

Humanitarian Response to the Fire in Rohingya Refugee Camp 16

Impact and Response Report

As of 20 January 2026

CAMP 16 (D Block) FIRE AFFECTED AREA

UAV IMAGERY INCIDENT BEFORE AFTER COMPARISON



Overview

407 Total shelters damaged	22,136 Total burnt area (meter square)	2,185 Displaced Individuals	178 Total facilities damaged	00 Fatalities	05 Injuries
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Situation Update

On 20 December 2026, at approximately 3:00 AM local time, a devastating fire broke out in Rohingya refugee Camp 16, resulting in significant destruction and losses across four sub-blocks (partially affected: D1 and D2; fully affected: D3 and D4). The fire impacted an area of 22,136 square meters, including three shelters belonging to the host community.

Immediately following the incident, volunteers from the Rohingya refugee Safety Unit (SUVs), local firefighters from the Disaster Management Unit (DMU), the Fire Service and Civil Defence (FSCD), and the Armed Police Battalion (APBn) worked collaboratively to control the fire, which was fully extinguished by 5:30 AM. The IOM Site Management Unit deployed three-wheeler Mobile Firefighting Units (MFFUs) from surrounding camps, while eight FSCD units supported the firefighting efforts.

Under the leadership of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), humanitarian partners swiftly mobilized to conduct damage assessments and establish a coordinated multi-sector response.

In total, 407 shelters were damaged, including those fully or partially burned or demolished. The incident displaced 2,185 individuals, and five people sustained injuries. Additionally, 178 facilities were affected. In the aftermath, affected families temporarily took shelter with nearby relatives, with no use of emergency communal relocation centers.

Inter-Sector Response



Shelter-CCCM

Lead Agencies: IOM and UNHCR

Impact Summary

- A total of 407 shelters were affected (335 fully damaged and 72 partially damaged), including three host community shelters, resulting in the displacement of 407 households, who are currently staying with friends or relatives.
- Significant damage occurred to WASH, site infrastructure, and community facilities, including 86 latrines, 68 bathing cubicles, 11 water points, one water network, 232 sq. meters of access pathways, 469 sq. meters of slope protection, 76 meters of drainage, 40 solar streetlights, two lightning arresters, and 55 burnt trees, increasing safety and public health risks.
- Five individuals were injured, with no fatalities or missing persons reported. Damage to 10 learning centers and two mosques/madrasas disrupted essential services.

Response

- Immediate fire suppression and containment were carried out through coordinated efforts of community volunteers, camp actors, and emergency services, preventing further spread and loss of life.
- Rapid initial damage and needs assessments were initiated across shelter, WASH, infrastructure, health, and protection sectors to inform coordinated response planning.
- Health actors provided first aid and medical follow-up for injured individuals, while site actors supported temporary displacement arrangements through community-based coping mechanisms.

Challenges / Needs

- Urgent shelter and NFI support are required for households whose shelters were fully or partially damaged, including the safe dismantling of unstable structures.
- Restoration of WASH facilities and site infrastructure is critical to address public health, protection, and safety risks, particularly due to damaged lighting and drainage.

- Overcrowding and protection risks may increase if displacement is prolonged, underscoring the need for timely multi-sector assistance and continued monitoring of vulnerable groups.

Partners:

- IOM -SMSD, HEKS, CIC, SCI.



Food Security

Lead Agencies: WFP and FAO

Impact Summary

- A total of 501 households (approximately 2,500 individuals) were fully or partially affected.

Response

- In coordination with CiC, WFP and its implementing partners provided an immediate emergency response through the distribution of fortified biscuits. During onset, a total of 501 households received one carton each totaling 2.505 MT.
- Additionally, 2,500 hot meal packages were distributed to affected individuals. The WFP GFA team will continue supporting affected households until they are able to return to their shelters.
- To address the severe impact of the fire, FSS resilience and livelihoods partners will assess damages related to resilience activities, including homestead gardening, to determine appropriate support ahead of the upcoming season.
- Furthermore, 110 WFP's NRM-DRR CFW volunteers were mobilized for garbage cleaning activities, and 20 GFA CFW volunteers were deployed as porter support at the GFA outlet in Camp 16, totaling 130 CFW volunteers engaged in the response.

Challenges / Needs

- Immediate restoration of cooking facilities is essential to enable affected households to meet daily food preparation needs and regain normalcy.

Partners:

- WFP and its implementing partners (AAB, CARE, RIC), Mukti, CWW (SHED), HIS (Uttaran)



Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

Lead Agency: UNICEF

Impact Summary

- A total of 86 latrines and 68 bathing cubicles were damaged, reducing access to essential sanitation and hygiene services.
- Water supply systems were also impacted, including 12 tap stands, one segment of the water network, 16 shallow tube wells, one deep tube well, and two 10,000-liter water storage tanks.

Response

- A joint assessment, including an in-depth WASH assessment, has been completed to inform response prioritization.
- WASH NFIs (hygiene kits) will be jointly distributed with the Shelter Sector on 21 January 2026, while temporary emergency latrines were installed on 20 January 2026.

- Construction of new latrines is scheduled to begin in the first week of February, followed by bathing facilities after shelter construction.
- Installation of 10,000-liter water tanks is planned for next week, while repairs to tap stands and tube wells and debris removal are ongoing.

Challenges / Needs

- Extensive damage to WASH infrastructure has disrupted sanitation, hygiene, and water services, posing immediate public health risks that require urgent restoration.

Partners:

- DSK, DPHE, UNICEF



Protection including Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence

Lead Agency: UNHCR, Lead Agencies for Sub-Sectors: UNICEF, UNFPA

Impact Summary

Protection Sector:

- The fire significantly increased protection risks for children and families, including caregivers, with heightened psychosocial distress and loss of safe spaces.

GBVSS:

- Increased vulnerability of women, girls, children and elderly people due to the loss of shelter and essential services like washrooms, shelter, leading to increased exposure, dignity issues, and resort to potentially unsafe secondary accommodations (e.g., with relatives or neighbours).
- Increased psychological distress and mental stress, which can weaken coping mechanisms and further expose women and girls to GBV risks or hinder their ability to safely report incidents.
- Elevated risk of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), including sexual exploitation, abuse, and intimate partner violence, resulting from the displacement, loss of community protection structures, and crowded temporary living conditions.

CPSS:

- The fire incident severely affected the safety and wellbeing of impacted households, particularly children and women, increasing protection risks and psychological distress.

Response

Protection Sector:

- As part of the ongoing emergency response, two Protection Emergency Response Unit (PERU) teams were deployed to deliver immediate protection services to affected populations, with a focus on children, women, and other at-risk groups. Interventions included Psychological First Aid (PFA), focused psychosocial support (PSS), referrals, and awareness-raising activities.
- Psychological First Aid (PFA): A total of 386 individuals including 90 persons with disabilities were reached through direct engagement in affected locations.
- Focused Psychosocial Support (PSS): In total, 99 individuals received targeted support to address acute emotional distress.

- Identified 90 persons with disabilities requiring specialized services. Initiated replacement of lost assistive devices (e.g. elbow crutches, walking sticks, foam mattresses).
- Referrals: A total of 41 individuals referred to essential services: (Health: 21, Food assistance: 15, Shelter/NFI support: 5)
- Information dissemination: In sum, 217 individuals were reached with information on safety, wellbeing, and available support services.

GBVSS

- The GBVSS was on the ground, visiting the fire-affected site and coordinating with the GBV Camp Focal Point.
- Planning for dignity kits distribution to fire-affected women and girls was shared in the camp coordination meeting by the GBV Camp Focal Point, in coordination with GBVSS and GBV actors.
- GBV Actors provided Psychosocial First Aid (PFA) to 196 individuals (Male - 62, Female - 134), Psychosocial Support (PSS) to 32 women and girls, and facilitated referrals to 19 individuals (Male - 8, Female - 11) to different services along with emergency shelter support to 34 women, girls and children in Women Friendly Space and Learning Centre.

CPSS

- Partners providing PFA, referrals, case management, and reunification support to children and families. A team of 14 frontline staff comprised of 7 case workers, 2 PSS workers, and 5 volunteers mobilized to support the emergency response.
- A total of 240 children (including 131 girls and 13 children with disabilities) received PFA and recreational PSS, while 190 parents (including 113 females and 7 persons with disabilities) were supported with PFA. 36 children already in case management were found to be further impacted, and 8 new children (5 girls, 3 boys) were newly registered for case management. 53 children were referred to essential services including health, NFI, food assistance, and shelter, and 1 child was successfully reunified.
- Two Multi-Purpose Centers (MPCs) were designated as Emergency Meeting and Information Centers to support affected families.

Challenges/Needs

Protection:

- Women reported difficulties accessing and safely using WASH facilities, citing concerns related to safety, privacy, and accessibility.

GBVSS:

- Ensuring prompt and adequate emergency dignity kits distribution to fire-affected women and girls, which is crucial for restoring their dignity and enabling them to seek required support services.
- Need for immediate shelter and restoration of essential services like washrooms to address the heightened vulnerability of GBV and dignity issues of displaced people, especially women and girls.
- Challenge of increased psychological distress and mental stress among the affected population, requiring sustained Psychosocial Support (PSS) and mental health services.

CPSS:

- Children and families, including caregivers affected by the fire, require expanded psychosocial first aid, safe spaces, and child-friendly environments including referral to life saving services due to heightened emotional distress and sudden displacement.
- Limited access to safe drinking water for children, resulting in dehydration risks.
- Children observed collecting garbage in affected areas, increasing exposure to physical and health hazards.

Partners:

Protection: NRC, HI, CODEC, IRC, UNHCR, BRAC

GBVSS: UNFPA, CARE Bangladesh, Mukti

CPSS: DSS, CODEC



Health

Lead Agency: WHO

Impact Summary

- The fire incident affected multiple shelters and community infrastructure across Camp 16 (Blocks D2, D3, and D4), resulting in temporary disruption of access to primary health services for the affected population.
- No fatalities or major injuries were reported; however, a limited number of minor injuries and stress-related conditions were identified, requiring basic first aid and psychosocial support.
- There is a heightened risk of secondary public health concerns, including mental health and psychosocial distress (MHPSS), interruption of routine care, and increased vulnerability of at-risk groups (children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities).

Response

- The EPR Technical Committee (EPR TC) activated health emergency coordination mechanisms and ensured the rapid deployment and readiness of Mobile Medical Teams (MMTs), with one core MMT deployed on-site, and additional surge teams placed on standby.
- Close coordination was established with the CiC, Site Management, Camp Management, and Camp Disaster Focal Points, ensuring alignment of health actions with the overall inter-sectoral response and participation in the Joint Needs Assessment (JNA).
- Health partners were guided to assess the functional capacity of nearby health facilities, maintain essential health services, and integrate MHPSS support into ongoing health response activities.

Challenges / Needs

- There is a need to strengthen fire-related mass casualty preparedness at the camp level, including contingency planning, rapid triage capacity, and referral pathways for potential future incidents.
- Enhanced MHPSS surge capacity and community-level psychosocial support are required for affected populations following repeated fire incidents.
- Continued support is needed for the pre-positioning of emergency health supplies, reinforcement of MMT surge readiness, and regular multi-hazard simulation exercises ahead of the high-risk season.

Partners:

- WHO, IOM, AWARD PHCC, PHD PHCC, AMAN HP



Nutrition

Lead Agency: UNICEF

Impact Summary

- A total of 369 shelters were fully damaged and 112 shelters partially damaged, affecting a large number of households; 369 HH temporarily relocated to friends/family. burned/damaged.
- A total of 154 beneficiaries affected across programmes such as, Outpatient Therapeutic Program (OTP) - 3, Targeted Supplementary Feeding Program (TSFP) - 11, Blanket Supplementary Feeding Program (BSFP) - 75, and Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women (PBW) - 65.
- Beneficiary cards and food items WASH facilities significantly affected, including 86 latrines, 68 bathing cubicles, 11 water points, and 1 water network, increasing hygiene and public health risks.

Response

- Initial rapid assessment conducted covering D2, D3, and D4 locations to identify shelter, WASH, and infrastructure damages. Food distribution is ongoing for available and present beneficiaries.
- Affected households temporarily accommodated by friends and family, reducing immediate displacement to Emergency Communal Relocation Centers (ECRCs).
- Damage information shared with relevant stakeholders for coordination and response planning.

Challenges/Needs

- Urgent shelter support is required for fully damaged and dismantled shelters to enable safe return of affected households. Some beneficiaries relocated to other blocks, making follow-up, screening, and distribution challenges.
- Immediate repair and rehabilitation of WASH facilities to prevent sanitation and disease risks.
- Restoration of critical site infrastructure, including pathways, stairs, slope protection, and solar lighting to ensure safety and accessibility.

Partners:

- SHED



Education

Lead Agencies: UNICEF and Save the Children

Impact Summary

- A total of 782 learners were affected.
- A total of 19 learning facilities were impacted, including 13 Learning Centers and 6 CBLFs.
- Infrastructure and teaching and learning materials were damaged due to the fire incident.

Response

- A needs assessment is ongoing, and immediate communication was conducted with teaching volunteers and learners to confirm their safety.
- Remaining learning materials are being relocated to safer locations and learning centers have been made available as temporary shelters for affected households.
- The Education Sector is coordinating with partners to support the repair, maintenance, and reconstruction of affected learning facilities.

Challenges / Needs

- Dust and ash are widespread and must be cleared before further steps can be taken.
- Additional challenges are yet to be confirmed.
- The Education Sector continues to coordinate closely with partners to identify gaps and constraints.

Partners:

- UNICEF (BRAC), SCI (FIVDB, JCF), BRAC (SKUS)



Livelihoods and Skill Development

Lead Agency: UNHCR

Impact Summary

- IOM is currently conducting tailoring training in Camp 16, with two groups totaling 34 participants. The session scheduled for today was postponed due to the fire incident; however, training will resume as normal from 21 January.
- One small dry fish business owned by Aktara (Block D – Skills Graduate) was fully damaged. She had previously received BDT 70,000 as entrepreneurship support in December 2025.

Response

- As there was no significant damage to the training center or beneficiaries, no additional action has been taken.
- An initial damage assessment was conducted to document losses and identify immediate needs, and Psychological First Aid (PFA) was provided to affected volunteers and community members.

Challenges / Needs

- No significant challenges were identified; missed training sessions will be addressed through an additional session, though livelihood activities were temporarily suspended following the CiC's recommendation due to infrastructure and asset losses.
- Support is required for recovery, rehabilitation, and the resumption of services.

Partners:

- IOM with Prottyashi, BRAC

<https://rohingyaresponse.org>

