

# Bangladesh

1 - 30 September 2019

**Monsoon rains** caused flooding in the camps in Cox's Bazar **affecting 29,924 people**. UNHCR supported (temporary or permanent) relocation and assisted refugees and people in the host community.

The Government of Bangladesh imposed tighter **restrictions on Rohingya refugees' use of mobile communication**. This decision also affects humanitarian activities in the settlements

Over **660,000** Rohingya have now **received identity documents** under the Government of Bangladesh-UNHCR Joint Registration process.

## KEY INDICATORS

**744,400\***

Fled Myanmar to Bangladesh since September 2017.

\*Some **914,998** refugees from Myanmar currently reside in Bangladesh in total.

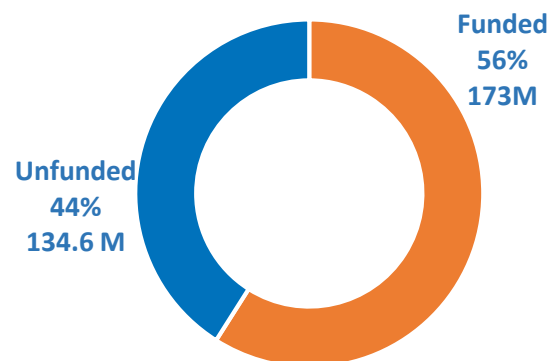
**660,887**

**Registered** under the Government of Bangladesh-UNHCR process and provided with identity documents.

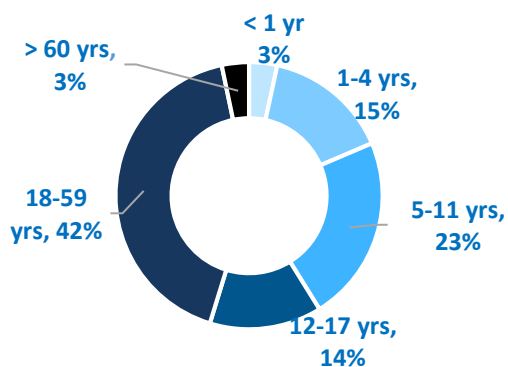
## FUNDING (AS OF 30 SEPTEMBER 2019)

**USD 307.6 M**

requested for Bangladesh

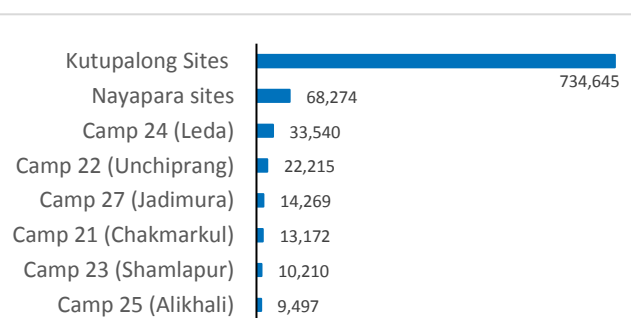


## AGE BREAKDOWN OF REFUGEES IN COX'S BAZAR



## POPULATION OF CONCERN

### Key settlements

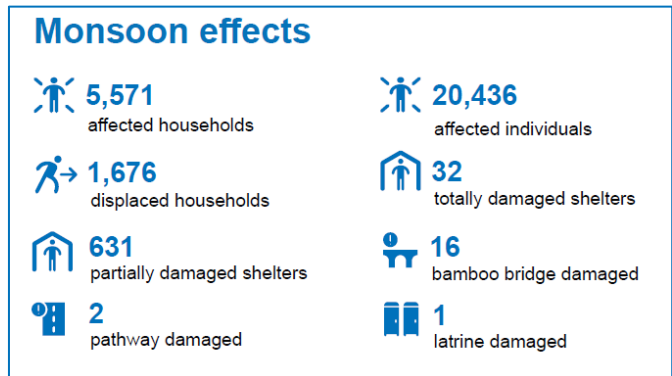


\***Kutupalong Sites** includes Camp 10, Camp 11, Camp 12, Camp 13, Camp 14, Camp 15, Camp 16, Camp 17, Camp 18, Camp 19, Camp 1E, Camp 1W, Camp 20, Camp 20 Extension, Camp 2E, Camp 2W, Camp 3, Camp 4, Camp 4 Extension, Camp 5, Camp 6, Camp 7, Camp 8E, Camp 8W, Camp 9 Kutupalong RC and **Nayapara sites** includes Camp 26 and Nayapara RC

# Operational Context

- Monsoon rains lasted nearly a week in September, starting on 8 September, and led to some flooding and landslides in the refugee settlements in Cox's Bazar, affecting some 7,600 refugee households. It also caused the temporary displacement of some 2,300 households. UN agencies, including UNHCR, as well as NGOs, working in support of the Government of Bangladesh, helped to assist thousands of impacted refugees in camps and hundreds of households in the host community.
- As of 30 September, 660,887 Rohingya were registered under the Joint Government of Bangladesh and UNHCR registration process, reaching approximately 75 per cent of the expected population to be covered by the exercise.
- UNHCR formally completed intentions surveys of refugees' willingness to undertake return to Myanmar, with the last interviews of a cleared list of refugees taking place at the end of September, though it remains possible for refugees to approach UNHCR should they intend to return. Based on an existing Memorandum of Understanding signed between UNHCR and the Government of Bangladesh, UNHCR was requested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in early August to start a process of determining the intentions of 3,450 refugees cleared for return to Myanmar. Currently, there are no households voluntarily willing to return to Myanmar, citing various reasons, including concerns about their safety and security in Rakhine State should they return, as well as the issue of their status on returning. UNHCR had temporarily suspended the intentions survey process in late August following a disruption of services in the Teknaf area due to insecurity around the camps, but resumed the interviews of the remaining families on the list provided by the two governments who came forward once access was again established.

## Impact of rains in Teknaf (8-12 September 2019)



Due to heavy rains and wind, which resulted in flooding, refugees and host community were affected and displaced in the southern Teknaf region of Cox's Bazar. In addition to shelter damage, some of the bamboo bridges that enable mobility within the refugee camps were also damaged.  
 Photo: ©UNHCR/Therik

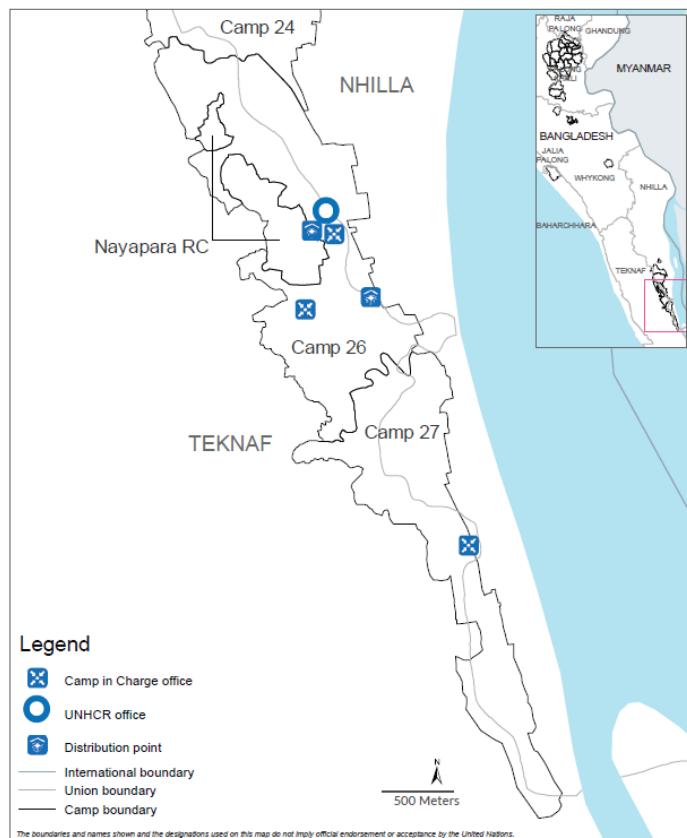


UNHCR continues to engage with refugee community volunteers and partners to improve and reinforce infrastructure and preparedness for adverse weather impacts Photo: ©UNHCR/Gias Uddin

## Achievements

### MONSOON EMERGENCY RESPONSE

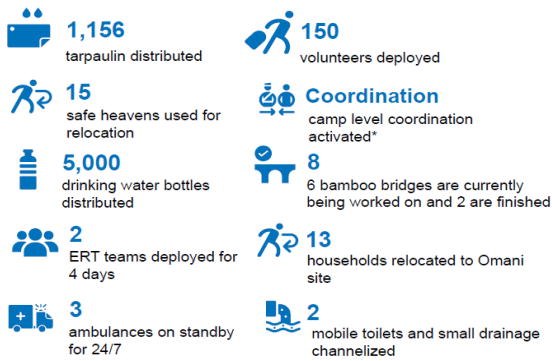
- During the second week of September, a total of 685mm of heavy rain fell in five days, with 360mm falling on 10 September alone. In the southern camps, the rain coupled with high tide of 7.7 ft. did not allow the water to drain enough and Camp 26 experienced flooding in a number of its areas, called 'blocks', with Block H being the most heavily affected. The surrounding host community were also affected. In response, UNHCR deployed its Emergency Response Team (ERT) to respond to protection, WASH, shelter, and health needs. Site management and field teams remained on site to collect data and support the local authorities in their response. Rohingya refugee volunteers were at the centre of the response and assisted the authorities, UN and NGO staff, working around the clock to provide emergency services, repairs and support relocations.
- For UNHCR, one of the major challenges in responding was the absence our main site management and shelter partner in Camps 21, 26, 27 and Nayapara Registered camp. In the days before the rains and flooding, the partners' activities were suspended by the Government. Mobile phone communication has also been restricted to 2G and there was limited voice calling capacity, which inhibited the response.
- UNHCR and partners worked in support of the Government's response and managed, despite challenging circumstances, to assist thousands of refugees in camps and hundreds of households in the host community who were impacted by the severe rain, winds and flooding.





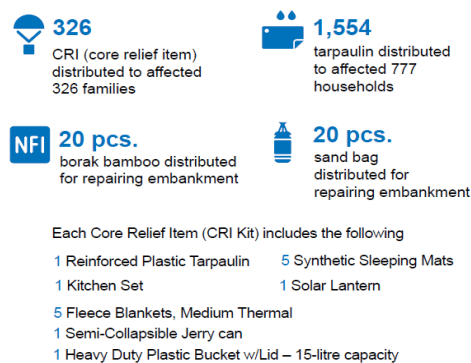
- While no injuries were reported in the camps, landslides and flooding caused the temporary displacement of 1,676 households. There was partial damage to over 630 shelters and complete destruction of over 30 shelters. Some of the refugees were relocated on an emergency basis to 15 designated safe havens / communal facilities to ensure their immediate safety, while others moved with extended families. UNHCR protection staff and partners are working to ensure that all refugees are safely accounted for and are reunited with separated family members. Shelter, food and access to clean drinking water is being provided.

### Response in refugee camps



\*Camp 26 was the coordination center, which included the CiC, Army, WFP, IOM, ISCG and 12 partners.

### Response in host community



*“Refugees were at the centre of the response in Teknaf, demonstrating their commitment to their communities and courage in the face of challenging situations.”*  
 Marin Din Kajdomcaj,  
 UNHCR Head of Sub-office, Cox’s Bazar.



## PROTECTION

### Connectivity for refugees severely limited in the refugee settlements in Cox’s Bazar

- In early September, the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) enforced a regulation disallowing sale of Bangladeshi sim cards and subscription to services for persons holding no national identity cards. All 3G and 4G mobile internet connectivity has also been restricted in refugee-hosting areas of Ukhia and Teknaf upazillas. This restriction may impact refugees negatively in a number of ways. Technology has been an important way for the refugees to communicate with family and friends, and for humanitarian agencies to disseminate information, including in emergencies such as monsoon incidents. The access to information provided by mobile internet has also helped inform refugees of action being taken by the international community and Bangladesh and Myanmar on helping to find solutions. Importantly, mobile phone access has provided a lifeline to UNHCR’s Protection Hotline for refugees to establish contact with the agency to report incidents of a protection nature and ensuring they could better access emergency support when needed.

### UNHCR and partners place importance of supporting the host community in Bangladesh

- UNHCR and partners have continued to strive to ensure support to affected host communities. UNHCR, for example, has programmes in place to support the renovation of local schools, install street lighting in villages close to the refugee settlements, and the upgrading of cyclone shelters and roads. In response to the recent flooding in Teknaf in early September, UNHCR also donated USD 2.5 million of in-kind tent support and distributed relief items to affected families in the host communities. UNHCR is also working with development actors and international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, to increase support to affected host communities. UNHCR has appealed for Bangladesh and host communities in Cox’s Bazar to continue their generous support to the Rohingya refugees until a solution can be found.

## More than 660,000 Rohingya registered under the Government of Bangladesh-UNHCR Joint Registration Process

- More than 660,000 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar were registered in the Joint Registration exercise by the Bangladesh authorities and UNHCR. For many of these refugees, it is the first time they have an identity card. The registration system relies on UNHCR-developed Biometric Identity Management System (BIMS) that captures biometric data, including fingerprints and iris scans, which secure each refugee's unique identity as well as other important information such as family links. The biometric, fraud-proof cards are issued jointly by Bangladeshi authorities and UNHCR to all verified refugees over the age of 12. This comprehensive registration is being simultaneously carried out in 7 sites across the refugee settlements in Cox's Bazar. Aside from the immediate protection identification document provided to refugees, the data will provide national authorities and humanitarian partners a better understanding of the population and their needs. Accurate data will enable to plan and ensure that assistance reaches those who most need it, particularly those with specific needs such as women and children taking care of their families and people with disabilities.



### SITE MANAGEMENT

#### Joint Capacity Sharing Initiative for Camp-in-Charge support staff

- On 3 September, UNHCR and IOM, as part of a site management working group in Cox's Bazar, launched a Joint Capacity Sharing Initiative. The initiative offers induction training for camp-based government support staff working under the Refugee, Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC). The support staff who directly report to the Camp-in-Charge (CiC), the most senior Government official in each camp, attended a 7-days multi-sector multi-disciplinary training on key skills required when working with camp-based refugee populations. The training modules are built on UNHCR's experience of working with refugees in other contexts across the world, though this is the first time the training has been undertaken in Bangladesh. The initiative will reinforce the national site management staff as the authorities assume a wider role in managing camps. The RRRC, with the support of UNHCR, is expanding the capacity of its CIC teams in the refugee camps to include support staff such as a Care and Maintenance Officer, an Information Assistant and two Community Mobilization Assistants per camp.
- The aim of the training is to give CIC support staff increased capacity at both strategic and operational-levels of humanitarian coordination, service delivery and site management specific to the Rohingya response. A longer-term site management technical assistance component is also envisioned. In parallel, the initiative will aim to develop a Site Management Guidebook for the Rohingya response in Bangladesh that consolidates and/or develops standardized tools and guidance for operational actors within sites.

## World Elephant Day

World Elephant Day<sup>1</sup> was observed in Bangladesh on 18 September 2019. IUCN and UNHCR jointly organized a seminar to raise awareness of the elephant population in Cox's Bazar and their current status and efforts for their conservation.

- There are an estimated 268 Asian elephants in Bangladesh. The latest Red List assessment by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Bangladesh categorized the Asian elephants as 'Critically Endangered' in the country. Today, the majority of the elephants are in Cox's Bazar, estimated to be around 45 in the surrounding forest areas close to the Kutupalong refugee settlement.



Elephant response volunteers practice how to manage human-elephant conflict in Kutupalong refugee settlement in Cox's Bazar. Photo: ©UNHCR/C. Gluck

- Historically, the elephants have migrated between Bangladesh and Myanmar, but this stopped due to the expansion of the 13 sq. km refugee camp, which now covers historical routes the elephants previously took. As a result, incidents between humans and elephants have increased. Some 15 lives were lost as a result of elephants entering into the border areas of the settlement since 2018. UNHCR and IUCN have partnered together for nearly two years with the objective of protecting both refugee lives and elephants. Over 586 refugees and 12 host community volunteers were trained by elephant experts in handling their safe deflection from the camp when elephants tried to explore old migration routes or forage food. Since February 2018, Elephant Response Team members manned 94 watchtowers around the large settlement and successfully diverted elephants from the refugee settlement and host community areas respectively and returned them to the surrounding forest on 93 occasions without injury or death to either people or elephants.
- At the World Elephant Day seminar held in Cox's Bazar, expert views were shared with the audience including from the Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AsESG) of IUCN's Species Survival Commission (SSC), acknowledging the need for more knowledge on the situation of elephants in Cox's Bazar and expressing the hope that the way forward could include and support innovative solutions for the better protection of elephants.

## 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

<sup>1</sup> Due to the Eid Al Adha holiday period falling in August, the globally observed World Elephant Day (held annually on 12 August) was deferred nationally to a later date.

(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 32 partners:

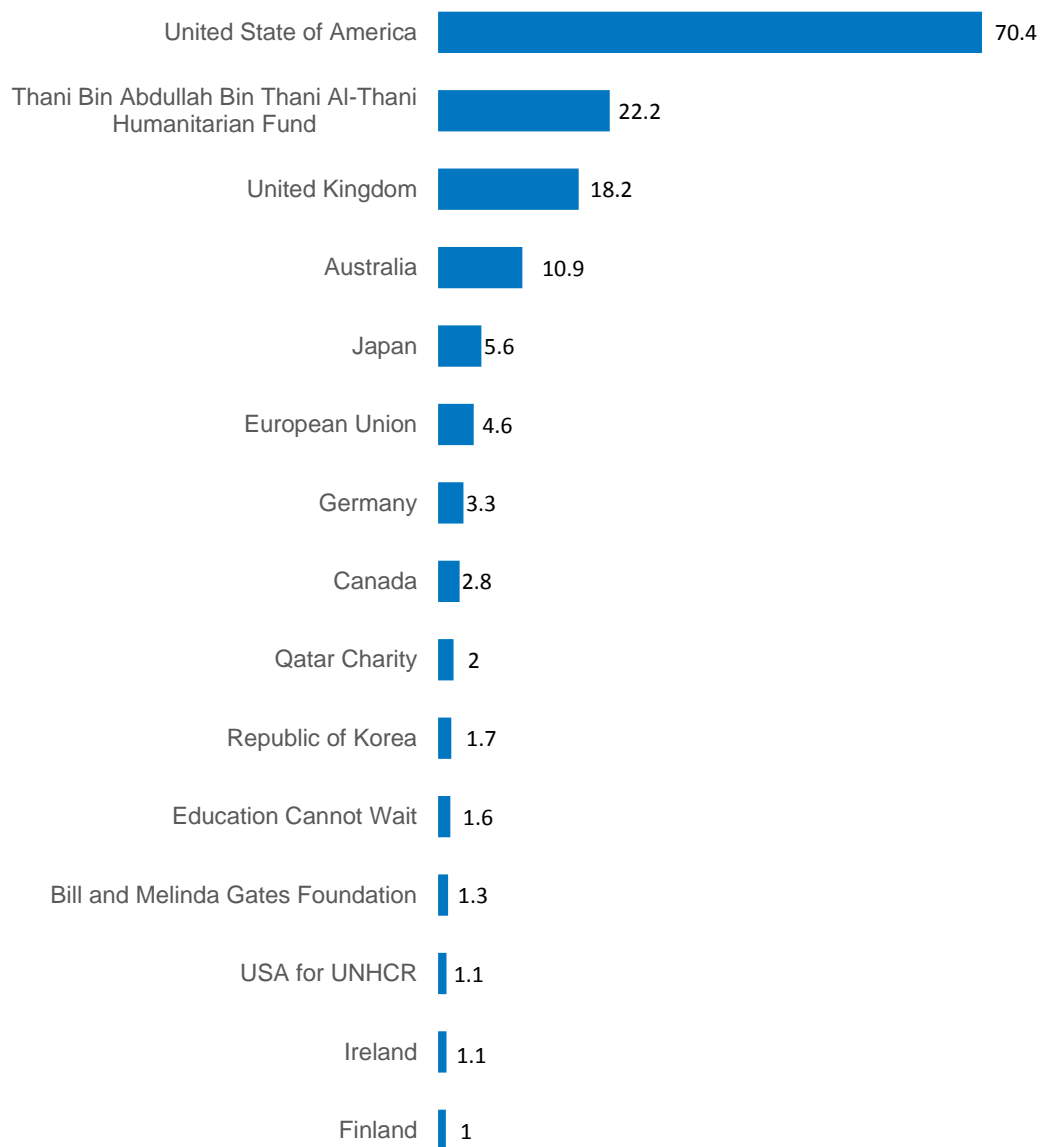
MDMR (Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief) | Action Aid Bangladesh | ACF (Action Contre la Faim) | ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) | BNWLA (Bangladesh National Woman Lawyer's Association) | Bangladesh Red Crescent Society | BRAC (Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee) | Caritas Bangladesh | Center for Natural Resource Studies | CODEC (Community Development Centre) | COAST (Coastal Association for Social Transformation Trust) | Danish Refugee Council | FH Association (Food for the Hungry) | GK (Gonoshasthaya Kendra) | IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) | Handicap International | Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation | Light House | Oxfam GB | Relief International | Mukti Cox's Bazar | NGO Forum for Public Health | RTMI (Research, Training and Management International) | Save the Children International | World Vision | Solidarites International | Terre des Hommes | TAI (Technical Assistance Incorporated) | NRC (Norwegian Refugee Council) | WFP (World Food Programme) | UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) | IOM (International Organization for Migration)

UNHCR would also like to acknowledge the crucial role played by the refugees in the response; with over 3,000 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 members 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 refugee response.

## Financial Information

Total recorded contributions for the operation amount to some **US\$ 173 million**.

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.

**Funding received (above USD 1 million)**



## External / Donors Relations

UNHCR's humanitarian response in Bangladesh is made possible thanks to the generous support of major donors who have contributed unrestricted funding to UNHCR's global operations, and to donors who have generously contributed directly to UNHCR Bangladesh operations.

### **In 2018 and 2019, support has been received from the people and governments of:**

Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, the European Union, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

UNHCR is sincerely grateful for the additional support received from many individuals, foundations, and companies worldwide including Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Education Cannot Wait, Kuwait Finance House, Qatar Charity, and Thani Bin Abdullah Bin Thani Al Thani Humanitarian Fund.

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