



Gender Based Violence Sub-Sector

Cox's Bazar Bangladesh

Quarterly Bulletin
Q3 (July - September), 2024



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UNFPA continues to lead the GBV Sub Sector. During the quarter the GBV SS:

- Conducted three monthly coordination meetings with **57 partners**, focusing on enhancing communication, collaboration and collective action on GBV response, as well as addressing partner challenges and solutions.
- Finalized the **2024-2026 strategy and rolling action plan**, revised the strategic Advisory (SAG) Terms of Reference, and reformulated the SAG.
- Held a **JRP Mid-Year Reflection Workshop** with nine JRP appealing partners and SAG members to address gaps, challenges, and 2025 preparations.
- GBVSS strengthened coordination with the Protection sector and Child protection sub sector, through regular coordinators' meetings, collaboration on the joint action plan, peace and security campaign and the stocktaking of law enforcement practices.
- Facilitated two training sessions for **Inter-sector Needs Assessment (ISNA)** enumerators on GBV terminology and data collection methods.
- Developed a One page resource for CiC and a dynamic FAQ for collaboration with Camp officials, which will be regularly updated based on emerging challenges.
- Engaged a consultant to conduct a GBV service audit across the 33 camps and the 11 host community sites to evaluate the effectiveness and quality of existing GBV services, identifying strengths and areas for improvement. The final report is currently being drafted and will be shared with the partners.
- Developed guidelines for GBV resource materials collections with the aim of harmonization and standardization of service provision and maximum utilization of collective resources.
- The GBVSS Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) was reformulated and the GBVSS strategy and rolling action plan was revised in partnership with REGA and the GBVSS SAG.

Field-level coordination highlights:

- The GBVSS field coordination team participated in 25 camp-based Camp Coordination and Protection Coordination Meetings this quarter to strengthen collaboration with government and humanitarian stakeholders, aiming to ensure comprehensive GBV services and safe, ethical referrals. Additionally, the team maintained active communication with Camp In Charge (CiC) officials and other actors to address GBV service gaps and challenges. As a result, the referral pathway has been strengthened, enabling faster and safer access to support for GBV survivors, enhancing awareness among camp focal persons on ethical referral protocols, ensuring confidentiality and safety for survivors. These efforts have strengthened overall accountability and collaboration with partners contributing to more comprehensive GBV service provision.
- In coordination with GBV Camp Focal Points (CFP) and Alternative Camp Focal Points (ACFP), the team held three monthly meetings with 33 GBV CFPs and ACFPs. These meetings focused on enhancing capacity and leadership, regularly updating and verifying referral pathways, addressing field-level challenges and advocacy measures with CiCs and other stakeholders. As a result, key advocacy messages were developed to address the concerns raised, particularly regarding the mediation of gender-based violence (GBV) cases, which present significant risks to safety and confidentiality. Additionally, the GBV CFP oriented the legal officers on the importance of safe and ethical referrals.



Emergency Preparedness and Response:

During the Bangladesh civil unrest starting June-August 2024, a number of service providers were unable to reach their facilities. The reduced availability and limited engagement of police, APBN, and government officials exacerbated the risks for those providing critical services to the most vulnerable people in the camps and host communities. Survivors, both Rohingya and host, faced delays in referrals due to restricted mobility. This complex scenario was further exacerbated by the cyclical natural disasters including the heavy rains and flash floods, which flooded areas and caused landslides within the refugee camps and host communities between July and September 2024. These disasters contributed to high risks of GBV and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), while also limiting access to lifesaving services.

To address these challenges, GBVSS prioritized mobilizing essential staff, including GBV case workers and midwives, for integrated SRH services, in accordance with the Inter-Sector Business Continuity Plan (ISBCP) established by ISCG. In collaborating with partners, GBVSS ensured remote case management and engaged volunteers to keep most Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS) open, thereby continuing essential awareness-raising, prevention activities, and referrals. During the concurrent monsoon season, GBVSS ensured the availability of Dignity Kits and maintained contact with PERU GBV Officers. Temporary emergency shelters were provided at various GBV service facilities for the displaced people, and GBVSS coordinated with other sectors to expedite repairs of damaged shelters and restore essential services, all while aiming to uphold a safe environment despite ongoing crises.

Capacity Building Events

Training on GBV guiding principles, GBV risk mitigation and services to non-GBV actors: The GBVSS conducted training on GBV principles, core concepts, risk mitigation, referral mechanisms, data protection, and coordination for non-GBV actors on 29th – 30th September, 2024. A total of 22 camp-level sector Focal Points participated in the training, including 19 men and 3 women from various sectors such as Site Management, Protection, Food Security, Education, and Child



Protection. Post training evaluation revealed a significant increase in knowledge regarding GBV risk mitigation. Evaluation involved pre- and post-tests, each scoring up to 7 points. In the pre-test, 68% of participants scored up to 4, with the remainder below that. Post-test results showed significant improvement, with 92% achieving a perfect score of 7, and no one scoring below 5.



Key Milestones:

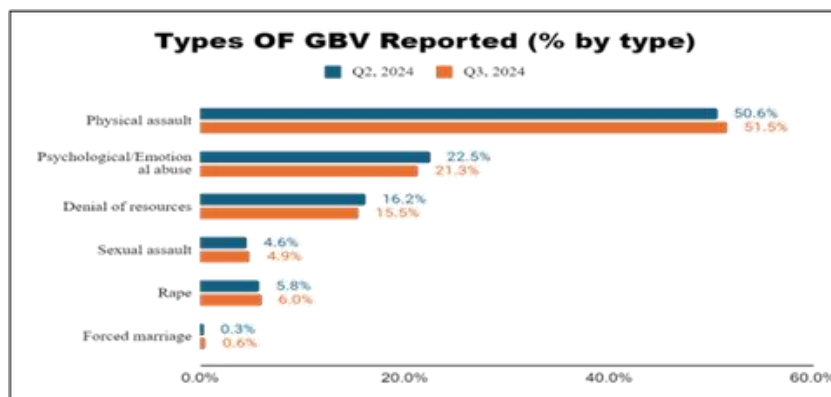
- GBV Service Audit: GBVSS engaged a consultant to conduct a GBV service audit in the camps and nearby host communities.
- GBVIMS Analysis Workshop: GBVSS conducted two GBV IMS analysis workshops to strengthen partners' analytical capacity and skill, inform their GBV case management program quality monitoring, and provide programs with analytical insights. The workshops focused on "Better Analyzing Organizational GBVIMS Data."
- GBVSS finalized the GBV service facility mapping in early September, 2024, which served as the basis for a service audit proposed in later September, 2024 to ensure quality and standards for all GBV-related services across the camps.

GBV Situations in Q3, 2024

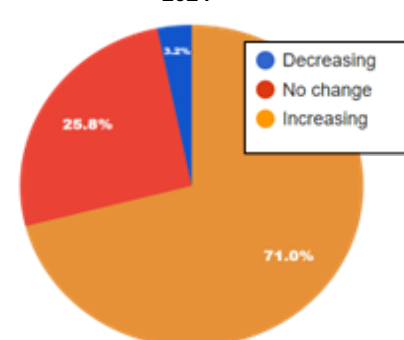
GBV types: reported in GBVIMS

In Q3 2024, physical assault remained the most common type of gender-based violence (GBV) reported, accounting for 51.5% of incidents recorded under the GBVIMS. This figure is consistent with Q2 2024. Following physical assault, the next most reported types of GBV were psychological/emotional abuse at 21.3% and denial of resources at 15.5%. In Q3 2024, sexual violence accounted for approximately 10.9% of reported incidents, an increase from 10.4% in Q2 2024. This category includes 6% for rape and 4.9% for sexual assault. While this increase may reflect improved reporting, field GBV actors confirm that this type of GBV is severely under-reported, including incidents of marital rape and extra-marital violence.

Focus group discussions highlight significant barriers for women and girls in accessing services, driven by worsening security in camps, including fears of abduction, theft, and sexual violence from organized armed groups. Over 64% of surveyed camps reported that women and girls felt unsafe, particularly at night. Additionally, 50% of GBV Camp Focal Points across 33 camps noted an increase in GBV incidents, while reports of kidnappings by host community members were also mentioned.



Overall GBV trends perceived by GBV Camp Focal Points (CFP), Q3 2024



Emerging GBV risks

In addition to the types of GBV reported in the GBVIMS, the GBV Camp Focal Points (CFPs) across the camps and other GBV actors have also reported multiple emerging GBV threats for women and girls in the Rohingya communities in Q3 2024 in relation to the worsening security crisis.

Organized armed groups and crimes against Rohingya women and girls: Women and girls are feeling extremely insecure due to the activities of armed and organized groups. Major incident types reported by GBV actors and CFPs include:

- Forced marriages and abductions largely targeting young and adolescent girls.
- Armed groups are forcibly entering the homes of female-headed households at night, exploiting their vulnerability; in some cases, women and girls have been subjected to sexual violence, including rape.
- Threats to survivors' families, creating significant barriers to reporting GBV incidences.

Perpetrators from Host Community: Survivors and beneficiaries particularly adolescent girls faced significant risks of sexual grooming, leading to fraudulent romantic and sexual exploitation, as well as blackmail by perpetrators from the host community. This alarming trend highlights the vulnerabilities of these women and girls in a precarious situation, where they are targeted for exploitation due to their marginalized status. In some cases, these perpetrators threaten the victims with forced marriage and rape.

Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence: A concerning number of incidents of harassment are occurring in online spaces and through the use of modern technologies. These incidents directly manifest in physical spaces due to the evolving nature of technology and its integration into our lives. Various forms of technology-facilitated GBV incidents have been reported by GBV actors and CFPs:

- Threats of image-based abuse (sharing intimate photos without consent) especially revenge porn.
- Sextortion (blackmail by threatening to publish sexual information, photos or videos)
- Online grooming for sexual assault. Perpetrators are using digital platforms to exploit the vulnerability of refugees, particularly women and girls, by building trust to facilitate sexual exploitation or assault.
- Threats of doxxing (publishing private personal information),
- Online gender and sexual harassment

Sustained and complicated IPV incidents, with emerging contributing factors: The number of intimate partner violence (IPV) incidents is increasing due to several emerging factors, including online gambling, the use of technology for extramarital relationships, substance use, and polygamy. Additionally, the lack of livelihood opportunities in the camps exacerbates this issue, contributing to rising tensions, altering household dynamics, and escalating domestic violence.



Challenges and Recommendations

Challenges

- **Safety Concerns for Service Providers:** Intensified safety risks for service providers and volunteers who support communities with GBV case referrals and connections to essential services.
- **Frequent Staff Turnover:** Frequent reshuffling of CiCs, APBn, and Majhis creates response gaps, increases vulnerability of GBV and non-GBV survivors and hampers consistent orientation and training of new staff.
- **Funding Limitations:** Limited and decreasing funding has severely impacted GBV case management and service provision, particularly for weekend services. This shortfall, coupled with heightened insecurity in the camp has increased the risks faced by women and girls.
- **Limited Access to Safe Shelters:** Access to safe shelters for GBV survivors, including gender-diverse populations and male survivors, remains a continuous challenge due to limited shelter availability; currently there are two safe shelters to support those in need.

Recommendations

- **Community Resilience and Social Cohesion:** Empowering individuals, building social cohesion, and enhancing security through peace and security campaigns to strengthen community resilience
- **Enhanced Coordination:** Strengthening coordination with partners and GoB stakeholders through ongoing orientation sessions and workshops.
- **Donor Advocacy for GBV Services:** Advocating with the donor community to enhance GBV services and ensure quality support for GBV Survivors.
- **Advocacy for Safe Shelters:** Engaging agencies and partners to increase the number and quality of safe shelters, enabling accommodation for more survivors.

Resources and Data

- GBVIMS Q2 2024 Factsheet ([link](#))
- GBVSS Q2 2024 Quarterly Bulletin, please visit this [link](#)
- For more information on GBVSS Coordination, please visit the Rohingya Response, [GBV sub-sector web page](#)





Nari Maitree

Organizational Objective: The Comprehensive, Integrated Multi-Sector Response for Rohingya Refugees and Host Communities in Cox's Bazar project aims to improve safe and dignified access to quality gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response services in Camp 05, Camp 14, Ratnapalong, and Haldiapalong funded by BPRM, technically supported by IRC. Our objective is to empower underprivileged individuals by implementing intensive and extensive programs that facilitate positive changes in family lifestyles and social systems. To achieve this, we provide GBV case management services and group psychosocial support (PSS). We also implement structured approaches such as the Girl Shine Early Marriage curriculum, Engaging Men through Accountable Practice (EMAP), and the SASA! Together initiative. We also participate in community-based protection initiatives that aim to respond to and prevent risks. These initiatives focus on avoiding negative coping mechanisms, promoting a safe environment, and fostering social cohesion within the community.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS / HIGHLIGHTS (July – September 2024)

Provided survivor-centered GBV case management services and unstructured psychosocial support (PSS) to 700 community members. This initiative created a safe, confidential space for survivors to report cases, and for women and girls to access group support and recreational activities, allowing them to share experiences, acquire knowledge, and build resilience.



Trained 180 community leaders on the **core concepts of gender-based violence (GBV) and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)**. These leaders are now equipped to disseminate these critical messages within their communities, raising awareness and fostering safer, more informed environments for women and girls.

Under the SASA! Together with the awareness phase, NM enlisted and trained 05 institutional allies who signed the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the structured prevention approach. These institutions are now actively working on addressing power imbalances in society. They focus on preventing GBV and intimate partner violence in Rotnapalong.



Radio listening session ongoing with 800 participants, featuring episodes from the Aa'rar Kissa and Aiyo Jani series. These sessions educate the community on GBV, PSS, sexual and reproductive health (SRH), and protection issues through engaging audio dramas and podcast-based listening groups.



Caritas Bangladesh

Caritas Bangladesh has been working in Camp 1E, 4Ext., 17, 19, and 20Ext. through 8 centers to survivor-centered services by responding to individual needs, preventing, and mitigating GBV risks, and supporting survivors of GBV in the FDMNs. Organizational objectives are:

- Strengthening perspectives for the future and the resilience of refugees and host communities in Cox's Bazar towards natural and manmade disasters.
- Protection of Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Women through "Multi-purpose Women and Girls' Centre (MWGC).
- Community-Based Protection and Psycho-Social Support for Rohingya Families in Camp 4 Extension.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS / HIGHLIGHTS (July – September 2024)

- Engaging 2300 community leader and/or imam engage and aware on GBV issues.
- A total of 245 FDMN individuals (20 girls, 225 women) received necessary psychosocial support services.
- A total of 45 women and girls, including 16 girls and 29 women (4 adolescent girl with disability), participated in vocational training sessions to increase the participants' knowledge, life skills, opportunities, and social dignity within their community.
- Capacity building training were conducted for 78 (Male-30 Female-48) including 02 person with disability.
- Dignity kit distribution among 73 individuals.

Celebration of International Day of Families: On 15th May 2024, Caritas Bangladesh observed "International Day of Families" with 500 participants in Camp-1E, 17, 19 and 20 Ext. to strengthen family ties and community bonds. Caritas Bangladesh staff organize recreational activities for project participants refreshment such as henna application, makeup sessions, games, and drawing were organized based on the interests of women and girls.



Caritas Bangladesh observed "**The International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict**" in Camp-1E, 17, 19 and 20 Ext. with 150 participants on 27th June 2024. One activity, "Unity is Strength," showed the power of teamwork highlighting cooperation. Another activity involved bracelet-making, where participants formed groups to create and exchange bracelets.

Caritas Bangladesh organized an event to celebrate "**International Day of Living Together in Peace**" with 500 participants on 16th May 2024 at Camp-1E, 17, 19 and 20 ext. Throughout the event, beneficiaries engaged in meaningful open discussions focused on the significance of the day, highlighting the importance of family's bonds and mutual support.



Jago Nari Unnayan Sangstha (JNUS)



JNUS is a women-led community-based organization founded in 2009 with a powerful vision to end all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls, regardless of gender, race, religion, or culture. The organization focuses on empowering women and girls in displaced, vulnerable, and marginalized communities within humanitarian contexts. Guided by core values of gender equality, impartiality, humanity, dignity, human rights, and respect for diversity, JNUS undertakes initiatives to build networks, enhance capacity, and engage in advocacy. The organization's gender division specifically designs and implements prevention and response activities aimed at addressing gender-based violence (GBV) and promoting gender-responsive humanitarian interventions. Through its work, JNUS strives to create safer and more equitable environments for women and girls.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS / HIGHLIGHTS (July – September 2024)

JNUS, in collaboration with SKUS and with support from UN Women, operates three Multi-Purpose Women Centers (MPWCs) at Camp 3 and Camp 5 in Ukhiya, as well as in the Whykhong Union of Teknaf, under the "Means to Lead" project. These centers offer a range of essential services, including skills development training, awareness-building initiatives, psychosocial counseling, first aid medical services, and referral support. To foster leadership and expand opportunities for women, 15 self-help groups



Session on women empowerment in IWD in camp 3

have been established—10 within the Rohingya community and 5 in the host community. From April to June 2024, JNUS successfully reached 2,276 participants through the MPWCs, providing basic education and informal skill development training, along with market linkage preparation. Training sessions covered areas such as tailoring, handicrafts, and fish drying, equipping participants with valuable skills for economic empowerment.



Safeguarding and PSEA orientation among camp 5 volunteers

JNUS, supported by the Canadian Government and Australian Aid through the Pooled Fund managed by BRAC, has been delivering WASH services to approximately 11,000 households in Blocks B and D at Camp 3, Ukhiya, in Cox's Bazar. The organization is actively involved in constructing WASH facilities and advocating for gender-responsive interventions in collaboration with local camp authorities and other development partners. By prioritizing gender considerations, JNUS aims to enhance the effectiveness and accessibility of WASH services, ensuring that the needs of women and girls are adequately addressed.

Organizational Objectives: Plan International Bangladesh's LEAP project in Cox's Bazar focuses on enhancing the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) of adolescent girls and young women in host communities and FDMN camps. Using a gender-transformative, rights-based approach, LEAP strengthens resilience and agency, enabling girls and women to exercise their SRHR and protection rights. The project engages various community groups to challenge harmful norms and improves health systems to provide Gender and Adolescent Responsive & Inclusive (GARI) SRH, SGBV, and MHPSS services across 18 unions and 3 camps. Targeting 97,773 adolescents (74% host, 26% FDMN) and indirectly benefiting 102,591 adults, LEAP

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS / HIGHLIGHTS (July – September 2024)

- PIB held an advocacy meeting in Ramu Upazila with key officials, promoting equitable SRHR services in clinics and schools, and securing commitments to adolescent-friendly health initiatives.
- A consultation in Cox's Bazar engaged departmental stakeholders to improve service accessibility and address GBV challenges faced by the host community.
- A Moral Gatekeepers discussion in 9 unions involved 199 participants, including adolescents and young married women, to support training for boys and girls.
- PIB organized two collaboration meetings in Teknaf and Cox's Bazar, aiming to strengthen GBV case management and establish effective referral pathways

Sustainability Plan Workshop Plan International Bangladesh organized 12 Sustainability Plan workshops at Jaliapalong, Haldiapalong, Camp 3 and Camp 1W, engaging 227 participants (10 girls, 5 boys, 98 males, and 153 females). Additionally, 33 workshops across 9 unions in Teknaf and Cox's Bazar attracted 529 participants (24 adolescent boys, 33 adolescent girls, 14 Young Married Women Group members, 184 females, 273 males, and 1 person with disability). The initiatives promote adolescent girls' clubs, SGBV and SRHR discussions in schools, and access to sanitary napkins in community clinics.



Plan International Bangladesh conducted 174 recreational sessions under the LEAP project, engaging 4,876 participants, including adolescent girls, young married women, and older women. These activities fostered social interaction, personal development, and addressed topics like GBV and reproductive health through games and interactive sessions.



Awareness sessions on gender equality (GE), GBV, and referral services were held in 7 unions and 3 camps, reaching 9,789 participants, including girls, women, and men. The sessions promoted women's rights, empowerment, GBV prevention, and positive parenting to foster healthy family relationships and challenge harmful norms.



Major achievements: PIB conducted GBV Safety Audits across 18 unions and 3 FDMN camps in Cox's Bazar, including Camp 1W, 03 and 04. The audits engaged diverse groups, such as Youth-Led Organizations (YLOs), Women's Rights Organizations (WROs), community leaders, adolescent girls and boys, PWD, and gender-diverse groups. A total of 194 participants joined Focus Group Discussions, comprising 87 adult females, 51 adult males, 38 girls and 18 boys. Stakeholders from government, legal aid, health, MHPSS, shelter, and education sectors were also involved.