UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency | Bangladesh

POPULATION

1,162,939 # of registered refugees

96.6% in 33 camps in Ukhiya & Teknaf
3.4% on the island of Bhasan Char

51% Female

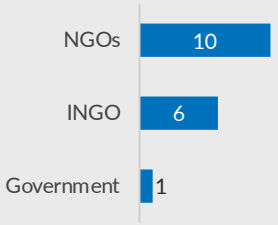
49% Male

52% Children

as of 30 September 2025

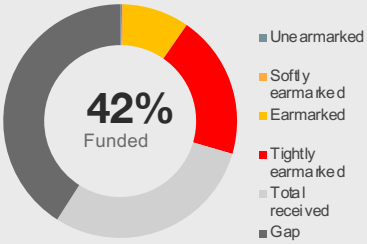
PARTNERS

19 # of partners implementing key UNHCR activities in 2025



FUNDING

255.5 M Funding for 2025 operations



as of 30 September 2025

HISTORY

UNHCR has been present in Bangladesh since 1992, but the relationship has deeper roots. In 1971, during Bangladesh's Liberation War, UNHCR coordinated a massive relief effort to support 10 million refugees forced to flee for protection, and helped facilitate their return to the newly independent nation in the following months.

Today, UNHCR and partners manage 16 camps in Cox's Bazar, including Nayapara and Kutupalong Registered Camps, plus the island of Bhasan Char, supporting the Government of Bangladesh to provide essential services and meet the protection needs of one million Rohingya refugees, including special services for women, children and persons with disabilities. Most arrived in 2017, fleeing persecution, large-scale violence and human rights violations.

Support is additionally extended to host communities while continuously working towards solutions to ensure that refugees can return in a safe, dignified, voluntary and sustainable way once conditions in Myanmar allow.

OPERATIONAL UPDATE
September 2025

Newly arrived UNHCR Representative Ivo Freiijen greets trainees at a camp skill development centre. © UNHCR

KEY UPDATES

- 2025 JOINT RESPONSE PLAN (JRP): As of 6 October, the 2025 Joint Response Plan (JRP) for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis was 38.1 per cent funded, according to the online financial tracker, with USD 355.6 million received against an appeal of $934.5 million. However, internal figures from the Inter-Sectoral Coordination Group (ISCG) indicate a higher funding level of 64 per cent. Critical gaps in Priority 1 needs include soap and menstrual hygiene items, stipends for teachers, cleaner cooking gas and emergency support for new arrivals, totaling USD 39.6 million. These gaps may trigger reductions in assistance, leading to a rise in negative coping mechanisms in the community. In 2024, the JRP was 68.2 per cent funded, with USD 581.7 million received against an appeal of USD 852.4 million, according to the online tracker. *Read the reprioritized 2025 Joint Response Plan*.

- HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE: On 30 September, the High-level Conference on the Situation of Rohingya Muslims and Other Minorities in Myanmar convened at the UN General Assembly in New York, with Member States, civil society and refugee representatives. Discussions focused on three objectives: funding humanitarian aid; creating conditions for the safe, voluntary and dignified return of displaced Rohingya; and supporting an inclusive peace process that recognizes their rights. *Read the UNHCR High Commissioner's statement*.

- NEW UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE: On 5 September, UNHCR Representative in Bangladesh Ivo Freijsen presented his credentials to the Foreign Affairs Adviser. With over three decades of humanitarian experience, including as UNHCR Representative in Lebanon, and in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr. Freijsen brings extensive expertise in refugee response and protection. From 8-11 September, he undertook his first visit to the Cox's Bazar camps, meeting refugee volunteers and humanitarian actors. He also met the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) in Cox's Bazar and the High Representative for Rohingya Issues in Dhaka to discuss ongoing humanitarian efforts and collaboration. *Read the press release*.

- MARITIME MOVEMENTS: Between 1 January and 19 September 2025, an estimated 1,088 Rohingya refugees departed camps in Bangladesh on perilous sea journeys to third countries—nearly triple the 387 departures recorded during the same period in 2024. Of these, 427 people are reported dead or missing. 2025 has seen the highest number of attempted maritime journeys since 2022, with about 4,200 people departing on 107 boats from Myanmar, Bangladesh, and India in the first nine months alone. Driven by worsening conditions in Myanmar and the protracted crisis in Bangladesh, and amid dwindling humanitarian resources, thousands continue to risk their lives in search of safety, family reunification, and livelihoods. *Read the Route-based snapshot*. *View the data portal*.

- NEW ARRIVALS: As of 30 September, 131,541 individuals (35,382 families) have been identified through the joint biometric identification exercise (BIE) for new arrivals and issued family cards granting access to assistance, though not individual refugee identity documents. The BIE includes screening procedures to exclude ineligible individuals, and mechanisms are in place for Bangladeshi families mistakenly included in the refugee database to voluntarily return their assistance cards. UNHCR continues to advocate with the Government of Bangladesh for full registration of the new arrivals. *View BIE dashboard*.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. BASIC RIGHTS, PROTECTION & EDUCATION
Refugee rights are respected, and they have access to education and protection, including protection against gender-based violence.

2. ADEQUATE LIVING CONDITIONS IN A GREEN ENVIRONMENT
Essential and sustainable services (including safe shelters, health, nutrition, WASH, energy) are ensured, and the environment is protected.

3. SKILLS & CAPACITY BUILDING TO SUPPORT DURABLE SOLUTIONS
Work toward sustainable solutions, with voluntary repatriation at the centre, supported by skills development, livelihoods and capacity building for refugees.

4. DIVERSIFIED FUNDING & PARTNERSHIPS
Partnerships with development and private sector actors to innovate, support and localize operations.

5. CREATING A POSITIVE NARRATIVE
Lead the narrative on the Rohingya refugee response and improve public attitudes toward the Rohingya.

DONORS

UNHCR in Bangladesh is grateful for the support of Australia, Belgium, Canada, the People's Republic of China, Denmark, the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jersey, Luxembourg, the Republic of Korea, Kuwait, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, and the USA.

With additional support received from UN funds including Education Cannot Wait (ECW), UN AIDS and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), and private donors, including Fast Retailing (UNIQLO), Join Together Society (JTS), King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives (MBRGI), Muslim World League, Ousri Household, SONY, and private donors in Germany and the Middle East.

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- SKILLS TRAINING: In September, skills training programmes in Cox's Bazar reached 4,238 learners, empowering refugees with practical and language skills. Among them, 277 learners — one-third of them women — enrolled in vocational training across 14 centres, with 117 attending final assessments and 113 passing. Meanwhile, 3,848 adults (63 percent women) continued Accelerated Adult Learning (AAL) courses across 116 centres in 14 camps, with 300 AAL graduates already progressing to vocational training. Additionally, 113 participants, including two women, joined English language classes in three centres, preparing to take the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam—a globally recognized test measuring English language proficiency—after completing the six-month course.

- LIVELIHOODS ON BHASAN CHAR: In September, 189 artisans at UNHCR partner NGO Forum's skills training centre on the island of Bhasan Char produced 944 items for sale under the Bibia label, including tote bags, cushion covers and key chains. 398 items were sold, generating BDT 176,930 (USD 1,442), maintaining a sales level similar to the previous month. Bibia products from the Bhasan Char centre are available for order through NGO Forum, as exceptionally authorized by the RRRC, in line with the Government-approved livelihoods and skills development framework for the island.

- FIRE PREPAREDNESS: Ahead of the dry season (December to March), fire preparedness and response was strengthened in camps through installation of ninety 10,000-litre water tanks and training for community volunteers. A request was submitted to the Office of the RRRC for approval to reinforce the sheds housing 32 mobile firefighting units (MFFUs) across the 16 UNHCR-managed camps. Sirens to alert camp residents and emergency lighting for nighttime fire response were installed in all MFFUs. In 2025 to date, 488 fire incidents were recorded across all 33 camps affecting 2,680 people (521 households), according to the incident tracker, including 249 incidents in UNHCR-managed camps. In 2024, 429 incidents were recorded in 33 camps over the same period (+14 per cent), affecting 6,604 individuals (1,497 households).

- DENGUE TREND: Dengue cases continued to decline for the eleventh consecutive week, following a peak of 456 cases recorded across the 33 Cox's Bazar camps the first week of July. Through the combined efforts of health, WASH, and site management sector partners working with the Rohingya community, 2025 has about half as many dengue cases compared to 2024 (10,812 cases) and 2023 (12,595 cases). These efforts include eliminating mosquito breeding sites through the 'seek and destroy' campaign, distributing mosquito nets, and stepping up community awareness sessions. From January to September, a total of 5,978 dengue cases were reported across 33 camps, with 8.1 per cent (484 cases) occurring in camps where UNHCR is the WASH focal point. *Read the WASH Sector's 'Guidance note on dengue prevention'.*

- MENTAL HEALTH & PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT: In September, UNHCR and partners reached 192 individuals through targeted trainings and awareness initiatives aimed at strengthening psychosocial well-being, community resilience, and technical capacity. Activities included self-care awareness sessions for 102 community leaders across five camps; a 'Coping with Stress' training for 54 APBn officers; completion of an 18-month Columbia University-supported Inter-Personal Therapy (IPT) supervision for 18 Bangladeshi psychologists in camps, now certified IPT therapists; and ongoing supervision for 18 staff trained on 'early adolescent skills for emotions,' delivering structured psychosocial support to adolescents and caregivers.

- MISSION REPORT: UNHCR welcomed seven visits from donors/partners in September, for a total of 93 missions in 2025. Visitors included delegations from the US Embassy, High Commission of Canada, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights.

- FUNDING UPDATE: As of 30 September, the UNHCR Bangladesh operation was 42% funded, with USD 107 million received against an operating plan of USD 255.5 million. Contributions were received from the Republic of Korea, Canada, the UK and Fast Retailing.

"IN CASE YOU MISSED IT…"

- ***"Despite enormous challenges — Bangladesh continues to host [the Rohingya], setting an example to the rest of the world. Showing us that compassion is still possible at a time when indifference and inaction are, sadly, fast, fast becoming the norm. Showing that giving asylum to refugees saves lives."*** *At the High-Level Conference in New York, UNHCR High Commissioner Filippo Grandi called for compassion and action. Read the statement.*

- UNHCR Bangladesh published 31 Facebook posts, 29 tweets and 27 Instagram posts in September.

UNHCR High Commissioner called on the international community to step off the 'path of inertia' and do more to achieve a resolution to the Rohingya crisis. Watch the video.

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