

SIGN

FRACTURE CARE
INTERNATIONAL



Reaching Refugees

By Chuck Bigger, Photojournalist

“Seeing a million people living under bamboo and plastic bags is something that doesn’t leave you quickly.”

*—SIGN Surgeon
Steve Kelley*

A tide of human sorrow is washing across the hills in southeastern Bangladesh. Fleeing ethnic violence, more than 600,000 Bengali (also known as Rohingya) Muslim refugees have poured across the border in the last three months into Bangladesh — a resource poor country ill-equipped to handle the influx of refugees and struggling to keep pace.

Survivors of the perilous journey arrive with stories of unimaginable terror. Many arrive with injuries sustained during their flight, from gunshot wounds, blunt trauma, shrapnel injuries from grenades and land mines, deep lacerations, and long bone fractures. Some of those injuries have gone untreated for months during their lengthy escape, further compounding their severity and treatment. *(Continued on page 2.)*





In the camps, families line up to receive basic provisions.

(Continued from front page.)

Refugee Camps

They are still streaming across the border at a rate of 2,000-5,000 a day, further overwhelming the sprawling and makeshift camps overtaking the hills in the Cox's Bazar region.

Words and metaphors are inadequate to describe the living conditions in the camps.

"Seeing a million people living under bamboo and plastic bags is something that doesn't leave you quickly," says Dr. Steve Kelley, a SIGN Surgeon.

"It is a sea of misery that we are seeing," Dr. Kelley says of the range of injuries he is treating in the refugees. "And a lot of these problems have been long, long neglected."

Only 24 miles from the sprawling refugee camps, Memorial Christian Hospital (MCH) in Malumghat, where Dr. Kelley has worked for 21 years, is the main referral hospital in the region. The burgeoning refugee crisis has tripled the hospital's patient load of long bone fractures. A new 24-bed temporary tented ward was quickly constructed to help accommodate the sudden influx of refugee patients.



A "refugee ambulance" carries a man with a broken leg to the camp health center. Cases requiring surgery are referred to Memorial Christian Hospital.

Refugees and SIGN Implants

Patients with injuries too severe to be treated at the camp hospitals are referred to MCH, including most of the orthopaedic injuries. In addition to other specialized treatments, MCH is the only hospital in the region using SIGN Implants to stabilize long bone fractures.

Over the first 10 weeks of operation at the new ward, Dr. Kelley has performed 20 SIGN Surgeries for Bengali refugees.

One of those was a leg-saving surgery for Yasir, a 35-year-old father of four



X-rays show Yasir's injury from a gunshot (left) and how a SIGN Implant straightens and stabilizes his femur.

who was shot from behind while fleeing. His femur was shattered into many pieces, but he continued his flight from Myanmar for two more weeks, limping and hobbling along using a homemade bamboo crutch. After clearing up the damage from the unsterile deferred treatment, Dr. Kelley was able to restore Yasir's leg with a SIGN Implant.

For the refugees trying to escape the country, the roadways in Myanmar were dangerous. So most took to fleeing at night through the steep forested terrain via slippery goat paths.



Above: Dr. Steve Kelley (center) examines Gaffar's injury prior to SIGN Surgery. Below: Gaffar is back at the camp with his family 4 days after his SIGN Surgery.

Gaffar, 27, and his family were fleeing that way when he slipped and fell down a steep hillside, snapping his right femur in half. A little over a week later Gaffar was referred to MCH and carried there from one of the camp hospitals. "Once he got his SIGN Nail, he was chomping at the bit to get up on crutches and walk again," says Dr. Kelley.

SIGN Heals

"We are blessed to have the participation of SIGN Fracture Care at MCH since 2005," Dr. Kelley says. "Over the years we've put in hundreds of nails and seen many families' lives knit back together through the use of the SIGN Nail."

Over the course of the twelve-plus year partnership with SIGN there has been a steady business of broken bones, Dr. Kelley says. "Bangladesh is a dangerous place for limbs. The Rohingya crisis began about 24 miles southeast of us and has roughly tripled our business for long bone fractures."

In the face of the ongoing crisis, Dr. Kelley says, "We are very blessed to have a partnership with SIGN and to be receiving a state-of-the-art product. We are in a position of privilege to be



here on the front lines of a conflict like this and to be well armed for it."

You can give SIGN Surgery to people in need like Bengali refugees. When you donate by Dec 31, your gift will be matched.

Bringing Equality of Care Everywhere

SIGN opened a new program at Sittwe General Hospital in November 2017. Sittwe is the capital of Rakhine State, on the west coast of Myanmar - and is the region where most Bengali (Rohingya) people lived before fleeing to Bangladesh. After hearing how many people made a dangerous journey with broken bones, Dr. Aung Thein Htay, who oversees all SIGN Programs in Myanmar, wanted to bring SIGN Surgery where it is needed most. Dr. Aung brought a set of SIGN Instruments and Implants to Sittwe General Hospital, and trained the orthopaedic surgeons there how to perform SIGN Surgery. Regional authorities attended the ceremony opening the new program and thanked SIGN for helping in their community.

Sittwe General Hospital treats all patients, including Bengali minorities. And now, thanks to the efforts of Dr. Aung, the surgeons there have the tools they need to help get injured and impoverished patients back on their feet.



Dr. Aung (center) delivers a SIGN Set to Sittwe.

Giving Ideas

IRA Check with your CPA to see if you are eligible to give a qualified charitable distribution from your IRA account directly to SIGN.



Stocks and Bonds

When doing your year-end tax planning, consult with your CPA about donating stocks and bonds to SIGN. Not only will your gift help heal, but you may receive some valuable tax advantages as well.



Employer Matching

Many employers match donations to charities. Check with your Human Resources department to find out how your donation to SIGN can go further.



For all donations, please call us at (509) 371-1107 or give online at signfracturecare.org/donate

Support SIGN While You Shop

On each site listed below, log in to your account and choose SIGN Fracture Care International as your charity. Thank you!



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Double your Impact in 2017!

Donations to SIGN now through December 31, 2017 will be matched by a fund at the Seattle Foundation.

You can help twice as many injured people receive healing surgery!

2017 Donations must be received as follows:

At SIGN: by Friday, December 29 at noon

Online: by 11:59 pm Sunday, December 31

