UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency | Bangladesh

POPULATION

1,197,411 # of registered refugees

97% in 33 camps in Ukhiya & Teknaf
3% on the island of Bhasan Char

51.5% Female

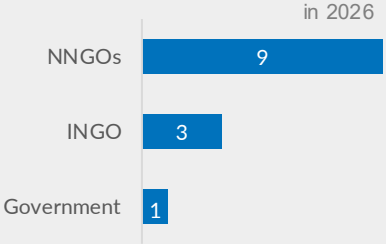
48.5% Male

51% Children

as of 31 May 2026

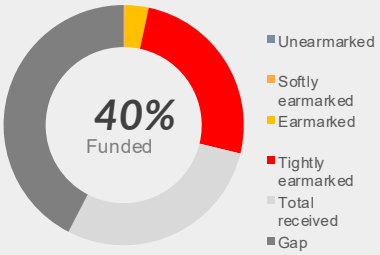
PARTNERS

13 # of partners implementing key UNHCR activities in 2026



FUNDING

200.6 M Funding for 2026 operations



as of 31 May 2026

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
April-May 2026

UNHCR provides protection-sensitive, culturally-appropriate sports for Rohingya women and girls. © UNHCR/Shari Nijman

KEY UPDATES

- 2026 JOINT RESPONSE PLAN (JRP): UNHCR, in close coordination with UN partners and the Government of Bangladesh, presented the 2026 update of the Joint Response Plan on 20 May, appealing for USD 710.5 million to reach up to 1.56 million people, including refugees and Bangladeshi host communities. The hyper-prioritized appeal — a 26% reduction from the 2025 JRP — covers only the minimum required to sustain lifesaving assistance. Reduced funding affects services across all sectors, including resilience and preparedness activities. As of 30 April, the appeal was 63% funded according to an internal analysis by the Rohingya Coordination Team. *Read the updated Joint Response Plan*. *Read the press release*.

- TARGETING & PRIORITIZATION EXERCISE (TPE): WFP introduced targeted and prioritized food assistance in the Cox's Bazar camps and on Bhasan Char, with households categorized into three tiers by food insecurity level based on income and vulnerability data. From 1 April, food insecure households will receive USD 7 (USD 8 on Bhasan Char, reflecting higher market costs), highly food insecure households will receive USD 10 per person per month (USD 11 on Bhasan Char); and extremely food insecure households will continue to receive the full ration of USD 12 (USD 13 on Bhasan Char). UNHCR worked closely with WFP on the TPE rollout and to engage with community questions and concerns, including a messaging campaign and strengthening complaint and feedback mechanisms through joint WFP-UNHCR help desks at distribution points.

- IMPACT OF GULF CRISIS: The global Gulf crisis drove up fuel and energy costs. In April and May, Bangladesh saw retail prices rise nearly 30% for liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and 12-16% for octane, diesel and petrol. Impacts include increased transportation and generator costs, as well as higher financial requirements for LPG in 2026 than initially planned. Sustained LPG funding is critical: as a cleaner alternative to firewood, it keeps families from collecting and burning wood from surrounding forests — which raises health and protection risks, including tensions with locals. The supplier met all LPG distribution requirements for April and May 2026, and UNHCR continues to closely monitor the supply chain and delivery capacity. At the current supplier rate, LPG funding is expected to cover needs through end of September. Together, UNHCR and IOM provide LPG to some 230,000 Rohingya refugee households, including new arrival families, while Islamic Relief-Bangladesh provides to 7,500 households on Bhasan Char.

- IDENTIFYING & ASSISTING NEW ARRIVALS: Rohingya and other residents fleeing conflict in Myanmar's Rakhine State continued to seek safety in Bangladesh, despite a closed-border policy that has limited safe access to asylum. Between 1 January and 31 May 2026, 1,893 individuals were reportedly denied access to Bangladesh, bringing the total to 14,380 since 2024, though many incidents continue to go unreported. Over the same period, 2,260 newly arrived individuals were biometrically identified through a joint exercise with the Government of Bangladesh, taking the total to 152,029 individuals (39,881 families) identified and issued family cards since the exercise launched in 2025 — some 12% of the current population. Unlike regular refugee registration, which has been suspended since May 2022, individual refugee identity documents are not issued through this process. UNHCR continues to advocate with government counterparts for full registration.

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, the Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, and the USA.

With additional support from UN funds including Education Cannot Wait (ECW), the Bangladesh Humanitarian Fund, and private donors including Adidas Foundation, Adyen NV, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Fast Retailing/UNIQLO, FC Barcelona Foundation, Human Concern USA, Humaniti Foundation (USA), and One Ummah.

Contacts:
Francesco Bert, bert@unhcr.org,
Senior External Relations Officer, Dhaka.

- SHELTER UPDATE: After a monthlong pause by authorities, following negative media reports, construction of double-storied and temporary safer shelters (TSS) in Block E of Camp 4-Extension restarted on 26 May. 210 out of 300 shelters are now complete, with the remaining 90 shelters more than 80% complete. These double-storied and temporary safer shelters are made with approved, locally available materials, including bamboo and steel poles and plastic tarps, in line with government guidance. These temporary structures are designed to provide enhanced protection from elements such as strong winds and heavy monsoon rains. However, they are designed to be quickly and easily dismantled and are not permanent.

- MENTAL HEALTH FOR EARLY ADOLESCENTS: In May, UNHCR launched the second cohort of the Early Adolescent Skills for Emotions (EASE) programme in Cox's Bazar to strengthen MHPSS support for adolescents aged 10–15 and their caregivers. Seventeen staff from partner organizations completed nine days of specialized training, with further classroom learning and supervised field practice planned through June and beyond. UNHCR will ensure effective implementation of EASE concepts in MHPSS programming through ongoing supervision and technical guidance.

- NUTRITION ON BHASAN CHAR: UNHCR will phase out support for nutrition programme implementation on Bhasan Char, effective 1 July 2026, as part of broader rationalization efforts to focus on core mandate activities and transition other sectoral responsibilities to agencies with the relevant expertise. UNICEF has expressed interest in supporting the continuation of nutrition programming, in coordination with WFP.

- MEASLES VACCINATION CAMPAIGN: The measles-rubella and vitamin A campaign in Cox's Bazar, launched 28 April, reached 166,772 children aged 6 to 59 months. This represents a 93.7% coverage, with a further 3% of zero-dose or missed children vaccinated through routine services. The Bhasan Char round, launched on 18 May. reached 4,181 children (99% coverage). UNHCR community health partners drove uptake with awareness raising, information materials, targeted household-visit support, and mobilizing eligible children. Over the country, the deadly measles outbreak, declared 15 March, has seen over 9,000 measles cases confirmed by lab tests, with children under five accounting for 81% of cases. Nationwide, 585 deaths linked to measles and measles-like symptoms were reported as of 31 May, with 90 confirmed as measles. Sixty cases have been confirmed in the Rohingya camps, and five deaths.

- TEKNAF WATER PROJECT: In the five Teknaf camps, the water supply system is being progressively solarized to reduce reliance on fuel, promote renewable energy use, and enhance overall service reliability. As of May, the solar-based water system at Camp 26 is now fully operational, and three power substations have been completed in Camp 26 and Nayapara Registered Camp. However, connection to the power grid is pending government approval, delaying full system integration. The Teknaf Water Project is a comprehensive solution to address the chronic shortage of water supply in the area during the dry season (December through March), dependence on costly diesel-powered pumping systems, high operational costs, inadequate water distribution infrastructure, and vulnerability to fuel supply disruptions.

- MISSION REPORT: In April and May, UNHCR received 14 missions from donors and partners, bringing the total number of missions in 2026 to 22. In May, a joint UNHCR-WFP high-level mission led by Deputy High Commissioner Kelly T. Clements and WFP Assistant Executive Director Rania Dagash-Kamara, accompanied by senior donor representatives, brought renewed international attention to the protracted Rohingya crisis and the updated 2026 JRP.

- FUNDING UPDATE: As of 31 May, the UNHCR Bangladesh operation was 40% funded with USD 81.5 million received against an operating plan of USD 200.6 million. Contributions were received from Canada, Finland, Japan, Jersey, Qatar, Switzerland, the EU, the Bangladesh Humanitarian Fund and private donors.

"IN CASE YOU MISSED IT…"

- ***"Sports' unique capacity to foster peace":*** *UNHCR and partners marked the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (6 April) with football matches, badminton tournaments, traditional Myanmar games, and community discussions on sports for peaceful coexistence. UNHCR Representative Ivo Freijsen called for sport and other soft skills for refugee youth in an op-ed. Read the story.*

- *UNHCR Bangladesh published 43 Facebook posts, 46 tweets and 41 Instagram posts in April & May, including posts on the 2026 JRP.*

UNHCR Deputy High Commissioner Kelly T. Clements on the 2026 JRP . Watch the video.

UNHCRBangladesh @UNHCR_BGD unhcr_bgd