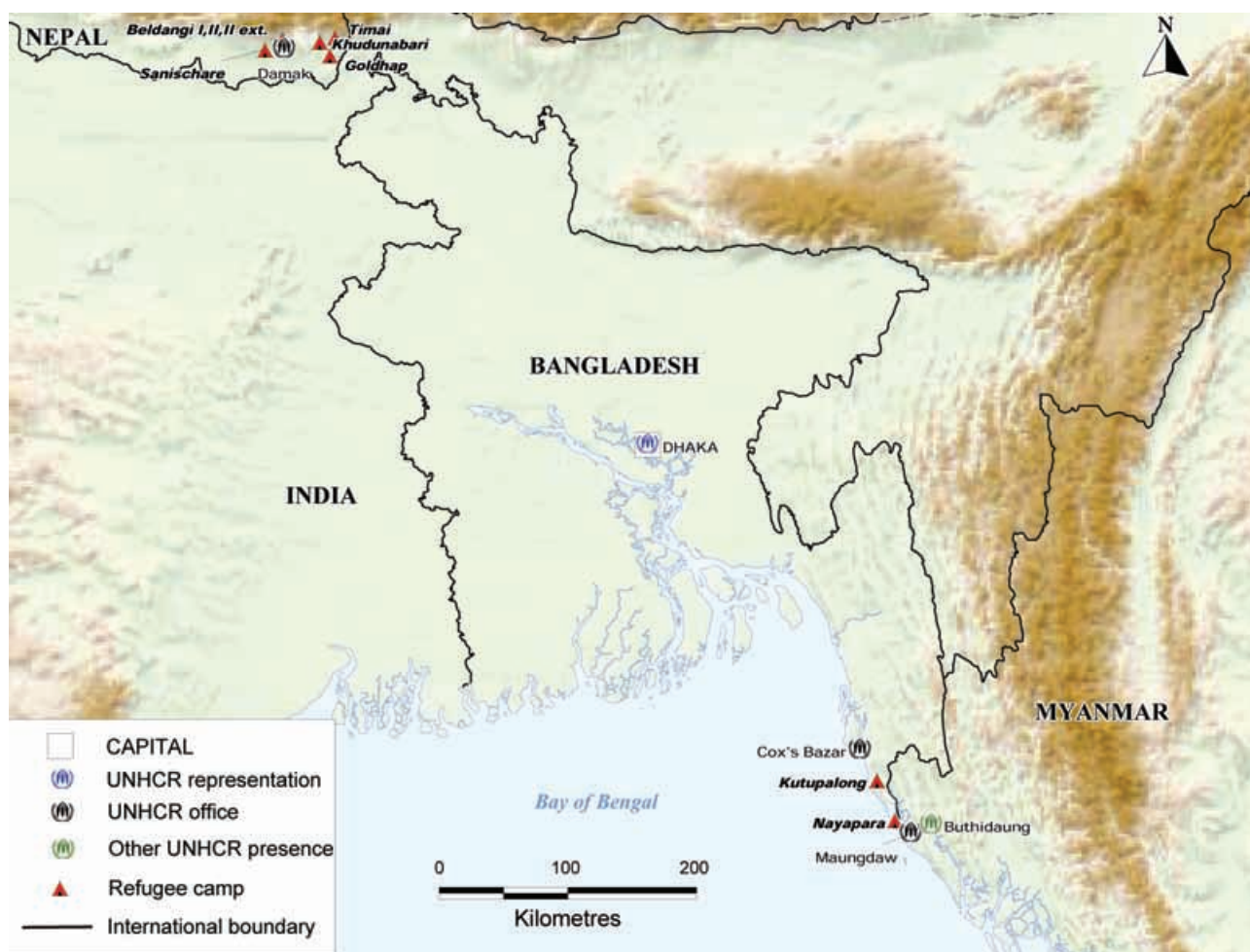


BANGLADESH



Operational highlights

- Stronger cooperation with the Government of Bangladesh, the diplomatic community, UN agencies and NGOs, as well as the introduction of more refugee-friendly policies by the Government, helped UNHCR improve conditions in the camps for refugees from Myanmar's northern Rakhine State. But much more still needs to be done, as the refugees' living conditions remain below international standards.
- A marked reduction in arbitrary detention, harassment and insecurity was evident in the camps. For the first time, registered refugees received individual photo identity cards to improve service delivery and protection. A new participatory camp management structure and the formation of youth and women's groups strengthened community mobilization. The greater participation of refugees in efforts to reduce sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), as well as the installation of solar lighting in the camps, enhanced the protection of women and girls. Teenage pregnancy was also reduced, from around 11 per cent in 2007 to 3 per cent in 2008.
- Some 2,300 refugee families benefited from the construction of 465 new shelters to replace old and dilapidated housing. New partnerships and the active involvement of NGOs and other UN agencies in the camps led to improvements in health, nutrition, education, skills training, community mobilization, water supply and sanitation. Malnutrition rates were reduced from 16.8 per cent in early 2007 to 8.6 per cent in 2008. Some 10,000 unregistered persons of concern from Myanmar were permitted by the Government to move from squalid conditions on the Naf River to a safer location and provided with new shelters.
- Close collaboration with UNICEF and the introduction of the national curriculum in camp schools has given refugee children access to formal primary education for the first time and increased attendance rates.
- The citizenship rights of approximately 300,000 stateless Bihari/Urdu speakers were recognized. They received national photo identity cards and were allowed to participate in the 2008 general elections without discrimination.

| Working environment |

The December 2008 general elections led to a peaceful transfer of power from the interim Government to a democratically elected leadership. A National Human Rights Commission was one of the institutions established to enhance a transparent and sustainable democratic system. In preparation for the elections, all Bangladeshi citizens received national photo identity cards for the first time.

Throughout the year, rising inflation, food shortages and the increasing cost of essential commodities created difficulties for a growing middle class as well as the poor and extremely poor. Despite these concerns, UNHCR was able to strengthen cooperation with the Government, and the latter's policies towards refugees grew progressively more favourable.

Bangladesh is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, and UNHCR's activities remain limited to assisting 28,000 refugees from Myanmar's northern Rakhine State in the two camps of Kutupalong and Nayapara in the south-eastern district of Cox's Bazar. UNHCR also determined the status of a small number of non-Myanmar refugees under its mandate.

| Achievements and impact |

● Main objectives

In 2008, Bangladesh was one of five pilot countries for the High Commissioner's initiative on protracted refugee situations. UNHCR's aim in the country is to promote and implement a comprehensive plan of action to achieve durable solutions for the refugees from Myanmar. It also seeks to ensure that camp-based refugees are protected and their living conditions improved. Furthermore, the Office aimed to promote refugee law and protect urban refugees and persons of concern within broader migration movements.

UNHCR also worked to ensure that the approximately 300,000 people belonging to the Bihari/Urdu-speaking community were able to exercise their rights as citizens of Bangladesh, not least during the elections.

● Protection and solutions

To advance efforts to find durable solutions for refugees from Myanmar, the High Commissioner visited Bangladesh in May 2008. During the visit he emphasized the need to create equity in the living conditions of registered and unregistered persons of concern from Myanmar, as well as for the host population which is also in need of support in the areas of education, health care and livelihoods.

The issuance of UNHCR photo identity cards to refugees helped to ensure better protection and more efficient access to services. The Office continued to follow up court cases involving refugees to enhance good governance in Cox's Bazar district. UNICEF and UNHCR took steps to initiate a

child protection programme for refugees and Bangladeshi nationals, and NGOs undertook a number of activities to cater to refugees and the local communities.

As part of a comprehensive durable solutions plan to address the protracted refugee situation, the modest resettlement programme introduced in 2006 was enhanced in 2008, when 500 refugees were accepted for resettlement by eight countries.

UNHCR promoted Bangladesh's accession to the 1951 Refugee Convention and the establishment of national refugee institutions so that the Office and the Government could jointly initiate refugee status determination (RSD). In the interim, UNHCR continued to determine the status of a small number of non-camp-based asylum-seekers under its mandate.

● Activities and assistance

Community services: Participation by the refugee community in camp management led to a reduction in violence, arbitrary detention, harassment and general insecurity. It also reduced the incidence of SGBV and early or forced marriages. A new camp management system ensured more impartial arbitration in minor civil disputes. Handicap International took measures to improve disabled persons' access to services in the camps. Sports in the camps improved young people's lives.

Domestic needs and household support: Refugees received basic items throughout the year to meet their daily needs. To promote greater self-reliance, blanket assistance was being phased out and replaced with targeted distribution of essential items according to need.

Education: UNICEF introduced the national curriculum in the camp schools, allowing refugee children access to an improved education and nationally recognized certification. Adolescent and adult literacy programmes and Burmese/Myanmar language training continued.

Health and nutrition: The distribution of mosquito nets led to a reduction in the incidence of malaria, from 1.3 to 0.9/1000/month, and no deaths were reported in 2008. The use of standard treatment protocols and guidelines helped contain a cholera outbreak in the camps. The protocols also helped in monitoring disease trends and providing early warning of the spread of infections. Education on reproductive health issues, as well as awareness and prevention activities for sexually transmitted infections and HIV and AIDS, were scaled up significantly in the camps.

Malnutrition rates were halved, from 16.8 per cent in early 2007 to 8.6 per cent in 2008. To reduce micro-nutrient deficiencies, UNHCR successfully introduced 'sprinkles' (a powder of vitamins and minerals added to food) for children under five, adolescent girls and pregnant and lactating women. The impact will be measured by a nutritional survey

Persons of concern					
Type of population	Origin	Total	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Refugees	Myanmar	28,300	28,100	52	59
	Various	50	-	35	10
Total		28,350	28,100		



Refugees from Myanmar in Bangladesh

UNHCR / S. KRITSANAVARIN

in 2009. Refugees registered by the Government of Bangladesh received food rations. Plans were developed to distribute ration cards to all refugees registered with UNHCR.

Income generation: Two important assessments in 2008 studied the livelihood capacities of camp-based refugees and the situation of the estimated 200,000 unregistered persons of concern from Myanmar living outside the camps. The findings indicated a need to continue self-reliance activities in the camps. They also showed that the situation of the unregistered persons of concern from Myanmar must be addressed within a development framework that considers the needs of other vulnerable groups in Cox's Bazar, including host communities.

While refugees do not have the legal right to work, all refugees recognized under UNHCR's mandate received employment counselling. Some received skills training to better prepare them for future income-generation activities, including in the camps.

Legal assistance: The strengthening of protection activities in the camps led to a marked decrease in arbitrary detentions, harassment and insecurity during the year. Refugees accessing the national legal system were provided with legal support.

The Office continued to determine the status of non-camp based asylum-seekers and decisions on 154 cases were issued during 2008.

Operational support (to agencies): UNHCR supported implementing and operational partners to ensure effective

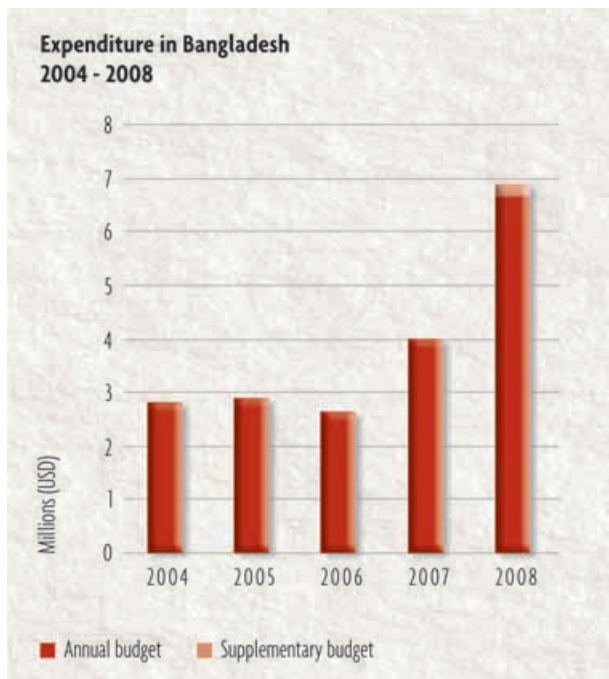
delivery of services to refugees and the preparedness to respond to emergencies as evidenced at the time of the Nargis cyclone warning in May.

Shelter and other infrastructure: The construction of new shelters was completed in Kutupalong camp and is underway in Nayapara camp. This has helped alleviate overcrowding and reduced respiratory problems. The introduction of solar-powered lights in the camps improved security, especially for women and girls. The community helps to monitor the functioning of the lights and trained refugees repair and maintain them.

Water and sanitation: Water facilities in both camps were overhauled. All water points are within 200 metres of the population, and there were no cases of water-borne disease reported during the year. New bathing cubicles in both camps ensured safer access, especially for women and the disabled. The construction of new drains is expected to reduce soil erosion during the monsoons and improve sanitation.

● *Constraints*

The protracted nature of the 17-year-old refugee situation in Bangladesh remained a concern. Continued engagement is needed from all stakeholders to enhance the living conditions of refugees in the country while a durable solution is sought. Growing economic disparities between the refugees and Bangladeshi nationals that have the potential to create dependent and fractured communities also need to be addressed.



Financial information

In 2008, the programme was fully funded, and additional funding was received to complete shelter construction in Kutupalong camp. Additional funding was also received from private organizations to enhance education and sports, while special projects benefited the nutrition, water and sanitation sectors.

Organization and implementation

In 2008, UNHCR had a total of 48 employees, including eight international staff, 14 UNVs (four international and 10 national), one JPO and three secondees from the Norwegian Refugee Council, the International Catholic Migration Commission and Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development. Operations were covered by the two offices in Dhaka and Cox's Bazar.

Working with others

In addition to its implementing partners, UNHCR cooperated closely with operational partners, including UN agencies such as WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA, FAO and ILO and NGOs such as Handicap International, Austcare and IOM. It has also engaged with diplomatic missions to promote a strategy for comprehensive solutions to the protracted refugee situation.

Overall assessment

Improved government policies and UNHCR's cooperation with the Government, diplomatic missions, other UN agencies and NGOs have resulted in improvements benefiting refugees from Myanmar. Yet, the refugees' living conditions remain below international standards. Positive developments include the distribution of individual ID cards; the introduction of the national curriculum in the two camps; the tolerance by the authorities of small-scale business activities in the camps; and the reduced control of refugees' movements in and out of the camps for income-generating opportunities. Nonetheless, opportunities for self-reliance will need to be expanded both as a protection response and in preparation for durable solutions.

The situation of refugees from Myanmar remains complex. It needs to be resolved taking into consideration the fact that Bangladesh remains one of the poorest, most densely populated countries in the world, and one prone to frequent natural disasters. Meanwhile, measures to improve education, health care and livelihood opportunities for the refugee and host communities would enhance the prospects for durable solutions for refugees, including voluntary repatriation, and improve their living conditions.

Partners
Implementing partners
Government: Ministry of Health, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management NGOs: Research, Technical Assistance Incorporated, Training and Management International
Operational partners
NGOs: Austcare, Handicap International Others: FAO, ILO, IOM, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP

Budget, income and expenditure in Bangladesh (USD)					
	Final budget	Income from contributions	Other funds available	Total funds available ¹	Total expenditure
Annual budget	6,876,034	6,397,170	269,096	6,666,265	6,657,077
Avian and human influenza preparedness SB	130,000	0	46,379	46,379	123,470
Anaemia control and prevention SB	124,010	0	123,470	123,470	46,379
Water and sanitation SB	40,000	0	35,849	35,849	35,849
Supplementary budget subtotal	294,010	0	205,698	205,698	205,698
Grand total	7,170,044	6,397,170	474,794	6,871,964	6,862,775

Note: Supplementary programmes do not include seven per cent support costs that are recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR. Income from contributions includes contributions earmarked at the country level. Other funds available include transfers from unearmarked and broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

¹ Total funds available include currency adjustments. See Note on Table 3.

Financial report for UNHCR's operations in Bangladesh (USD)				
Expenditure breakdown	Current year's projects			Prior years' project
	Annual programme budget	Supplementary programme budget	Total	Annual and supplementary budgets
Protection, monitoring and coordination	1,476,782	35,000	1,511,782	0
Community services	308,557	0	308,557	0
Domestic needs and household support	257,642	0	257,642	0
Education	110,571	0	110,571	0
Food	108,925	0	108,925	0
Health and nutrition	471,170	7,235	478,405	2,981
Income generation	3,742	0	3,742	0
Legal assistance	123,785	0	123,785	0
Operational support (to agencies)	365,826	4,416	370,242	1,355
Sanitation	26,475	65,797	92,272	12,408
Shelter and infrastructure	2,352,900	0	2,352,900	140,680
Transport and logistics	87,096	4,145	91,241	704
Water	32,259	89,105	121,364	1,298
Instalments to implementing partners	428,433	0	428,433	(159,426)
Subtotal operational activities	6,154,163	205,698	6,359,861	0
Programme support	502,914	0	502,914	0
Total expenditure	6,657,077	205,698	6,862,775	0
Cancellation on previous years' expenditure				(58,704)
Instalments with implementing partners				
Payments made	2,042,494	0	2,042,494	
Reporting received	(1,614,061)	0	(1,614,061)	
Balance	428,433	0	428,433	
Outstanding 1st January				192,117
Reporting received				(159,426)
Refunded to UNHCR				(38,092)
Currency adjustment				968
Outstanding 31st December				(4,433)