

Summary of Humanitarian Access and Service Delivery

Weekly Update (11-14 August 2024)

Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh



Situation Overview

Following the major political events that took place in Bangladesh in the first week of August 2024, culminating in the resignation of the Prime Minister on 5 August and the subsequent formation of an interim government on 8 August, humanitarian access and service delivery in Cox's Bazar continued to be impacted, but mitigation measures were in place to address challenges.

After days of heightened insecurity following the Prime Minister's resignation, an almost complete withdrawal of police forces across the country occurred, resulting in a shifting security environment within the Rohingya camps. After a notable absence of APBn in the camps on 5 and 6 August, the presence of authorities gradually increased in subsequent days, with additional support provided by the Army and ANSAR auxiliary battalion, and Camp-in-Charges (CiCs) returning to duty from 7 August. Humanitarian staff movements to the Rohingya refugee camps were also limited to life-saving missions causing service delivery in the camps to be interrupted on 5 and 6 August and gradually improving in the following days. From 11 August, service provision had mostly resumed across all sectors. By 13 August some 95% of APBn personnel were in Ukhiya and Teknaf, and the remaining 5% who had been deployed to other parts of the country for operational duties returned on 14 August.

During this period, partners have worked to ensure a minimum level of service delivery, with a high level of support from refugee volunteers. While most services resumed from 11-14 August, security concerns regarding the mobility of staff in Ukhiya and Teknaf, and across camps, are still being reported. There are also reports of new families entering camps and the new arrivals are reluctant to be registered. Further, with the Bangladesh Bank requesting banks to limit cash withdrawals to no more than Tk 2 lakh (equivalent to \$1,700) due to a lack of security amid the ongoing volatility, services to refugees, including cash-for-work and other volunteer activities, are likely to be impacted.

Sector Updates: 14 August



Shelter-CCCM Sector Lead Agencies: IOM and UNHCR

- SCCCM activities steadily resumed during the reporting period, with partners engaged in most regular and emergency preparation response activities in all the camps.
- LPG distributions continued in all camps. Emergency cash-for-work was in operation throughout the week to respond to the most urgent works.
- Slope covering with plastic sheets and tarpaulins was done as an immediate measure to prevent further damage. Minor repairs to pedestrian pathways and stairways are ongoing.
- Rapid damage shelter verification activities have resumed in all camps along with emergency shelter kit distribution. Regular shelter activities are ongoing in some camps.
- Site management continued to implement response activities.
- Barricades erected by the Army last week presented logistical challenges, including the movement of LPG trucks into the camps, to access the distribution points, which slightly delayed distribution.



Food Security Sector Lead Agencies: FAO and WFP

- FSS life-saving assistance continued to be fully operational with 19 outlets open daily. WFP's general food interventions through E-vouchers were delivered at the planned full value of \$12.50 per person to refugees, and with the most vulnerable receiving an additional \$3 voucher with access to the Fresh Food Corner stores. WFP targets approximately 11,000 households (55,000 individuals) daily. As of 13 August, 43% of the monthly total refugee caseload was reached. The in-kind donation of Korean fortified rice made up part of the food basket staples.
- Partner organizations reported that the impact on homestead gardening food production activities related to the security situation is minimal. July to August is off-season for vegetable planting and daily support to beneficiaries is not required. Partner organizations' planning for this period is emergency support and damage control due to rains and floods, restoring losses with contingency stock inputs. Planting will resume as planned in September.
- Cash-for-work food security resilience-building activities have continued through volunteers.
- Some partner organizations continued the work-from-home modality while others operated from the office. Limited staff are permitted to work in the camps based on the criticality of interventions required, such as conducting damage assessments caused by rain or floods. Partner organizations have relied mainly on volunteers to fill the gaps.



Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Sector Lead Agency: UNICEF

- Partner staff have resumed their activities and are accessing the camps during normal working hours. However, in some camps, staff remains limited, and some staff are working remotely.
- As a mitigation measure, beneficiaries are being informed of the current situation through volunteer networks.
- Water supply and sanitation services continue uninterrupted, including the distribution of soap and menstrual hygiene management kits. However, staff are expressing safety concerns, leading to disruptions in NFI distribution activities in some camps.
- Due to heavy rain, the demand for faecal sludge collection has increased significantly. In UNHCR-managed camps, contingency vacuum trucks were mobilized alongside the existing centralized collection system to manage the excess sludge effectively and safely.
- Critical materials and supplies, such as fuel and items needed for the repair and maintenance of WASH infrastructure, have been restocked and ensured, based on need.
- Construction of new WASH infrastructure has resumed.
- The reduced presence of authorities in some camps impacts not only the daily operation and maintenance of WASH services but also restocking of supplies and staff presence in the field. There is also a risk of theft to on-site stocks and warehouses.
- Due to heavy rains, there has been an increased demand for sludge collection, transport, and treatment. Fortunately, camps have not reported serious damage to the WASH infrastructure.



Health Sector Lead Agency: WHO

- All 46 Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs) and 57 Health Posts are operational and can provide the all-inclusive health package comprising of general outpatient consultation and inpatient care services, etc.
- Friendship Maternity and MSF hospitals remain fully functional. The Turkish Field Hospital (AFAD) is providing partial services (minimal scale with emergency department) due to a staff transition.

- Partners are now providing all comprehensive services under the provision of the Minimum Essential Service Package for Primary Health Care (e.g. outpatient consultation, emergency, delivery, stabilization, referral, lab investigations, GBV, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, community health outreach, etc.).
- The WHO-led (Health and WASH sector) Joint Assessment and Response Teams (JART) are continuously working on the investigation and mitigation response to cholera cases.
- The Routine Immunization Programme continues to deliver vaccination to the eligible population through fixed immunization points and outreach sites with full capacities.
- Regarding the adverse weather conditions, health facilities faced significant risks during the monsoon, specifically an increased risk of landslides for some facilities. The steep terrain and saturated soil in this area have heightened the potential for landslides, which could pose a serious threat to the structural integrity of these facilities.
- Despite the challenging conditions, Community Health Workers/Disaster Management Units/CPPs from the camps were advised to stay alert and the focal person from each of the Medical Mobile Teams (MMT) maintained close collaboration with supervisors. MMTs with dedicated HR and logistics were set for any emergency deployment. Emergency transportation services were also active, especially for vulnerable and emergency cases.



Protection (including CP and GBV) Sector Lead Agencies: UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA

Protection:

- Almost all protection partners have resumed activities within the camps with a few exceptions of staff from minority groups providing remote assistance. Protection facilities, including community centres and case management service points, have been fully operational since 11 August, and protection monitoring, along with community-based activities, has resumed.
- Although outreach activities are not yet back to full capacity due to security concerns, efforts are ongoing to ensure comprehensive support and community engagement.
- Legal assistance centres remain operational across 24 camps, with all lawyers present as of 14 August to provide necessary services. Mitigation measures included continuous risk assessments for protection volunteers and caseworkers.
- The absence of APBn's night patrols during the reporting period have heightened anxiety among camp residents.
- UNHCR and DRC Protection Focal Points (PFPs) have adapted their approach to ensure continued support by providing protection case management and counselling remotely. In situations where immediate intervention or rescue is required, PFPs have been coordinating with CiCs, APBn, and the Army, particularly when APBn is unable to respond.
- As of 13 August, APBn has resumed patrolling in most camps, reinforcing security measures. PFPs who visit the camps are actively meeting with refugees and authorities to address urgent cases directly, ensuring that critical protection needs are met despite the circumstances.
- The camps are facing significant challenges due to mobility issues and increased safety concerns. The absence of APBn has led to a rise in criminal activities, including abductions, shootings and thefts. Organized group activities have further disrupted the protection environment, leading to the suspension of Community-Based Protection activities in Camp 8E. The lack of Majhis and the presence of organized groups have generated fear amongst the communities, especially among vulnerable populations such as persons with disabilities, who struggle to access essential services due to staff and volunteers' limited movements.

- In the host communities, ethnic and religious minorities, both as participants and volunteers, have reported fears of being targeted, resulting in low participation in centre-based activities.
- Remote service delivery by protection partners has also created difficulties, as refugees express a need for direct interaction with PFPs. Political changes are causing disruptions, with new land ownership claims leading to threats of eviction in some camps.

Child Protection (CP)

- Session-based activities, such as life skills training and structured psychosocial support, have been rescheduled to avoid harm to children, adolescents, and women.
- While some CP partners opted for work-from-home modalities or limited operations due to security concerns earlier in the week, all partners have been delivering services in-person on a full scale since 12 August.
- All child protection facilities, except those in high-risk areas, are operational and provide recreational and prevention services.
- Case management, referrals, and follow-ups continue, with increased direct involvement from caseworkers alongside volunteers.
- Awareness campaigns on child protection issues, such as drowning, landslides, dowry, and child marriage, are being conducted in camps and host communities.
- Outreach activities and home visits are ongoing on a limited scale, prioritizing high-need cases.
- There is a growing risk of physical abuse, neglect, trafficking, and other forms of violence, particularly affecting adolescent girls.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

- There was a general improvement in the service delivery situation recorded with the resumption of all essential GBV services across the camps and host communities in the reporting period.
- From 11 August, most service providers and camp-based actors returned to office in camps. GBV services including Women Friendly Spaces, Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS), multi-purpose centres, and women-led community centres (WLCC) all fully resumed operation.
- In Camps 3, 4, 4 Ext., 15 and 16, women and girls shared that they feel highly unsafe due to the ongoing security context. Reports of attacks and harassment of female headed households at nighttime continue across the various camps.
- In host communities, women and girls express fear due to the insufficient presence of law enforcement authorities. They also share concerns about the movement of Rohingya refugees in the host community. This increases the likelihood for inter-communal clashes.
- There was a reduction in the number of reported GBV cases or visits recorded in the service facilities, most likely due to the restrictions on movement outside shelters owing to the security situation. Not only access to GBV service facilities, but also women and girls' engagement in community awareness and outreach activities, saw a reduction during the period.



Nutrition Sector Lead Agency: UNICEF

- All nutrition facilities (45 Integrated Nutrition facilities and four Stabilization centres) have been providing services during the reporting period.
- Dispatching of nutrition supplies from the Cox's Bazar warehouse to the camps has resumed and no nutrition supply break occurred.



Education Sector Lead Agencies: UNICEF and Save the Children

- On 13 August, the learning facilities in the camps re-opened, marking the start of a new academic calendar for 2024-2025.
- No further disruptions have been reported to the Education Sector.



Livelihoods and Skill Development Sector Lead Agency: UNHCR

- All skill development centres were operational from 12 August, and the Accelerated Adult Learning (AAL) sessions have been ongoing during the reporting period.
- All production centres were operational from 11 August. Jute bag production centres have also resumed regular operation.
- Partners resumed activities at the Multi-Purpose Women Centres and the women's market in Camp 5, as well as training sessions and reusable sanitary napkin production.
- The construction of two English Language centres in Camps 15 and 1E has resumed.
- The selection process for new beneficiaries was delayed in some cases due to unavailability of government counterparts.
- Volunteers are also conducting community visits to mitigate any challenges enrolled participants may be facing.
- Youth clubs and self-help groups have continued their meetings independently, with staff providing technical support remotely. This helps maintain a sense of continuity and engagement among participants.

Cross-Cutting Updates: 14 August



Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)

Common messages on decreased staff presence, service gaps, safety and emergency support continue to be circulated among the refugees through helpdesks, information centers, community engagement and awareness sessions, mosques and temples, based on key concerns raised and addressing rumours. Limited broadcasts continue over radio and loudspeakers. Although most activities have resumed as partner presence in the camps increased, some Complaint Feedback and Response Mechanisms (CFRM) resorted to limiting their activities due to lack of sufficient human resources in the camps and relied heavily on support from volunteers on referrals and dissemination of critical information.



Humanitarian Access

A human chain was organized in Teknaf Upazila of Cox's Bazar by students demanding strong border monitoring to stop further Rohingya influx into Bangladesh. This is in response to videos circulated on social media noting that thousands of Rohingya have fled from Maungdaw to the Naf River. If this becomes a priority for students, it could have further access implications.

Demonstrations and political gatherings were observed along roads in Teknaf and Ukhiya regarding different national and political issues. So far, humanitarian vehicles have not faced significant road access issues, however, more public gatherings may happen in the coming days. Some gates to the Ukhiya camps have been closed temporarily by the Army based on assessed security risks. From next week, the gates are expected to be reopened with APBn maintaining security. Notably, with the setting up of new security

checkpoints by the Army, partner field staff going to the camps have reported delays due to crossing multiple checkpoints where their identity cards are scrutinized before they are given access to the camps.

Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR)

Monsoon erratic rains, strong winds, and landslides continue to affect the Rohingya population. Some shelters were damaged, drains blocked with silt, and pathways and stairways eroded. Meanwhile, shelter damage verifications are ongoing, as well as coordination with displaced/relocated families living temporarily in communal spaces to return home once hazard mitigation works are completed. The health surge team and logistics are well set to respond to emergencies.

Meanwhile, there has been a notable increase in thefts, with significant numbers of missing plastic sheets and tarpaulins stolen from risky slopes, exposing landslide-prone areas to extreme risk. Partners are currently assessing/mapping the locations and extent of this. The continued resistance of temporarily displaced families to be relocated to safer shelter remains an issue to be addressed. Further, the Disaster Management Committee training and disaster risk reduction schemes remain pending in the host communities, including a delay in installing optical rain gauges, also intended for the camps.



Energy & Environment Network (EEN)

At least four incidents of looting solar grid components occurred in Camps 20 Ext, 20 and 4, mainly over the weekend. These incidents involved criminal group members breaking into facilities and battery rooms, assaulting security guards, and looting valuable assets such as solar panels, batteries, and inverters (IPS). Materials looted from a facility in Camp 20 were seized by the Army the next day.

Limited staff movement has caused interruptions in the regular operation and maintenance of solar infrastructure overall. At least 21 Solar Streetlights (SSL) have had components stolen and were reported to CiCs. The prolonged SSL service repair is expected to reduce community lighting at night.

During the reporting period, environmental focal points have maintained communications remotely for operational issues and monitoring, such as human-elephant conflict, wildlife rescue, etc. Some partners fully resumed plantation activities during the week, or expect to resume activities soon, including delivery of materials, site preparations, and plantation.

Contact

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