

# JOINT PROTECTION MONITORING REPORT

**816**

Focus Group Discussion (persons reached)

**360**

Home Visits

**235**

Direct Observation

**1,286**

Key Informant Interviews

**54%**  
Men

**46%**  
Women

**6%**  
Disabilities

	Female	Male
Children (0-17)	2%	2%
Adult (18-59)	43%	51%
Elderly (60+)	1%	1%

The Joint Protection Monitoring framework is implemented by the Protection Sector since 2022 to promote the systematic and regular collection, verification, and analysis of violations of rights 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-based information collection to develop a better understanding of the protection situation in the camps through a joint analysis of risks, threats, vulnerabilities, and incidents, as well as patterns and trends.

Six agencies (UNHCR, IOM, IRC, DRC, OXFAM and HI) conduct protection monitoring as part of the core programming, covering 33 camps. The report also reflects the contributions of the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Child Protection (CP) Sub-Sectors and the Anti-Trafficking Working Group.

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

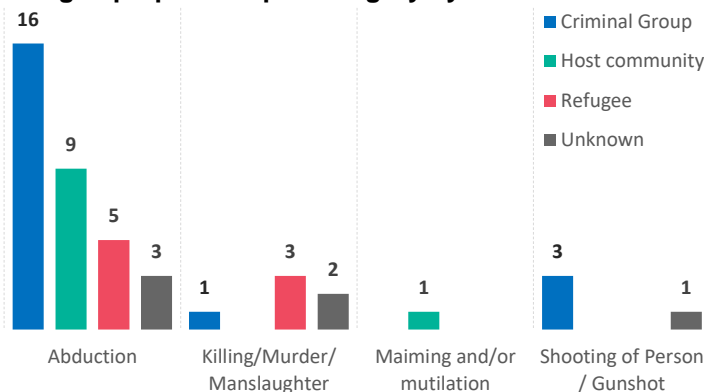
During the reporting period (January - March), 44 serious protection incidents<sup>1</sup> against refugees were reported, allegedly perpetrated by members of criminal groups, in several camps (2E, 6, 8W, 9, 11, 12, 18, 20, 24, 25, 26 and Nayapara). During the reporting period, rival criminal groups clashed violently in camps 6, 8E, 8W, and 10.

Reports of incidents including harassment, beatings, verbal abuse, monetary extortion, unlawful or arbitrary arrest, and confiscation of refugee documents and/or mobile phones by law enforcement authorities in the camps were received in several camps in Ukhiya (camps 1E, 1W, 6, 8E, 8W, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 18, 19) and Teknaf (camps 20, 20ext, and 21).

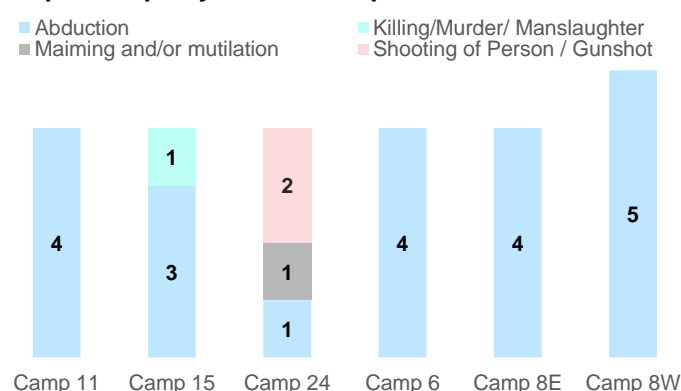
Several refugees were arrested outside the camps by law enforcement authorities to enforce movement restrictions. Whereas the presence of law enforcement aims to reduce security threats, refugees feel they remain exposed to criminal groups and also expressed fear of arrest under false charges during security operations conducted by the law enforcement authorities in the camps.

Little oversight or supervision on selection and participation of refugees in the night patrolling system by the authorities was a cause for concern. In camp 16, refugee youths reported that one man from each household must participate in the night watch groups. Some families who do not have male household members allegedly had to pay 100 Bangladeshi Taka [BDT] (approx. 1.30 USD) to the Majhi to be exempted. Some Majhis and Imams in camp 8W also ordered young boys and elderly refugees to patrol their respective blocks at night.

**Alleged perpetrator per category by incident**



**Top 6 camps by incidents reported**



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

Safety and security concerns, including threats by criminal groups, triggered spontaneous movements of refugees to perceived safer areas across the camps. The relocation occurred within camps or across camps, mostly spontaneously without the formal involvement of authorities. The largest movements recorded were from camp 24 to camp 20, from camp 25 to camp 1W and 15 and internally within camps 10 and 22. Safety concerns in the camps were also a consideration by some refugees relocating to Bhasan Char. Refugees in camps 15 and 16 reported that, frequently, marriages with Rohingyas abroad would be arranged, leading to onward movements of refugees from Cox's Bazar in the hope of better living standards in the other country (f.e. Malaysia). Escalating violence, punishment by authorities and imposed movement restrictions were also cited as reasons by some refugees leaving the camps for Myanmar and Malaysia.

From Camp	To Camp	Refugees	# of HH
Camp 10	Camp 10	25	5
Camp 21	Camp 10	5	1
Camp 8W	Camp 8W	1	1
Camp 8E	Camp 8E	2	1
Camp 22	Camp 22	17	3
Camp 24	Camp 20	33	6
Camp 25	Camp 1W	14	3
Camp 1E	Camp 25	8	2
Camp 2W	Camp 25	4	1
Camp 25	Camp 15	10	3
Camp 4	Camp 25	2	1
Camp 9	Camp 7	5	1
Camp 21	Camp 13	1	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>127</b>	<b>29</b>

Refugees expressed concerns about relocating to Bhasan Char. In some instances, the Government's relocations drives were perceived as pressuring refugees because camp authorities instructed Majhis to create lists with a minimum number of households and achieve a set quota. Refugees who did not want to relocate reportedly had to pay 100-500 BDT (approx. 1.30 USD to 8 USD) to Majhis, who would then reportedly pay that amount to families willing to relocate to Bhasan Char. In some cases, Majhis and camp authorities were said to confiscate the Family Counting Number (FCN) card to pressure refugees to relocate to Bhasan Char.

Refugees allegedly associated with criminal groups or accused in criminal cases were also told they had to relocate (for instance 6 cases in Camp 10 and Camp 12). There is also evidence of families living in landslide-prone areas (Camp 10, 5 incidents) being told to relocate. In 4 incidents (Camp 8E, Camp 8W, Camp 10), camp authorities and Majhis enlisted individuals suffering from mental disability and with 2 of these incidents involving a minor.

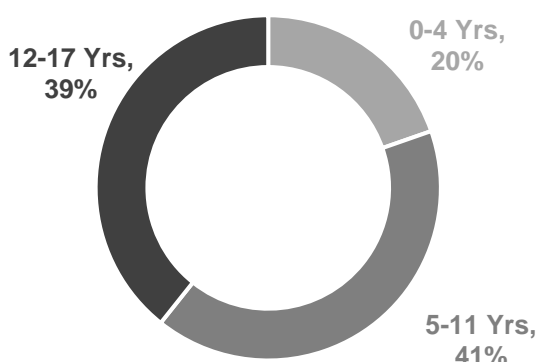
In the period under review, 55 victims of **human trafficking** were identified. The majority were trafficked for labor exploitation purposes (promise of work in agriculture, construction, domestic work, livestock raising, and day labor) with 2 separate cases linked to promise of marriage and education. Of the 55 individuals identified, 34 intended to travel within Cox's Bazar, 17 to other destinations in Bangladesh (Chittagong) and 3 to other countries. According to the data from the Anti-Trafficking Working Group, recruitment or initial engagement in the trafficking situation mainly occurs while refugees are at "home" in the shelter.

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

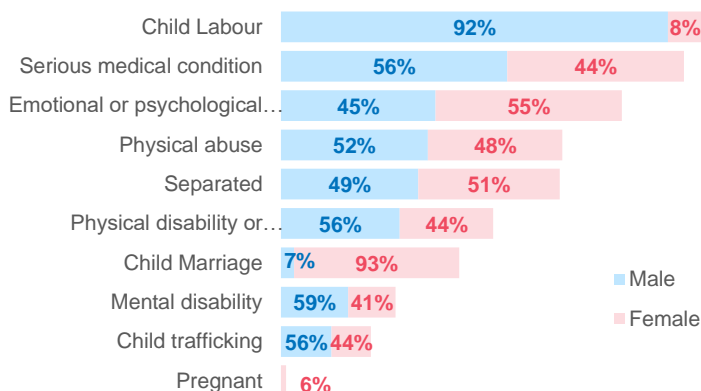


The fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic continued to have a significant impact on children. Organisations reported that due to the decrease of actors on the ground and activities in the camps, including awareness-raising activities and the closure of learning centers and Child Friendly Spaces (CFS), protection concerns as child labor, emotional and physical abuse, and child marriage increased. According to **Child Protection** Information Management System (CPIMS+) data, child labor cases were 17% of total cases (92% boys and 8% girls) and resulted as the highest protection concern for children. Child labor cases were highest in camp 15 (11%), camp 14 (10%) and camp 24 (10%). Concerning physical abuse, the highest numbers of cases were reported in camp 5 (10%), camp 8E (8%), and camp 4 (7%). The highest numbers of reported child marriage cases were in camp 15 (14%), camp 27 (13%), camp 14 (7%), and camp 16 (6%). Families are also known to marry girl-children during uncertain times, as evidenced in the reported figures.

**Child Protection Cases – Disaggregated by Age Group**



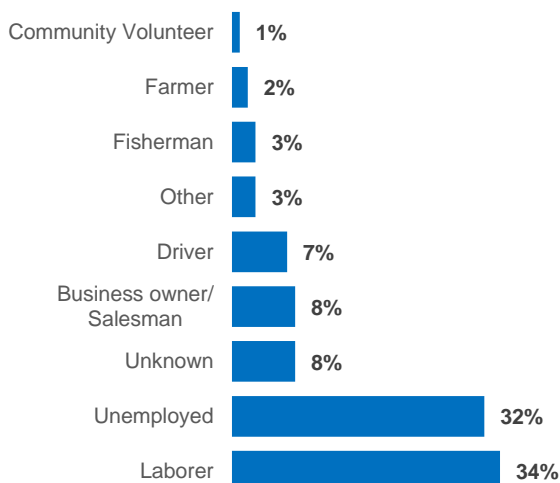
**Top Child Protection Concerns**



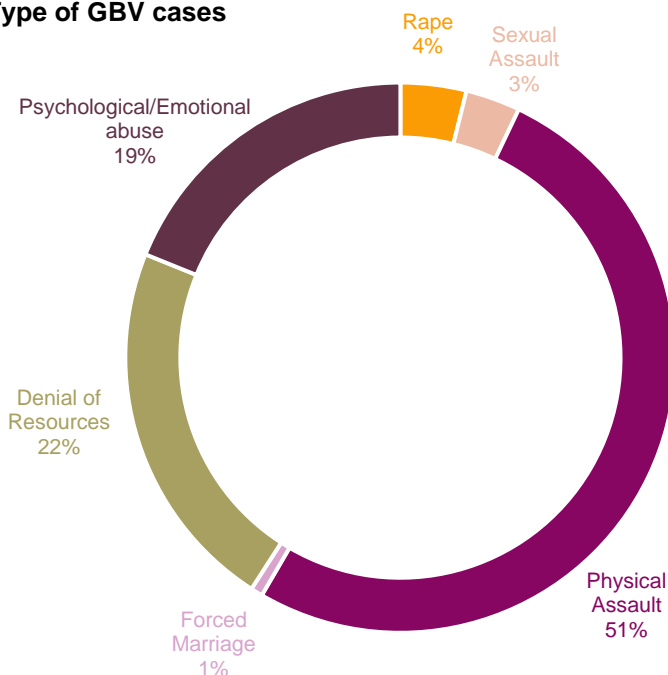
Based on the **Gender-Based Violence** Information Management System (GBVIMS) findings, the top 4 types of GBV incidents of the reporting period were physical assault: 51%, denial of resources: 22%, psychological / emotional Abuse: 19%, and rape: 4%. Physical assault is more prevalent than the other type of GBV.<sup>2</sup> The survivor's residence is the location where the highest number of GBV incidents occur. These findings emphasize the importance of working on mitigation strategies to reduce the risks of GBV in the residences of the survivor and the perpetrators.

The data for Quarter 1 2022 regarding the alleged perpetrator's occupation has been different from the previous year's data, as the highest percentage of perpetrators are laborers. During the last year, unemployed perpetrators were significantly higher. Refugee women and girls with disabilities were at risk of sexual abuse outside the house, at the latrine and bathing points, water collection points, distribution points, and markets.

**GBV Prepetrator's occupation**



**Type of GBV cases**

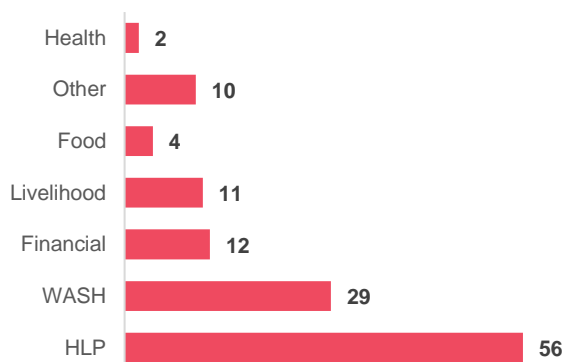


<sup>2</sup>Intersected incidents can only be reported as 1 type of GBV in GBVIMS (based on GBV classification tool and the process of elimination, determining the most specific incident type that applies to the reported incident.). More details in the monthly [here](#) and quarterly GBV factsheet [here](#).

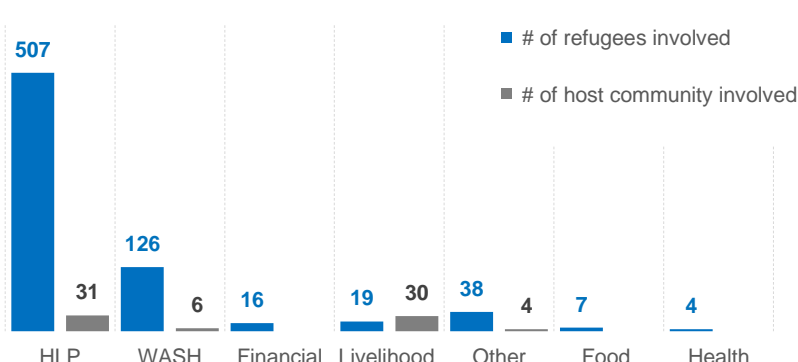
**SOCIAL COHESION AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE**

Incidents between refugees and host community were reported in several camps. In the camps, the host community often rents land and shelters to refugees. Incidents related to renting and housing issues were reported in Camp 1W, 6, 8 E/W, 9, 10, 12, 15, 16, 22, 25, with a marked peak in January 2022. Refugees, who have accrued debt for renting land or using communal services, sell their food or non-food rations to pay the debt. This was a particular trend in camps 1E, 12, 16, and 21. In camp 12, host community members are said to be collecting half of the refugees' monthly food rations by way of rental payment. Unpaid debt resulted in quarreling and social conflict. In camp 8E, camp 11 and camp 12, host community members imposing arbitrary rental fees on refugees or illegal taxes to secure their right to stay on a given land were identified.

**# of incidents reported**



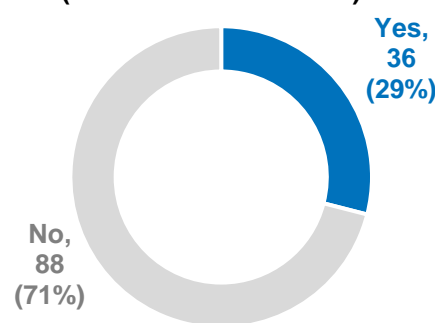
**# of refugees and host community involved in the incident**



Incidents were observed of Rohingya refugee families being threatened with eviction by host landowners attempting to dislodge the refugee community from areas considered under their ownership. In one incident in camp 8E, three families had paid host community landowners BDT 20,000 (approx. 320 USD) upon their arrival in Bangladesh to secure their right to live on that land. The agreement was sealed through a written document stating that the Rohingya families could live there until they returned to Myanmar. Nevertheless, the three families also had to pay the host landowners a 'rental fee' of BDT 500 (approx. 8 USD) per month. During this quarter, the landowners revisited the agreement with the families and threatened them with eviction.

Disagreements and resentment among communities hampered access to services. Communal water points and latrines caused much of the social conflict between refugees and host communities, leading to disputes and negative attitudes towards Rohingya refugees. In most circumstances, authorities were not involved or did not intervene.

**Peaceful Coexistence  
(Authorities intervened)**



**ACCESS TO JUSTICE**

Formal and informal justice systems (legal partners or traditional/community level) exist in the camps with varying effectiveness for the refugees. 6,537 (57% are women and girls) refugees received assistance from camp-based legal aid partners including legal counselling, mediation, assistance to file cases at police stations and courts, and legal representation. Legal partners accompanied and/or assisted 27 refugees (9 men, 16 women and 2 boys) to lodge complaints at police stations or to file cases in courts in relation to different protection incidents such as physical assault, killing, abduction, sexual violence, missing person, etc. Legal partners' lawyers provided direct legal representation to 8 refugees (7 men and 1 woman) in courts.

However, in many camps, Majhis or criminal groups were reported to be involved in mediation at the block level. Sometimes the informal system, which is often mediated by Majhis (i.e. in camp 1E) and/or criminal groups, at times also involves the authorities, mainly if the dispute resolution requires the accused refugee to pay money which in turn profits the mediators. Confiscation of refugee documents (with the subsequent lack of access to services) was cited as a form of punishment by some refugees who did not agree with the proposed mediation/resolution of their case. They would then have to pay a fee to reclaim their FCN card. In camp 16, refugees said that the Majhi would confiscate the refugee documents if refugees bypassed him and went to the camp authority. With authorization needed from camp authorities to file cases with the police, the camp authority in camp 25 was said to dissuade the legal partner from filing a case with the police, claiming it does not produce a proper solution and redirecting all matters to the camp authority team.

Refugees were arrested for playing ludo and carrom and accused of gambling. Refugees reported they have been arrested without sufficient evidence or under false charges and paid a fee to be released.

While legal awareness sessions are organized in the camps by protection actors, some persons with disabilities reported challenges in accessing formal justice systems, including services provided by legal partners and camp authorities, due to lack of confidence to approach partners and authorities and knowledge about the services (camp 1E and 1W). Concerns were also shared that the services are not sufficiently accommodating the dignity of a person with disability.

In camp 1W, women refugees said GBV survivors feared social stigma and did not have the money to pay the Majhi to resolve their matter. As per GBVIMS, 21% of the reported GBV incidents were referred to Legal Assistance; of them 49% of the survivors declined legal assistance services.

**ACCESS TO SERVICES**

During the reporting period, refugees reportedly faced various barriers when accessing humanitarian services. Refugees reported challenges in accessing food, mainly because of registration issues related to the updating of their cards.

The barriers that refugees with disabilities faced included age and disability discrimination, bullying, physical assault, and shyness or lack of confidence. They also stated to experience long wait times for some health and WASH services due to the number of people, lack of lighting, inaccessible roads, and struggle to carry the aid they received to their shelter.

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



Movement restrictions were sometimes a barrier to refugees accessing health services and distributions outside the camps. In camp 15, refugees said they could access health services but were not satisfied with the quality, as health services did not conduct eye and hearing tests.

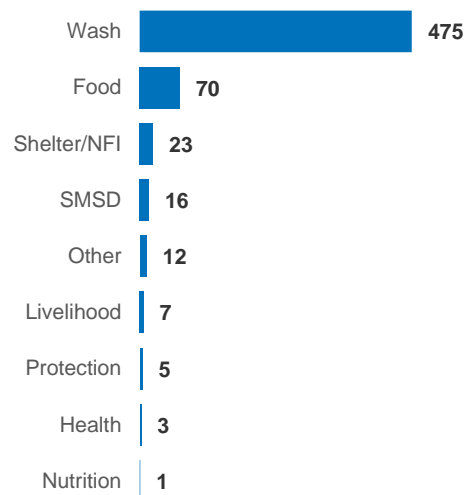
In other camps, refugees said they needed food, education services, employment opportunities, and WASH services. Refugee children with disabilities faced specific challenges in accessing education; for example, there was no material for visually impaired children, or the education facilities were too far from the shelters.

Families that split to relocate to Bhasan Char encountered barriers to access assistance because the authorities took back the refugees' cards, which were needed by the remaining family members to access services in the camps. Some refugee men who had a second family, relocated to Bhasan Char, leaving the other family behind in the camps without the refugee card. In the camps, the CiC also forbade partners from distributing food to refugees who returned from Bhasan Char but were no longer officially residing in the camp (with few exceptions based on successful advocacy by protection focal points). Authorities also allegedly deprived food access to refugees who were accused of disobedience to punish them.

Some coordination challenges in the delivery of protection services resulted from the camp authorities' actions: in camp 21, the camp authority prohibited solar lamp distribution to vulnerable women and girls; the camp authority reduced volunteers' monthly honorarium; some authorities did not approve NGOs and UN agencies' requests to conduct activities. Reacting to Majhis' complaints, camp and law enforcement authorities, in some instances, confiscated refugees' FCN cards as punishment. The extended camp authority team (guards, CMA) at times interfered with protection cases that needed the camp authority's attention.

**Denial of Services**

(# of Refugees affected by Sector)



**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 for increased patrolling by APBn inside and at the perimeters of the camps to prevent and reduce violence against, and threats to the safety of refugees by criminal groups and mitigate escalating violence.
- Ensure timely, fair and effective investigation and prosecution of crimes in the camps to fight against impunity and deter criminal activities in the camps.
- Advocate with camp and law enforcement authorities to facilitate access to justice for refugees with the support of legal partners in the camps, including facilitating reporting of cases to the authorities.
- Strengthen investigation and criminal prosecution and internal disciplinary procedures for abuses by law enforcement personnel and establish mechanisms in camps to report police misconduct.
- Enhance Protection coordination at the camp level between camp authorities and focal points/organisations through thematic discussions on principles of humanitarian intervention, Protection, and Child Protection principles.
- Strengthen the role and oversight by the camp authorities on relocation to Bhasan Char, establishing clear procedures for identifying and screening refugees who are willing to be relocated to Bhasan Char. Procedures should be aimed at preventing family separation to avoid children leaving to Bhasan Char without parents or guardians.
- Advocate with authorities for access to food and other services for refugees who have returned from Bhasan Char for protection or other legitimate reasons.
- Increase awareness on the risks of smuggling and trafficking in persons, as well as on the risks and dangers that may arise before, during and after irregular onward movements from Bangladesh.
- WASH, Shelter, and other relevant actors to strengthen protection mainstreaming in their intervention to mitigate social tension within the refugee community and between host and refugees. Humanitarian service providers to also improve accessibility to persons with disabilities.
- Livelihood working group partners to expand employability, vocational training, financial literacy, and micro-finance services to address negative coping mechanisms such as child marriage, child labor etc.
- Engage with the ISCG and RRRC to ensure a data protection and sharing protocol on GBV and CP project information as part of data sharing agreements.