

MULTI-HAZARD EMERGENCY (LIFESAVING) RELOCATION PROTOCOL

for the Rohingya Refugee Response in Bangladesh



Cox's Bazar, BANGLADESH

TABLE OF CONTENTS

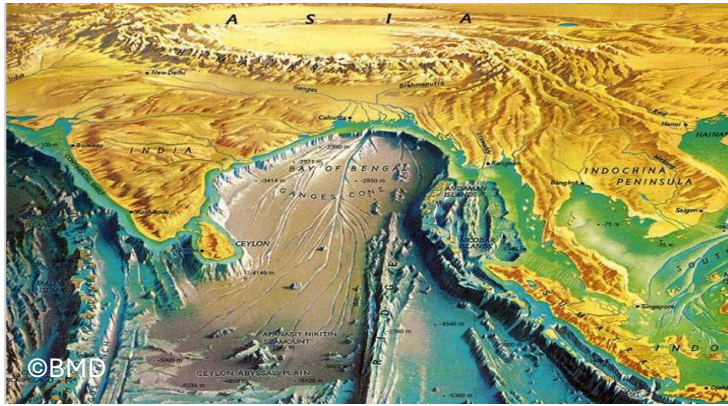
ABBREVIATIONS	3
I. CONTEXT	4
II. OBJECTIVES	5
III. ACTIVATION AND DEACTIVATION	5
IIIA. Hazard Specific Activation	5
IIIB. ECRC Deactivation	8
IV. EMERGENCY RELOCATION PRIORITIZATION DURING MULTHAZARD EVENTS	9
V. Specific Roles and Responsibilities on ECRC Protocol Activation and Deactivation	10
ANNEXES	12

ABBREVIATIONS

BoB	Bay of Bengal
CDMC	Camp Disaster Management Committee
CiC	Camp in Charge
CPP	Cyclone Preparedness Programme
DC	Deputy Commissioner
DMCs	Disaster Management Committees
EVIs	Extremely Vulnerable Individuals
ECRCs	Emergency Communal Relocation Centers
EPR	Emergency Preparedness and Response
EOCs	Emergency Operation Cells
HCC	Humanitarian Coordination Cell
PBW	Pregnant and Breast-feeding Women
PSEA	Prevention for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
PSN	Persons with Special Needs
RCP	Rohingya Coordination Platform
RRRC	Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner
RR	Refugee Response in Bangladesh
SCCCM	Shelter – Camp Coordination and Camp Management
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

I. CONTEXT

Bangladesh's geography, topography, and status as one of the world's largest and most densely populated deltas make it highly vulnerable to climate-induced, environmental, and natural hazards. In 2023, Bangladesh was ranked as the **ninth most high-risk country globally** in terms of climate disaster risk¹.



Cox's Bazar, one of the nineteen coastal districts considered disaster "hotspots", faces persistent threats from multiple hazards. Its location along the Bay of Bengal (BoB) and the bay's funnel-shaped geography intensifies **cyclones and storm surges**. The district's low-lying, flat terrain increases flood exposure, while steep and unstable slopes elevate **landslide risks during heavy rainfall**². In addition to cyclones, the Rohingya

refugee camps are increasingly vulnerable to **flash floods, fires, and disease outbreaks** that aggravate existing fragilities³.

The impacts of climate change further intensify these hazards, increasing the likelihood of more frequent, prolonged, and severe disaster events. For example, in 2019 **Cyclone Bulbul**—one of the longest-lasting cyclones in recorded history—forced the evacuation of over 2 million people into cyclone shelters⁴. Similarly, repeated seasonal monsoon rains have triggered destructive floods and landslides⁵, while recent large-scale **fire incidents** in the camps displaced thousands of already vulnerable refugees⁶. These layered risks underline the multi-hazard reality confronting both host and refugee populations.

The humanitarian and development implications are profound. Between 2000 and 2019, Bangladesh endured **185 extreme weather events** linked to climate change, resulting in an estimated **\$3.72 billion in economic losses**⁷. For Rohingya refugees living in highly exposed, densely populated, and resource-scarce camps, these hazards heighten the risk of secondary displacement, exacerbate humanitarian needs, and further erode limited coping mechanisms.

Given the magnitude of these risks, there is a critical need for a comprehensive, multi-hazard, and collaborative approach to emergency preparedness and response. Particular attention must be paid to safeguarding **Extremely Vulnerable Individuals (EVIs)** and communities in high-risk locations before the disaster strike. With the shifting disaster risk landscape—including more frequent cyclones, intensified rainfall, recurrent floods, fires, and other hazard events—Bangladesh requires paradigm shifts in preparedness. This includes timely, well-coordinated, and effectively managed lifesaving relocation processes that protect and save lives across all hazards.

¹ [INFORM Risk Index. \(2023\)](#)

² Islam, N., & Peterson, R. (2009). *Climatic disasters in Bangladesh: A case study of vulnerability, resilience and adaptability*. Springer. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11027-008-9166-9>

³ Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG). (2022–2023). [Situation Reports on Rohingya Refugee Response, Cox's Bazar](#).

⁴ UNDRR. (2019). [Bangladesh goes beyond cyclones: Cyclone Preparedness Programme](#).

⁵ Wikipedia. (2019). [2019 South Asia floods – Impacts in Bangladesh](#).

⁶ UNHCR. (2021). [Rohingya refugees displaced after massive fire in Cox's Bazar camps](#).

⁷ Germanwatch. (2021). [Global Climate Risk Index 2021](#).

II. OBJECTIVES

The **Multi-Hazard Emergency (Lifesaving) Relocation Plan and Protocol for the Rohingya Refugee Response in Bangladesh** has been developed for the Government of Bangladesh—particularly the Office of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC)—and humanitarian actors, coordinated by the Rohingya Coordination Platform (RCP). ECRCs operate within the existing camp governance structure and follow SCCCM/site management principles. Their purpose is to enable coordinated multi-sector service delivery, community engagement, and accountability during temporary life-saving relocation, rather than functioning as standalone service sites.

Its primary objective is to ensure prompt, well-prepared, and rapid relocation of Rohingya refugees from high-risk areas to designated safer locations and emergency shelters in the event of imminent hazards. These hazards include, but are not limited to, **cyclones, floods, landslides, fires, and other sudden-onset disasters** that pose immediate threats to life, safety, and dignity.

The overarching aim is to safeguard **Extremely Vulnerable Individuals (EVIs)** and other at-risk groups by minimizing exposure to hazards and preventing avoidable loss of life. Timely, coordinated, and safe relocation is critical for the survival and protection of vulnerable Rohingya refugees **before, during, and after multi-hazard events**.

III. ACTIVATION AND DEACTIVATION

Recognizing the high exposure and vulnerability of the Rohingya refugee camps to **multiple hazards**—including cyclones, floods, landslides, and fires—underscores the urgent need for proactive and lifesaving relocation planning. The rapid movement of refugees from immediate danger zones to designated **Emergency Communal Relocation Centers (ECRCs)** or other approved communal facilities is essential to prevent loss of life. Any delay in such action places lives at grave risk and may lead to tragic consequences.

IIIA. Hazard Specific Activation

The **Multi-Hazard Emergency (Lifesaving) Relocation Protocol** is activated by the camp level Disaster Management Committees (DMC) in the camps and will be activated based on triggers set for each specific hazards.

Following the Anticipatory Action principle, the activation of the emergency communal relocation centers will consist of 2 phases:

- a. **Pre-Activation Phase:** Set of activities required to ensure readiness of the facilities identified to be used for emergency relocation in the camps.
- b. **Activation Phase:** Set of activities to be undertaken during the actual relocation and utilization of refugee population in ECRCs.

Hazard	Cyclone		Monsoon		Fire Incidents	
	Trigger	Required Actions	Trigger	Required Actions	Trigger	Required Actions
Pre-Activation Phase	BMD *Local Cautionary Signal 4 in Cox's Bazar Port	✓ Revisit ECRC map and location per camp. ✓ Revisit Risk Mapping to identify priority areas for emergency relocation. ✓ Check ECRC minimum readiness checklist (<i>Please see annex on ECRC minimum readiness checklist including sector lead agency responsible in providing the expected service at ECRC in camps</i>). ✓ ECRC Management Team per camp on standby.	INSTANT Portal/ Landslide EWS indicates possible heavy rainfall precipitation that may cause flashfloods or landslides in Cox's Bazar.	✓ Revisit ECRC map and location per camp. ✓ Revisit Risk Mapping to identify priority areas for emergency relocation. ✓ Check ECRC minimum readiness checklist (<i>Please see annex on ECRC minimum readiness checklist including sector lead agency responsible in providing the expected service at ECRC in camps</i>). ✓ ECRC Management Team per camp on standby.	An ongoing fire incident is reported confirmed by the Site Management Sector.	✓ Revisit ECRC map and location per camp. ✓ Revisit Risk Mapping to identify priority areas for emergency relocation. ✓ Check ECRC minimum readiness checklist (<i>Please see annex on ECRC minimum readiness checklist including sector lead agency responsible in providing the expected service at ECRC in camps</i>). ✓ ECRC Management Team per camp on standby.
Activation Phase	BMD *Cyclone Danger Signal 5-7 in Cox's Bazar Port	✓ Activate ECRC facilities in the camp. ✓ Mobilize the ECRC Management Team assigned in each facility per camp. ✓ Mobilize DMUs and SMS volunteers in the emergency relocation. ✓ Activate provision of assistance (Food, NFI, etc.) to refugees relocated in ECRC	BMD issues Heavy Rainfall Warning in Chattogram Division	✓ Activate ECRC facilities in all camps. ✓ Mobilize the ECRC Management Team assigned in each facility per camp. ✓ Mobilize DMUs and SMS volunteers in the emergency relocation. ✓ Activate provision of assistance (Food, NFI, etc.) to refugees relocated in ECRC	The number of impacted shelters based on estimation is 50 and above.	✓ Activate ECRC facilities in all camps. ✓ Mobilize the ECRC Management Team assigned in each facility per camp. ✓ Mobilize DMUs and SMS volunteers in the emergency relocation. ✓ Activate provision of assistance (Food, NFI, etc.) to refugees relocated in ECRC

*The triggers for both pre-activation and activation phases for cyclones were considered based on the definition of Cyclone Signals for Sea Ports under SOD 2019.

ECRC Activation during Cyclonic Events

Pre-Activation Phase

During cyclonic events, once the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) issued its Special Weather Bulletin (SWB) with **Local Cautionary Signal 4** is hoisted in Cox's Bazar Port, camp level DMCs shall undertake the following actions under the pre-activation phase:

- ✓ Revisit ECRC map and location per camp.
- ✓ Revisit Risk Mapping to identify priority areas for emergency relocation.
- ✓ Check ECRC minimum readiness checklist (Please see annex on ECRC minimum readiness checklist including sector lead agency responsible in providing the expected service at ECRC in camps).
- ✓ ECRC Management Team per camp on standby.

The pre-activation phase aims to ensure that the ECRC facilities identified in each of the camps are ready in terms of the minimum facility requirement as well as the essential services required to be provided to refugees that will be relocated in these facilities. The 0.28 m² per person space allocation reflects the Government cyclone shelter standard and is applicable for very short-term life-saving relocation. If relocation exceeds 24 hours, DMC/SCCCM actors should initiate decongestion measures and prioritize EVIs/PSNs for safer and less crowded arrangements where feasible.

The pre-activation phase trigger is in line with the activation of the Disaster Management Committees (DMC) across the 33 camps wherein, when activated, the required actions under this pre-activation phase will form part of the agenda among the DMC members.

Activation Phase

As the cyclonic synoptic forecast, especially for Cox's Bazar continues to progress where BMD's cyclone signal for Cox's Bazar Port reaches between **Danger Signal 5 to 7**, required actions under the Activation phase will be triggered. Activities in this phase would include:

- ✓ Activating all designated ECRC facilities across the camps
- ✓ Mobilizing the ECRC Management Team focal points assigned in ECRC facilities
- ✓ Mobilizing DMU/SMS camp volunteers in supporting emergency relocation among identified persons and households according to prioritization criteria to the ECRC facilities
- ✓ Activation provision of minimum assistance (food, NFI, etc.) among relevant sectors responsible for ECRC facilities.

ECRC Activation during Monsoon Season

During monsoon season, the required actions to be undertaken under this ECRC protocol will remain the same with the cyclone, both in pre-activation and activation phases. The only difference is the triggers that will activate the said actions.

ACTIVATION TRIGGERS	Pre-Activation Phase	Activation Phase
	A heavy rainfall precipitation which could potentially cause flashflood or landslide forecasted by BMD's INSTANT Portal/ Landslide Early Warning System.	BMD issues Heavy Rainfall Warning/ Alerts involving Chattogram Division.

ECRC Activation during Fire Incidents

Pre-Activation Phase

Once a fire incident is reported in the camp/s and confirmed by Site Management Sector Agency lead, key required actions under this phase shall be triggered. The overall principle of the actions under this phase is to initiate close monitoring to determine whether the need to activate ECRC facilities will be required in terms of the number of populations potentially affected, number of ECRC facilities that may require to be opened and ensure readiness of the facilities identified to be activated. Minimum readiness checks should include internal zoning feasibility, safe entry/exit and circulation routes, night lighting, and fire risk mitigation measures (including separation of cooking and sleeping areas).

Activation Phase

When the estimated number of shelters being impacted in a fire incident reaches at least 50 and above, the DMC in the affected camp/s shall trigger the required actions under the ECRC Activation phase.

The call to activate this phase can be done either:

- While the fire incident is still happening and extent of damage is gradually expanding; or
- The fire incident was declared controlled and/or dozed out by FSCD.
- Activate AAP measures in ECRCs, including a help desk/complaints & feedback mechanism and clear information-sharing on services, expected duration, and return planning.

III.B ECRC Deactivation

The process of deactivating the ECRC facilities shall be guided by the following parameters aligned with respective hazards and shall be evaluated by the respective DMCs based on the post impact situation in each camp:

	Cyclone	Monsoon	Fire Incident
DEACTIVATION PARAMETERS	○ BMD lowers Cyclone Signal to Local Cautionary Signal 3 in Cox's Bazar port. ○ Shelters of families inside the ECRC facilities remain unaffected after the cyclone. ○ Shelters of families were impacted but with minor damage and considered safe to be used even while repairs are taking place by shelter sector and approved by the camp DMC. ○ The geographical location where the families inside the ECRC facilities are residing is considered safe to return by Site Development Sector which will be declared by the camp DMC.	○ BMD Heavy rainfall warning is lifted. ○ Shelters of families inside the ECRC facilities remain unaffected by landslides/flashfloods. ○ Shelters of families were impacted but with minor damage and considered safe to be used even while repairs are taking place by shelter sector and approved by the camp DMC. ○ The geographical location where the families inside the ECRC facilities are residing is considered safe to return by the Site Development Sector which will be declared by the camp DMC.	○ The location where the fire incident happened is considered safe to return by Site Development Sector which will be declared by the camp DMC. ○ Shelters of families relocated in ECRCs are not affected by the incident. ○ Shelter relocation arrangements/strategies (both short term and/or long term) are established. ○ Shelter relocation arrangements/strategies (both short term and/or long term) are established.

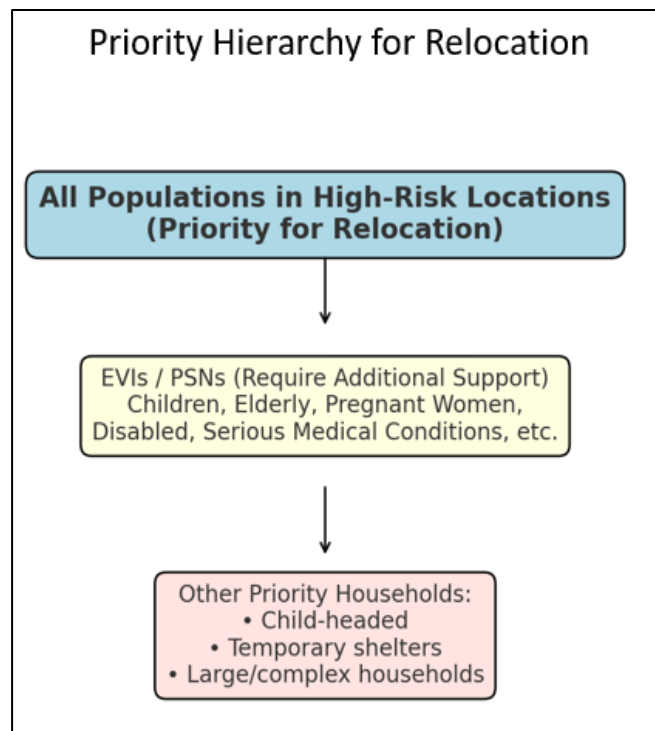
	○ Shelter relocation arrangements/strategies (both short term and/or long term) are established.	○ Shelter relocation arrangements/strategies (both short term and/or long term) are established.	
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The considerations under these deactivation parameters are applicable not only to the shelter conditions of families who stayed in ECRC facilities but also to those who were not in ECRC facilities but shelters were impacted, and no alternative shelters are available after an incident occurred (e.g. no relatives or neighbors to stay with while shelters are repaired or re-constructed. Following ECRC review with relevant sectors and community representatives to capture lessons learned and update ECRC readiness and mapping accordingly.

IV. EMERGENCY RELOCATION PRIORITIZATION DURING MULTHAZARD EVENTS

Given the limited capacity of Emergency Communal Relocation Centers (ECRCs) within the Rohingya refugee camps, the primary priority for emergency (lifesaving) relocation is for **all populations living in high-risk locations**. Emergency relocation procedures are designed to save lives and reduce exposure to harm for the entire camp population when imminent hazards such as cyclones, floods, landslides, or fires threaten.

Within this framework, persons with special needs (PSNs)—also referred to as Extremely Vulnerable Individuals (EVIs)—require additional support measures to ensure their safety and dignity during relocation. While relocation applies to all at-risk households, EVIs must be provided with specialized assistance because of their limited physical, medical, emotional, or protection capacities to endure disaster impacts.



EVIs include, but are not limited to:

- I. Children under five years old (below 59 months old)
- II. Pregnant and breast-feeding women (PBW)
- III. The Elderly (60+)
- IV. Individuals with Serious medical conditions
- V. Individuals with Disability
- VI. Individuals with child at risk
- VII. Individuals with Specific legal & physical protection needs
- VIII. Individuals with Unaccompanied/separated child
- IX. Individuals with Single parent or caregiver

In addition, priority for relocation is also the (i) **children-headed households**, (ii) **children in temporary shelter(s)**, and (iii) **large/complex households** with more than seven members composed of a mix of elderly and children under five years old, whereby the dependency ratio is high, and emergency needs are considered complex. The identification and management of these groups should be part of regular preparedness planning led by the Camp Disaster Management Committees (CDMCs), ensuring that relocation support can be delivered promptly before hazard impacts occur.

The indicative number of people prioritized for emergency (lifesaving) relocation is provided in Annex 1. These figures will be updated regularly by the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) Secretariat's Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) component, based on hazard lead time. This data will guide CiCs, Commanders, and EOC Incident Managers in making timely decisions regarding "advised" and "mandatory" relocations.

Meanwhile, specific information on (i) child-headed households, (ii) children in temporary shelters, and (iii) large/complex households will continue to be coordinated and provided by the Protection Sector, as these groups are not yet included in Annex 1.

V. Specific Roles and Responsibilities on ECRC Protocol Activation and Deactivation

SECTOR/AGENCY/ ENTITY	ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES
RRRC AND ISCG	Responsible for ensuring the ECRC plan and protocol is functional and operational across the camp settlement.
DISASTER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES (DMC)	- Led by the Camp in Charge (CIC) as chairperson in each camp. - Overall responsible for ensuring the effective implementation and overall management of the ECRC protocol from activation to deactivation in their respective camps. - Ensure temporary, inclusive community representation arrangements are established within 24 hours of ECRC activation (including women, elderly, persons with disabilities, and youth) to support communication, conflict mitigation, and identification of vulnerabilities.
ECRC FACILITY FOCAL	- Led by the respective sector lead agency in charge of facilities identified as ECRC in camps. (e.g. Education sector for Learning Centers, Protection Sector for women and child friendly spaces, etc.) - Responsible for ensuring that the minimum ECRC facility readiness checklists are regularly checked and available in close coordination with relevant sector focal points. - Facility focal coordinates facility-specific readiness and use but does not assume overall site management authority; operational coordination inside the activated ECRC is supported by SCCCM/SMS in line with DMC direction.
SITE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT (SMS)	- Mobilization of Disaster Management Unit/Site Management Support camp volunteers in relocating refugees in high-risk zones and persons with specific needs to ECRC facilities. - Responsible for keeping track of refugees relocated in ECRC facilities. - Coordinate ECRC population tracking and reporting in alignment with SCCCM camp-level information management systems to avoid parallel registration. Personal data must be handled and shared only for humanitarian purposes and in line with data protection standards.

SITE DEVELOPMENT SECTOR (SD)	Regardless of the hazard type, responsible in providing technical recommendation through the DMC whether the impacted area/s is safe for refugee population is safe to return or require further site planning which will serve as basis in deactivating the ECRC protocol.
SHELTER SECTOR	Responsible for ensuring that the non-food items to be provided to refugees occupying in ECRC facilities are adequate according to the occupancy capacity of identified ECRC in each camp.
FOOD SECURITY SECTOR	Responsible for ensuring that the food assistance (hot meals and dry food, etc., in line with FSS 72-hour response plan) to be provided to refugees occupying in ECRC facilities are adequate according to the occupancy capacity of identified ECRC in each camp.
WASH SECTOR	- Responsible for ensuring required wash facilities are adequate in ECRC identified facilities. - Response for ensuring adequate WASH materials/kits is available according to the ECRC facility occupancy capacity.
HEALTH SECTOR	- Ensure health referral pathways are functional within the camps - Responsible for setting up first aid management stations in ECRCs.
PROTECTION SECTOR (INCLUDING GBV, CP SUBSECTORS)	Monitor GBV, child protection, and legal/psychosocial services within ECRCs as part of expanded roles of PERU volunteers in camps.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Indicative figures of Extremely Vulnerable Individual (EVIs)

Extremely Vulnerable Individuals (EVI) Classifications and Figures		NUTRITION SECTOR PRIORITIES										HEALTH SECTOR PRIORITIES										PROTECTION SECTOR PRIORITIES																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																														
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SN	Camp	Total Families	Total Females with PSN	Total Population (Individuals)	Total Individuals with PSN	Below 5 years old			5-17 years old			65+ years old			Individuals with Serious medical conditions			Individuals with Disability			Individuals with child at risk			Individuals with legal & physical protection needs			Persons with Special Need (PSN)			Persons with Single parent or caregiver			Children in household			Children in temporary shelter			Other PSN			Large / Complex Household Composition																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																										
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