

# JOINT PROTECTION MONITORING REPORT

**1,260**

Focus Group Discussion (persons reached)

**744**

Home Visits

**382**

Direct Observation

**249**

Key Informant Interviews

The Joint Protection Monitoring framework has been implemented by the Protection Sector since 2022 to promote the systematic and regular collection, verification, and analysis of rights violations and protection risks for the Rohingya refugee population in Cox's Bazar.

The Joint Protection Monitoring reports serve to inform protection programming and advocacy through a common and standardized evidence base. This document offers an informed understanding of the protection situation in the camps through joint analysis of risks, threats, vulnerabilities, and protection incidents. Six agencies (UNHCR, IOM, IRC, DRC, OXFAM and HI) conduct protection monitoring as part of core programming, covering 33 camps hosting 918,308 refugees. This report also reflects the contributions of the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Child Protection (CP) Sub-Sectors as well as the Anti-Trafficking Working Group.

**51%**  
Men

**49%**  
Women

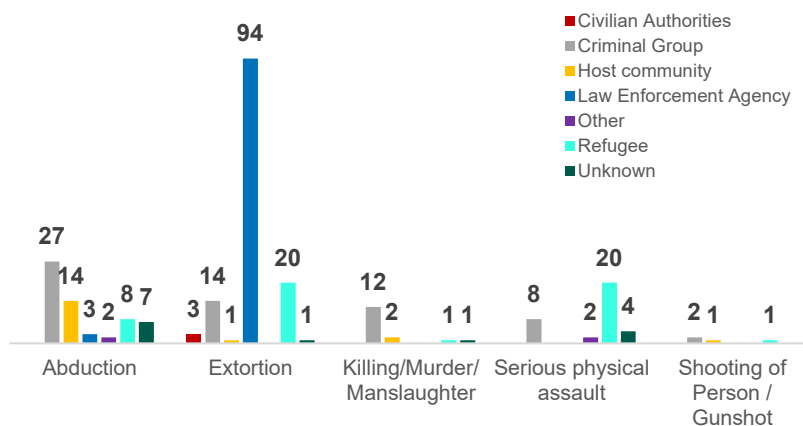
**6%**  
Disabilities

	Female	Male
Children (0-17)	3%	3%
Adults (18-59)	40%	43%
Elderly (60+)	6%	5%

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

Overall, incidents for the reporting period increased by 48% in comparison to the last quarter (April-June). The recorded increase relates to extortion cases (155% increase) and abductions for ransom (45% increase) closely linked to the unavailability of livelihood opportunities and lack of financial means for refugees. The increase in serious physical assault is seen to be related to more violent clashes between different criminal groups seeking to increase their presence and influence in the camps. A total of 248 serious protection incidents were documented across the 33 camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf during the reporting period (July-September). The major protection incidents reported include extortion (133), abduction (61), killing/murder/manslaughter (16, all reported victims were refugees), serious physical assault (34) and shooting of person/gunshot (4). Most of the incidents took place in camps 8W, 12, 6, 11, 19, 3, 8E and 20 Ext in Ukhiya, and camps 24 and 25 in Teknaf. Reports of kidnappings for ransom demands and violent robberies by criminal gangs has significantly increased in the Teknaf camps.

Alleged perpetrator by incident



Refugees reported a perceived increased presence of criminal groups in camps 2E, 4 Ext, 8E, 8W, 15, 18 and Nayapara registered camp. Criminal groups are seen to be involved in a wide range of crimes, including kidnapping, extortion, torture, murder, intimidation, and threats which increased feelings of insecurity and unsafety amongst refugees. Some refugees reported that criminal groups were forcefully recruiting members (notably young men)

Law enforcement authorities maintained active security surveillance in the camps and conducted a significant number of drug-related arrests and law enforcement operations against criminal groups to ensure the overall safety and security of the camps. Some refugees reported they feared law enforcement operations that have increased following violent clashes between criminal groups and are said to have left for Myanmar and Malaysia due to safety concerns and the presence of criminal groups.

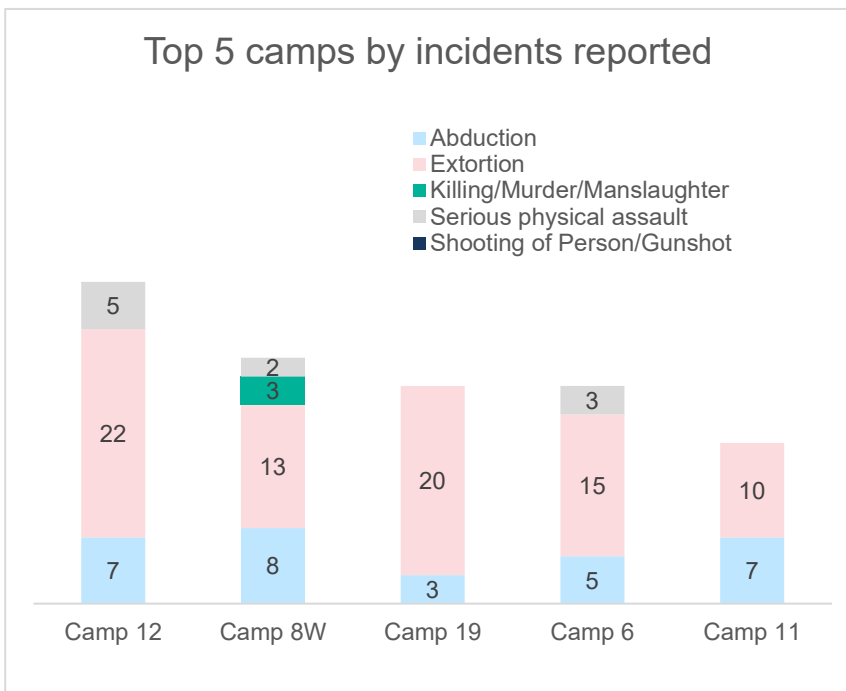
<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of the report, the serious incidents collected are related to the following incident categories only: abduction, extortion, killing/murder/manslaughter, serious physical assault and shooting of person/gunshot.

Implication of camp and law enforcement authorities as well as influential refugee leaders (Majhis) in alleged (monetary) extortion were also reported by refugees. This likely exacerbated refugee's already precarious situation in the camps to meet their basic needs and contributed to diminishing trust of affected refugees towards law enforcement authorities. This is primarily due to two interrelated factors: the arbitrary arrest of refugees and the ineffective engagement in community safety forums and dialogues with leaders on protection-sensitive policing.

Next to reports on serious protection incidents, threats, harassment, verbal abuse and (perceived) abuse of power by camp authorities, Majhi's were cited by refugees as their main issues of concern. At the same time, some Majhis expressed increasing fear of being targeted by criminal groups. During the reporting period, out of the 12 refugees killed, five were Majhis allegedly killed by criminal groups for opposing them or because of being seen as colluding with the authorities.

Lack of oversight of the selection and participation of refugees in the night patrolling system to enhance safety and security in the camps remained a concern. Some Majhi's demanded 100 BDT (approximately 1 USD) from refugee families that did not have an adult male in the family to take part in night patrolling. Some Majhis also allegedly coerced women, elderly and youth to participate in the patrolling.

This resulted in a few official movements of refugees within the camps to seek more security were registered. In September, two families were moved from Block A1 to Block B1 in camp 22. Unofficial self-relocations for the same purpose, however, also continued to be reported. For example, in camp 25, refugees self-relocated due to feeling insecure in the blocks adjacent to hills where some of the criminal groups were reportedly hiding.



In the reporting period, 80 victims of **human trafficking** were recorded by the Anti-Trafficking Working Group (ATWG) within Bangladesh. An increase can be seen in the number of cases reported compared to the previous two quarters, (30 victims identified in January – March 2022, and 67 during April-June 2022) explained, primarily, by the efforts undertaken by the ATWG to strengthen identification/screening and increased awareness (15 organizations in the ATWG are conducting awareness raising activities covering all 33 camps). Dynamics related to the trafficking (profile of victims, type of trafficking/form of exploitation and approach by traffickers) remained similar. Of the cases documented, 84% of the victims were male and 16% female. The majority of the victims (89%) were trafficked for labor exploitation and 88% of reported cases involved promises of work made at the recruitment stage.

More details in the Quarterly Dashboard produced by the Anti-Trafficking Working Group (ATWG), available [here](#).

**80**  
Refugees Identified

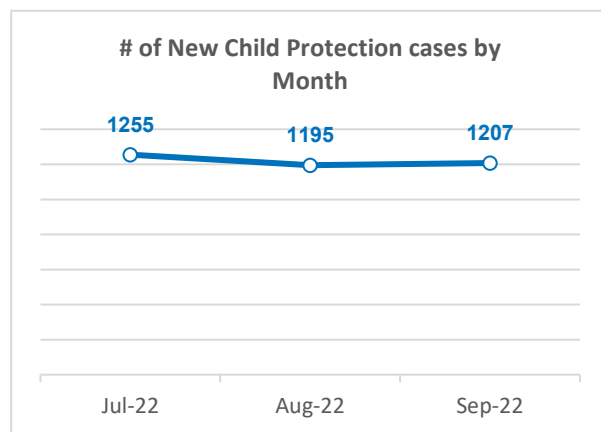
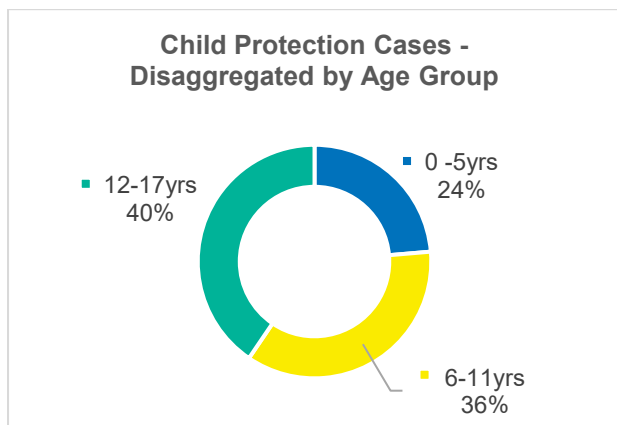
**51**  
Men

**6**  
Women

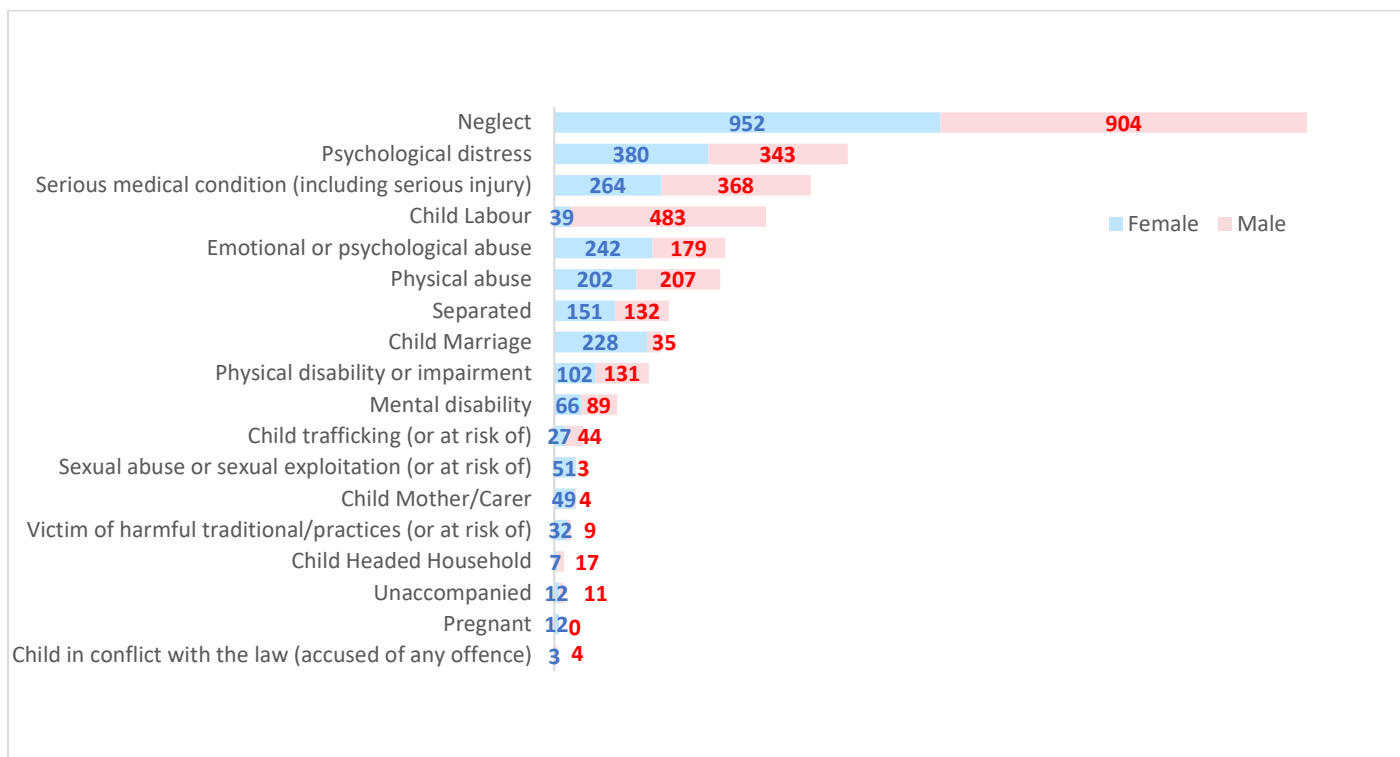
**16**  
Boys

**7**  
Girls

A total of 3,657 child protection cases were recorded in the third Quarter through the Child Protection Sub-Sector. The number of cases reported monthly remained consistent with the peak number of cases recorded in June (1,260 cases). 40% of these cases concerned adolescents aged between 12-17, followed by 36% aged between six and 11.



According to the Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS+), the top five cases reported were classified as neglect, psychological distress, serious medical conditions (including serious injury), child labor and emotional or psychological abuse. Cases of neglect rose 8.6% compared to the previous Quarter, while cases of psychological distress reduced by 23%; there were 723 cases recorded compared to 937 in Quarter Two. In the reporting period, serious medical conditions (including serious injury) replaced child labor as the third most reported child protection concern following an increase of 72% in quarter 2; 632 cases in quarter 3 compared to 367 cases in Quarter Two. Child labor cases increased by more than 10% during the reporting period. Boys continue to be disproportionately affected both by child labor and serious medical conditions while girls comprise 85% of the cases of child marriage.

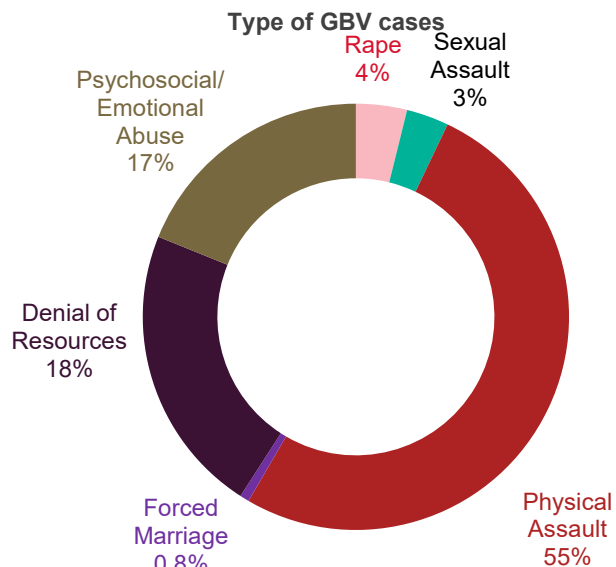


Data from the Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS)<sup>2</sup> for the reporting period remained consistent with findings from the previous Quarter. Physical assault (56%) increased by 1% from the previous Quarter (55%) and 18% of survivors reported denial of resources and psychological abuse.

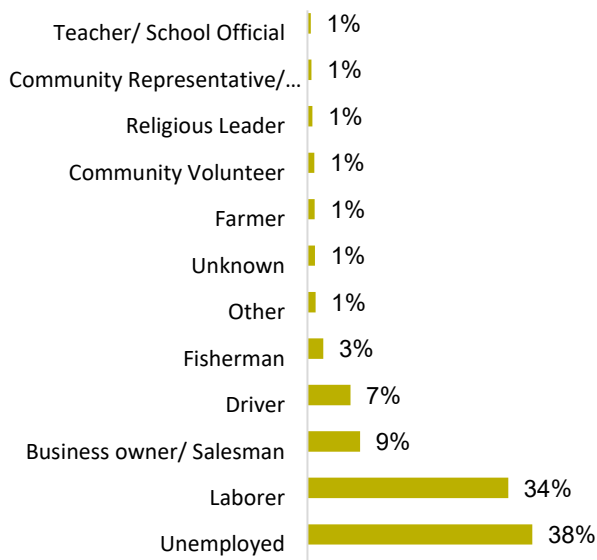
The types of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) are mainly perpetrated in the context of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). There are multiple factors that contribute to its prevalence: lack of livelihood activities, extra-marital affairs, dowry practices, substance abuse and deterioration of safety and security concerns that are fueling risks of GBV. Rape and sexual assault remain underreported due to stigma and social shame associated with it. Women and girls mentioned, lack of awareness of Sexual and Reproductive Health rights and practices by males related to social norms and gender attitudes leading to men claiming control over women’s bodies and reproductive choices.

GBV continues to occur primarily in the survivor’s residence, followed by the perpetrator’s residence, as well as those of friends and relative as per previous reports. In addition, 85% of reported cases are perpetrated by intimate/former partners.

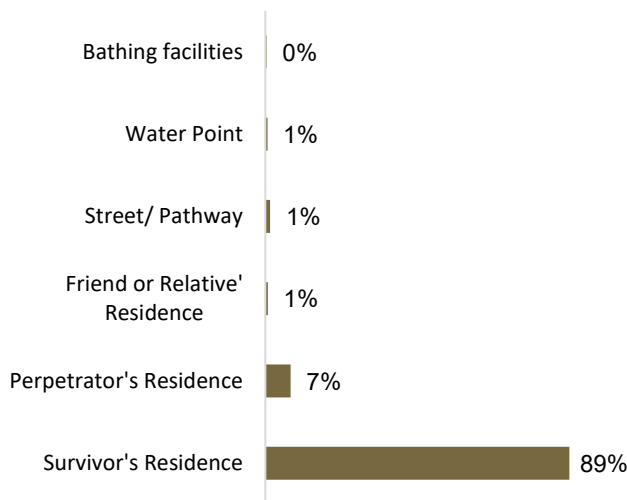
The dynamic of both social and economic conditions is also reflected in the majority of reported cases with IPV as the main form of GBV and 64% of the primary perpetrators between the ages of 26-40. Lack of higher education and livelihood opportunities in the camp setting is a contributing factor to GBV, with 38% of perpetrators unemployed and 34% engaged as laborers. The dynamic of both social and economic conditions is also reflected in the majority of reported cases with IPV as the main form of GBV and 64% of the primary perpetrators between the ages of 26-40.



**GBV Perpetrator's occupation**



**Locations of Reported GBV incidents**

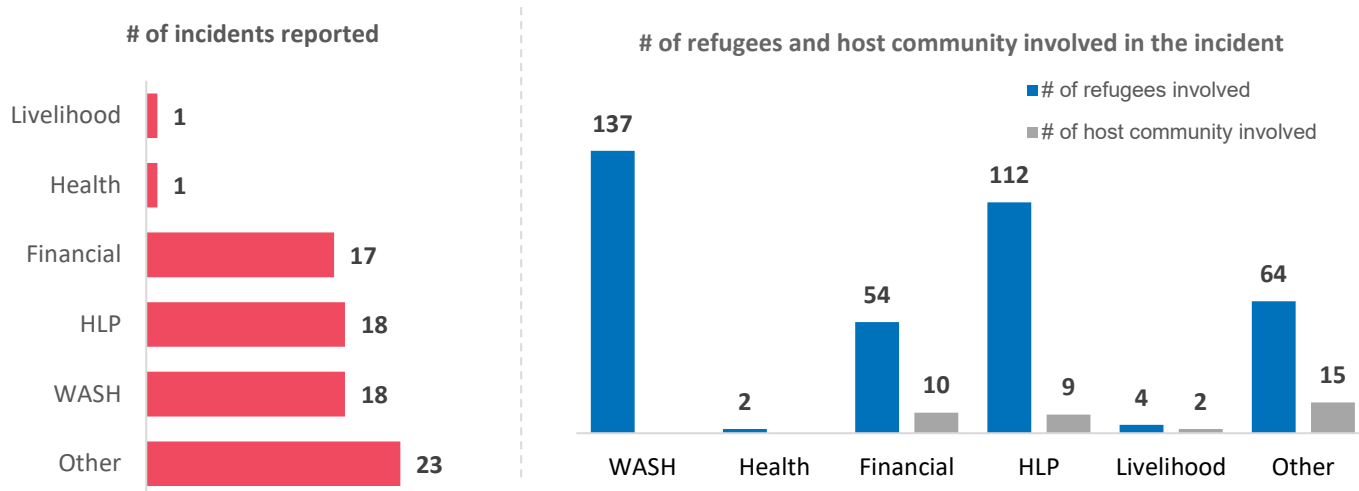


<sup>2</sup> Intersected incidents can only be reported as one type of GBV in GBVIMS (based on GBV classification tool and the process of elimination, determining the most specific incident type that applies to the reported incident.). More details in the monthly [here](#) and quarterly GBV factsheet [here](#).

## **SOCIAL COHESION AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE**

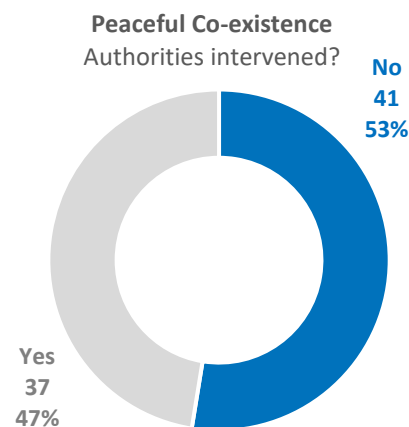
Lack of education, skills and livelihood opportunities, perceived escalating violence in the camps and imposed movement restrictions remained the most cited reasons for refugees to leave the camps and move to host communities.

Regarding social cohesion and peaceful coexistence among refugees, and between refugees and host communities, agencies reported a similar number of incidents as Quarter Two. There was a total of 78 incidents for the reporting period against 77 incidents for Quarter Two. Most of the reported incidents for this category were linked to quarrels between families, fighting between individuals and alleged theft of property (falling under the 'other' category). Incidents related to access to communal WASH facilities (water collection points and latrines), Housing, Land and Property (HLP) disputes (occupation of land, housing/shelter rentals and property disputes) and debt/financial issues (gambling debts, unpaid dowry, loans) were also recorded.



Compared to Quarter Two, the majority of refugees and host communities involved in incidents were related to WASH facilities and HLP issues.

Instances where the host communities reported the presence of refugees outside the camps increased. In the current Quarter, refugees raised concerns over conflicts with host communities in camps 1E, 6, 8W, 11, 12, 16 and 22. In some cases, these conflicts resulted in refugees trying to relocate to other camps (either by submitting formal relocation requests to camp authorities or self-relocating). The abduction of three refugees was reported in camps 8W and 11 due to disputes with host community members. In line with the previous Quarter, authorities have intervened in 47% of the cases to resolve disputes with the host community.



## **ACCESS TO JUSTICE**

Between July and September 2022, 6,204 refugees received legal services including: counseling on options to address particular issues, effective mediation of disputes by legal partners, assistance to file a case with the police and in courts, representation in court, legal support as victim of trafficking and release from detention after intervention by legal partners. Most frequent serious crimes brought before court were (attempted) murder, serious physical harm and (attempted) rape. Mediation was mostly provided on family issues and financial disputes between refugees.

Women and girls were provided legal services in 55% of the cases pertaining to mediation of marital issues (divorce, unpaid dowry), (neighborly) disputes with other refugees and GBV cases filed with District Police as well as legal representation before court. Formal legal services and traditional community-level justice systems continue to prevail in the camps with varying degrees of effectiveness to support refugees. Lengthy processes remain an obstacle for refugees to avail of the formal justice system but remain the only way to address serious crimes (including murder and rape). Mediation of certain cases by legal partners such as family/marital issues, financial and contractual obligations, minor disputes (e.g., verbal abuse) is encouraged through awareness raising. Nonetheless, informal dispute resolution mechanisms in the community continue to be used often to access justice. While it offers timely resolution

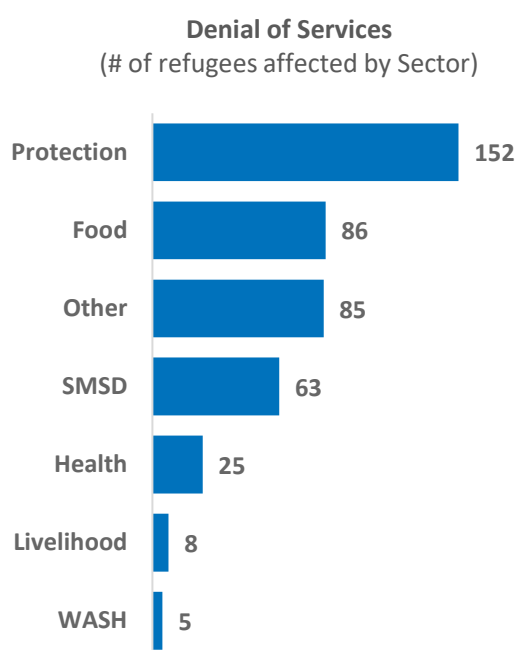
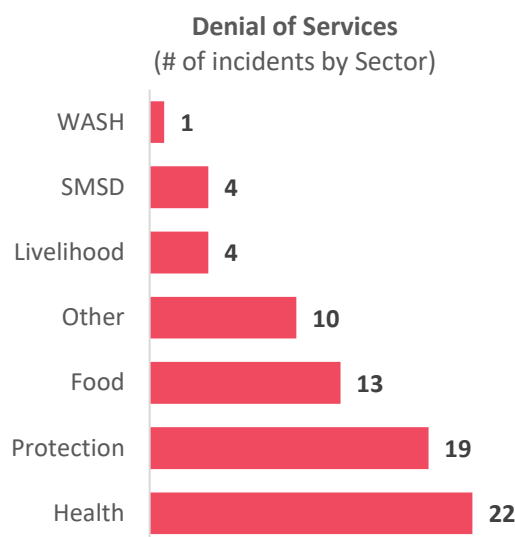
for refugees, it is often not in line with national legislation, human rights law and protection principles and is susceptible to bribery by the parties involved to determine the outcome, often barring refugees from effective access to justice. There is a reluctance from refugees to involve the camp and law enforcement authorities as some refugee's fear there might be repercussions from criminal groups or the authorities if they report incidents through formal channels.

The influential role of Majhis (community leaders) in the camps and their tendency to directly intervene in the resolution of issues, contributes to the system of informal dispute resolution. In some cases, criminal groups, which have established some level authority through force and threat, are known to coerce refugees into informal mediation of their disputes, favouring the refugee sympathetic to their group. Some Majhi's continued to demand payment for their services -and favours the party that pays- or to facilitate reporting to the relevant authorities.

## ACCESS TO SERVICES

During the reporting period, 73 incidents were registered in 18 camps related to denial of services and unequal access to services compared to 37 incidents documented for the second Quarter.

Denial of services with regards to health were reported in camps 6, 9, 19, 22 and 25, involving refugees who were turned away by host community volunteers at healthcare units. This was due to not wearing masks, not being registered in the camp where they were seeking medical assistance or suffering from visible conditions like ophthalmia and scabies. Long waiting times also resulted in refugees' inability to access services. Perception by refugees that did have access to health services referred to being provided limited treatment, such as insufficient or incorrect medication. Many refugees indicated their preference to go to Balukhali, Palongkhali, Kutupalong, Ukhiya, Court Bazar, Cox's Bazar, Chittagong and Chattogram to access health facilities available for the host community, rather than access services in the camps despite additional financial costs. Fewer drug prescriptions and lack of specialized services in camps for chronic diseases were reported as the biggest push factors for refugees to seek services outside the camp.



Denial of services with regards to food and protection were exclusively linked to the lack of documentation (Family Counting Number card (FCN)). Camp authorities confiscated FCNs for various reasons such as unsanctioned returns from Bhasan Char, a family members' alleged involvement in a criminal group, not taking part in night patrols and family disputes. While camp authorities often target a single person with confiscation of FCN, the entire family's access to assistance would be affected by this action.

Limited access to services for elderly refugees remained a concern. Reports from camp 22 indicated that elderly refugees did not arrive as scheduled at a healthcare unit or an Liquefied Petroleum Gas collection point and were subsequently refused service, potentially increasing pre-existing vulnerabilities.

In case of Site Management Site Development (SMSD), most issues reported were related to the extensive time taken to repair damaged public infrastructure (stairs, for instance). The cases of livelihoods pertained to individual livelihood activities (e.g., selling fruit) that were prohibited by camp authorities. Some Rohingya refugees were forced to shut down all types of small businesses, including shops, in camps 3, 4, 12, 19, and 22, following the camp administrations prohibition for refugees from conducting any kind of business, even though partnering with host communities.

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 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The below recommendations follow key issues identified by the Protection Monitoring agencies during the reporting period for action and follow-up by protection and other humanitarian actors in coordination with the Protection Sector:

- Advocate with camp authorities to ensure a uniform and formal approach to participation of refugees in night patrols and avoid exploitation or coercion of refugees by influential actors in the camps.
- Continuation of training programmes with law enforcement authorities to mitigate impact on refugees' security during law enforcement operations in the camps.
- Strengthen internal disciplinary procedures to hold law enforcement personnel to account.
- Strengthen investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of crimes in the camps to reduce impunity and reduce threats to refugee security, ensuring protection and assistance for refugee victims and witnesses
- Continue GBV awareness raising for service providers at community level by mainstreaming GBV in house-to-house visits by refugee volunteers and with authorities to ensure unimpeded access for survivors to assistance and essential services.
- Enhance activities which support community-based child protection mechanisms to prevent and respond to child protection concerns including enhancing safety measures and risk mitigation, focusing on those child protection concerns highlighted as critical within the reporting period.
- Sensitization of volunteers in healthcare facilities to ensure equal and unimpeded access for refugees in host community facilities
- Sensitize the refugee community on registration procedures, in particular registration of new-born children to ensure proper access to assistance
- Continued coordination with relevant Sectors/Working Groups to effectively mainstream protection in their interventions and to address issues reported through protection monitoring agencies (increased lighting at sanitary facilities, improved access to services for persons with disability and the elderly (e.g., medical services, food, and LPG collections)
- Ensure that *Food, WASH, Shelter/NFI, Health* and other non-protection sector actors mainstream protection in their intervention and respond in a way that reduces social tension within the refugee community and between host and refugees.
- Continue advocacy with the Government of Bangladesh for the expansion of education and skills development opportunities for refugees, notably adolescents, especially men aged between 18-24, and access to livelihood opportunities to strengthen self-protection mechanisms, contributing factors to protection risks, such as GBV and reduce harmful coping mechanisms such as child labour.