

COVID-19 Response 1-30 November 2020



Wards in local Cox's Bazar District hospital continue to be supported by UNHCR as the threat of a second wave of infections looms. Photo: ©UNHCR/Harlass

Overview

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports over 5,500 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Cox's Bazar since earlier in the year when the first case was detected in the district. This includes over 350 cases from among refugees living in the 34 camps in Cox's Bazar. Some 10 refugees have sadly died to date.

The COVID-19 treatment services put in place by the authorities and humanitarian agencies in Cox's Bazar continue to have sufficient capacity to support patients for required medical assistance. However, Bangladesh is preparing for a possible second wave of COVID-19 infections.

More than 550 people from both refugee and host communities have so far received treatment in two UNHCR supported Severe Acute Respiratory Infection Isolation and Treatment Centres (SARI ITCs) in Ukhiya and Kutupalong and in an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) that UNHCR established at Sadar Hospital, the District's principal healthcare facility.

Operational Update on Key Sectors



HEALTH
HIGHLIGHTS

Supported with medical care

- Over 550 cases (refugees and host community) provided with care and assistance to date.

Treated and discharged patients

- Over 350 patients successfully treated and discharged.

Community-based surveillance mechanisms continue to be one of the most effective ways to identify cases. UNHCR and other agencies are working with refugee Community Health Volunteers (CHV) from the camps to help identify additional cases. The CHVs provide targeted counselling on testing to refugees identified with COVID-like symptoms and support referrals. Some 22,000 refugees have been referred to health services by CHVs since they started their surveillance for COVID-19 in June.

UNHCR-supported SARI ITCs in Ukhiya and Kutupalong as well as an ICU in the local District hospital have provided some 550 patients from the camps and the host community with support and care to date. As of 30 November, 350 patients were successfully treated and discharged. The facilities continue to have sufficient capacity to deal with the number of cases identified.

A survey on COVID-19 knowledge and perceptions around testing and mask-wearing was completed in the refugee camps in cooperation with WHO. Key findings indicate that more than 95% of refugees know the two most common symptoms of COVID-19. The vast majority perceived the disease to be serious or very serious (88%). The perceptions towards testing for COVID-19 was overwhelmingly positive with more than 85% confirming they would be tested in case of symptoms. 89% of the respondents had two or more cloth masks. While the majority reported wearing masks, direct observations in the camp show a need for additional work to be done to improve compliance with public health requirements to wear masks.



COMMUNICATION WITH REFUGEES

HIGHLIGHTS

Community outreach ongoing

- Over 10,000 older refugees and caretakers reached by refugee community outreach volunteers with messages and support on COVID-19

UNHCR and community-based protection partners continue to work with the refugee community to conduct awareness-raising sessions on COVID-19 prevention and response in the camps. UNHCR-supported Community Outreach Members (COMs) from the refugee communities continued their messaging and information dissemination. Since June, COMs have conducted 9,785 elderly support visits reaching 10,554 older persons and their caretakers.

Mask making training for the community coupled with the awareness sessions on the importance of using them in public spaces continues. Cumulatively, 15,429 refugees were reached since the start of the COVID-19 response in Cox's Bazar in March.

CONTACTS

Mai Hosoi, External Relations Officer, UNHCR Bangladesh (Dhaka) - hosoi@unhcr.org

LINKS: [Operations Portal](#) - [Twitter](#) - [Facebook](#)