

UN-supported campaign to immunize 150,000 Rohingya children against deadly diseases

17 September 2017 – As thousands of Rohingya refugees including many children having fled violence in Myanmar continue to arrive in Bangladesh, a United Nations-supported vaccination campaign has been initiated to prevent the spread of potentially deadly diseases.

According to a [news release](#) by the UN Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)), the agency and the UN World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) are supporting the Bangladeshi Ministry of Health-led campaign targeting measles, rubella and polio to inoculate some 150,000 Rohingya children below the age of fifteen in 68 refugee settlements near the country's border with Myanmar.

"We are happy that we were able to initiate the immunization campaign so quickly to protect the population from a possible measles outbreak," said Navaratnasamy Paranietharan, the head of WHO in Bangladesh.

The seven-day campaign was planned by the UN health agency, which is also managing and monitoring its field implementation. UNICEF has provided vaccines, syringes and Vitamin A capsules.

"Measles is a very infectious and dangerous disease during emergencies, especially for children who are already weak and malnourished," added Edouard Beigbeder, the head of UNICEF in Bangladesh.

"With thousands of children crossing the border every day, vaccination is crucial to prevent the spread of potentially deadly diseases."

RELATED: [Rohingya crisis one of the fastest growing in recent years, warns UN refugee agency](#)

In addition to the vaccination campaign, the two UN agencies are also helping the Government reinforce maternal, new-born, child and adolescent health services; renovate delivery and new-born care units; improve water, sanitation and hygiene in health facilities; and strengthen disease surveillance, early warning and health-related information systems.

According to estimates, more than 410,000 Rohingya refugees have arrived in Bangladesh since August 25, with children making up about 60 per cent of that number.