

## **80,000 children 'wasting' from hunger in Myanmar: UN**

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**Yangon:** Over 80,000 children under the age of five living in Muslim-majority areas of western Myanmar are "wasting" and will need treatment for acute malnutrition over the next year, the World Food Programme (WFP) warned in a report on Monday.

The report from the UN agency was based on an assessment of villages in Rakhine state, where some 75,000 stateless Muslim Rohingya people have fled a bloody army crackdown, reports the Guardian.

Those who remain are now reeling from a food crisis, with WFP finding one-third of homes are experiencing extreme food deprivation in Maungdaw, one district particularly affected by the violence. This includes episodes of no food in the house or not eating for 24 hours.

No children under the age of two met minimum adequate diet requirements, the assessment found, while 225,000 people need humanitarian assistance.

"It is estimated that 80,500 children under the age of five are expected to be in need of treatment for acute malnutrition over the next twelve months," the WFP report said.

A WFP spokesperson in Myanmar said this "wasting" -- condition of rapid weight loss that can become fatal -- impairs the functioning of the immune system.

"The survey has confirmed a worsening of the food security situation in already highly vulnerable areas following the security incidents and ensuing violence in late 2016," the Guardian quoted the WFP report as saying.

Last October, Rohingya militant attacks on border police sparked army retaliation in which government forces have used helicopters to attack villages.

"Food prices were highly volatile, and supply of affordable dried fish, a main source of proteins for the population, was scarce," the report added.

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