

Operational Context

- Monsoon rains decreased in August compared with July. Monsoon related incidents in the refugee settlements, such as shelter damage, soil erosion and landslides, fell from 104 in July to 26 in August. As a result of the improved shelter and infrastructure only some 5% of families were affected by monsoon incidents this year.
- Linked to ongoing registration efforts, UNHCR launched a new electronic distribution management system called the Global Distribution Tool (GDT). GDT draws on registration data to deliver assistance in a more efficient way to refugees with less waiting times. It also uses biometrics to verify the identity of beneficiaries for assistance and is currently used for LPG distributions.
- Based on an existing Memorandum of Understanding signed between UNHCR and the Government of Bangladesh, UNHCR was requested by the Government to assess the voluntariness of 3,450 refugees cleared for return to Myanmar. To date, no refugees have expressed an intention to return to Myanmar. UNHCR will continue to interview families cleared for return to ascertain their intentions.
- Services to southern camps in Cox's Bazar, particularly in Teknaf were disrupted due to some tensions between refugees and the host communities in the area. UNHCR monitored the situation, providing critical services, such as supplying water through Camp in Charge supported interventions. Staff access resumed for regular activities on 28 August after the situation stabilized.



In Nayapara refugee settlement, refugee Block Committee members vote to elect an overall Camp Committee to represent them. The elections are an important part of the community architecture, giving refugees a voice in their leadership.

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Achievements

MONSOON EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Achievements and Impact

- Monsoon-related incidents in refugee camps reduced towards end of the month with weekly rain accumulation progressively decreasing. Typical rain episodes did not last more than several hours. A total of 64 incidents were reported by Site Management partners across all camps, including 26 in UNHCR managed camps during the reporting period. Most prevalent incidents included wind storms, soil erosion resulting landslides, and water-logging. 101 shelters sustained damage (78 partially, 23 completely damaged). While no large-scale destruction occurred, refugee families continued being temporarily relocated to alternative shelters, usually hosted by neighbours in the same or adjacent blocks. Site management, shelter and field outreach members delivered relief and shelter assistance to the affected families.
- As of 31 August, 88,361 refugee families had received tie-down shelter kits, and another 31,863 were assisted with shelter repair/replacement. As a result of the improved shelter and infrastructure, only some 5.17% of the refugee families were affected by monsoon incidents this year. Less than 1% of shelters were fully damaged. An estimated 4.4% of shelters were partially damaged. UNHCR partners and refugee volunteers continue to respond to assess damage, temporarily relocate families, and distribute shelter and other non-food items as needed.



PROTECTION

Survey of refugee intentions to voluntary return to Myanmar

- Based on an existing Memorandum of Understanding signed between UNHCR and the Government of Bangladesh relating to voluntary return of Rohingya refugees, UNHCR was requested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to start a process of determining the voluntariness of 3,450 refugees cleared for return to Myanmar. To date, no refugees have expressed an intention to return to Myanmar. UNHCR will continue to interview families cleared for return to ascertain their intentions. UNHCR briefed UN and NGO partners on the process and undertook an information campaign with refugees, which included meetings with refugee civil society organizations, refugee community groups, religious leaders and volunteers, to inform them on the decision of the two governments to start the process, underscoring that refugees had an individual right to choose to return. BBC Audio messages were widely disseminated to the refugee community based on the Key Messages and an interview with the Additional Secretary of the Office of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner. After disseminating information within communities on the process, UNHCR and the camp in charge (CIC) met with individual households to invite them to a confidential interview to ascertain their intentions regarding return. UNHCR continues to respond to questions and concerns from the refugee community regarding returns at Information Service Centres and UNHCR's Hotline.

Over 500,000 Rohingya registered under Government of Bangladesh - UNHCR Joint Registration Process

- **More than 557,000 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar were registered** in a joint registration exercise by the Bangladesh authorities and UNHCR. For many of these refugees, it is the first time they have an identity card. The registration system relies on a UNHCR-developed Biometric Identity Management System (BIMS) that captures biometric data, including fingerprints and iris scans, which secure each refugee's unique identity as well as other important information such as family links. The biometric, fraud-proof cards are issued jointly by Bangladeshi authorities and UNHCR to refugees over the age of 12.

This comprehensive registration is being simultaneously carried out in all refugee settlements in Cox’s Bazar and aims to ensure accuracy of data on refugees in Bangladesh, giving national authorities and humanitarian partners a better understanding of the population and their needs. Accurate data will help agencies’ programme planning and ensure assistance reaches those who most need it, particularly for people with specific needs, such as women and children taking care of their families and people with disabilities.



FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

World breastfeeding week supported by UNHCR in refugee settlements

- World Breastfeeding week ran from 1– 7 August 2019, and many agencies, including UNHCR, promoted the benefits of breast feeding in the refugee community.

UNHCR and its three nutrition partners - Action Against Hunger, Terres des Hommes and Save the Children, organized several activities to increase awareness on appropriate infant and young child feeding practices. Sessions with key community members, such as the community leaders, fathers, and religious leaders, were held to sensitize them on the importance of community support for pregnant and lactating women to adopt positive breastfeeding practices and to ensure adequate growth and development of young children and prevent malnutrition in the camps.



Nutrition partners utilized the week to gauge community knowledge on Infant and Young Child Feeding through question and answer sessions to assess the community’s general knowledge on breastfeeding among different target groups (adolescents, fathers, grandmothers, pregnant and lactating women).



SHELTER AND NFIS

Roll-out of a more efficient distribution tool for assistance

- On 3 August, UNHCR launched an electronic distribution system called *Global Distribution Tool* (GDT). The tool is currently operational in Camp 26 in Nayapara where LPG distributions are taking place. GDT speeds up the process of identifying beneficiaries when they arrive, which reduces waiting time. The accounting of items distributed is carried out by scanning biometric cards or identification numbers on other cards if a refugee has not yet received a new biometric registration card. The GDT system will be rolled out for the distribution of in-kind assistance such as household items or shelter assistance in all camps. One of the advantages of the GDT system is that it is linked to UNHCR’s registration records and uses fingerprints or iris scans already stored in the registration system. This can help tackle fraud by reducing duplications in the

system. It can also help better manage a more targeted distribution system taking into account different household sizes as well as specific needs in any household.

Any update to the registration database will be reflected in real-time in GDT-managed distributions. The UNHCR-supported registration data currently being collected and updated in the Government-UNHCR joint exercise can also support the distributions of other agencies.



SITE MANAGEMENT

Re-greening the refugee settlements

- Marking over two years since the Rohingya fled to Cox's Bazar, a number of UN agencies and international and local NGOs worked together during August to plant additional trees. The tree planting showed the continued commitment of agencies working with the Government of Bangladesh to re-green the forest area with appropriate planting. It is also part of the ongoing commitment to the safety of the refugees. Planting serves a number of functions, including recovery of the host community area that was badly affected by the initial emergency, land stabilization within the settlements which can off-set risks during the monsoon, such as landslides.



- UNHCR, along with its partner Center for Natural Resource Studies (CNRS) planted 1,000 medicinal and shade saplings around 10 Camp-in-Charge (CIC) offices from 18 to 25 August. Further, some 4,640 saplings were planted in Camp 4 Extension in Kutupalong settlement, including along terraces to strengthen soil stability. 5,000 saplings were also planted as part of a programme of homestead plantation work. In total, five hectares were planted during the period. UNHCR also engaged refugees in consultations about the importance of planting, challenges of plant protection, and responsibility-sharing for care and maintenance of plants. Three further consultations are planned to follow the planting which will explore strategies for the better survival of the plants, formation of management committee to ensure protection of plants, and awareness raising around benefits that can accrue from the plants.



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF RELIANCE

- A Camp Committee was elected in Nayapara Registered Camp among existing block elected representatives. The Camp Committee represents the views and interest of refugees regarding camp conditions, needs and challenges. The role of the Camp Committee also includes liaison with the authorities and agencies. Currently community camp-elected representation only covers 4 out of 34 camps. The system will continue to be rolled out to cover more camps.

Working in partnership

UNHCR co-chairs a Strategic Executive Group (SEG) in Bangladesh with the UN Resident Coordinator and IOM. The Refugee Agency leads on the protection and solutions response for all refugees, and heads a Protection Working Group in Cox's Bazar. UNHCR welcomes its valuable partnership with a number of UN agencies and coordinates the delivery of its assistance with humanitarian partners through a number of working groups under the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG). UNHCR's main government counterpart are the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and its Cox's Bazar-based Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) in Dhaka. UNHCR staff work closely with the Camp-in-Charge officials in different refugee settlements, as well as a range of international and national actors. It has a strong network of 28 partners:

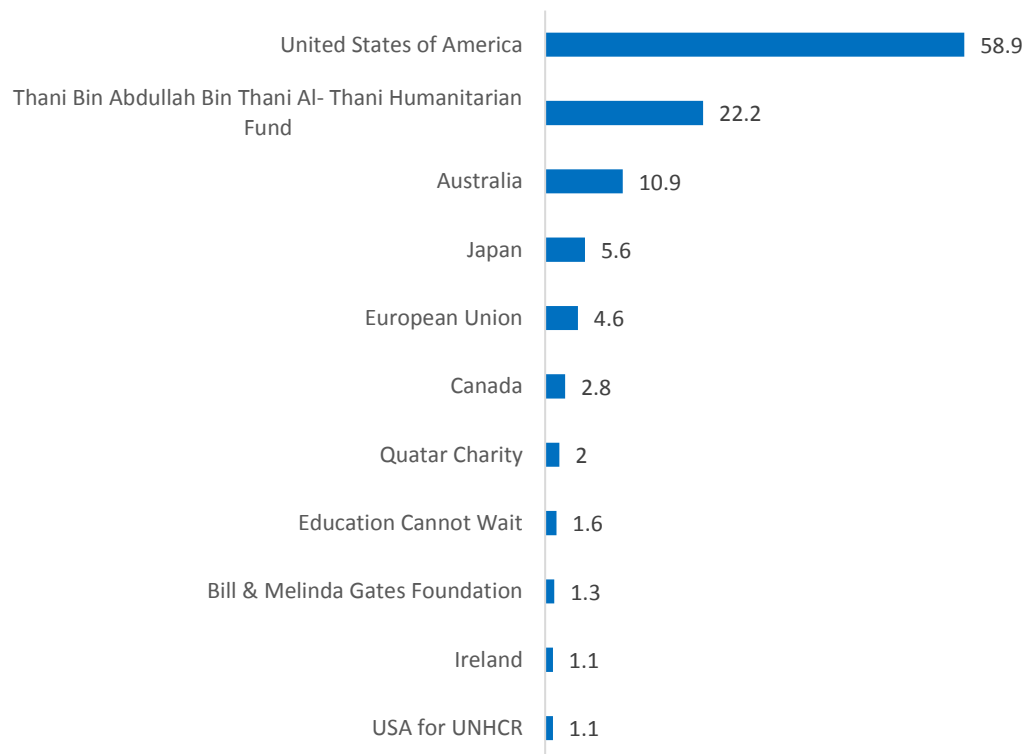
Action Aid Bangladesh | ACF (Action Contre la Faim) | ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) | BNWLA (Bangladesh National Woman Lawyer's Association) | Bangladesh Red Crescent Society | BRAC (Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee) | Caritas Bangladesh | Center for Natural Resource Studies | CODEC (Community Development Centre) | COAST (Coastal Association for Social Transformation Trust) | Danish Refugee Council | FH Association (Food for the Hungry) | GK (Gonoshasthaya Kendra) | IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) | Handicap International | Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation | Light House | Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) | Oxfam GB | Relief International | Mukti Cox's Bazar | NGO Forum for Public Health | RTMI (Research, Training and Management International) | Save the Children International | Solidarites International | Terre des Hommes | TAI (Technical Assistance Incorporated) | World Vision International

UNHCR would also like to acknowledge the crucial role played by the refugees in the response; with over 3,000 volunteers from the refugee community who are often the first responders on the ground. UNHCR and partners have trained and work with safety unit volunteers who support the emergency response, community outreach members who support raising awareness on important issues and in addressing protection risks, community health workers who assist with outreach for health and nutrition, and others who provide further critical support to the refugee response.

Financial Information

Total recorded contributions for the operation amount to some **US\$ 126.1 million**.

Funding Received in million USD (above USD 1 million)



External / Donors Relations

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LINKS

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