UNHCR Bangladesh

The UN Refugee Agency

POPULATION

1,173,171 # of registered refugees

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

51.5% Female

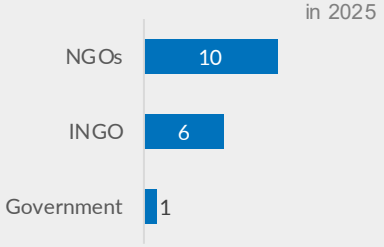
48.5% Male

52% Children

as of 30 November2025

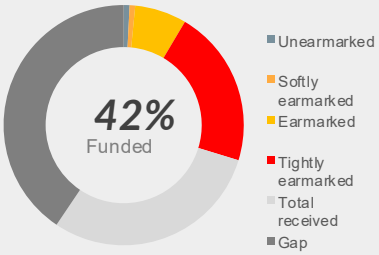
PARTNERS

19 # of partners implementing key UNHCR activities in 2025



FUNDING

255.5 M Funding for 2025 operations



as of 30 November 2025

HISTORY

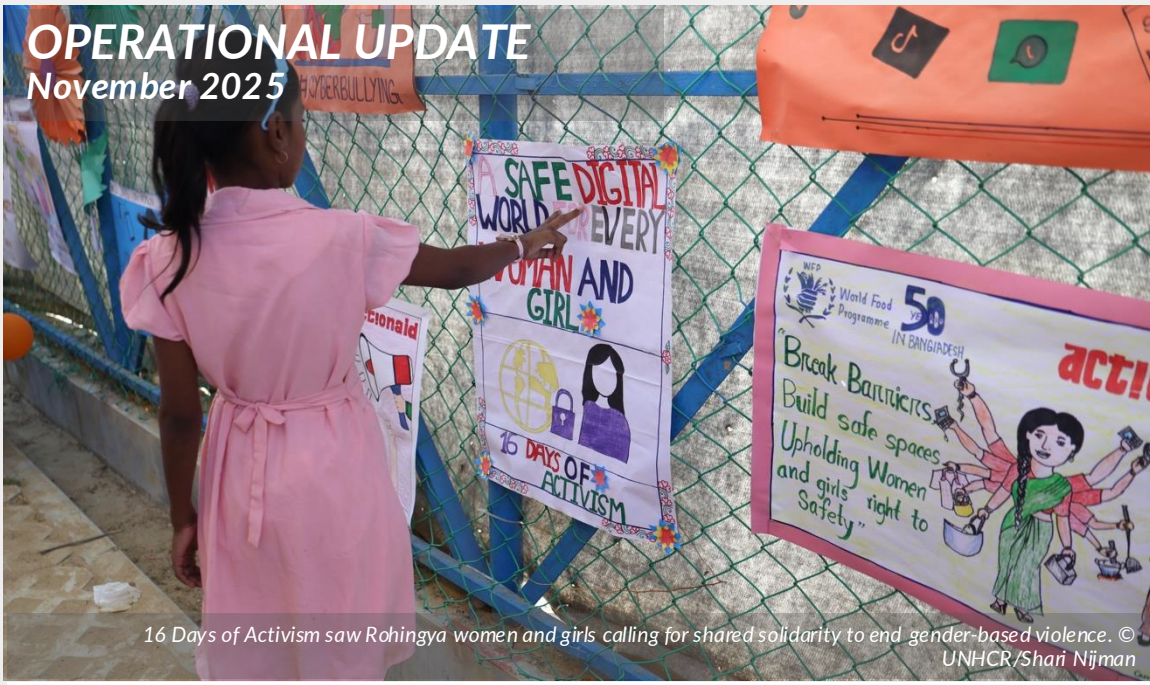
UNHCR has been present in Bangladesh since 1992, but the relationship has deeper roots. In 1971, during Bangladesh's Liberation War, UNHCR coordinated a massive relief effort to support 10 million refugees forced to flee for protection, and helped facilitate their return to the newly independent nation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

November 2025



16 Days of Activism saw Rohingya women and girls calling for shared solidarity to end gender-based violence. © UNHCR/Shari Nijman

KEY UPDATES

- 2025 JOINT RESPONSE PLAN (JRP): As of 30 November, the 2025 Joint Response Plan (JRP) for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis was 38 per cent funded, according to the online financial tracker, with USD 356.3 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 65 per cent. Funding for Priority 1 activities — including soap and menstrual hygiene items, stipends for teachers, cooking fuel, and emergency support for new arrivals — reached 93 per cent, leaving a gap of USD 32 million. In 2024, the JRP was 64 per cent funded, with USD 547 million received against an appeal of USD 852.4 million, according to the online tracker. *Read the reprioritized 2025 Joint Response Plan*.

- IDENTIFYING & ASSISTING NEW ARRIVALS: As of 30 November, 139,378 individuals (35,961 families) have been identified through the joint biometric identification exercise (BIE) 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. Meanwhile, under the Initial Support Programme, 81 per cent of new arrivals in UNHCR-managed camps (14,450 households) have been covered by LPG assistance as of 30 November, including regular refills, LPG initial sets and pressure cookers.

- SIM CARD PILOT: The Office of the Rohingya Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) launched a SIM card distribution pilot in the Cox's Bazar camps on 10 November. Four mobile providers issued 100–200 cards, mainly to volunteers and elected Rohingya representatives, as determined by the RRRC. UNHCR was engaged to verify the recipients, but not in the selection process itself. UNHCR is in discussions with the RRRC on how to ensure transparent and fair beneficiary selection and is drafting a guidance document to ensure a streamlined process with strong safeguards, including registration of one SIM per person and proper data entry. UNHCR is also developing simple FAQs for the community to ensure transparent information sharing. 10,000 SIM cards will be distributed through the RRRC-led pilot.

- BHASAN CHAR FAMILY VISITS: Government authorities organized this year's third family visit of Bhasan Char residents to the Cox's Bazar camps, from 27 October to 23 November. 541 refugees participated, bringing the number of refugees involved in three government-led family visits in 2025 to 1,993, with an average of two to three individuals per household. Refugees were transported by two Navy vessels, each with a capacity of 300-350 people. Three family visits also took place in 2024, although demand for the visits continues to exceed availability. Refugees on Bhasan Char cite the island's remoteness and limited transport options to the mainland camp as key concerns. However, insufficient funding for the government-led visits and the rough sea conditions during the rainy season (June to October) limit greater frequency. Refugees on Bhasan Char must apply for family which are approved by authorities on the island for specific reasons including funerals, seriously ailing relatives, or medical needs.

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 from UN funds including Education Cannot Wait (ECW), UN AIDS and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), and private donors, including Fast Retailing (UNIQLO), Adidas Foundation, Adyen, Join Together Society (JTS), Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives (MBRGI), Muslim World League, Ousri Family Foundation, SONY, Tanmeia Foundation

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- LIVELIHOODS ON BHASAN CHAR: A July 2025 impact assessment showed that 88.8 per cent of 240 refugee-led enterprises supported by UNHCR in 2023 and 2024 were able to continue operating. Women-led enterprises are lagging slightly, mainly due to social and health-related challenges. Over half of the supported businesses reported growth in sales and profits, and 72 per cent of materials received as in-kind assistance were retained. The study found that training improved skills in planning, recordkeeping, and customer engagement. Future recommendations include customizing business support with conditional cash and appropriate materials; providing ongoing technical assistance and mentorship; expanding advanced training; facilitating access to markets beyond the island and strengthening gender-sensitive interventions to support women entrepreneurs.

- UPDATE ON REPLANNED SETTLEMENT IN CAMP 4-EXTENSION: A post-relocation survey of families who returned to Block F of Camp 4-Extension in March 2025 following UNHCR and partners' reconstruction found nearly 90 per cent of respondents considered the rebuilt block to be well-planned. 76 per cent reported that their new shelters were an improvement on the previous ones, although 56 per cent cited insufficient indoor living space due to a reduced shelter size (from 180 square metres to 150, the government-approved standard). In June 2024, clashes between organized groups drove all residents to self-evacuate, dismantling shelters and WASH facilities for materials as they departed. The RRRC subsequently approved a reconstruction plan comprising 200 single-story bamboo composite shelters, 70 double-story shelters, and a barrack for armed police to provide security. Families returned after construction completed in February 2025. More than 80 per cent of respondents felt their shelter needs were met in a timely manner.

- MITIGATING WATER SCARCITY IN TEKNAF: UNHCR and partner NGO Forum constructed 20 earthen dams to function as temporary water reservoirs in five camps to mitigate recurring dry-season water shortages in the Teknaf camps relying on surface water sources for household needs. From December onward, UNHCR and partners will closely monitor water levels in the temporary reservoirs to assess whether minimum standards of 20 litres per person per day can be met in Teknaf during the dry season. In 2025, 80 days of water trucking were needed from 10 March to 29 May to mitigate water shortfalls in the five affected camps.

- DIGITIZATION OF MENTAL HEALTH RECORDS: UNHCR successfully launched the digitalization of MHPSS data through a new platform that centralizes and streamlines medical records and documentation of MHPSS sessions for community para-counselors and psychologists. By replacing manual records with a secure digital system, the platform improves case follow-up, strengthens monitoring, and enhances psychologists' ability to provide effective supervision and technical guidance to community para-counselors.

- SOCIAL AUTOPSY: UNHCR and the Sexual and Reproductive Health Working Group conducted a 'social autopsy' at the Camp 12 Primary Healthcare Centre to identify drivers of bottlenecks in maternal and child healthcare contributing to high maternal and perinatal deaths (within 42 days of delivery), across all 33 camps. Key factors included limited access to blood donors, delays in referral for surgical care, and reluctance to seek hospital-based services. While maternal mortality fell by a fifth from 46 in 2024 to 37 in 2025 (two in UNHCR-supported facilities), perinatal deaths rose 17 per cent, from 491 to 574 — indicating increased vulnerability in the camp community.

- MISSION REPORT: UNHCR welcomed eight visits from donors/partners in November, for a total of 112 missions in 2025. Visitors included the UK Minister for Development, student filmmakers from UNHCR's collaboration with the Dhaka International Mobile Filmmaking Festival, and a delegation of journalists from the European Union.

- FUNDING UPDATE: As of 30 November, the UNHCR Bangladesh operation was 42 per cent funded, with USD 108 million received against an operating plan of USD 255.5 million. New contributions were received from the US, Finland, Australia, Switzerland.

"IN CASE YOU MISSED IT…"

- ***Dangerous sea journeys in search of safety:*** *UNHCR and IOM expressed concern at the loss of 21 lives, including Rohingya, after a refugee boat from Myanmar capsized in the Andaman Sea. As of November, about 5,300 Rohingya refugees embarked on dangerous sea journeys from Bangladesh and Myanmar in 2025, with more than 600 reported missing or dead. Read the press release.*

- *UNHCR Bangladesh published 22 Facebook posts, 38 tweets and 22 Instagram posts in November, including posts on the 16 Days of Activism campaign & World Toilet Day.*

In the Cox's Bazar camps, 20-30 people share a single toilet. Keeping them clean is a community effort. Watch the video for World Toilet Day.

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