UNHCR Bangladesh

The UN Refugee Agency

POPULATION

989,585 # of registered refugees

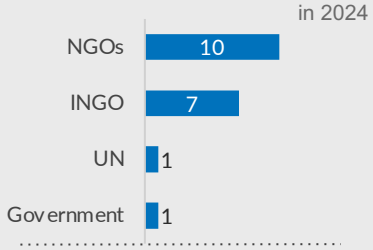
96.4% in 33 camps in Ukhiya & Teknaf
3.6% on the island of Bhasan Char

51% Female
49% Male
52% Children

as of 30 June 2024

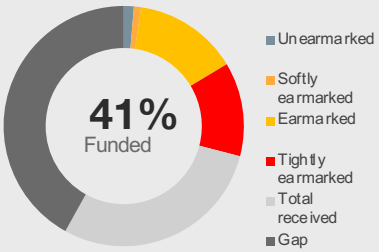
PARTNERS

19 # of partners implementing key UNHCR activities in 2024



FUNDING

275 M Funding for 2024 operations



as of 31 July 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

July 2024

Heavy rains damaged shelters, flooded camps, and disrupted daily activities.@ Shari Yasmin Nijman/UNHCR

KEY UPDATES

- 2024 JOINT RESPONSE PLAN (JRP): As of 31 July, the 2024 JRP was 35% funded, with USD 298.5 million received against an appeal of USD 852.4 million. The 2024 JRP requests continued support for one million Rohingya refugees, who are dependent on humanitarian assistance, and includes more than 400,000 host community members. As the conflict in Myanmar continues to escalate, international solidarity with Bangladesh and refugee protection is urgently needed. In 2023, the JRP was 66% funded with USD 578 million received against an overall appeal of USD 876 million. Read more.

- POLITICAL UNREST: In July, Bangladesh experienced widespread civil unrest which disrupted response activities, and prompted adjustments and innovations. With the imposition of a nationwide curfew/general holiday on 19 July, movements of UNHCR and partner staff were severely restricted. Rohingya volunteers led service provision in many critical areas, while other services were temporarily paused. The communications blackout — including the suspension of mobile internet from 18 to 28 July, and the wider shutdown of broadband and mobile internet including email from 18 to 23 July — impeded workflows such as reporting, procurement, recruitment, and other essential tasks. Communication with volunteers and other Rohingya in camps was also hampered. Service adjustments included building offline servers to enable LPG distribution, as the online database could not be accessed at distribution points without internet. UNHCR took a leadership role in coordinating with government and security counterparts, including facilitating convoy movements of life-saving assistance to the camps, accompanied by an APBn escort.

- WORLD DAY AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS: UNHCR and partners marked World Day Against Trafficking in Persons on 31 July, with film screenings in 32 camps and host community areas. Almost 2,000 people watched two short films on child trafficking and participated in group discussions as well as Q&A sessions with legal experts. The discussions focused on possible trafficking scenarios and what to do.

- EMPOWERING ROHINGYA WOMEN: To foster women's leadership and agency, UNHCR trained 100 Rohingya women in homestead gardening, empowering them to grow nutritious food for their families. UNHCR has also created a women's support network (WSN), which meets biweekly, as a safe space for women to exchange experiences, support each other, and design their own community-based programmes. In August, UNHCR will begin training women to repair small electronics as 'safety champions.' Community members have also expressed strong interest in beauty parlor training, plans for which are being developed.

- ROHINGYA HOUSING, LAND, AND PROPERTY (HLP) ISSUES: A report on Rohingya HLP Issues in 2023 in Cox's Bazar was finalized, providing a comprehensive analysis of HLP challenges faced by the Rohingya community. With refugees living on land owned both privately and by the State, they are vulnerable to eviction, disputes and abuses. The need to pay rent for some, despite lack of resources and absence of written lease agreements, heightens their vulnerability. 96% of refugee households reported HLP issues. The highest number of eviction cases were reported in Teknaf camps. Read the full report.

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, Finland, the European Union, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, 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, foundations, corporates, and companies worldwide including adidas AG, Fast Retailing Co. Ltd., Kuwait Red Crescent Society, Zakat House of Kuwait and Tanmeia Foundation.

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- PRODUCTION CENTRES: Seven production centres in Cox's Bazar camps employed 701 Rohingya women volunteers, including 32 new volunteers in July. A new batch of 42 women will join after completing training in machine sewing. A new bakery was launched in camp 5, with eight women trainees in the baking and pastry-making programme. On Bhasan Char, 218 women artisans at the handicraft production centre made over 1,700 items, including tote bags, laptop sleeves, cushions covers and key rings.

- PRE-VOCATIONAL SKILLS TESTING: Low literacy and numeracy among youth on Bhasan Char represent a barrier to refugees' enrolment and success in curriculum-based vocational skills training, with only 55% of registered learners in vocational courses passing final assessment tests. Pre-vocational training aims to close learning gaps through teaching core competency skills. In July, 300 refugee youth completed pre-vocational courses in basic Myanmar language, functional English literacy, and functional numeracy skills, and 96% (288 learners) passed the post-training assessment. Cumulatively, 4,728 youth have taken the assessment test since 2022, with a pass rate of 95% (4,509 learners).

- BAMBOO SUPPLIES: Delivery of bamboo supplies improved, allowing partners to scale up shelter assistance. By 31 July, the operation received 56.5% of *borak* bamboo and 38.7% of *muli* bamboo committed by suppliers (compared to just 16% of *muli* bamboo received by end of June). More than 4,800 households are still awaiting shelter assistance, compared to 6,200 households as of 30 June. **Borak* and *muli* are two kinds of bamboo.

- REPLANNING BLOCK F, CAMP 4-EXTENSION: Block F remains deserted after several security incidents in June prompted the community to self-relocate to other camps. Heavy rain and vandalism have since left the site in poor condition. In July, a draft site plan with features designed to improve residents' safety and well-being was developed. A peripheral vehicular road for patrolling is planned, and APBn has already begun construction of barracks in the northwest part of the block.

- CHOLERA RESPONSE: Cholera cases rose in July, with continuous heavy rain causing flooding in many camps. 78 cases were reported, mainly affecting boys under 10-years-old. Together with WASH and Health partners, UNHCR intensified prevention and mitigation. Community health workers and WASH volunteers raised awareness on hygiene practices, safe sanitation, food and drinking water management, handwashing, prevention of acute watery diarrhea, etc. Water quality testing at source and household levels increased; 16,800 water purification tablets and 710 jerrycans with chlorine solution were distributed, and drain cleaning was increased in areas where cases had been identified. The last oral cholera vaccination campaign was conducted in 2021, with immunity waning after two years. The Health Sector is advocating for funding for a new campaign.

- PREVENTING HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT: Human-elephant conflict surged in July, with 35 incidents reported– nearly one third (30%) of the year's total (116). All incidents were mitigated without harm to humans nor elephants. UNHCR distributed new or additional elephant deterrent tools (i.e. loudspeakers, megaphones, torch lights), and all elephant response team members remain on high alert. The increase in incidents can be attributed to human encroachment on core forest areas.

- MISSION REPORT: In July, UNHCR welcomed nine visits from donors/partners to Cox's Bazar camps and on Bhasan Char, including delegations from the World Bank, Canada, Japan and ADB. All missions were paused after 18 July due to the civil unrest.

- FUNDING UPDATE: As of 31 July, the UNHCR Bangladesh operation was 41% funded against an operating plan of USD 275 million. New contributions were received from Saudi Arabia, Canada, the USA, and Fast Retailing.

IN "CASE YOU MISSED IT…"

- With the July communications blackout in Bangladesh (18-28 July) affecting connectivity nationwide, UNHCR temporarily paused social media posting.

- From 1 to 16 July, UNHCR Bangladesh published 18 Facebook posts, 23 tweets and 17 Instagram posts, including spotlights on climate emergencies and community-led initiatives, updates on landslides and other weather incidents, and a look at Camp 5's comeback after the devastating January fire.

On 3 July, UNHCR Representative Sumbul Rizvi appeared on popular morning talk show Shokaler Bangladesh to discuss the Rohingya response. Watch video.

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