

# “Window of opportunity is closing” – final plea for funds as monsoon season looms over Cox’s Bazar

**Cox’s Bazar/Geneva, 11 May 2018** – The window of opportunity to protect people in Cox’s Bazar against floods and landslides is rapidly closing.

Pre-monsoon rains are already causing havoc in camps for people displaced from Rakhine State in neighbouring Myanmar. The heavy rains normally start at the end of May, with the rainy season continuing through to September.

Steve McAndrew, the head of operations for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in Cox’s Bazar said:

*“It is no longer possible to provide everyone in the camps with adequate shelter before the rains really set in. Instead, we are focusing on what we can do to protect those most vulnerable to floods and landslides.*

*“We are shoring up essential services like water and sanitation, and we are preparing to launch multiple emergency response operations over the coming months. We are prepositioning supplies, and we are expanding volunteer outreach into the furthest corners of the camps,”* said McAndrew.

Of the 785,000 people living in the camps around Cox’s Bazar, an estimated 200,000 are believed to be at risk of floods and landslides. This includes 25,000 living in extremely high-risk areas – on steep and denuded hill sides that are likely to wash away in the first sustained downpour.

With only weeks now remaining before the beginning of the rainy season, IFRC is issuing an urgent plea for 6.4 million Swiss francs to fund relief activities that are implemented by Bangladesh Red Crescent Society volunteers. The activities are designed to help people before and during the monsoon and cyclone seasons.

*“The window of opportunity to make a difference is closing very quickly. We have a plan, we have well trained volunteers and staff, and we have a presence throughout the camps. We need money,”* said IFRC’s Steve McAndrew.

In addition to concerns about floods and landslides, IFRC medical staff are also alarmed about the potential risk of major disease outbreaks, triggered by the arrival of rain. Flooding will heighten the threat of waterborne disease, including acute watery diarrhoea or diphtheria, which thrives in congestion.

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## **Note to editors:**

The 6.4 million Swiss francs needed in the coming weeks and months reflects a range of planned activities under **IFRC’s emergency appeal for Cox’s Bazar**. This 29 million Swiss franc appeal is only 54 per cent funded.

Activities funded by this 6.4 million could include:

- Expanded volunteer outreach throughout the camps, making sure that people know the risks of the monsoon, what to do and what support will be available.
- Support for families evacuated from the highest risk areas.
- Relocation of health clinics threatened by wind or floods.
- Increased stocks of emergency supplies, such as plastic sheeting, ropes, toolkits, hygiene kits and kitchen sets to replace those destroyed or washed away.
- Prepositioned first aid backpacks and expanded first aid training for volunteers so that they can go shelter to shelter treating injuries immediately following storms and floods.
- Reinforcement of essential services like water points and latrines so they are less likely to be blown away or inundated. Expanded stockpiles of emergency supplies of water purification tablets, buckets and disinfecting spray.

#### Related content

[Learn more](#) about the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society/IFRC emergency operation in Cox's Bazar.

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