UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency | Bangladesh

POPULATION

1,168,398 # of registered refugees

96.6% in 33 camps in Ukhiya & Teknaf
3.4% on the island of Bhasan Char

51.5% Female

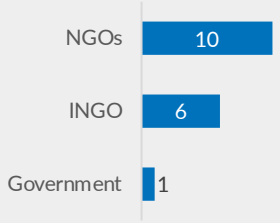
48.5% Male

52% Children

as of 31 October 2025

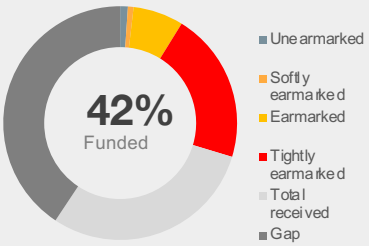
PARTNERS

19 # of partners implementing key UNHCR activities in 2025



FUNDING

255.5 M Funding for 2025 operations



as of 31 October 2025

HISTORY

UNHCR has been present in Bangladesh since 1992, but the relationship has deeper roots. In 1971, during Bangladesh's Liberation War, UNHCR coordinated a massive relief effort to support 10 million refugees forced to flee for protection, and helped facilitate their return to the newly independent nation in the following months.

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.

A kite festival brought together Rohingya from Hindu and Muslim communities to celebrate and empower women.© UNHCR/Shari Nijman

KEY UPDATES

- 2025 JOINT RESPONSE PLAN (JRP): As of 31 October, the 2025 Joint Response Plan (JRP) for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis was 38 per cent funded, according to the online financial tracker, with USD 354.9 million received against an appeal of $934.5 million. However, internal figures from the Inter-Sectoral Coordination Group (ISCG) indicate a higher funding level of 64 per cent. Critical gaps in Priority 1 needs include soap and menstrual hygiene items, stipends for teachers, and emergency support for new arrivals, totaling USD 39.6 million. These gaps may trigger reductions in assistance, leading to a rise in negative coping mechanisms in the community. In 2024, the JRP was 68.2 per cent funded, with USD 581.7 million received against an appeal of USD 852.4 million, according to the online tracker. *Read the reprioritized 2025 Joint Response Plan*.

- PROTECTION TRAINING FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT: UNHCR facilitated refugee protection training for law enforcement agencies on Bhasan Char, reaching 52 participants from the Armed Police Battalion (APBn) and District Police. Participants gained essential skills and knowledge on refugee protection, access to justice, working with persons at heightened risk, and maintaining the civilian and humanitarian character of the camps,

- IDENTIFYING & ASSISTING NEW ARRIVALS: As of 31 October, 136,518 individuals (35,961 families) have been identified through the joint biometric identification exercise (BIE) for new arrivals and issued family cards granting access to assistance, though not individual refugee identity documents. The BIE includes screening procedures to exclude ineligible individuals, and mechanisms are in place for Bangladeshi families mistakenly included in the refugee database to voluntarily return their assistance cards. UNHCR continues to advocate with the Government of Bangladesh for full registration of the new arrivals. *View BIE dashboard*. Meanwhile, under the Initial Support Programme, 347 families received new LPG sets in October. LPG assistance for new arrivals identified through the BIE exercise (as of end-June) was largely completed in September, with support for those not previously covered scheduled to continue in November. To harmonize assistance across camps, UNHCR distributed solar lamps and kitchen sets to newly arrived refugees who had not yet received them, and supplied IOM with the same items for distribution in the camps it manages. 49 per cent of new arrivals reside in IOM camps.

- JOINT PROTECTION MONITORING REPORT: In Q3 2025 (July to September), incidents of abductions and kidnappings rose by 91 per cent compared to Q2 (April to June), while the number of reported killings dropped significantly to four cases. Competition among criminal groups operating in the Teknaf camps and surrounding areas led to a sharp increase in serious protection incidents, including physical assaults, extortion, and abductions. Ransom demands reportedly reached as high as BDT 600,000 (USD 4,900). Gathering for the purpose of recruitment, repatriation and camp elections persisted, and concerns continued to be raised by refugees on the accountability and functionality of the five community members selected to represent "the voice of the Rohingya." *Read the Q3 2025 report.*

- YOUTH ENVIRONMENT CLUB: 26 youth took part in a two-day training on pollution and environmental awareness to strengthen youth leadership on climate action and help address the effects of environmental degradation and climate change on Cox's Bazar.

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, the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jersey, Luxembourg, the Republic of Korea, Kuwait, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, and the USA.

With additional support from UN funds including Education Cannot Wait (ECW), UN AIDS and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), and private donors, including Fast Retailing (UNIQLO), Adidas Foundation, Adyen, Join Together Society (JTS), Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Global Initiatives (MBRGI), Muslim World League, Ousri Family Foundation, SONY & the Tanmeia Foundation

Contacts:
Romain Desclous, desclous@unhcr.org,
Senior External Relations Officer, Dhaka.

- FEMALE HYGIENE KITS REDESIGN: A redesign of menstrual hygiene products, under the Fast Retailing project, incorporated user feedback to improve comfort, reduce drying time, and increase absorbency. In October, a perception survey of the new products by of 206 refugee women found that 95 per cent preferred the new underwear design, and 88 per cent preferred the new sanitary pads. Production of the new kits will start in 2026. Meanwhile, 14,604 kits (116,832 sanitary pads and 43,812 underwear) were delivered to UNICEF in October for their distribution to refugees.

- MARKET FAIR IN COX'S BAZAR: On 29-30 October, a product market fair was organized in Cox's Bazar by the Skills Development and Livelihoods Sector, showcasing a range of products made by Bangladeshi and Rohingya artisans through skills training projects. UNHCR partner NGO Forum displayed Bibia products—including handwoven textiles, embroidered home décor and handcrafted accessories—made by Rohingya refugee women living in the Cox's Bazar camps and on Bhasan Char. *View the Bibia catalog*.

- "BE A HANDWASHING HERO": To mark Global Handwashing Day (15 October), UNHCR and partners brought together children, mothers, imams, majhis, teachers, and volunteers to reinforce good hand hygiene practices to prevent diseases such as acute watery diarrhea and respiratory infections. Over 1,800 refugees participated in interactive activities such as art competitions, courtyard sessions, handwashing demonstrations and community gatherings. 20 popular refugee social media influencers amplified "Handwashing Hero" messages and handwashing tutorials on YouTube and TikTok. *View the campaign online*.

- COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS (CHWs): Capacity-building for refugee community health workers intensified in October. First, a Training of Trainers (ToT) equipped CHW supervisors with a core skills package covering the code of conduct, reporting, surveillance, disease prevention, community nutrition, mental health and psychosocial support, and sexual and reproductive health. Participants will cascade the training to CHWs under their supervision. In addition, CHWs received practical first aid training to treat wounds, burns, and minor injuries, strengthening their ability to provide immediate care before referral to health facilities. UNHCR continues to lead the CHW Working Group in Cox's Bazar. As healthcare funding in the camps declines, building the community's resilience and capacity to mitigate and respond to basic health and nutrition needs is essential.

- SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT INTEGRATION: Renovation work on a centralized facility for sorting and processing solid waste was completed in Camp 1W, replacing two smaller material recovery facilities and optimizing operations, thereby reducing costs and mitigating potential tensions with host communities over waste management. The upgraded and expanded Camp 1W centre will serve both camp 1W and neighbouring Camp 1E — a combined population of more than 55,000 people. Meanwhile, the Camp 1E facility has been decommissioned.

- WAREHOUSE MANAGEMENT: As part of cost reduction measures, UNHCR's Chittagong warehouse has been decommissioned as of 31 October, with all items in inventory relocated to the Cox's Bazar warehouse.

- MISSION REPORT: UNHCR welcomed ten visits from donors/partners in October, for a total of 105 missions in 2025. Visitors included private sector donors from the US and the UK, delegations from the Canadian Embassy, Swiss Development Cooperation, Australian High Commission, UK FCDO, Germany's Academy for Security Police, EU ECHO regional Director General and a member of the State of Jersey's Assembly.

- FUNDING UPDATE: As of 31 October, the UNHCR Bangladesh operation was 42 per cent funded, with USD 107 million received against an operating plan of USD 255.5 million. Contributions were received from the US, Italy and private sector partners Fast Retailing and Tanmeia Foundation.

"IN CASE YOU MISSED IT…"

- ***"UN80: Youth as catalysts of change."*** *To mark the UN's 80th anniversary and celebrate UN Day 2025, an exhibition of 80 photographs by youth, including a dozen by Rohingya refugee youth, was held in Dhaka. The images highlighted the creativity, resilience, and aspirations of young people across Bangladesh for a more peaceful, equal, and sustainable future.* *Read the story.*

- UNHCR Bangladesh published 31 Facebook posts, 38 tweets and 28 Instagram posts in October, including posts on Global Handwashing Day, Teachers' Day, World Mental Health Day and UN Day.

On UN Day 2025, UNHCR spotlighted how our colleagues in blue bring their passion to purpose to support refugees. Watch the video.

UNHCRBangladesh @UNHCR_BGD unhcr_bgd