

Over 2,350 injured Rohingyas treated

They suffered bullet, sharp weapon and lacerating wounds in Myanmar violence

AFP, Cox's Bazar

Bangladesh said yesterday it had treated more than 2,350 Rohingya refugees for serious injuries sustained during the violence in Myanmar, including bullet and machete wounds and trauma from landmines.

About 4,22,000 refugees from the stateless Muslim minority have fled Myanmar's westernmost Rakhine State since August 25, overcrowding camps along the border ill-prepared for an influx of desperate civilians.

Local authorities and aid agencies in Cox's Bazar district have been struggling to provide food, shelter and medical treatment for the Rohingyas, who recruited tales of brutality and rape by Myanmar troops and Buddhist militants as they escaped.

Bangladesh authorities said nearly 14,000 refugees had been treated in hospital and mobile medical clinics for illness and injury, including 2,364 people for wounds consistent with violence.

"These include injuries from bullets, mines or sharp weapons such as knives," Enayt Hussain, a senior health department official, told AFP.

Bangladesh officials believe anti-personnel mines have been planted by Myanmar security forces to prevent Rohingyas from trying to return to their villages, and several deaths from these banned weapons have been confirmed.

Hussain said local hospitals and medical clinics were "overstretched" but health authorities were "prepared to face the crisis" described by aid agencies as a humanitarian catastrophe.

Bangladesh has deployed the army to restore order and fast-track the construction of shelters for thousands of refugees still living in the open exposed to monsoon rain.



Nine people were killed as this truck with relief for Rohingyas from Red Crescent fell off the road in Naikyangchhari of Bandarban yesterday.

Take back Rohingyas

Bernicat to Myanmar

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Marcia Bernicat has called on Myanmar to immediately end the violence in Rakhine state, restore peace and stability there and take back the Rohingyas.

She said the US welcomes Aung San Suu Kyi's announcement to take back those who fled to Bangladesh. "We encourage the government to act quickly on this commitment while ensuring the safety and wellbeing of returnees," she added.

Mentioning the recommendations made by former UN secretary general Kofi Annan-led advisory commission, she said the US feels those should be followed. "If those lay out a good roadmap for a lasting solution to the complex problem.

"Fortunately a road map already exist, the advisory report by the Annan commission which Aung San Suu Kyi says she was ready to implement already exists... so there is a blueprint already available, in fact all of these occurred just after the report was released...."

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

It's genocide'

FROM PAGE 1

find out the reason for this exodus," he said.

His remarks are even less likely than Suu Kyi's to mollify global concerns as he questioned, like Suu Kyi the day before, the reasons for the flight of the 4,22,000 Rohingyas to Bangladesh.

He also questioned the timing of an army campaign that includes shooting innocent civilians, burning of villages and rape.

"Now this also said there had been no mass since September 5, a claim that has already been debunked by Western reporters on the grounds.

Smoke could be seen rising from at least two places in Myanmar as late as Wednesday, a Reuters reporter in the east said. The burning of an army camp that includes shooting innocent civilians, burning of villages and rape.

Like Suu Kyi, Van Thid did not use the word genocide, referring to them simply as Muslims. The Rohingyas are widely reviled in the Buddhist-majority country.

Suu Kyi's stance has disheartened some rights groups who had campaigned for her freedom during the Nobel Peace Prize winner's 15 years under house arrest by a military junta.

The violence and the exodus of refugees has brought international condemnation and raised questions about the commitment of government leader Aung San Suu Kyi to human rights, and prospects for Myanmar's political and economic transition.

British Prime Minister David Cameron said earlier this month it was negotiating with veto powers China and Russia to ensure their protection.

China, which has close economic and diplomatic ties with Myanmar and is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, is strategically important country, has called for understanding of the government's efforts to protect stability.

US officials, for their part, have said that the violence in Myanmar is not genocide, but they have urged Myanmar to end the violence and allow full humanitarian aid access.

Britain sent back five Myanmar army officers from a training mission last week, "on account of the current situation in Rakhine", Myanmar's army said on Facebook late on Wednesday.

The move comes amid a mounting diplomatic spat between the two countries, with Britain saying on Wednesday it had suspended all educational training courses for the Myanmar military over concerns of rights abuses in Rakhine state.

Meanwhile, UK All Party Parliamentary Groups Chair Anne Main, who is visiting Bangladesh, yesterday said Myanmar was committing "atrocities" against the Rohingya, reports our staff correspondent.

"I have no doubt that this is ethnic cleansing," she told journalists at state guesthouse Padma in the capital.

The ruling Conservative Party law-

maker led a UK parliamentary delegation in a two-day visit to Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar in the last two days.

"We have seen and heard horrific things from people in camp," she said.

Paul Scully, also a ruling Conservative Party lawmaker, said the ongoing crisis in Myanmar needed to be stopped immediately through international pressure.

CHANCES OF ACTION SLIM

Early on Wednesday, US President Donald Trump called on the UN Security Council to take "strong and swift action" to prevent a repeat of the crisis.

It was the strongest US government response yet to the violence.

Even so, the chances of forceful action by the world body appear slim.

Security Council members said they could consider adopting a formal statement if the situation does not improve, but China and Russia are unlikely to agree to stronger action that would require the adoption of a resolution they could veto.

A UN Security Council resolution would need nine votes in favour and no vetoes by Russia, China, the US, Britain and France.

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ing to continue to try to deliver aid.

"We will carry on, nothing has been put on hold," Grazziela Leite Piccoli, ICRC spokeswoman for Asia, told AFP.

News of the clashes emerged as a truck hired by the Red Cross and ICRC crashed in Bangladesh, killing nine people and injuring 10 others.

"It was carrying the food to Rohingya people in the camps," she said.

The two of the pre-existing Rohingya settlements in Kutupalong and Balukhali in Ukhaia have effectively merged into one densely populated mega-settlement of nearly 500,000 refugees, making it one of the largest refugee concentrations in the world, the statement said.

Makeshift settlements on side of roads and in the hilly terrain do not have sanitation and little potable water is available there. People are drinking water collected from paddy field puddles or hand-dug shallow wells often contaminated with excreta.

While the prices of food are skyrocketing, Rohingyas are only eating one meal of plain rice a day, the statement said.

The statement also quoted MSF Emergency Coordinator Robert Ousef. "The situation in the camps is incredibly fragile, especially with regards to shelter, food and water and sanitation, that one small event could lead to an outbreak that may be the tipping point between a crisis and a catastrophe."

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Fear of health emergency

FROM PAGE 2

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Nine killed

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Naikhangghari Upazila Health Complex, said Salman Karim Khan, a doctor at the upazila health complex.

All the victims hail from Naikhangghari sadar area, said AK Jahangir.

He said they were supposed to distribute food packs, weighing 50kg, to each Rohingya family.

One of their trucks was able to cross a patch of battered road but the Chakdhalha B8B camp but the second truck flipped over.

The overturned trucks were heading towards Amtoli area from where the labourers were supposed to carry the packs to a remote camp, he added.

The packs had rice, chickpeas, sugar, oil, lentil and sattu.

About 7,500 Rohingya refugees had been staying in Boro Shonkhola of Naikhangghari upazila for 20 days, said Deputy Commissioner Dilip Kumar Das.

More than 420,000 Rohingya have fled Myanmar's northern Rakhine state and have taken shelter in Bangladesh in less than a month.

Meanwhile, management, staff and volunteers of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, management of the ICRC and IFRC expressed deep shock and condolences over the deaths of the workers in Bandarban.

Haftiz Ahmed Mazumdar, chairman of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, said all members of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, IFRC and ICRC representatives expressed sincere sympathy to the bereaved families.

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Besides, government facilities have treated 2,364 Rohingyas for serious injuries, 7,969 for respiratory infections, 2,335 for skin diseases and 3,520 for diarrhoea.

The government is setting up 12 health centres at the Rohingya camps, 20 doctors, 12 nurses and other health personnel would be deployed at the centres.

Nasim said more than 40 private and international organisations are directly and indirectly involved in the services that include family planning.

Nasim urged the international community to put pressure on Myanmar to take back their citizens from Bangladesh.

Two additional hours of medicare on September 28

The health minister said government hospitals will provide two additional hours of service on September 28, the birthday of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

"We decided to provide medicare at all government hospitals from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, instead of 8:00 AM to 2 PM."

RELIEF MATERIALS COMING IN

King Salman Centre for Relief and Humanitarian Aid of Saudi Arabia has provided 100 tonnes of core relief items including food and materials for shelter.

ICOM has chartered a Boeing 747 to bring the aid to Bangladesh today, said a press release.

Iran dispatched 29 tonnes of relief materials including tents, blankets and medicine. On September 15, Iran sent 41 tonnes of relief.

Sexual violence

Hundreds of thousands of refugees are living in an extremely precarious situation, and all the preconditions for a public health disaster are there, White said in the statement.

She also warned of a very high risk of an outbreak of infectious diseases.

Two of the pre-existing Rohingya settlements in Kutupalong and Balukhali in Ukhaia have effectively merged into one densely populated mega-settlement of nearly 500,000 refugees, making it one of the largest refugee concentrations in the world, the statement said.

Makeshift settlements on side of roads and in the hilly terrain do not have sanitation and little potable water is available there. People are drinking water collected from paddy field puddles or hand-dug shallow wells often contaminated with excreta.

While the prices of food are skyrocketing, Rohingyas are only eating one meal of plain rice a day, the statement said.

The statement also quoted MSF Emergency Coordinator Robert Ousef. "The situation in the camps is incredibly fragile, especially with regards to shelter, food and water and sanitation, that one small event could lead to an outbreak that may be the tipping point between a crisis and a catastrophe."

MSF called for massive scale-up of humanitarian aid, a comprehensive vaccination campaign for measles and cholera to reduce the risk of an outbreak.

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