

Burma and Bangladesh – Regional Crisis Response

October 22, 2020

SITUATION AT A GLANCE

985,658

People in Need of
Humanitarian
Assistance in Burma

UN – December 2019

105,315

IDPs in Burma's Kachin
and Northern Shan

UN – August 2020

131,907

IDPs—Originally
Displaced in 2012—in
Burma's Rakhine IDP
Sites

UN – June 2020

97,477

IDPs Displaced by the
Government of Burma—
AA Conflict in Rakhine
and Chin

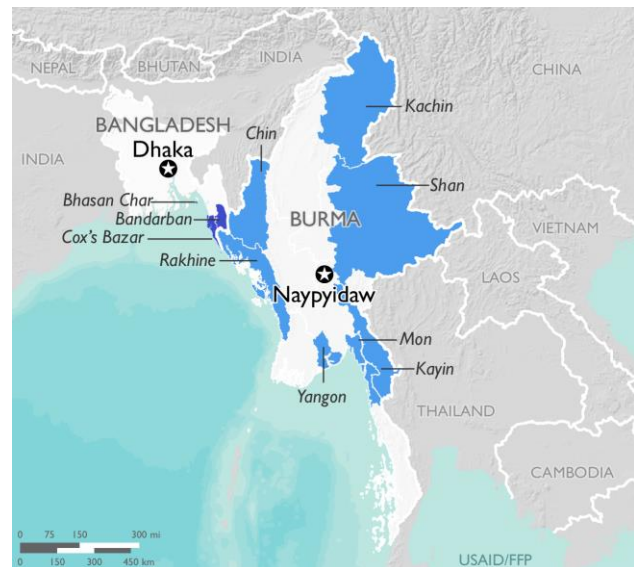
UN – October 2020

861,545

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

UNHCR – September 2020

- The USG announces nearly \$200 million in FY 2020 funding for the Burma and Bangladesh response.
- Conflict between the Government of Burma and the Arakan Army (AA) armed group has intensified since late August, nearly doubling the number of individuals displaced by the conflict since the beginning of 2020.
- Government of Burma restrictions related to a surge in COVID-19 cases are unnecessarily compromising humanitarian access to displaced populations.
- Violence in the Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar District between rival armed groups has resulted in casualties and displacement, raising additional protection concerns.



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

USAID/BHA ^{1,2}	\$195,903,451
State/PRM ³	\$273,142,827

For complete funding breakdown with partners, see detailed chart on page 6

Total **\$469,046,278⁴**

¹ USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)

² Total 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.

³ U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM)

⁴ This total includes \$47,759,529 in funding through USAID/BHA and State/PRM for COVID-19 preparedness and response activities, of which \$43,187,165 is supplemental funding and \$4,572,364 is non-supplemental funding.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

USG Announces FY 2020 Response Funding

On October 22, Deputy Secretary of State Stephen E. Biegun announced nearly \$200 million in U.S. Government (USG) funding at a donor conference promoting support for Rohingya refugees and host countries co-hosted by the U.S., the UK, the European Union, and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The funding reflects previously unannounced FY 2020 awards for the Burma and Bangladesh response.

Renewed AA–Government of Burma Clashes Increase Displacement

Fighting in Burma's Rakhine State between Government of Burma forces and the AA has intensified since August, with new displacements and attacks on civilians in Kyauktaw, Myebon, and Rathedaung townships. On September 8, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Ola Almgren issued a statement urging parties to the conflict to adhere to international humanitarian law and permit humanitarian access to affected areas. On September 22, UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Burma Thomas Andrews called for an immediate ceasefire in Rakhine. An estimated 97,400 individuals were displaced across Rakhine and Chin states as of October 4, approximately double the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) reported in January 2020, according to the UN.

As COVID-19 Spreads in Rakhine, Restrictions Slow Humanitarian Response

As of October 16, the Government of Burma Ministry of Health and Sports (MoHS) had confirmed nearly 2,428 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) cases in Rakhine, representing a six-fold increase since September 1, when the MoHS had reported only 409 confirmed cases in the state. While the Rakhine State Government (RSG) has stated that life-saving assistance can continue, blanket suspensions of organizations with COVID-19 cases among their staff affected 17 humanitarian organizations in September and October. While the RSG has eased blanket suspensions in recent weeks, a new requirement that staff conducting life-saving activities receive certification of negative test results has resulted in significant delays in issuing travel authorizations due to limited testing and administrative capacity. Even after travel approvals are granted, local authorities and camp management committees have blocked activities in some cases due to misunderstanding of new requirements, among other reasons. Humanitarian organizations, including USG partners, are advocating for the RSG to adopt revised infection prevention and control measures for humanitarian staff, as a means of balancing legitimate public health needs with the urgent priority of continuing to deliver assistance efficiently and safely. One USAID/BHA non-governmental organization (NGO) partner regained approval to operate in Rathedaung in late September and was able to restart mobile clinic services and other health activities while continuing to use appropriate personal protective equipment and apply screening and triage procedures to enhance the safety of patients and staff. In coordination with other humanitarian organizations in Rakhine, the NGO partner also launched online training tools designed to support efforts to combat COVID-19-related stigma, reaching participants in locations such as Rakhine's Maungdaw Township.

Violence in Rohingya Camps Leads to Casualties, Displacement

Clashes between two armed groups in the Cox's Bazar refugee camps escalated beginning the week of September 27, resulting in at least eight deaths and injuring numerous others as of October 6, international media report. The fighting also displaced more than 300 households and destroyed 20 shelters, according to UNHCR. As of October 6, the Bangladesh Armed Police Battalion had increased presence in the camps during the day, while Bangladesh Armed Forces personnel had begun patrolling

the camps at night, to stabilize the security situation. The clashes, which were reportedly related to control over illegal drug trafficking, resulted in a brief withdrawal of some humanitarian organizations operating in the refugee camps, the UN reports. While relief actors have not reported new clashes in recent days, the incidents highlight ongoing risks to refugees living in the camps, UNHCR reports.

Coordinated COVID-19 Response Continues in Cox's Bazar

As of October 19, there were 287 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the Cox's Bazar refugee camps, as well as 4,699 cases in the host community, resulting in nine refugee deaths and 70 host community member deaths, the UN reports. Humanitarian organizations—including USG partners the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR—operating in the Cox's Bazar refugee camps continue to provide critical, multi-sector assistance to prevent and respond to the spread of COVID-19. With USG support, IOM is providing critical equipment to Cox's Bazar health facilities to help local health care providers meet heightened needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. In August and September, the UN agency provided medical supplies and personal protective equipment—including 10,000 surgical masks, 5,000 face shields, 200 mosquito nets, and six air conditioners—to isolation and treatment centers in Cox's Bazar's Chakaria and Ramu sub-districts. From October 2 to 8, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) sector organizations reached nearly 250,000 individuals with COVID-19 information through neighborhood-based campaigns and more than 135,000 people through mass media, according to the Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG)—a humanitarian coordinating body comprising UN agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders in the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar.

COVID-19 Livelihood Disruptions Endanger Urban Cox's Bazar Households

Movement restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic have caused major disruptions to livelihoods, exacerbated household vulnerability, and constrained access to adequate food and nutrition for households in the urban Cox's Bazar sub-district located within Cox's Bazar District, according to a July urban vulnerability assessment by the UN World Food Program (WFP). More than half of the nearly 450 surveyed households reported being moderately to highly vulnerable as a result of the loss of income, nearly double the pre-pandemic proportion of households reporting the same level of vulnerability. Separately, since March, WFP reported a nearly 50 percent drop in household food expenditure, as well as a quadrupling in the number of households that have reduced their food consumption to only two meals per day, indicating significant effects of COVID-19 on regular access to food in the district. To sustain immediate food consumption levels, households were increasingly adopting negative coping mechanisms—including borrowing food, reducing meal frequency and portion size, buying food on credit, or spending household savings—to meet food needs, which could have an additional negative effect on the livelihoods of the urban population in the coming months.

Cox's Bazar Monsoon and Cyclone Response, Readiness Work Continues

As the April-to-October monsoon season comes to an end and Bangladesh's second annual monsoon season—which mainly occurs from October to November—continues, humanitarian organizations in Cox's Bazar are actively responding to monsoon-related needs in refugee camps and host communities. Between September 25 and October 1, monsoon-related events directly affected nearly 1,540 Rohingya refugees, with more than 1,430 affected by wind, storms, and rain, and more than 100 affected by landslides. Following these events, ISCG partners conducted rapid assessments and provided emergency assistance to affected households. Relief organizations also implemented mitigation measures, such as stabilizing slopes, constructing stairway hand railings, and repairing bridges, in September and October. Additionally, as of October 8, health sector organizations had stored contingency health supplies for use in the event of a weather-related incident in 20 locations across Cox's Bazar, ISCG reports.

KEY FIGURES



1.7 Million

People supported through FY 2020 BHA emergency food assistance



9

USG partners implementing FY 2020 stand-alone protection interventions



\$6.7 Million

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

U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

With more than \$150 million in FY 2020 funding to WFP, USAID/BHA supported food assistance aims to reach nearly 1.7 million people, including approximately 355,000 vulnerable individuals in Burma and more than 1.3 million Rohingya refugees and host community members in Cox's Bazar, by providing cash transfers for food, food vouchers, and locally, regionally, and internationally procured in-kind food assistance. USAID/BHA also supports coordination and capacity-building activities among food security agencies in the two countries to strengthen response efforts. Additionally, USAID/BHA assistance to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), WFP, and one NGO partner supports nutrition assistance in Burma, while State/PRM assistance to IOM, UNHCR, and UNICEF supports the delivery of complementary livelihoods and nutrition services to vulnerable individuals in Bangladesh.

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 gender-based violence 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.

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 more than \$6.7 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 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.



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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, providing 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

- Continued conflict between Government of Burma forces and non-state armed groups since June 2011 in Kachin and northern Shan states has generated widespread displacement and exacerbated humanitarian needs. As of August 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.
- Government of Burma forces launched large-scale and indiscriminate military operations in Rakhine's Buthidaung, Maungdaw, and Rathedaung townships that have since been characterized by the international community as ethnic cleansing following Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army attacks on northern Rakhine State checkpoints and police posts in October 2016 and August 2017. Nearly 862,000 people had fled Burma into neighboring Bangladesh and taken shelter in Cox's Bazar's 34 refugee camps as of September 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.
- Since November 2018, escalating clashes between the AA and Government of Burma forces have displaced more than 97,000 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.
- 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			
Burma			
Non-Food Assistance			
Danish Refugee Council (DRC)	Economic Recovery and Market Systems (ERMS), Protection	Kachin, Rakhine, Shan	\$1,200,000
International Rescue Committee (IRC)	Health, Protection	Chin, Kachin, Rakhine, Shan	\$1,200,000
Metta Foundation	Agriculture and Food Security, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Kachin, Shan	\$1,500,000

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)	ERMS, Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management (HCIM), Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA)	Kachin, Rakhine, Shan	\$1,500,000
UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	HCIM	Countrywide	\$400,000
	Country-Based Pooled Fund ³	Countrywide	\$2,000,000
Relief International	MPCA, Protection, Risk Management Policy and Practice, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Rakhine, Shan	\$1,200,000
Save the Children (SCF)	Health, Nutrition, Protection, WASH	Rakhine, Shan	\$2,506,329
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			\$17,033,513
Food Assistance			
DRC	Agriculture and Food Security	Burma	\$229,750
	Cash Transfers for Food	Burma	\$2,031,696
UNICEF	Complementary Services	Burma	\$618,668
	Local, Regional, and International Procurement	Burma	\$619,886
WFP	Local, Regional, and International Procurement	Burma	\$12,529,735
	Complementary Services	Burma	\$200,000
	Cash Transfers for Food	Burma	\$12,520,265
TOTAL FOOD ASSISTANCE FUNDING IN BURMA			\$28,750,000
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING IN BURMA			\$45,783,513
Bangladesh			
Non-Food Assistance			
CARE	Risk Mangement Policy and Practice, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Cox's Bazar	\$3,500,000
Catholic Relief Services (CRS)	Risk Mangement Policy and Practice, Shelter and Settlements	Bandarban	\$4,194,628
IOM	Risk Mangement Policy and Practice, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Cox's Bazar	\$3,500,000
Implementing Partner	Risk Mangement Policy and Practice, Shelter and Settlements	Cox's Bazar	\$1,000,000
TOTAL NON-FOOD ASSISTANCE FUNDING IN BANGLADESH			\$12,194,628
Food Assistance ⁴			
WFP	Food Vouchers	Bangladesh	\$83,950,000
	Local, Regional, and International Procurement	Bangladesh	\$22,200,000

	Complementary Services	Bangladesh	\$11,550,000
	Cash Transfers for Food	Bangladesh	\$7,300,000
UNICEF	Nutrition	Bangladesh	\$1,925,310
TOTAL FOOD ASSISTANCE FUNDING FOR THE ROHINGYA RESPONSE IN BANGLADESH			\$126,925,310
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING IN BANGLADESH			\$139,119,938
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING IN BURMA AND BANGLADESH			\$184,903,451
STATE/PRM			
The Ara Trust	Gender-Based Violence	India	\$176,860
Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation	Health	Malaysia	\$498,026
Humanity & Inclusion/ Handicap International (HI)	Health	Bangladesh	\$4,366,186
	Protection	Thailand	\$599,860
Health Equity Initiatives	Health	Malaysia	\$600,000
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Bangladesh	\$5,700,000
	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Burma	\$19,100,000
International Catholic Migration Commission	Gender-Based Violence	Malaysia	\$599,960
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Bangladesh	\$8,000,000
IRC	Livelihoods	Bangladesh	\$6,390,820
	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Thailand	\$19,406,311
IOM	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Bangladesh	\$33,270,487
	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Indonesia	\$125,000
Kumpulan ACTS	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Thailand	\$400,000
	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Malaysia	\$372,674
Terre des Hommes Foundation	Health	Bangladesh	\$3,277,284
	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Bangladesh	\$80,875,000
UNHCR	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Burma	\$12,750,000
	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Regional	\$6,075,000
UNICEF	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Bangladesh	\$31,800,000
UN World Health Organization (WHO)	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Bangladesh	\$1,999,830
TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING			\$236,383,298
TOTAL USG FUNDING FOR THE BURMA AND BANGLADESH REGIONAL CRISIS RESPONSE IN FY 2020			\$421,286,749

FUNDING IN BURMA AND BANGLADESH FOR COVID-19 OUTBREAK PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE ⁵			
USAID/BHA			
Non-Food Assistance			
IOM	HCIM, Health, Protection, WASH	Kachin, Kayin, Mon, Rakhine, Shan	\$1,000,000
IRC	Health, Protection	Chin, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Rakhine, Shan	\$2,000,000
UNICEF	Health, Protection, WASH	Chin, Kachin, Kayin, Rakhine, Shan	\$3,000,000
TOTAL NON-FOOD ASSISTANCE FUNDING IN BURMA			\$6,000,000
IOM	ERMS, Health, Protection, WASH	Cox's Bazar	\$1,000,000
IRC	Health, Protection, WASH	Cox's Bazar	\$2,000,000
SCF	Health, Protection, WASH	Bandarban, Cox's Bazar	\$2,000,000
TOTAL NON-FOOD ASSISTANCE FUNDING IN BANGLADESH			\$5,000,000
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING			\$11,000,000
STATE/PRM			
ICRC	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Bangladesh	\$3,500,000
	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 - Multi-sector	Bangladesh	\$462,364
	Humanitarian Assistance - COVID-19 Preparedness and Response	Thailand	\$1,986,165
UNHCR	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Bangladesh	\$6,397,000
	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Malaysia	\$1,100,000
	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Burma	\$2,200,000
UNICEF	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Bangladesh	\$9,260,000
TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING			\$36,759,529
TOTAL USG FUNDING FOR COVID-19 OUTBREAK PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE IN BURMA AND BANGLADESH IN FY 2020			\$47,759,529
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING FOR BURMA AND BANGLADESH IN FY 2020			\$195,903,451
TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING FOR BURMA AND BANGLADESH IN FY 2020			\$273,142,827
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR BURMA AND BANGLADESH IN FY 2020⁶			\$469,046,278

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. Funding does not include USAID/BHA support for activities in Bangladesh that are not related to the Rohingya refugee response.

2 USG funding represents publicly announced funding as of October 22, 2020.

3 Country-based pooled funds are country-based multi-donor humanitarian financing instruments managed by OCHA under the guidance of the Humanitarian Coordinator.

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

5 Figures represent supplemental International Disaster Assistance (IDA) and Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) funding committed for COVID-19 preparedness and response as of October 22, as well as non-supplemental funding to support COVID-19 preparedness and response.

6 Funding for populations in Burma and Bangladesh affected by the violence in Rakhine State totals nearly \$1.2 billion—including nearly \$962 million in Bangladesh and more than \$201 million in Burma—since the outbreak of violence in August 2017. This includes nearly \$635 million in State/PRM funding, more than \$101 million in USAID/BHA non-food assistance funding, and nearly \$431 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 30, 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)