

BANGLADESH

09 May – 4 June 2018

Since January 2018, 9,286 refugees have arrived in Bangladesh, with almost 250 individuals arriving in the last two weeks. Refugees continue to cross the border into Bangladesh, more than half of whom are women and children.

UNHCR and partners have relocated over 13,600 out of approximately 41,700 refugees living in areas at high risk of landslides. As more relocation plots are being readied and identified, UNHCR and partners are racing to relocate the remaining population to safety.

More than 2,000 volunteer Rohingya refugees received training on emergency preparedness, and other skills from UNHCR and partners. With thousands more under training, refugee volunteers have been trained on a wide range of skills such as early warning, search and rescue, diseases outbreak preparedness and first aid.

POPULATION FIGURES

886,778 Total number of refugees in Bangladesh

720,849 Estimated new arrivals in Bangladesh since 25 August 2017

STAFFING & PARTNERS

268 staff currently working on the emergency compared to 49 prior to the crisis. 169 are national staff.

24 partners compared to 7 prior to the crisis.

FUNDING

USD 238.8 million

Requested for UNHCR's emergency response in 2018.



UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, George Okoth-Obbo speaks to Mohammad, a refugee benefiting from a pilot shelter project implemented by UNHCR and partner BRAC. © UNHCR/ Dalal Alsharhan

Refugee Arrival trends

Since January 2018, 9,286 refugees have arrived in Bangladesh, with almost 250 individuals arriving in the last two weeks¹. Travelling from Myanmar by boat, refugees continue to cross the border into Bangladesh, particularly through the Sabrang arrival point. Most of the new arrivals (67%) currently come from Maungdaw and the rest from Buthidaung (26%) and Rathidaung (5%) according to [UNHCR's Population Factsheet](#). More than half of them are women and children. The Bangladesh Army, UNHCR, and partners have maintained basic services at the arrival point for new arrivals, which include health, food, and counseling, to support refugees who have often undertaken difficult journeys with limited supplies.



Two boys standing on the edge of one of the areas in Kutupalong settlement, which houses over 600,000 refugees. Many people from this area (also called Camp 5) are being relocated to safer locations being readied by UNHCR and partners, © UNHCR/ Dalal Alsharhan

Preparedness and response to monsoon and cyclone

Relocations: UNHCR estimates that 150-200,000 refugees in Cox's Bazar district are living on land that is vulnerable to landslides and/or flooding. Of this number, UNHCR have assessed 41,700 to be living in areas at high risk of landslides. 13,600 of these high-risk refugees have now been relocated to safer areas.

Some refugees have expressed reluctance to relocate, due to reasons including the unfamiliarity of the new areas, concerns about access to sufficient facilities and services, and preferences to remain living closer to their family and friends. Some refugees have said they are willing to accept the risks of remaining in place. UNHCR is continuing to engage with refugee communities to raise awareness about the dangers of landslides during the monsoon season.

New land: Following the completion of the leveling works on the first portion of land newly allocated by the Government, comprising approximately 12 acres, UNHCR and partners have started to install shelters and WASH facilities. This will allow for safe relocations of refugees from locations at risk of

¹ Information on arrivals at border points are reported through various sources which cannot always be verified or confirmed.

flooding and landslides. The land is in the north-western part of the Kutupalong settlement, and it was developed as part of a tripartite earthworks project with WFP, UNHCR, and IOM (also known as the Site Management Engineering Project – SMEP). UNHCR and partners hope to start relocating refugee families at risk of landslides to the new land (now called Camp 4 Extension) starting in mid-June.

Shelter upgrade and site preparation: As of 4 June 2018, UNHCR has exceeded its initial target (80,000) and distributed over 83,000 upgraded shelter kits, including bamboo poles, rope, shelter-grade tarpaulin and tools, so families can strengthen their shelters ahead of the monsoon season. Biodegradable sandbags are also being provided to support the anchoring of structures. Additionally, the distribution of pre-monsoon shelter tie-down kits, containing rope and pegs, have started. Over 30,000 pre-monsoon kits have now been distributed.

UNHCR has identified 20 educational institutions within the host community, which could temporarily shelter refugees, and local communities during an emergency or disaster. Renovation by UNHCR and partner BRAC, is ongoing in six educational institutions in Kutupalong, Shamlapur, Thainkali and Leda, including classroom additions, roof improvements and additional access to water and sanitation facilities.

Additional ongoing mitigation measures include: cleaning and strengthening of main drainage channels, road construction and surfacing, slope leveling and reinforcement and formation and training of safety volunteers units in each camp. Heavy rains are forecast for the coming weeks, which are expected to delay progress of ongoing mitigation works.



Workers constructing shelters in Camp 4 Extension, the new land allocated by the government and leveled by UNHCR and partners as part of the SMEP project. © UNHCR/Dalal Alsharhan

Refugee protection and response

Community-based protection: A number of community outreach members (trained protection refugee volunteers, also known as COMs) have now completed training to conduct a monsoon ‘readiness survey’ of refugee households. Following the training, the COMs completed a survey of some 500 refugees, with preliminary findings indicating a strong belief that mosques are viable and safe for shelter during monsoon/cyclones. Based on this feedback, more information is being disseminated to refugees about safe shelter locations, and UNHCR is working with partners in the site management sector and with the camp authorities to mark communal structures that have been assessed as unsafe for shelter. The authorities are also liaising with mosque imams and the refugee community to agree on the methodology to mark mosques that are located in unsafe areas. Additionally, in the month of May 2018, the COMs conducted over 1,300 awareness raising sessions across the refugee settlements – including sessions designed specifically for children – reaching thousands of refugees.

A landslide drama was performed again for over 1,000 refugees, following the first successful performance in April, as a way to reach out and inform a wider audience on the risks of landslides. Facilitated by UNHCR’s Shelter and Community-Based Protection units with support from partners, the performance received enthusiastic responses in Chakmarkul and Kutupalong



COMs continue to engage refugee children in Temporary Learning Centers on Emergency Preparedness © UNHCR/COM Volunteers

settlements.

Additionally, UNHCR-trained volunteers participated to an emergency preparedness and response exercise in Kutupalong on 19 May, which was organized by MoDMR and the Army. Participants included refugee volunteers, police, border guards, the Cyclone Preparedness Program (CPP), Bangladesh Red Crescent, the Fire Service and Civil Defense, UN agencies (including UNHCR), and other NGOs and volunteers. The exercise included a simulated rain and landslide scene, followed by a search and rescue drill.

Cash Based Interventions (CBI): A pilot multi-purpose cash grant distribution in two sections of Kutupalong settlement reached 9,015 families throughout April with support from the Government of Bangladesh and partner agencies BRAC and Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS). Eligible families received a one-off payment of 2,500 Bangladesh Taka (around 30 US dollars) each to cover basic household needs. A Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) survey conducted two weeks after the grant distribution revealed that the grant has contributed to improved living conditions and enabled refugees to meet basic needs such as food and medicine. The most common uses of the grant were food (33%), medicines (26%), clothes and shoes (15%), fuel (6%), and debt repayment (5%). Based on the PDM, UNHCR is working on a recommendation for a second-phase of multipurpose cash grant targeting people with specific needs, particularly those with little or no access to income-generating activities, including many women such as female-headed households.

Camp settlement and protection profiling: In partnership with REACH, UNHCR has released its Camp Settlement and Protection Profiles (Round 3), which provide a multisector and protection overview of conditions in the refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar District. The profiles are based on a

sample-based household survey carried out in each camp. Findings can be found on the Bangladesh page of the UNHCR Operational Data Portal [here](#).

Legal assistance and advocacy: Since January 2018, a total of 669 extremely vulnerable individuals and 1,138 persons with special needs were identified by UNHCR and referred to different partners to receive the necessary assistance and services. UNHCR works closely with partners Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) and Technical Assistance Inc. (TAI) to provide legal counseling and support to refugees. Since January 2018, they have supported 954 individuals on cases, including those involving domestic violence, dowry, and other legal issues. UNHCR has a Hotline and Suggestions boxes throughout the settlements for refugees to communicate their concerns and, at times, to request specific assistance.

Child Protection and SGBV: UNHCR and partners continue to identify unaccompanied and separated children, with a total of 614 and 2,030 respectively identified and registered since the beginning of the year. As much as possible, children are reunified with their families once tracing is successfully completed, while others without any close relatives in Bangladesh are placed in foster care. Training and awareness sessions are also ongoing, and those include: Psychological First Aid for child protection and case management staff, 'Positive Behavior and Life Skills' training for adolescents, in addition to 'Positive Demeanor in Emergencies' training for parents, care givers, child protection staff, Case Management Training for case workers and councilors, and Child Protection training for camp-based volunteers from the refugee community.

On issues related to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), UNHCR and partners continue to undertake both prevention and response activities. Posters were installed in different offices and service providers' centers containing messages on sexual abuse and harassment and zero tolerance of such behaviors. In addition to conducting several capacity building activities for staff, partners, and volunteers, SGBV teams also supported focus group discussions with concerned communities to determine the main issues related to their safety and security. Additionally, UNHCR continued its advocacy work during the reporting period, which included briefing the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict in Cox's Bazar during her second visit since the August 2017 influx.

Refugee voices: During consultations with refugees in the past two weeks, one of the protection issues highlighted by the community was the need for education. One of the refugee volunteers for protection (COM) was quoted as saying: "Education is the best thing in human life". Across the settlements, refugee men, women, boys, and girls have asked for opportunities to be able to attend or continue schooling. Adolescents are also asking for opportunities to obtain education they never had in Myanmar. Volunteers such as the COMs and other community groups are urging as many refugees as possible to attend temporary learning centers and child-friendly spaces so they could benefit from opportunities there. At the same time, COMs are looking into ways in which boys and girls, as well as young men and women, can be constructively engaged in Community Centers or through volunteering.

Health and WASH: COMs reported complaints about the lack of medicines and information about access to healthcare services, on services provided by the Refugee Health Unit (RHU) doctors and on lack of service coverage by other humanitarian actors. UNHCR is working to strengthen coordination and communication with relevant units and partners in order to share further trends and raise these issues. So far, around 1,000 out of 2,000 community health workers (CHWs) from the refugee volunteer community have been trained on first aid, while some CHWs also attended workshops on preparing for possible outbreak of acute watery diarrhea, risk communication (providing information to people so they can make informed decisions to protect themselves) basic counseling, psychological first aid, and identification and referral of mental health cases.

UNHCR and Oxfam, in coordination with the Bangladesh Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) held a workshop titled, *Sustainable Sanitation Solutions for Refugees in Bangladesh* from 3 to 4 June 2018. The main objective was to address sanitation issues in the camp and to discuss more sustainable approaches that are also more technically appropriate. The previous week, UNHCR facilitated another workshop in Cox's Bazar with 60 attendees from over eight WASH agencies. That workshop covered UNHCR's WASH protection principles, technical WASH topics, and monsoon preparedness planning. Each agency completed a stock list of its emergency preparedness items and staff for their camps, which will be used to highlight any remaining gaps to be covered during the monsoon season.



Refugees collect water from the water reservoir near a water treatment plant in Shalbagan settlement in Teknaf. UNHCR and Oxfam have deepened the reservoir over the past months to ensure adequate access to water for this population. © UNHCR/Dalal Alsharhan

Energy and Environment: On the occasion of International Day for Biological Diversity, refugees participated in a peaceful procession on 19 May 2018. The rally included the participation of refugee volunteers who are part of the Elephant Response Teams (ERTs), which were trained by UNHCR and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to prevent human-elephant conflict. The rally was held in three areas of the Kutupalong refugee settlement, where the volunteers held placards highlighting their work and displaying photos of elephants and slogans advocating for the protection of wildlife and the environment. The event was attended by UNHCR, IUCN, and officials from the Bangladesh government, including the Forest Department, and the Refugee, Relief, and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC).



Refugees are joined by IUCN, UNHCR, RRRC, and other government officials as they march on Biological Diversity Day. © UNHCR/Dalal Alsharhan

Voluntary Refugee Returns to Myanmar

UNHCR and UNDP agreed on 31 May with the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on the text for a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU is the first and necessary step to create conditions conducive to safe, dignified and voluntary return in Myanmar.

Access to Rakhine State, which has not been possible for UNHCR since August 2017, remains a priority to enable UNHCR to eventually provide independent information to refugees about the conditions there, and help them make an informed and voluntary decision on whether they feel they can return in safety and with dignity.

Working in partnership

In Bangladesh, UNHCR works in close collaboration with the government and humanitarian actors to coordinate the response. The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) and the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) are UNHCR's main government counterparts, in addition to Camp-in-Charge officials (CiCs) working in refugee settlements in the Cox's Bazar District.

UNHCR coordinates its work with humanitarian actors under an Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG). UNHCR leads on the protection response for all refugees, and heads the Protection Working Group of the ISCG, together with the RRRC.

UNHCR also works closely with and funds 24 partner agencies, both international and national actors, as support to the Government of Bangladesh's humanitarian response to refugees. Local sourcing of goods and services is a priority for UNHCR, which is more cost effective and benefits local community businesses in Cox's Bazar and other business operators in Bangladesh.

UNHCR financial needs for 2018

	Protection	26.7 m
	Basic relief items	5.6 m
	Water, sanitation & hygiene	40.8 m
	Shelter/infrastructure	25.0 m
	Energy and environment	13.4 m
	Education	10.0 m
	Community mobilization	18.1 m
	Health and nutrition	34.5 m
	Logistics	11.0 m
	Camp management	35.3 m
	Support costs	18.4 m
TOTAL		238.8 m

Supporting the response

The Government and people of Bangladesh have responded in a generous way to refugees, however, more support from the international community is critical to assist Bangladesh's efforts and share responsibility. UNHCR has called for support for host communities as well. A sustained political effort to work towards a solution for the situation is necessary. A Joint Response Plan (JRP) for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis was launched in March 2018 calling for USD 951 million for agencies to continue delivering lifesaving assistance until the end of the year. UNHCR is appealing for USD 238.8 million as part of its Supplementary Appeal for 2018 (included in the JRP) to enable the organization to respond to support protection and other requirements as they prepare to face a harsh monsoon season, and potential cyclones.

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