

BANGLADESH

8 - 15 January 2018

The first meeting of the Bangladesh/Myanmar Joint Working Group was held on 15 January in Naypyidaw, Myanmar. Discussions reportedly focused on the modalities for the return of refugees.

The right of refugees to return voluntarily should continue to be at the core of the dialogue between the Governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar. In addition to voluntary returns must be safe, dignified and sustainable.

The relocation of 9,400 refugees from Bandarban, near the border with Myanmar, to Kutupalong settlement began on 14 January 2018. It will continue in the next weeks.

655,500* Estimated new arrivals in Bangladesh since 25 August 2017

307,500 Estimated refugee population before 25 August 2017

963,000 Estimated total refugee population currently

STAFFING & PARTNERS

190 staff currently working on the emergency compared to **49** prior to the crisis. **122** are national staff.

23 partners compared to **7** prior to the crisis

** As reported by the Inter-Sector Coordination Group.*

FUNDING

USD 83.7 million

Requested for UNHCR's initial emergency response from Sept 17 to Feb 18. Out of this amount, **USD 26,4 million** are the requirements for Jan-Feb 2018:



A Joint Response Plan, covering the period from March to December 2018, is under preparation



The relocation of refugees from Bandarban to Kutupalong settlement began on 14 January 2018.
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Operational Context

Some 655,500 refugees have fled Myanmar to Bangladesh since 25 August 2017. Between 1 and 13 January 2018, more than 960 refugees crossed into Bangladesh, a decrease compared to the first two weeks of December 2017, during which more than 1,300 refugees arrived.¹

Bangladesh is now enduring its coldest winter in fifty years, with average low temperatures dropping to 15 degrees Celsius. Rohingya refugees lack adequate clothing and shelter, and are therefore vulnerable to even modest temperature declines, especially at night. Children, who make up 55 percent of the Rohingya refugee population, are particularly vulnerable. Women and girls, who represent more than half of all refugees in Bangladesh, are likewise vulnerable, as are the estimated ten percent of Rohingya refugees who are either disabled, have serious medical conditions or are older persons at risk. UNHCR and its partners have distributed sweaters and shawls to ensure that refugees can stay warm.

UNHCR is working with the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and partners to ensure protection and the delivery of much needed assistance to refugees through various sectors and with monsoon rains fast approaching, stabilization of the terrain to mitigate the effects of landslides and flooding. They also continue to expand basic infrastructure and services in the existing settlements of Kutupalong and Nayapara. In addition, UNHCR is assisting local host communities affected by the unprecedented influx.

On 23 November 2017, the governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh signed a bilateral 'arrangement' on the return of refugees to Myanmar. A Joint Working Group (JWG) consisting of government representatives from Myanmar and Bangladesh was subsequently formed on 19 December 2017 with a mandate to implement the said arrangement. The JWG held its first meeting on 15 January 2018 in Naypyidaw, Myanmar. UNHCR understands that the discussions between the two governments focused on the modalities for the return of refugees to Myanmar. Although UNHCR is not a party to the arrangement or the JWG, UNHCR is keen to be part of these discussions, to ensure that the voice of the refugees is heard and that they are protected in Bangladesh and upon any future return to Myanmar. In any refugee situation, UNHCR hopes that refugees will be able to return home when they themselves choose to. However, any returns must be sustainable and premised on international standards of voluntariness, safety and dignity.

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

Update on achievements



PROTECTION

Achievements and impact

- The active network of 126 Community Outreach Members (COMs), which covers four areas of Kutupalong, including the makeshift, Nayapara extension area and Chakmarkul, conducted 119 home visits and 80 information sessions on diphtheria and food distribution this week, reaching some 506 and 1,268 people respectively. The COMs identified 137 urgent cases and referred 71 cases to UNHCR's partners Technical Assistance Inc. (TAI) and BRAC for assistance.
- UNHCR, in cooperation with TAI, has trained some 68 COMs, including 25 women, on SGBV identification, prevention and response in two areas of Kutupalong and in Nayapara's makeshift settlement. More COMs will receive the same training in two other areas of Kutupalong in the coming week. In coordination with UNFPA, UNHCR, together with the Camp in Charges (CiCs) of six areas of Kutupalong settlement, including the makeshift, is developing a cohesive SGBV referral pathway that will assist SGBV survivors to safely reach professionals and institutions who are qualified to address their needs.
- This week, UNHCR, in cooperation with its partner Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA) and the police, rescued 12 refugees, who were trafficked by a local individual from Burma Para and Kutupalong settlement to work in a brick field in Panirchora, Ramu, Cox's Bazar.
- UNHCR launched a hotline service which is open seven days a week. Calls are shared with UNHCR protection staff for follow-up and referrals. So far, calls concern requests for legal assistance, while other reported issues include family disputes, domestic violence and concerns related to registration, amongst others. A tracking system was established and teams are working with partners to ensure immediate assistance.
- In its effort to enhance communication with communities and activities at established information points, UNHCR is planning to launch a radio broadcast and include a mobile charging facility in Nayapara settlement. UNHCR participated in two radio broadcasts for refugees by Radio NAF in Teknaf on child protection issues. Amongst others, parents inquired about ways to protect their children, in particular adolescent girls, in such a densely populated settlement. They also shared concerns about their children having to stand a long time in distribution lines. In follow up to this initiative, UNHCR, in partnership with BBC Media Action, is planning to develop a radio broadcast targeting children.

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- Protecting children, through facilitating their access to learning facilities and to certified education, is a high priority. Advocacy with the authorities in this regard will continue.
- Mental health and psychosocial support continue to be essential to address the needs of many of the refugees who have suffered various forms of violence and deep psychological harm.



EDUCATION

Achievements and Impact

- The new school year has started. So far, 7,082 refugee children, from the registered camps and the new settlements, are enrolled in primary education. The Department of Primary Education has provided children in Kutupalong registered camp with National Curriculum Textbooks. While enrolment is ongoing, 22 sessions were organized to sensitize communities on the start of the school year and education more broadly. Over 300 refugees participated.
- In order to facilitate access to learning opportunities, 15 classrooms were constructed in two areas of Kutupalong settlement since the last week of December 2017.

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- Refugee parents continue to request grade level learning opportunities for their children, as well as the possibility for them to take exams.



CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT

Achievements and Impact

- Relocation of 9,400 refugees from Bandarban to Kutupalong settlement began on 14 January 2018. These refugees had initially chosen to stay near the border to remain close to their homes. Due to their isolated location they received little assistance and had no access to education or medical facilities. The nearest hospital for emergency cases was more than an hour away. They agreed to move to Kutupalong refugee camp where they could more easily access assistance and basic services. The relocation will be implemented gradually over the next few weeks, with an average of 600 refugees relocated every day. Each family will receive core relief items (CRIs) and shelter kits. Partners have supported UNHCR with logistical arrangements, including volunteers for carrying luggage, provision of hot meals and water, as well as medical and protection screening upon arrival in Kutupalong.

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- On 11 January 2018, a fire broke out at the transit centre in Balukhali. The fire incident was reportedly started from a candle used for lighting inside a tent. A mother and three of her children sustained severe burns and were rushed to the IFRC hospital at Balukhali where they died on 12 January 2018. Two children survived the incident with slight injuries. The father and the two children have now been relocated to Kutupalong settlement. The guards at the transit centre were able to contain the fire from spreading to other tents using fire extinguishers and sand buckets positioned in the compound. There are a total of 10 fire extinguishers, 50 sand buckets and 20 fire blankets available at the facility. Cooking and lighting inside the tents are not allowed and relevant messages are shared with newly arrived refugees daily. All 23 families currently staying at the centre have been provided with solar lights. UNHCR is working with the authorities to revisit and reinforce fire prevention and response systems in the settlements to minimise as much as possible the risk of such tragedies.

**SHELTER AND NFIS****Achievements and Impact**

- On average, Bangladesh receives more rain in just two months than London over a whole year. In preparation for the rainy season, UNHCR and partners are working to implement measures to prevent land slippage and flooding in the hilly terrain of Kutupalong. So far, some 27,600 shelter kits have been distributed. These shelters have been designed in consultation with the refugees, and are meant to provide them with waterproof, more spacious and safer homes.
- UNHCR is also improving infrastructure such as bridges and pathways in two areas of Kutupalong and the makeshift to facilitate refugees' access to services, in particular for those with specific needs such as children, women at risk and the elderly. Since 14 December 2017, 22 bridges were built. Some 2.3 km of pathways has also been completed.
- UNHCR and partners continue to distribute much needed aid, particularly targeting vulnerable refugees including women, children and the elderly. So far, UNHCR and partners have distributed over 102,113 pieces of eco-friendly cooking fuel (rice compressed husks) and more than 115,592 sweaters and shawls.

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- Activities to prepare for the monsoon will accelerate in the next weeks. UNHCR and partners plan to distribute upgraded shelter kits to an additional 50,000 refugee families.
- The improvements to pathways and bridges will also continue. Some additional 3.2 km of pathways will be finalized by the end of January and similar work in the remaining areas of Kutupalong will begin in February.

**HEALTH****Achievements and Impact**

- To date, WHO has reported some 3,954 suspected cases of diphtheria and 31 deaths amongst those staying in Balukhali, Jamtoli, Unchiprang, and Hakimpara. As part of the response, [health sector partners](#) are working to vaccinate almost half a million children in refugee settlements and host communities. UNHCR is using the capacities of COMs to play a greater role in the second phase of the diphtheria campaign to encourage refugees to seek immunization. UNHCR's partners also provided NFIs and shelter materials for isolation and treatment facilities.

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- UNHCR, together with the refugee health unit of the RRRC and the Directorate General of Health Services of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, is finalizing standard operating procedures (SOPs) to ensure refugees' timely referral and access to secondary and tertiary care. The medical referral SOPs are expected to be implemented by end of January.



LOGISTICS

Achievements and Impact

- The new UNHCR warehouse in Cox's Bazar became operational on 10 January 2018, making UNHCR the only organization with its own warehouse capacity in the city. The facility is environmentally friendly and 20 solar street lights enable it to be operational 24/7. Previously, UNHCR used a warehouse in Chittagong, which added operational costs and some extra 14 hours of transportation to the delivery point. The new infrastructure will enable faster and more efficient delivery of assistance to refugees. UNHCR will also save USD 0.5 million per year on warehousing, with such savings being redirected towards much needed aid.



Speeding up delivery of aid to Rohingya refugees. © UNHCR/Caroline Gluck

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- The new facility contains five prefabricated structures, with four to be established by mid-February. While it can currently store some 16,000 CRI kits, its capacity will reach a total of 33,000 CRI kits once completed.



WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

Achievements and Impact

- This week, UNHCR and partners have constructed almost 60 latrines, 70 bathing cubicles and 6 tube wells in Kutupalong and Nyapara. There are now over 4,600 latrines, some 1,920 bathing cubicles and 910 tube wells installed in the settlements.
- UNHCR and its partner Oxfam have constructed two dams on a stream located in the Nayapara extension area. These dams provide a complementary source of water for the refugees in addition to the existing tube wells.

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- In light of the high number of tube wells in Ukhaia and Teknak Upazillas, it is difficult to ensure water quality control. WASH actors are examining the possibility of developing a medium and large scale centralized water system to provide clean drinking water.

Working in partnership and inter-agency spirit

- UNHCR works closely with other UN agencies to implement a host of inter-agency projects in a various sectors. UNHCR also works in close collaboration with a range of international and national NGOs in Bangladesh, and scaled up its implementing partnership network to 23 partners, including nine national NGOs. In 2018, UNHCR also intends to pursue additional collaboration with national and local partners to enhance services and delivery, and will work to increase national and local sourcing of goods and services. In addition, UNHCR is assuming its lead role in the protection response for all refugees, coordinating closely on the delivery of assistance with UN agencies and other partners through the various sector working groups of the Inter-Sector Coordination Group.
- UNHCR continues to support the GoB's efforts in providing protection and assistance to all refugees. UNHCR's main government counterpart is the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR). In Cox's Bazar, UNHCR cooperates with the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), the local representative of the MoDMR.



A young Rohingya refugee girl at a learning centre in Kutupalong extension site. © UNHCR/Mitra Salima Suryono

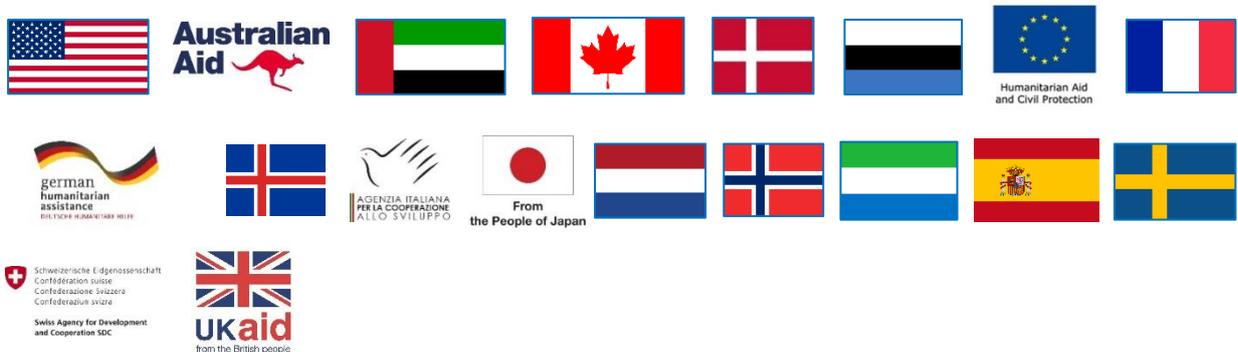
Donor Support

UNHCR is providing emergency assistance and protection in an evolving refugee crisis in Bangladesh. UNHCR continues to call for flexible funding in order to efficiently respond to changing needs and emerging priorities. UNHCR is grateful for the valuable support provided by all donors who have contributed towards identified immediate life-saving needs, and towards supporting the safety and dignity of refugees. The valuable support provided also helps the Government of Bangladesh, through its ministries and authorities, to manage the response with UNHCR's support.

The significant demands on the humanitarian response for Bangladesh need to be recognised. The response of the Government and people of Bangladesh has been extraordinarily generous. However, additional support is needed. UNHCR hopes that the commitment of Bangladesh towards supporting refugees' immediate needs and finding solutions will continue to be supported by the international community with adequate financial contributions and with other support in 2018. To date, support has been encouraging with 81% of UNHCR's initial appeal for USD 83.7 million received. An inter-agency Joint Response Plan (JRP), covering the period from March to December 2018 is presently being finalised.

In 2018, UNHCR will continue work with authorities and partners to provide essential services for refugees, in particular enhancing access to protection services, shelter, health and nutrition, water/sanitation, education and others. Activities to protect natural resources and the environment will be supported also in consultation with local communities.

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



With thanks also to the many private donations from individuals, foundations, companies in Australia, China, Egypt, Italy, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, Oman, Philippines, Portugal, Senegal, Singapore, Switzerland, Thailand, and UAE, including IKEA Foundation, UNIQLO Co. Ltd, Sheikh Thani Bin Abdullah Foundation, Opec Fund for International Development, HRH Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein, UPS Corporate, Qatar Charity, Rahmatan Lil Alamin Foundation, The Silent Foundation, Fondazione Prosolidar-Onlus and RUSSING Group. Special thanks also to UNOPS, and CERF.

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