

# BANGLADESH

16 – 30 November 2018

**IN THIS UPDATE:**

- *Voluntary return of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar*
- *Scaling-up distribution of eco-friendly cooking fuel*
- *New bamboo treatment plant*
- *'16 Days' campaign against Gender-Based Violence*
- *Refugee children observe Universal Children's Day*
- *World Toilet Day*
- *Phase 2 Registration progress*
- *Arrival trends*
- *Quick facts and figures*

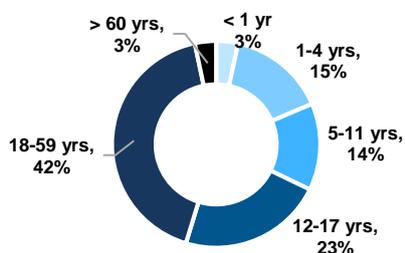
UNHCR has kicked-off a large-scale distribution of energy-efficient Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) to Rohingya refugees in Kutupalong and the other refugee settlements in Cox's Bazar district. The project will support more than 200,000 refugee households as well as a significant number of vulnerable Bangladeshi host families with a clean, healthy, safe and reliable source of energy for cooking and heating.

UNHCR and its partner OXFAM will start the operation of a faecal sludge treatment system that will cover the sanitation needs of 150,000 refugees in Kutupalong refugee settlement. This represents an important improvement in the type of sludge treatment available to date, by enhancing capacity of the treatment site from the original small scale manual treatment taking place to date.

**POPULATION FIGURES** (as of 30 November 2018)

**902,984** Total number of refugees in Cox's Bazar  
**735,116** Estimated new arrivals since 25 August 2017

**Age breakdown of refugees in Cox's Bazar**



**UNHCR FUNDING 2018**



**JOINT RESPONSE PLAN FUNDING 2018**



Refugee women in Kutupalong settlement participating in a day of activism to end violence against women. The 16 Days of Activism campaign addressing gender-based violence started on 25 November across all refugee settlements. ©UNHCR

## Update on voluntary return of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar

In a [statement](#) on 23 November, UNHCR expressed its **deep appreciation to and solidarity with Bangladesh for its generosity in continuing to host and support nearly one million Rohingya refugees on its territory** and for its **continued commitment to protecting refugees' right to safe, voluntary, and dignified return to their homes in Myanmar**. It reiterated **Myanmar's responsibility for creating conditions that are conducive for voluntary return**, and called on Myanmar to **exert all efforts to create these conditions and address the root causes of the refugees' displacement** in line with the recommendations of the Kofi Annan-led Advisory Commission on Rakhine State. UNHCR underlined the importance for Myanmar to **demonstrate concrete progress** toward ensuring freedom of movement, access to services, documentation and livelihood opportunities to **build the refugees' confidence that the conditions in Myanmar have sufficiently changed to allow them to contemplate their return**.

The statement also recalled the High Commissioner's [statement](#) on 11 November 2018 to **allow refugees to undertake go-and-see visits that will enable them to independently assess the conditions in Rakhine State and share their views with other refugees in Bangladesh**. UNHCR signalled that it is **prepared to support such visits** and continues to **work with all stakeholders to find a sustainable solution** that will afford the refugees, and all communities in Rakhine State, a decent future.

## More refugees and Bangladeshi families switch to eco-friendly cooking fuel

Following a **successful pilot distribution of energy-efficient Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) in August 2018**, UNHCR is expanding the alternative cooking fuel project to **more than 200,000 Rohingya refugee households** as well as a significant number of **vulnerable Bangladeshi host families**.

The project will help **tackle and reverse the environmental impact** resulting from the massive influx of Rohingya refugees more than a year ago, **mitigate protection risks** from collecting firewood in the forests especially for women and children, and **improve the air quality** and therefore the refugees' health. Respiratory illnesses attributed to firewood smoke are among the most common health problems for refugees.



*Men and women from Kutupalong refugee settlement gather to watch an instructional safety video on the use of LPG at one of UNHCR's distribution sites. The safety instruction is important for many who have not had the chance to previously use the stoves and cylinders. ©UNHCR/S. O'Brien*

The estimated 900,000 refugees in Cox's Bazar area need 700 metric tons of firewood daily for cooking. The switch to gas fuel will **help decrease tree cutting**, in parallel with a **greening initiative** by UNHCR and its partners, IUCN (the International Union for Conservation of Nature) and BRAC, to **reforest the refugee settlements as well as improve the environment**.

As part of the LPG distribution, refugees receive a **mandatory, hands-on training on how to safely and responsibly use the LPG cylinders and stoves**. The cylinders contain 12.5 kilograms of LPG, enough to meet all cooking needs of a family of five for a month. Refugees will also be entitled to **regular monthly refills**.

Most of the stoves are **being produced locally, creating jobs in the local Bangladeshi economy**. In

addition to assisting refugees, **every sixth stove and gas cylinder will be delivered to vulnerable Bangladeshi families in local communities hosting Rohingya refugees.**

The alternative fuel initiative is **supported by the Bangladesh Government**, including the Refugee Repatriation and Relief Commissioner (RRRC) and the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR), **as well as other UN agencies**, including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the World Food Programme (WFP).

## New bamboo treatment plant for transitional shelter

UNHCR and BRAC have **completed the construction of a bamboo treatment plant in Kutupalong settlement.** The plant has **six chambers** and will be able to **treat and process about 5,400 thick diameter bamboo poles in a month.** Once treated, bamboo is expected to be **more durable to withstand the weather and infestation from insects**, making their use more **cost efficient** for shelter and construction of other structures, as well **as reducing the amount of new bamboo required.** This will contribute to reduced risk of fresh bamboo being sourced from non-commercial bamboo plantations. UNHCR will start using treated bamboo to construct new transitional shelters ahead of the next monsoon season.

The process also ensures that there will be no risk of pollution to surrounding areas from materials used in the treatment. Regular untreated bamboo needs regular repair and replacement, even after one year of use. In the weeks ahead, UNHCR will build **three additional plants.**

## '16 Days of Activism' campaign raises awareness on Gender-Based Violence

November 25<sup>th</sup> observed the launch of the **16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**, a campaign which runs annually around the world. The 16 days run from the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women until Human Rights Day on 10 December.

Together with the Protection Working Group partners, the GBV sub sector and Gender in Humanitarian Action working group in Bangladesh, UNHCR and others helped organise over **100 activities and events** with the Rohingya community in Cox's Bazar **to build awareness of GBV in the refugee settlements and advocate for a violence-free environment.** The events included meetings between refugee women and the camp authorities on gender-based violence issues, as well as events and activities targeting men and boys, religious leaders, in efforts to address GBV affecting the refugee community.

The campaign was launched in Kutupalong refugee settlement with **100 trees planted** in a ceremony presided over by the RRRC, Rohingya refugee women, and participating agencies, including UNHCR.



*A tree planting by the RRRC, Md. Abul Kalam (second from left) on 25 November officially launches the 16 Days of Activism campaign in the refugee settlements in Cox's Bazar to end violence against women. ©UNHCR*

**Preventing and responding to GBV** in all its forms is a **central aspect of UNHCR's protection mandate**, calling for a multi-sectoral response across its programmes. This ranges from the design of gender-sensitive latrine facilities; enhancing camp lighting for security; developing and strengthening

referral mechanisms for survivors' medical treatment; supporting confidential counselling and legal advice services; as well as operating other safety nets for survivors of GBV incidents.

## World Toilet Day highlights better sanitation practices

Every year on 19 November, the UN marks the World Toilet Day with the aim to **address global sanitation crisis** which sees around 60% of the global population, or 4.5 billion people, with no toilet at home or one that does not safely manage waste, which can impact public health.

Refugees in Cox's Bazar marked the day with rallies to **raise awareness on sanitation and hygiene within their community**, along with UNHCR and its partners, including demonstrations of hand-washing at service points and learning centres.

A WASH fair was held in Camp 17 in Kutupalong refugee settlement attended by the RRRC representative, the Camp-in-Charge official and WASH partner. The fair's highlights included performances by Bangladeshi musicians, and booths to explain to the refugee community the water, sanitation, and hygiene activities being undertaken in the settlement.



*The Rohingya refugee community in Kutupalong settlement attend a fair on water, sanitation and hygiene organised for the World Toilet Day. ©UNHCR*

**Continuing efforts are being made on all fronts to improve sanitation and hygiene for refugees in Cox's Bazar**, including access to safe and usable toilets, hygiene, and clean water. Currently, the latrines available vary in type and quality, some of which were put in place early in the emergency response and were poorly designed, lacked adequate pit volumes to respond to the population needs, and with a deficit in gender-segregated facilities. It is a priority to decommission unusable latrines, desludge usable ones, and provide safer toilets for women and girls.



*UNHCR and partner OXFAM have established the first large-sized fecal sludge treatment plant in Kutupalong refugee settlement. It's also the first time the specific technology of using covered lagoons is used in Bangladesh. ©UNHCR/S. O'Brien*

UNHCR, with its partner OXFAM, will start the **operation of a fecal sludge treatment system** that will **cover the sanitation needs of 150,000 refugees** in Kutupalong refugee settlement. The design capacity of the fecal sludge treatment site is 40 cubic meter (m<sup>3</sup>) per day. Initially, the system will start up with a capacity of 20 m<sup>3</sup> per day.

OXFAM will truck collected faecal sludge to the site where possible. In parallel, the establishment of linked transfer stations, comprised of modified large water tanks, will allow fecal sludge to be pumped to the treatment plant as well. The sludge will be collected in two covered lagoons (1,700 m<sup>3</sup> each) and undergo anaerobic digestion. The solid effluent from the lagoons will be further treated by a planted drying bed and the liquid effluent will be

chlorinated and led to a polishing pond for pathogen reduction.

## Household nutrition screening to identify child malnutrition

In an effort to **improve the situation and ensure early detection of malnutrition among refugee children**, UNHCR and its partners (Terre des Homes, Action Against Hunger, and Save the Children International) are **expanding door-to-door nutrition screening**. Children identified by refugee volunteers are referred to the closest nutrition centres for further measurements, admission, and treatment. The nutrition volunteers also provide **health promotion sessions** covering malnutrition, hygiene practices and accessing ongoing nutrition programmes. **Access of nutrition services for children under five** continues to be affected by **inadequate knowledge regarding malnutrition and nutrition programmes, weak community nutrition outreach programmes, and the distance of facilities where nutrition screening is carried out**.



*UNHCR and Terre des Hommes (TdH) identify children at risk of malnutrition through their mobile teams and refer to services nearby for additional support. ©UNHCR*

Through the door-to-door community outreach programme, a total of **55,107 children (6-59 months)** were screened over 20 days during November. The screenings helped identify and refer **522 refugee children with Moderate Acute Malnutrition** and **115 children with Severe Acute Malnutrition** for further support.

The community nutrition screening program will **continue as a key tool for identifying childhood malnutrition** among the harder to reach families and individuals in the Rohingya refugee settlements in Kutupalong and other locations.

## Progress on Joint Government of Bangladesh-UNHCR Phase 2 registration/verification exercise

To date, **over 30,000 individuals have been verified/registered through the joint Government of Bangladesh-UNHCR Phase 2 registration/verification exercise**. An ID card, commonly referred to as the 'smart card', is issued to all refugee women, men, girls and boys above the age of 12 and replaces two existing cards that they already possess – a Ministry of Home Affairs (white) registration card and a Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (yellow) family counting card.

**The new card provides a secure identity document for refugees. It aims to establish a more efficient system for refugees to access services and assistance through better use of technology and continuously updated and more accurate information.** The process will help eliminate duplication in the existing database and enable all humanitarian actors to capture refugee needs more precisely as well as tailor the protection response more effectively.

The authorities have **taken the lead in discussions with refugees** to explain that **the card is a Government of Bangladesh requirement**, as well as **advising refugees that repatriation will take place only with their free and informed consent**.

## Refugees continue to arrive from Myanmar

Refugees continue to arrive to Bangladesh a year after the events of August 2017 in Myanmar.

**A total of 55 refugees arrived** in Bangladesh during the reporting period. New arrivals continue to raise concerns about their lack of rights and security in Rakhine State.

Many new arrivals make their way to UNHCR's Transit Centre in Kutupalong where they can avail of basic assistance and support to relocate to the main refugee settlement once a shelter space is available.

**Since 1 January 2018:**

**15,247** individuals have arrived in  
Cox's Bazar

**11-24 November 2018:**

**55** individuals entered Bangladesh

**Most arrived by boat** via the southern peninsula of Cox's Bazar, including Sabrang and surrounding areas.

## Quick facts and figures on UNHCR protection services and assistance

### Access to Education



**41,535**

children supported by UNHCR and its partners currently access Early Childhood Development, primary, and lower secondary education in refugee settlements

### Access to Education



**4,289**

adolescents, including 629 refugees and 3,660 Bangladeshi youths, acquired computer literacy skills through the Community Technology Access Centres

### Child Protection



**59,481**

Children provided with psychosocial support through structured play and mobile service activities

### Community-Based Protection



**387,876**

refugee men, women and children received information on hygiene, the use of *aqua tabs*, and Acute Watery Diarrhea, from community volunteers (COMs) since January 2018

### Information Points



**1,941**

refugees received information or referral through Information Points during the reporting period. Popular inquiries are on shelter (31.4%), fuel (24%), WASH (11.6%) and food (11.4%)

### Transit Centre



**19**

individuals newly arrived and sought assistance from 11 to 24 November 2018 in Kutupalong's Transit Centre

### Refugee Community Services



**113**

community service projects completed by 36 men's, women's and youth volunteer groups in 12 refugee settlements as of 30 November 2018

### LPG Distribution



**11,642**

refugee families received LPG bottle and a cooking stove since August 2018. Some 10,053 families received LPG refills. The distributions are part of UNHCR's SGBV prevention, health, and environmental protection efforts, by reducing unaccompanied trips to collect firewood, reducing harmful fumes in shelters, and addressing deforestation through reduced tree cutting

### Shelter Tagging



**62,966**

refugee shelters in Kutupalong settlement were tagged to facilitate timely distribution of relief assistance, avoid gaps and duplication, and better tailor protection solutions for persons with specific needs

## Working in partnership

UNHCR co-chairs a Strategic Executive Group (SEG) in Bangladesh with the UN Resident Coordinator and IOM. The Refugee Agency leads on the protection response for all refugees, and heads a Protection Working Group in Cox's Bazar. UNHCR welcomes its valuable partnership with a number of UN agencies and coordinates the delivery of its assistance with humanitarian partners through a number of working groups under the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG). UNHCR's main government counterpart is the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and its Cox's Bazar-based Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC). UNHCR staff work closely with the Camp-in-Charge officials in different refugee settlements, as well as a range of international and national actors. It has a strong network of 28 partners, including:

**ACF** (Action Contre la Faim) | **ACTED** (Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development) | **ADRA** (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) | **BDRCS** (Bangladesh Red Crescent Society) | **BNWLA** (Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association) | **BRAC** (Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee) | **CARITAS BANGLADESH** | **CODEC** (Community Development Centre) | **CSI** (Center for Social Integrity) | **DRC** (Danish Refugee Council) | **FH** (Food For the Hungry) | **GK** (Gonoshasthaya Kendra) | **HELVETAS** Swiss Intercooperation | **HI** (Handicap International) | **IUCN** (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) | **IRC** (International Rescue Committee) | **MTI** (Medical Teams International) | **NGOF** (NGO Forum) | **OXFAM** | **PIN** (People in Need) | **PUI** (Première Urgence Internationale) | **REACH** | **RI** (Relief International) | **RTMI** (Research Training and Management International) | **SCI** (Save the Children) | **SI** (Solidarités International) | **TAI** (Technical Assistance Incorporated) | **TDH** (Terre Des Hommes Foundation)

UNHCR would also like to acknowledge the crucial role played by the refugees in the response; with over 6,500 **volunteers from the refugee community** who are **often the first responders on the ground**. UNHCR and partners have trained and work with **safety unit volunteers** (SUVs) who support the emergency response, **community outreach members** who support raising awareness on important issues and in addressing protection risks, **community health workers** who assist with outreach for health and nutrition, and others who provide further critical support to the emergency response.

## Donor Support

The Government and the people of Bangladesh have shown extraordinary generosity in responding to the crisis. However, more support and solidarity is required from the international community to assist the ongoing humanitarian response. Continued political efforts to work towards a solution to the situation remains vital. UNHCR is appealing for USD 238.8m (as part of its Supplementary Appeal for 2018) in order to respond to the needs of hundreds of thousands of refugees.

**UNHCR Bangladesh is grateful for the generous contributions of donors who have provided unrestricted and broadly earmarked funds, as well as to donors who have contributed directly to the Operation in 2017 and 2018:**



*With thanks to the many private donations from individuals, foundations, and companies such as the Arab Gulf Fund, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, International Islamic Relief Organization, Kuwait Finance House, OPEC Fund for International Development, Prosolidar-Onlus Foundation, Qatar Charity, Rahmatan Lil Alamin Foundation, The Big Heart Foundation, The Church of Latter-Day Saints, and UPS Corporate. Special thanks also to CERF.*

**CONTACTS:** Ivy Susanti, Reporting Officer, UNHCR Bangladesh, [susanti@unhcr.org](mailto:susanti@unhcr.org)

Mai Hosoi, External Relations Officer, UNHCR Bangladesh, [hosoi@unhcr.org](mailto:hosoi@unhcr.org)

LINKS: [UNHCR data portal](#) - [UNHCR operation page](#) – [Facebook](#) – [Twitter](#) – [Latest stories](#) – [Instagram](#)

UNHCR financial needs for 2018	
 	<b>Protection</b> 26.7 m
	<b>Basic relief items</b> 5.6 m
	<b>Water, sanitation &amp; hygiene</b> 40.8 m
	<b>Shelter/infrastructure</b> 25.0 m
	<b>Energy and environment</b> 13.4 m
	<b>Education</b> 10.0 m
	<b>Community mobilization</b> 18.1 m
	<b>Health and nutrition</b> 34.5 m
	<b>Logistics</b> 11.0 m
	<b>Camp management</b> 35.3 m
	<b>Support costs</b> 18.4 m
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>238.8 m</b>