

Rohingya Refugee Food Aid To Be Halved From Next Month: UN

AFP- A lack of funds will force rations to be halved for around one million Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh from next month, the United Nations food agency has said.

Huge numbers of the persecuted and stateless Rohingya community live in squalid relief camps in Bangladesh, most arriving after having fled from a 2017 military crackdown in neighbouring Myanmar.

Successive aid cuts have already caused severe hardship among Rohingya in the overcrowded settlements, who are reliant on aid and suffer from rampant malnutrition.

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) said in a letter on Wednesday that “severe funding shortfalls” had forced a cut in monthly food vouchers from \$12.50 to \$6.00 per person.

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“Unfortunately, we have still not received sufficient funding, and cost-saving measures alone are not enough,” the letter said.

Md. Shamsud Douza of Bangladesh’s refugee agency told AFP that his office would hold a meeting with community leaders next week to discuss the implications of the cuts.

Wednesday’s letter comes days before a visit by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who is slated to meet Rohingya refugees to mark the annual Muslim Ramadan fast.

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The 2017 crackdown in Myanmar – now the subject of a UN genocide investigation – sent around 750,000 Rohingya fleeing into neighbouring Bangladesh with harrowing stories of murder,

rape and arson.

Bangladesh has struggled to support its immense refugee population and the prospects of a wholesale return to Myanmar or resettlement elsewhere are remote.

Rohingya living in the camps around Cox's Bazar are not allowed to seek employment and are almost entirely dependent on limited humanitarian aid to survive.

Large numbers of refugees have attempted hazardous sea crossings in an effort to find a better life away from the camps, including more than 250 Rohingya who arrived in Indonesia in January.

AFP