

In Wake of Devastating Cyclone in Bangladesh, House Passes Rothman's Resolution Pledging U.S. Support

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In Wake of Devastating Cyclone in Bangladesh, House Passes Rothman's Resolution Pledging U.S. Support

(Washington, DC)—Yesterday, the U.S. House of Representatives passed Congressman Steve Rothman's (D-NJ) resolution supporting the United States' efforts to provide humanitarian aid to millions of suffering Bangladeshis. A devastating cyclone hit the south Asian nation last month, causing at least 1.5 million people to lose their homes and livelihoods. All told, Cyclone Sidr has affected over 8.7 million Bangladeshis, more than 3,000 of whom were killed.

"Millions of our fellow human beings are suffering in Bangladesh and we must not ignore their need for help. I commend my House colleagues for uniting to express America's heartfelt sympathy for the Bangladeshis whose lives have been shattered by this natural disaster and for pledging to provide them with assistance," said Rothman, a member of the House Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs.

On November 15, Cyclone Cidr hit the coast of southern Bangladesh with 155 mile-an-hour winds that smashed tens of thousands of homes, damaged roads and buildings, and caused a 16-foot tidal surge that ruined thousands of hectares of crops. Experts believe that the destruction from Cyclone Sidr is the worst felt by Bangladesh in 16 years.

Devastation caused by this natural disaster is far-reaching. The southern districts of Bangladesh were so ravaged that a relief worker described one area as looking like a "valley of death" in the days after the storm. Even the flora and fauna of Bangladesh were impacted. During the cyclone, a massive tidal wave hit the Sunderbans, the world's biggest mangrove forest and the home of the endangered Royal Bengal tiger. While researchers have yet to verify how many of these endangered tigers were killed in the storm, the destruction documented so far led experts to declare the forest an "ecological disaster."

Rothman's resolution bolsters the efforts of the U.S. government to provide humanitarian aid to Bangladesh, including more than \$19.5 million dollars in emergency food assistance and other funding to the country that the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) provided.

The Bangladesh Association of New Jersey (BANJ) hailed the passage of Rothman's bill. BANJ President, Nahid A. Chowdhury of Hawthorne, said: "The Bangladesh Association of New Jersey applauds Congressman Rothman's resolution in response to the horrible tragedy that has occurred in Bangladesh. The victims of Cyclone Sidr can use any kind of relief or support that we can provide them from the great United States of America."

Nearly 70,000 American citizens are of Bangladeshi descent. The Republic of Bangladesh is a low-lying country about the size of Wisconsin with a population of 147 million. The U.S. Department of State considers Bangladesh a moderate Islamic nation and describes the country, which won independence in 1971, as an ally.

The full text of Rothman's resolution, which passed by a vote of 388 to 0, is available online.

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