

# BANGLADESH

1 April – 30 April 2019

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The ongoing joint Government of Bangladesh-UNHCR registration exercise has now reached over 238,000 Rohingya refugees. A senior UN mission visited a registration site in early April to witness the process and understand how it will streamline assistance and protection interventions in Bangladesh. Five registration sites are currently operating and register an average **4,000 refugees per day**. In addition to a barcoded smart card, families receive an attestation listing household members.

**Monsoon and cyclone preparations** are ongoing across all camps, placing **communities at the centre of the response** with increased support from the UN and partners, including **distributions, pre-positioning, earthworks, and infrastructure improvement**. UNHCR, in collaboration with the Danish Refugee Council, have completed a first drill of a camp-level emergency response simulation to assess and improve the readiness of community volunteers.

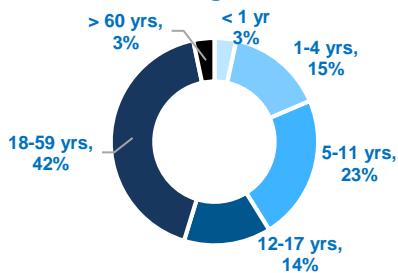
## Population figures

(as of 30 April 2019)

**907,357** Total number of refugees in Cox's Bazar

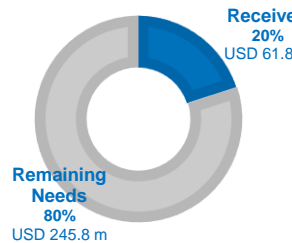
**741,357** Estimated new arrivals since 25 August 2017

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



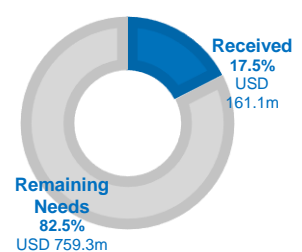
### UNHCR FUNDING REQUIREMENTS 2019

**\$ 307.6 m**



### JOINT RESPONSE PLAN FUNDING REQUIREMENTS 2019

**\$ 920.5 m**



Rohingya volunteers participating in a dialogue organized by the Danish Refugee Council on ensuring safety, providing support and feedback from the refugee community. The dialogue was part of the first drills undertaken in 2019 on a camp-level basis within an emergency response simulation as part of the preparedness measures in Cox's Bazar in view of the monsoon and cyclone season. ©UNHCR/C. Gluck

## Preparations for monsoon and cyclone response put community and protection at the centre

With the foundations of the 2018 emergency response already in place, the 2019 response plan for the upcoming monsoon and cyclone seasons puts communities at the centre, rooted in refugees' own capacities, self-reliance, and ability to act as first responders. Through ongoing trainings, and continually supported by UNHCR and partner field teams, community responders are engaged alongside aid agencies at all stages of the response, including preparedness, early warning, first response, and in damage assessments. These efforts are collectively underpinned by increased interagency coordination and UNHCR/partner multi-functional teams (MFTs) for rapid field deployment when needed, pre- and post-disaster distributions and pre-positioning, and critical infrastructure assessments and improvements. Significant earthworks have also been conducted to reduce the risk of flooding and landslides.

UNHCR, in collaboration with the Danish Refugee Council, have completed a first drill of a camp-level emergency response simulation as part of the preparedness measures. The simulation targeted individual camps and tested the readiness of community volunteers. The exercise aimed to better understand how a response would unfold, potential challenges, and important lessons on communication. It further provided practice for refugee volunteers on conducting assessments and reporting on damage caused by incidents. UNHCR and other agencies have been training volunteer teams dedicated to critical response activities for the monsoon and cyclone seasons, based on the positive experience of the 2018 response.



*Rohingya refugees, Mohammed and Khalida, point to a spot from where they pulled someone half buried in a landslide to safety. The pair is part of the Safety Unit Volunteers. © UNHCR/Caroline Gluck*

Furthermore, a multi-agency protection network has been reactivated and on standby. It is made up of 206 protection staff from 37 national and international NGOs and UN agencies, including specialized staff in child protection and GBV, and 120 refugee community outreach volunteers. Protection Emergency Response Units (PERU) are activated across all camps and will operate as mobile teams in the event of any disaster or serious incidents under the coordination of the Protection Sector. Staff and volunteer profiles are tailored to the challenging terrain of the camps.

PERU teams have also renewed their training on protection emergency response and referrals, child protection, gender based violence (GBV), psychosocial first aid, protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), cyclone alert and preparedness, self-care, and personal safety. When deployed for any incident, they will be responsible for assessing protection needs/risks; providing psychosocial first aid; assisting vulnerable persons affected by landslides, flooding, and heavy storms; making service referrals; and helping families access safe temporary shelter and core relief items. The PERUs will also support inter-sector efforts to relocate households at risk of landslides and flooding by identifying persons with specific needs and accompanying them to evacuation sites.

## Expanding the reach of Community Centres

UNHCR and its partner BRAC have opened a new community centre in Unchiprang—the eighteenth centre opened with UNHCR partners BRAC and TAI in 15 out of 34 camps.

Community centres facilitate a variety of activities that bring refugees together for creative, individual expression and constructive social dialogue. Discussions with men and boys on SGBV have taken place in community centres as part of UNHCR's efforts to raise awareness on the harm of SGBV and emphasize the positive role that men and boys can play to prevent it.

Examples of other activities include indoor games, conversation and book circles, arts and crafts, as well as Rohingya cultural and social events and film showings. All activities and gatherings held at the centres are non-commercial and entirely free-of-charge for all participants.

In 2018, 24,111 community consultations were conducted through community centre outreach. Feedback from these consultations helped shape the activities as well as the available resources within the centres, making them more relevant to refugees' lives. Many refugees consulted expressed interest in reading materials, tailoring, and table games. New activities introduced in response to refugee interests include providing newspapers and radio listening.

The centres provide safe physical spaces for community-led needs identification and problem solving, which underlies UNHCR's community-based protection work and are important to tailor adequate information services and Community Outreach volunteer work.

UNHCR is working on an additional three centres, including plans with Action Aid Bangladesh for camps 11 and 12, which will bring coverage to 17 of 34 camps and a total of 21 operational centres by mid-year.

## Fire in Kutupalong camp contained through quick response of authorities and refugees

On 24 April, a fire outbreak in Camp 5 destroyed or partially destroyed 45 shelters and affected 182 refugees. The suspected cause was an accidental fire in a shelter while the occupant was cooking. Nine people suffered minor injuries and were treated immediately in MSF, RTMI, and Hope International hospitals.

Fire response mechanisms put in place in the camp proved effective in containing the incident, alongside the quick action of the Camp 5 Camp-in-Charge (CIC) who was immediately on the scene and led the response with fire services, police, and military support. Rapid creation of a fire break through removal of shelters, and deployment of fire extinguishers from the nearby CIC office, helped stop the spread of the fire. Safety Unit Volunteers (SUVs) from the Rohingya community also played a critical role in helping



*Refugee volunteers assisting with deployment of a hose to tackle a fire that broke out in Camp 5 in Kutupalong refugee settlement on 24 April. ©UNHCR*

the authorities to contain the fire. Limited access to the site was a challenge, however, with only one of two deployed fire response vehicles able to reach the site.

Shelter support was provided for affected families by actors working in Camp 5, while other families temporarily relocated to a relative's shelter. The CIC arranged for cooked meals for families during the evening of the incident and the following day.

The incident highlights the ongoing safety risks posed by congested settlements, but also underscores the success of preparations for fire response, which saw quick deployment of firefighting resources and measures.

The Fire Safety Civil Defense of Bangladesh (FSCD) has a fire station in each Upazilla ready to be deployed in case of emergency. Over 100 volunteers in each camp have been trained and fire buckets are readily available around shelters, learning centres, child friendly spaces, and water distribution points.



UNHCR and other agencies also continue to include trainings for refugees on Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) use, handling, and maintenance, as well as fire extinguisher training and community messaging on fire risk prevention.

Further measures currently underway include developing key messages to monitor incidents and raise alerts, provide safe spaces throughout the camps, and install fire safety barricades. Communication materials in the form of flash cards, posters, audio messages, and animation continue to be developed and disseminated to ensure that messages on fire safety reach the Rohingya community.

## Over 238,000 Rohingya now issued with new identity documents

The joint Government of Bangladesh-UNHCR registration process for Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar has registered and issued documents for over 238,003 individuals. Currently, five sites in and around the Kutupalong refugee settlement are operating, located in UNHCR's Transit Centre, Camp 5, Camp 12, Camp 16, and Camp 17.

The identity card, also known by the Rohingya community as a 'smart card', is issued to all refugee women, men, girls, and boys above the age of 12 and replaces two existing cards that they previously possessed – a Ministry of Home Affairs (white) card and a Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (yellow) family counting card.

## UNHCR, IOM, and OCHA chiefs visit Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar

On 24-26 April, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock, the Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) António Vitorino, and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi undertook a three day joint mission to Bangladesh. They reiterated their commitment to continue working toward safe and sustainable solutions for Rohingya refugees in Myanmar, noting UN efforts to help create conditions conducive to return. They called on the international community to continue supporting the critical needs of 1.2 million people in Bangladesh, including host communities.

After visiting the refugee camps, they highlighted the critical importance of expanding opportunities for learning and skills training. Almost half of the 540,000 refugee children under the age of 12 are currently missing out on education altogether, with the remainder accessing only very limited schooling.

The joint mission also discussed with the Government ways the international community can further support preparedness and response efforts for the monsoon and cyclone seasons. They witnessed the ongoing work in the camps to address weather-related risks, including the strengthening of shelters, the improvement of infrastructure, the training of volunteers, and in particular they recognized the critical role refugees are playing themselves in these efforts.

The UN leads also met with families who were going through the joint Government of Bangladesh-UNHCR biometric registration. They also witnessed an innovative World Food Programme e-voucher food system diversifying refugee diets, and met male refugee role models as well as women volunteers who are supporting those who have survived sexual and domestic violence.



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(L-R) UN Resident Coordinator, Mia Seppo; Mark Lowcock, UN OCHA; António Vitorino, UN Director General of IOM; Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees; Manuel Marques Pereira, IOM Head of Sub-Office, in Cox's Bazar. © UNHCR/W. Swanson

## 1,000 paper cranes sent by Rohingya refugees to Hiroshima Peace Centre

One thousand origami paper cranes folded by hundreds of refugees in Cox's Bazar made their way to Hiroshima to convey wishes for peace to Japan and to highlight the situation of the refugees and their desire for solutions in Bangladesh.

On 16 April, Japan's Ambassador to Bangladesh H.E. Hiroyasu Izumi and Mr. Dirk Hebecker, Representative of UNHCR in Japan handed the colorful 1,000 origami cranes folded by refugees to Mr. Shiro Tani, Vice Mayor of Hiroshima City.

The cranes emerged from a project run by UNHCR, which introduced paper folding as a small craft to help the community develop conversations on harmony and peace within their community.

Spurred by their interest in the origins of origami, the community also learned about the story of the atomic bomb that devastated Hiroshima, as well as the story of Sadako Sasaki, a young girl who passed away at the age of 12 due to the after-effects of atomic radiation.

Refugees were very encouraged by the warm reception of the cranes from Ambassador Izumi and the Vice Mayor of Hiroshima, expressing their hope that Japan will continue to support the search for solutions to their situation.



Ambassador Hiroyasu Izumi and UNHCR Representative Tokyo delivering the cranes to Vice Mayor of Hiroshima City Shiro Tani. ©UNHCR

## 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 **27 partners**:

**Action Aid Bangladesh** | **ACF** (Action Contre la Faim) | **ADRA** (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) | **BNWLA** (Bangladesh National Woman Lawyer's Association) | **Bangladesh Red Crescent Society** | **BRAC** (Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee) | **Caritas Bangladesh** | **Center for Natural Resource Studies** | **CODEC** (Community Development Centre) | **COAST** (Coastal Association for Social Transformation Trust) | **Danish Refugee Council** | **FH Association** (Food for the Hungry) | **GK** (Gonoshasthaya Kendra) | **IUCN** (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) | **Handicap International** | **Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation** | **Light House** | **Oxfam GB** | **Relief International** | **Mukti Cox's Bazar** | **NGO Forum for Public Health** | **RTMI** (Research, Training and Management International) | **Save the Children International** | **Sesame Workshop** | **Solidarites International** | **Terre des Hommes** | **TAI** (Technical Assistance Incorporated)

UNHCR would also like to acknowledge the crucial role played by the refugees in the response; with **over 3,000 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 refugee response.

## Donor Support

The Government and the people of Bangladesh have shown extraordinary generosity in responding to the crisis. While support has been generous, 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 307.6 million in order to respond to the needs of hundreds of thousands of refugees, as well as affected host communities.

**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 2018 and 2019:**



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