



# Women's Peace Network

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## Statement on the recent food aid cuts to Rohingya refugees | *May 9, 2023*

We, Women's Peace Network, are deeply concerned about the World Food Programme's \$125 million USD funding [shortfall](#) for the nearly one million Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Alarming, the approximate 17 percent cut in donor support to the camps has [decreased](#) the value of the General Food Assistance voucher from \$12 USD to 10 per person and month since March 1, 2023. From June on, these victims and survivors of genocide will see this value [plummet](#) to \$8 USD.

WFP's upcoming round of ration cuts will aggravate the already deteriorating situation of Rohingya refugees. This is because the camps, which are [managed](#) by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, are currently not equipped with the infrastructure or mechanism that can immediately and effectively resolve such a multidimensioned crisis. The UNHCR's refugee status in Bangladesh [cannot](#) provide Rohingya with access to employment, education, or any other basic service that will permit the community to support themselves. The camps' limited access to healthcare, proper shelter, and sanitation facilities [cannot](#) save Rohingya lives from malnutrition and other preventable illnesses, and a severe mental health crisis. As a result, when access to even a fraction of such basic human needs disintegrates, the degree of its adverse impact becomes significantly magnified: many more of these victims and survivors of genocide face death, and those who survive face hopelessness, despair, and further abuses.

By aggravating the camps' deteriorating conditions, WFP's ration cuts will be particularly detrimental to Rohingya women and girls. Specifically, such conditions risk further contributing to many of the abuses that have uniquely endangered this group. For instance, the camps' lack of pathways to refugee self-reliance have [left](#) many more



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Rohingya – predominantly men – to seek power and control by [committing](#) sexual and gender-based violence, as well as domestic and intimate partner violence, against those whom they consider inferior: women. This vicious cycle of violence has also been observed from militant groups and gangs, whose key activities [include](#) taking women hostage. Further threats to food security will risk [debilitating](#) the remaining fabric of society that has helped prevent violence against refugee women and girls. At the root of such violence, the sense of hopelessness and despair in the camps is being further [exacerbated](#) by the ongoing human rights and humanitarian catastrophe in Myanmar. Losing hope for a safe, sustainable, and voluntary return home amid a food crisis, Rohingya women and girls have thus had no choice but to [risk](#) human trafficking, child and forced marriage, domestic servitude, sexual and gender-based violence, and death in their perilous journey for a semblance of humanity.

Therefore, we demand the international community to immediately save Rohingya refugees from hunger, malnutrition, and other threats to their lives. Beginning by fulfilling WFP's \$125 million USD donor funding shortfall, governments must ensure that the camps can afford reliable access to basic needs and livelihoods. The refugees should be provided with access to employment, education, and other opportunities for self-reliance and empowerment as a people. The international community should also ensure them access to safety and protection, especially domestic legal processes that uphold the rule of law and due process. All these processes must involve frequent and direct consultations with the Rohingya community, especially women, youth and other marginalized groups.

In bringing Rohingya out of genocide and towards justice, guaranteeing their access to food should be the bare minimum.