

# BANGLADESH

17 December 2017

The Bangladesh emergency is a textbook refugee situation. **People fleeing Myanmar should not be forcibly returned. Return needs to be voluntary, safe, and dignified.**

The Government of Bangladesh has generously opened its border for refugees entering the country. **International support continues to be needed to assist refugees and host communities.**

UNHCR seeks to ensure that all refugees enjoy their rights on an equal footing. **Refugees should be able to participate fully in the decisions that affect their lives.**

## POPULATION FIGURES

**655,000\*** Estimated new arrivals in Bangladesh since 25 August 2017

**307,500** Estimated refugee population before 25 August 2017

**954,500** Estimated total refugee population currently

## STAFFING & PARTNERS

**210** staff currently working on the emergency 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 21 DECEMBER 2017)

**USD 83.7 million**

Requested for UNHCR's initial emergency response

**USD 67.9 M**  
Received

**USD 15.8 M**  
Remaining needed



A boy flies his home-made kite made from discarded plastic bags. Photo: UNHCR/Andy Hall

# Operational Context

## Arrivals and border movements

Since 25 August this year some 655,000 refugees have fled targeted violence and serious human rights violations in Rakhine State, Myanmar. UNHCR estimates that average arrival rates have dropped from 745 per day in November to 100 per day so far this month.

UNHCR identified more than 40 border points used by refugees to cross into Bangladesh since the start of the crisis. Currently, refugees arrive mainly through two entry points - Sabrang and Anjumanpara. The availability of boats, boat fares, information provided by relatives on previous crossings, presence of landmines, and border surveillance generally determine the points of crossing.

The Government and people of Bangladesh have shown extraordinary generosity in keeping the country's borders open and shared their resources with refugees from Myanmar. Newly arrived refugees are settling in the border areas in the south-east of Bangladesh, in Cox's Bazar, where an estimated 307,500 refugees were already living. The vast majority are staying in a large and densely populated settlement called Kutupalong. The terrain of the camps is hilly and prone to landslides, flooding, whilst proximity to the coast also makes the area prone to cyclones. Weather conditions, the challenging terrain, and the lack of roads limit access to the refugees, especially those living in more remote areas of the spontaneous settlements. UNHCR has funded a road to ensure better access, working closely with Bangladesh's armed forces.

## Refugee population and protection needs

In order to develop a better understanding of the refugee population and of their needs UNHCR launched a family counting exercise. This exercise will aim to complement the Government's on-going registration efforts. UNHCR teams have identified family composition in its counting exercise and gathered other information that will assist with response efforts. This exercise is proving instrumental in the development and implementation of protection activities and the provision of targeted assistance.

Of the 753,238 individuals counted, the majority (69%) are from Maungdaw, while 24% are from Buthidaung in northern Rakhine State, Myanmar. Some 52% are women or girls, while 54% are children under 18 years of age. A significant number of families (31%) have at least one member who has specific needs, including single mothers (16%), serious medical conditions (4%), elderly people (4%), and people with disability (5%), among others.

UNHCR is working closely with the Government of Bangladesh and partners to provide protection and assistance to the refugees and to support host populations affected by the influx. The Office also continues to work to develop sites in the extended areas of Kutupalong along with ensuring that basic infrastructure is in place where refugees settle.

On 23 November, the Governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh signed a bilateral 'arrangement' on the return of refugees to Myanmar. UNHCR continues to engage with both governments outlining UNHCR's established role in voluntary return processes, why it is important as a means of ensuring refugee concerns are represented, and to address the most pressing aspects of the arrangement, including its scope, timeframe, conditions, and any other criteria that will help it meet international standards for voluntary return. Refugees will need accurate information in order to make their own well-informed choices

on voluntary return to Myanmar. Based on the reports of Rohingya refugees arriving in Bangladesh and of human rights organization, conditions in Myanmar's Rakhine State are not yet conducive to enable safe and sustainable return for many refugees. Confidence-building measures will be required on the ground in Rakhine State as well as other measures, such as unhindered access for UNHCR to conduct protection monitoring of refugee returns.

## Update on achievements



### PROTECTION

#### Achievements and impact

- Since 2 October, UNHCR protection teams have undertaken a total of 92 border monitoring missions. People are continuing to arrive from Myanmar however the pace of the influx has now slowed. UNHCR estimates average arrival rates have dropped from 745 per day in November to 100 per day so far this month. Two-thirds of the new arrivals in the last week said they came from Buthidaung in Myanmar's northern Rakhine state. In speaking with refugees, many have cited their **main reasons for flight** as fear for their safety and security, arbitrary arrests, restrictions on movement and livelihoods. High food insecurity was also present in northern Rakhine State pre-dating the August violence which resulted in a serious malnutrition situation. This has contributed further to the high levels of malnutrition seen currently in the settlements in Bangladesh once refugees started arriving.
- Registration, including birth registration, for all refugees is critical. **UNHCR's family counting exercise which began on 3 October has now been completed.** UNHCR teams continue to count new arrivals and update the data for families who may move within settlements. In parallel, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) is conducting biometrics registration for some 830,000 individuals, including new arrivals. UNHCR will work jointly with authorities to update data records and share with the authorities complementary data which UNHCR gathered on the location of individuals and on family composition. This is expected to result in good data set that will enable UNHCR and the authorities to better plan together, with other partners.
- UNHCR together with 13 partners conducted a community-based assessment in mid-November. Findings indicate that generally refugees feel safe in hosting areas and settlements. However, they indicated a need for more information on the assistance and services available in the sites. Community support and solidarity is high among new arrivals. Distribution lines were considered one of the more difficult aspects of living in the settlements, in particular having to walk long distances to reach the distribution points and waiting times to receive assistance. The assessments highlights a **correlation between protection risks and the level and quality of access to basic needs and services.** Women, female youth, older persons, pregnant women, children and persons with disabilities are the most affected. The external version of the report will be available in the coming days and is set to help guide services on improving access and better facilitate delivery of assistance to refugees and minimize hardships.

#### Identified needs and gaps

- Many of the refugees who fled Myanmar have suffered various forms of violence, including rape, and deep psychological harm. Life-saving assistance and protection activities, including community-based and approaches and psychosocial support as well as equipped medical services, continue to be

essential. Child protection and associated services, including schooling, also need to be scaled up for the over 400,000 refugee children who are currently in desperate need of schooling.

- Engagement with development actors and the creation of livelihood opportunities need to be further explored to help foster social cohesion among both refugees and host communities. Freedom of movement and access to education and employment would allow for planned interventions that could help refugees contribute to the local economy, benefitting refugees and host communities. It would also provide refugees with useful skills and enhance the sustainability of return to Myanmar when conditions allow.



## EDUCATION

### Achievements and Impact

- Educational learning, recreational activities and vocational skills are amongst the top requests by refugees. To date, 69% of boys and 66% of girls are accessing temporary learning centres (including madrasas), which is an indicator of positive interest and support for enrolment in educational facilities.

### Identified challenges and gaps

- Opportunities for youth (in particular 15-18 years of age) and adults for life-skills and vocational training, as well as basic literacy and numeracy, could significantly improve young refugees' skills and mitigate reliance on negative coping mechanisms.
- Boys may face barriers to accessing education, mostly due to need to support the family financially. Child labour is a recognized challenge. For girls, the barriers to education are related to parents deprioritizing education and expectations for girls to perform household chores.



## SITE COORDINATION AND SITE MANAGEMENT

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR is collaborating closely with the authorities, partners, and communities to improve the standards in Kutupalong refugee settlement and to plan new site areas. Efforts focus on ensuring that services are in place ahead of when refugees are settling in as far as possible, and on upgrading shelters and infrastructures in view of the upcoming monsoon/cyclone season in 2018. In collaboration with the RRRC and IOM, UNHCR developed a **Macro Settlement Development for Kutupalong**, which aims to assist government and humanitarian agencies to identify gaps and/or address any potential duplication of service provision. This will help improve fair and equitable access to assistance. This includes, but is not limited to, the proposed locations of health facilities, WASH infrastructure, roads and bridges, recreational as well as targeted interventions for food security and livelihoods, energy, agriculture, environment and reforestation.
- On 12 December, a road implemented by RRRC and the Armed Defence Forces of Bangladesh (ADFB) with UNHCR resources **connected the north and south of Kutupalong's large settlement**. The 6 Km long road was developed to improve refugees' access to assistance and services. Additional pathways, bamboo bridges, and public lighting have also been established in the large settlement. Drainage, retaining structures (to retain soil and/or rock), and road paving are expected to be completed by the start of the rainy season in 2018.

- Emergencies within an emergency (cyclones, landslides) are a real risk. UNHCR is working, in collaboration with the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC), to conduct a **rapid assessment of landslides and flooding risks in all areas** of Kutupalong. The assessment will produce a heat map of the most vulnerable zones in the settlement and help inform planning for needed relocations, ensuring refugees can establish their shelters in safer areas. Refugee community leaders and refugee outreach workers will also be trained on landslide risks, preparedness, and disaster risk measures.

#### Identified needs and remaining gaps

- Certain areas of Kutupalong settlement are more densely populated than Dhaka, one of the world's most densely populated cities, exposing refugees to greater risks of fire hazards, environmental hazards, and communicable disease. A more efficient use of available land, such as through the macro-plan approach, will require multi-year and multi-partner support, as well as dedicated resources.



#### SHELTER AND NFIS

##### Achievements and Impact

- The second phase of UNHCR's shelter strategy is underway and aims to upgrade existing shelters and infrastructures in view of the upcoming monsoon/cyclone season in 2018. UNHCR has distributed over 18,500 shelter kits since the beginning of November 2017. This represents over 41% of the 45,000 families targeted for the upgrade. 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 shelters. Distributions will continue until the end of 2017 and will accelerate in 2018.
- In order to minimize the impact of the emergency response on host communities and to mitigate protection risks linked to firewood collection, UNHCR has started distributing eco-friendly cooking fuel in early December. Some three to five football fields were being cleared every day to cover refugees' needs for firewood. UNHCR's distributions are expected to help mitigate against this. So far, UNHCR and partners have distributed compressed rice husks (CRH) to **42,039** families to mitigate impacts on environment. The distribution is expected to reach a total of 78,000 families in the northern part of Kutupalong and Nayapara settlements.
- As part of its winterization efforts to help refugees cope with the cooler temperatures, UNHCR also began distributing the first of 170,000 warm shawls for adults and 15,000 sweaters for children under two years of age.

#### Identified needs and remaining gaps

- More than 85% of families reside in a shelter without a lock. The need for a lock is one of the main interventions suggested by refugees to increase their sense of safety and security. Other suggestions by refugees included lighting around key infrastructures, and warning systems in case of wild animal attacks and natural disasters.



## WATER AND SANITATION

### Achievements and Impact

- Based on UNHCR's site planning, WASH actors are collaborating to install water and sanitation in new areas where refugees settle. So far, 3,175 latrines, 888 bathing cubicles and 329 tube wells were installed in Kutupalong and Nayapara settlements.
- UNHCR is closely coordinating with and providing technical support to the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) which is the national lead agency for the provision of drinking water. Work is ongoing on a comprehensive water mapping exercise covering Teknaf and Ukhiya sub-districts in Cox's bazar.

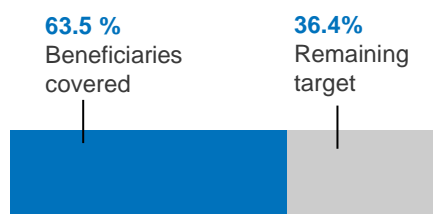
### Identified needs and remaining gaps

- Scarce water resources in Nayapara and the risk of water contamination in all refugee settlements are concerns. Improving access to safe wash facilities by installing locks and lights is also a priority.

### Refugees with access to water



### Refugees with access to latrines



## HEALTH

### Achievements and Impact

- The response to the refugee situation presents opportunities to work with Bangladesh to reinforce national systems where needs are identified by the authorities and its services. In this regard, UNHCR continues to support Bangladesh's medical health care facilities in refugee hosting areas with logistical support, equipment and other immediate needs (ambulances, hospital tents, medicines and medical supplies, resources and training).
- Emergency nutrition assessments indicate a prevalence of global acute malnutrition among all children 6-59 months of age and of anaemia, found in nearly half of children in Kutupalong settlement. The serious food security situation in Rakhine State prior to August 2017 is also a contributing factor in the scale of malnutrition witnessed. UNHCR and partners have established 12 malnutrition treatment centres across the large settlement which has continued to reach over 1,500 children every month since October 2017. In order to scale up these services, mass screening for malnutrition was conducted in mid-November and was complemented with de-worming, vitamin A supplementation, and identification of measles cases. Some 90,000 children under five years of age have been screened and referred to the relevant programmes based on their status. While many of the ongoing efforts by various UN agencies and NGOs are starting to show results, these should continue.
- WHO has reported 1,474 cases of diphtheria (not confirmed) and 20 deaths amongst those staying in Balukhali, Jamtoli, Unchirang, and Hakimpura. The majority (73%) of cases are under 14 years of age. A District Core Committee on the outbreak has been set up, led by the Civil Surgeon of Cox Bazar and facilitated by WHO. So far, UNHCR teams have been actively conducting training for partners' Community Health Workers and clinicians on case definition, contact tracing and early identification for the purpose of referrals. Currently, all treatment is still provided by MSF. The vaccination campaign for

those under 6 years of age has started. Tetanus and diphtheria vaccines for those above 7 years of age will be delivered by UNICEF and all aid workers will also be covered during the campaign.

#### Identified needs and remaining gaps

- UNHCR's epidemiologist continues to work to improve the Health Information System through capacity building initiatives, and field visits.

### 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), which is in charge of leading the emergency refugee response in coordination with the district authorities. In Cox's Bazar, UNHCR cooperates with 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.

### Donor Support

UNHCR is providing emergency assistance and protection in an evolving humanitarian context in Bangladesh. UNHCR continues to call for flexible funding in order to efficiently respond to changing needs and quickly respond to new emerging priorities. UNHCR is grateful for the valuable support provided by all donors who have contributed towards identified immediate life-saving needs, and towards supporting the safety and dignity of refugees. The valuable support provided also helps the Government of Bangladesh, through its ministries and authorities, to manage the response with UNHCR's support.

The significant demands on the humanitarian response for Bangladesh need to be recognised. The response of the Government and people of Bangladesh has been extraordinarily generous. However, additional support is needed. UNHCR hopes that the commitment of Bangladesh towards supporting refugees' immediate needs and finding solutions will continue to be supported by the international community with adequate financial contributions and with other support in 2018. To date, support has been encouraging with 75% of UNHCR's initial appeal for USD 83.7 million received.

UNHCR will continue work in 2018 with Bangladesh to provide essential services for refugees, in particular enhancing access to protection services, shelter, health and nutrition, water/sanitation, education and others. Activities to protect natural resources and the environment will be supported also in consultation with local communities.

#### Donor country contributions to UNHCR Bangladesh operation in 2017

Canada | Denmark | European Union | Estonia | Germany | Iceland | Japan | Norway | Sweden | Switzerland | Slovenia | Spain | United Arab Emirates | United States of America.

With thanks also to the many private donations from individuals, foundations, companies and other donors in Australia, China, Egypt, Italy, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, Oman, Philippines, Portugal, Senegal, Singapore, Switzerland, Thailand, and UAE, including IKEA Foundation, UNIQLO Co. Ltd, Sheikh Thani Bin Abdullah Foundation, Opec Fund for International Development, HRH Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein, UPS Corporate, Qatar Charity, Rahmatan Lil Alamin Foundation, The Silent Foundation, Fondazione Prosolidar-Onlus and RUSSING Group. Special thanks also to UNOPS, and CERF.

### Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2017



United States of America (266m) | Sweden (76m) | Netherlands (52m) | United Kingdom (45m) | Norway (41m) | Japan (25m) | Denmark (23m) | Australia (19m) | Canada (16m) | Switzerland (15m) | France (14m) | Germany (12m) | Italy (10m)

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