

Islamic Relief responds to massive fire in Rohingya refugee camp



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Islamic Relief is scaling up to provide emergency shelter and sanitation to thousands of people made homeless by the devastating fire at Balukali refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

Around 10,000 shelters have been destroyed and almost 90,000 people affected. An emergency assessment by Islamic Relief and our local partner organisation, Uttaran, has found that thousands of people have been left without any latrines, washing facilities or clean water – putting people at grave risk of disease outbreaks as the camp becomes increasingly congested.

Many of the homeless have been taken in by relatives or neighbours, and Islamic Relief teams on the ground say that conditions are now extremely cramped, with tents designed for four people now holding eight or nine. With two major wells destroyed, there are long queues of people waiting for hours to get water.

Islamic Relief, in coordination with local authorities, will provide almost 6,000 people with emergency tents, latrines, hygiene kits including face masks and Covid-19 protective material, and other items such as clothes and mosquito nets.

“Tens of thousands of people have lost everything they own. All they have left is the clothes they were wearing when the fire broke out. Many fled to Bangladesh with nothing as they escaped terrible violence and they have been trying to rebuild their lives here, only for the fire to destroy everything. “The level of destruction is devastating and will take a long time to recover. People are still in shock. Local community groups have been central to the emergency response but they need

more support.” The camps at Cox’s Bazar currently shelter more than 870,000 Rohingya refugees. 15 people are confirmed to have died in the fire so far, although there are fears that the numbers will rise. More than 400 people are still missing.

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