**Humanitarian programme** for forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh

**Situation report:**
15 January 2018

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

- 655,500 people have arrived since 25 August
- 9,000 crossed the border in the past week
- 1.2 million require immediate humanitarian assistance, including earlier arriving Myanmar nationals and vulnerable members of host communities

As of 14 January 2018, the ISCG reports 655,500 forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals have arrived in Bangladesh driven by violence across the border. The speed and scale with which the influx began on 25 August, resulted in a critical humanitarian emergency. BRAC, as well as a number of other humanitarian actors, have been partnering with the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and UN Agencies to ensure that critical needs of the displaced population are being met and their dignity is protected.

The people who fled here came with very little possessions. In most cases, whatever money they brought with them were spent in transportation and to agents who facilitated their travel to the settlements, or in constructing makeshift shelters. The FDMN community continues to receive critical assistance for food, shelter, health and other urgent humanitarian needs. As the needs are shifting since the early emergency onset, BRAC and other humanitarian actors are coordinating and responding to the more medium-term needs on the ground.
New arrivals are seen each week, and BRAC is responding by upgrading the quality and comprehensiveness of the services provided. For instance, BRAC has partnered with UNHCR to provide better-quality tarpaulin and shelter-building materials. Additionally, for winter, BRAC has been providing winter clothing and blankets as needed. These communities live in extremely close quarters, hence cooking is risky while fuel is expensive. Therefore, BRAC has been arranging communal kitchens and providing compressed rice husk for alternative means of fuel. Activities such as these indicate the humanitarian sector’s shift in attention to longer term livability in the settlements. All actors are now increasingly including the host communities, who are poor and also affected by the influx, in their relief programming.

Aside from these, the critical health needs have also slightly shifted. Currently, there is a lot of emphasis on the identification, management and prevention of diptheria outbreak. Therefore, BRAC and other health sector responders are working with the GoB to run risk communication activities to increase awareness and effectiveness of the vaccination campaigns. One of the setbacks of the diptheria vaccination campaigns is participation across the Rohingya people. Many of the people in the community believe vaccinations are “impure” according to their religious beliefs and desire not to participate. BRAC and other actors are planning to hold a dialogue with imams (religious leaders) and majhis (zone leaders from the FDMN community) to address issues as these.

The crowded, unsafe, and unsanitary conditions in the settlements also give way to numerous protection concerns, especially for women and children. Women and girls tend to stay inside very hot shelters for cultural, religious and safety concerns. They have also indicated not feeling safe using WaSH facilities, as latrines are sometimes undesignated, and lack lighting. To avoid open bathing and defaecation, they wash inside their shelters, restrict food and water intake, and restrict movement during the menstrual period. Adolescent girls and women are at risk of trafficking, domestic violence, assault, or abuse. Increasing access to healthcare, gender-appropriated latrines, and psychosocial support are therefore priorities.

For children, being out of school increases the risk child marriage, abuse, sexual exploitation, trafficking, and child labour. There are high malnutrition rates among these children. Humanitarian actors are expanding operations in education, nutrition, gender-based support, and community mobilisation through volunteer network at the camps and makeshift settlements. BRAC is launching an expanded nutrition, and education, programmes with UNICEF.

Humanitarian actors on the ground are increasingly emphasising on greater coordination, transparency and standardised reporting. With integrated approaches and scaled-up services, increased coordination mechanisms are high priorities for all implementers to the restoration of dignity and hope of life for the displaced people.
Response to date

- Over 1,245,431 people received health care support through various medical support agencies.
- 323,940 children under the age of 15 have been vaccinated against measles and rubella during a fourteen-days long campaign.
- To ensure safe and clean births, over 3,663 emergency reproductive health kits have been distributed.
- 100,646 cases of acute respiratory infections (ARI) and 95,950 cases of diarrhoea have been treated by BRAC’s 10 primary health centers and 50 satellite clinics.

Challenges:

- There is a need for scaling up the health care facilities with focus on elderly people.
- Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) service providers need to be strengthened. Training in line with the guidelines on the particular needs of children, adolescents and elderly groups is crucial.
- Doctors and paramedics of the organisation working in the health sector of the makeshift settlements need to be trained on facing emergency disease breakouts, like that of diphtheria.
- Improved coordination is needed between health providers through data sharing and uniform reporting system so as to track diseases and others health trends.

See more at:
A crisis within a crisis: Tackling a diphtheria outbreak in the Rohingya makeshift settlements
Health concerns remain a concern in the different camps and makeshift settlements due to substandard sanitation facilities, poor water quality and spatial constraints. This combined with the population density of FDMNs has greatly increased the risk of severe public health hazards.

Spots for an additional 5,000 latrine and bathing facilities are currently being assessed based on needs. Considering the congestion at the settlements, finding adequate space is challenging.

There is a total estimated gap in reaching 416,893 people with essential WASH services.

Funding and authorization for work remains a major constraint for sector partners to scale up and improve the quality of response activities.

See more at:
Safe drinking water for more than 1 lac people in Ukhia and Teknaf
There is a need for information hubs where FDMNs receive accurate information on protection services available, location and their providers.

Volunteers and front line workers need to be well oriented on protection concerns and the importance of integral services required to ensure a comprehensive support system for the FDMNs.

More women friendly spaces are required in each of the densely populated makeshift settlement. At present, there is an unequal distribution of these facilities that are aimed to helping women and adolescent girls feel safe, share experience, engage in activities and voice their opinions.

The lack of space for communal structures limits actors to offer child friendly spaces or safe spaces for women and girls in locations that can be easily accessed or forces them to resort to limited mobile services. There is an urgent need to allocate land for communal services that can be easily accessed by women, also by children and other vulnerable groups.

**See more at:**
[What does self-defense mean for adolescent Rohingya girls?](#)
EDUCATION

Response to date

- 58,500+ girls and boys have access to educational services
- 46,475 girls and boys have been enrolled in learning activities.
- 1,943 teachers have been recruited and 372 teachers trained so far to improve the quality of education services being provided
- A total of 33,701 children received education supplies since 25 August.
- BRAC has provided educational services to 21,000 children through 200 learning centres.

Challenges:

Many educational institutions in the host community remain close due to schools being used for relief distribution or army camping grounds. There is an immediate need to resume educational activities for the host community to ensure that the tension between the two communities do not deteriorate.

With increase in employment and volunteering opportunities created by humanitarian organisations for the host community, many high school and college students have dropped out from their educational institutions with the aim to continue earning through these jobs.

The timing for maktabs/madrassas continue to clash and remain as a problem for assuring attendance at CFSs and learning centres.

There are several organisations with learning centre operations within the makeshift settlements who need to coordinate streamlining what is being taught at the centres.

See more at:
Inside Cox's Bazar's settlements where childhood and laughter still exist
Response to date

- Over 233,000 households have received emergency shelter assistance since 25 August.
- 62,000 households received kitchen sets and children clothes.
- Over 200,000 emergency shelter kits (tarpaulins and rope) have been distributed.
- Alternative fuel contained in compressed rice husks are being distributed and cooking stoves (including gas) are being distributed by both sector partners and private enterprises inside the settlements.
- Partners continue to distribute additional shawls, blankets, children’s clothes, children's blankets and sleeping mats to the FDMN populations. BRAC distributed 558,134 bamboos for shelter construction.

Challenges:

The lack of land, density and poor state of infrastructure inside the settlements is the main challenge in trying to ensure that the shelters are up to international standards.

More distribution of warm clothes is essential.

The need to meet the fuel crisis is imperative. While the prices of firewood in some parts of the settlements has increased, in some parts, the prices have dropped to adjust to the affordability of the FDMN. This difference in price is harmful to local economy and environmental degradations.

There is a huge challenge in meeting the demand for cooking fuel. Greater distribution of compressed rice husks and gas stoves to households would reduce this need.

A large number of shelters remain at risk of floods and landslides as they are located on hilly terrain and valleys.

Transportation cost for carrying relief items continues to rise.

Increased lighting on roads are necessary to allow the FDMN to carry their relief items safely after dark.

Information gap regarding relief distribution continues to prevail at the ground level which leads to further overlapping and delays in distribution.

See more at:

A $52 care package
ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE

Response to date

• 19,039 trees have been planted by BRAC in makeshift settlements and host community to contribute to environmental restoration.

• For securing food sources, 103,030 households, in both settlements and host community, have received vegetable seeds from BRAC.

Challenges:

FDMNs are occupying forest land and hilly areas by chopping down many trees for making shelter and collecting firewood. Rapid plantation of various trees is primary requirement to restore the environment in the makeshift settlement and as well as the host communities.

Finding alternative and sustainable fuel sources for cooking is a requirement in preventing cutting trees.

Providing seed support to both FDMN settlements and host communities is necessary to restore the agriculture and environment.

To prevent soil erosion, there is an urgent need of covering the bare land with crops like grasses.

See more at:
Girls and women joining forces in Cox’s Bazar
Jointly, along with OXFAM and UN Women, BRAC is developing a guideline for solar mapping.

BRAC is coordinating with other organisations and Camp in Charge from government (RRRC) to improve the overall communication among actors for site management. The aim is to ensure that all actors participate to coordinate and avoid duplications of the activities. Coordination tools are under design to enhance the gathering and dissemination of information between the designated partners.

Moonlight Foundation is distributing kit boxes to 250 children in a BRAC CFS located in Lambassia. The organisation will also provide dignity kits among 350 women and adolescent girls in BRAC women friendly space in PP zone.

BRAC participated in UNHCR protection meeting and discussion on “Conflict resolution dispute mechanism and mobility of FDMNs”.

**PARTNERS**

- Government of Bangladesh
- Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
- International Organisational for Migration (IOM)
- World Food Programme (WFP)

For more information please contact:

**OPERATIONS**

Khaled Morshed  
khaled.m@brac.net  
+88 01730321717

**MEDIA**

Mohammed Abdus Salam  
Salam.ad@brac.net  
+88 01709647506

**PARTNERSHIP**

Iffat Nawaz  
Iffat.nawaz@brac.net  
+88 01708812649