

BANGLADESH

8 December 2017

UNHCR issued a statement on the return arrangement signed between Myanmar and Bangladesh, stressing that **conditions in Myanmar are not yet conducive for returns.**

The **trend of new arrivals** has considerably decreased with least 270 people crossing into Bangladesh so far in December, compared with 20,000 in November.

There is currently an **outbreak of diphtheria** among refugees in Cox's Bazar. UNHCR has made its Transit Centre available to serve as a treatment and isolation facility.

POPULATION FIGURES

646,000* Estimated new arrivals in Bangladesh since 25 August 2017
307,500 Estimated refugee population before the influx
953,500 Estimated total refugee population now

STAFFING & PARTNERS

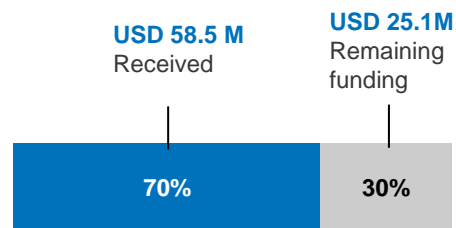
255 Staff now present in the operation compared to **49** prior to the crisis. 75 are national staff.
21 partners compared to **7** prior to the crisis.

* As reported by the Cox's Bazar Inter Sector Coordination Group

FUNDING (AS OF 5 DECEMBER 2017)

USD 83.7 M

Requested for UNHCR's emergency response for 2017



Rohingya refugee children, Janat (7) and Amina (5) at a UNHCR transit camp in Kutupalong, Bangladesh peek through an opening in a tent. Having fled Myanmar recently, Janat and Amina's mother is very ill. The entire family is now living temporarily in UNHCR's transit centre receiving support and protection. © UNHCR/Andy Hall

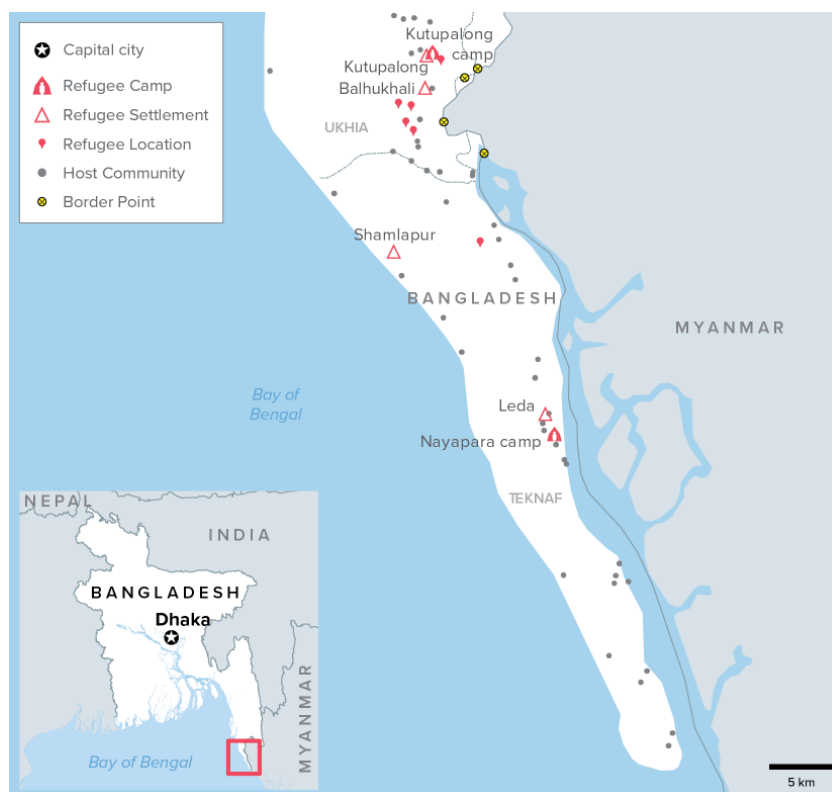
Operational Context

Since 25 August 2017, **646,000 refugees have fled targeted violence and serious human rights violations** in Myanmar's northern Rakhine state, bringing the total number of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh to close to one million.

Newly arrived refugees are settling in the border areas in the South-east of Bangladesh, where an estimated 307,500 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar were already living. Weather conditions, the hilly terrain, and the lack of roads limit access to the refugees, especially those living in more remote areas of the spontaneous settlements.

On 24 November 2017, the Governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh signed a bilateral "Arrangement" on the returns of refugees from Myanmar. UNHCR continues to engage with both governments on UNHCR's role in the voluntary returns process and to address the most pressing challenges to the Arrangement, including its scope, timeframe, and eligibility criteria. Refugees will need accurate information so as to make their own well-informed choices on return to Myanmar.

At present, a steady flow of new arrivals continues to cross into Bangladesh in search of safety. 20,000 refugees arrived in Bangladesh in November alone. Conditions in Myanmar's Rakhine State are not in place to enable safe and sustainable returns. In Bangladesh, UNHCR is working closely with the authorities and partners to provide protection and assistance to the refugees, and to support affected host populations.



Update on achievements

According to WHO, diphtheria is “rapidly spreading among Rohingya refugees in Cox’s Bazar.” On 6 December, WHO warned that more than 110 suspected cases, including 6 deaths, have been clinically diagnosed by health partners, including Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC). Diphtheria is a highly infectious respiratory disease that spreads through droplet and can be deadly, particularly in overcrowded areas with no proper sanitation system. WHO is working with the Bangladesh Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), UNICEF, and partners to contain the spread of the highly infectious respiratory disease through effective treatment and adequate prevention.

For its part, **UNHCR immediately made part of the Rubber Plantation Transit Centre available to serve as a treatment and isolation facility** for patients under MSF management. Sixty-eight patients were transferred on 9 December 2017. The outbreak has impacted the upcoming relocation of some 10,000 refugees currently in border areas in Bandarban district; their relocation will be delayed to allow for the vaccination of children.



PROTECTION

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR and its partner Technical Assistance Inc. trained 29 Community Outreach Members (COMs) from Zone EE in Kutupalong extension. COMs were trained on their roles and responsibilities, protection fundamentals, Code of Conduct (COC) and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). COMs raised community concerns, which have further highlighted the need for increased awareness on fraud, corruption, PSEA and Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), including ways to report incidents. The same trainings will be conducted across the different locations before the end of the year, targeting over 100 COMs.
- Through greater community engagement, UNHCR is receiving reports about refugees paying to access humanitarian assistance, such as food and shelter material. Investigations are underway and efforts are being made to mitigate these developments. UNHCR is revising distribution modalities, for instance by including greater women participation. UNHCR is also strengthening community complaint mechanisms and is putting together procedures to prevent and address fraud, misconduct and sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Refugees living in Nayapara continue to provide 3,500-4,000 hot meals daily to newly arrived refugees in the community kitchens set up in the settlement. Refugees, including those abroad, and local community members continue to contribute to 80% of the total costs.

- On 7 December 2017, UNHCR's Deputy High Commissioner Kelly Clements briefed international and national media outlets at a well-attended press conference in Dhaka. In her statement, the Deputy High Commissioner noted that, despite not being a party to the negotiations leading to the signing of the bilateral Arrangement on the return of refugees between Myanmar and Bangladesh, UNHCR hopes to advise both governments on its practical application going forward. Ms. Clements underscored UNHCR's position on the signing of the Arrangement, particularly with regard to some of the challenges linked to the extent of UNHCR's role in the process, the scope, timeframe, and eligibility criteria that the Arrangement sets out. She also emphasized that conditions in Myanmar's Rakhine State are not in place to enable safe and sustainable returns and that refugees are still fleeing. Finally, she noted that UNHCR stands ready to help both governments work towards a solution for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh that meets international refugee and human rights standards, and ensures that the voices of refugees are represented.



UNHCR Deputy High Commissioner Kelly T. Clements visits a child-friendly space in Kutupalong refugee camp. © UNHCR / Andrew McConnell


HEALTH
Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR is supporting the Ministry of Health’s **diphtheria vaccination campaign** that has started for all children under six, together with WHO and UNICEF. UNHCR is also procuring antibiotics to treat an estimated 8,000 people.
- Part of UNHCR Rubber Plantation transit centre has been transformed into a treatment and convalescence centre, under MSF management.
- UNHCR conducted a training for refugee volunteers to disseminate key information on diphtheria so that volunteers can recognize symptoms of the disease (sore throat, swollen neck glands, etc.) and direct patients to health facilities.
- UNHCR will be working closely with all partners in the Health Cluster to deliver the optimal prevention and response interventions required to contain the outbreak.


WATER AND SANITATION
Achievements and Impact

- Following security incidents in Nayapara settlement, some restrictions were placed on water and sanitation actors’ access to the area. As a result, the building of latrines and the water reservoir was halted. UNHCR worked with local authorities to resolve the situation. On 10 December 2017, December 2017, following continuous discussions with UNHCR and the Forestry Department, the RRRC and locals approved the re-deployment of partners who will be able to continue the work on WASH facilities.

Refugees with access to water

64.4%
Beneficiaries covered

35.6%
Remaining target


Refugees with access to latrines

44.5%
Beneficiaries covered

55.5%
Remaining target


SHELTER AND NFIS
Achievements and Impact

- **In less than a month, UNHCR distributed over 15,000 shelter kits as part of the second phase of its shelter strategy.** This represents over 30% of the 45,000 families targeted. The full shelter kit comprises bamboo poles, ropes, tools and tarpaulins; it weighs an average of 100-150 kg. Some families, for instance female-

headed households with small children, are receiving extra assistance to carry and build their shelter. Distributions will continue until end 2017 and will accelerate in 2018.

- **UNHCR has also started distributing eco-friendly cooking fuel** on 3 December. In over a week, UNHCR and partners distributed Compressed Risks Husks to 18,000 families. This will help reduce protection risks linked with firewood collection and will mitigate the impacts on the environment.
- On 10 December 2017, UNHCR and IOM presented to the ISCG the first draft of the Macro Settlement Development Plan (MSDP). This visionary plan uses themes, such as roads, major infrastructure, solid waste management, wastewater management, energy, to offer a long-term vision and planning for the development of Kutupalong settlement. This tool will be used for advocacy, long-term site development and funding.

Refugees who received core relief items



SITE COORDINATION AND SITE MANAGEMENT

Achievements and Impact

- **Coordination remains a challenge**, notably in new zones under development in the extension site of Kutupalong. Some humanitarian and private actors are building sub-standard latrines too close to water points, creating risks of water contamination, and shelters in flood-prone areas. UNHCR assisted 200 families to move from flood-prone areas to safer locations in Zone OO, an area under development in the northern part of Kutupalong.
- UNHCR continues to **support the Camp-in-Charge**, the Bangladeshi officials appointed to the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) to manage refugee settlements and to improve coordination. Since early December, UNHCR's partners, the Danish Refugee Council and BRAC have been supporting the CiC appointed in the northern part of Kutupalong, to improve coordination and to conduct small site construction works. The CiC are working closely with representatives from the refugee community (the majhis – community leaders). Going forward, UNCHR will support a more inclusive representation system, including through elections, as successfully conducted in Kutupalong and Nayapara settlements.



LOGISTICS

Achievements and Impact

- Since the beginning of the crisis, UNHCR has procured 2,106 metric tons and 10,085 cubic meters of aid relief items – amounting to more than USD 9,000,000 – through 17 international airlifts, three sea shipments, and cargo flights.



Rohingya mother Laila Begum, 30, and her children (from left) Aysha, 7, Mohammed Riaz, 13, and Kishmot Ara, 5, open their UNHCR Non-Food Items emergency relief pack in their makeshift shelter at Kutupalong refugee camp, Bangladesh. The pack includes a solar lantern, phone charger, blankets, tarpaulin and kitchen set. (c) UNHCR / Andrew McConnell

Working in partnership

- **UNHCR continues to support the Government of Bangladesh's efforts in providing protection and assistance to all refugees.** UNHCR's main government counterpart is the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR), in charge of leading the emergency refugee response in coordination with the district authorities. In Cox's Bazar, UNHCR cooperates with the office of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), the local representative of the MoDMR.
- **UNHCR is working with international and national NGOs in Bangladesh and scaled up its partnership network to 21 partners, including nine national NGOs.** UNHCR is assuming its lead role in the protection response for all refugees, coordinating closely on the delivery of assistance with UN agencies and other partners through the various sector working groups of the inter-sector coordination Group.

External / Donors Relations

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds.

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