



ROHINGYA CRISIS

HUMANITARIAN ADVOCACY UPDATE

LAST UPDATED 26 AUGUST 2026

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Milestone:** The Rohingya crisis entered its tenth year on 25 August, marking nearly a decade of mass displacement with no durable solution in sight.
- **Displacement:** Nearly 1.2 million Rohingya refugees remain in Bangladesh, where many continue to face restrictions on education and livelihood opportunities amid declining international funding (see page 2).
- **Myanmar:** Around 500,000 Rohingya remain inside Myanmar, caught in ongoing conflict and facing serious protection risks (see page 2).
- **Our response:** In 2026, Islamic Relief reached more than 150,000 Rohingya refugees with shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) support, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), food assistance and other essential services (see page 7).
- **Earthquake recovery:** We supported communities in Myanmar affected by a major 2025 earthquake through shelter repairs, livelihood recovery assistance and Ramadan food distributions (see page 4).
- **Advocacy:** Islamic Relief calls for greater refugee protection, sustainable humanitarian funding, accountability, and ensuring any future return of Rohingya refugees is safe, voluntary and dignified (see page 3).

1.1M+

Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh

4M+

Internally Displaced People in Myanmar

500,000

Rohingya remain in Myanmar

77%

IDP & refugees are women & children

50%+

of refugees are children under 18

45%

lack adequate nutrition

ISLAMIC RELIEF IN BANGLADESH AND MYANMAR

Programme reach:

Bangladesh: Islamic Relief Bangladesh manages all activities through its own offices.

1. **Programme Office, Cox's Bazar:** Leads the Humanitarian Crisis Response Programme (HCRP), and coordinates all the projects in Bangladesh.
2. **Field Office, Ukhiya:** Manages operations in Camps 2E, 2W, 3, 4, and 7, delivering shelter, WASH, protection, and seasonal assistance while carrying out monitoring, community engagement, and coordination with local partners.
3. **Field Office, Bhasan Char:** Delivers WASH, LPG, food security, livelihoods, and education programmes, while managing logistics and coordination with camp authorities and sector partners. The office also manages logistics, warehousing, and coordination with the Camp-in-Charge (CiC), RRRC, and sector partners.

Myanmar: Islamic Relief Myanmar works through our local partner Phyu Sin Saydanar Action Group (PSSAG) in Amarapura Township, Mandalay Region.



HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

Since fleeing violence in 2017, around 1.2 million Rohingya refugees have remained in Bangladesh, most in crowded camps near Cox's Bazar. Most depend on aid to survive. Funding shortfalls have increased hardship and pushed some to take dangerous sea journeys in search of a better future. In 2025, nearly 900 Rohingya refugees were reported missing or dead while crossing the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

Funding shortages

Funding shortfalls hit the most vulnerable people hardest, particularly women and girls, older people, and people with disabilities. Despite rising humanitarian needs, the 2026 appeal is 26% lower than last year's funding request.

By August 2026, only 49.1% of the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis Joint Response Plan and only 18% of Myanmar funding had been funded, leaving critical gaps in humanitarian assistance and putting essential services at risk. Since 2024, about 150,000 new arrivals have entered the camps. Many still lack decent shelter and basic items, including clean cooking fuel.

The fragility of Rohingya shelters

In Bangladesh, Rohingya refugees live across 33 crowded camps in Cox's Bazar, while around 35,000 people live on Bhasan Char island. Most families face harsh and uncertain conditions. About 97% live in emergency shelters made of bamboo, tarpaulin, and other temporary materials. Fewer than 1% live in durable shelters. For many families, little more than a plastic sheet stands between them and the next storm.

Bangladesh remains highly exposed to climate-related hazards. Each year, the monsoon season brings heavy rain and strong winds between June and October. In July 2026, exceptionally heavy rainfall caused severe flooding and landslides across Cox's Bazar and other districts. Since 5 July, Cox's Bazar recorded more than 800 millimetres of rain, causing widespread damage to shelters, roads, water and sanitation facilities, retaining walls, and other critical infrastructure. The impact was felt across all 33 refugee camps and surrounding host communities. By 12 July, more than 182,000 people had been affected, with 30 reported deaths and 39 injuries. The camps face constant threats from fire, floods, landslides, cyclones, and disease. Although most households now use LPG for cooking, nearly one in four still relies on firewood, increasing the risk of fires such as the devastating blaze that swept through the camps in 2023.

Across the border in Rakhine State, Myanmar, humanitarian needs remain severe. Many internally displaced people (IDPs) and host communities live in damaged shelters that offer little protection from extreme weather.

Requests for assistance continue, but humanitarian access remains heavily constrained by insecurity and funding shortages. The operating environment is further complicated by frequent electricity outages, volatile fuel prices, high inflation, banking restrictions, and ongoing market instability, all of which increase operational costs and disrupt the supply of essential goods. Social tensions remain high amid continued displacement and economic hardship. Although local partners remain ready to respond, cash-based programming and other humanitarian activities face significant operational and regulatory constraints, particularly in Rakhine State.

Rohingya refugees

Nearly a decade after the 2017 crisis, safe, voluntary, and dignified return to Myanmar remains out of reach due to ongoing instability and the lack of guarantees for security, rights, and citizenship. With few prospects in either Myanmar or Bangladesh, many Rohingya continue to undertake dangerous sea journeys. In 2025, more than 6,500 refugees attempted maritime crossings and around 900 were reported dead, with women and children making up most of those travelling. Reports of further boat tragedies, alongside detention and limited support for survivors, highlight the severe protection risks facing refugees. These dangers are compounded by funding shortfalls that continue to undermine essential humanitarian services and durable solutions.

Protection concerns extend beyond the camps and sea crossings. Rohingya refugees rescued at sea, including children, have reportedly faced detention and the risk of forced return to Myanmar, and limited access to legal, medical, and psychosocial support despite experiencing severe trauma and loss. More than 235,000 refugee children (ages 5 to 17) were out of school, increasing their exposure to child labour, child marriage, trafficking, and other protection risks.

At the same time, humanitarian organisations are struggling to respond because of significant funding shortfalls that have reduced the scale and reach of essential services.

OUR ASKS

To the international community

1. Address the root causes of the crisis: The Rohingya need more than aid alone. They need justice, citizenship, safety, and equal rights in Myanmar. For decades, the international response has focused on humanitarian relief while failing to address the policies that drove their displacement. Any pathway to return must guarantee safety, citizenship, freedom of movement, political rights and the right to self-determination. States should press Myanmar to repeal or amend the 1982 Citizenship Law and end the discrimination that underpins the crisis.

2. Sustain funding and share responsibility: The Rohingya crisis remains one of the world's largest and longest displacement crises. Donors should provide predictable, multi-year funding to support refugees and host communities, prevent cuts to essential services, and help Bangladesh manage the long-term impact of displacement. Bangladesh should not bear this responsibility alone.

3. Maintain pressure for justice and accountability: The international community should build on the momentum of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) proceedings in 2026 and support efforts to secure justice for the Rohingya.^[1] States should uphold international law, support accountability mechanisms, and use diplomatic and economic leverage to end persecution, discrimination, and violence in Myanmar. They should also support measures to prevent trafficking and address the conditions that increase vulnerability, including statelessness and restrictions on basic rights.

4. Protect Rohingya refugees across the region:

Governments should ensure that Rohingya refugees are treated with dignity, protected from discrimination and abuse, and given access to protection and assistance in line with international human rights and refugee standards. Every preventable death at sea is a failure of protection. No one should have to choose between remaining in desperate conditions and risking death at sea. These perilous journeys are a consequence of prolonged displacement, statelessness, and the absence of durable solutions.

To the Government of Bangladesh

1. Protect rights and expand opportunities: Bangladesh should continue to uphold the principle of non-refoulement and ensure that no Rohingya refugee is returned to Myanmar unless conditions allow for safe, voluntary, and dignified return. Greater access to education, skills training, livelihoods, and mobility is also needed to reduce aid dependency and vulnerability to exploitation, trafficking, and recruitment by armed groups.

2. Sustain humanitarian support and refugee participation: We call on the Government of Bangladesh, donors, UN agencies, and regional partners to maintain humanitarian assistance, strengthen protection services, expand refugee participation in decisions that affect them, and invest in resilient infrastructure and shelter in the camps.

3. Support conditions for future return: As conditions in Rakhine State evolve, Bangladesh and relevant stakeholders should engage all relevant actors to improve humanitarian access, protect civilians, and support the conditions needed for safe and voluntary repatriation.

To the Government of Myanmar

1. Comply with the ICJ's provisional measures and end discrimination against the Rohingya: Myanmar must fulfil its obligations under the Genocide Convention and cooperate with international accountability efforts. Myanmar must end policies that deny Rohingya citizenship, freedom of movement, access to services, and equal protection under the law, including reform of the 1982 Citizenship Law.

2. Ensure humanitarian access and civilian protection: Myanmar authorities and all parties exercising control in Rakhine State should allow safe, sustained, and principled humanitarian access to Rohingya communities. Restrictions on movement, services, and livelihoods have left many families without adequate food, healthcare, shelter, water, and protection.

[1] In December 2019, the ICJ heard The Gambia's case on protecting the Rohingya. In January 2020, it ordered Myanmar to prevent genocidal acts, with merits hearings held in January 2026.

ISLAMIC RELIEF PROGRAMMES AT A GLANCE

Capacity: Islamic Relief Bangladesh has grown from an emergency response actor into a leading provider of integrated humanitarian and resilience programmes for Rohingya refugees and vulnerable host communities.

Through its Humanitarian Crisis Response Programme (HCRP) and a USD 12.9 million Joint Response Plan (JRP) partnership (2023-2026), Islamic Relief Bangladesh reached more than 150,000 refugees across 33 camps between January and July 2026. With a strong presence in both Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char, Islamic Relief Bangladesh delivers 100% of WASH services in two camps, shelter support in five camps, and 100% of food assistance in Bhasan Char, alongside WASH, education, livelihoods, and protection programmes. Around 75% of programme staff are shelter and WASH specialists, supporting high-quality, accountable service delivery.

Challenges: The ongoing conflict in Myanmar continues to drive cross-border displacement and create uncertainty, particularly in border areas where humanitarian organisations face movement restrictions and access limitations.

Access to Rakhine State remains highly constrained due to insecurity, government restrictions, and travel limitations for international staff, making direct humanitarian engagement with Rohingya communities extremely difficult.

WHO ISLAMIC RELIEF WORKS WITH ON THE ROHINGYA CRISIS

Government, institutional donors, and local partners



OCHA

unicef



DISASTERS
EMERGENCY
COMMITTEE



ISLAMIC RELIEF PROGRAMMES: MYANMAR

In 2026, Islamic Relief Myanmar focused on supporting communities affected by the devastating earthquake in Amarapura Township, Mandalay Region through our emergency recovery programme. Our response centred on three key interventions designed to help families recover safely and rebuild their lives:

1. Cash for Shelter Repair
2. Cash for Livelihood Recovery
3. Ramadan Food Assistance

These programmes supported communities from all backgrounds, ensuring that assistance reached the most vulnerable households.

1. Cash for Shelter Repair: October 2025 – March 2026

Islamic Relief supported 250 earthquake-affected households (1,262 people) with cash assistance to repair partially damaged homes.

The programme prioritised vulnerable households, including female-headed households, older people, people with disabilities, and families with young children. Among the households supported, 60% were female-headed, and 29% were headed by elderly people.

With the support received, families were able to repair their homes and improve protection from heavy rain, extreme heat, and other climate-related hazards. Safe shelter has also improved privacy, dignity, and security, particularly for women, girls, older people, and children. Many households reported reduced stress, enabling them to focus on restoring their livelihoods and meeting other essential needs.

Operations

2. Cash for Livelihood Recovery: Cash distributed in January, February and July 2026

To help families restore income sources disrupted by the earthquake, Islamic Relief provided cash grants to 1,200 households (6,042 people) across 12 villages.

The programme targeted low-income and vulnerable households, including female-headed households, people with disabilities, landless labourers, and families with limited income opportunities. Nearly 40% of supported households were headed by women, 198 households (17%) were headed by elderly women, and 10 households (1%) were headed by elderly men, demonstrating the programme's strong focus on supporting the most vulnerable and marginalised populations.

Before receiving assistance, households developed simple income-generation plans based on their skills, available resources, and local market opportunities.

Each household received a cash grant of MMK 550,000 (around US\$262), alongside regular visits and guidance on business planning, cash management, and market engagement.

Families were able to restart or expand small businesses, recover agricultural and trading activities, and improve their ability to meet basic needs. The intervention strengthened household resilience and supported longer-term economic recovery in earthquake-affected communities.

3. Ramadan Food Assistance

During Ramadan 2026, Islamic Relief provided food packs to 1,191 vulnerable families from different backgrounds, reaching 4,582 people, including 2,306 women and girls (50.3%) and 2,276 men and boys (49.7%) and 159 people with disabilities. The food assistance helped families meet their immediate nutritional needs during Ramadan while reducing pressure on household finances at a time of ongoing recovery from the earthquake.



Myanmar Earthquake Response Project Phase 2: Cash for Shelter. March 2026



Myanmar Earthquake Response Project: Cash for Livelihood for the earthquake family affected in Mandalay region. March 2026

Case study

From Myanmar to Cox's Bazar 'I want to return with dignity'

After remaining in Myanmar for years following the 2017 displacement crisis, Gul and her family fled to Bangladesh in April 2026 following escalating insecurity and severe hardships. Their journey highlights the continued challenges faced by Rohingya families in Myanmar and the difficult choices many have had to make in search of safety.

"I left because I could no longer bear to watch my son's life being extinguished. To be a mother and stand there, helpless, while your grown son is suffering from such an agonising and humiliating physical torture is a pain that no words can describe." Gul says.

Since arriving in Cox's Bazar, the family has faced overcrowded shelter, and like many newly arrived refugees, they remain dependent on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs.

"Ten of us are crowded into two tiny, cramped rooms offered to us by a kind stranger who lives there. We sleep on the hard ground because we have no beds. I suffer from diabetes, my knees are always swollen, and my stomach burns with gastric pain, but we lack the medicine to make it stop. We have no gas cylinder and no stove to cook the little rice we receive."

Through Islamic Relief's psychosocial support programmes, Gul has accessed awareness sessions and information on protection services. Her story underlines the importance of sustained humanitarian assistance, including protection services, and efforts to create the conditions necessary for the safe, voluntary, dignified, and rights-based return of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar.

"At first, I sat in the corner in total silence, my heart a hard knot of anger. But then I met a volunteer I called her Apa (sister). She didn't look at me as a statistic but as a mother who was carrying a burden that was too heavy for one soul."

Islamic Relief advocates for the rights of the Rohingya people, including their right to return safely and voluntarily to Myanmar. Until conditions allow for such return, we support Rohingya families in Bangladesh with lifesaving assistance and protection services so they can live with dignity and hope.

"Through these sessions of support and awareness, I am finally learning how to live again," Gul says.



ISLAMIC RELIEF PROGRAMMES: BANGLADESH

Cox's Bazar refugee camps and host communities:

In Ukhiya Upazila, including Camps 2E, 2W, 3, 4, and 7, and surrounding host communities, Islamic Relief is delivering integrated shelter, WASH, and protection assistance to 27,255 households, reaching 122,971 individuals.

- **Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI)** activities include the repair and maintenance of shelters, emergency shelter assistance, site improvement works, slope stabilisation, and disaster risk reduction measures.
- **Seasonal support** is also provided through winterisation assistance, Ramadan food distributions, and qurbani programmes.
- **WASH** services focus on maintaining safe access to water and sanitation facilities through the repair of water points, latrines, and bathing cubicles, as well as desludging^[2] and hygiene promotion activities. Households receive hygiene kits and waste bins to support healthy living environments. Water quality testing helps ensure access to safe drinking water, while a solid waste management initiative converts approximately 4,500 kilograms of waste into compost, contributing to small-scale vegetable production within the camps.
- **Protection activities:** We include gender-based violence and protection awareness, case referral, psychological first aid, recreational and capacity development support.

Bhasan Char:

Islamic Relief is delivering integrated humanitarian assistance in Bhasan Char, reaching 6,114 households (27,469 individuals) across WASH, food security, livelihoods, education, and protection sectors. WASH services were expanded in 2026 from eight to 13 clusters, supporting approximately 14,500 people.

- **LPG distribution:** In response to rising market prices, the programme was adjusted to provide 25,695 LPG cylinders (4000 cylinders monthly), helping households meet their energy needs and reducing reliance on harmful coping mechanisms.
- **Food security interventions** include general food assistance delivered in partnership with the World Food Programme, rice distributions, and food vouchers, reaching approximately 32,000 refugees with food assistance.
- **Livelihoods programmes** support refugees with skills development, training, and productive assets in areas such as aquaculture, poultry rearing, and other income-generating activities, helping households strengthen self-reliance and improve economic resilience.
- **Education programmes** featured inclusive schooling under the Myanmar Curriculum, Early Childhood Development centres for 1,450 children enrolled in these centres, and capacity-building for teachers.



Shelter provided for the newly arrived Rohingya population at Cox's Bazar, July 2026

[2] Removing human waste and wastewater solids from latrines, septic tanks, and other sanitation facilities.

Case study

Bhasan Char: The pen that heals a broken past

For Alkama, a Grade 5 student in Islamic Relief's school in Bhasan Char, education represents hope for a better future. Her family fled Myanmar after losing their home and livelihood, and now faces daily challenges as refugees.

"It hurts my heart to see my old parents tie firewood to their delicate shoulders," Alkama says softly. "That is why I study so hard. I want to change our story."

Despite these hardships, Alkama remains determined to continue her studies and pursue her dream of becoming a doctor.

"I want to be a doctor so I can help my parents and treat people who cannot afford medicine," says Alkama.

Through Islamic Relief's Gender Responsive Inclusive Education, Early Childhood Development, and Skills Development Project (GREEN Project), Alkama has access to education, learning materials, and a safe environment where she can learn and develop new skills. The project also helps raise awareness of children's rights and the importance of girls' education, enabling Alkama's family to support her ambitions and keep her in school.

Alkama's story is clear proof that for Rohingya refugees, hope is not found in what was lost, but in what can be gained. Through the support of the GREEN Project and her own hard work, this young girl is stitching together a future filled with medicine, health, and dignity.

