



EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO DEVASTATION CAUSED BY MONSOON RAINS

889,704 Rohingya refugees reside in 34 extremely congested camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazilas of Cox's Bazar District. Over 700,000 of these refugees arrived in the weeks following violence in the northern part of Myanmar's Rakhine State in August 2017.

This week, Cox's Bazar has experienced persistent rains and strong winds and the weather conditions are expected to continue in the coming days. We are saddened by the resulting deaths of six refugees and 15 Bangladeshis in the host community areas, as confirmed by government officials. 518 villages in Cox's Bazar district are affected.

Prior to this week, the monsoon season had already affected over 117,000 refugees because of soil erosion and landslides, flooding, wind and storms. Coordinated efforts to prepare the camps and refugees in advance of monsoon season take place throughout the year. Adding to the complexity of the situation, Bangladesh is currently facing its highest infection and positivity rates since the beginning of the global COVID-19 pandemic. In order to mitigate the spread of the virus, access to camps by humanitarian actors has been restricted with only critical activities permitted.

Current Situation

Assessments on the damage in the camps are ongoing. As of 29 July, initial reports indicate:

- Over 3,800 shelters (housing over 21,000 refugees) have been destroyed or damaged as a result of the severe weather events.
- More than 13,000 refugees have been forced to temporarily relocate and have sought shelter in community facilities or with other families.
- Hundreds of facilities are damaged including primary health clinics, distribution points and latrines.
- Many roads have been blocked by debris, pathways washed away, and foot bridges destroyed.
- Access has been hindered due to damage to roads, pathways and bridges.

Rains are predicted to continue in the coming days. Lifesaving interventions are being prioritised while assessments are ongoing.

Coordination

Under the lead of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), humanitarian partners were onsite from the time of the flooding to assess the damage and establish a coordinated response to provide immediate assistance.

On 28 July, the Divisional Commissioner of Chittagong visited the affected area, including camps, with the Deputy Commissioner Cox's Bazar, the RRRC, leadership from the local administration, and security agencies.

UNHCR's Initial Assessment & Response

Shelter, Site Management and Non-Food Items

- UNHCR has deployed its Emergency Response Teams to assess the damage, collect data, provide immediate assistance, support refugee volunteers and partners, and to coordinate with the Camp in Charge officials in UNHCR-managed camps.
- 1,600 volunteer refugee and host community emergency responders trained in flood and monsoon response are active throughout the camps assisting families and individuals. Volunteers are supporting the distribution of hot meals to affected families from the World Food Programme (WFP).
- 982 households have been supported with shelter material kits depending on the level of damage to their shelters.
- 43 facilities including 40 learning centres are being used as temporary communal shelters for displaced families.
- Prepositioned items including tarpaulins, solar lamps and jerry cans are being distributed by our partners. Additional items have been dispatched from our warehouses in Cox's Bazar for ongoing distributions.

Medical

- Most of the health facilities supported by UNHCR are affected by water logging and leakage from roofs and windows. While health services continue, two facilities had to temporarily suspend their services, discharging or evacuating patients due to extensive flooding. One facility has since re-opened.
- Due to destruction of some roads and walk-ways, some medical facilities are difficult to reach. Mobile clinics are on standby.
- More than 1400 Community Health Workers (CHW) are identifying and referring refugees who require medical and psychosocial support to health facilities. CHWs are conducting home visits to raise awareness on health priorities during the emergency.
- Disease surveillance, along with awareness raising on Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD) which often increases during natural disasters like flooding is taking place, along with the distribution of oral rehydration solution (ORS) and zinc tablets to suspected AWD cases.
- Referrals to health, protection, gender-based violence and nutrition services are ongoing.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- Over 500 households have received chlorinated water (5,000L in total) through the distribution of jerrycans. UNHCR is coordinating with WASH actors across the camps to ensure access to safe drinking water.
- Hundreds of latrines have been damaged, assessment and repairs are ongoing.
- About 25% of chlorinated water networks have been impacted and are now producing less water than required. Refugees are relying on nearby tube wells and UNHCR, through its partners, have distributed 64,541 aqua tabs to ensure the safety of drinking water.

Protection

- UNHCR trained protection volunteers successfully reunited 52 lost children with their families. The children were separated when families had to abandon their shelter and seek refuge with friends, families or in community facilities.
- Over 5,000 Refugee Protection Volunteers throughout the camps including Community Outreach Members, have been assisting older persons and other refugees with specific needs, referring refugees to relevant services providers, and supporting families to rebuild their shelters where possible.

UNHCR's Funding

Operational requirements for 2021 in Bangladesh are currently only 49% funded, leaving a funding gap of over US\$149M.

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