

JOINT PROTECTION MONITORING REPORT

592

Focus Group Discussion (persons reached)

248

Home Visits

660

Key Informant Interviews (persons reached)

58%

Men

42%

Women

7%

People with disabilities

	Female	Male
Children (0-17)	1%	1%
Adult (18-59)	34%	50%
Elderly (60+)	7%	7%

The Joint Protection Monitoring framework is implemented by the Protection Sector since January 2022 to promote the systematic and regular collection, triangulation, and analysis of protection incidents and risks for the Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar camps. The Joint Protection Monitoring reports serve to inform protection programming and advocacy through a common and standardized evidence-based information collection. This report offers a better understanding of the protection situation in the camps through joint monitoring of the protection incidents and analysis of risks, threats, and vulnerabilities periodically. Six partners (UNHCR, IOM, IRC, DRC, OXFAM and HI) conduct protection monitoring as a core protection program covering 33 camps. This report also reflects the contributions of CP and GBV Sub-Sectors as well as of the Anti-Trafficking Working Group, Gender-Diverse Population Working Group and the Housing, Land and Property Technical Advisor.

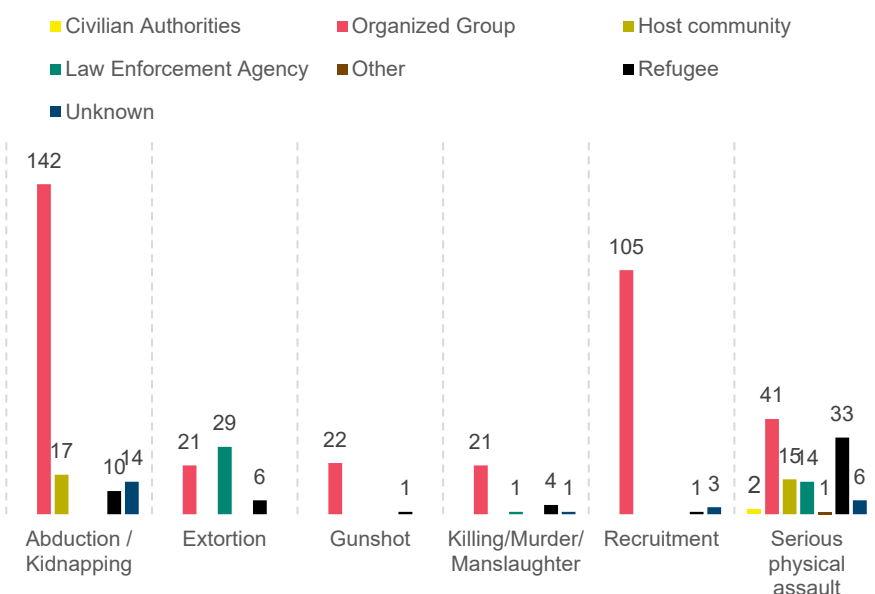
Executive Summary: Since mid- to late April, organized groups have been implementing various tactics to force, intimidate, or manipulate refugees with false promises of payment, repatriation, or citizenship, to join their groups to engage in the armed conflict. In mid-May, the dynamics in Ukhiya camps shifted noticeably due to Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA's) increased presence, raising significant security concerns. Spikes in reprisal attacks from the Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO) were observed in the camps. A total of 27 killing incidents, of which the majority were because of confrontations between organized groups, were reported during the quarter. In May and June, several gatherings, and protests from refugees against forced recruitment occurred in 9 camps.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

A total of 510 serious protection incidents¹ directly affecting 604 Rohingya refugees have been recorded across the camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf during the second quarter of 2024. Major safety and security incidents include abduction/kidnapping (183), serious physical assault (112), recruitment² (109), extortion (56), killing/murder/manslaughter (27), and gunshots/suspected use of firearms (23),

There was an overall increase of 26% in the total number of reported protection incidents (excluding recruitment, a new type of incident this quarter) in comparison to quarter 1 (2024). An emerging trend of organized groups recruiting refugees, particularly male refugees, including adolescents and youths, to engage them presumably in the armed conflict in Myanmar was reported across all camps as an emerging heightened protection concern.

Alleged perpetrator per category by incident



¹ For this report, the serious incidents collected are related to the following categories only: abduction/kidnapping, extortion, killing/murder/manslaughter, serious physical assault, gunshot/suspected use of firearms and recruitment. This last category was included for this report and will be monitored in the following Joint Protection Monitoring Reports.

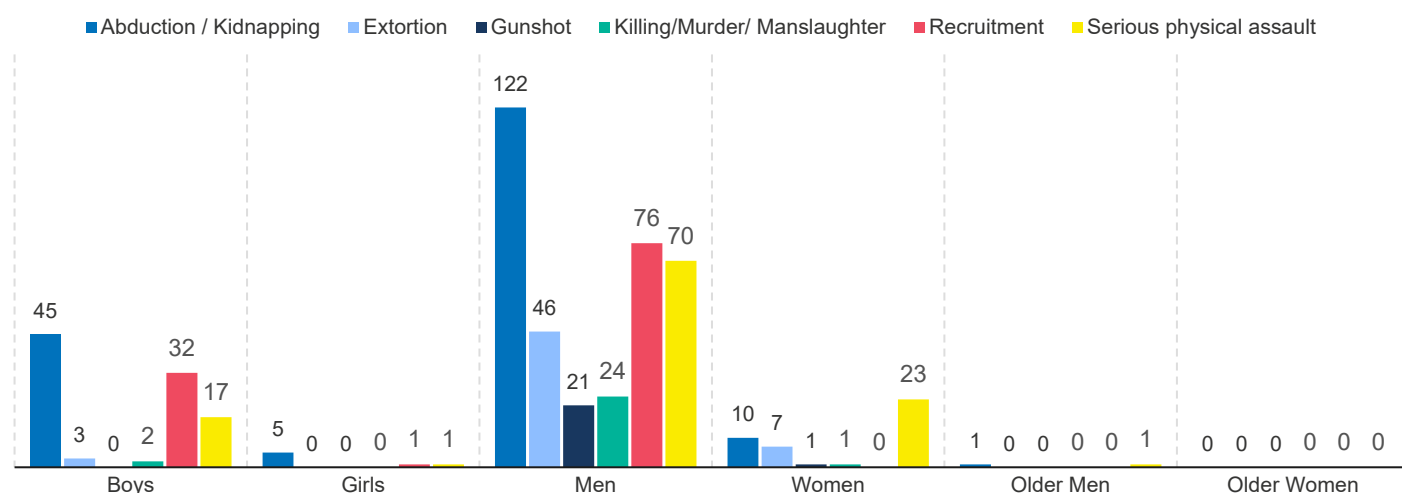
² For this report, the Sector started reporting on number of incidents of recruitment. For child recruitment cases kindly refer to page 3.

*UNHCR Data portal link available [here](#)

The highest number of cases came from camps 3, 4, 5, 7, 8E, 8W, 9, 11 and 12. Threats of recruitment compelled many young people to leave the camps leaving behind their female and elderly members at home at night making their situation vulnerable and exposing them to heightened protection risks. Incidents of recruitment were reported in January and February 2024. However, the scale and intensity of recruitment activities increased dramatically in March and April. Reportedly, organized groups used various tactics to force (abduction/kidnapping), intimidate through large scale gatherings involving Majhi's and imams at times, or manipulate refugees with false promises such as payment for joining, repatriation to Myanmar, or granting Myanmar citizenship if they join their group to engage in the ongoing conflict in Myanmar. Refugees demonstrated against forced recruitments and participated in protests in May and June in at least nine camps including 1E, 1W, 4, 4 Ext, 5, 15, and 18 involving allegedly more than 8,000 refugees. While these gatherings sent strong messages by the refugees, including in the appeal of women to the camp authorities to restore law and order, in several camps the protests resulted in violent clashes where refugees were reported injured and three lost their lives during these gatherings. Recruitment incidents of male adults dropped sharply in June most likely as a result of enhanced Law Enforcement Agency interventions combined with the mobilization of refugees against these activities.

Ongoing power struggle and confrontation between RSO and ARSA continued to deteriorate the security situation in particular in Camp 4 Ext and its surrounding areas. The location of Camp 4Ext, near the forest and with occasional presence and patrolling by APBn enhanced the isolation of the area and provided an opportunity for organized groups to increase their movements and violent activities. ARSA members from different camps were reported to be hiding in the hilly area outside the camp boundary with members often entering the camp for food and water supplies and extortion from refugees. Retaliatory abductions and extortion by RSO were reported. On 10 June, several confrontations occurred between the two organized groups, which led to 4 refugees being killed and 8 refugees severely injured and led the entire population of Camp 4EXT Block F to spontaneously self-relocate to nearby blocks and other camps.

Demographic of Serious Protection Incidents*



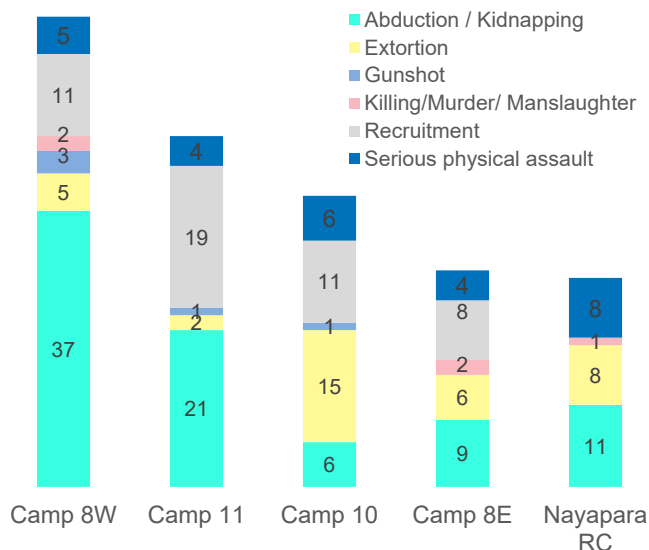
*There was one reported incident of gunshot involving a person of unknown gender and age, one abduction case for which the age or gender of the refugee wasn't identified and an incident of serious physical attack for which the gender and age of the refugee was also unknown.

Killings almost doubled during the reporting period with an 80% increase in comparison to quarter 1 (2024), most of the victims being men (89%) and remaining were two boys and a woman. Targeted killings -including killings against those who failed to pay ransom for abducted individuals- and crossfire between organized groups continue to be the main drivers of violent deaths inside the camps. Abduction and kidnapping incidents rose by 20% inside the camps and in the adjacent host community. Rohingya refugees, including 50 children, were abducted by members of organized groups who subjected them to beatings, psychological and emotional abuse and coerced them into paying a ransom to secure their release. In May, ten refugee youths between the ages of 15 and 25 from Camp 8W, were allegedly abducted by RSO members while sitting at a neighbouring shop run by a refugee. They were reportedly transported to Thaingkhali village of Palongkhali union, where they suffered brutal torture before being released upon payment of BDT 15,000 each.

Incidents of extortion registered a 23% increase compared to quarter 1. Allegations of physical assault and verbal abuse towards refugees also increased by 55% in comparison to the last quarter. Fear of retaliation from perpetrators held up victims from reporting to service providers or authorities.

Poor lighting, including reports of increased theft of solar batteries in camp 1E, in latrines and bathing facilities intensified safety concerns for women and girls specifically. An increase in theft and movements by organized group members was reported with refugees being pushed to do night patrolling by the Head Majhi's and Law Enforcement Agencies. The imposition of fines (BDT 150-200) for non-compliance added financial strain to already impoverished residents. The Rohingya community expressed heightened anxiety for their families and neighbors residing along the border in Myanmar due to the ongoing conflict, leading to sleepless nights. Due to declining livelihood options inside the camps, the community especially male family members were reported to be looking for employment in the host community. Their increased mobility within the host society puts them at risk of abduction and human trafficking as well as arrest/detention for being outside the camps in an unauthorized manner.

Top 5 camps by incidents reported



During the second quarter of the year, 55 cases of human trafficking of refugees within Bangladesh were recorded. The profile of victims, type of trafficking and modus operandi of traffickers remained largely the same in comparison to quarter 1 (2024). Most human trafficking victims were male (62%), trafficked under the promise of paid labor and ended up in forced labor. In addition, 6 children were identified as victims of trafficking. Refugees' homes/shelters were reported to be the main place for initial engagement with the traffickers and the majority remained in Cox's Bazar (47%) or were reportedly taken to Chittagong (27%).

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

55
Refugees Identified

34
Men

15
Women

4
Boys

2
Girls

CHILD PROTECTION

Reports of child recruitment were raised in almost all refugee camps in Quarter 2³. Children aged 14 to 18 were coerced into joining armed groups in Myanmar. These groups primarily targeted young boys with prior training in Myanmar. Dusk has been identified as the most dangerous time for abductions for recruitment in the camps. Children were either coerced into joining armed groups or do so voluntarily, often driven by financial incentives.

Families were reported to face threats from armed groups which resulted in some parents opting to send their children to host communities at night for safety. Threats of abduction also led parents to organize patrols. During the reporting period, some community members lost their lives trying to prevent abductions and the recruitment of their own children by armed groups. Families of recruited children lived in constant fear. Recruited children were reportedly subjected to torture in Myanmar and there were reported cases of children returning back to the camps after escaping. As a coping mechanism, children were reported to limit their movements to avoid recruitment; this has impacted the overall participation of boys and adolescents in camp activities.

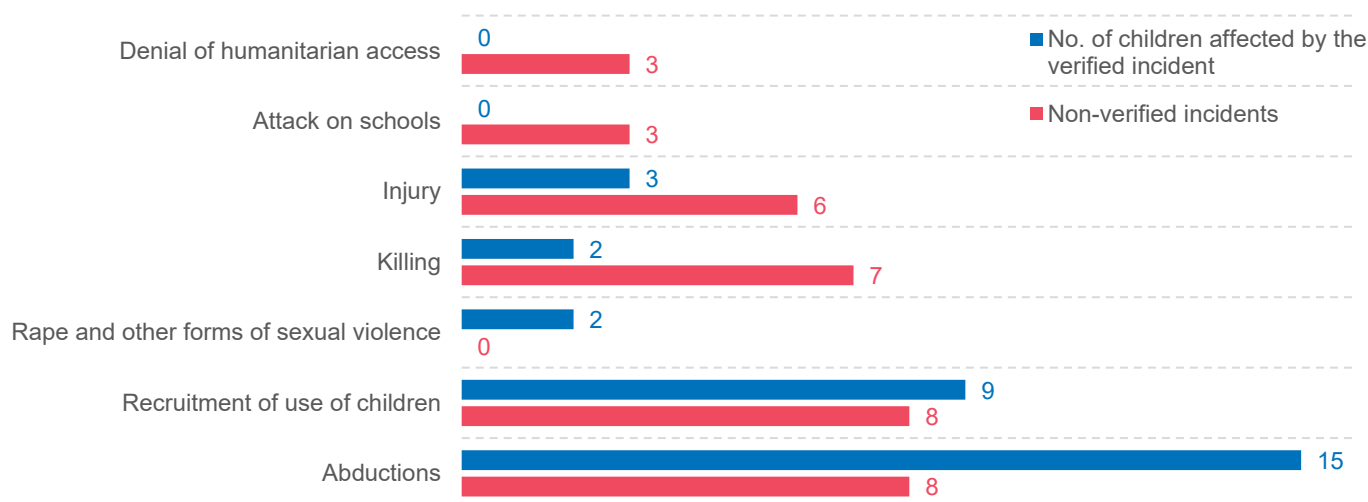
There was a generalized perception from some children who stated that their lives in the camps were worse than in Myanmar and felt humiliated by not having documentation and access to work. Influenced significantly by peer pressure and social media, some adolescents expressed a desire to "fight for their country" and saw this as a way to contribute financially to their families.

³ Data has been gathered from the Child Protection Situation Monitoring (CPSM) initiative launched in Q1 2024. It includes inputs from 742 key Informant Interviews (KII) comprising community leaders, teachers, Majhi's, child protection workers, and volunteers, alongside 453 Adolescents who participated in 44 Focus Group Discussions (FGD). Additionally, the Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS+) records child protection cases managed by CPSS partners in the camps and child recruitment risk assessment and analysis.

Children recruited by armed groups during the reporting period, took on various roles, including cleaning, handling arms, sharing information, and carrying food.

UNICEF reported through the Child Rights Monitoring Mechanism (CRMM)⁴ that a total of 68 incidents committed against children by armed groups were documented. Of these, 33 incidents of serious violations were verified which affected 31 children (26 boys, 2 girls, 3 of unknown sex), mostly aged between 14-17 years. The breakdown of these verified incidents is as follows:

Serious child rights incidents - CRMM



* Out of the 68 reported incidents, 35 could not be verified during the reporting period.

Pervasive fear within the camps has significantly impacted the reporting and verification of child rights violations. Organized groups like RSO and ARSA, exert considerable influence over the population by creating fear among them. This environment of fear has severely hindered the collection and verification of essential data needed to prevent serious violations against children.

Community members, including primary and secondary sources, expressed their reluctance to report violations due to the potential threat of reprisals from these violent groups which led to significant underreporting; and on many occasions, it is likely that individuals may have opted to remain silent as a way to protect themselves and their families from harm.

Other child protection incidents reported during Quarter 2 include impact on children’s mental health (reported by 64% of the adults) and behavioral and psychological problems among children. Out of the total cases, 11% (reported in the CPIMS+) pertain specifically to mental health and psychosocial support issues. In the focus group discussions (FGDs) with children, boys reported domestic violence, educational deprivation, and insecurity from armed groups as their greatest concerns inside the camps. While there is some access to mental health services and cultural activities, they were reported to be insufficient in the current situation.

A total of 59% of key respondents (KII) indicated that children were engaged in labor that hinders their education and playtime. In the CPIMS+ system, 8% of reported cases involved child labor. The types of labor vary, with boys primarily working in the camp markets, performing daily labor outside the camp, and carrying loads, while girls are predominantly engaged in domestic chores such as sewing, tailoring, or begging. The children reported that economic necessity, financial hardships, lack of earning family members, and cultural practices drive them into labor to support their families. Additionally, parental pressure and a lack of awareness about the importance of education further exacerbates the issue.

Approximately 32% of adults acknowledged that child marriage is happening in their communities, with causes linked to cultural beliefs, romantic entanglements among the youth and poverty. Child marriage accounts for 4.3% of the total reported cases in the CPIMS+ emphasizing its substantial but often overlooked presence. The repercussions, including early pregnancy and educational disruption, indicate a profound impact on children's health and future. Children reported

⁴ The Child Rights Monitoring Mechanism (CRMM) is an undertaking of the United Nations in Bangladesh. It aims to prevent occurrences and trigger an immediate response to Child Rights Violations (CRV) in situations of violence. The CRMM is a specialized framework established to monitor, document, respond to, and report serious violations of children's rights in situations of violence, particularly Cox's Bazar. With the growing instability in the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar and along the border with Myanmar, there have been increasing reports of CRVs that need to be properly monitored and verified.

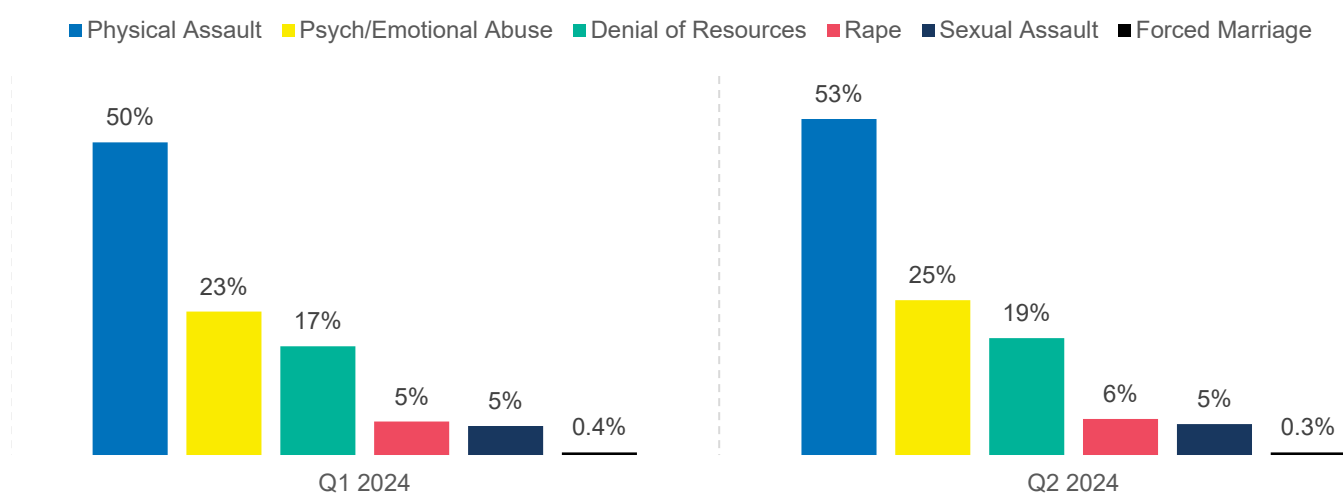
that they feel pressured into these unions due to cultural norms, safety concerns, the lack of proper accommodation, and economic needs.

A total of 69% of adults during Quarter 2, identified child neglect by caregivers, attributed to a lack of awareness, domestic violence, and unemployment. Child neglect represented 34% of the total cases reported in the CPIMS+. Children reported that the main driver of neglect is economic hardship, coupled with large family size and gender discrimination. Children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to being neglected. Parental preoccupation with work, mental health issues further contribute to neglect.

Children also reported that the main driver of violence against children in camps is rooted in family dynamics, community interactions, and societal norms. Children face physical abuse, verbal insults, and harassment from family members, peers, and community leaders.

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Top types of GBV reported (by %)



During the reporting period, physical assault was the most common type of GBV reported, accounting for 53% of the incidents reported under the GBVIMS, followed by Psychological/Emotional abuse (25%) and denial of resources (19%).

There has been an increasing trend of reporting sexual violence in the camps. According to the GBV camp focal points, although sexual violence accounted for around 11% of the reported cases in quarter 2 (rape for 5% and sexual assault for 5%), in quarter 1, they constituted 10% of the reported cases which was a 2% increase in terms of such reports in comparison to quarter 4 2023.

Regarding women and girls' safety and security perceptions in the camps, GBV camp focal points from nearly two-thirds (64.6%) of the camps surveyed indicated that women and girls are feeling unsafe or very unsafe in the camps in Q2, 2024. Heightened protection risks such as kidnapping, abductions, thefts, assaults, and robberies in addition to the insecurity associated with the recruitment of men and boys were reported by the BGV partners as the major concerns affecting women and girls.

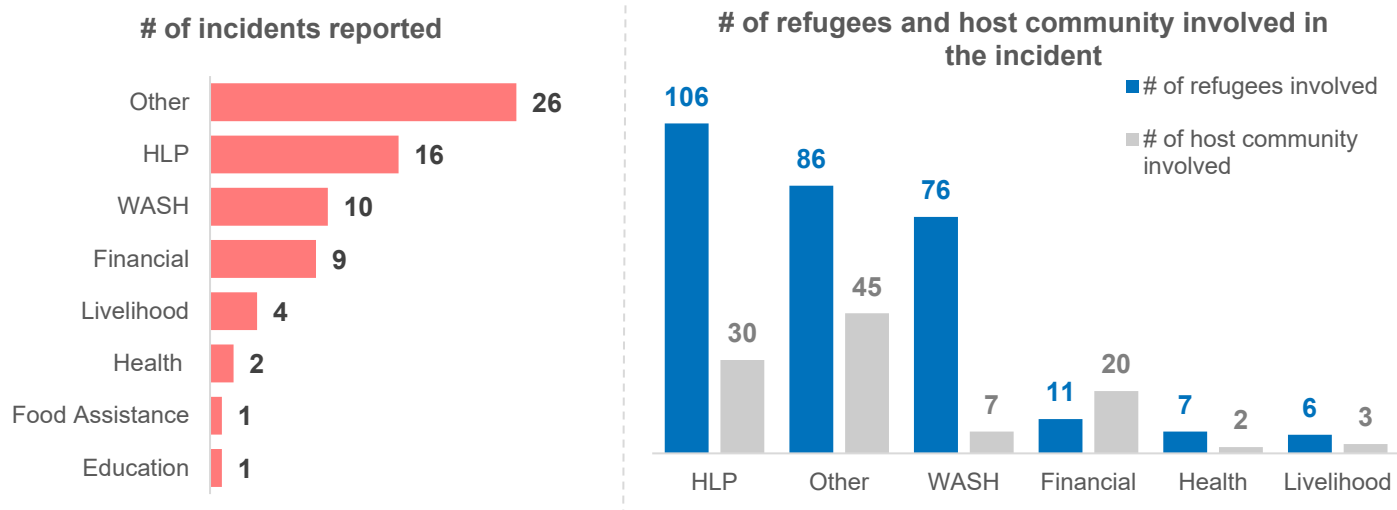
By case context, 74% of the cases correspond to Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), regardless of the classification above.

**For a full comprehensive report with more in-depth GBV risk monitoring, please refer to the [GBVSS GBVIMS factsheet \(Q2, 2024\)](#) on Rohingya Refugee Response website.*

SOCIAL COHESION AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

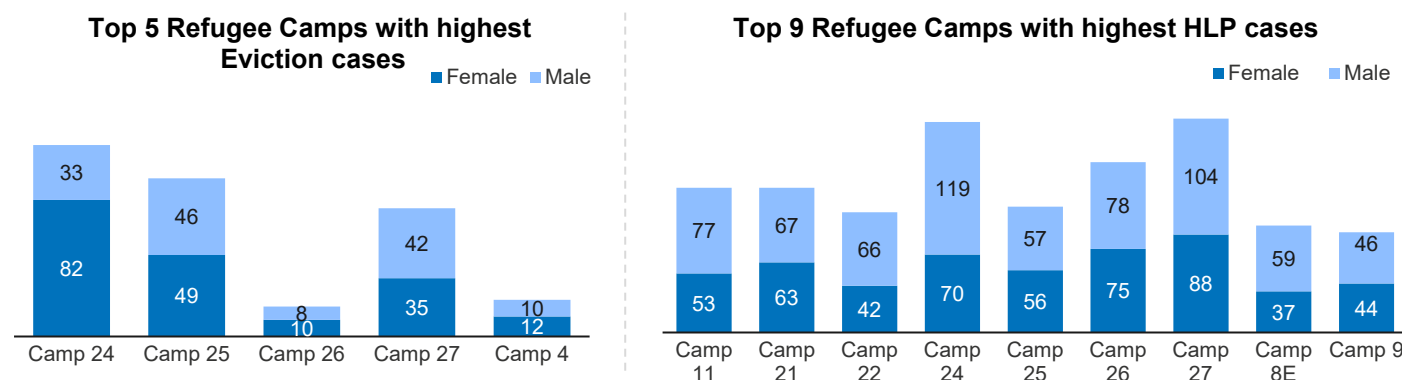
A total of 69 incidents were reported during quarter 2 showing an increase of 77% compared to quarter 1. Incidents involved 399 individuals, with 73% of these incidents relating to refugees and the rest to host communities. The highest number of incidents reported correspond to "others"; this includes disagreements regarding the division of income from joint business projects, conflicts linked to debts and borrowed money, quarrels related to loan repayments, disputes over the sale of counterfeit gold and online gambling. A total of 16 incidents of Housing, Land and Property (HLP) were

reported by refugees and host communities; rental disputes and arbitrary demands from host community members increased significantly in comparison to last quarter. In Camp-16 (block A-6) host community members threatened families with eviction or demanded money, rice, or oil for staying there. Households that fail to provide these rations as a mean to cover for their rent often remain at risk of losing their accommodation. Non-compliance with these demands can lead to eviction or violent reprisals. There were 10 incidents related to WASH: shared use of water points and latrines caused social tensions that led to violent disputes and negative attitudes towards Rohingya refugees. There were 9 incidents associated with financial conflict and lack of resources amongst refugees and host communities and 4 related to accessing livelihood opportunities. There were two reported incidents linked to food distribution and access to education.



During the reporting period, Housing, Land and Property (HLP) remained the second most reported issue for Rohingya refugees regarding proper access and right to land and property. A total of 1,840 HLP cases were registered, with 47% (871 cases) involving women. The primary issues reported were evictions, rent increases, and conflicts over access to shared resources, e.g. water points and latrines. HLP disputes strain refugees' access to services, including health, education and WASH. For instance, in camps 15, 16, 11, and 12, host community members claimed ownership of lands used for humanitarian facilities such as health centers and learning centers, demanding rent, and sometimes locking the facilities if rent wasn't paid. In Camp 21, local communities claimed land ownership, obstructing WASH facility construction and increasing landslide risks through hill cutting. A total 374 households faced eviction threats; 208 of these threats involved woman-headed households.

Landowners in some camps in Teknaf requested payment to resolve legal disputes. Those with financial means were allegedly favored in legal judgments, often influenced by the Block Majhi. In a similar instance, some refugees that had the means settled a legal dispute with the Majhi with gold instead of currency.



ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Between April and June, 5,598 (54% corresponding to women and girls) refugees benefited from the legal services provided by legal actors. These services include legal counselling, assistance in filing cases with the police and in courts, court representation, and release from detention after intervention by legal actors. Among these, 3,641 refugees were

provided with legal counselling, 81 were assisted with filing legal complaints in police stations and courts, as well as obtaining the camp exit permits from Camp-in-Charges (CiCs), and 69 refugees were represented in legal proceedings. Legal assistance was provided mostly in cases where refugees were victims of serious physical assault, abduction, murders and gender-based violence related cases. Legal actors also provided mediation support as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism in family and civil disputes. During the reporting period, 887 cases (1,774 refugees) were referred to legal actors for mediation, 78% of which were successfully resolved.

The most frequently reported cases to legal partners were kidnapping, domestic violence, family, and marital disputes, as well as killings and drug related incidents. The presence of organized groups posed challenges for legal partners in conducting legal awareness sessions at block level in some camps at Ukhiya. During the reporting period, a total of 10,140 refugees were reached through legal awareness sessions, where lawyers inform refugees and respond to questions on legal issues, including protection mechanisms, legal procedures, the right to legal aid, and free legal services available in camps. In some camps, male refugees declined to attend the awareness sessions, fearing recruitment by these groups.

There were reports of refugees bypassing the formal legal system and seeking justice directly. After trials, perpetrators might receive a short-term penalty, but harassment prevails, and victims are threatened with further harm if they seek further legal action. Formal and informal justice systems were particularly prevalent during the reporting period for resolving disputes involving Majhi's and Imams. Some refugees continue to avoid seeking justice because of the lengthy process. People are willing to go for informal justice to the Majhi's or Imam because they think it is the easiest way and they do not need to struggle with legal support providers.

Influential members of host community and Majhi's were allegedly interfering and engaging in solving community conflict cases, while the involvement of APBn is also observed to be interfering in solving disputes. Access to justice for the refugees is often dependent on the availability of the CiCs and the legal partners who assist them. However, in cases of domestic violence or community conflicts, the presence of both conflicting parties is mandatory to complete the process; often one party remains absent making the access to justice process complicated. The existing mechanism does not allow CiCs and the humanitarian/legal partner to enforce the presence of an absent party (often the perpetrator). Because of the continuous absence of one party, the justice process was reported to be delayed for months during quarter 2. Some CiCs were reported to use a provisional enforcement measure by withholding food from the family whose member was accused of misconduct; this endangered families as some of the alleged perpetrators left the camp and abandoned family members dependent on him for food.

ACCESS TO SERVICES

During quarter 2, 2,146 refugees reported to have faced challenges during the height of the forced recruitment wave, which further contributed to affect access to services. The overall fear of recruitment and the increased presence of organized groups inside the camps created significant challenges for refugees' overall access to services. The last week of April there were reports of community leaders compiling lists of volunteers currently working in the camps and asking for their salaries to allegedly benefit the RSO. Volunteers were reported to have been approached inside their shelters with targeted visits. Announcements from mosque loudspeakers in the camps ordering male members (between 18 and 50) to report for a meeting with Majhi's were also reported. Reports of unknown groups of armed men holding meetings with members of the community asking refugees to join the fight in Myanmar severely impacted the safety and security of refugees and volunteers. From May 5 to June 30 only, a total of 406 security incidents affected 1,166 volunteers that couldn't report to work.⁵

Internal movement within the camps was marred by fear and danger; the imposition of night and daylight movement restrictions/constraints further restricted the freedom of movement and accessing services. Fear of harassment and arbitrary detention loomed large, deterring refugees from visiting relatives or carrying out essential tasks. Rohingya refugees in Camp 15 and Camp 1E were unable to move between blocks after 7:00pm, even for urgent matters, due to fear of organized groups. Refugees caught by the APBN while attempting to move between blocks sometimes faced severe beatings.

Difficulties in accessing services continued also due to distance and long queues posed significant challenges for certain groups of people in the communities. Many families had to wait for extended periods to receive food, water, and

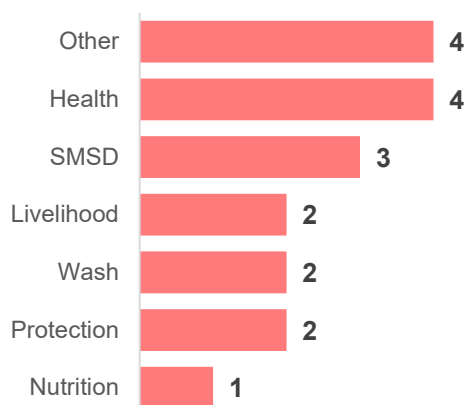
⁵ The Protection Sector rolled out a volunteer risk mapping to understand to what extent services were interrupted as a result of volunteers being targeted and not being able to carry out their activities. The mapping extended to all sectors in the response. An initial report was issued on May 30, a second one on June 13 and the last on June 30.

healthcare, leading to frustration and increased vulnerability. Medical patients in camp 1E experienced extensive delays in accessing hospital care and medications. Refugees from this camp expressed concerns about their relatives with disabilities when accessing medical care as they were unable to transport them to the hospital during emergencies.

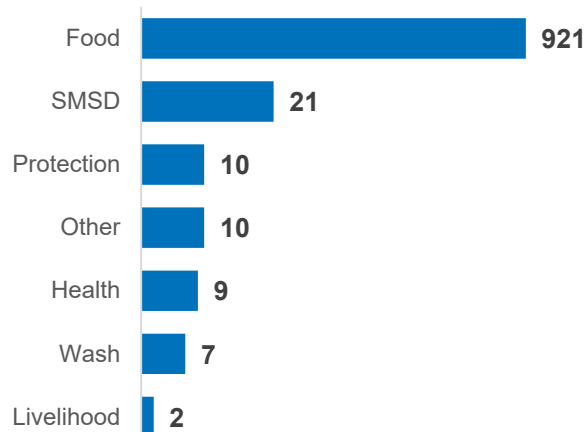
Arbitrary costs and bribes were reported to be requested to access essential services such as shelter and legal assistance during quarter 2. This further exacerbates inequalities and excludes refugees who are unable to pay. Fees of BDT 500 per person was requested to be paid to the Block Majhi in one of the camps in return for the submission of names of community members for daily labor assignments.

Community leaders, imams, teachers, caregivers, and women leaders raised a variety of concerns linked to access to services, but most were related to the issuance of new registration cards, registration related to separation when a member of a family gets married, for newborns and when a change of location occurs due to relocation from or within the camp. A lack of ambulance support was reported. This service is crucial in ensuring timely access to medical services during an emergency. Currently, each patient is provided one-time ambulance ride for emergency needs. This policy aims to optimize ambulance resources while prioritizing immediate medical assistance for all patients. Refugees reported also needing support more than once, such as in cases of injuries by gunfight or stabbing.

Denial of Services
(# of Incidents by sector)



Denial of Services
(# of refugees affected by sector)



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Sustain advocacy for enhanced protection-sensitive security in the camps including mechanism to screen, disarm and remove in a protection-oriented manner, following international standards and referencing best practices, to maintain the civilian and humanitarian character of the camps.
- Advocate with camp and law enforcement authorities to promote and support access of refugees to formal justice mechanisms, as well as ensure timely investigation and prosecution of crimes to fight against impunity and deter criminal activities in the camps. This should include the strengthening of investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of crimes in the camps -particularly for recruitment, abductions, and killings- to reduce impunity and threats to refugee and ensure protection and assistance for refugee victims and witnesses.
- Continue to monitor and advocate to ensure Law Enforcement Agencies - including investigative bodies such as District Police - effectively prevent and reduce safety and security risks, maintain the standard of treatment against refugees, counter threats posed by rival organized groups, and contain the escalation of violence. This should include reinforced mechanisms to prevent and address instances of police misconduct while promoting a supportive environment for law and order.

- Enhance activities to promote peace and security in the camps as part of the Peace and Security campaign, as well as peaceful coexistence, through community engagement, as a prevention and response strategies to create a safe and secure environment for refugees in the camps.
- Address extortion practices -in particular- through Majhi's and block leaders asking them to help mediating disputes, seeking justice and preventing violence and abuse. Provide training to Majhi's and other community leaders on their roles and responsibilities as community leaders, emphasizing integrity, impartiality, community mediation skills/capacity and adherence to human rights as well as identify and work with "community champions" on developing the risk mitigation mechanism within the preview of community-based protection.
- Intensify the use of effective awareness-raising strategies on identified risks, negative coping trends, deeply rooted harmful social norms and on onward movements to prevent loss of lives and to mitigate the possibility of trafficking in person and smuggling.
- Provide sufficient educational support for adolescent boys and youth to reduce the risk of drug addiction and involvement in other illegal activities. This can include expanding access to quality schooling, vocational or skill development training, recreational activities including Sports for Protection, meaningful community engagement opportunities, and mentorship programs.
- Strengthen and enhance gender-based violence prevention strategies amongst women and men in the community, particularly about the challenges faced by widowed women, women-headed households, youth and adolescent girls and boys to promote gender equality. Provide safe spaces, meaningful engagement opportunities, women and girls targeted sports for protection activities, support groups, and counselling services. Encourage women participation in training, meetings, and accessing service facilities and support for women empowerment and leadership developments.
- Advocate for more livelihood and skill development opportunities to prevent and address harmful coping mechanisms such as child marriage, child labor, and other protection concerns and to empower communities in particular the young people.

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