



GBV Sub-Sector (GBVSS) Monthly Meeting Minutes - July 2026

Date	13 July, 2026	Venue: RCP Conference Room, Cox's Bazar Office
Meeting Modality	In-Person	Time: 10:00 am to 12:00 pm
Chair	Alona Bermejo, GBVSS Coordinator	Preparation of Minutes: GBVSS Coordination Team
Partner's present	Number of Participants: The total number of participants is 45 (Male: 07 , Female: 38). Representative Organizations/Sector/Sub-Sector/WGs/Network: UNICEF, UNFPA, Nari Maitree, Caritas Bangladesh, Mukti Cox's Bazar, AID Comilla, UNHCR, Bandhu Social Welfare Society, IRC, BRAC, MFS, Care Bangladesh, Coast Foundation, WFP, Tdh, EDUCO, SKUS, Save the Children, FIVDB, RTMI, GIZ, BNPS, IOM, Women Refugee Commission, Good Neighbors Bangladesh, Protection Sector, Plan International, OXFAM, UN Women, YPSA, Breaking the Silence, World Vision, MHPSS WG, CPSS, GBVSS.	
Agenda & Discussion	<u>Welcome & Greetings:</u> Alona Bermejo, the GBV Sub-Sector Coordinator, started the meeting by welcoming all attendees and inviting them for a round of introduction. The GBVSS-Coordinator presented the agenda for endorsement with the partners. <u>Agenda:</u> 1. Updates on Action Points-June 2026 2. <u>GBVSS Updates:</u> • Discussion on Safe Shelter, OCC and Alternative Care Arrangement • Joint CP-GBV SAG • GBVSS Regular Reporting Deadlines • Field Observation Updates 3. <u>Partner Presentation:</u> • Integrating Legal Aid Service Messages During GBV Counselling with Survivors (UNHCR) • Understanding the impact of funding cuts on Women and Girls' Safe Spaces in Cox's Bazar (Women's Refugee Commission) 4. <u>Operational Updates:</u> Case Management WG/Prevention WG/Bhasan Char/ Protection Sector/CPSS/PSEA Network/GiHA Chapter 5. AoB <u>Discussion and Follow-up Actions:</u> <u>GBVSS Updates:</u> 1. Updates on Action Points-May 2026: The GBVSS-Coordinator shared the updates on the action points from the previous month. • GBV Risk Submission: All partners continue to submit GBV risks through the established reporting tool. Implementation of this action point is ongoing. • Formation of Joint CP-GBV SAG: Following the Expression of Interest process and a voting process by GBVSS and CPSS members, the Joint Child Protection-GBV Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) was established. • Annual Work Plan (AWP) 2026: The GBVSS 2026 Annual Work Plan was shared with partners for review and input. • Safe Shelter & OCC Bilateral Discussions: GBVSS and CPSS, together with Safe Shelter and One-Stop Crisis Centre (OCC) implementers, as well as the GBV and CP Case Management Working Groups, held meetings (9 June and 5 July 2026) to address referral	



challenges and develop strategies to strengthen survivor-centred Safe Shelter and OCC services.

2. GBVSS Updates:

- **Discussion on Safe Shelter, OCC and Alternative Care Arrangement:** GBVSS explained that the Joint Consultation Meeting on Safe Shelter, the One-Stop Crisis Centre (OCC), and Alternative Care Arrangements aimed to strengthen survivor-centred referral mechanisms. The consultation clarified service modalities, eligibility criteria, referral pathways, consent procedures, and documentation requirements for Alternative Care Arrangements and Safe Shelter services, while reinforcing a common understanding of OCC's multisectoral, survivor-centred approach and confirming that access to OCC services does not require survivors to pursue legal action. Participants agreed to develop separate concise guidance notes (1-2 pages each) for caseworkers on Alternative Care Arrangements, Safe Shelter, and OCC, and identified key follow-up actions, including updating the Alternative Care Arrangement SOP, reviewing the GBV referral pathway (including the OCC hotline), and organizing joint capacity-building initiatives to improve coordinated, survivor-centred service delivery. The initial capacity-building sessions will target GBV case managers and case management supervisors, who will subsequently cascade the knowledge to caseworkers. The minutes of the most recent meeting are currently being finalized.
 - **Joint CP-GBV SAG:** GBVSS together with CPSS completed the selection of the Joint GBV and CP Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) through a member voting process. The elected members are UN Women (from UN); Plan International, Save the Children, and International Rescue Committee (from INGOs); and BRAC, CODEC, Breaking the Silence,(NNGOs), with the additional women-led NGO seat (Nari Maitree) introduced to strengthen localization. The Joint SAG will provide strategic guidance alongside its permanent members, including the GBVSS and CPSS Coordinators, UNFPA, UNICEF, relevant government departments, the Protection Sector, and the PSEAH Network. The 1st Joint SAG Meeting is scheduled for 13 July 2026 where the primary objective is to review the draft TOR.
 - **GBVSS Regular Reporting Deadlines:** Partners were reminded to adhere to the established GBVSS reporting timelines to strengthen coordination, evidence-based advocacy, and operational planning. Monthly 5Ws reports should be submitted by the 10th of each succeeding month, while GBVIMS IR should be shared by the 5th. Agencies were also requested to regularly update the quarterly service and facility mapping to support service gap analysis and referral pathway strengthening as requested by the end of each quarter. The Incident Tracker is an event-based reporting tool that should be submitted whenever significant protection or GBV-related incidents occur that require the attention of the coordination team, regardless of whether an emergency is ongoing. It is intended to facilitate rapid coordination, information sharing, and follow-up actions in response to emerging protection concerns. In contrast, Flash Updates are activated only during emergencies, such as flooding, landslides, fires, cyclones, or other humanitarian crises, and require daily reporting throughout the emergency period. Partners were encouraged to submit available information promptly, even if incomplete, to ensure effective coordination and timely humanitarian response.
- 3. Field Observation Updates:** The National Field Coordinator shared the updates on the field observation as below:
- **Security Environment & Organized Group Influence** (*Camps 1W, 3, 4, 6, 8E, 10, 11, 12, 15, 20, 20 Ext., 21*): Organized groups were reported to pressure survivors into unwanted



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relationships, intimidate survivors and their families, influence community dispute resolution, and perpetrate sexual violence, undermining survivor-centred responses.

- **Forced Marriage, Tech-Facilitated GBV & Trafficking** (Camps 1E, 4 Ext., 2W, 5, 7, 13, 16, 20, 24, 19, 25, 26): Online harassment, cyber abuse, blackmail, internet-facilitated exploitation, pornography, online gambling, and misuse of refugee data cards as loan collateral are emerging concerns. Adolescent girls were reported to leave the camps after being lured through online relationships and later return after being sexually exploited. Issues include increased trafficking, attempts to marry off adolescent girls to men abroad, survivors of sexual violence being sent overseas instead of receiving support, and families increasingly considering irregular migration as a coping strategy.
- **New Arrivals & Shelter Gaps** (Camps 1E, 7, 9, 12, 19, 20 Ext.): Some newly arrived Rohingya families are attempting to return to Myanmar due to limited shelter and resources and relatives are not willing to support them for a longer period. In addition, an increasing number of new arrivals are reportedly residing in rented accommodation outside the camps near the border, where men often work as day labourers for landlords' businesses while women are engaged in domestic work, with incidences of sexual abuse. Moreover, issues include sexual assault of newly arrived women specially adolescent girls lacking safe accommodation with increased risks of exploitation and trafficking.
- **Severe IPV** – Camp 14: A woman was seriously assaulted by her drug-dependent husband, sustaining severe hand injuries requiring hospitalization.
- **Night-time Intimidation** – Camp 17: Unknown individuals repeatedly threw bricks onto shelters, creating fear among residents.
- **Female-Headed Households Targeted** – Camp 12: Unidentified individuals were reported knocking on the doors of female- and girl-headed households at night, raising security concerns.
- **Food Assistance-Related Protection Risks** (Camps 1W, 5, 8W, 17, 22, 24): Reports indicate unequal food distribution between first and second wives in polygamous households, while confusion around the TPE process and food-card mortgaging is contributing to household conflict and increased vulnerability for women.

Participants noted that this practice is contributing to heightened economic vulnerability, food insecurity, household conflict, and intimate partner violence, despite existing verification mechanisms during food distribution, mentioned by WFP. It was agreed that the GBV Sub-Sector would engage with WFP to better understand the scale and drivers of this issue and identify potential measures to reduce associated protection risks.

- **Labour & Drug-Related Exploitation-** Camp 24: Labour exploitation remains a concern, with reports of workers being underpaid or compensated with Yaba tablets instead of wages – involving both Rohingya and host community networks and increasing economic vulnerability.
- **Femicide:** Three femicide incidents were reported in June, highlighting the extreme consequences of substance abuse, economic stress, and intimate partner violence.

To address the issue of femicide, the following recommendations were provided for:

- ❖ *The Protection Sector expressed concern over the increasing number of femicide cases and questioned the effectiveness of existing prevention materials, emphasizing the need for timely advocacy and more meaningful community engagement. UNFPA highlighted the importance of strengthening and fast tracking the joint prevention toolkit to ensure harmonized community messaging, social and behaviour change interventions, and a critical review of current response mechanisms, particularly the use of mediation in IPV cases.*



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- ❖ *The recommendation also includes joint case reviews involving the Case Management Working Group, Protection Sector, and legal actors. UN Women noted that online gambling is a nationwide concern, while IRC emphasized that prevention priorities should evolve based on emerging evidence and changing contexts, with stronger trend analysis led by case managers and supervisors.*
- ❖ *IOM stressed the need to go beyond routine GBVIMS reporting by strengthening analytical capacity, and UNICEF highlighted the importance of livelihood support for women as part of GBV prevention.*
- ❖ *UNHCR called for greater collaboration on digital safety with Community-Based Protection, Education, and other sectors, while existing technology-facilitated GBV materials could be adapted across sectors and shared ongoing regional initiatives on online safety.*
- ❖ *Participants agreed on the need for deeper hotspot (along with case loads per case worker) and gender analysis, stronger evidence on effective prevention interventions, and sustained advocacy for prevention programming despite funding constraints.*

Partner Presentation:

Understanding the impact of funding cuts on Women and Girls' Safe Spaces in Cox's Bazar:

Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) presented preliminary findings from its ongoing research examining the impact of humanitarian funding cuts on Women and Girls' Safe Spaces (WGSS) in Cox's Bazar. The research aims to generate evidence to inform donor decisions, policies, and programming by assessing how funding reductions and other emerging risks are affecting women's and girls' access to WGSS and GBV services. Drawing on interviews with humanitarian actors and Rohingya women and girls, the findings reaffirmed that the comprehensive WGSS model remains critical for GBV prevention, response, and risk mitigation. Beyond providing survivor services, WGSS serve as safe spaces for women and girls, facilitate referrals to other sectors, strengthen community engagement and positive social norms, support livelihoods and life skills, and improve access to essential services through coordinated, multisectoral programming.

The presentation highlighted that prolonged funding reductions and prioritization of life-saving activities have significantly affected prevention and risk mitigation interventions, resulting in staff reductions, greater reliance on volunteers, integration of GBV services into other facilities, reduced outreach activities and incentives, and declining participation in WGSS programming. These changes have contributed to reduced service quality, increased staff burnout, diminished access to referrals and essential services, and heightened protection risks, particularly for female-headed households, adolescent girls, women with disabilities, and other marginalized groups. WRC further noted that funding cuts in sectors such as food security, WASH, and livelihoods have compounded GBV risks by increasing economic hardship and reliance on negative coping mechanisms, including child marriage. The presentation concluded that sustained investment in the comprehensive WGSS model and cross-sector collaboration is essential to address the underlying drivers of GBV and prevent further deterioration of protection outcomes.

Participants welcomed the research and emphasized that prevention programming must be protected alongside response services, as reductions in community outreach and women-only spaces undermine long-term GBV prevention. The discussion highlighted the importance of using the research findings and complementary evidence to advocate with donors, documenting the broader impacts of funding cuts beyond the GBV sector, and generating stronger data on the effectiveness of prevention interventions. WRC mentioned the final report is expected to be published by the end of August.

Integrating Legal Aid Service Messages During GBV Counselling with Survivors: UNHCR presented the legal aid services available to refugees, highlighting that free legal assistance is provided through legal aid centres across all 33 camps and Bhasan Char by partner organizations, camp-based legal officers, and



trained refugee paralegal volunteers. Services include legal counselling, legal representation, support for filing complaints, mediation for civil and non-cognizable cases, legal awareness, intervention in detention and trafficking cases, transport support for legal proceedings and OCC referrals, assistance for post-mortem cases, and support for relatives of detained refugees. The presentation also outlined the legal case filing process and emphasized that legal process should only be introduced when appropriate, based on survivors' interests and informed consent, without delaying urgent health, safety, or psychosocial support. Legal assistance should complement GBV case management, with referrals guided by confidentiality, survivor choice, and a survivor-centred approach.

During the discussion, participants emphasized the need to strengthen the integration of legal services within GBV programming by addressing structural barriers that limit women's and girls' access to justice, including fear of retaliation and social pressure. It was proposed that legal actors contribute to the GBV caseworker refresher modules, particularly on legal referral pathways and survivor counselling. UNHCR also shared updates on piloting mobile legal information sessions in Women and Girls Safe Spaces and communities, with plans to expand to additional locations by September, alongside legal literacy courses and on-the-job training for refugee volunteers to strengthen community-level awareness. Participants recommended developing a live directory of legal service providers across the camps, including service coverage and referral contacts, incorporating indicative timelines for different legal processes to better manage survivor expectations, strengthening monitoring of legal caseloads and service demand, and including guidance on managing retaliation risks in the planned legal aid guidance note. UNHCR informed the meeting that a two-page legal guidance document would be shared with partners.

Operational Updates:

Prevention WG: UNHCR - lead of the Working Group reported that its June monthly meeting was held on 30 June 2026. Members were informed that updates to the GBV service mapping and focal point directory are ongoing, and the excel sheet has been re-shared with all organizations following previous technical access issues. The Working Group also shared the first draft of a concept note and assessment questionnaire, developed by CODEC on behalf of the task team, to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of GBV outreach and awareness-raising sessions delivered primarily by volunteers. The draft documents will be circulated among members for review and feedback before finalization. The next Prevention Working Group meeting is scheduled for 28 July 2026.

Case Management Working Group (CMWG): IRC - lead of the Working Group reported that its latest monthly meeting was held on 9 July 2026 at Mukti Cox's Bazar, where members reviewed the previous meeting minutes, assessed progress against agreed action points, and discussed pending tasks and next steps to strengthen GBV case management. The Working Group also organized a self-care event for members, promoting staff well-being, peer support, team cohesion, and positive morale in recognition of the challenges faced by frontline case management staff. The next CMWG meeting is scheduled for 3 August 2026, to be hosted by IRC.

Bhasan Char Updates: GBVSS on behalf of the Bhasan Char representative reported that regular GBV programming continues in Bhasan Char. UNHCR conducted a refresher case management training for BRAC caseworkers to strengthen the quality of survivor-centred case management, while a GBV service quality monitoring checklist was implemented to assess service standards and identify areas for improvement for UNHCR GBV programming. Looking ahead, Mukti will facilitate Caring for Child Survivors (CCS) training later this month to further strengthen the capacity of frontline staff responding to child survivors of GBV.



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Child Protection Sub-Sector-CPSS: The Child Protection Sub-Sector (CPSS) shared that its monthly meeting and mid-year review workshop were held on 28 June 2026, providing an opportunity to review progress and priorities for the remainder of the year. CPSS informed members that the CPIMS+ dashboard is under development to enable real-time data visualization and updates during coordination meetings. The Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is also progressing, with assessment tools finalized, task team members oriented, and consultations underway with all Case Management agencies, including Bhasan Char, with completion expected by the end of July. In addition, the CPSS [Q1 2026 Bulletin](#) has been published and is now available on the Rohingya Response website for partners to access and reference.

Protection Sector: The Protection Sector shared that Protection Advocacy and Engagement Strategy Workshop was conducted to develop a common advocacy framework addressing key protection concerns and their root causes in the Rohingya response, with the first draft expected in early August. The Sector also briefed the Heads of European Missions on the deteriorating protection situation, highlighting increased refoulement incidents, security concerns, organized group activities, child recruitment, GBV trends, shrinking civic space, and threats to humanitarian workers, while advocating for stronger engagement with the Government of Bangladesh.

The Sector also shared updates from the ECHO Protection Consortium, where the Protection Bulletin Q1 2026 highlighted increasing protection incidents, particularly those involving organized groups, and advocated for the registration of all Rohingya refugees, temporary work opportunities, and greater investment benefiting both refugees and host communities. Partners were informed that the Protection Sector Transformation Matrix has been updated, including progress in standardizing protection case management processes and guidance. The January–May 2026 Protection Dashboard reported that approximately 670,000 refugees accessed protection services. Preparations for ISNA 2026 and the Participatory Assessment have been completed to support evidence-based planning for JRP 2027, while the Housing, Land and Property (HLP) Working Group delivered capacity-building sessions for GBV, Child Protection, and SCCCM partners on HLP issues and referral pathways.

GiHA Chapter: UN Women updated members on the ongoing revision of the Camp-level GiHA Coordination Concept Note, incorporating feedback received from partners. Members were also informed that UN Women, in collaboration with the NGO Coordination Platform, is planning a workshop to map Women-Led Organizations (WLOs) operating in the Rohingya response to strengthen coordination and localization efforts. The next GiHA Chapter meeting is scheduled for 20 July 2026.

PSEAH Network: GBVSS on behalf of the PSEAH Network shared the updates. In collaboration with RSH and the NGO Platform, a Safeguarding Leadership Training was conducted on 18 June 2026 for leaders from national and local NGOs, focusing on key safeguarding challenges and priority actions. The Network also completed the PSEAH Capacity Assessment Mapping exercise and will support organizations that have not yet undergone an assessment to ensure all members are assessed in a coordinated and standardized manner while strengthening compliance with minimum PSEAH standards. In addition, UNFPA, in coordination with the PSEAH Network, organized the SEAH Prevention Knowledge Platform Co-Design Workshop in Dhaka and Cox's Bazar to inform the development of a knowledge platform for SEAH prevention. Members were further informed that UNFPA and the PSEAH Network will jointly conduct a training on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and the Victim Assistance Protocol for GBV Sub-Sector and Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Working Group members on 13–14 July 2026 to strengthen understanding of survivor-centred victim assistance and inter-sectoral coordination.

AoB

- N/A



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The detailed presentation can be found [HERE](#).

Action Points

SL	Action Points	Responsible person	Progress
1.	GBVSS Annual Workplan to be reshared	GBVSS	Shared
2.	Engage with WFP to better understand the protection implications of food ration card mortgaging and identify appropriate mitigation measures.	GBVSS	
3.	GBVSS will communicate with partners the schedule for the Orientation on the Safe Shelter, OCC and Alternative Care Arrangements once finalized	GBVSS	
3.	Share the two-page legal guidance document with GBV partners.	UNHCR - Legal Unit	Expected by the end of July 2026
4.	Ensure the timely submission of 5W reports, GBVIMS IR, Service and Facility Mapping updates, Incident Tracker inputs, and GBV Risk Monitoring reports in accordance with the agreed reporting timelines.	Partners	Ongoing