

# JOINT PROTECTION MONITORING REPORT

**1,274**

Focus Group Discussion (persons reached)

**507**

Home Visits

**681**

Key Informant Interviews

**48%**  
Men

**52%**  
Women

**9%**  
Disabilities

|                 | Female | Male |
|-----------------|--------|------|
| Children (0-17) | 7%     | 8%   |
| Adult (18-59)   | 36%    | 34%  |
| Elderly (60+)   | 8%     | 6%   |

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

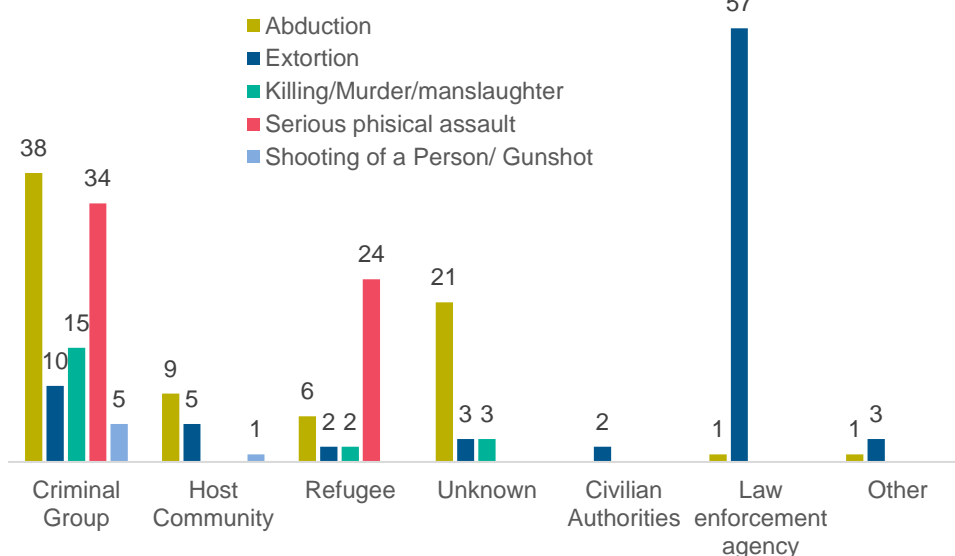
The Joint Protection Monitoring reports serve to inform protection programming and advocacy through a common and standardized evidence-based information collection. This document offers a better understanding of the protection situation in the camps through a joint analysis of risks, threats, vulnerabilities, and protection incidents.

Six agencies (UNHCR, IOM, IRC, DRC, OXFAM and HI) conduct protection monitoring as part of core programming, covering 33 camps and an estimate of 923,358\* refugees. This report also reflects the contributions of the Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and Child Protection (CP) Sub-Sectors as well as of the Anti-Trafficking Working Group and the House, Land and Property Technical Forum.

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

Refugees and partners from the Protection Sector reported rising violence across the camps including the first report of a daylight shooting registered on December 26, in Camp 8 resulting in the death of a male refugee. During the reporting period (October - December), 242 serious protection incidents<sup>1</sup> were documented across the 33 camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf. The protection incidents documented include cases of abduction (79), extortion (82), killing/murder/manslaughter (20 - all reported victims were refugees), serious physical assault (58), and shooting of person/gunshot (6). Although the overall number of incidents

No. of Incidents reported per group



remained similar to the previous Quarter (July-Sept)<sup>2</sup> - where 248 incidents were reported - there was an increase in abductions, killing/murder/manslaughter, serious physical assault, and shooting of persons/gunshot. Most of these incidents took place in camps 8E, 8W, 9, 10, 11, 13, 18, 19, 20, and 20 Extension in Ukhiya and Camp 25 in Teknaf. Escalation of criminal activities and gunfights between rival criminal groups to gain control of the camps have continued to worsen the safety and security situation: eleven refugees, including four Majhi's, were killed allegedly by a criminal group during the covered period. Dire humanitarian conditions in the camps and pressure from criminal groups to engage people in criminal activities for money, together with the lack of refugees' trust in the effectiveness of law enforcement, aggravate protection risks for refugees in the camps.

<sup>1</sup> For this 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.

<sup>2</sup> [Protection Monitoring final report 2022 Q3](#)

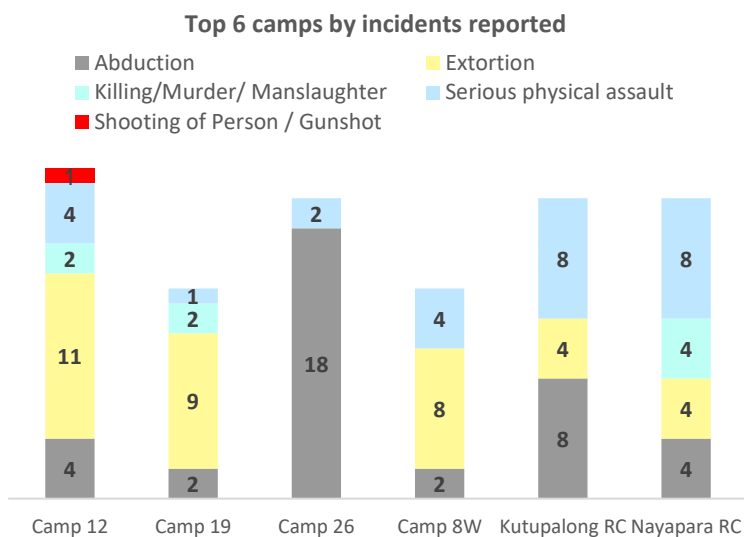
\*UNHCR Data portal link available for the Population statistics [here](#).

Kidnapping and abduction for ransom by criminal gangs were found on the rise during the period, particularly in Teknaf camps. In Camp 25, refugee families reported leaving the blocks adjacent to the hilly area out of fear of criminal groups believed to be hiding there. Criminal groups were allegedly accountable for 50% of abductions while 28% correspond to unknown perpetrators. A ransom is demanded from family members for the release of those refugees who are abducted. Some refugees are forced into exploitative labour or are locked up and tortured to pressure their families into paying the money. In addition, it has been reported that male refugees between the ages of 16 and 25 are at higher risk of recruitment by criminal groups.

Perceived low confidence in law enforcement in camps continued to be observed throughout the reporting period even though security operations increased since the end of October in several camps in Ukhiya with additional law enforcement personnel deployed in and around the camps. A few individuals allegedly involved with criminal groups were arrested while several refugee leaders (Majhis), fearing to be targeted as they are perceived to act as informants, left the camps or requested the authorities to provide increased security. Document confiscation, arbitrary arrests, and punishment resulted in increased distress and anxiety in the refugee community. Refugees reported women and children leaving in despair for Myanmar and Malaysia on dangerous journeys because of being frustrated with the perceived inaction by camp and law enforcement authorities to address their safety and security concerns, and unresponsiveness in engaging in community dialogue to address protection needs.

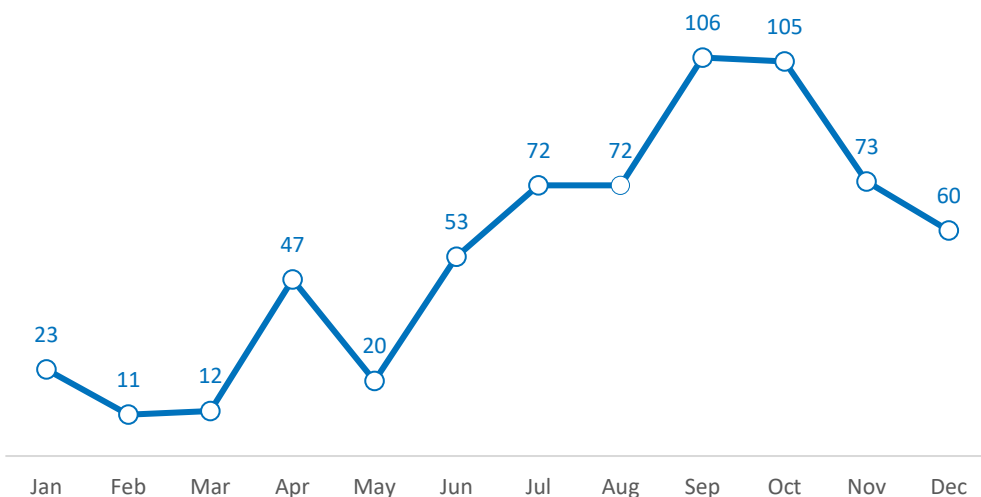
**Secondary Displacement:**

| Camp         | To Camp | Refugees   | # of HHs   |
|--------------|---------|------------|------------|
| Camp 9       | Camp 9  | 20         | 5          |
| Camp 25      | Camp 25 | 405        | 83         |
| Camp 25      | Camp 12 | 116        | 21         |
| Camp 25      | Camp 8W | 47         | 9          |
| Camp 25      | Camp 18 | 26         | 5          |
| Camp 25      | Camp 19 | 17         | 4          |
| Camp 25      | Camp 15 | 14         | 3          |
| Camp 25      | Camp 26 | 11         | 1          |
| Camp 25      | Camp 27 | 8          | 1          |
| Camp 25      | Camp 13 | 7          | 1          |
| Camp 24      | Camp 25 | 12         | 2          |
| Camp 22      | Camp 22 | 5          | 1          |
| Camp 22      | Camp 22 | 4          | 1          |
| Camp 22      | Camp 22 | 3          | 1          |
| Camp 18      | Camp 10 | 2          | 1          |
| Camp 18      | Camp 17 | 2          | 1          |
| Camp 18      | Camp 8E | 1          | 1          |
| Camp 15      | Camp 1E | 3          | 1          |
| <b>Total</b> |         | <b>703</b> | <b>142</b> |



Law Enforcement Agencies were allegedly responsible for 70% of extortion incidents which include refugees caught outside the camp or outside their shelter at night who need to pay to avoid sanctions and confiscation of cellphones.

**Total number of incidents per month**



Young refugee men aged between 18 and 24 were reported to be the main victims of extortion and bribes. Harassment and restriction of movement were also reported during Quarter 4, especially at checkpoints.

Overnight patrolling remained a concern for refugees as female members of households whose husbands had to engage in the night rounds reported feeling unsafe being alone in their shelters.

Women reported feeling insecure with law enforcement personnel, Majhis, and even criminal groups - particularly but not only during night-time - entering their shelters without any specific reason and mentioned feeling afraid to get out of the shelter and go to the latrine in several camps.

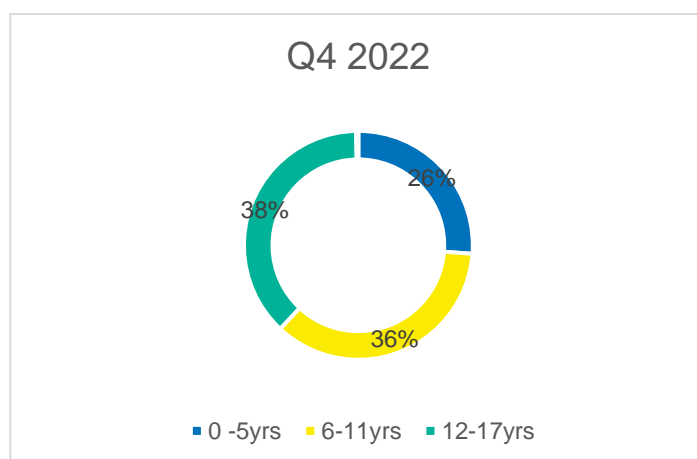
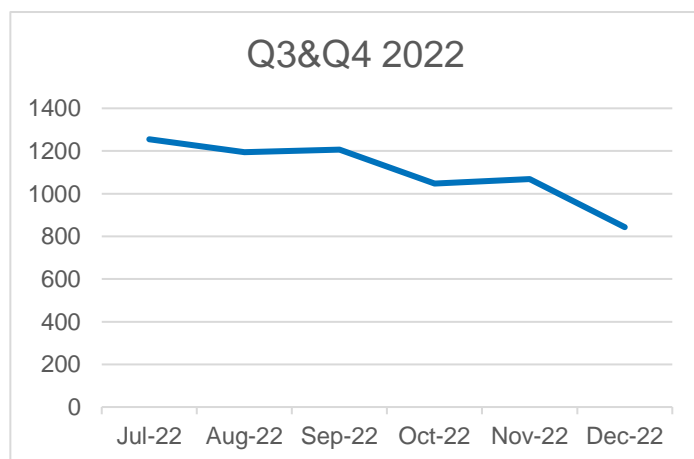
Against the whole year of 2022, the reported protection incidents increased during the last two Quarters (July to December) by doubling numbers in comparison to January to June. In 2022, a total of 55 refugees were victims of killing/murder/manslaughter, 212 were victims of abduction, 268 were victims of extortion, 99 were victims of serious physical assault and 19 were victims of shooting of person/gunshot in the 33 camps. An overall of 653 serious incidents were reported throughout the year with Law Enforcement Agencies allegedly involved in 44% of these incidents (mainly extortion) followed by various criminal groups accounting for 32%.

For the period January – December 2022, 289 cases of human trafficking of Rohingya from the camps were registered. The profile of victims, type of trafficking and modus operandi of traffickers remained largely the same. Most of human trafficking victims were male (81%), trafficked under the promise of paid labor and ended up in forced labor. In addition, 79 children (21 girls and 58 boys) were identified as victims of trafficking. Refugees' homes/shelters were indicated as the main place for recruitment or initial engagement with the traffickers and the majority remained in Cox's Bazar (36%) or were brought to Chittagong (28%).

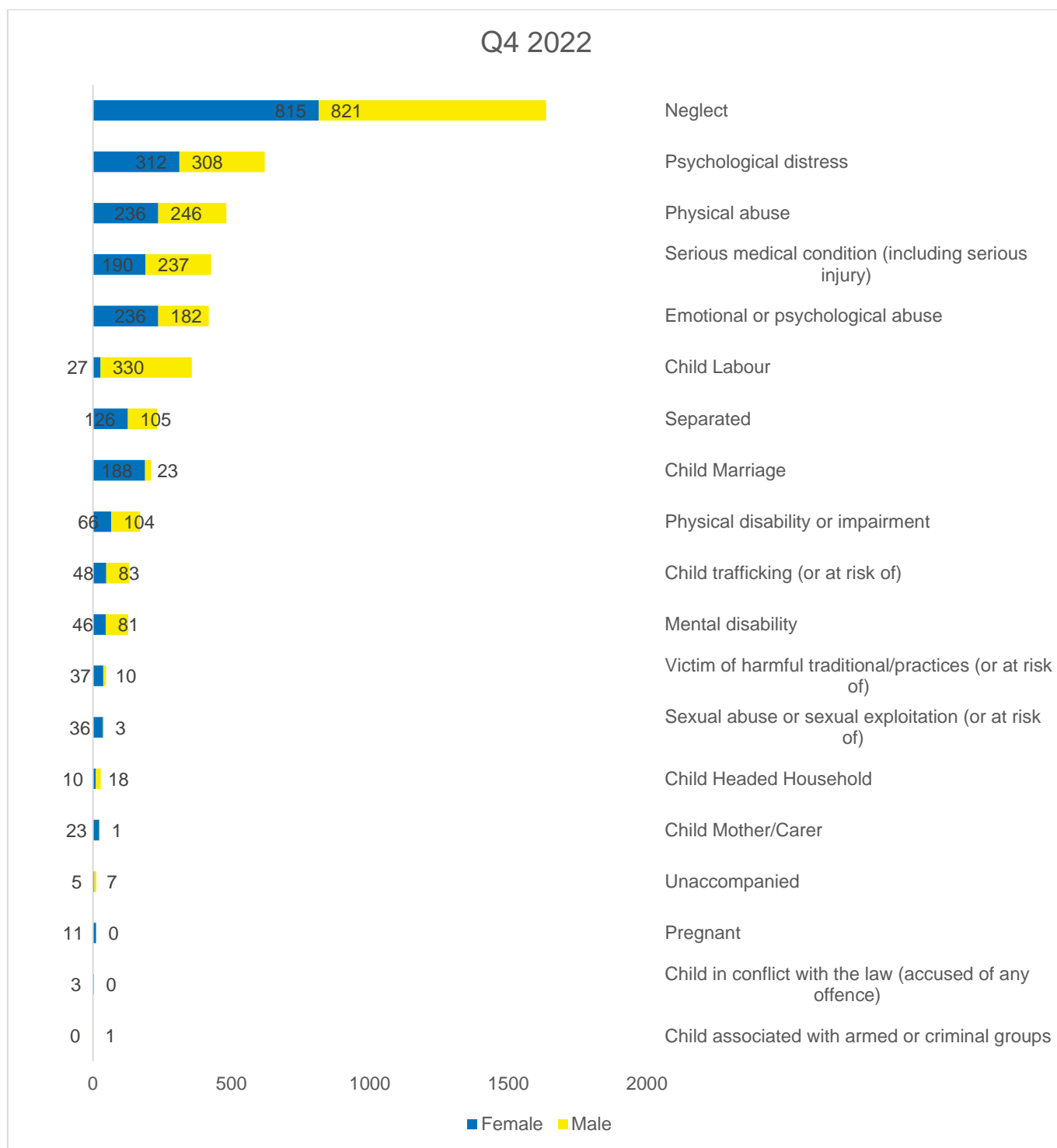
More details in the Quarterly Dashboard produced by the Anti-Trafficking Working Group (AT WG), available [here](#).



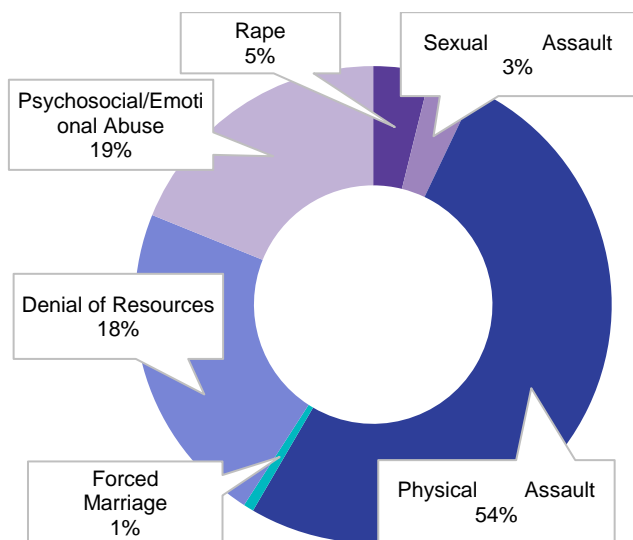
During the reporting period, the Child Protection Information Management System, captured 2,954 protection cases. The highest number of reported cases impacted the well-being of 12 to 17-year-old children accounting for 38%, followed closely by those aged 6 to 11 (36%). By the end of 2022, there was an overall decline in cases registered in comparison to Quarter 3. However, neglect (1,636), psychological distress (620), physical abuse (482), serious medical conditions -including serious injury- (427) and emotional or psychological abuse (418) remain significantly high in comparison to the previous quarter (July-Sept) and remain among the 5 top protection concerns for refugee children.



In addition, refugee caregivers and parents continue to experience high levels of stress due to lack of access to basic needs, loss of assets/capital, and lack of security for themselves and their children. Refugees lament the absence of adequate services for parents and caregivers to cater to their mental health needs and emotional and social well-being, help building their stress management and coping skills and provide a nurturing and safe environment for their children. Signs of emotional and behavioral trouble manifest slightly higher in girls and the total number of cases reported during this period was 620 with a reduction of 14% in comparison to Quarter 3. Refugees continue to express concern over disrespectful behavior, self-isolation, aggressive behavior, self-harm, lack of self-care, and unwillingness to listen to caregivers by refugee children because of psychological distress. Serious medical conditions such as malaria, pneumonia, diarrhea, respiratory illness, and serious injury accounted for 427 reported cases during the last months of 2022.



Lack of economic means and cultural norms in the community were reported as the main reasons for child marriage, which continues to have a disproportionate impact on girls (89%). The lack of perceived security for women and females in the camps has also contributed as a catalyst for child marriage. During the reporting period child labour slightly decreased, with a total of 357 cases of children engaged in work in shops, driving rickshaws, construction work and as domestic servants (particularly girls). Given economic constraints, as well as lack of access to education and availability of caregivers, Rohingya children are forced into work inside and outside the camps to support themselves and their families, with 92% of affected children being boys.



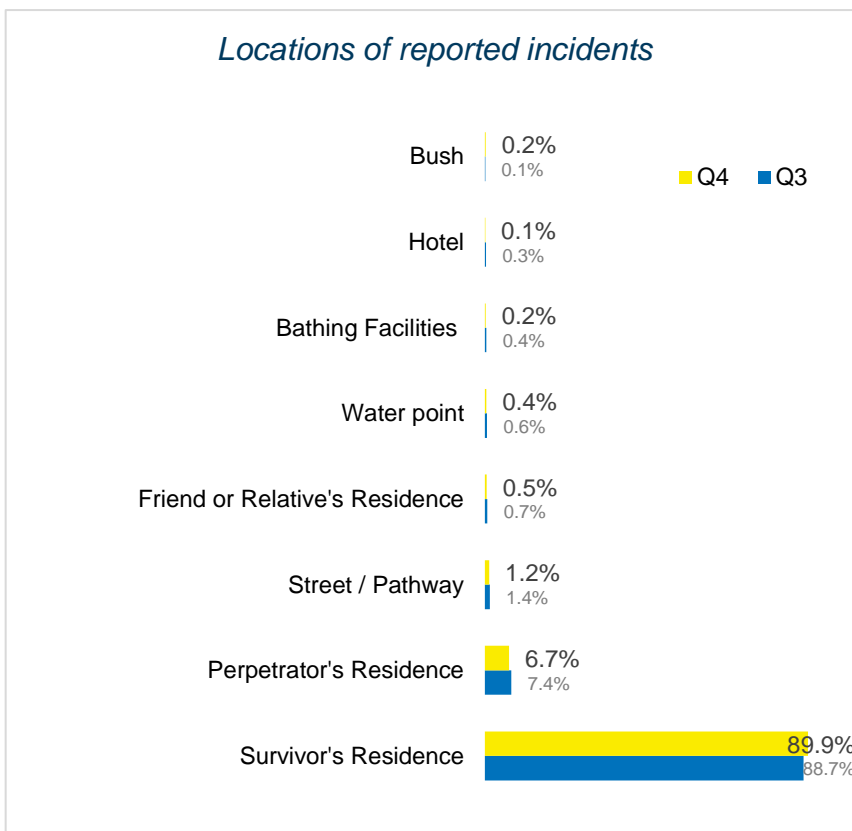
GBV reported cases in Quarter 4 - 2022

Rohingya women and girls continue to be extremely vulnerable to Gender Based Violence (GBV) within the camps. During the last Quarter of 2022, physical assault (54%) remained the highest reported incident followed by psychological & emotional abuse. These types of GBV incidents are essentially perpetrated in the context of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and are characterized by women and girls suffering in silence with few survivors reporting the cases, seeking assistance, and asking for medical care after events take place due to stigma, fear, and threat of retaliation.

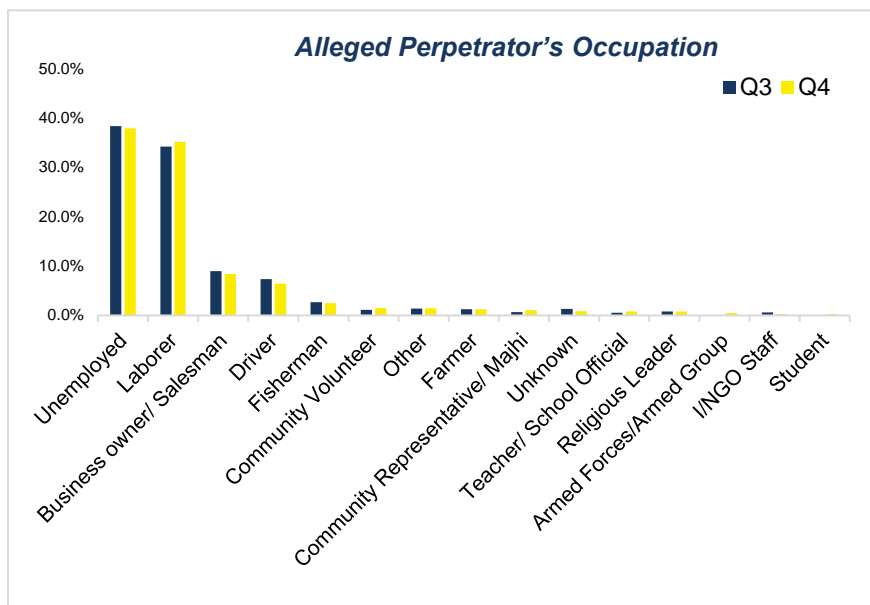
In comparison to Quarter 3, the rate of reporting of sexual violence increased by 2%, especially in December 2022, and to some extent this can be attributed to joint workshops conducted with the focal points at camp level explaining forms of GBV and referral systems.

Data gathering organizations observed that reported sexual violence was mainly perpetrated against adolescent girls due to prevailing cultural norms, for instance, unmarried women are at higher risk of harassment and sexual assault. Moreover, in some instances following cases of rape, survivors are forced to marry their perpetrator to avoid shame to the girl's family. Lower income for a household heightens the exposure of women being exploited by men through early and forced marriage and commercialized sexual exploitation.

Like in previous Quarters of 2022, GBV incidents continue to be reported to have taken place predominantly at the survivor's residence or the perpetrator's residence (97%), given that perpetrators are primarily husbands and male family members. These incidents include repeated physical assault and denial of financial support. An additional factor contributing to a higher number of cases reported at residences is women and girls not leaving their homes due to the cultural practice of purdah<sup>3</sup> and unemployed men spending more time at home. However, GBV is also occurring in streets, pathways, water points, bathing facilities, and in bushes. During the covered period, women and girls stated that using safe latrines remains a challenge; communal toilet blocks with female facilities next to the male facilities increase risks of women being sexually harassed and assaulted and so they prefer to use the latrines at night, but some passages have no lighting and hence GBV risks might also arise.



<sup>3</sup> In certain societies the term purdah is widely used to refer to the system of seclusion of Muslim and Hindu women from men or strangers, especially by means of a curtain. UNHCR, CARE and ActionAid (2020). An Intersectional Analysis of Gender amongst Rohingya Refugees and Host Communities in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. An Inter-Agency Research Report, September 2020.



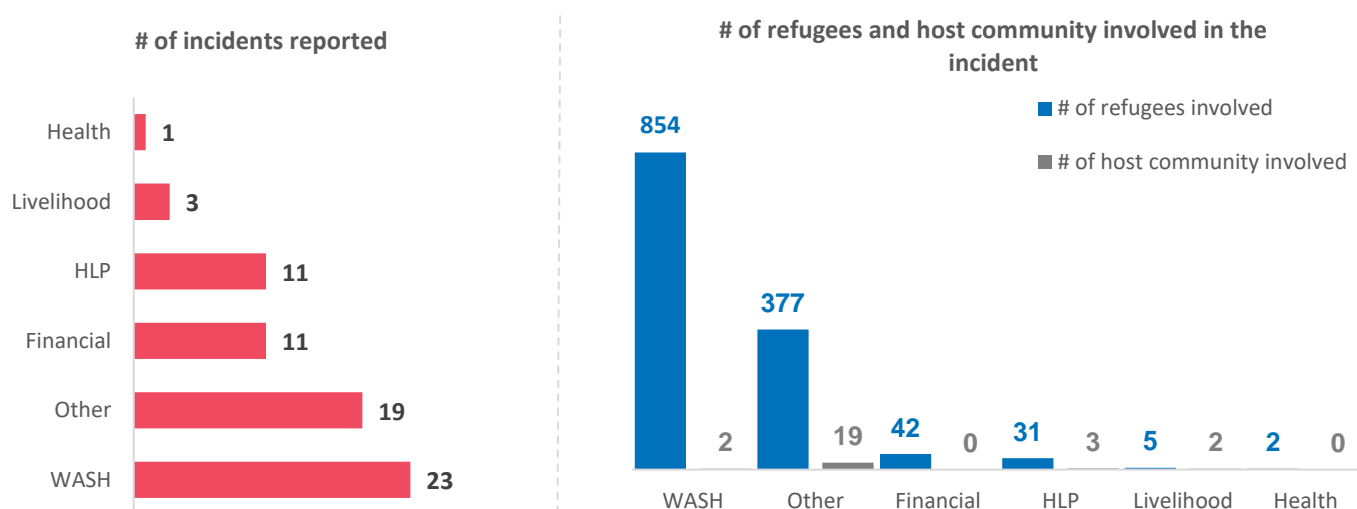
Lack of livelihood opportunities for men during all quarters of 2022 further contributes to loss of status and unfulfilled expectations over traditional roles for men and continues to worsen rates of GBV and IPV and explains -to a great extent- why the highest rates for perpetrators “occupation” correspond to unemployed men.

Limited income-generating and recreational activities in the camp lead to frustration and general discontent amongst refugee men who feel the economic burden of their families. Tension among family members affects conjugal and intimate relationships; anxiety due to unemployment and an uncertain life continued to be reported as the main catalyst for GBV.

## SOCIAL COHESION AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

Perceived deterioration of security by refugees and lack of livelihoods, skills, and education opportunities remain the main reasons for refugees to seek alternative opportunities in host communities.

Agencies reported 68 incidents related to social cohesion and peaceful coexistence among refugees, and between refugees and host communities with a slight decrease of 12% of the overall incidents reported for Quarter 3. Most of the reported incidents were related to access to communal *WASH* facilities (latrines, water collection, and distribution points) and quarrels between families, fighting between individuals and alleged theft of property (reported under the “other” category). Tensions also grew due to an increase in house rent by the host community<sup>4</sup> member/family. The absence of tenancy documentation and regulation of the rental market leaves refugees vulnerable to arbitrary rental price increments and increased risk of forced evictions. In Camp 9, around 200 refugee families living on property owned by the host community who used to pay around 2,000 BDT (*approximately 19 USD*) per shelter were asked to raise their monthly rent to 8,000 BDT (*approximately 74 USD*).

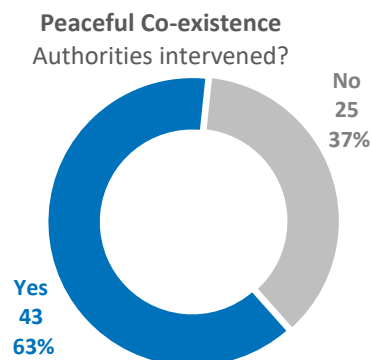


Housing Land and Property (HLP) issues are mainly linked to the lack of available suitable land for shelter, disputed sale of shelters, and competition over shared resources including following self-relocation of refugees, which are resulting in tensions and disputes between the refugees and the host communities, and, in some cases, in forced

<sup>4</sup> Host communities continue to provide land for Rohingya refugees, particularly in the Teknaf camps and those refugees are required to pay rent to continue to access land for shelter. These tenure arrangements are mostly undocumented (verbal arrangement) and unregulated.

evictions. Out of these cases, 44 cases specifically involved forced eviction, indicating instances where individuals or communities were facing a threat or actual act of being evicted from their shelter or living spaces. Camps 8E, 9, 24, 25, 26, and 27 had the highest levels of HLP incidents in 2022. In Camp 25, a total of 141 families with approximately 651 individuals were evicted by their landowners. Approximately 86 of the families that were evicted decided to self-relocate within the camp; 19 families self-relocated to other camps - pending the Camp in Charge's (CiC) approval - and 36 families found shelter with their relatives within the camp and are pending allocation of a new plot/shelter.

Disputes related to debt, unpaid dowry, and gambling were also registered during the reporting period. Refugees raised concerns over the effectiveness of night patrolling aimed at ensuring overall safety and mitigating burglary and robbery incidents, which further exacerbates peaceful co-existence amongst them and host communities. Reports of host community males getting involved in extra-marital affairs with refugees have allegedly increased tensions further. Authorities intervened in 63% of the cases to settle and resolve disputes with the host community, with an increase of 16% in relation to the previous Quarter, while the remaining 37% of the cases did not receive intervention as this is done only for host communities and not intended for refugees.



## ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Between October and December, 5,593 refugees received legal services from legal partners ranging from mediation to intervention in detention cases. 57% of cases concerned women and girls seeking mediation for marital issues in relation to GBV, cases filed with the District Police, divorce, inter-household disputes, unpaid dowry, and legal representation before the court. Delays in the registration of marriages and divorces have been observed in several camps, and have resulted in refugees resorting to informal procedures, which can expose them to child marriage as there is no verification of polygamy, consent and no counselling provided to couples on GBV and child marriage by camp authorities. Certification of marriages and divorces by the Camp-in-Charges (CiCs) is required, but in several camps, they are reluctant or against registering divorces because it goes against their norms but also would require additional shelters for the separated families which are not always readily available. This contributes to persistent gender-based violence in the private sphere.

There is still an overall reliance on informal dispute resolution amongst refugees through Majihs, despite allegations of favoritism and abuse of power by them and - in some cases - interference by criminal groups in the process. Moreover, informal dispute resolution may conflict with human rights law standards and undermines protection principles, with these mechanisms reinforcing harmful gender power dynamics with outcomes favoring men in line with prevailing social norms. Refugee women reported that if they escalate their concerns to the criminal justice system this may put them at risk of retaliation. Camp based legal partners continue to raise awareness on the free mediation services offered by them to refugees.

Women, especially single women, and/or female heads of households also feel reluctant to report their concerns to law enforcement agencies. Reports state that after arrests are conducted, in some cases, the alleged perpetrator manages to get released after paying bribes, which range between BDT 5,000 and 50,000 (46 to 460 USD). On the other hand, a number of perpetrators get released on bail after a few months and return to the camps. This trend affects the community's confidence in law enforcement and the criminal justice system.

During the reporting period, refugees, especially those who go outside the camps for daily labor and other needs, are often subjected to extortion on their way back by host community members and Law Enforcement personnel. There were accounts of criminal groups forcibly taking money, mobile phones, and other valuables from refugees. When such crimes take place, refugees are unable to seek recourse from the camp authorities, because the incidents took place outside the camp while some refugees had no permission from the authorities to leave the camp.

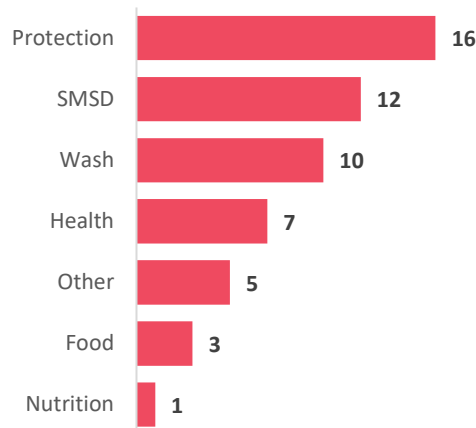
Since January 2022, legal partners have provided legal services to 24,873 refugees. Additionally, 7,934 refugees (3,504 women, 4,093 men, 233 boys, 104 girls) attended group legal awareness sessions across the 33 camps.

## ACCESS TO SERVICES

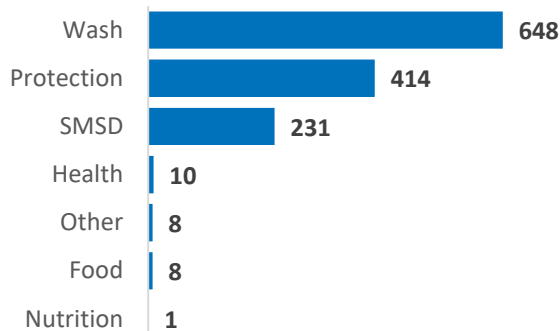
A total of 54 incidents related to denial of services were registered affecting 1,320 refugees. Although there were fewer incidents reported during the covered period in comparison to Quarter 3 (where a total of 73 incidents were registered) there was an increase of 68% in the number of affected refugees. This is mainly related to unequal access to WASH services such as delayed response to sanitation renovation, inadequate delivery of drinking water, and insufficient toilets and bathing facilities mainly reported in camps 6 and 10.

Denial of protection services was linked to refugees having their registration documents confiscated by authorities in cases of allegations of criminal offenses. There were some cases of confiscation of documents from refugees who had been registered at yet returned from Bhasan Char, and as a result, lost their access to assistance/services in the camps.

**Denial of Services**  
(# of Incidents by Sector)



**Denial of Services**  
(# of Refugees affected by Sector)



Refugee families in the camps - especially female-headed households - reported facing challenges in accessing sources of lighting, which caused them to feel unsafe, including in their shelters. Candles and kerosene oil are commonly used for lighting, however, the most vulnerable households, such as those headed by women, widows, and older persons with grandchildren, often cannot afford to purchase these items. As a result, these households were forced to sell ration items to be able to afford lighting. In addition, older refugees and women indicated that they feel insecure about leaving the shelter at night, particularly when going to the latrine, due to the lack of torch lights and poor lighting in the camps.

Site Management Site Development (SMSD) issues reported were related to roads that were not accessible for refugees,

particularly for older persons and persons with disabilities, who are reportedly deprived of transport by drivers because of their use of wheelchairs.

Parents and caregivers in Camps 19, 20, and 20 Extension reported feeling more satisfied with the quality of education provided to their children and the curriculum in the native language approved by the Government of Bangladesh than earlier but pointed out the challenge with recruiting qualified teachers. Reportedly, Mahjibs have been engaged in selecting teachers and taking money from the local community to put them on the list of selected teachers. Some parents still believe that madrasa teachers take better care of their children and pay for private tuition which costs around 200 BDT (1.80 USD) for each child.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Advocate for increased patrolling by Law Enforcement Agencies inside and at the perimeters of the camps to prevent and reduce violence and threats to the safety of refugees by criminal groups and mitigate escalating violence.
- 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.
- Strengthen criminal prosecution and internal disciplinary procedures to punish any reported abuse by law enforcement personnel.





- Advocate to ensure refugees, including refugees returned from Bhasan Char, are not denied access to assistance in the camps.
- Strengthen ongoing training and capacity-building for law enforcement agencies to ensure protection-sensitive policing in refugee camp settings and enhance social cohesion between refugee and host communities.
- Ensure that WASH, Shelter/NFI, Health, Food, and other non-protection sectors actors mainstream protection in their intervention and respond in a way that reduces social tension within the refugee community and between host community members and refugees.
- Promote a community-based protection approach to enable refugees to identify, understand, and prioritize their protection concerns more accurately and support their empowerment initiatives.
- Ensure that the approved Myanmar curriculum is implemented throughout all learning levels while opportunities for skills development for adolescents are enhanced.
- Advocate for a regulatory framework for camp land administration in line with humanitarian standards and promote HLP rights within the camps (e.g., discourage the sale of shelters, liaise with humanitarian partners during Basan Char relocation to reallocate vacated shelters based on priority needs, support HLP dispute resolutions).
- Advocate for the government to define the camp boundaries (mapping of camp land) to address challenges related to access, disputed claims to land by host community members, forced evictions/secondary displacement, and possibly self-relocation within the camps.
- Advocate for more livelihood opportunities, diversified employability, vocational skills training, and microfinance services to address negative or harmful coping practices such as child marriage, child labor, and other concerns.
- Ensure targeted interventions for children whose primary caregivers are either older persons or chronically ill or persons with disabilities.