

BANGLADESH

21 April – 08 May 2018

The **UN Security Council visited Dhaka and Cox’s Bazar on 28 and 29 April 2018**, meeting with UN and Bangladesh Government officials and Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina. They expressed appreciation for the support of the Bangladesh government and stressed the importance of finding a solution to the refugee crisis.

The 45th Session of the **Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Council of Foreign Ministers** was held in Bangladesh on 5 and 6 May 2018, with a focus on the Rohingya refugee crisis. Delegates visited refugee settlements in Cox’s Bazar before heading to Dhaka for the conference, which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Over 78,000 out of 80 000 refugee families (98% of current target) have received upgraded shelter kits, including bamboo poles, rope, shelter-grade tarpaulin and tools. UNHCR and other shelter partners are accelerating distributions ahead of the rainy season and will complete distribution to the remaining targeted refugee families in the coming weeks.

POPULATION FIGURES

878,596 Total number of refugees in Bangladesh

713,909 Estimated new arrivals in Bangladesh since 25 August 2017

STAFFING & PARTNERS

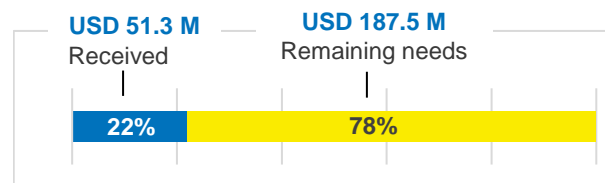
247 staff currently working on the emergency compared to 49 prior to the crisis. **169** are national staff.

24 partners compared to 7 prior to the crisis.

FUNDING

USD 238.8 million

Requested for UNHCR’s emergency response in 2018.



A child and a woman wait at a play area inside a nutrition center run by UNHCR partner Action Against Hunger (ACF) © UNHCR/ Dalal Alsharhan

Refugee Arrival trends

Since the start of January 2018, over 8,441 refugees have arrived in Bangladesh, with over 450 individuals arriving in the last two weeks¹. Travelling from Myanmar by boat, refugees continue to cross the border into Bangladesh, particularly through the Sabrang arrival point. The Bangladesh Army, UNHCR, and partners have maintained basic services at the arrival point for new arrivals, which include health and food, to support the refugees who have undertaken difficult journeys with limited supplies. Many new arrivals report having left Myanmar without relatives, some of whom reportedly plan to leave soon due to continued fear for their security and safety.



Newly arrived Rohingya refugees at UNHCR's Transit Center queue up for a hot meal, provided twice daily by UNHCR partner ACF and cooked at the center's community kitchen. © UNHCR/Caroline Gluck

Refugee Returns to Myanmar

Last month, UNHCR and the Government of Bangladesh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) relating to voluntary returns of Rohingya refugees once conditions in Myanmar are conducive. The MOU establishes a framework of cooperation between UNHCR and Bangladesh on the safe, voluntary, and dignified returns of refugees in line with international standards.



Canada's Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland is briefed by UNHCR Head of Operation during her visit to UNHCR's Transit Center in Kutupalong. © UNHCR/Dalal Alsharhan

Several delegations visited Bangladesh during the reporting period including UN Security Council, OIC foreign ministers, Canadian foreign minister, and UNHCR's Executive Committee (ExCom) Chair. The importance of UNHCR involvement in any voluntary repatriation of refugees to Myanmar was highlighted during discussions and in the media. Although many refugees desire to eventually return home, they remain concerned about the process and the current conditions to which they may return. Over the past months, refugees have frequently told UNHCR that they will not consider going back to

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

Myanmar unless questions of citizenship, legal rights, access to services, justice, and restitution are addressed.



Thousands of Rohingya refugees line the roads of the Kutupalong mega refugee settlement as the UNSC visit takes place. Many hold signs welcoming the visit and saying they want justice, as well as stating their key demands for repatriation. © UNHCR/Caroline Gluck

Refugee response

Protection activities

Capacity building and community engagement: After being trained by UNHCR and protection partners, refugee volunteers conducted emergency preparedness awareness sessions across Kutupalong and Nayapara settlements, reaching directly more than 8,000 refugees since they started in early April. Separately, a group of performing artists collaborated with UNHCR on 26 April 2018 and presented a drama on landslide awareness, which coincided with a rally organized by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR). The event saw the participation of the Secretary of MoDMR, other local officials, as well as partners, agencies, and students. The performance was enthusiastically received by the refugee audience, and community volunteers were further trained to deliver messages across the settlements to raise awareness on landslide risks. UNHCR units are also in discussion on the possibility of rolling out landslide messages to children in Child Friendly Spaces (CFSs) and Temporary Learning Centers.

Child Protection: As part of emergency preparedness efforts, UNHCR and partners identified six CFSs as “lost child and caregivers meeting points”, where staff and volunteers will be operating to provide support and necessary protection interventions, in case of emergency. In addition, sessions on emergency preparedness with key messages for the community on disaster risks, family separation, and child protection measures have been organized for parents, community-based child protection committees, CFS facilitators, and child clubs.

Community-based protection: While water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) was the top concern across most settlements, issues around family counting number (FCN) cards, shelter and site infrastructure were relayed by the community through the network of community volunteers established by UNHCR, in partnership with TAI and BRAC, since December 2017. Some families reported that because they did not manage to register for or obtain their FCN cards, they were left out of the Compressed Rice Husks (CRH) distribution – forcing them to walk long distances to collect firewood.

UNHCR registration staff have been deployed to 11 information points across the settlements to address FCN issues, and are working closely with community-based protection colleagues to address the concerns of the community.

Health and Nutrition: With the support of UNHCR, UNICEF, and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), UNHCR and partner Action Against Hunger (ACF) launched a follow up emergency survey to determine the health and nutrition status among refugees. Starting on 28 April 2018, around 715 out of a sample population of 1,806 households were already surveyed, and while data collection is still ongoing in both Kutupalong and Nayapara, the survey results are expected to be completed by the second week of June 2018. The modules covered in the survey are child anthropometric and health, infant and young child feeding (IYCF), mortality and immunization coverage.



*Refugee community volunteers deliver awareness raising messages on cyclone and monsoon preparedness across all settlements.
©UNHCR Community Outreach Member volunteer/ Raywas*

Provision of services and assistance for emergency preparedness

Strengthening shelters: As of 02 May 2018, UNHCR has distributed 78,133 out of 80 000 upgraded shelter kits, including bamboo poles, rope, shelter-grade tarpaulin and tools to families so they can strengthen their shelters ahead of the monsoon season. UNHCR and other shelter partners are accelerating distributions ahead of the rainy season to reach more families, as the number of arrivals continues to grow. Additional pre-monsoon kit distributions, containing ropes and pegs, have started. Biodegradable sandbags are also being provided to support the anchoring of structures.

Relocations: As of 3 May 2018, 15,201 refugees have been relocated by UNHCR and supporting partners for various reasons, including construction works, landslide and/or flood vulnerability, and new arrivals. Out of those, 10,061 refugees were relocated to safer areas due to living in areas that are at high risk of flooding and/or landslides.

UNHCR and partners estimate that up to 200,000 people will be at risk of flooding and/or landslides during the monsoon season, out of which 24,000 were identified to be at critical risk of landslides and in urgent need of relocation. UNHCR and partners are racing to ready more shelters, facilities, and land in order to relocate all families who now reside in areas at critical risk of landslides over the coming weeks.



Machinery seen in the new land where UNHCR and IOM will start relocating refugee families once shelters and facilities have been established. ©UNHCR/Caroline Gluck

New land: The first portion of the newly allocated land, comprising approximately 12 acres, has been leveled and is now ready for UNHCR and partners to install shelters and facilities for safe relocations. This is part of new land that was allocated by the Government of Bangladesh in north-western Kutupalong settlement to accommodate refugees being relocated from high risk flood and landslide areas. It is envisioned that the total of all the new land under development (approximately 100 acres) should be able to provide homes for another 12-15,000 individuals. As part of a tripartite earthworks project with IOM, UNHCR,

and WFP (also known as Site Management Engineering Project - SMEP), engineers are building bridges, roads, preparing land for safer relocation, fortifying embankments and clearing drainage channels. Since work to level the new land began following authorization from the authorities in March 2018, 76 earthwork machines and more than 3,500 laborers, including both host community and Rohingya refugees, have been mobilized to prepare the land to support refugee relocations.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH): Due to the depletion of the water supply in the Nayapara settlement's main reservoir, UNHCR started trucking water to the water treatment site in order to support refugees there. In response to increased water strain in the site, the surrounding settlements work has started to extend the pipeline and install tap stands around different parts of the settlement. WASH continues to be among the top concerns for humanitarian agencies and the refugee population.

UNHCR is working with WASH partners to decommission latrines that are malfunctioning or located in at-risk areas ahead of the heavy rains. So far, over 63% of at-risk latrines have been decommissioned. In addition, emergency WASH simulation exercises are being led by UNHCR to prepare WASH partners in advance of any WASH emergencies that may occur during the monsoon season. Eight out of 12 areas, where the exercises are being conducted, have already been completed. UNHCR is also coordinating the work of nine WASH partners in Camp 17 (an area in Kutupalong settlement to which some refugees who were living in areas at risk of flooding and/or landslides have been relocated) to cover the WASH needs. In the previous two weeks, 75 latrines and four deep tube wells were completed, keeping pace with the needs of relocations.



Samuda, a 35 year-old mother from Buthidaung, receives help during the first pilot cash assistance program for Rohingya refugees in Kutupalong. As the sole supporter of her 15-year old daughter, she said, "The first thing I'll do is pay off our debts of around 200 taka (\$2.50), and then we'll use this money to buy food". ©UNHCR/Caroline Gluck

Cash Based Interventions (CBI): UNHCR developed a pilot cash-based intervention (CBI) in Kutupalong to enable refugees to cover part of their basic needs other than food. The pilot project, which was launched on 9 April 2018 by UNHCR and its partner BRAC supported by the authorities and Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) in two of the most densely populated areas of Kutupalong.

The scope of this intervention was to cover 11,405 families settled in two zones of the settlement, out of which 9,015 have received cash support (80%). This pilot aims to also support families in improving their living conditions and reducing their exposure to hazards during the monsoon season. Moreover, the pilot allows refugees to make their own decisions regarding how best to use these funds – a more dignified way to receive assistance. A post-distribution monitoring (PDM) survey is currently underway to collect relevant information about the perception of the refugees receiving cash, including its impact, access to markets, items purchased, etc.

Cleaner and safer fuel: The Government of Bangladesh has officially approved the mass roll out of UNHCR's LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) initiative across settlements in Cox's Bazar, and including most vulnerable families of the host community in the vicinity. LPG for clean cooking has already been provided to 12,000 households through UNHCR partner Caritas and local supplier Omera. This will be scaled up to 100,000 households including the host community within a few months, which is expected to dramatically reduce issues including deforestation, SGBV (as women and children won't have to walk long distances to gather firewood), health (indoor wood burning), among other issues.

Safety volunteers: Area-level response plans are being developed for each of the designated areas in the settlements - headed by UNHCR field colleagues and supported by Camp Management Support partners. The aim is to ensure adequate emergency preparedness response at the area-level.

One of the components of this effort is the establishment of Safety Volunteer Units, which consist of 50 volunteers in each of the designated areas. These volunteer units will support and strengthen the capacity of Government-appointed area officials (Camp-in-Charge) to respond to emergencies. Units have already been created in all settlements and they have been trained on cyclone preparedness and early warning.

Currently, they are undergoing a series of extensive trainings by the Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence department on firefighting and first response in emergencies, which will be completed by mid-June 2018. In addition to trainings, UNHCR partners are constructing fire stands in various areas across the settlements with firefighting materials in case a fire breaks out, which will enable the nearby community to take quick action while calling for support from Safety Volunteers, and until the Fire Services arrive.

Supporting host and refugee communities

In April 2018, UNHCR started implementing Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) to benefit local host communities. In addition to installing solar street lights previously, UNHCR started work on improving drainage systems, repairing roads, rehabilitating educational facilities which hosted refugees, and equipping them and other public places with WASH facilities, and also providing local fishermen with life jackets. These among several projects that are planned to be completed by June 2018.

As part of emergency preparedness or evacuation, UNHCR along with partner Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) identified 20 host community educational institutions near the settlements which could accommodate more than 25,000 people during any emergency. UNHCR started improving facilities like access to water, sanitation, roof, doors & windows, stairs, additional rooms, etc. of those institutions. During any emergency, both members of the host and refugees communities will have the opportunity to stay in those educational institutions as evacuation shelters.

UNHCR is also exploring more QIPs options involving communities, local Government and civil societies. The extreme poverty within the host communities of Cox's Bazar is very high at 17% (while the national average is 12%) and those extremely poor households have been affected by the influx. To address the issue and to improve the acceptance of refugees by the host community, UNHCR in partnership with BRAC started implementing the 'Targeting Ultra Poor Graduation Model' since April 2018. The program already identified the targeted households through a rigorous participatory process involving communities. This programing will be a two-year time bound intervention designed to raise some 2,000 ultra-poor households into sustainable livelihoods. Within the project period, the targeted 2,000 ultra-poor households from the host communities of Teknaf and Ukhia will receive ultra-poor graduation support to rise out of poverty.

Working in partnership

At Dhaka level, UNHCR co-chairs the Strategic Executive Group (SEG) with the UN Resident Coordinator and IOM. UNHCR leads on the protection response for all refugees, and heads a Protection Working Group in Cox's Bazar. UNHCR coordinates its delivery of assistance with UN agencies and other partners through various working groups under the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG). UNHCR's main government counterpart is the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief.

In Cox's Bazar, UNHCR works with the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner and Camp-in-Charge officials in different settlements. UNHCR also works closely with a range of international and national actors in Bangladesh. It has a partnership network of 24 partners, including 9 national NGOs. In 2018, UNHCR is increasing national and local sourcing of goods and services.

UNHCR financial needs for 2018

	Protection	26.7 m
	Basic relief items	5.6 m
	Water, sanitation & hygiene	40.8 m
	Shelter/infrastructure	25.0 m
	Energy and environment	13.4 m
	Education	10.0 m
	Community mobilization	18.1 m
	Health and nutrition	34.5 m
	Logistics	11.0 m
	Camp management	35.3 m
	Support costs	18.4 m
TOTAL		238.8 m

Donor Support

The response of the Government and people of Bangladesh is extraordinarily generous. More support is required from the international community to assist Bangladesh in its humanitarian response to the refugee situation. UNHCR has called for support for refugees and host communities, as well as continued political efforts to work for a solution to the situation. On 16 March 2018, a Joint Response Plan (JRP) for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis was launched calling for USD 951 million to continue delivering lifesaving assistance from March-December 2018. As of 7 May 2018, USD 151.4 million—constituting 16 per cent of the total required—have been received under the JRP.

UNHCR is appealing for USD 238.8 million as part of its Supplementary Appeal for 2018 in order to continue to respond to the needs of hundreds of thousands of refugees, who are now preparing to face a harsh monsoon season.

Donor country contributions to the UNHCR Bangladesh operation in 2017 and 2018, and unrestricted funding to UNHCR's global operations



With thanks also to the many private donations from individuals, foundations, companies including Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, IKEA Foundation, King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, 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.

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