

2018 JRP FOR ROHINGYA HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

MARCH - DECEMBER 2018



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This document is produced on behalf of the Strategic Executive Group and partners.

This document provides the Strategic Executive Group's shared understanding of the crisis, including the most pressing humanitarian needs and the estimated number of people who need assistance. It represents a consolidated evidence base and helps inform joint strategic response planning.

The designations employed and the presentation of material in the report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

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FOREWORD BY CO-CHAIRS (STRATEGIC EXECUTIVE GROUP)

Since 25 August 2017, more than 671,000 Rohingya refugees have fled Myanmar and sought safety in Cox's Bazar. The people and the Government of Bangladesh have responded with resounding solidarity. The Government sprang into action, assisted by humanitarian actors, including local and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international NGOs and the United Nations, all of whom have stepped in to offer their support and expertise. We are grateful to donors and the international community for their timely response to the initial appeal in 2017. Together with the refugees and the host communities themselves, the collective efforts of these stakeholders have saved countless lives since the beginning of the crisis.

Nonetheless, much work remains to be done.

The scale and speed of the influx has had wide reaching consequences for the refugees, the communities that have welcomed them and the surrounding environment. While the refugees have inspired us with their resilience in the face of extreme adversity, they have suffered profound trauma and continue to require support to address their urgent needs. In addition, the magnitude of the crisis has placed an enormous burden on the host communities in Cox's Bazar.

In light of this, the humanitarian community, led by the Inter-Sector Coordination Group in Cox's Bazar and the Strategic Executive Group in Dhaka, has worked closely with the Government to draw up this Joint Response Plan (JRP) for 2018. The JRP lays out a vision for a coordinated response to address the immediate needs of the refugees and mitigate the impacts on affected host communities.

The rest of 2018 poses serious threats to the people we serve. Congested living conditions continue to foster risks such as disease outbreaks and fires. Rain and the coming monsoon season will cause flooding and landslides. The likelihood of such "crises within the crisis" exacerbates the already incredibly difficult circumstances faced by the refugees. In close cooperation and coordination with the Government, we are actively ramping up our collective capacity to address such challenges.


Through the compassion that it has shown by affording Rohingya refugees temporary shelter, including by providing almost 6,000 acres of land in an already very densely populated country, Bangladesh has set an example for the rest of the world. The complexities of responding to an emergency involving the rapid arrival of almost 700,000 people into a small area in the south-east corner of the country require joint efforts: continued financial support underscored by the principle of burden sharing, continued international engagement to search for solutions and continued collaboration between the humanitarian community and the authorities to deliver support to the refugees and host communities.



Mia Seppo
UN Resident Coordinator,
Bangladesh

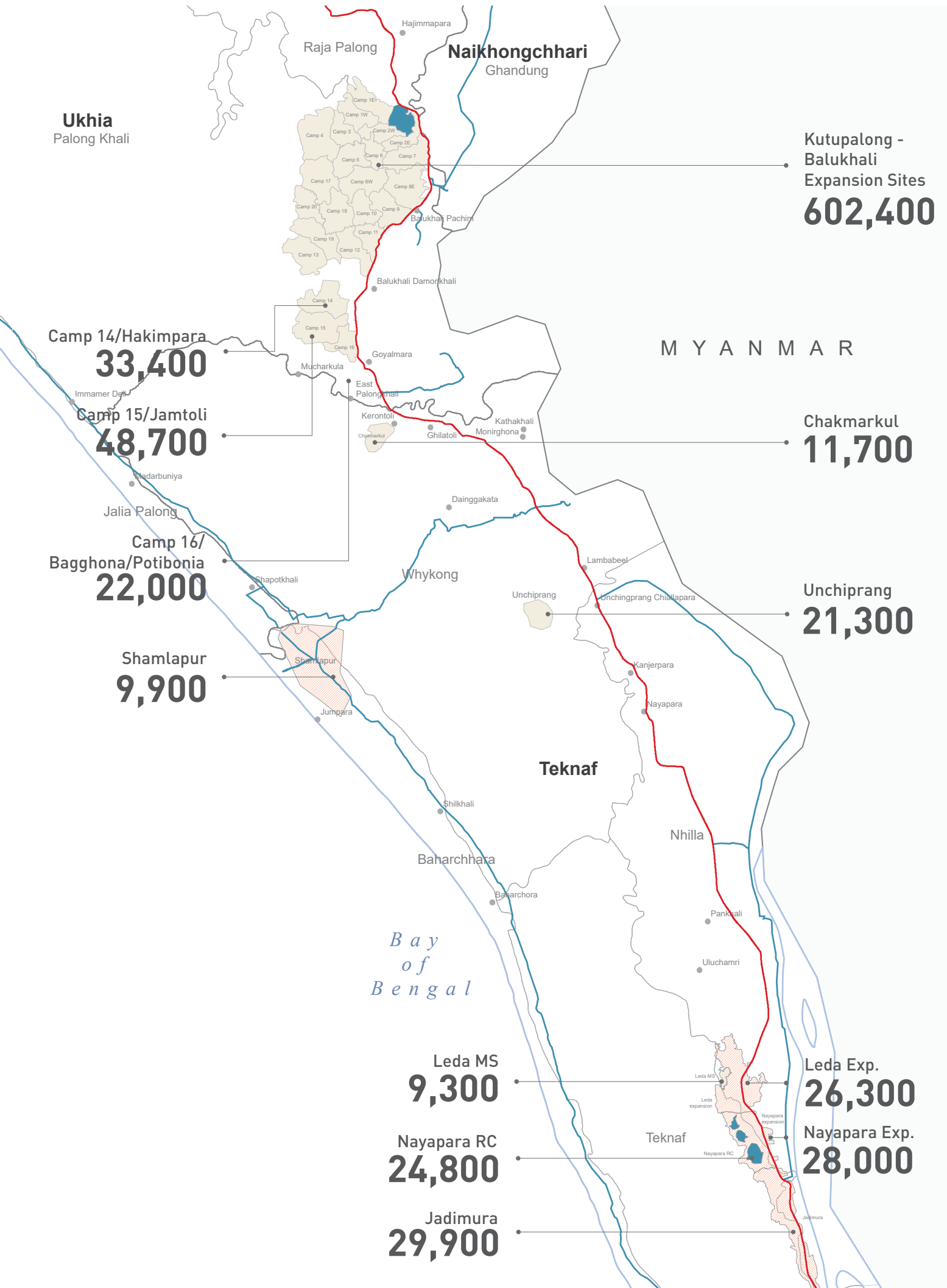


Andrew Mbogori
Representative a.i.,
UNHCR Bangladesh



Sarat Das
Representative IOM,
Bangladesh

BANGLADESH: COX'S BAZAR REFUGEE POPULATION AS OF 25 FEBRUARY 2018



PART I:

CRISIS AND NEEDS OVERVIEW



Photo: IOM/Mohammad



CRISIS OVERVIEW



NEEDS OVERVIEW: PROTECTION NEEDS, OTHER KEY NEEDS AND CHALLENGES, BANGLADESHI HOST COMMUNITY NEEDS



VULNERABILITIES AND RISKS



OPERATIONAL CAPACITY AND CONSTRAINTS



ASSESSMENTS AND INFORMATION GAPS



GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

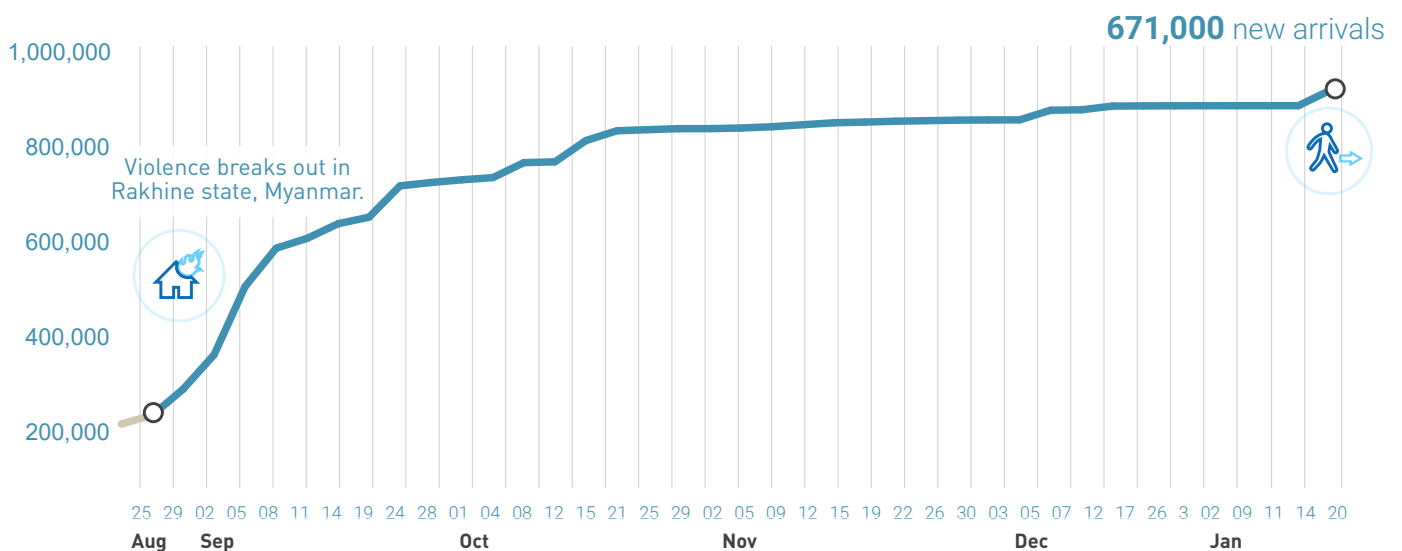
OVERVIEW OF

THE CRISIS

Since 25 August 2017, targeted violence¹ against Rohingya communities in Rakhine State, Myanmar, has forced 671,000 people - mostly women and children - to flee their homes. This exodus has become one of the fastest growing refugee crises in the world².

The Government of Bangladesh has kept its borders open to Rohingya refugees and leads the humanitarian response. The people of Bangladesh continue to show tremendous generosity and hospitality in the face of a massive influx. In keeping with its policies, the Government of Bangladesh refers to the Rohingya as “*Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals*”, in the present context. The UN system refers to this population as refugees, in line with the applicable international framework for protection and solutions, and the resulting accountabilities for the country of origin and asylum as well as the international community as a whole. In support of these efforts, the humanitarian community has rapidly scaled up its operations as well. Over a two-month period, the refugee population in Cox’s Bazar more than quadrupled. The influx has continued steadily in subsequent months, with people arriving by foot and by boat. Many refugees arrive exhausted and famished, often after walking for days and experiencing, gender-based violence, and other human rights violations. Many have lost family members, in their villages or along the way, and are deeply traumatized. The Rohingya have endured attacks on their cultural identity and legal nationality for decades and have been denied access to basic human rights such as education, health care or food. Forced into statelessness, even their freedom of movement within their country of origin has been severely restricted.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS



The Government of Bangladesh estimates that there were 303,070 Rohingya in Bangladesh before 25 August 2017 (as per the census results of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, which was conducted in 6 districts). Following the initiation of Needs and Population Monitoring (NPM) in 2017, approximately 213,000 Rohingya have been identified, mostly living in Cox’s Bazar, through a different methodology³. The refugees are now concentrated within congested sites in Ukhia and Teknaf Upazilas of Cox’s Bazar District, putting an immense strain on the half a million Bangladeshis who live there. Infrastructure, health and water services, which have been extended to the refugees by the District

1. See Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Mission report of OHCHR rapid response mission to Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh, 13-24 September 2017.

2. Needs and Population Monitoring (NPM), Round 8.

3. To ensure consistency in methodologies, figures throughout this document are based on the Needs and Population Monitoring (NPM) estimates. The people identified by NPM were concentrated mostly in two Upazilas in Cox’s Bazar, though other neighbouring districts, covered by the BBS’s census such as Bandarban, Rangamati, Khagrachhari, etc., also host Rohingya communities.

Government as a critical part of the humanitarian response, are under massive pressure. The environment, especially fragile forest and land resources, are being degraded. Pre-existing settlements and camps have expanded with the new influx, while new spontaneous settlements have also formed. Significant numbers of new arrivals have also been absorbed into the local host community, where a total of over 56,000 Rohingya refugees are currently estimated to reside. As of late February 2018, there were ten camps and settlements, ranging in size from 9,900 refugees in Shamlapur, to more than 602,400 refugees in the Kutupalong-Balukhali Expansion Site. To the south of the Expansion Site, Jamtoli, Hakimpara and Potibonia are inseparable, housing 101,400 refugees between them. Around Nayapara Refugee Camp and Leda in Teknaf, settlements have joined to form a third sprawling concentration of more than 88,300 refugees, which continues to expand and spread into surrounding villages⁴.

Movements within Cox's Bazar remain fluid, with arrivals continuing daily in February 2018. The 4,800 acres of undeveloped forest land, allocated for a new camp by the Government of Bangladesh in September 2017, is now very densely populated. More than 602,400 refugees live there – making it the largest refugee camp in the world, which is increasingly untenable. Refugees arrived at the new proposed site before infrastructure and services could be established. Severe congestion remains the critical challenge to effective service provision. Movement into the Kutupalong-Balukhali Expansion Site continues, including through relocations of vulnerable refugees from the border areas in Bandarban District, which began in January 2018.

In November 2017, the Governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar signed an arrangement on the repatriation of Rohingya refugees / forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals. The arrangement affirms that return should be voluntary, safe and dignified. The operationalization of this arrangement is currently under discussion between the two Governments. At present, the UN has limited access to the three northern townships of Rakhine state in Myanmar. The UN continues to engage the Government of Myanmar to seek unfettered access to Rakhine to ensure that development and humanitarian assistance reaches all people in need. There are ongoing discussions about the UN's, and in particular UNHCR's, engagement with the process of repatriation and reintegration; should the conditions for return improve demonstrably, based on unfettered access and monitoring reports by UNHCR and other partners. The international community has committed to supporting the safe, dignified and sustainable return of Rohingya refugees from camps in Bangladesh. This support may include actions such as sharing information with the Rohingya on conditions in Myanmar so that they can make an informed decision. The UN Country Teams in Bangladesh and Myanmar stand ready to support the implementation of the recommendations of the Rakhine Advisory Commission.

Regardless, the urgent humanitarian needs of the Rohingya refugees and their host communities in Cox's Bazar must be addressed. To do so in a coordinated manner, under the leadership of the Government of Bangladesh, the humanitarian community has engaged in multi-sectoral needs assessments, consultations and strategic planning, which has culminated in this Joint Response Plan. The process has entailed ongoing bilateral consultations at the District level with the Deputy Commissioner (DC), the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), led by the Senior Coordinator for the Rohingya Refugee Response and the ISCG Secretariat, with Sectors engaging relevant line Departments and Ministries (including the Department of Public Health Engineering, the Civil Surgeon's Office, and the Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs). A District consultation on 29 January 2018, co-chaired by DC, RRRC and the Senior Coordinator, was attended by the Armed Forces Division and all relevant line Departments, and has informed revisions to the plan. At national level, the Strategic Executive Group has led engagement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its National Task Force, as well as the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and relevant line Ministries on the technical Sector issues they lead, including the nature and design of interventions, and sector standards⁵.

Timely funding is required to meet life saving and humanitarian needs, as well as the acute needs of host communities

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