

WFP in Cox's Bazar

Situation Report #2: Fires in the Rohingya refugee camps

31 March 2021



IMPACT

- **48,300** people lost their shelters, belongings, and food
- **92,000** people impacted ¹

WFP RESPONSE

- **15,000** households supported with rapid food assistance
- **847,000** cooked meals delivered to up to **63,000** people
- **2,000** children and **200** pregnant and nursing mothers supported with nutrition services
- **630** host community members supported

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Context

- A massive fire broke out in the Kutupalong mega camp on 22 March 2021. The fire started in camp 8W and later spread through camps 8E and 9. The fire subsided in the early hours of 23 March. At least three other smaller and unrelated fires in non-affected camps were reported since then.
- According to findings from the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) Rapid Joint Needs Assessment conducted immediately following the fire, 48,300 people were directly affected losing their shelters, belongings and food and 92,000 people impacted.¹
- The fire damaged almost all infrastructures across the three camps. Essential facilities destroyed included six health facilities, two nutrition facilities, one General Food Distribution (GFD) point and 149 learning centers. Latrines, water points, women friendly spaces and child friendly spaces were also affected.
- Shelter was identified as the first priority across all camps, closely followed by food, water and kitchen sets.

Needs

- WFP has identified needs totalling USD 3.7 million to replenish stocks, set up kitchens, distribute cooked meals, cover transportation costs for the Logistics Sector and WFP SCOPECARDS printing.

RESPONSE	REQUIREMENT (IN USD)
Emergency Food Assistance	3,450,000
SCOPE Services and General Costs	165,000
Logistics Sector	85,000
Total	3,700,000

¹ Population residing around the fire affected area within 100 m buffer zone whose shelters had to be knocked down to create fire breaks and/or were using/ accessing services and facilities in camps 8E, 8W and 9.

WFP Response

Immediate response:

- WFP has been on the ground since the fire was first reported to provide engineering support and food assistance. To assist in containing the fire and support the site management agencies, WFP had light and heavy machinery, including water tanks as well as Site Maintenance and Engineering Project (SMEP) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) volunteers on standby. WFP also supported evacuated households with high energy biscuits on the night of the fire.

Ongoing rapid response:

- Since 23 March, WFP has reached up to 15,000 households with high energy biscuits, supported up to 63,000 people with over 847,000 cooked meals and distributed almost 360,000 litres of water to complement the International Organization for Migration (IOM) distributions.
- As refugees are still unable to cook their own food, WFP is setting up kitchens to provide freshly cooked meals until Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and kitchen sets can be distributed. Together with Concern Worldwide, World Vision, Shushilan and Resource Integration Center (RIC), WFP has so far set up four (out of a planned eight) hot food kitchens and is also using the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency's (TIKA) kitchen to provide cooked meals. WFP plans to have the remaining four hot food kitchens fully operational by 3 April.
- WFP is providing essential food commodities (rice, yellow split peas and oil) to other Food Security Sector partners who are cooking freshly cooked meals.
- WFP provided a one-off in-kind food ration to over 2,000 households being hosted in camps not directly affected. These households will transition back into the regular e-voucher programme from 1 April 2021.
- WFP supported 126 fire-affected host community households with in-kind food (high energy biscuits, yellow split peas, oil and rice) on 26 March. WFP is assessing the need to also provide cash transfers (through b-kash) to these populations.

Digital solutions

- WFP has printed over 7,000 SCOPECARDS for all Camp 9 beneficiaries who lost all their documents in the fire and has distributed them to over 1,100 households so far. The cards are being distributed at IOM and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) non-food item (NFI) distribution points where beneficiaries also receive kitchen kits, hygiene kits, facemasks, and dignity kits. The SCOPECARDS will be automatically topped-up once issued and old cards will no longer work.
- Beneficiaries from affected camps who lost their UNHCR card or other ID can still redeem their April entitlements using fingerprint biometrics. UNHCR registration teams are currently supporting people at key WFP distribution points to re-issue family documentation.

Nutrition

- Immediately following the fire, WFP set up two breastfeeding corners and opened two temporary nutrition centers with UNICEF to resume services in camps 8E and 9.
- Since 24 March, these centres have been providing breastfeeding corners and counselling services for mothers, complementary feeding rations for children between 6 and 23 months, Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) treatment services for children under five, drinking water for caregivers and wet Super Cereal Plus rations for mothers and children. Children are also being screened for acute malnutrition in the nutrition sites and at the community level.

Volunteer and labour support

- WFP has deployed an average of 2,000 volunteer labourers over the past eight days to support food assistance, debris clearance and loading food at Modhuchara hub. An additional 5,000 volunteers are on stand-by.
- WFP deployed an average of 100 Communication with Community (CwC) volunteers over the past eight days to support the distribution of food assistance, together with IOM.

Sector and common service response

Food Security Sector (FSS)

- FSS partners responded immediately to the needs of populations affected by the fires by providing emergency food assistance including rapid response through high energy biscuits, cooked meals, and dry snacks to complement the main food assistance.
- FSS is playing a key role in coordinating between partners and ensuring the response is as effective and efficient as possible with no overlap. To this end FSS developed a [guidance note](#) to streamline partners' emergency food response and a [response tracker](#) to track partner coverage and gaps, presence, distribution points and capacity.
- FSS recommends that partners phase-out cooked meal distributions once affected households have the facilities to cook their own food.

Logistics Sector (LS)

- Over the last eight days, in partnership with Humanity and Inclusion-Atlas Logistique, LS has transported 467 m³ of relief items for eight organizations using 52 trucks.
- LS designed and conducted a rapid assessment to identify access constraints on the roads used by humanitarian partners to reach the camps. Traffic and access to the camps are being updated in the Logistics Information Exchange Platform (LOG.IE) [Physical Access Constraint \(PAC\) map](#).
- LS loaned three light towers, two generators, one ablution unit, one prefab and one mobile storage unit (MSU) to four organizations.
- LS published a [fire response map](#) indicating items loaned per location and cargo transported.

Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS)

- ETS has connected an IOM LPG distribution site in Camp 18 to support with the digitalization of IOM shelter and NFI distributions and started to install a solar panel to be used as a backup power source.
- ETS monitored the radio repeater at the TV tower and found that it was still functional. Adjacent e-voucher outlets were subsequently brought back online four days after the fire (on 26 March). Broken fibres have also been repaired at Balukhali Logistics Hub.

Site Maintenance and Engineering Project (SMEP)

- Since 23 March, SMEP has been deploying light and heavy machinery every day to transport water and cooked meals, remove debris, support the Shelter Sector, and start excavation work. SMEP has also partnered with IOM for waste removal.
- WFP conducted a Bamboo Bridge Damage Rapid Assessment and developed an [operational map](#) which indicates all bridges in the affected area and the extent of damage. A total of 58 bridges were identified so far, of which 30 were destroyed, four heavily damaged, 18 minorly damaged and six still intact.

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