

# BANGLADESH

27 December 2017 - 7 January 2018

**Arrivals from Myanmar have significantly decreased**, with over 2,200 refugees crossing into Bangladesh from 1 to 26 December, compared to over 12,700 in November.

**Discussions on returns between the Governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar are on-going.** UNHCR offers to help the Governments to ensure international standards are contemplated.

**The biggest challenge to refugee protection is the environment of the camps.** UNHCR and partners are working to address the logistical challenges of bringing large amounts of aid.

**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

**187** staff currently working on the emergency compared to

**49** prior to the crisis. **113** are national staff.

**23** partners compared to **7** prior to the crisis

\* As reported by the Inter Sector Coordination Group.

## FUNDING

**USD 83.7 million**

Requested for UNHCR's initial emergency response (until February 2018). A Joint Response Plan is under preparation.

**USD 71.2M**  
Received in  
2017

**USD 12.5 M**  
Remaining needs



Compressed rice husks are dried in the sun in Kutupalong refugee camp, Bangladesh. The fuel is used to cook with and is a sustainable alternative to wood cut from the forest. Photo: © UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

## Operational Context

Some 655,000 people have fled Myanmar to Bangladesh since August 2017. There were more than 2,200 new arrivals between 1 and 26 December 2017, a significant decrease in arrival trends compared to November, which saw the arrival of over 12,700 refugees<sup>1</sup>. In December, the majority of arrivals (over 1,900) arrived through the Mogpara/Sabrang border point, on the southernmost tip of Bangladesh.

UNHCR is working with the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and partners to ensure protection and assistance for refugees. UNHCR's support also aimed at ensuring that local host communities affected by the unprecedented influx are considered and assisted. The agency also continues to work to develop areas in the existing settlements, Kutupalong and Nayapara, to provide basic infrastructure and services.

On 23 November 2017, the governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh signed a bilateral 'arrangement' on the return of refugees to Myanmar. A Joint Working Group (JWG) consisting of government representatives from Myanmar and Bangladesh was subsequently formed on 19 December 2018. The JWG is tasked to develop a specific instrument on the physical arrangement for the repatriation of returnees. UNHCR continues to offer its technical support to both Governments to establish a voluntary repatriation framework in line with international standards, with a view to ensuring that any returns occur in conditions of voluntariness and safety — and in a sustainable manner. Reportedly, the first meeting of the JWG is planned to take place on 15 January 2018.

UNHCR has been sampling refugees' views on return. A majority of those interviewed indicated that before considering returning to Myanmar they would need to see some positive developments, in particular in relation to citizenship, security, and the possibility for them to enjoy their basic rights. Some refugees have also asked for reassurances about UNHCR's involvement in the process, being familiar with UNHCR's role and assistance in past efforts to assist refugees to return to Myanmar.

## Update on achievements



### PROTECTION

#### Achievements and impact

- As part of its efforts to ensure that refugees can participate in decisions that affect their lives, UNHCR rolled out a Community Outreach Members (COMs) initiative on 12 December 2017 in one area of Kutupalong settlement which has expanded since to Nayapara and Chakmakul settlements. To date, there are in total 76 trained community outreach members. Up to the first week of January 2018, COMs have conducted 196 information sessions on health, hygiene and food distribution reaching 3,635 people in the refugee community, and visited 234 homes. They will gradually link up their work

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<sup>1</sup> Information on arrivals at border points are reported through various sources which cannot always be verified or confirmed.

with Community Workers and Volunteers and better enable the referral of cases for assistance. Since the launch of the COM initiative, 15 out of the 19 cases monitored have been resolved through referrals and follow up by UNHCR's partners. Most recently, COMs are playing an important role in stemming the spread of diphtheria as they are actively reaching out to find cases and possible infection contacts for medical follow up.

- Another effort that is part of UNHCR's move to strengthen community-based responses is through support for solid community representation. In Kutupalong, in coordination with the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), UNHCR will support the establishment of refugee committees, with an age, gender, and diversity lens.
- UNHCR, in cooperation with UNFPA, together with the Camp in Charge officers (CiCs) in six areas of Kutupalong settlement are developing a cohesive sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) referral process. UNHCR has held two focus groups discussions with women of different ages to better understand their knowledge on services provided in Kutupalong for SGBV survivors and underreporting of incidents. Refugee women mentioned that, while they generally feel safe in the settlement, many are not aware of SGBV services available, except for medical services provided to survivors. There was a strong feeling that domestic violence cases should be dealt with in the family. Further, many saw the community representative system as the only mechanism to resolve interpersonal disputes.
- UNHCR is strengthening its partnership with local and international NGOs on SGBV issues, emphasizing the need for refugee community participation in SGBV prevention and response, as well as the general need for scaling up services and ensuring greater understanding of the types of services available to support survivors. UNHCR, in cooperation with its partner Technical Assistance Inc. (TAI), trained 14 COMs on SGBV. UNHCR, TAI and COMs, drafted common messages on SGBV to be delivered during awareness raising sessions. In addition, 11 COMs were trained and will be specialized on SGBV prevention and response in Kutupalong.
- On 7 January 2018, UNHCR participated in a radio broadcast by the Community Radio Naf station. Recent assessments have shown that radio communication is the third most trusted form of communication within the Rohingya communities, after family and religious leaders. This radio programme provided information to refugees on child protection, UNHCR's activities to address the risks faced by children, and the community's role in protecting children. This week, UNHCR identified and referred nine child headed-households, one unaccompanied child, two separated children, and four children with disabilities to partners for assessment and follow up. Teams also supported the reunification of a 6-year-old child who was lost in Burma Para spontaneous settlement.

#### **Identified needs and remaining gaps**

- UNHCR is concerned about the potential risk of human trafficking and smuggling in the refugee settlements, with some reports from refugees of parents being approached with offers to take their children away and for a better life for women and men through marriage arrangements and jobs. UNHCR is developing anti-trafficking awareness materials and working with partners to highlight risks to refugees. In December, UNHCR's partner Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNLWA) conducted awareness sessions on trafficking for almost 3,000 refugees and 120 community representatives. These efforts will continue in 2018.



## EDUCATION

### Achievements and Impact

- Improvements to education facilities are underway. Since October 2017, some 111 classrooms were renovated, including 58 in Kutupalong and 53 in Nayapara. In addition, three temporary learning centres (TLCs) have been recently opened in two areas of Kutupalong extension, bringing the total of TLCs in those areas to fourteen. They cater for the primary education of 5,091 children and the lower secondary education of 435 children.

### Identified needs and remaining gaps

- UNHCR sees facilitating greater access to learning opportunities and safe learning spaces as a key priority and also as a way of enhancing child protection. In 2018, UNHCR is planning to build 40 TLCs, comprising some 120 classrooms, in Kutupalong and Nayapara. These will provide early childhood learning, basic education, adolescent and youth education.
- UNHCR and partners working on education are currently developing some guidelines and standard operating procedures on fire safety and adverse weather. Teachers will be trained on the required procedures.



## SHELTER AND NFIS

### Achievements and Impact

- The second phase of UNHCR's shelter strategy is underway in preparation for the monsoon season. Since November, UNHCR and its partners has distributed some 27,600 upgraded shelter kits, composed of bamboo poles, ropes, tools, and tarpaulins, to help refugees build sturdier homes. Since November 2017, over 27,500 kits were distributed. In four days only, UNHCR's partner ADRA completed the distribution for more than 2,600 families in Charmakul / Karantoli. In addition, UNHCR continues to collaborate with the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) to identify areas, which have the highest risk of landslides and to mobilize partners to prepare the sites for the upcoming rains.
- In order to minimize the impact of the emergency response on host communities and reduce the risk faced by children and women while collecting firewood, UNHCR started distributing an eco-friendly locally produced alternative cooking fuel to refugees in early December. In one month, UNHCR and partners have distributed compressed rice husks to almost 74,400 families, covering some 94 per cent of the targeted families in Kutupalong and Nayapara. However, this still covers only 30 per cent of the energy needs. UNHCR is working with partners and stakeholders to find alternative solutions.
- In the past weeks, temperatures have dropped in the settlements to under 15 degrees Celsius at night. As part of their efforts to help refugees stay warm during the winter months, UNHCR and partners have distributed some 64,944 winter shawls to date, covering 41 per cent of the population. With the help of specialized partners, children' winter cloth were also distributed.

### Identified needs and remaining gaps

- UNHCR and partners plan to distribute upgraded shelter kits to some 45,000 refugee families in total, with distributions to accelerate before the monsoon season starts.

- The single greatest challenge to the protection of the refugee is the physical environment of the settlements. These are highly congested<sup>2</sup> and movement is limited due to the lack of roads, pathways and transport. The situation is expected to dramatically deteriorate during the monsoon season as large parts of the settlement will become inaccessible and whole areas may be devastated by floods and landslides. UNHCR is working with IOM, government bodies and other partners to address logistical challenges pertaining to bringing large amounts of food, shelter material and other aid in on a regular basis.



## WATER AND SANITATION

### Achievements and Impact

- During the reporting period, WASH facilities coverage has been improved through the construction of 250 latrines, 197 bathing cubicles and 90 tube wells were built in Kutupalong and Nyapara. There are now 4,559 latrines, 1,851 bathing cubicles and 905 tube wells installed in the settlements. The decommissioning of large numbers of full or dysfunctional latrines continues.
- As part of the fecal sludge management efforts, UNHCR's partner BRAC is installing three sludge disposal sites one area of Kutupalong. Sewer pipes, which connect the surrounding household septic tanks to the treatment plant, will also be installed. Each plant will treat waste from up to 200 latrines.

### Identified needs and remaining gaps

- The arrivals of refugees in Nayapara area has drastically increased water needs. Water shortage is likely at the end of the dry season in March. UNHCR and its partners are currently identifying preventive solutions and mitigation measures, including water dams and boreholes drilling to address the expected water gap.
- UNHCR teams conducted a mapping of latrine and tube wells in two zones of Kutupalong to analyze the distribution of facilities in the zones and better assess whether coverage is sufficient in the area. So far, over 200 WASH facilities have been mapped. This exercise has shown an urgent need for desludging and for additional latrines. UNHCR and partners are already planning the constructions of 10 latrines and four tube wells in one zone of Kutupalong. These will cater for 500 and 2,000 people respectively.



## HEALTH

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR and UNFPA are working closely to improve 24/7 access to delivery and emergency obstetrics and neonatal care in their facilities. These efforts will help reduce maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality, access to sexual reproductive health services including family planning methods. Both agencies also cooperate for the enhancement of community-based outreach and awareness on sexual and reproductive health for refugees to have accurate information in order to make informed

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<sup>2</sup> UNHCR's absolute minimum standard for space is 30m<sup>2</sup>/person. All areas of Kutupalong are below this standard - some zones only have 9m<sup>2</sup>/person.



choices. UNHCR will also continue to advocate for all refugee children to be issued with birth certificates.

- The number of diphtheria cases has plateaued with around a 100 cases a day. To date, WHO has reported 3,371 cases of diphtheria and 30 deaths amongst those staying in Balukhali, Jamtoli, Unchiprang, and Hakimpara. The majority (73%) of cases are under 14 years of age. Treatment is now provided by MSF, IOM, Samaritan's Purse and emergency medical teams. The second round of vaccination for diphtheria is due to start on 25 January 2018. UNHCR has supported the response, through partners, by training supervisors for community health workers and leading UNHCR implementing partners community health work contact tracing, case identification and community monitoring. It also communicated risk messages with community leaders through COMs. UNHCR's partners also provided NFIs and shelter materials for isolation and treatment facilities. According to the COMs, a large number of refugees shared concerns about delays in receiving food. UNHCR subsequently approached WFP. In response, WFP developed some information tools (FAQs, ration entitlements, and a hotline) on food distribution.

#### Identified needs and remaining gaps

- There are concerns about access to quality secondary health care with the public health facilities being overwhelmed by the increasing number of patients referred from the settlements. Efforts are underway to work out a referral pathway with adequate resources to support the access of these patients.
- WFP, in collaboration with food security sector partners, issued a [vulnerability assessment](#) on 5 January 2018. UNHCR's nutrition partners, Save the children and ACF, were also involved in the assessment. The study found that although more than 90 percent of Rohingya refugees received emergency food assistance, a major concern is limited access to a well-diversified and balanced diet. WFP's food distribution includes rice, vegetable oil and lentils, an emergency ration designed to provide basic calories, but lacking diversity. The study recommends that food distribution be scaled up and, where possible, to transition from food distribution to e-vouchers programme to facilitate access to a more nutritious diet. It also calls for the enhancement of livelihood support programmes within host communities. UNHCR is working with WFP for regular sustained complementary food assistance.

#### Working in partnership and inter-agency spirit

- UNHCR is working closely with sister UN agencies to implement a host of inter-agency projects in a various sectors. UNHCR also work in close collaboration with a range of international and national NGOs in Bangladesh, and scaled up its implementing partnership network to 23 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. In 2018, UNHCR intends to further expand its collaboration with national partners. It also works to increase national and local sourcing of goods and services.
- UNHCR continues to support the GoB's efforts in providing protection and assistance to all refugees. UNHCR's main government counterpart is the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR). In Cox's Bazar, UNHCR cooperates with the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), the local representative of the MoDMR.

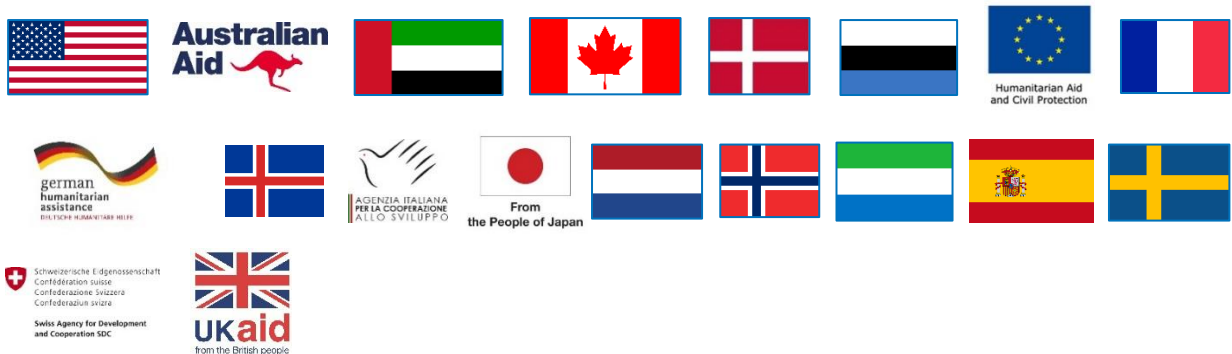
## Donor Support

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 85% of UNHCR's initial appeal for USD 83.7 million received. An inter-agency Joint Response Plan (JRP), covering the period from March to December 2018 is presently being finalised.

In 2018, UNHCR will continue work with authorities and partners 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, and donor country unrestricted funding to UNHCR's global operations



With thanks also to the many private donations from individuals, foundations, companies 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.

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