

## **UN releases US\$14 million for Rohingya refugees left homeless by camp fire**

(New York, 24 March 2021): UN humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock today released US\$14 million from the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to provide urgent shelter and other assistance to tens of thousands of Rohingya refugees after a devastating fire tore through the Kutupalong camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh — the world's largest refugee camp — on 22 March.

Estimates indicate that the fire displaced more than 45,000 mostly Rohingya refugees, originally from neighbouring Myanmar, with many more affected. A hospital and other critical health, nutrition and education structures were destroyed.

The CERF funds will help set up and rebuild shelter and provide affected people with urgent water and sanitation services, food, mental and psychosocial health assistance and other emergency services.

The UN's Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock, said: "This fire has ripped through one of the most vulnerable communities in the world. Rohingya refugees need our support now more than ever, as the pandemic continues to take its toll and they approach the monsoon season.

"Rohingya refugees themselves have always stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the aid workers, volunteering their services to support response efforts in the camps. Now is the moment for the international community to stand by them."

People displaced by the fire have sought refuge in nearby camps, shelters and learning centres, and at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees transit sites. NGOs have set up child-friendly spaces at central points to receive and care for lost and unidentified children.

The central coordination body for humanitarian agencies serving the Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar said reports from the camps indicate that at least 11 people lost their lives, more than 500 people required medical attention and about 400 people are missing.

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Bangladesh-based international NGO BRAC, the fire destroyed more than 10,000 structures including shelters, mosques, community centres, learning centres, service centres, shops and offices.

The structures included two nutrition centres and one food distribution centre run by the World Food Programme (WFP) and a health clinic run by IOM in the camp. Two other WFP nutrition sites and one e-voucher outlet have been closed until the damage can be assessed.

Several teams from UN agencies and partners such as BRAC have been on the ground along with Government officials since the fire was reported. They stepped in to contain the fire and provide first aid,

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food, health care, emergency shelter kits, protection and drinking water, and they are helping to trace missing family members.

The Kutupalong camp network is home to the vast majority of the more than 800,000 Rohingya refugees sheltering in Cox's Bazar.

In January, more than 3,500 refugees were left homeless when a fire destroyed around 550 shelters and 150 shops in the Nayapara camp, about 30 kms (19 miles) south of Kutupalong.

CERF is one of the fastest and most effective ways to help people affected by crises. Since its creation, it has assisted hundreds of millions of people with almost \$7 billion across more than 100 countries and territories.

This would not have been possible without generous and consistent donor support.

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