


# Asia and the Pacific


1 July 2020

 **9.2** million  
Persons of concern

 **4.4** million  
Refugees and Asylum seekers

 **2.9** million  
Internally displaced persons

 **83,930**  
Returnees

 **2.3** million  
Stateless persons

## Overview

On 20 June, UNHCR in Bangladesh opened and handed over the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) in Sadar district consisting of ten intensive care beds with life-saving lung ventilators and eight high-dependency beds. The facility is the first of its kind in Cox's Bazar. The inauguration ceremony fell on the World Refugee Day and was attended by members of parliament and high-ranking officials from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and district authorities. Monitoring and support mechanisms continue in Bangladesh for UNHCR staff receiving medical treatment or placed in isolation/quarantine.

## Highlights by country

### South-West Asia

#### Afghanistan

- The UN is establishing a five-bed ICU at the UN Operations Centre (UNOCA) in Kabul to provide life-saving emergency support so that humanitarian partners can stay and deliver. The Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund – through its fourth reserve allocation for the COVID-19 response in 2020 – allocated reserve funds to kick-start the project. Opportunities for co-funding are being pursued as the service might need to be scaled up and provided for an extended period.
- An EU Humanitarian Air Bridge flight departed on 15 June from the Netherlands to deliver 100 tonnes of life-saving materials to supply EU-funded humanitarian partners in Afghanistan. Also, according to media reports, on 11 June, the Government of Turkey sent medical equipment, testing kits and PPEs to Kabul to support the Afghan Government's response.
- Movement restrictions and the increased presence of male family members at home is reportedly restricting women's ability to seek SGBV support. However, over the past week, 1,058 GBV cases were identified and referred to Family Protection Centers in 21 provinces.

#### Pakistan

- UNHCR Pakistan's COVID-19 cash assistance program is targeting 70,000 vulnerable refugee households. Some 22,000 families have been identified and approved for cash assistance. Urgent Money Orders are being distributed through Pakistan Post Offices throughout the country. To date, over 5,000 families have collected their assistance. UNHCR teams continue to work closely with refugee community structures to proactively identify and process families for inclusion in the cash assistance program.

### South Asia

#### India

- Community representatives in India highlight challenges in meeting community expectations amidst concerns regarding lack of opportunities in the informal employment sector due to COVID and limited resettlement opportunities, among others.
- Community messages on possible COVID-related support has been widely disseminated in response to refugees beginning to approach the office seeking assistance both individually and in groups. It has been challenging for UNHCR's persons of concern and service providers to negotiate with landlords on the possibility of deferred rent as, for some, rent was the only source of income, especially during

the lockdown period. Additionally, a recent Delhi High Court judgement rejected an application for waiver or suspension of rent owing to the lockdown, which has made added further challenges.

## Nepal

- The Nepal Ministry of Education has begun to offer remote learning opportunities via television. UNHCR is repositioning funds to accommodate procurement of television sets to enable refugee children to take part.
- On 18 June, UNHCR Damak joined a joint UN mission to Biratnagar to monitor the COVID response, meet with local and provincial government officials and visit quarantine centers and holding areas. The mission was led by IOM and included UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, UNDP, UN RCO, UN-Habitat, WFP and UNHCR.

## South-East Asia

### Bangladesh

- To enhance uptake of testing and treatment and foster trust in health facilities, UNHCR is working extensively to build the capacity of community-based surveillance systems in the camps in Cox's Bazar to identify suspected cases and refer them for testing through community channels. Persons who meet case definitions receive individual counselling on testing, treatment and quarantine, and are referred to facilities. Meanwhile, violence between different groups, theft, and security issues remain prevalent in some Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar, with some refugees relocating between camps, citing general insecurity as the reason. The increase in security issues is attributed in part to limited livelihood opportunities and the reduced presence of authorities in the camps.
- Since the beginning of the COVID-19 response, 56,807 household level handwashing tippy taps have been installed; 13,824 hand washing devices at latrine blocks and 343 hand washing devices have been set up in public places; 119,436 refugee households have been provided with soap rations; 23,023 refugee women have received female hygiene kits; 246 households, including those in quarantine, received WASH hygiene kits; regular latrine desludging and garbage collection have been strengthened; and, 254,950 latrines, bathing cubicles, hand washing points, water collection points and tube well areas have been disinfected with chlorine solution.
- Due to the government declaration of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, as a 'red zone' and implementation of strict lockdown, partner staff face challenges in movement and accessing the camps. As a result, partners are rotating staff who live closer to refugee camps among distribution points to maintain operations. Lockdown measures introduced by district authorities are being followed in the camps, with shops allowed to open only on Sundays and Thursdays.

### Myanmar

- In Rakhine State, UNHCR and other agencies continue to face access constraints which challenge implementation of COVID-19 activities (which for UNHCR include awareness raising and distribution of hygiene items) and regular activities. The onset of the monsoon season also requires a scaling up of wet weather preparedness, shelter activities and continued emergency response to new displacement.
- Against a backdrop of armed clashes, there are concerns that the outbreak of COVID in Rakhine State may further destabilize the situation as there are no prospects for near-term de-escalation. Rakhine State's health sector is under-resourced and overstretched, and the conflict has drawn its attention away from pandemic preparedness and response.

### Malaysia

- UNHCR's COVID-19 Response Hotline (available in Rohingya, Chin, Burmese, Arabic, Somali, Persian, Urdu & Tamil) has received 19,494 calls through mid-June, an average of 222 calls a day.

### Thailand

- UNHCR is planning a gradual re-opening of its registration room at UNESCAP in Bangkok, initially to issue and renew UNHCR cards and, in specific cases, to undertake registration/RSD/protection interviews.

## Philippines

- UNHCR has requested protection partners to mainstream COVID-19 key messaging into their project implementation. Partners have been requested to produce information, education, and communication materials on COVID-19 in local languages such as Bisaya and Maranao, and to disseminate COVID-19 related messages in the language and culture of their respective persons of concern. These materials are distributed during the social preparation stage of Quick Impact Projects.
- The Department of Trade and Industry has revised its Livelihood Seeding Program to include refugees and stateless persons under its list of qualified beneficiaries. The program provides financial and technical support to micro, small and medium sized enterprises affected by the pandemic.

## Funding needs

**UNHCR's revised COVID-19 emergency appeal** was launched on 11 May, in line with the revised Global Humanitarian Response Plan. Of the USD 745 million total revised financial requirements for UNHCR, the total needs in Asia-Pacific stand at **USD 96.3 million**. The requirements per country to support COVID-19 preparedness and response in the region are as follows.

**Afghanistan:** USD 11,085,150 | **Islamic Republic of Iran:** USD 16,199,400 | **Pakistan:** USD 19,256,030

**Bangladesh:** USD 25,487,008 | **Myanmar:** USD 8,900,000 | **Indonesia:** USD 3,536,871 | **Malaysia:** USD 4,526,273 | **Philippines:** USD 450,000 | **Thailand:** USD 2,139,090

**India:** USD 2,077,500 | **Nepal:** USD 1,461,200

**Kazakhstan:** USD 270,000 | **Kyrgyzstan:** USD 470,000 | **Tajikistan:** USD 440,000



*On 20 June 2020, the first Intensive Care Unit (ICU) in Cox's Bazar was inaugurated with UNHCR's support. The facility has 10 intensive care and 8 high-dependency beds.*

UNHCR continues to be grateful for the robust support from donors on the COVID-19 response including the Governments of **Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Norway, Sweden, UK, USA**, as well as the **EU** and **CERF**. We also appreciate the support from private donors who have rallied swiftly to provide a range of in-kind donations for COVID-19 response in the region.

We are also grateful to donors who provide unearmarked contributions to UNHCR, which help support operations in Asia and enable us to respond in a timely and flexible manner. These donors include **Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Denmark, the UK, Germany, Switzerland**, and **private donors in Spain and the Republic of Korea**.

UNHCR continues to appeal to donors not to deprioritize funding for the regular programmes in Asia-Pacific as our ongoing activities are critical to support the over 9.2 million persons of concern in the region.

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