COVID-19 AND MONSOON PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE IN ROHINGYA REFUGEE CAMPS AND HOST COMMUNITIES
WEEKLY UPDATE #24 | 14 to 20 August 2020
Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh

HIGHLIGHTS

“Before going to the health post, I had some misconceptions about coronavirus. I thought that it is just a propaganda and it will not affect Muslims. But now, I understand that it is not a fake story. It is a real risk. Anyone can be infected by coronavirus. If we follow the advice, which I heard from the audio messages, we can save our lives.”

– Emam Hossain, a 35-year-old Rohingya refugee in Ukhiya. Emam is one of many Rohingya refugees who heard a COVID-19 audio message at a health facility in the camps. Communications with Communities (CwC) Working Group partners identified health facilities in the camps and nearby host communities as a strategic point for information dissemination and have been broadcasting messages on COVID-19 symptoms, risk prevention, and seeking treatment, to dispel misinformation in the community. Almost all health facilities are now playing audio/video messages, which is significantly raising awareness and understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic. Read more

Key COVID-19 figures this week¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>89</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>confirmed COVID-19 cases in the refugee camps, and 3,858 cases in the host community</td>
<td>Rohingya refugees in quarantine who were in contact with a COVID-19 suspected or confirmed case, and 1,021 host community members</td>
<td>Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (SARI) Isolation Treatment Centres (ITCs) are operational, with the addition of a new centre this week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6</th>
<th>25</th>
<th>90+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rohingya refugee fatalities due to COVID-19, and 62 fatalities of host community members</td>
<td>Rohingya refugees in isolation who are suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19, and 539 host community members</td>
<td>Participants convened to listen to Rohingya and other women leaders, at an event focusing on women as first responders during the COVID-19 pandemic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Monsoon-related Incidents² reported this week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>17,049</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>1,035</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rohingya refugees affected³</td>
<td>Rohingya refugee fatalities due to drowning⁴</td>
<td>Rohingya refugee injured</td>
<td>Rohingya refugees displaced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>950</th>
<th>14,871</th>
<th>1,228</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rohingya refugees affected by 140 slope failures</td>
<td>Rohingya refugees affected by 99 events of wind/storms/rain</td>
<td>Rohingya refugees affected by 11 floods</td>
<td>Rohingya refugees affected by lightning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ COVID-19 data on Cox’s Bazar District is sourced from WHO daily update. Please note that confirmed COVID-19 cases and number of fatalities are cumulative.

² All numbers are indicative only, as reported to SMSD Sector following rapid assessments carried out on the day of the incident. The numbers are not verified.

³ Households and/or individuals directly affected by a specific incident, including people injured, relocated, displaced and with damaged shelters. These estimates do not include people who are indirectly affected ex. by not being able to access affected facilities.

⁴ SMSD Sector cannot confirm that drownings resulted from the monsoon, however, the data captures all incidents (windstorm, slope failure, lightning, flood and drowning) reported in the camps during the monsoon season.
COVID-19

HEALTH

This week, a new SARI ITC opened in the camps, bringing it to a total of 13 SARI ITCs with a capacity of 490 beds that were active and receiving patients. The Health Sector, with the support of WHO, continued case management and infection prevention and control (IPC) trainings for humanitarian and health workers in all upazilas5, and have so far trained 102 humanitarian and healthcare workers in five upazilas. During the week, COVID-19 testing of refugees continued to increase: 878 refugees were tested, compared to 699 in the previous week. In host communities, testing also increased with 490 tests conducted, compared to 459 in the previous week.

WATER, SANITATION and HYGIENE (WASH)

WASH Sector partners reached 242,983 individuals through a neighbourhood-based approach and 248,516 individuals through mass media with COVID-19 awareness messages in host and Rohingya communities. In the camps, WASH Sector partners provided soap to 25,273 households and family hygiene kits to 13,786 households, and installed a total of 1,854 hand-washing stations (HWS), including 96 HWS with stools and buckets at household-level, 15 HWS at public spaces, and 1,743 tippy taps at public places and near toilet facilities. As part of COVID-19 risk prevention measures and IPC compliance in the host communities and camps, WASH Sector partners disinfected 63,365 WASH facilities and 3,473 public buildings.

COMMUNICATION with COMMUNITIES (CwC WG)

CwC WG partners organized 32 cascade training sessions on COVID-19 with 63 staff and volunteers. CwC WG partners reached 275,107 people in the camps and host communities with key COVID-19 messages through community engagement activities, including 45,456 neighbourhood-based sessions; 24,637 community consultation meetings; 685 listening group sessions; 493 video/film viewings; and 8,395 sessions led by religious leaders. CwC WG partners organised COVID-19 awareness announcements via loudspeakers/megaphones in 21 camps. For receiving community feedback/complaints, 92 information service centres in the camps and 4 information service centres in the host community were operational. 5 new audio messages and 1 video on COVID-19 were developed by CwC WG partners.

FOOD SECURITY (FSS)

A workshop on the mask-making initiative was held to finalize the plan for blanket coverage for all Rohingya households and targeted coverage for vulnerable Bangladeshi households in all upazilas with 2 reusable cloth masks per person. Health Sector and the Livelihood Working Group endorsed specifications for cloth masks and a second round of mask distributions in the camps. Training of trainers for female CwC volunteers were conducted to train 800 volunteers who will disseminate key messages at the household-level in all 34 camps, beginning in September.

SHELTER/NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFI)

Shelter/NFI Sector partners distributed NFI packages (including blankets, floor mats, mosquito nets, tarpaulins, rope and solar lamps) to households with older persons in 32 camps. Distribution at the two remaining camps is pending Government approval. During the week, 13 NFI kits were provided to quarantine centres in Nayapara.

PROTECTION, including Child Protection (CPSS) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV SS)

Protection Sector disseminated FAQs developed by UNHCR to partners on the re-opening of registration sites and on registration referrals, addressing numerous queries that have been raised by refugees and agencies particularly related to the changed modality of making appointments and registration referrals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

5 Upazilas are administrative units in Bangladesh. Districts are divided into Upazilas (or sub-Districts).
Protection Sector partners including Protection focal points and Protection Emergency Response Units (PERU) reached 17,271 refugees with COVID-19 messaging. Rohingya Community Outreach Members conducted 740 household visits and 214 monitoring assessments for 2,627 refugees, and conducted 1,366 COVID-19 awareness sessions, reaching 4,749 refugees including 758 older persons and 64 persons with disabilities. CPSS trained 40 volunteers, particularly in the COVID-19 context. Awareness-raising on child protection risks continued with 21 key messages finalized and translated for dissemination in the camps by volunteers, Child Protection focal points, and community members. GBVSS partners reached 10,610 refugees including 5,912 females with awareness messaging on GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic to promote access of survivors to specialized case management services and to encourage the disclosure of incidents.

**SITE MANAGEMENT and SITE DEVELOPMENT (SMSD)**

To reduce mistrust in the refugee community, SMSD Sector partners conducted “Go and See” visits to the new SARI ITC in Camp 20 for 10 Rohingya women, 10 Disaster Management Unit (DMU) Volunteers, and five majhis; and conducted over 1,931 awareness sessions reaching 31,968 individuals including 15,921 women. SMSD Sector partners screened over 10,000 individuals at 10 camp entry points, where camp visitors’ temperatures were checked and they were requested to wash their hands. Orientation sessions for safe and dignified burials continued this week with 15 sessions conducted in Camps 18, reaching 50 individuals including 15 women. To strengthen coordination, SMSD Sector partners organised orientation sessions on SMSD for 28 newly-recruited Health Outreach Members including 18 women.

**LOGISTICS**

Logistics Sector received and approved a request from BDRCS for use of 1,400m3 of the common storage in the COVID-19 Hub. Logistics Sector supported Hope Foundation hospital with a heavy machinery crane and flat belt to move two containers in the hospital area.

**GENDER IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION (GiHA WG) and GENDER HUB**

The Gender Hub held a Learning Circle, “Feminism: Diverse Women as First Responders” on 19 August to commemorate World Humanitarian Day and as part of the Three-Year Mark of the Rohingya Response, with speakers including a Rohingya and other women leaders and over 90 participants. CiC Gender Officers worked with Rohingya volunteers and women leaders across 13 camps to address gender issues and identify solutions, and led orientation sessions on protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) reaching 1,675 Rohingya community members, including 886 women.

**NUTRITION**

In the camps, Nutrition Sector partners trained 12,000 Rohingya and Bangladeshi mothers on measuring Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) and referring children to the nearest integrated nutrition facilities. In the host community, Nutrition Sector partners also reached 8,500 caregivers in host communities with 2,373 COVID-19 awareness materials and counselled around 8,000 Rohingya and Bangladeshi mothers and caregivers on infant and young child feeding practices in emergencies, particularly in the COVID-19 context. Nutrition Sector identified 48 suspected COVID-19 cases at nutrition facilities in the camps and referred them to health facilities.

**EDUCATION**

During the week, 409 Burmese Language Instructors (BLIs) provided remote guidance on COVID-19 prevention, wellbeing and self-care to 22,826 Rohingya children, youth and adolescents. An additional 156 BLIs provided at-home educational support, explaining learning materials and activities to 7,550 learners. Meanwhile, educational facilitators shared COVID-19 awareness messages and caregiver-led education instruction to 2,333 parents, caregivers and community members and trained 14,184 community volunteers, youth and adolescent volunteers on Education in Emergencies and child, adolescent, and youth-friendly awareness messages.
Cumulative incidents reported in Camps since 14 June 2020 (SMSD Sector)

**CUMULATIVE CASUALTIES:** Since 14 June, 5 fatalities have been reported in the camps as a result of monsoon-related events. Some 17 refugees have been injured. The peak was recorded on 18 June, when over 13,900 refugees were affected by wind and slope-failure on one day.

Cumulative precipitation compared to number and type of incidents reported by rain gauge (Geological Survey of Bangladesh/UNDP)

Please note the pre-determined risk thresholds are - 3 hours: 75 mm; 24 hours: 200 mm; 72 hours: 350 mm. The slope failure risk is significant when those thresholds are reached with the given time period. Peak rainfall of 282.95 mm was recorded on 18 June. During this week, there was widespread and intense showers and thunderstorms with rainfall peaking on 18 August.

**WATER, SANITATION and HYGIENE (WASH)**

Monsoon rain and winds affected 145 toilets, 35 bathing cubicles, 10 tube wells, and 3 fecal sludge management (FSM) sites in different camps in Ukhiya, and impacted 94 toilets, 2 FSM sites, 94 tube wells, 4 bathing cubicles, 11 water tanks, 18 waste pits and 16 tap-stands in camps in Teknaf. WASH Sector partners started repairing the damaged toilets, FSM and bathing cubicles in Ukhiya and Teknaf.

**COMMUNICATION with COMMUNITIES (CwC WG)**

CwC WG partners engaged with Rohingya and host communities to raise awareness on the risks of heavy monsoon rains and reached 12,678 individuals through different community engagement activities, including 55 community awareness sessions, 2,333 neighbourhood-based sessions, 33 radio listeners’ group sessions, and 83 video/film
shows. Additionally, 96 information service centres were operational, with staff disseminating monsoon-related information and receiving feedback and complaints from both communities.

**FOOD SECURITY (FSS)**

FSS partners provided rapid food assistance response to households displaced by floods and landslides in the camps, including high energy biscuits to 328 households (1,533 individuals) and 1,267 cooked meals to 193 households (902 individuals) in 10 camps.

**SHELTER/NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFI)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>904</td>
<td>Rohingya refugee households were partially moderately damaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>657</td>
<td>Rohingya refugee households were partially severely damaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>265</td>
<td>Rohingya refugee households were fully damaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rohingya refugee households were completely destroyed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shelter/NFI Sector partners continued providing emergency support to vulnerable Rohingya refugee households affected by monsoon rains. Shelter/NFI Sector partners verified shelter damage for 1,830 households and provided them with emergency shelter assistance; 3 households were referred for relocation and will be assisted in their new location; and 11 households with older persons without caretakers were provided with home deliveries of emergency shelter materials and received support to repair their shelters.

**PROTECTION, including Child Protection (CPSS) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV SS)**

Protection actors, Protection focal points and PERUs referred 437 cases from the refugee community to Health, SMSD, Shelter and WASH partners to address needs arising from the heavy monsoon rains. Protection Sector received reports that persons with specific needs are facing difficulties in accessing services and assistance due to monsoon-affected walkways. Relocating households with damaged shelters to temporary communal spaces continued to be a challenge due to the need for COVID-19 mitigation measures. Messages surrounding risks for children such as separation and drowning during the monsoon season have been finalized and translated with ongoing support from Translators without Borders. GBV caseworkers provided remote support in one camp in Ukhiya as two GBV partners closed their women and girls’ safe spaces and centres due to water logging caused by heavy monsoon rains during the week.

**SITE MANAGEMENT and SITE DEVELOPMENT (SMSD)**

With heavy rains this week, SMSD teams mobilized DMU volunteers to record incidents, assist with emergency shelter repairs, and access to services at temporary shelters. In at-risk camps, SMSD Sector partners and volunteers initiated emergency relocation plans. SMSD Sector partners continued routine site maintenance and construction as part of monsoon mitigation and response activities in the camps. Partners also assessed existing facilities and structures and engaged volunteers in solar street light monitoring, road demarcation, and support to the DMUs. In multiple camps, Rohingya women were involved in camp clean-up campaigns to improve their communities and reduce flooding risks.

**EDUCATION**

Heavy rainfall damaged 189 learning centres this week. Education Sector partners completed repairs on 17 learning centres and started repairs on 56 learning centres affected by monsoon rains.

**NUTRITION**

Nutrition outreach activities and repair works were limited during the week due to heavy monsoon rainfall, which also partially damaged two nutrition centers in Teknaf.

**LOGISTICS**

Logistics Sector has prepositioned contingency stock for the monsoon season in three logistics hubs, which will be
provided to partners on a request basis.

Gender in Humanitarian Action (GiHA WG) and Gender Hub

A number of women safe spaces have been used as temporary emergency shelter for families affected by the monsoon rainfall, causing challenges related to practicing COVID-19 mitigation measures and also continuing to ensure safe access to regular services and activities for women and girls in the centres. GiHA WG along with the Protection Sector is coordinating with SMSD Sector and the Emergency Preparedness and Response Working Group to update the related 2019 guidelines to address these challenges.

For more information: Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG)
E-mail: iscg@iscgcxb.org. Website: https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/bangladesh Social media: