



The Rohingya crisis

ECHO FACTSHEET

Facts & Figures

EU¹ humanitarian aid:

Myanmar/Burma
2010-2014:
€ 49.3 million

Bangladesh
2007-2014:
€ 20.79 million

Thailand
2013-2014:
€ 325 000

Total funding
€ 70.41 million

¹ The figures refer to European Commission humanitarian aid only, and do not include contributions by EU Member States.

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Primary health care consultation (MSF) in Maungdaw township, Rakhine state, Myanmar/Burma.
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Key messages

- The Rohingya crisis is fundamentally a human rights crisis with serious humanitarian consequences.
- In Myanmar/Burma, the Rohingya have **very limited access to basic services and viable livelihood opportunities**. The legal status and the discrimination that these stateless people face must be addressed.
- **Inter-communal dialogue and conflict resolution** must be prioritised in Rakhine State, where tensions between the communities are widespread and community segregation must be avoided.
- International organisations help meet **emergency humanitarian needs**. It is crucial that they have proper operating conditions to effectively assist people in need. This is especially important, as, since March 2014, many aid organisations have **had to temporarily suspend their operations in the area due to threats and attacks** on their premises by Rakhine extremist groups.
- The crisis has a **wider regional dimension**, with large number of Rohingya fleeing to neighbouring countries on precarious boat journeys every month (Bangladesh, Thailand, Malaysia, India, Indonesia and Australia as final destination or transit countries).
- **Safe and unhindered access** to populations in need should be granted to humanitarian aid organisations, not only in Myanmar/Burma, but in all countries of Asia where the Rohingya people are seeking asylum or protection.

Humanitarian situation and needs

The Muslim minority living in **western Myanmar/Burma's Rakhine State** – some 800 000 people – are known as the Rohingya. For years, they have suffered legal and social discrimination due to long-standing tensions with the Buddhist Rakhine community over land and resources. They have been denied the right to citizenship. The Rohingya are subject to many restrictions: they are banned from travelling without authorization, prohibited from working outside their villages, cannot get married without permission from the authorities, and face huge difficulties in getting sufficient access to food, medical care and education.

In 2012, widespread inter-communal violence in Rakhine left 140 000 people, mostly Rohingya, displaced. The majority is now living in camps and has only limited access to health care and education, and no livelihood opportunities. Tensions between communities continue – with regular occurrences of violent incidents.

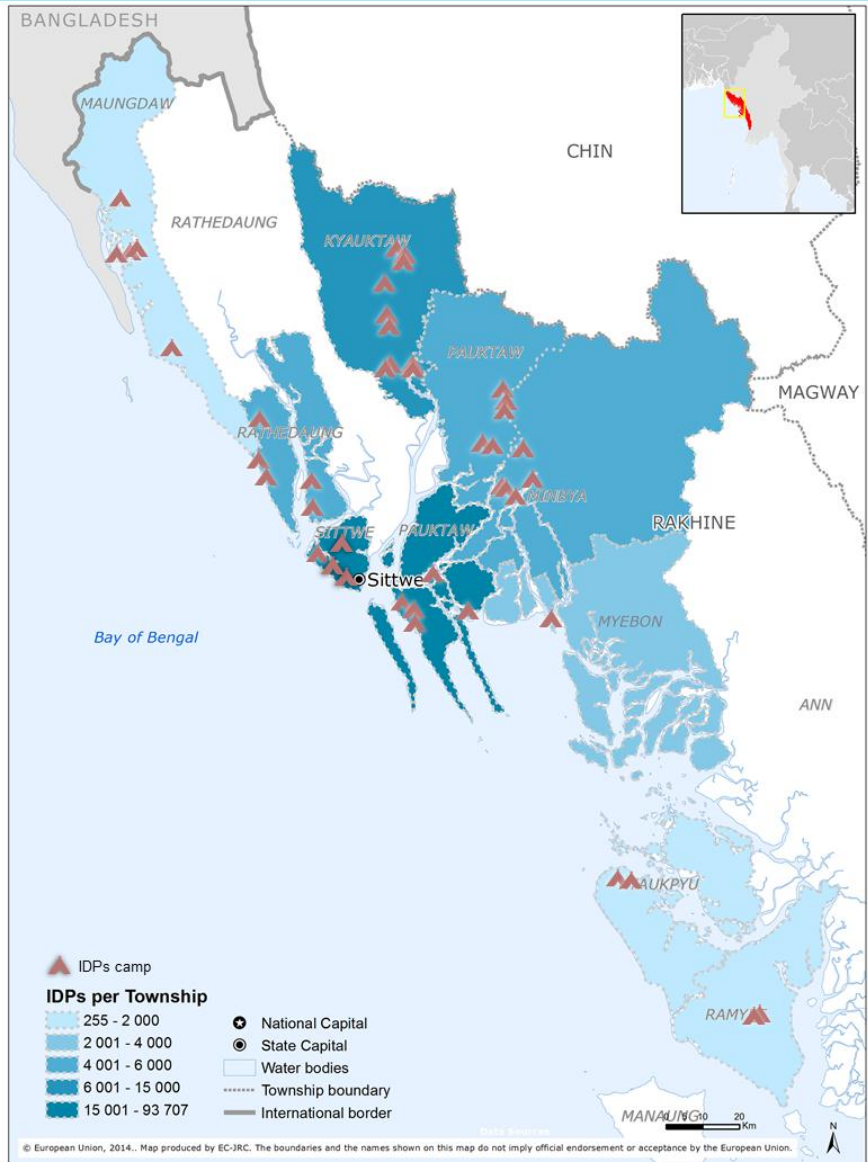
There has been an increase in security threats and attacks against UN and international NGOs by Rakhine extremists, who erroneously feel that humanitarian aid, which is allocated strictly according to needs, is distributed unevenly and benefits only the Rohingya. In March 2014, as a consequence of attacks, many aid organisations temporarily suspended their activities and evacuated their staff. Access to the IDP camps around Sittwe remains highly regulated.

Due to their deplorable living conditions, every month up to 7 000 people – including women and children – have escaped on precarious boat journeys to neighbouring countries. Many do not survive these journeys, and others often fall prey to human trafficking or end up exploited as forced labour.

Since January 2013, Thai authorities have detained some 2 800 Rohingya in Immigration Detention Centres, police stations and social welfare facilities, after they were arrested trying to cross Thailand into Malaysia.

Displacement of Rohingya communities in Rakhine State, Myanmar/Burma

Rohingyas - Myanmar

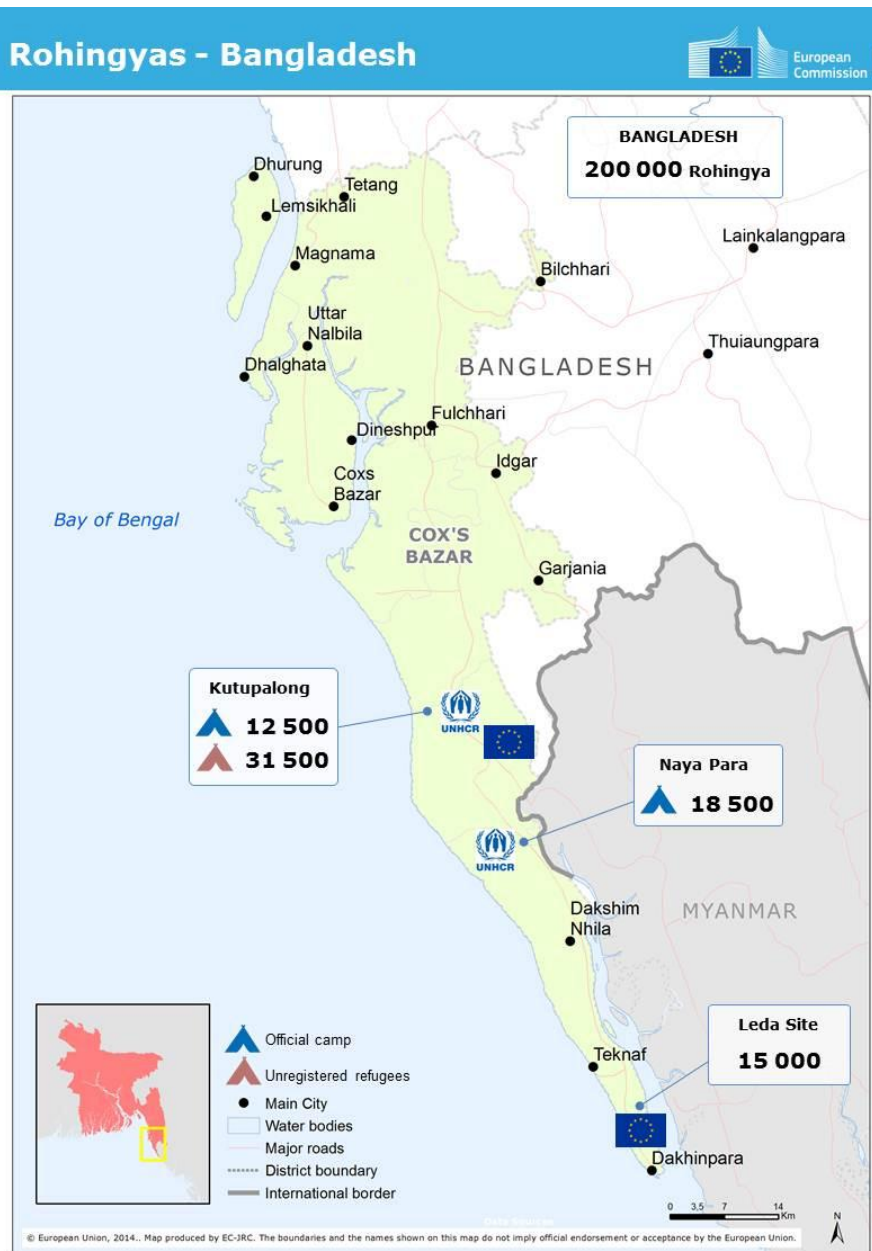


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Escapes to neighbouring countries started much earlier than 2013. The initial influx of Rohingya to **Bangladesh** dates back to 1978, with a large arrival in 1991-1992. Presently, only 31 000 living in two official camps managed by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in Nayapara and Kutupalong are recognized by the Government of Bangladesh as refugees. National authorities' refusal to register Rohingya at birth or provide marriage certificates and other civil documentation makes it difficult to assess the scale of the humanitarian needs of these people in Bangladesh. These refugees live in difficult conditions with inadequate food intake and diet diversification, few opportunities for livelihood activities and limited access to education and health care.

Conditions in the official refugee camps are better than those of the estimated 200 000 Rohingya living in the Kutupalong makeshift camp, Leda site and the surrounding areas. These people are officially considered illegal economic migrants and have virtually no rights. The Government of Bangladesh recognised in 2014 the humanitarian needs of undocumented people from Myanmar, however, without giving them legal status. Many households are female headed which increases exposure to exploitation. The situation of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh is a "forgotten crisis" as defined by ECHO's Global Vulnerability and Crisis Assessment (GVCA) in 2013.

Rohingya camps in Bangladesh



The European Union's humanitarian response

The European Commission, through its Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO), has been funding relief programmes in **Rakhine State of Myanmar/Burma** and **Bangladesh** since 1994. Additional support was also provided in **Thailand** in 2013. ECHO has established an office in Yangon (Myanmar/Burma) in 2005 and another office in Dhaka (Bangladesh) since 2002 to facilitate the delivery of EU humanitarian assistance.

From 2010 to 2014, ECHO provided some € 38.7 million in humanitarian aid to vulnerable people in Rakhine state, including to the more isolated northern areas. In addition, € 10.6 million were provided from 2010-2012 to communities along the coast affected by cyclone Giri. The support enabled ECHO's partner organisations to provide emergency shelter, food, water and sanitation, health care and to assist in the early recovery of approximately 250 000 people, mainly of Rakhine ethnic origin. This brings overall funding for Rakhine State to € 49.3 million since 2010.



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In 2014, ECHO is funding projects throughout Rakhine State to address some of the most urgent needs among the Rohingya in the northern townships, including food and nutrition (especially for children under five), provision of basic health services and supply of other basic household items, and to support the population displaced since 2012. Together with its humanitarian partner organisations, ECHO is committed to continue to contribute to the provision of basic services. In order to deliver this vital assistance, both the security for aid workers and appropriate access to the beneficiaries need to be ensured.

ECHO has also been providing significant funding for life-saving assistance to the unrecognised Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh through international NGOs. € 20.79 million have been provided since 2007, for basic health care, water, sanitation and nutrition services.

Since 2013, ECHO allocated € 325 000 to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to provide food, basic household items, medical care and protection assistance to some 2 000 Rohingya men, women and children who were detained under poor conditions in Thailand. The Rohingya were detained after allegedly trying to travel illegally through Thailand en route to Malaysia.

The European Commission acts on the basis of the international humanitarian principles which are integral part of the [European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid](#). This means that the European Commission provides humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable communities, irrespective of ethnic or religious background. EU humanitarian assistance is based solely on needs. Projects are implemented by ECHO's partner organisations including international NGOs and UN agencies.



Some 90 000 Rohingya find themselves squeezed into camps near the state capital Sittwe, living in cramped barrack-type shelters. Rakhine State,

