Cox’s Bazar District, Bangladesh
Emergency: Rohingya Refugee – Protracted Grade 2 Emergency
Reporting period: 1st - 31st October 2023

HIGHLIGHTS

- Cyclone Hamoon hit the coastline of Cox’s Bazar bringing strong winds and heavy rainfall that affected Cox’s Bazar town with varying degrees of structural damages. The refugee camps were generally unscathed with no impact on health services, no casualties detected.
- Delivery of health services have continued at normal levels; however, partners continue to operate with caution as they monitor the impact of the countrywide politically motivated movement blockage.
- The public health situation remained stable in October with no observed change in morbidity or mortality pattern, availability and access to essential services remain stable. Dengue incidence continued to decline. Maternal and Child Health outcomes remain a concern.
- The health service utilization rate in October maintained the decline noted in August 2023 following the roll out of health cards. About 430,000 OPD consultations were provided representing a 21% reduction compared to August 2023. The general morbidity/disease distribution pattern has remained consistent with pattern seen prior.
- Scabies MDA: Distribution planned to be started November 2023 in a geographically phased approached.

FUNDING $USD

3.4 % reported in the UNOCHA Financial Tracking System However, the June 2023 sector funding analysis indicates about USD 47.3m (49%) may have been received/committed by the time of the assessment.
General Situation

- **Cyclone:** On 24th October 2024, a powerful Cyclonic Storm “Hamoon” hit the coastline of Cox’s Bazar bringing strong winds and heavy rainfall and moved further North-Westwards and completed crossing the coast by 25th Nov 2023. More than 60 mm of rainfall was recorded with wind speeds ranging from 120 km/h to 155 km/h on 24 October 2023. While Cox's Bazar town suffered various degrees of structural damages, the health services and facilities in the camp were not impacted, no casualties detected.

- **Countrywide movement blockage:** By the end of October 2023, there has been recurrent call by some political parties in the country to impose country wide blockade. While skirmishes or disturbances may have been detected in some parts of the country, in Cox’s Bazar partners are still able to continue with routine operations through with enhance precaution and vigilance.

- Otherwise, the situation has remained steady with routine services delivery without major changes.

Health Services

**General Services:** In October, a total of 430,249 OPD Consultations were provided, still maintaining the decline detected since August when the health card was launched, and lower than the seasonal dips seen around the same time in the year before. The other factor may be related to the significant seasonal decline in Dengue cases. Overall, about 4.6 million OPD consultations have been conducted approximating to about 3.2 per person per year so far. There is no change detected in the disease burden among the refugees with as demonstrated in the bar chart. Through the existing mortality surveillance mechanism, a total of 2,270 deaths from all causes were recorded within the refugee population by October 2023 representing a Crude Death Rate of about 2.4 deaths per 1,000.

**Referral Services:** During January-October, about 36,000 patients were referred for different medical services. Of these, 63% were referred to other PHCCs within the camps, 14% to the nearby Upazilla health complexes, and 16% to Cox’s Bazar Sadar hospital. Most (57%) were elective while 43% were due to various medical emergencies. The slight increase in referrals in August and September may have been to interruption in CEmONC capacity in the camp before Friendship Field Hospital scaled up its capacity in September 2023.

![Graph 1: OPD Consultation](image)

![Graph 3: #Patients Refered Out of the refugee camps](image)

![Distribution of morbidites (Jan-Oct, 2023.)](image)
Public health risks, priorities, needs, and gaps

1. Communicable Disease Control and Surveillance

Dengue

The Dengue outbreak has declined to levels like post outbreak transmission levels observed in 2022. About 700 cases were added in October bring the total approximately 13,000 cases. In October, one more dengue related death was reported resulting in 17 total deaths in 2023: Case Fatality Rate of 0.1%. WHO is planning an Entomology survey to understand better the vector and other environmental factors associated with the outbreak.

COVID-19: On COVID-19, no significant change in the incidence. Globally, WHO continues to track three variants of interest XBB.1.5, XBB.1.16 and EG.5. EG.5 is the most prevalent variant accounting for 39% of the cases. In the South East Asia region, very small data from few countries was submitted to the Global Initiative for Sharing All Influenza Data (GISAID) hence caution in interpretation. However, XBB.2.3 accounted for most sequences in India, while in Myanmar XBB.1.9.2 and XBB.2.3 were detected. No data was available for Bangladesh. (WHO SEARO, Oct 2023)

Other Communicable Disease: In October, the situation for the other infectious diseases e.g., Measles, Diphtheria, and AWD/Cholera remain stable without any significant change in trend.

Health Sector Action


Adapting the WHO Package of High Priority Health Services for Humanitarian Setting (H3 Package): The draft package for Cox’s Bazar is still under review by the Strategic Advisory Group to submit their feedback by November, thereafter the document is for further review by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Joint Response Plan (JRP) 2024: The 2024 Joint Response Plan process is on track with the peer review and selection of projects (by the SAG) scheduled for November 2024. The PRT will prioritize projects that demonstrate strong technical/operational relevance and feasibility, strong fundraising record, consistent coordination commitments, safeguards for humanitarian principles in addition to PRT Guidelines.
Community Health Working Group (led by UNHCR/Green Hill):

- Continued to ensure the refugees receive the General Health Card and issuance for new-borns, new arrivals, etc.
- Cyclone Hamoon: Over 1700 Community Health Workers (CHWs) disseminated pre- and post-cyclone awareness messages to more than 500,000 individuals, provided clinical and psychological first aid to over 5,000 individuals.
- More than 1600 CHWs and 160 Supervisors received training on Mass Drug Administration and continue to raise awareness at community level through interpersonal and mass communication on MDA for scabies are ongoing at the camp level.

2. Health Sector Partners Update

BDRCS: In close consultation with the government and aligned with rationalization principles of the health sector, a joint decision was reached by about five partners operating the health facilities to reallocate their resources to other health facilities where gaps are identified leaving only Save the Children to operate the PHC in camp 15. This decision in undergirded by the rationalization assessment and credit to these partners for their strategic resolve and coordination to increase efficiency in the longer term.

IOM: On 24th October 2023, Cyclonic Storm Hamoon brought strong winds and heavy rainfall in Cox’s Bazar town and northerly areas that were in eye of the storm. IOM as a co-lead to the EPR technical working group led preparedness actions that included prepositioning of Mobile Medical Team Technical (MMTs), facilitated coordination meetings of the MMT partners, prepositioning emergency health logistics, including MMT kits. IOM coordinated the referral unit (DRU) with 36 ambulances on standby from health sector partners, including 11 IOM ambulances. Facilitated 400 Community Health Workers and provided cyclone preparedness messages to 16,410 people prior to the cyclone's landfall and 30,733 people after the cyclone's landfall; first aid services provided to 24 injured people.

Refugee Crisis Foundation/HMBD: Healthy Smile Program, Dental Clinic at Nayapara Registered Camp

Due to the high burden of oral disease and limited availability to dental care, RCF delivered the first oral health prevention program for children. The project aims to prevent and reduce tooth decay and instil healthy hygiene habits from an early age as a habit that contributes to healthy development and reduction of preventable diseases. We have established washing facilities in the learning centre in camp 13. The station has a capacity for twenty children at a time.

The teachers received training from RCF’s dental team on handwashing and toothbrushing. Every day, each child in the class partakes in the group activity at the washing station where they brush their teeth with fluoridated toothpaste and wash their hands with soap. We will be providing regular oral health screening and dental treatment for the children. The project has received financial support from the FDI World Dental Federation.

In partnership with RRRC, UNHCR, HMBD and Susuaville, we opened the dental clinic at Nayapara Registered Camp in August 2023 with services that include comprehensive dental treatment including fillings, extractions, and abscess drainage. On average, 300 patients are treated monthly.

UNHCR: Bhasan Char
Integrative ADAPT Therapy training for Community Para-Counsellors: A two-day refresher training and supportive supervision workshop on Integrated Adaptive therapy (IAT) was arranged for 4 community Para counsellors (CPCs) and one newly joined psychologist. The workshop was focused on the common challenges and gaps that CPCs were encountering during practices of the IAT intervention. The training was led by the IAT-trained Friendship psychologist.

UNHCR: Cox’s Bazar

- On the 10th of October, UNHCR-supported partners observed World Mental Health Day with the support of the various stakeholders (MHPSS technical working group, CiCs, community leaders, etc.) in camps on the theme ‘Mental health is a universal human right’.

World Health Organization:

- Trained a total of 117 IPC Focal (Male-77 and Female-40) person on “Infection, Prevention, and Control (IPC) from various NGOs/INGOs health facilities in the camps. 51 participants (36 males and 15 females) received refresher training on “Biosafety, Uses of RDTs and Different Sample collection Procedure” for healthcare workers in camp settings to strengthen practices to minimize exposures to biological agents and to avoid any incidents
- Under ‘Health and Gender Support Project’, gap-filling support of medicines for managing Hypertension and Diabetes Mellitus were provided to 17 health facilities of FDMN camps supported by IOM and RTMI. The medicines included 23,72,000 pcs - Tablet Amlodipine 5 mg, 4,25,000 pcs - Tablet Losartan 50 mg, 56,000 pcs - Tablet Hydrochlorothiazide 25 mg, 24,52,000 pcs - Tablet Metformin 500 mg, 504,000 pcs - Tablet Gliclazide 80 mg, 249,984 pcs of Tablet Aspirin 75 mg and 21,10,000 pcs - Tablet Rosuvastatin 5 mg.


References
3. The Government of Bangladesh refers to the Rohingya population in Bangladesh as “Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDPMs).” The United Nations (UN) system refers to this population as Rohingya refugees, in line with the relevant international framework.
4. World Health Organization (11 August 2023). Disease Outbreak News; Dengue in Bangladesh. Available at: https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news/item/2023-DON481
5. https://healthcluster.who.int/publications/m/item/health-cluster-dashboard-q1-march-2023
6. Please visit the Health Sector Webpage available here to access the following: Health Sector HeRAMS, Health Sector 4W, Health Sector Training Planner, and Sector strategic documents
7. Health Service Performance Indicators Data Source: Health Sector Monthly 4W report and, HeRAMS (Data Extracted on 16 November 2023)