

Over 725,000 refugees fled from Myanmar since August 2017 and are hosted in Bangladesh. Women and girls, as well as men and boys, reported harrowing stories of brutal sexual violence. Upon arrival in the camps, the challenging living conditions have increased their exposure to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Moreover, scarce livelihood opportunities may exacerbate risks of various forms of gender based violence, including intimate partner violence, sexual exploitation, trafficking, survival sex and child/forced marriages.



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**Progress**

UNHCR is an active member of the GBV Sub-sector under the Protection Sector and has made progress in supporting the prevention of and response to SGBV. The SGBV unit is composed of 9 specialised staff, who work with NGO and UN partners, and the government. UNHCR has also contributed to the following initiatives:

**92%** of SGBV survivors to date are women and girls; 8% men and boys

**5** partners support UNHCR activities to prevent and respond to SGBV

**31%** of households have been identified with at least one protection vulnerability; 16% of households are single female headed

**UNHCR is working to address SGBV:**

- 1** **Scaling up** immediate health, psychosocial, and legal support
- 2** **Increasing access** to services, including through comprehensive women’s health centres
- 3** **Working to prevent and mitigate risks**, through building community-based protection and response mechanisms, encouraging girls and women to participate in decision making and leadership roles, raising awareness, and integrating SGBV considerations into all activities

Health facilities ensuring access for survivors to Post-exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) to prevent HIV, accord treatment for STIs, and emergency contraception for rape survivors. Health staff have been trained on Clinical Management of Rape. About 76% of survivors received medical treatment.

UNHCR has a team of four psychologists working with partners to provide psychological first aid, and mental health and psycho-social support to refugees, including to SGBV survivors. Ten safe spaces for women and girls have been established.

Six counselling centres and nine community centres have been established in Kutupalong and Nayapara settlements to assist refugees with case management, psychosocial support, legal response and referral to additional services.

Sensitising the community on prevention measures to address SGBV and on confidential and secure ways to access services. A community-based approach is in place so that survivors and their children are not ostracised; 93 community-based groups established.

UNHCR has strategically placed solar lights in refugee settlements and host communities to increase security for women and girls. Distribution of Liquefied Petroleum Gas has commenced and will reduce the need to collect firewood in isolated forest areas and exposure to potential SGBV risks.

Regular meetings with the community to sensitise refugees on prevention measures to address SGBV and ensure confidentiality. Some 262 community outreach members were given foundational SGBV training, where 24 received specialised courses, to strengthen outreach.

**Way Forward**

It is critical moving forwards to improve access to assistance and livelihoods as well as to empower all members of the refugee community, in particular women and adolescent girls. These are key to avoid the most vulnerable being forced into survival sex, exploitation or abuse. Diverse and inclusive community representation is also important to foster a more comprehensive response. The current governance structures are not conducive to the type of engagement that needs to be built with the refugee community, in order to positively promote conditions that are favourable to preventing and addressing SGBV.

**Partners:**

BNWLA, BRAC, IRC/RTMI and TAI

## Working in partnership

UNHCR co-chairs a Strategic Executive Group (SEG) in Bangladesh with the UN Resident Coordinator and IOM. The Refugee Agency leads on the protection response for all refugees, and heads a Protection Working Group in Cox's Bazar. UNHCR welcomes its valuable partnership with a number of UN agencies and coordinates the delivery of its assistance with humanitarian partners through a number of working groups under the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG). UNHCR's main government counterpart is the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and its Cox's Bazar-based Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC). UNHCR staff work closely with the Camp-in-Charge officials in different refugee settlements, as well as a range of international and national actors. It has a strong network of 23 partners, including:

**ACF** (Action Contre la Faim) | **ADRA** (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) | **BDRCS** (Bangladesh Red Crescent Society) | **BNWLA** (Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association) | **BRAC** (Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee) | **CARITAS BANGLADESH** | **CODEC** (Community Development Centre) | **DRC** (Danish Refugee Council) | **FH** (Food For the Hungry) | **GK** (Gonoshasthaya Kendra) | **HELVETAS** Swiss Intercooperation | **HI** (Handicap International) | **IUCN** (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) | **NGOF** (NGO Forum) | **OXFAM** | **PUI** (Première Urgence Internationale) | **REACH** | **RI** (Relief International) | **RTMI** (Research Training and Management International) | **SCI** (Save the Children) | **SI** (Solidarités International) | **TAI** (Technical Assistance Incorporated) | **TDH** (Terre Des Hommes Foundation) |

UNHCR would also like to acknowledge the crucial role played by the refugees in the response; with over 1,000 **volunteers from the refugee community** who are **often the first responders on the ground**. UNHCR and partners have trained and work with **safety unit volunteers** (SUVs) who support the emergency response, **community outreach volunteers** who support raising awareness on important issues and in addressing protection risks, **community health workers** who assist with outreach for health and nutrition, and others who provide further critical support to the emergency response.

## Donor Support

The response of the Government and people of Bangladesh has been very generous. More support is currently needed from the international community to assist the ongoing humanitarian response in Bangladesh for refugees and host communities. Continued political efforts to work for a solution to the situation remain vital. UNHCR is appealing for USD 238.8m (part of its Supplementary Appeal for 2018) in order to support Bangladesh's humanitarian response to refugees.

## Donor country contributions to UNHCR Bangladesh (2017/2018)



## 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
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>238.8 m</b>

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