

2024 A COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW FOR ROHINGYA REFUGEE IN BANGLADESH

NEED ASSESSMENT REPORT



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children of earth

INTRODUCTION

The Rohingya, a Muslim ethnic minority, have resided in predominantly Buddhist Myanmar (formerly Burma) for centuries. Despite their long-standing presence in the country, they are not acknowledged as an official ethnic group and have been denied citizenship since 1982, resulting in their status as **the world's largest stateless population**. As a result, Rohingya families are deprived of basic rights and protection, leaving them highly susceptible to exploitation, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and abuse.

More than 1 million Rohingya refugees have fled violence in Myanmar in successive waves of displacement since the 1990s. The Rohingya have suffered decades of violence, discrimination and persecution in Myanmar. Their largest exodus began in August 2017 after a massive wave of violence broke out in Myanmar's Rakhine State, forcing more than 742,000 people - half of them children - to seek refuge in Bangladesh. Extensive human rights violations were documented



KUTUPALONG REFUGEE CAMP

Kutupalong is currently the largest refugee camp in the world.



Now, more than 960,000 Rohingya refugees are living in Bangladesh with a majority settled in and around Kutupalong and Nayapara refugee camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar region — some of the largest and most densely populated camps in the world. Rohingya refugees are hosted in 33 highly congested camps in Cox's Bazar District. Kutupalong is located in the coastal district of Cox's Bazar. Kutupalong is also the most densely populated and has exceeded its capacity.

Kutupalong is co-run by the United Nations (UN) and the Bangladeshi government.

In order to be able to provide rapid and effective assistance, the humanitarian organizations active in the refugee camp organize themselves under the umbrella of the UN in so-called clusters.

More than half of all Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh (52 percent) are **children**, while 51 percent are comprised of women and girls. The current refugee population accounts for one-third of the total population in the Cox's Bazar region.

LIVING CONDITIONS

The monsoon season (from June to October) increases the risk of floods and landslides due to heavy rainfall and strong winds. Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya have found refuge in flimsy shelters made of bamboo and tarp which have been built in areas prone to landslides, which may not stand rains and heavy winds. The rainy season also exacerbates the risk of disease - such as hepatitis, malaria, dengue and chikungunya - in crowded camps that don't have proper water and sanitation facilities, putting children and the elderly at particular risk. Most of the refugees have no adequate access to clean water, sanitary facilities, or healthcare. The impending monsoon season poses a huge threat to thousands of Rohingya families living in makeshift shelters in the camp.

While the number of Arakanese living in the camps increases day by day, life gets harder due to epidemics such as diphtheria, cholera, diarrhea, respiratory tract infection, which are resulting from insufficient and limited health services and clean water access. The Rohingya refugees are almost entirely dependent on humanitarian aid to survive.



CHILD CRISIS

According to Sultana Begum, Asia regional head of humanitarian policy for Save the Children, the living conditions in Cox's Bazar is "really squalid". Security conditions at the camp are terrible, there are lots of armed groups and violence is rising. It is clear from this brief description that there is no place for a child to grow up. But children comprise over half of the refugees in Cox's Bazar, so the Rohingya crisis "really is a children's crisis".

Now, around 500,000 Rohingya children live in the camps in Cox's Bazar, and many of them, according to Ms Begum, "are already showing signs of depression and anxiety. They're confined to the camps, with very little movement and they're losing any hope that they have for a better future, especially the older ones who neither have access to work nor to schooling."

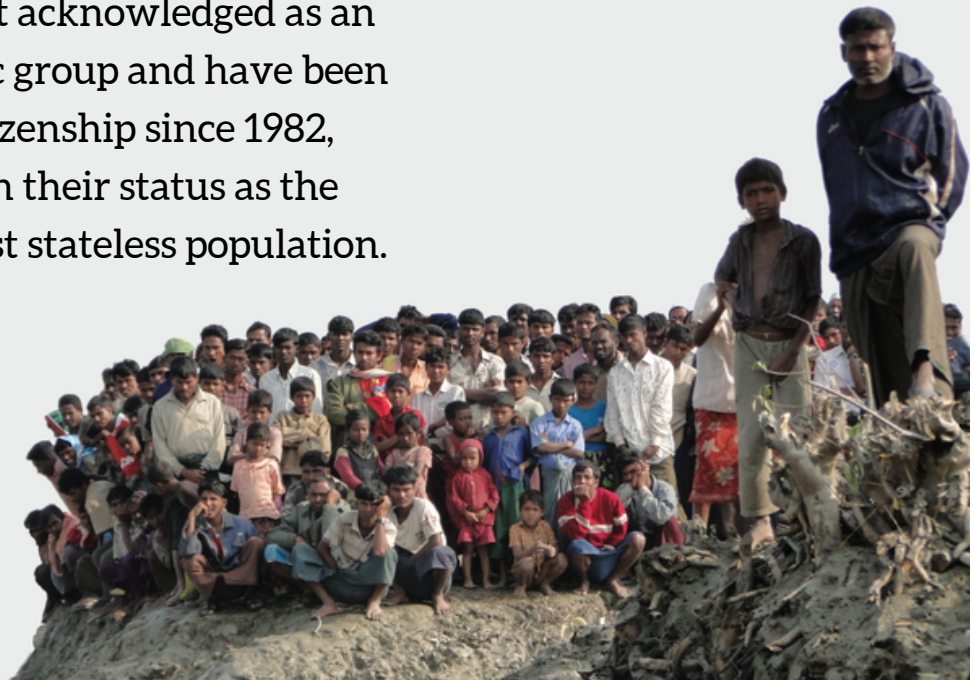
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STATELESS

Like no other persecuted group in the world, the Rohingyas are **stateless**, meaning that they have no legal documents: They don't have a passport, they're displaced in a region where most of these governments in the region don't recognize refugees. That means that they are under no legal obligation to provide them with support. Ms Begum said "They're so vulnerable. They're also often treated as immigrants and they're detained or deported for immigration offenses." She also highlights the risk of violence, child labour, human trafficking and child marriage.

They are not acknowledged as an official ethnic group and have been denied citizenship since 1982, resulting in their status as the world's largest stateless population.



EDUCATION IN THE REGION

About 50% of the refugees are below the age of 18. The Government of Bangladesh prohibits the Rohingya refugees from accessing formal education. Instead, the refugee children are offered non-formal education programmes from various nongovernment organizations.

According to the Reliefweb report and UNICEF's estimates, approximately 300,000 refugee children have access to education in over 6000 learning centers. Still, about 16% of children aged 3–14 and 81% of adolescents aged 15–24 have no access to education in the refugee camps.



EDUCATION IN THE REGION

The main issue concerning education for Rohingya children is the government's policy, which denies them formal education due to their legal status and documentation. The policy prevents around 400,000 refugee children from accessing education, leaving them without the opportunity to receive primary and secondary education in their camps. The government is resistant to providing permanent structures in the camps, as they anticipate the refugees' return to Myanmar when conditions improve. However, the government acknowledges that education is essential to empower refugee children and reduce their dependence on the host country for enduring harmony and societal cohesion. Despite this, the government has only allowed informal education for Rohingya refugee children in English or Burmese in the refugee camps and is unwilling to provide financial support.



EDUCATION IN THE REGION

As a response to this, NGOs has established temporary learning centers that can accommodate only a small number of students.

These centers have no tables, desks, or electricity, and children receive only 2 h of schooling due to a shortage of space. Religious schools (Quami Madrasa) are also available in the camps, but they are not recognized by the education system of Bangladesh. In addition, multidimensional barriers, including socio-cultural factors, economy, safety, hygiene, and toilet facilities contributed to limited access to education, particularly for females.

In 2019, around 3200 learning centers were operational, and 70% of them were supported by UNICEF. Currently, there are over **6000 learning facilities** in the refugee camps, which includes a learning centre (LC), a community-based learning facility (CBLF), and a cross-sectoral shared learning facility (CSSLF). However, despite these efforts, there is still much to be done to improve the situation of refugees, as only 30% of the Joint Response Plan (JRP) targets have been achieved in the camps. Consequently, due to legal and administrative barriers and a lack of quality teaching staff, educational preparedness is insufficient for children and youth in the Rohingya camps.

INTERVENTION STUDIES

Community Based Protection and PSS for Rohingya Families

The project is implemented by Caritas in Bangladesh. The project started in January 2024, and the new phase will end in December 2024. The Barefoot Counsellors (BFC) project is a community-based protection initiative focusing on empowering the Rohingya community. It emphasizes psycho-social support to address gender-based violence (GBV) and protection issues.

Trained Rohingya volunteers form a protection network, addressing concerns such as intimate partner tension, conflicts, resource denial, and child violence.



The project offers psychological first aid, referral support, awareness sessions on various issues, capacity building, risk identification, and coordination with sectoral actors. Life skill sessions on problem-solving and stress management further contribute to community well-being.

INTERVENTION STUDIES

The IRC's Child Protection program

The IRC's (International Rescue Committee) Child Protection program ensures a multi-sectoral response to children, adolescents, and their caregivers in Rohingya refugee camps and impacted host communities in Cox's Bazar. Currently, the program is operating in Camps 1E, 1W, 6, 8E, 25, and host communities in Ramu, Chakaria, Ukiya, Teknaf in Cox's Bazar district, and Patuakhali in Southern Bangladesh.

Strengthened Protection of Children in Rohingya camps and Host Communities

UNICEF will adopt a public health approach to preventing abuse, exploitation, violence and neglect of children, within a social-ecological framework and according to fundamental Protection principles including 'Do No Harm' and the 'Best Interests of the Child'.



INTERVENTION STUDIES

UNHCR Community-based Child Protection Mechanisms

UNHCR and partners work closely with refugee communities to ensure safety and access to specific services for children including the creation of child protection networks. These consist of committees, child and adolescent clubs, and parent groups. Multipurpose centers for children and adolescents in 21 camps provide safe spaces for children to play, relax, express themselves, and learn skills to deal with the challenges they face. Members of community-based structures, volunteers, and communities participate in training and awareness-raising sessions on a wide range of topics including basic child protection and referral pathways, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, prevention of child marriage, child labour and tracking, working with children with disabilities, emergency preparedness, risks of family separation and psychosocial support.



INTERVENTION STUDIES

Child Protection Services for Rohingya Refugee Community

AAR Japan and NGO Forum for Public Health will continue to provide its protection services based on the achievements and learning of the existing intervention focusing on Child protection facilities. There are two child friendly spaces, one in Camp-25, Alikhali, and one in camp-27, Jadimura, that are run by AAR Japan and NGO Forum for Public Health since December, 2018. These CFSs will continue to operate offering various recreational activities, PFA, Psychosocial support, counseling services, non-formal education and sports amenities for children in order to recover from trauma or to avoid protection risk of the children.



CONCLUSION

Despite ongoing efforts by the international community and local organizations, significant gaps remain in key areas such as food security, shelter, healthcare, education, and protection services. The Rohingya continue to endure harsh living conditions in overcrowded camps, with limited access to essential resources and services. Addressing these needs requires sustained and coordinated action, focusing on both immediate relief and long-term solutions. Enhancing infrastructure, increasing educational opportunities, improving healthcare access, and ensuring the safety and dignity of all refugees are critical steps in mitigating the plight of the Rohingya. The international community must remain committed to supporting Bangladesh in this humanitarian crisis, working together to provide comprehensive and sustainable assistance to improve the lives of Rohingya refugees.



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"A Child Can Build A World"



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