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SUMMARY OF TOTAL CASES REGISTERED

Jan - Jun 2025

2,809

Cases

47% were women and
53% men.

Jul - Dec 2025

2,451

Cases

44% were women and
56% men, with 2 cases
of gender diverse
population.

Jan - Dec 2025

5,260

Cases

47% were women and
53% men, with 2 cases of
gender diverse
population.

Context

In response to the 2017 influx of Rohingya refugees, the Government of Bangladesh allocated approximately 8,000 acres of land in Teknaf and Ukhiya (Cox's Bazar) in September 2018 for refugee settlements. These sites overlapped with land privately claimed in Teknaf and with forest land in Ukhiya, including areas where host community members held use rights under the Social Forestry Programme.

However, as the displacement became protracted, pressure on local resources increased and host community members began to feel the strain. The Government's decision in October 2018 not to allocate additional land for Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar further compounded these challenges. At the same time, both the existing refugee population grew, and new refugees continued to arrive in Bangladesh seeking protection, yet the amount of available land remained unchanged. This further intensified overcrowding in the camps and heightened pressures on both refugees and host communities. These factors collectively contributed to an increase in HLP issues within the camps and surrounding host community areas.

* While each case corresponds to one household, occasional duplications of households may occur.

What is HLP?

Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) rights encompass a spectrum of entitlements pertaining to the ownership, utilization, transfer, and habitation of land and any fixed assets. The accessibility of these rights is paramount for all individuals, with a special emphasis on refugees, ensuring their well-being and security. Without access to HLP rights, refugees are left susceptible to a myriad of protection risks, encompassing both physical and psychological adversities, including forced evictions, arbitrary rent increase and disruption of their access to services. Moreover, the resolution of HLP issues within the refugee and displacement framework serves as a fundamental prerequisite for the effective delivery of various humanitarian services, including Shelter, WASH and CCCM.

Drivers of HLP disputes

Land claim and land disputes resulting from poor land management and land administration make the underlying causes of HLP issues in the Rohingya camps. Within camp boundaries and surrounding areas, host community members increasingly assert claims over land allocated to refugees or used by humanitarian actors for service delivery. In Teknaf, these claims are generally framed as private ownership, however, in Ukhiya, claims are more commonly linked to social forestry land, with individuals asserting use rights and attempting to control access to and use of the land.

The long-standing gaps in land demarcation have continued to complicate the situation, making it difficult to distinguish between private and public land and to confirm which forest parcels are formally allocated under the Social Forestry Programme versus those that are not. In parallel, mechanisms to verify and resolve land claims remain limited or inconsistently applied, particularly for social forestry-related claims. While RRRC manages the camps, land records remain with other ministries and departments, including the Forest Department for social forestry land and the land authorities for private land. In the absence of systematic coordination among these bodies, verifying land claims and addressing disputes has remained consistently challenging, and verification processes have not been implemented in a consistent or systematic manner in practice.

However, under Bangladesh's legal framework, including the Forest Act (1927), the Forest (Amendment) Act (2000), and the Social Forestry Rules (2004), Bangladeshi nationals who receive land under the Social Forestry Programme obtain only limited use rights for a specific period, rather than ownership. These rights can only be granted through written agreements with the Forest Department and are generally restricted to forestry-related activities, and do not permit construction, land conversion, leasing, renting, or transferring to third parties, except under limited inheritance provisions or with permission from the Forest Department.

Between January and December 2025, a total of 5,260 housing, land and property (HLP) cases were recorded across the Rohingya camps, representing an average of approximately 14 incidents per day. These cases included rental disputes, eviction threats, land and shelter claims, relocation disputes and restrictions on access to basic services such as pathways, latrines and water points.

Practices such as restricting humanitarian operations, demanding rent from humanitarian agencies or charging refugees to access services did not align with the purpose and limits of the social forestry framework. To effectively address these HLP issues, engagement with and coordination among the relevant authorities at district and national levels, including the Forest Department, the Ministry of Land and RRRC remain necessary.



Key Highlights

Challenges for New Arrivals

While access to HLP rights remains a challenge for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, the situation has disproportionately impacted newly arrived refugees. As of 31 December 2025, UNHCR had biometrically documented 141,532 new arrivals in Cox's Bazar. Due to administrative constraints, these individuals have not been allocated shelters. As a result, they are relying on relatives, informally renting land or shelters, or purchasing shelters by means of unregulated arrangements with third parties who claiming ownership over them. These situation is compounded by Bangladesh's complex land management system—particularly the granting of “use rights” on social forestry land—which undermines tenure security, especially in Ukhiya where land claims and rent demands by host community members are common.

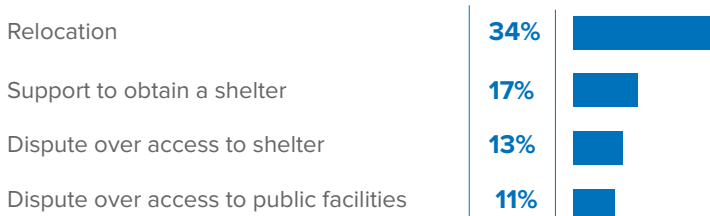
Decline in Eviction Cases

The number of eviction incidents declined compared to 2024, with 230 eviction-related cases reported, representing 6% of the total HLP caseload in 2025. This reduction is attributed to strengthened HLP interventions, including the broader use of written rental agreements between refugees and host community members, improved awareness of housing rights, and the establishment of eviction response mechanisms supported by Camp-in-Charges (CiCs) in some camps. These measures contributed to stronger dispute prevention, improved documentation, and more timely responses to eviction cases. However, eviction incidents may remain underreported.

Selling of Shelters

Shelter transactions continued to be reported. Since mid-2024, the arrival of new refugees has led to a marked increase in shelter sales, primarily targeting new arrivals. In several camps, both host community members and refugees have engaged in the sale of shelters, often through informal or unregulated arrangements. Prices range from BDT 10,000 to 100,000 per unit, depending on the location and structure. These transactions have contributed to secondary evictions, as some individuals claim ownership over the land or have forcibly reclaimed and sold the occupied shelters. Cases of refugees being forcibly displaced from their shelter by third parties to make space for newly arrived Rohingyas and charge more money were also reported.

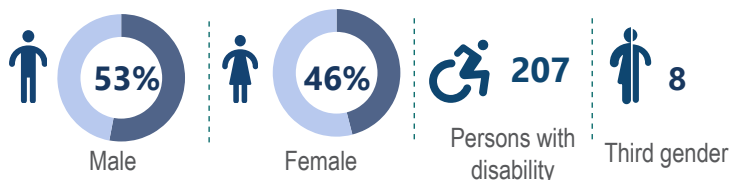
Top HLP Issues Reported:



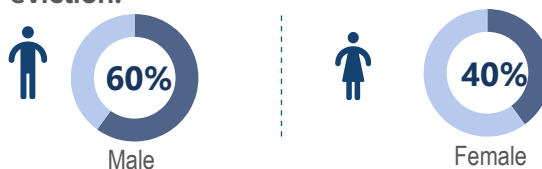
Population groups of HHs that faced HLP issues:



Gender of Heads of Households(HHs) that faced HLP issues:



Gender of Heads of HHs faced eviction/threat of eviction:



The most reported HLP issues from January to December 2025 were related to relocation, shelter disputes, and access-related conflicts across Rohingya camps and host communities in Ukhiya and Teknaf, including Hnilla, Palongkhali, and Whykong. Relocation was the most frequently reported concern, with 1,807 cases recorded. The underlying reasons included rising rent costs imposed by landlords, threats or intimidation from organized groups, security-driven community tensions in specific camp blocks (e.g., Camp 24: A5, A6, C9, D1, D2; Camp 26: I, G, H, A-1), and limited shelter availability.

Shelter-related disputes remained a significant component of the HLP caseload in 2025. A total of 683 cases involved disputes over access to shelters or pathways, while disputes over access to public facilities accounted for 609 cases. In addition, 270 cases were linked to encroachment or boundary disputes. These figures reflect ongoing pressures on land and infrastructure in densely populated areas with limited space and services.

A total of 2,641 cases involving female headed households were recorded, representing 50% of all cases, almost the same distribution as in 2024 (49%). However, women often face compounded vulnerabilities due to limited decision-making power over housing, fewer economic resources, and increased exposure to gender-based violence. Eviction cases shifted from 55% female-headed households last year to 40% in 2025, with male-headed households rising to 60%. The decrease is partly linked to HLP partners prioritizing women and persons with specific needs, as well as mediation with landowners that drew on community values and customary respect for women to prevent forced evictions.

Camps with the highest number of registered HLP cases:

Camps	Female	Male	Total
Camp 24	168	221	389
Camp 27	147	185	332
Camp 19	103	165	268
Camp 10	93	152	245
Camp 15	94	136	230
Camp 1W	102	111	213
Camp 21	107	105	212
Camp 22	77	133	210
Camp 11	95	108	203
Camp 13	81	113	195

Camps with the highest number of eviction and threats of eviction cases

Camps	Female	Male	Total
Camp 24	18	41	59
Camp 16	19	18	37
Camp 26	10	17	27
Camp 11	9	7	16
Camp 12	7	5	12
Camp 1E	6	6	12
Camp 25	4	8	12
Camp 27	2	10	12
Camp 8E	2	7	9
Camp 1W	3	5	8

In 2025, the type and geographical coverage of HLP incidents remained similar to 2024, with incidents recorded in almost every camp across Teknaf and Ukhiya. However, some changes were observed in the camps with the highest number of cases in 2024. Camp 24 recorded the highest caseload in 2025, with 389 HLP cases, equivalent to more than one incident per day on average, while this camp ranked second in terms of reported cases last year.

The increase in 2025 was largely driven by large-scale relocations linked to security concerns caused by criminal groups operating in the camp. Between August and November, more than 150 families relocated from Block E of Camp 24 to other camps or to safer blocks within the same camp. Reports indicated that criminal groups were extorting residents, assaulting them, and demanding payments, which contributed to insecurity and displacement within the camp. For evictions, Camps 24 and 26 both registered a high number of HLP and eviction cases in the previous year, both camps reported fewer cases in 2025, with an estimated decrease of approximately 45%. This decline is largely attributed to strengthened coordination with landowners and community leaders, as well as consistent engagement with relevant stakeholders, which helped reduce eviction risks.

In Camp 26, improved tenure security through the formalization of land use arrangements, supported by HLP partners, also contributed to fewer disputes. These improvements were further reinforced by administrative measures introduced by the Camp-in-Charge, including restrictions on relocations into the camp aimed at maintaining stable rent levels, which contributed to mitigating rental disputes.

HLP disputes affecting humanitarian operations

HLP disputes in the camps affect not only refugees but also humanitarian organizations. In 2025, a total of **16 HLP-related cases were recorded involving disputes with humanitarian actors**, including United Nations agencies, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and national NGOs.

In 2024, such claims increased during periods of political unrest in Bangladesh; however, the number of cases declined in 2025. Not all cases were referred to HLP partners, as several were resolved internally by the organizations concerned.

In one case in Camp 15, a member of the host community claimed control over the land where a Women Friendly Space (WFS) was operating. **The individual demanded a monthly payment of BDT 10,000 and threatened to close the facility** if the payment was not made. The issue was temporarily resolved through an agreement under which the agency provides BDT 5,000 per month to prevent disruption of services.

Similarly, in the same camp, **another host community member claimed ownership of the land where a Learning Centre was operating and demanded rent**. When the organization refused to pay, the individual locked the facility for several days, disrupting education activities.

In a separate incident in Camp 12, **members of the host community took control of 18 boreholes constructed by humanitarian agencies** that were originally intended to serve both refugees and nearby host community households. Host community members reportedly restricted refugee access to the boreholes unless payments were made, charging approximately BDT 500 per refugee family per month.

The boreholes were intended to support around 200 refugee families, who now face barriers to accessing safe water. Host community members reportedly justified their control by claiming that the land had been allocated to them under the Government's Social Forestry Programme, and therefore asserting their right to use and manage the land, including control over the water facilities.

Camp 15	9
Camp 21	4
Camp 19	1
Camp 7	1
Camp 16	1



Case Story: Preventing eviction and protecting families in Camp 24

Camp 24 is situated on land officially allocated by the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) for refugee settlement, meaning refugees should, in principle, access shelter plots free of charge and with security of tenure.

However, in this camp, 22 families (113 individuals, including 63 women and two children with disabilities) reported receiving a verbal eviction notice from a host community landholder. The families were instructed to vacate the land within one month so that the landholder could construct a market. The households had been living on the land since 2017 and were paying BDT 300–500 per month depending on the size of their shelters- the average size of shelter in the camps is around 15 square meters. Yet they had no written rental agreement (as they did not know the importance of it and, generally, it was not a practice in the camps then), leaving them vulnerable to eviction.

At the time, the host community landholder was outside the country and had appointed a caretaker to manage the land. The families reported that the caretaker warned them not to raise complaints and threatened them with consequences if they did so. Seeking support, the households approached the HLP team operating in the camp. The team responded by engaging with the affected families and relevant stakeholders to prevent the eviction and assess the situation.

They conducted an initial assessment of the case and facilitated discussions with the landholder and camp authorities to understand the circumstances surrounding the eviction notice.

During the analysis and due diligence, the HLP team identified that the land falls under the social forestry programme governed by the Forest Act of 1927 (as amended) and the Social Forestry Rules 2004. Under this legal framework, the use of such land is restricted to activities permitted under the social forestry arrangements, primarily forestry and agricultural purposes, and permanent construction is generally prohibited. Based on this legal assessment, the HLP team advised the landowner that the planned construction of a market would not be permitted under the current legal framework without prior Government authorization, and eviction of the households was therefore unjustified.

Due to the landholder's absence from the country, the mediation process took approximately two weeks. During this time, the HLP team in the camp facilitated communication between the families, the landholder and the CiC, ensuring that community concerns were conveyed. Through continued engagement and coordination with the CiC, the eviction was ultimately halted and the planned construction was suspended, allowing the affected families to remain in their shelters.

While the HLP WG has been able to prevent some evictions and provide HLP support to many refugees, addressing the root causes of HLP issues requires high-level advocacy and long-term measures, including:

- Allocating additional land for refugee camps to ensure adequate space for the growing population
- Strengthening land demarcation to clearly distinguish between private and public land, and between allocated and non-allocated social forestry parcels
- Establishing effective HLP dispute-resolution mechanisms, including reliable verification of land ownership and use-right claims
- Addressing rental practices by preventing rent demands from refugees or humanitarian agencies for land occupied under Government allocation, and regulating rental arrangements in areas where host community members may legitimately charge rent; and
- Expanding awareness-raising and legal assistance services, including mediation and collaborative dispute resolution, to support peaceful coexistence and mitigate protection risks in the camps.



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More details about HLPWG activities and updates can be found on the Rohingya Response website: <https://rohingyaresponse.org/hlpwg>