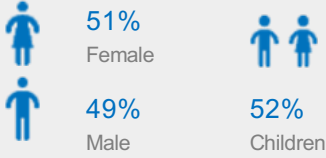




POPULATION

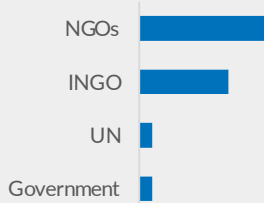
975,350 # of registered refugees



as of 31 January 2024

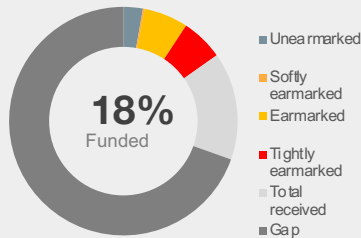
PARTNERS

19 # of partners implementing key UNHCR activities in 2024



FUNDING

275 M Funding for 2024 operations



as of 31 January 2024

HISTORY

UNHCR has been a friend of Bangladesh since 1971, providing life-saving aid to some 10 million refugees forced to flee during the Liberation War.

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

January 2024



The devastating fire in Camp 5 on 7 January left some 900 families without homes. © Ayas, Rohingya photographer

KEY UPDATES

- 2023 JOINT RESPONSE PLAN (JRP):** As of [31 December](#), the 2023 JRP was 50% funded with USD 440 million received against an overall appeal of USD 876 million. This compares to 69% funding received against an appeal of 881 million in 2022. [Read more.](#)
- MISSING AT SEA:** Some 569 Rohingya were reported to have perished or gone missing last year in South-East Asian waters, with nearly 4,500 embarking on deadly sea journeys – a significant increase on previous years. The number reported missing or dead is the highest since 2014. Estimates show one Rohingya was reported to have died or gone missing for every eight people attempting the journey in 2023. [For more info, visit the Myanmar data portal.](#)
- FIRE IN CAMP 5:** On 7 January, a massive fire broke out in Camp 5, a UNHCR-managed camp. The fire took over three hours to extinguish, with more than 200 Rohingya volunteers serving as first responders. Almost 1,000 shelters were damaged/destroyed, affecting some 900 households (5,000 people) including 3,500 children. Damage was also reported to 31 community facilities including learning centres and child-friendly spaces, 213 WASH structures, and 55 solar streetlights. Emergency firefighting vehicles could not reach the area as there is no vehicular access road, slowing the response time. Dry canal beds and lack of fire breaks in the congested area also impeded the fire response.
- REDESIGNED SITE PLAN:** With support from the Camp 5 Camp-in-Charge, UNHCR designed a new site plan for the fire-affected community, with additional access roads and optimized locations of shelters and facilities. The plan implements an integrated WASH/Shelter model, with one WASH block for every 3-5 shelters. The model increases accessibility for the elderly, women and girls, people with disabilities and other special needs. It mitigates gender-based violence (GBV) and protection risks, and promotes health, dignity and ownership, while reducing exposure to unsanitary practices within living spaces.
- COMMUNITY DIALOGUES:** 65 refugees (25 women) took part in five community consultations organized in five camps. Safety and security in the camps remain the primary concern for refugees, followed by food distribution, increases in GBV incidents, child labour and child marriage (i.e. negative coping mechanisms due to lack of income), and healthcare concerns. Refugee feedback/concerns were shared with the relevant actors.
- REGISTRATION VERIFICATION EXERCISE:** In January, the exercise to verify and update the data of refugees in the two registered camps was completed. Registration details of 35,340 individuals (8,004 households) were updated, reaching 86% of the target.
- NEW SCHOOL YEAR IN REGISTERED CAMPS:** UNHCR's new education partner CODEC launched the new academic year in Nayapara and Kutupalong registered camps with programmes for early childhood education (ECE) and primary and secondary levels (up to grade 8). As of January, 6,068 children are enrolled (2,563 children in ECE, 3,229 in primary grades and 276 in secondary grades), 51.6% of whom are girls. Materials have been adapted from the English curriculum rather than the Myanmar curriculum, to better reflect the needs of the registered refugees.

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.

- VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT & PRODUCTION:** In January, 3,275 refugees (1,823 women) were enrolled in vocational skills training; 399 refugee women were engaged in underwear and sanitary napkin production, and 131 refugee women engaged in jute bag production. Meanwhile, UNICEF confirmed a plan to use the underwear and sanitary napkins produced at the UNHCR-supported centres for its female hygiene kits, contributing to the project's cost recovery. A fifth production centre will be established in February, increasing production capacity.
- BIOGAS ACCIDENTS & SAFETY AWARENESS:** Three biogas/septic tank related incidents occurred in December and January in Cox's Bazar, resulting in 11 injuries (ten children and one adult) and one adult fatality. The incidents prompted an audit of all biogas plants, involving consultations with 175 biogas users and their neighbours. The audit recommended decommissioning 13 out of 82 biogas facilities (all in registered camps). Meanwhile, awareness campaigns on biogas-related risks and hazards were conducted, and UNHCR is reviewing occupational hazards for community volunteers and will conduct targeted training and awareness of partner staff and volunteers.
- PRESSURE COOKER STUDY:** The second round of the study identified further energy savings through use of pressure cookers, with smaller households able to save more. The research findings are being analyzed and finalized in the coming weeks, and will be reflected in the future programming.
- UPSWING IN FIRE INCIDENTS:** In January, 80 fire incidents (two major ones and 78 minor) were reported, compared to 37 minor incidents during the same period in 2023. Injuries, damages to shelters and other properties were recorded. The cause of 44 incidents (55%) could not be established, while the remaining fires were attributed to different, unconfirmed factors including suspected arson.
- CAMPAIGN AGAINST SCABIES:** In January, 32,539 refugees ages two years and up received the recommended two doses of medicine in a mass drug campaign against scabies, and 32,006 refugees received their first dose, reaching 99% of target.
- MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH CARD:** UNHCR piloted a Maternal and Child Health Card to ensure proper healthcare documentation and monitoring during pregnancy, childbirth, and the first two years of a child's life. The pilot is ongoing at select health facilities in 13 camps and will be completed in February. A wider rollout, in coordination with Health Sector partners, is planned for the second quarter, aiming for more effective health service delivery through reducing multiple consultations.
- MISSION REPORT:** After a pause on missions in the lead up to Bangladesh's general election on 7 January, UNHCR hosted or assisted eight visits from donors and partners to Cox's Bazar camps and Bhasan Char, including the USA, the UK, and ADB.
- FUNDING UPDATE:** As of 31 January, the UNHCR Bangladesh operation was 18% funded against an operating plan of USD 275 million. A top up was received from the European Union in January.

DONORS

UNHCR in Bangladesh is grateful for the support of Australia, Belgium, Canada, the People's Republic of China, Denmark, the European Union, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

With additional support received from UN funds including Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and private donors, foundations, corporates, and companies worldwide including Adidas, Fast Retailing Co. Ltd., Qatar Charity, and the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives.

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IN "CASE YOU MISSED IT..."

- "With Bangladeshi humanitarian actors, UN agencies & NGOs, UNHCR is rebuilding the destroyed camp with the goal of improving where we can. A better planned camp is less vulnerable to calamity."** Out of the ashes of the devastating 7 January fire in Camp 5, a more resilient camp is emerging — with better roads, equally distributed services, and inclusive access across genders, ages and different abilities. [Read the op-ed by UNHCR Representative Sumbul Rizvi.](#)
- UNHCR Bangladesh social media accounts published 32 [Facebook](#) posts, 37 [tweets](#) and 25 [Instagram](#) posts in January, including updates on the [Camp 5 fire](#), a closer look at [mobile firefighting units](#) & snapshots of [sanitary napkin production](#) from Fast Retailing production centres.



Now we see hope in them, as the construction work has started very well

With more than 900 shelters damaged or lost on 7 January, UNHCR and humanitarian partners are working at full tilt to rebuild the fire zone. [Watch video.](#)