

Burma and Bangladesh – Regional Crisis Response

September 11, 2020

SITUATION AT A GLANCE

985,658

People in Need of Humanitarian Assistance in Burma

UN – December 2019

105,522

IDPs in Burma's Kachin and Northern Shan

UN – April 2020

131,907

IDPs in Burma's Rakhine IDP Sites¹

UN – June 2020

860,494

Total Number of Refugees in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar

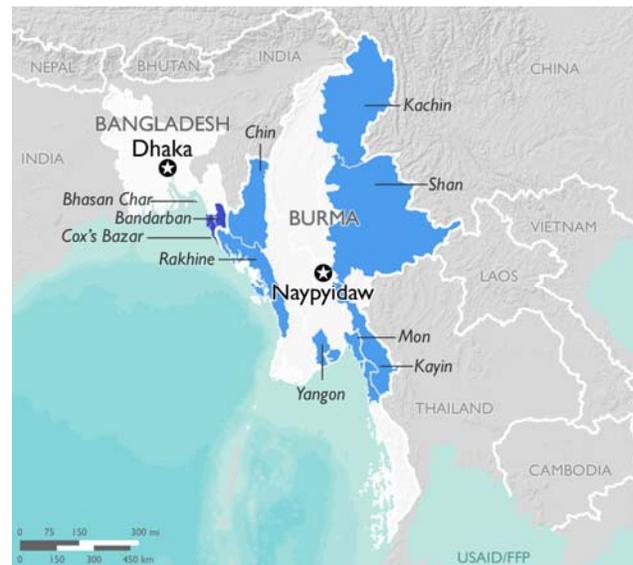
UNHCR – July 2020

711,460

People Displaced from Burma to Bangladesh Since August 25, 2017

UNHCR – July 2020

- Since late June, Government of Burma military operations against the Arakan Army (AA) armed group have resulted in increased population displacement in Rakhine State. Humanitarian access in the affected areas remains highly restricted, and protection issues persist throughout Rakhine.
- Restrictions related to coronavirus disease (COVID-19) have limited humanitarian access and impeded critical activities in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar District.
- On September 5, Government of Bangladesh officials hosted "go-and-see" visits for 40 Rohingya refugees and several camp officials to Bhasan Char Island—a previously uninhabited and flood-prone island in the Bay of Bengal.



TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING For the Burma and Bangladesh Response in FY 2020

USAID/BHA^{2,3} \$117,221,812
State/PRM⁴ \$144,063,793

For complete funding breakdown with partners, see detailed chart on page 7

Total \$261,285,605⁵

¹This number reflects the number of IDPs in sites in central Rakhine State created after the outbreak of violence in Rakhine in 2012. It does not include the sites and settlements in Rakhine where people displaced by the recent clashes in the state are currently hosted.

²USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)

³Total USAID/BHA funding includes non-food humanitarian assistance from the former Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance and emergency food assistance from the former Office of Food for Peace.

⁴U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM)

⁵This total includes approximately \$42,287,165 in supplemental funding through USAID/BHA and State/PRM for COVID-19 preparedness and response activities.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Military Operations Drive Population Displacement in Northern Rakhine

Between June 25 and 30, a Government of Burma military offensive against the AA in northern and eastern areas of Rakhine's Rathedaung Township displaced at least 2,800 people to other areas of Rathedaung, as well as neighboring Buthidaung, Ponnagyun, and Sittwe townships, the UN reports. Prior to the late June military offensive, the AA–Government of Burma conflict had already displaced an estimated 14,600 people in Rathedaung. Humanitarian access to Rathedaung remains limited, restricting needs assessments and the delivery of assistance to new internally displaced persons (IDPs) and affected host communities, according to the UN. The AA–Government of Burma conflict has displaced more than 86,000 people—77,000 of whom now reside in IDP sites in Rakhine—since hostilities intensified in late 2018.

Additionally, according to an April Oxfam survey, displaced Rohingya and Kaman women in IDP camps in Rakhine face particular challenges due to significant protection risks, crowded shelter conditions, and impediments to accessing health care. Rohingya and Kaman women surveyed reported spending most of their time in small, overcrowded shelters and being discouraged from leaving the shelters to access health care and other services due to movement restrictions and gender norms. Rohingya and Kaman women also reported the risk of gender-based violence (GBV), particularly when accessing the camps' public latrines at night. As the Government of Burma's national camp closure strategy—the Government of Burma's plan to close or relocate IDP camps throughout the country—proceeds, Oxfam and other relief agencies continue to advocate the lifting of movement restrictions, improvement of shelter conditions in the camps, and consultation with IDPs on durable solutions as immediate priorities to assist women and other vulnerable populations in IDP camps in Rakhine.

Relief Organizations Continue COVID-19 Advocacy and Response in Rakhine

Humanitarians have expressed concern about a recent outbreak of community transmission and surge in confirmed cases that began in Rakhine's capital of Sittwe in mid-August. As of September 1, the Government of Burma Ministry of Health and Sports confirmed 409 COVID-19 cases in Rakhine since mid-May, of which 393 cases were confirmed between August 16 and September 1; additionally, on August 31, health actors confirmed the first COVID-19 case in an IDP site in Rakhine. Across Burma, health agencies have confirmed 2,265 COVID-19 cases as of September 11, the UN World Health Organization (WHO) reports. WHO is continuing advocacy efforts with and providing technical support to the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Rakhine State Health Department to curb the outbreak in Rakhine, including through improving COVID-19 isolation, patient transport, triage, and treatment capacity; strengthening infection prevention and control protocols and adherence; educating staff on personal protective equipment (PPE) use; and enhancing disease surveillance and reporting. U.S. Government (USG) partners operating in Burma are also implementing measures to reduce COVID-19 transmission among beneficiaries, humanitarian workers, and host communities by encouraging the proper use of PPE, emphasizing effective handwashing and sanitation practices, and maintaining spaces for adequate physical distancing at distribution sites.

Flooding Affects Vulnerable Populations in Kachin State

In mid-July, flooding caused by monsoon rains temporarily displaced more than 6,500 people in 19 townships across Burma's Kachin State, the UN reports. Additionally, heavy rains in western Kachin in early July triggered a landslide that resulted in at least 172 deaths and more than 50 injuries. Humanitarian organizations continue to implement preparedness measures to mitigate the

impact of flooding throughout Kachin, including coordinating with local authorities to establish contingency stocks of relief items to facilitate the efficient deployment of supplies when needed. USG partners are providing health assistance and protection services, as well as water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) kits to vulnerable communities affected by the flooding.

Rohingya Recognize Three Years Since Mass Displacement From Burma

On August 25, the international community joined Rohingya refugees in recognizing the three-year anniversary of the Rohingya mass exodus from Burma; beginning on August 25, 2017, a Government of Burma military campaign in western Burma prompted more than 700,000 Rohingya to flee to Bangladesh. In marking of the anniversary, the Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG)—a humanitarian coordinating body comprising UN agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other stakeholders in Bangladesh’s Rohingya refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar—acknowledged the resilience of Rohingya refugees and the generosity of Bangladeshi host communities, called for renewed support to address the humanitarian crisis, and reaffirmed its commitment to meeting the critical needs of the affected communities and identifying durable solutions for refugees, including their safe, dignified, sustainable, and voluntary return to Burma when conditions allow.

COVID-19 Complicates Protection Service Delivery in Cox’s Bazar

The outbreak of COVID-19 in Cox’s Bazar and containment measures by local authorities have significantly impeded GBV interventions, mental health and psychosocial support activities, and other protection-focused humanitarian services within the district, according to a June Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS) report. Humanitarian organizations have had limited direct access to GBV survivors, which has hindered efficient and confidential response to individual needs. In response to these protection gaps, as of mid-August relief organizations in Cox’s Bazar and the Government of Bangladesh Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) were in discussions about implementing a July National Task Force decision to officially resume protection and additional critical services in the camps, the ISCG reports. Due to access restrictions for humanitarian staff, relief organizations have recruited and trained approximately 2,000 refugee volunteers since May to assist in disseminating critical messaging on GBV prevention and protection initiatives throughout the camps and host communities, ACAPS reports. Additionally, USAID/BHA partner the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has provided mental health and psychosocial support messaging to approximately 43,100 people, distributed emergency relief supplies to nearly 1,100 beneficiaries, and trained nearly 40 isolation and treatment center staff to respond to incidents of GBV in Cox’s Bazar as of July 24. IOM also continued to support local primary health care facilities, where medical staff provided more than 25,300 primary health consultations to residents of Cox’s Bazar and the surrounding area during the same time period.

Relief Actors Aim to Mitigate Impacts of COVID-19, Flooding in Cox’s Bazar

Amid ongoing heavy monsoon rainfall throughout Bangladesh, relief actors—including USG partners CARE, IOM, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF)—are continuing COVID-19 and disaster risk reduction (DRR) programming in Cox’s Bazar to address the impacts of the monsoon rainfall and minimize transmission risks for COVID-19 and other waterborne and vector-borne diseases. Despite limited access to the refugee camps due to weather conditions and COVID-19-mitigation measures imposed by the Government of Bangladesh, relief organizations continued to implement activities, including livelihoods, health, protection, shelter, and WASH programs, in July. As part of these efforts, relief organizations completed nearly 80 landslide mitigation projects and repaired more than 160 feet of drainage infrastructure, nearly 160 staircases, and nearly 500 feet of bridges in the camps that had been damaged during the floods. The organizations also

conducted awareness-raising sessions for 350 Rohingya households on insulating shelters from the monsoon rains, and continued to repair latrines and bathing cubicles damaged by the heavy rainfall.

Government of Bangladesh Reaffirms Intent to Relocate Refugees

In an August 24 public statement, Government of Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen reaffirmed the government's intent to relocate Rohingya refugees to Bhasan Char Island and outlined a relocation plan and timeline, starting with moving 10,000 refugees to the island following Bangladesh's June-to-October monsoon season. In early May, the Government of Bangladesh already transferred more than 300 Rohingya stranded at sea to Bhasan Char. Since then, the UN has been negotiating terms of reference (TORs) to conduct a humanitarian protection visit for the refugees on Bhasan Char; in his remarks, Bin Momen reiterated government support for UN access to Bhasan Char to establish a response framework for the island, but agreement on the protection assessment TORs remains outstanding. On September 5, the Government of Bangladesh armed forces escorted 40 Rohingya community leaders, two female refugees, and several government representatives, including Camp in Charge and Office of the RRRC officials, from the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar to Bhasan Char Island for a three-day "go-and-see" visit to better inform the refugees about the island, local media report.

WHO Urges Increased COVID-19 Testing in Cox's Bazar Host Communities

WHO has called for increased COVID-19 testing among Cox's Bazar host communities following a reduction in testing rates since July, when the Government of Bangladesh introduced testing fees; refugees in the district are not charged for COVID-19 testing. Although the fee was recently reduced from \$2.50 to approximately \$1.20, the fee remains a significant deterrent from host community members getting tested, WHO reports; host community stigma around COVID-19 has also deterred testing. The UN agency has urged for greater community engagement in host communities to increase testing rates and encourage early diagnosis of the disease and isolation of cases. While testing has decreased, the positive COVID-19 test result rate for the host community continues to fluctuate between 10 to 20 percent, compared to the approximately 2 percent positive rate in Cox's Bazar refugee camps. In the refugee camps, WHO notes that the majority of test samples collected were among refugees ages 29 years and younger, and has advocated for increased testing among older age groups, amid other robust COVID-19 preparedness and response activities in the camps. As of September 11, WHO reported 130 confirmed COVID-19 cases among the refugee population in Cox's Bazar, 4,082 cases within Cox's Bazar host communities, and 332,970 cases nationwide.

KEY FIGURES



930,000

People supported through FY 2020 BHA emergency food assistance

U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

With more than \$89 million in FY 2020 funding to the UN World Food Program (WFP), USAID/BHA supported food assistance aims to reach more than 930,000 people, including approximately 347,000 vulnerable individuals in Burma and 585,000 Rohingya refugees and host community members in Cox's Bazar, by providing locally, regionally, and internationally procured in-kind food assistance; cash transfers for food; and food vouchers. USAID/BHA also supports coordination and capacity-building activities among food security agencies in the two countries to strengthen response efforts. Additionally, State/PRM assistance to IOM, UNHCR, and UNICEF supports the delivery of complementary livelihoods and nutrition services to

vulnerable individuals in Burma and Bangladesh.



9

USG partners implementing FY 2020 stand-alone protection interventions

PROTECTION

The USG supports nine partners to address protection concerns among conflict-affected and displaced populations in Burma's Kachin, Rakhine, and Shan states; host communities and Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar; and Rohingya refugees across Southeast Asia. USG-supported protection activities in Burma and Bangladesh aim to increase access to and the provision of protection services, including GBV prevention and case management, child-friendly spaces, community-based mental health and psychosocial support, and legal assistance. USG partners also work with the broader humanitarian community in Burma to support advocacy efforts with authorities to promote the delivery of protection services in areas with significant humanitarian access constraints.



\$4.9 Million

In FY 2020 funding for shelter and settlements emergency and DRR activities

SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS

The USG provides shelter and site management assistance in Burma and Bangladesh to support newly displaced persons, improve living conditions, and strengthen resilience against the impact of cyclones and other natural disasters. With nearly \$4.9 million in FY 2020 funding, USAID/BHA partners in Burma are constructing and repairing durable shelters and distributing essential household items for vulnerable IDPs in Kachin, Rakhine, and Shan, while partners in Bangladesh are conducting disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities to establish and strengthen shelters in host communities and refugee camps in Bandarban and Cox's Bazar districts. State/PRM-supported shelter assistance includes emergency shelter repairs and distribution of shelter materials, such as plastic sheeting to prevent roof leaks, complemented by site coordination and site management capacity-building activities. USG partners are also providing cash assistance for host community members and refugees to purchase local shelter materials.



5

NGO partners implementing critical FY 2020 WASH programming

WASH

The USG supports WASH programming in Bangladesh's Bandarban and Cox's Bazar districts and across Burma to ensure access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities, prevent communicable disease outbreaks, and mitigate the risk of acute malnutrition in vulnerable children and mothers. Through FY 2020 funding to IOM, Red Cross agencies, UNICEF, and five NGO partners, USG assistance helps to address critical WASH needs by installing hand washing stations and latrines, improving drainage and waste removal systems, supplying safe drinking water and hygiene supplies, and strengthening community awareness of proper WASH practices to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases.

CONTEXT IN BRIEF

- Since November 2018, escalating clashes between the AA and Government of Burma forces have displaced more than 86,000 civilians, mostly ethnic Rakhine, in Rakhine and Chin states. In addition, intercommunal violence in 2012 displaced tens of thousands of people in Rakhine, and nearly 132,000 people affected by the 2012 clashes remained displaced in the state as of June 2020. Displaced populations, as well as other vulnerable individuals, continue to lack access to basic services and livelihood opportunities due to ongoing tensions and movement restrictions. Many IDPs in Rakhine are Rohingya, a minority group not recognized by the Government of Burma and denied rights to citizenship, freedom of movement, and public services. As of December 2019, an estimated 600,000 ethnic Rohingya remained in Rakhine.
- Continued conflict between Government of Burma forces and non-state armed groups since June 2011 in Kachin and northern Shan has generated widespread displacement and exacerbated humanitarian needs. As of June 2020, more than 105,000 people remained displaced in Kachin and northern Shan, with many IDPs residing in areas outside of Government of Burma control and with limited or no humanitarian access, hindering efforts to provide assistance to displaced and other populations in need.
- Following Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army attacks on northern Rakhine State checkpoints and police posts in October 2016 and August 2017, Government of Burma forces launched military operations in Buthidaung, Maungdaw, and Rathedaung townships. More than 860,000 people have fled Burma into neighboring Bangladesh and taken shelter in Cox’s Bazar’s 34 refugee camps as of July 2020, while other refugees are sheltering in host communities, UNHCR reports. Refugee populations largely rely on humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs, including food, shelter, and WASH services; many refugees have reported restrictions that limit their access to basic education services, capacity to engage in income-earning activities, and freedom of movement. Refugees and host communities in Cox’s Bazar are also vulnerable to natural hazards such as cyclones and flooding.
- On December 20, 2019, U.S. Ambassador Scot Marciel re-declared a disaster for Burma due to the ongoing complex emergency.

USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE BURMA–BANGLADESH RESPONSE IN FY 2020¹

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
FUNDING IN BURMA AND BANGLADESH FOR THE REGIONAL CRISIS RESPONSE²			
USAID/BHA			
Non-Food Assistance			
Danish Refugee Council (DRC)	Economic Recovery and Market Systems (ERMS), Protection	Rakhine	\$1,200,000
UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management	Countrywide	\$400,000
Relief International	Multipurpose Cash Assistance, Protection, Risk Management Policy and Practice, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Rakhine, Shan	\$1,200,000
Solidarités International	Agriculture and Food Security, ERMS, WASH	Kachin, Rakhine	\$2,500,000
UNICEF	Health, Protection, WASH	Kachin, Rakhine, Shan	\$3,002,184
	Program Support		\$25,000

TOTAL NON-FOOD ASSISTANCE FUNDING FOR THE BURMA COMPLEX EMERGENCY			\$8,327,184
CARE	Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and Practice, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Cox's Bazar	\$3,500,000
Catholic Relief Services (CRS)	Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and Practice, Shelter and Settlements	Bandarban	\$4,194,628
Implementing Partner	Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and Practice, Shelter and Settlements	Cox's Bazar	\$1,000,000
TOTAL USAID/BHA DRR FUNDING IN BANGLADESH			\$8,694,628
TOTAL NON-FOOD ASSISTANCE FUNDING IN BURMA AND BANGLADESH			\$17,021,812
Food Assistance³			
WFP	Local, Regional, and International Procurement	Burma	\$8,808,055
	Complementary Services	Burma	\$200,000
	Cash Transfers for Food	Burma	\$5,191,945
TOTAL FOOD ASSISTANCE FUNDING FOR THE BURMA COMPLEX EMERGENCY			\$14,200,000
WFP	Food Vouchers	Bangladesh	\$53,950,000
	Local, Regional, and International Procurement	Bangladesh	\$12,200,000
	Complementary Services	Bangladesh	\$2,850,000
	Cash Transfers for Food	Bangladesh	\$6,000,000
TOTAL FOOD ASSISTANCE FUNDING FOR THE ROHINGYA RESPONSE IN BANGLADESH			\$75,000,000
TOTAL USAID/BHA FOOD ASSISTANCE FUNDING IN BURMA AND BANGLADESH			\$89,200,000
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING			\$106,221,812
STATE/PRM			
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Bangladesh	\$3,200,000
ICRC	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Burma	\$6,900,000
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Bangladesh	\$8,000,000
International Rescue Committee (IRC)	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Thailand	\$19,406,311
IOM	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Bangladesh	\$30,670,487
UNHCR	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Bangladesh	\$21,875,000
UNHCR	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Burma	\$3,750,000
UNHCR	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Regional	\$3,075,000
UNICEF	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Bangladesh	\$13,900,000
WHO	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Bangladesh	\$1,999,830
TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING			\$112,776,628
TOTAL USG FUNDING FOR THE BURMA AND BANGLADESH REGIONAL CRISIS RESPONSE IN FY 2020			\$218,998,440

FUNDING IN BURMA AND BANGLADESH FOR COVID-19 OUTBREAK PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE⁴			
USAID/BHA			
Non-Food Assistance			
IOM	HCIM, Health, Protection, WASH	Kachin, Kayin, Mon, Rakhine, Shan	\$1,000,000
	ERMS, Health, Protection, WASH	Cox's Bazar	\$1,000,000
IRC	Health, Protection	Chin, Kachin, Kayin, Rakhine, Shan	\$2,000,000
	Health, Protection, WASH	Cox's Bazar	\$2,000,000
Save the Children Federation (SCF)	Health, Protection, WASH	Bandarban, Cox's Bazar	\$2,000,000

UNICEF	Health, Protection, WASH	Chin, Kachin, Kayin, Rakhine, Shan	\$3,000,000
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING			\$11,000,000
STATE/PRM			
ICRC	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Bangladesh	\$3,500,000
ICRC	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Burma	\$2,750,000
IFRC	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Bangladesh	\$1,724,000
IOM	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Bangladesh	\$7,380,000
IRC	Humanitarian Assistance - COVID-19 Preparedness and Response	Thailand	\$1,986,165
UNHCR	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Bangladesh	\$6,397,000
UNHCR	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Malaysia	\$200,000
UNHCR	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Burma	\$2,200,000
UNICEF	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Bangladesh	\$5,150,000
TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING			\$31,287,165
TOTAL USG FUNDING FOR COVID-19 OUTBREAK PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE IN BURMA AND BANGLADESH IN FY 2020			\$42,287,165
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING FOR BURMA AND BANGLADESH IN FY 2020			\$117,221,812
TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING FOR BURMA AND BANGLADESH IN FY 2020			\$144,063,793
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR BURMA AND BANGLADESH IN FY 2020⁵			\$261,285,605

1 Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. USAID/BHA and State/PRM funding includes funding for both Burmese refugees and asylum seekers in the region, as well as IDPs inside Burma.

2 USG funding represents publicly announced funding as of September 11, 2020.

3 Estimated value of food assistance and transportation costs at time of procurement; subject to change once purchased.

4 Figures represent supplemental International Disaster Assistance (IDA) and Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) funding committed for COVID-19 preparedness and response as of September 11.

5 Funding for populations in Burma and Bangladesh affected by the violence in Rakhine State totals nearly \$966 million—including nearly \$806 million in Bangladesh and approximately \$161 million in Burma—since the outbreak of violence in August 2017. This includes nearly \$509 million in State/PRM funding, more than \$90 million in USAID/BHA non-food assistance funding, and nearly \$367 million in USAID/BHA food assistance funding for populations affected by the violence in Rakhine State and other vulnerable populations. The fact sheet total includes funding from October 1, 2019, through September 11, 2020.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://www.interaction.org).

USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.

More information can be found at:

- USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](https://www.cidi.org)
- Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](https://www.reliefweb.int).

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)