SWISS SOLIDARITY WARNS OF ANOTHER DISASTER FOR ROHINGYA IN BANGLADESH AND APPEALS FOR DONATIONS

At the end of August 2017, more than half a million people of the Rohingya ethnic minority fled from Myanmar to Bangladesh. There were reports of armed violence and torched villages. Now they are facing the threat of cyclones and the monsoon. More aid is urgently needed.

Some 780,000 Rohingya are currently living in refugee camps in Bangladesh under the most precarious conditions. Despite the tireless efforts of several aid organizations, there is a lack of food, medical care and basic sanitation.

Fear of a disaster within a disaster

This stricken population is now facing yet another disaster. The cyclone and monsoon season is putting the Rohingya, who live in extremely cramped conditions in badly built camps, in danger. The camps are located on hilly terrain that is threatened by landslides and flooding. The upcoming heavy rainfalls will silt up the few access roads and paths and leave some of the area flooded. Many of the dwellings, which are made from bamboo poles and tarpaulins, will not be able to withstand the storm winds. Flood damaged and landslide-exposed latrines pose a risk of contaminated drinking water, thus facilitating the rapid spread of epidemics and disease in this densely populated area.

Precautionary measures

Swiss Solidarity's partner relief organizations have been bringing aid to the Rohingya since the beginning of the refugee crisis and are now doing everything within their power to minimize the human and material damage by cyclones and the monsoon. They are reinforcing dwellings, emptying and securing latrines and helping resettle endangered families. They also working to improve medical care and sanitation.

But despite all these preventative measures, the monsoon threatens to cause widespread damage. People could be harmed or even lose their lives.

Aid funded so far

We have been able to support 12 projects by 8 partner aid organizations with the CHF 4,507,000 in donations collected in September of last year. They have distributed food, cooking utensils, mosquito nets and lamps, taken care of the malnourished, secured a healthcare and water supply, created safe places for children, erected latrines and used the generated biogas to fuel kitchens because firewood is lacking. To date, 217,789 people have been able to benefit from these relief measures.

More donations urgently needed

As the cyclone and monsoon season begins and stepping up the relief effort becomes crucial, Swiss Solidarity funds have run out. This is why the foundation is renewing its appeal for donations for the Rohingya. Donations for emergency relief for the Rohingya are welcome online at [www.swiss-solidarity.org](http://www.swiss-solidarity.org) or to postal account 10-15000-6 (specify: Rohingya). Swiss Solidarity payment slips are available at all Swiss post offices.

Contact:   
Sophie Balbo, Swiss Solidarity’s Spokesperson, 078 815 96 39

“Swiss Solidarity” is the expression of the solidarity of the Swiss population with the victims of disasters and conflicts. It is an independent foundation created by the SSR. Swiss Solidarity is not itself operational, but co-funds using donations from the public, businesses as well as cantons and municipalities, the projects of 25 Swiss NGOs which assist victims on the ground. The Foundation ensures the proper use of these donations through in-depth analyses and field assessments by experts in compliance with international standards for emergency aid, rehabilitation and reconstruction. In Switzerland, Swiss Solidarity supports people in need in collaboration with specialised organisms. In the wake of severe weather in the country, it supports individuals, communities and SMEs suffering major damage. Since 1946, Swiss Solidarity has collected more than 1.7 billion Swiss francs in donations.  
For more information, please visit: [www.swiss-solidarity.org](http://www.swiss-solidarity.org).