



POPULATION

971,904

of registered refugees



52%
Female
48%
Male



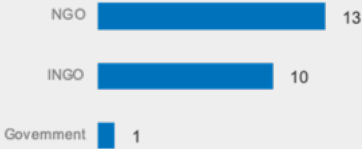
51%
Children

as of 31 December 2023

PARTNERS

24

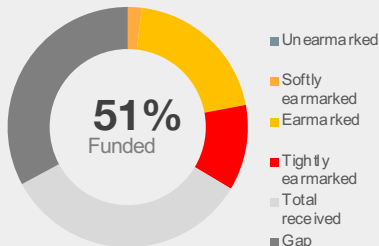
of partners implementing key UNHCR activities in 2023



FUNDING

275 M

Funding for 2023 operations



as of 15 December 2023

HISTORY

UNHCR has been a friend of Bangladesh since 1971, providing life-saving aid to some 10 million refugees forced to flee during the Liberation War.

Today, UNHCR and partners manage 16 camps in Cox's Bazar, including Nayapara and Kutupalong Registered Camps, plus the island of Bhasan Char, supporting the Government of Bangladesh to provide essential services and meet the protection needs of one million Rohingya refugees, including special services for women, children and persons with disabilities. Most arrived in 2017, fleeing persecution, large-scale violence and human rights violations.

Support is additionally extended to host communities while continuously working towards solutions to ensure that refugees can return in a safe, dignified, voluntary and sustainable way once conditions in Myanmar allow.

OPERATIONAL UPDATE

December 2023



All Rohingya households now receive clean energy to cook and pressure cookers for fuel efficiency. © UNHCR

KEY UPDATES

- 2023 JOINT RESPONSE PLAN (JRP):** As of [31 December](#), the 2023 JRP was 49% funded with USD 429 million received against an overall appeal of USD 876 million. This compares to [64% funding received](#) against an appeal of 881 million in 2022. [Read more.](#)
- GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM 2023:** On 13-15 December, the world's largest international gathering on refugees, held every four years, took place in Geneva. 4,200 participants from 168 countries attended, including 300 refugee delegates. Some 1,600 pledges were made in support of refugees and host countries, including 42 pledges for the Rohingya. [Read more.](#)
- MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PLEDGE FOR THE ROHINGYA:** On 14 December, a high-level parallel event was held alongside the GRF — offering a platform for pledge announcements in the presence of high-level delegates from Bangladesh, Canada, the USA, Australia, and the UK, including Bangladesh's Foreign Secretary. Solidarity with host countries and Rohingya was expressed through [42 pledges by 25 actors](#). Pledges ranged from financial commitments to technical support to advocacy. Sectors included healthcare and education access, self-reliance, protection, resettlement, climate action and more.
- DESPERATE BOAT JOURNEYS:** The fourth quarter of 2023 saw an increase in maritime movements of Rohingya refugees, with more than 1,600 Rohingya landing in Indonesia's Aceh province alone. A coordinated online campaign of misinformation, disinformation and hate speech has led to [attacks](#) on the new arrivals in Indonesia. Rohingya are fleeing violence along with limited opportunities to learn, acquire skills or work, and reduced rations in the Cox's Bazar camps. As of 31 December, 4,490 Rohingya embarked on risky boat journeys in 2023 — a 21% increase from 2022. More women and children are now making the trip: of recent emarkees, 35% are men, 28% women and 38% children. [For more info, visit the Myanmar data portal.](#)
- REGISTRATION EXERCISE:** The exercise to verify and update the data of registered refugees formally ended in December. Of 5,071 households (23,215 individuals) targeted in Nayapara Registered Camp (NRC), 86% were reached. In Kutupalong Registered Camp, where the exercise ran May-September, 92% of 3,372 targeted households (18,063 individuals) were reached. Some pending NRC cases will be processed in 2024.
- TOWNHALLS WITH REFUGEE VOLUNTEERS:** On 20 December, the first of a series of townhall meetings with community-based protection volunteers was held in Camp 3. 24 volunteers shared challenges encountered while carrying out their day-to-day duties, with safety and security issues reported as a chief area of concern. UNHCR continues to advocate for greater security in the camps, and sustainable livelihoods that offer hope and opportunities for the refugees.
- PRE-VOCATIONAL TRAINING:** Of 9,496 adolescents and youth who sat for assessments after completing pre-vocational courses in literacy, numeracy, and life skills, 94% passed. Successful graduates will be referred for curriculum-based vocational training, while those who did not pass are being encouraged to re-take the course.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. BASIC RIGHTS, PROTECTION & EDUCATION

Refugee rights are respected, and they have access to education and protection, including protection against gender-based violence.

2. ADEQUATE LIVING CONDITIONS IN A GREEN ENVIRONMENT

Essential and sustainable services (including safe shelters, health, nutrition, WASH, energy) are ensured, and the environment is protected.

3. SKILLS & CAPACITY BUILDING TO SUPPORT DURABLE SOLUTIONS

Work toward sustainable solutions, with voluntary repatriation at the centre, supported by skills development, livelihoods and capacity building for refugees.

4. DIVERSIFIED FUNDING & PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships with development and private sector actors to innovate, support and localize operations.

5. CREATING A POSITIVE NARRATIVE

Lead the narrative on the Rohingya refugee response and improve public attitudes toward the Rohingya.

DONORS

UNHCR in Bangladesh is grateful for the support of Australia, Belgium, Canada, the People's Republic of China, Denmark, France, European Union, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jersey, the Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States of America. With additional support received from UN funds including Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and private donors, foundations, corporates, and companies worldwide including Fast Retailing Co. Ltd., Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Qatar Charity, and the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives.

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- **VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT & PRODUCTION:** In 2023, 4,219 individuals (2,844 women) were enrolled in skills development training and production activities, including 275 local Bangladeshi women. Trainees learned skills in eight trades, and produced sanitary napkins, female underwear, jute and fabric handicrafts, and clothing items — for which they received stipends. 2.7 million sanitary napkins and 660,000 pairs of female underwear were produced through the Fast Retailing/UNIQLO project alone, supplying Rohingya women and girls in camps with comfortable, quicker-drying, menstrual hygiene items through the year.
- **SHELTER REPAIRS:** In 2023, 43,308 refugee households received materials for shelter repair and maintenance, after reporting damage and being verified for assistance. This represents nearly half (46%) of the 93,500 total shelters in 16 UNHCR-managed camps. In 2022, less than a third (30%) required repairs. The cycle will continue into 2024 as more of the temporary shelters reach the end of their lifespans, while designs for sturdier shelters that have greater resistance to fire and weather are under review by the Government.
- **EDUCATION & HEALTH HANDOVERS:** As part of rationalization, all UNHCR-supported learning facilities teaching the Myanmar Curriculum were handed over to UNICEF in December (938 facilities across 13 camps). UNHCR will continue to support education in the two registered camps. Meanwhile, two primary healthcare centres with integrated MHPSS services in Camps 1E and 1W were handed over to BRAC. UNHCR closed two health facilities in Camps 5 and 6. UNHCR will continue to fund eight nutrition centres for another six months of 2024, to allow the Nutrition Sector to identify alternate funding sources.
- **NUTRITION SURVEY 2023:** Findings of the 2023 Standardized Expanded Nutrition Survey were published in December. Global acute malnutrition (GAM) among children aged 6-59 months increased from 12.3% in 2022 to 15.1% in 2023, while severe acute malnutrition (SAM) increased from 0.7% in 2022 to 2.1% in 2023. Both rates are now above critical thresholds (15% for GAM; 2% for SAM) and represent the highest levels of acute malnutrition seen in the Cox's Bazar Rohingya refugee population since the 2017 influx.
- **GENERAL HEALTH CARD:** The rollout of health cards in Cox's Bazar and on Bhasan Char has so far resulted in a 25% reduction in the number of visits at the health facilities by reinforcing the management of individual health information, avoiding duplication of health care services, and enabling better communication and follow up within the health system.
- **WILDLIFE CONSERVATION & ELEPHANT RESPONSE:** In 2023, 141 wild animals of 31 species were rescued by refugee volunteers across 33 camps. Meanwhile UNHCR and partner IUCN continued elephant response activities, safely mitigating 141 human-elephant-contacts in 2023 through the work of 866 trained Rohingya and Bangladeshi volunteers.
- **MISSION REPORT:** In December, UNHCR hosted or assisted seven visits from donors and partners to Cox's Bazar camps and Bhasan Char, including the Ambassador of Norway, the High Commissioner of Australia, and delegations from Switzerland, Canada and the USA.
- **FUNDING UPDATE:** In 2023, the UNHCR Bangladesh operation was [51% funded](#) against an operating plan of USD 275 million. A new contribution was received from CERF this month.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

- ***"I never felt as much empathy towards refugees as I do now."*** Student filmmaker Rafsan Jany Rahat reflects on his participation in a five-week workshop, co-organized by UNHCR and the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, which empowered emerging storytellers to create stories about people 'Forced to Flee' on their mobile devices. The workshop closed on 1 December with a screening of films written, directed, shot and produced over the course of the workshop. [Read the story.](#)
- UNHCR Bangladesh social media accounts published 30 [Facebook](#) posts, 42 [tweets](#) and 46 [Instagram](#) posts in December, including a closer look at the [stories of this year's Nansen award winners](#), [a message of support from the Ambassador of Japan](#), and [facts about risky maritime journeys](#).



"Water is life." Rohingya water supply volunteer Abdul Motaleb explains how he helps ensure clean water to one million refugees in camps. [Watch video.](#)