



During the initial response, the Rohingya were sheltered in a sports hall in the town of Lhoksukon.

## RESPONSE TO THE ROHINGYA SITUATION IN ACEH AND NORTH SUMATERA

### Population of Concern

**310** persons of concern as of 31 January 2016

Location	Adult Male	Adult Female	Children	Total
<b>Aceh Province</b>				
Blang Adoe, Aceh Utara	26	10	40	76
Kuala Langsa, Kota Langsa	33	1	17	51
Bayeun, Aceh Timur	46	12	40	98
Lhokbani, Kota Langsa		12	22	34
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>259</b>
<b>North Sumatera Province</b>				
Beraspati Hotel, Medan	9	7	25	41
IDC Belawan, Medan*	1		4	5
Tanjung Balai, Asahan*	3	2		5
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>310</b>

Since the arrival of some 1,000 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar in May 2015, spontaneous departures have continued to take place resulting in a current population of 310 individuals.

Upon their arrival 544 children were registered, including 347 who were identified as unaccompanied and separated children. Of the 148 children remaining, some 87 are unaccompanied and separated children: 27 in Blang Adoe, 17 in Kuala Langsa, 20 in Bayeun, 13 in Lhokbani, 6 in Beraspati Hotel, and 4 in IDC Belawan.

### UNHCR Presence

Under the overall coordination of the Country Office in Jakarta, UNHCR has established a presence in Lhokseumawe to cover the Blang Adoe Shelter, and in Langsa to cover the Bayeun, Kuala Langsa, and Lhokbani shelters. UNHCR staff in Medan are addressing the needs of those in Beraspati Hotel, IDC Belawan, and Tanjung Balai.



Children comprised over half of the disembarked Rohingya population.

Location	Female				Male				Total
	0 - 4	5 - 11	12 - 17	18 - 65	0 - 4	5 - 11	12 - 17	18 - 65	
Blang Adoe, Aceh Utara	2	2	11	10	3	10	12	26	76
Kuala Langsa, Kota Langsa		1	1	1		7	8	33	51
Bayeun, Aceh Timur	3	3	4	12	5	10	15	46	98
Lhokbani, Kota Langsa	2	6	5	12	5	3	1		34
Beraspati Hotel, Medan	3	5	3	7	2	3	9	9	41
IDC Belawan, Medan*			4					1	5
Tanjung Balai, Asahan*				2				3	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>310</b>

\* Immigration detention facilities

## MAIN ACTIVITIES

### Emergency Response

- In May 2015 nearly 1,000 Rohingya refugees and some 800 Bangladeshi migrants arrived in Indonesia after boats on which they were traveling were abandoned by smugglers. UNHCR immediately responded with a range of protection interventions, including registration of asylum claims, carrying out best interests assessments, addressing immediate protection and security concerns, facilitating the reunification of families separated during their rescue at sea and disembarkation in Indonesia, undertaking needs assessments and mapping of partner activities, and assisting the Government in ensuring effective coordination.
- In response to the crisis, UNHCR deployed staff to Aceh and North Sumatera and has maintained a regular presence in the affected areas. UNHCR re-deployed staff from other locations to go on mission to Aceh to address immediate protection needs and establish a temporary presence. The team worked closely with the Government and partners on the ground to ensure access to documentation, accommodation, food, healthcare, and basic relief items, and to identify and address urgent protection needs.
- UNHCR then established two field units in Aceh and recruited staff to be based in Langsa and Lhokseumawe, while reinforcing its presence in Medan, North Sumatera and in Jakarta to help monitor and track protection interventions and developments as well as to pursue a range of comprehensive solutions for the group.

### Coordination

- From the arrival of the Rohingyas and Bangladeshis in May 2015 UNHCR has worked closely with the Government of Indonesia and partners to ensure an effective, comprehensive, and coordinated response to the needs of this group. The Government quickly established task forces in each location hosting the new arrivals, and UNHCR has taken an active role in this mechanism. The task forces comprise all Government counterparts involved in the response at the local level, as well as UNHCR, IOM, and representatives of NGOs engaged in the shelters.
- In addition to the local level, UNHCR has worked closely with key Government counterparts in Jakarta to advocate on issues affecting the response, particularly the Desk for People Smuggling, Asylum-Seekers and Refugees within the Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal and Security Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, and the Directorate-General of Immigration.
- UNHCR also formed a Jakarta-level protection coordination group at the height of the crisis to enable exchange of information and coordination of activities in Aceh and North Sumatera. The group brought together international agencies and NGO partners to discuss current activities, to identify areas of duplication and gaps in meeting the needs of the group, and to assess how to address emerging protection concerns.
- UNHCR has contributed to the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Government and other partners involved in the response, covering a range of operational issues including shelter management, access to services, and handling of protection incidents. UNHCR has worked closely with local authorities to strengthen government capacity to respond to protection needs and to enhance knowledge of refugee protection, human rights principles and standards of treatment in a refugee context, and together with IOM and key Government counterparts from Jakarta UNHCR organized a series of trainings and sensitization sessions for local authorities and NGOs working in Aceh. These positive collaboration efforts have resulted in regular and meaningful information sharing, improved protection monitoring, and more proactive responses to protection incidents.



The Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal and Security Affairs met with key partners in Langsa to establish task forces to coordinate protection and assistance.

### Registration and Refugee Status Determination

- In May and June 2015, UNHCR protection staff formally registered all Rohingyas as asylum-seekers and collected first-hand information on the circumstances of their departure and travel to Indonesia. UNHCR conducted initial protection assessments for the registered population to help determine who were the most vulnerable and how best to meet their protection needs.

- UNHCR completed preliminary best interest assessments for some 347 unaccompanied or separated children to identify the individual needs of these children and to begin determining what interventions would be in their best interests. Following the initial assessments, protection staff prioritized vulnerable cases and conducted formal best interest determinations for the most vulnerable children to gather and analyze information about each child's circumstances, risks, and needs, with the view to identifying appropriate solutions including priority resettlement.
- UNHCR has initiated the process of refugee status determination for the Rohingya population in Aceh and North Sumatera, and it is expected that the remaining cases will be finalized by the end of March 2016.

## Comprehensive Solutions

- Alongside the immediate protection interventions in Aceh and North Sumatera, UNHCR has prioritized the identification of solutions for the Rohingya population. UNHCR has advocated for a range of solutions that includes family reunification with relatives in other countries, temporary stay measures, access to legal labor migration schemes, and resettlement for the most vulnerable.
- Thus far the cases of 18 vulnerable individuals have been submitted for resettlement, including 11 unaccompanied children and 7 families referred as women at risk. UNHCR is continuing the process of identifying and prioritizing the most vulnerable individuals for resettlement submission, and the next group is expected to be submitted to States in the coming weeks.



UNHCR set up a makeshift facility to register the Rohingya.

## Protection

- UNHCR protection staff have responded to the immediate and priority protection needs of the Rohingya, with a particular focus on children and women who comprise over half of the total population. All activities have been implemented in collaboration with various partners, including Government counterparts, UNICEF, IOM and other international organizations, NGOs, civil society, and communities of concern.
- Based on the comprehensive assessment of protection mechanisms and general conditions, UNHCR, together with partners, has put in place measures to address the identified gaps focusing on child protection, accommodation, healthcare, sanitation and hygiene, psychosocial support, security, refugee empowerment, community participation, and education and life-skills training. UNHCR has coordinated with partners to support the establishment of recreational activities, informal education and skills training, child friendly spaces, and psychosocial support programs, mainly targeting women and children.
- UNHCR has worked with partners to establish case management and referral mechanisms to ensure individuals with protection concerns are assessed and followed up appropriately. The high proportion of unaccompanied and separated children, as well as women and girls at risk and others with specific physical and protection needs, has demanded intensive engagement of protection staff.
- To address the urgent and special needs of children, UNHCR has developed and implemented a comprehensive child protection strategy for working with the Government and other partners to ensure children are protected and solutions are found for them. Partners include international agencies and NGOs as well as host communities, religious leaders, and the children themselves along with their families. The strategy focuses on three key areas, including identifying and addressing immediate and mid-term protection needs of children, ensuring access to comprehensive solutions, and raising awareness on child protection risks and standards among children as well as host communities.
- UNHCR has collaborated with the Government and partners to put in place an effective SGBV prevention and response programme that includes a system to prioritize reporting of incidents and to ensure swift follow-up, especially for children and women. A number of serious SGBV incidents have been addressed through these mechanisms together with the Government and partners, and comprehensive responses have entailed formal investigations and initiation of prosecution of



UNHCR held information sessions with Rohingya groups in the shelters and regularly monitored support programs.

perpetrators, provision of medical and psychosocial support, and ensuring the security of survivors. Local authorities, partners, and the refugee population are receiving counselling on an ongoing basis to increase their knowledge on how to prevent and respond to incidents of SGBV. This has resulted in the formation of self-help groups and the implementation of referral and multi-sectoral response mechanisms in the different shelters.

- As a way of ensuring peaceful coexistence and facilitating the integration of the Rohingya within the communities hosting them, UNHCR and partners have implemented a comprehensive program to sensitize the group to the local culture and environment and to make certain they understand the laws and regulations in place, particularly in relation to Sharia Law which is enforced in Aceh. UNHCR has developed and distributed a “Do’s and Don’ts” pamphlet to help raise awareness on local customs and to guide the Rohingya in their personal behavior. The program has also focused on sensitizing the group to the dangers of engaging smugglers to facilitate irregular movement to Malaysia and within Indonesia, including the risks of exploitation and trafficking.
- UNHCR has utilized the data and information gathered in Aceh and North Sumatera to inform regional protection monitoring efforts and to guide the development of operational response plans, and this information has fed into regional data collection efforts aimed at analyzing the Bay of Bengal Crisis and developing strategies to prevent further dangerous movements by sea.

## CONTINUING INITIATIVES

- While the number of Rohingya remaining in Aceh and North Sumatera has fallen significantly since May 2015, the needs of this population remain acute and the situation continues to be affected by a range of protection concerns. UNHCR will continue to support the Government of Indonesia to facilitate coordination, protection monitoring, and comprehensive solutions. UNHCR is committed to ensuring continuity of protection activities, and will carry on utilizing all available resources to effectively address the ongoing needs of the Rohingya in Aceh and North Sumatera.
- With the reduced population in Aceh, UNHCR will continue to advocate for the consolidation of the remaining Rohingya into a single location, which would ensure more effective delivery of assistance and facilitate measures to provide protection for the men, women, and children who will make up the residual population, pending identification of longer-term solutions. Both the Blang Adoe shelter in Aceh Utara and the soon-to-be completed Timbang Langsa shelter in Kota Langsa have sufficient capacity to accommodate the remaining members of the group.
- UNHCR will continue to work with the Government and partners to build the capacity of those engaged in the response in Aceh and North Sumatera, through ongoing training, awareness-raising, and sensitization programs. This is a crucial component of a comprehensive protection strategy to ensure the safety and security of the Rohingya and prevent their exploitation.
- UNHCR will remain committed to facilitating comprehensive solutions for the Rohingya, including through efforts to facilitate the resettlement of the most vulnerable among the group and advocacy for temporary stay measures, access to income-generating activities, improved educational and skills development opportunities, and family reunification with close relatives in other countries in the region.

