

Moving Stories

Commitment
for **Life**

Life-giving Faith | Defiant Hope | Generous Love

Committed to supporting our global partners **BANGLADESH**

Bad Samaritan

Campaigners worry that the government's new Illegal Migrations Bill threatens to tear up the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, to which the UK was a signatory. "The UK's draconian asylum system divides families and ravages the mental and physical health of some of the world's most vulnerable people," says Global Justice Now. "There is no 'illegal' way to claim asylum."

Asylum is different to economic migration. Asylum seekers are protected under international law, and the UK has strict guidelines for the latter. The Joint Public Issues Team organised a response to the introduction of the Illegal Migration Bill, that reflected the parable of the Good Samaritan. It summarised the awfulness of the Bill by stating, "If ever there was a contemporary example of ignoring our neighbour and walking by on the other side, this is it." <https://jpit.uk/response-to-illegal-migration-bill>

Prayer

God of love, protect all asylum seekers around the world. Soften the hearts of hardened politicians. Pour compassion onto cynical lawmakers. Open our arms in welcome of strangers. Fill us with the unstinting generosity that we have found in the heart of Jesus. Amen.

Christian Aid Week



Commitment for Life supports Christian Aid week, 14 to 23 May, which will focus on Malawi to help farmers plant better seeds, secure a fairer price for crops, and build happier futures for their children. For more information click here: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week>



Photo: Jamal Hossain and Layla Begum outside their home at the camp with their daughter Rozeya. (Christian Aid)

At the beginning of March, a massive fire broke out in one of the world's largest, crowded Rohingya refugee camps, known as Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. No casualties have been reported. However, the blaze which engulfed some 2000 shelters made of bamboo-and-tarpaulin, spread quickly and as a result it is estimated that twelve thousand people are now homeless.

In response, Christian Aid said that it is "set to work with local partners to repair shelters and provide essentials". Describing the situation on the ground, Christian Aid's Country Director in Bangladesh, Pankaj Kumar, said: "The devastation of the blaze has left thousands homeless, without any of their worldly possessions and in immediate need. It's not just homes but mosques, health centres, wash blocks, and much more that has been engulfed."

Christian Aid is undertaking an immediate needs assessment by working with partners based in the camps. The development agency expects to repair individual shelters and health centres and provide essentials such as clothing, non-food items, toilets, and cooking utensils.

Pankaj Kumar added: "Even before these fires, the refugees living in these camps were facing a hunger crisis and required help. They need access to food, clean water to drink, shelter, clothing, and cooking utensils ... This fire should be a wake-up call to the international community too. World leaders can no longer sit on their hands where Rohingya refugees are concerned. They must now fully fund the humanitarian response that is needed."

Christian Aid's work in the camps includes supporting women and girls in safe spaces, advocating for access to justice and security services and raising awareness to reduce gender-based violence.