

BANGLADESH

5 April – 20 April 2018

On 13 April, UNHCR and Bangladesh signed a **MoU, which provides the framework for voluntary, safe, and dignified returns of refugees once conditions in Myanmar are conducive.** UNHCR does not believe that current conditions in Rakhine State are currently conducive to returns.

More than 2000 families have been relocated for their safety due to risk of landslide or flooding, and relocations of new arrivals from the UNHCR Transit Centre moving to the main Kutupalong settlement.

Nearly 70,000 families have received upgraded shelter kits, including bamboo poles, rope, shelter-grade tarpaulin and tools. UNHCR and other shelter partners are accelerating distributions ahead of the rainy season to reach tens of thousands more families.

POPULATION FIGURES

876,049 Total number of refugees in Bangladesh (figure pending verification)

671,000* Estimated new arrivals in Bangladesh since 25 August 2017

STAFFING & PARTNERS

226 staff currently working on the emergency compared to **49** prior to the crisis. **155** are national staff.

23 partners compared to **7** prior to the crisis.

* As reported by the Inter-Sector Coordination Group.

FUNDING

USD 238.8 million

Requested for UNHCR's emergency response in 2018.



Individual households relocating from the UNHCR Transit Centre in Kutupalong to the main refugee settlement. Volunteers help carry the belongings of individuals who are unable. © UNHCR/S. O'Brien

Refugee Arrival trends

Since the start of January 2018, over 7,700 refugees have arrived in Bangladesh, with over 250 individuals arriving in the last two weeks¹. Travelling from Myanmar by boat, refugees continue to cross the border into Bangladesh, particularly through the Sabrang arrival point. The Bangladesh Army, UNHCR, and partners have maintained basic services at the arrival point for new arrivals, which include health and food, with refugees having undertaken difficult journeys with limited supplies. Many new arrivals report having left Myanmar without relatives, some of whom reportedly plan to soon leave soon due to continued fear for their security and safety.



New arrivals at UNHCR's Transit Centre near the Kutupalong settlement being assisted with temporary shelter, food, water, medical and other needs. UNHCR/C. Gluck

Refugee Returns to Myanmar



Signing of MOU by UNHCR and the Government of Bangladesh in Geneva. © UNHCR/Susan Hopper

On 13 April 2018, UNHCR and the Government of Bangladesh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) relating to voluntary returns of Rohingya refugees once conditions in Myanmar are conducive. Signed by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, and Bangladesh Foreign Secretary, Md. Shahidul Haque, it establishes a framework of cooperation between UNHCR and Bangladesh on the safe, voluntary, and dignified returns of refugees in line with international standards.

Visit of Myanmar's Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement to Bangladesh

Myanmar's Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Professor Win Myat Aye, visited Kutupalong refugee settlement in Cox's Bazar on 11 April 2018. Organized bilaterally between Bangladesh and Myanmar, the visit focussed on the ongoing discussions around returns and presented the Minister an opportunity to see the situation for refugees in Bangladesh. During the visit, some refugees were reported to have presented a letter of appeal to the Myanmar government stating their wish to return to their homes in Rakhine State, but in safe and dignified conditions, which they felt did not currently exist. Some refugees have said told UNHCR that before they consider returning to Myanmar they would need to see concrete progress in relation to their legal status and citizenship, security, and their ability to enjoy

¹ Information on arrivals at border points are reported through various sources which cannot always be verified or confirmed.

basic rights at home in Rakhine State. Some refugees also report observing the situation of internally displaced persons in the central townships of Rakhine State, and that positive developments on the situation could build trust and confidence among them.

Refugee response

Protection activities

The Protection Working Group (PWG) in Cox's Bazar, led by UNHCR, has been discussing ways to respond to disaster or emergency situations during the monsoon and cyclone period. In support of this effort, and to ensure the protection of refugee communities, a Protection Emergency Response Unit (PERU) has been created.

The PERU will be composed of mobile teams formed by staff with protection expertise, including on child protection and GBV prevention and response, from different agencies, with the deployment of one mobile team per area within the settlements. Deployed teams will provide first response intervention for extremely vulnerable groups, including affected women, children, persons with disability, and older persons. They will be deployed immediately after an incident when available static service response is not possible due to access, security or other factors and will complement the response efforts carried out by trained refugee volunteers in each area, who have extensive knowledge of their community. In addition, UNHCR Registration focal points with a mobile database of the Family Counting exercise will support family verification when needed at the major distribution and gathering points.

The Island, Bhasan Char - UNHCR continues to closely follow developments on plans announced by the Government of Bangladesh to relocate 100,000 refugees from Cox's Bazar District to Bhasan Char island. On 4 April 2018, the Government of Bangladesh briefed UN agencies on its plans for the ongoing development of the island in its effort to find alternative locations for refugees to live in, including to prevent loss of life and property during the upcoming monsoon and cyclone season. There have been no official consultations to date with refugees regarding their views on Bhasan Char. UNHCR has expressed the need for further discussion with the authorities on key protection issues that are fundamental to understanding how any proposal may work for relocations, including viability of the site to offer dignified living conditions, safety and security considerations, issues around voluntariness of relocation, and other factors related to freedom of movement, the ability of refugees to earn a living, and participate in decisions affecting them, humanitarian personnel access and presence, and support or requirements for persons with specific needs.

SGBV- In April, UNHCR started to roll-out case management training for sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) case workers and managers in partner organizations. Training uses a survivor-centered approach. This core training helps ensure a common understanding of the minimum standards for SGBV case management. It will improve the quality of services such as how to avoid doing harm, and, ensure confidentiality, safety, security and respect towards survivors. Qualified caseworkers will be better able to provide professional case management and support survivors. This training fits into the overall SGBV prevention and response efforts of UNHCR to building partner capacity, and harmonize responses.

Community-Based protection - As part of its community outreach program, launched in December 2017, UNHCR and its protection partners, TAI and BRAC, continue to train 249 community outreach members (COMs), 170 men and 79 women. Each week, the COMs conduct an average of 400 home visits, meeting more than 1,500 refugee men and women on average, as well as information sessions on preparedness for the rainy season reaching an average of 600 men and women. During these activities, the COMs also identify cases in need of support of which some require urgent intervention. The COMs themselves provide direct support to some of the concerned refugees and refer others to TAI and BRAC. Concerns related to shelter, health, food, water and fire risks are the most frequently reported by

refugee communities to COMs. UNHCR is working to address specific concerns through partners and with the authorities, where relevant.

UNHCR, BRAC, Solidarités Internationales and TAI trained 380 refugees and members of host communities (including community outreach workers; community women, men and youth groups; and, community outreach members) on their roles and responsibilities, code of conduct, basic communication skills and planning for awareness raising. Participants in the training were introduced to core messages on the cyclone and rainy season developed by the inter-agency Communications with Communities, with inputs from the Protection Working Group, the CP and GBV sub-sectors and other sectors. The training saw an enthusiastic participation by all participants, as well as their commitment to address the concerns of the community and assist them in preparing for the coming cyclone, storms and floods.

Provision of services and assistance for emergency preparedness

As of 16 April 2018, nearly 70,000 households have received upgraded shelter kits, including bamboo poles, rope, shelter-grade tarpaulin and tools. UNHCR and partners aim to reach all 80,000 plus households it is targeting ahead of the monsoon period. Additional pre-monsoon kit distributions are planned soon, containing ropes and pegs.

Biodegradable sandbags are also being provided to support the anchoring of structures.

Some 80,000 households have received core relief items (CRIs), covering 100% of refugee households targeted by UNHCR distributions in different settlements. UNHCR is currently procuring contingency stocks ahead of the monsoon in order to be in a position to replenish lost or damaged relief items among households affected by landslides, flooding, or potential cyclone in the coming months.



Refugees collecting core relief items from a UNHCR distribution point in Kutupalong settlement. © UNHCR/S. Sarma

Shelter partners in the refugee settlements in Cox's Bazar are also planning to upgrade community shelters to provide temporary housing for beneficiaries who could lose their shelters in floods or landslides. An assessment has been launched to gather available information on current community structures in the settlements.

UNHCR continues to work with the Government of Bangladesh and partners on the priority relocation of refugee families currently living in areas that are vulnerable to flooding and/or landslides to safer parts of the settlements. As of 9 April 2018, more than 2000 households have been relocated to three sites by UNHCR and IOM, with the assistance of partner organizations, for various reasons, including construction works, landslide and/or flood vulnerability, and new arrivals.

Out of those households, 878 were relocated from areas at high risk of flooding and/or landslides. Work has progressed significantly on making 123 acres of land in north-eastern Kutupalong settlement ready for hosting refugees from high-risk flood or landslide areas. Three borehole drillings and six latrines having been started by UNHCR with the support of Oxfam. Several shelter prototypes have been built on new land provided by the Government, including stronger designs than before, for consideration. Currently, a

minimum of 150,000 refugees are estimated to be living in areas that are at high risk of floods and/or landslides.

UNHCR, WFP and IOM continue to undertake emergency preparedness work through the Site Management Engineering Project (SMEP), which is a joint initiative to enhance monsoon preparedness and response. SMEP activities currently include earthworks and other engineering projects for monsoon preparedness.



Work is progressing on the paving of the main settlement access road cutting through the centre of the large Kutupalong-Balukhali settlement in Cox's Bazar district, Bangladesh. © UNHCR/R. Arnold

The Bangladesh Army has been working fast, using its engineering expertise, to ensure the main artery road in the Kutupalong-Balukhali settlement will be open for use when the monsoon arrives.

The road needs to be fully paved ahead of the monsoon to ensure that vehicles can access the settlement to deliver vital humanitarian assistance, as otherwise the surface of the road will turn muddy with the clay becoming three times softer when wet. The first 4.2 kilometres of over 6 kilometres of the central access road has been paved with bricks sourced from local suppliers, with UNHCR's support. Vital culverts are being installed

along the road by to ensure the road will stay secure during flooding in the settlement, and help drain flood water out of the settlement. Most of the required culverts in the northern section of the settlement have been completed. Once the monsoon starts, any repairs to the road will be undertaken by SMEP's rapid engineering response capacity. More than 3,500 people have been working with WFP's global logistics and engineering team to prepare the land for the safe relocation of refugees in conjunction with UNHCR and IOM, fortifying embankments, and clearing drainage channels.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) – Water, sanitation and hygiene continue to be among the top concerns for humanitarian agencies and the refugee population. Since 25 August 2017, UNHCR through its partners has constructed 3,686 latrines, 894 tube wells, and 1,659 bathing cubicles, constituting approximately 14% of the total functional latrines and tube wells currently installed for the overall response. It is estimated that 3,200 latrines in different areas of the refugee settlements in Cox's Bazar need to be decommissioned due their location in landslide or flood risk areas. The decommissioning needs to be completed ahead of the monsoon to reduce the level of contamination that can potentially affect water sources, in particular in the large Kutupalong-Balukhali settlement. Progress has been made so far on decommissioning one in three of these identified latrines (over 1,000). UNHCR is also working with its partners and other WASH actors on supporting hygiene promotion teams who are working to spread messages about good practices to reduce disease transmission.

UNHCR has started construction work of a new earth dam in the Shalbon area of Nayapara settlement where new arrivals live. The dam aims to increase the water holding capacity of the reservoir which will eventually enable a continuous water supply. Water supply has been steadily increased to 110 m³ per



Reservoir in the Nayapara refugee settlement where works are ongoing to deepen it to benefit refugee and host communities. © UNHCR/S. O'Brien

day through six tap stands across expanded areas of Nayapara's settlement. A cash-for-work digging program has also helped deepen the reservoir in the settlement. A total of over 3,800 m³ has been excavated to date. As water sources continue dry up in this area, UNHCR and partners have begun to provide water trucking as an interim response to the water shortage situation before rainfall refills the reservoir. Currently the water shortage results in only about 10 litres per person per day in Nayapara refugee settlement area.

Health – UNHCR and the Bangladesh Directorate-General of Health Services (DGHS) are soon planning to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to

work together to improve the routine Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI) through the extension of services to new areas where UNHCR's partners are working. This will ensure that children will get the necessary immunizations and reduce the overall risk of vaccine preventable outbreaks. The MoU will help improve access to basic health care services through the construction of five prefabricated primary health posts.

UNHCR in collaboration with partners has also rolled-out a community-based mortality surveillance in refugee settlements in Cox's Bazar. This will improve data on mortality among refugees which at present is not comprehensive and subsequently tailor the health response strategy.

The upcoming monsoon season threatens to disrupt health care delivery. Thirty two percent of all health facilities are currently located in areas at high risk of floods or landslides and may be affected. Flooded or landslide-affected latrine facilities or contaminated water sources and poor hygiene can also increase disease outbreaks, including the risk of cholera, shigellosis, Hepatitis E. Mobile Medical Teams (MMT) are being established across health partners to support health care in case facilities are flooded, destroyed, or have reduced access. UNHCR is prepositioning pre-packed health structures that can be set up within 72 hours. Critical medical supplies are also being pre-positioned.

Preparation is also ongoing for the Oral Cholera Vaccine campaign scheduled to start mid-April targeting the entire refugee population (below one year age). It is part of prevention planning for the monsoon and additional to other vaccination campaigns. Health actors are working closely with WASH partners to ensure the effects of any water contamination during the monsoon is limited as much as possible. Aquatabs will be pre-positioned for rapid distribution in the event of any household having need for supplementary supply during monsoon or cyclone-related incidents. UNHCR is also working on strengthening community engagement with refugees actively involved in preparedness efforts to restore their resilience through increased community messaging on safe hygiene behaviours to prevent disease outbreak and training of community health workers on general and psychological first aid.

UNHCR and WHO are leading the Emergency Preparedness and Response Taskforce on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS). An action plan has been drafted and now being reviewed and consolidated with the inputs from other MHPSS actors. UNHCR is supporting the implementation of key activities such as the facilitation of two MHPSS mapping workshops, the development of a guidance note for organizations working with persons with severe mental conditions, training of partners' field staff and refugee volunteers (Community Health Workers and Community Outreach Members) on psychological first aid, and the integration of mental health into primary health care services.

As of 7 April 2018, there were 6,577 diphtheria case-patients reported through EWARS (based on last data available from WHO). The majority of cases aged 5-14 years, with a total of 41 deaths. Diphtheria cases amongst the refugee population have declined since January 2018 according to the WHO, but on average 163 case-patients are reported per week. Investigation is underway by WHO to further reduce transmission in the community. Since 1 December 2017, 52 diphtheria case-patients have been reported in the host community. No deaths have been reported. A third round of diphtheria vaccination campaign was completed covering 431,448 children between the ages of 6-15 years in Ukhiya, Teknaf and Naikhyongchari Upazilas.

WHO has designed a rapid sampling strategy to sample 25 patients over 3-4 days, with the possibility of extending sampling timeframes up to seven days, to confirm the outbreak and assess ongoing transmission of measles virus. The total number of measles cases for 2018 has passed 1,000 cases.

Nutrition - UNHCR has established nutrition programmes in ten areas in Kutupalong, Chakmarkul and Nayapara settlements covering the needs of 132,700 refugees, including 78,000 adult women and children. Other operational agencies in Cox's Bazar district, including UNICEF, have established 31 programmes in 18 areas in Kutupalong and Nyapara settlements where refugees are settled. Overall coverage of the entire refugee population is good, estimated to be over 80%, however, there are remaining challenges to be met, including technical support to partners and scaling up of nutrition treatment for moderate acute malnourished children.



Refugee community outreach workers screening and detecting malnourished children in Kutupalong settlement, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. © UNHCR/Kazi Namus Zakib

Support for critical nutritional treatment, with a special focus on children and mothers is key, especially with the monsoon setting in soon and the heightened risks refugees will face due to potential for contamination of water, risks of diarrhoeal disease, malaria and other infections or disease that can impact nutritional status. To reduce risk factors having a negative impact on the nutritional status of refugee children, UNHCR together with UNICEF and sector partners are working on strengthening an integrated approach with health partners for early detection and referrals of malnourished children as well as community messaging on key hygienic practices and infant and young child feeding practices (IYCF) for children and women through the WASH sector. Screening of children in ongoing on a regular basis through community volunteers, ensuring early detection and referral of acute malnourished children.

UNHCR is currently conducting a household dietary diversity survey among refugee population included in a CBI pilot intervention in two selected camps Kutupalong. Food remains a primary concern of the refugee population and this has been documented through multi-functional assessments and in community discussions in planning for the upcoming cyclone season – obtaining food remains a source of stress for many refugees. The aim of the study is to document influence of cash on the recipient's ability to improve their dietary diversity.

A SMART nutrition survey led by ACF with support of CDC, UNHCR and UNICEF, will be launched early May, before the monsoon season. The survey, conducted twice yearly (pre- and post-monsoon) provides important information on the nutritional status of children and women of the refugee population as well as key factors impacting on this, including micronutrient status, IYCF practices and food security.

Cash Based Interventions (CBI) – On 9 April, UNHCR and its partner BRAC supported by the authorities and BRCS started a pilot project of cash distribution amongst refugees in two of the most densely populated areas of Kutupalong. The multi-purpose cash is to complement the distribution of relief items. After months of careful preparation, the project is proceeding according to plan with adjustments made to the timeline. By 19 April, 6,956 of the planned 12,000 households had received their payment of 2,500 Bangladesh Taka (equivalent to approximately 30 US dollars). The project is accompanied by a nutrition survey and shall be followed by post distribution monitoring (PDM). UNHCR hopes to be able to scale up cash payments to target destitute refugee and host community households in the future.

Cyclone contingency - UNHCR in collaboration with the authorities and partners is preparing its response plan in the event of a cyclone hitting the refugee settlements in Cox's Bazar. While the monsoon is an established seasonal phenomenon and predictable, cyclones are not. A robust cyclone response plan is in place for the Bangladeshi community. However, while the government's Cyclone Prevention Plan (CPP) will extend to refugees, the interventions available for refugees in the event of a cyclone will be different. There are no cyclone-safe shelters, for example, in the refugee settlements, and host community shelters will not have sufficient capacity in the event of a cyclone to accommodate the number of refugees that may need urgent shelter. Early warning for any extreme weather to refugees will be supported in line with the advice issued by the Bangladeshi authorities as part of its early warning system. UNHCR is working with refugees to ensure that there is a mechanism in place to accurately relay information in case this need arises, including capacitating volunteers on the ground, from within the refugee community, to work with UNHCR and other agencies in the event of a cyclone. The training of 14 CPP volunteer units (one 20-person unit per area within the large Kutupalong settlement) started on 9 April 2018 and will finish by the end of the month. The training programme has involved inputs from the Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP), the American Red Cross and Bangladesh Red Crescent societies, and Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief. Training is focusing on cyclone-related hazards, vulnerabilities, and risks, classification of cyclones, possible impacts in settlements, warning signals, family-level and community/block-level disaster preparedness, roles and responsibilities of volunteers in multi-hazard situations and in reducing the loss of life and damage to property, raising public awareness activities (through field demonstrations, folk songs, posters, leaflets, billboards, etc.), and prevention of gender discrimination, as well as protection of children. UNHCR is increasing awareness on protection risks across the board for the monsoon and potential cyclone, particularly focusing on women and children, and persons with special needs such as the elderly and persons with disability, who frequently experience greater challenges during crisis periods, e.g. access to services, latrines, greater risk of abuse and exploitation (both during and after the event). Community outreach members (COMs) are already raising awareness of issues within the community, including on how refugees can seek assistance, and report incidents safely and confidentially.

Supporting host and refugee communities

UNHCR has installed 199 solar street lights in public areas within and on the outskirts of the northern part of Kutupalong refugee settlement. Around 20 solar street lights were installed by UNHCR in Foliapara host community village, which has a population of 10,600 people and is located on the northern outskirts of Kutupalong refugee settlement. This is part of a wider set of activities UNHCR plans to engage in to ensure local host communities needs are supported, and recognition of their significant and ongoing contribution to the life-saving response that has been led by the Government of Bangladesh for refugees with UN support. UNHCR is not alone in providing lights, as other UN agencies, including IOM, are also

supporting the effort to ensure lighting in the settlements and host communities. A further 53 lights are planned for the Chakmarkul settlement, and 270 for Nayapara settlement and host community. Some 18 will be installed at key distribution points operated by UNHCR. Lights are essential for enhancing community safety and security in the settlement, and for allowing distributions of vital humanitarian support to continue into the evening when necessary.

In order to minimize the impact of the humanitarian response on the environment and mitigate protection risks linked to firewood collection in the surrounding forest areas, in early December 2017 UNHCR started to distribute compressed rice husks (CRH) as an alternative cooking fuel to refugees. The fuel is also sourced from local suppliers benefitting local businesses. The aim of the CRH distributions is to reduce forest cutting, root digging, and mitigate against child labour, and other potential risks. Together with FAO, IOM and WFP, UNHCR is further planning to participate in a pilot liquid petroleum gas (LPG) initiative to provide a safe fuel alternative for refugees and includes vulnerable host community households.

Further, to enhance its support to local host communities, UNHCR established a multi-functional team to explore possibilities for Quick Impact Projects within host communities. A number of projects are identified, including support for upgrades for WASH facilities in local schools, which are approved for implementation.

Working in partnership

At Dhaka level, UNHCR co-chairs the Strategic Executive Group (SEG) with the UN Resident Coordinator and IOM. UNHCR leads on the protection response for all refugees, and heads a Protection Working Group in Cox's Bazar. UNHCR coordinates its delivery of assistance with UN agencies and other partners through various working groups under the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG). UNHCR's main government counterpart is the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief.

In Cox's Bazar, UNHCR works with the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner and Camp-in-Charge officials in different settlements. UNHCR also works closely with a range of international and national actors in Bangladesh. It has a partnership network of 23 partners, including 9 national NGOs. In 2018, UNHCR is increasing national and local sourcing of goods and services. So far, UNHCR has signed 35 local framework agreements worth over USD 20 million for construction, procurement of relief items, shelter material, and services for persons of concern.

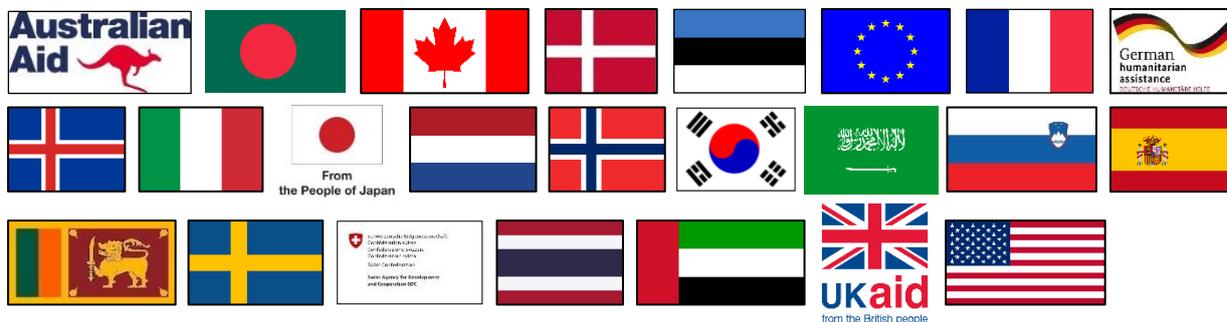
Donor Support

The response of the Government and people of Bangladesh is extraordinarily generous. More support is required from the international community to assist Bangladesh in its humanitarian response to the refugee situation. UNHCR has called for support for refugees and host communities, as well as continued political efforts to work for a solution to the situation. On 16 March 2018, a Joint Response Plan (JRP) for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis was launched calling for USD 951 million to continue delivering lifesaving assistance from March-December 2018. UNHCR is appealing for USD 238.8 million as part of its Supplementary Appeal for 2018 in order to continue to respond to the needs of hundreds of thousands of refugees, who are now preparing to face a harsh monsoon season.

UNHCR financial needs for 2018

	Protection	26.7 m
	Basic relief items	5.6 m
	Water, sanitation & hygiene	40.8 m
	Shelter/infrastructure	25.0 m
	Energy and environment	13.4 m
	Education	10.0 m
	Community mobilization	18.1 m
	Health and nutrition	34.5 m
	Logistics	11.0 m
	Camp management	35.3 m
	Support costs	18.4 m
TOTAL		238.8 m

Donor country contributions to the UNHCR Bangladesh operation in 2017 and 2018, and unrestricted funding to UNHCR's global operations



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