to their homes, we need to ensure their basic needs are met. This includes 4.5 million litres of clean water, and 4 million food rations to the camps, as well as shelter and protection,” says Mark Mitchell.

Earlier this year New Zealand’s international NGOs came together to raise funds for the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan. The public’s generosity exceeded expectations, and in response the government increased its funding for the emergency.

“We are coming together again to help the hundreds of thousands of refugees who have fled Myanmar. The root causes of this crisis must be addressed and we encourage the New Zealand government to use its voice and relationships to protect the hundreds of thousands of men, women and children affected. This includes advocating that all people are treated in accordance with international humanitarian and human rights law, and durable solutions for refugees are found to enable them to rebuild their lives in **dignity.**”



The Council for International Development (CID) is the peak body for New Zealand's international development and humanitarian aid sector. The NGO Disaster Relief Forum is the humanitarian network within CID

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New Zealand international NGOs active in the region include:

Visit our infographics link at <http://www.cid.org.nz/assets/NDRF-Bangladesh-snapshot-Nov2017.pdf>

Background

- Over 621,000 refugees have fled to Bangladesh since 25 August 2017.
- Families arrive traumatised, exhausted and hungry. Most have walked for days through jungles and across mountains, rivers and vast rice fields to reach safety.
- **Many families have experienced trauma and lost members, which has unsettled the family's structure.** Around 19% are female-headed households, and the number of separated or unaccompanied children is growing. Children represent more than half of the Rohingya refugees.
- New arrivals are now living outside the camps, in makeshift settlements and temporary shelters – often nothing more than tarpaulin held on bamboo poles.

