

COVID-19 AND MONSOON PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE IN ROHINGYA REFUGEE CAMPS AND HOST COMMUNITIES

WEEKLY UPDATE #26 | 28 August to 3 September 2020

Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

HIGHLIGHTS

"I am feeling very happy to get the opportunity to package masks. This has increased my self-esteem and confidence as previously I was neglected due to my inability to use my right hand."

– **Isda Khatun, a Rohingya person with a disability living in a camp in Ukhiya.** Isda is one of many Rohingya persons with disabilities who are engaged in a local mask-making initiative. Isda and her fellow Rohingya package cloth masks that have been produced by vulnerable households in the host communities who are facing the negative economic impacts of COVID-19 and were targeted for livelihood support. The masks are packaged with key information and education and communication (IEC) materials and then distributed in Cox's Bazar Sadar and Kutabdia upazilas.

Food Security Sector's Livelihoods Working Group (LHWG) is coordinating this inter-agency effort including national and international NGOs and UN agencies. With production support from both the host communities and Rohingya refugees, LHWG partners have distributed 2.2 million reusable cloth masks to approximately 674,800 individuals in the camps and 432,800 individuals in host communities as of 3 September 2020.



Photo: WFP/BRAC, Md. Kamal Hossain

Key COVID-19 figures this week¹

<p>123 confirmed COVID-19 cases in the refugee camps, and 4,012 cases in the host community</p>	<p>8 Rohingya refugees in quarantine who were in contact with a COVID-19 suspected or confirmed case, and 942 host community members</p>	<p>40,462 vulnerable households in the host community affected by the COVID-19 pandemic received unconditional food assistance</p>
<p>6 Rohingya refugee fatalities due to COVID-19, and 64 fatalities of host community members</p>	<p>59 Rohingya refugees in isolation who are suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19, and 523 host community members</p>	<p>63,313 Rohingya learners received household-level educational support, where learning materials and activities were explained</p>

Monsoon-related Incidents² reported this week

<p>921 Rohingya refugees affected³</p>	<p>1 Rohingya refugee fatality due to drowning⁴</p>	<p>0 Rohingya refugees injured</p>	<p>50 Rohingya refugees displaced</p>
<p>5 Rohingya refugees affected by 1 slope failure</p>	<p>915 Rohingya refugees affected by 11 events of wind/storms/rain</p>	<p>0 Rohingya refugees affected by floods</p>	<p>0 Rohingya refugees affected by lightning</p>

¹ COVID-19 data on Cox's Bazar District is sourced from WHO daily update. Please note that confirmed COVID-19 cases and number of fatalities are cumulative.

² All numbers are indicative only, as reported to SMSD Sector following rapid assessments carried out on the day of the incident. The numbers are not verified.

³ Households and/or individuals directly affected by a specific incident, including people injured, relocated, displaced and with damaged shelters. These estimates do not include people who are indirectly affected ex. by not being able to access affected facilities.

⁴ SMSD Sector cannot confirm that drownings resulted from the monsoon, however, the data captures all incidents (windstorm, slope failure, lightning, flood and drowning) reported in the camps during the monsoon season.

COVID-19**HEALTH**

As of 30 August, 14 Severe Acute Respiratory Illness Isolation and Treatment Centres (SARI ITCs) with a capacity of 946 beds were active and receiving patients. With the Civil Surgeon Office and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Coordination Centre, WHO completed a round of supportive supervision visits to four upazila health complexes, where all parties discussed current COVID-19 interventions and the importance of continuity of essential health services. Since the start of COVID-19 testing in early April in Cox's Bazar District, the highest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in one day -13 cases- was reported from the camps on 2 September.

WATER, SANITATION and HYGIENE (WASH)

WASH Sector partners reached 245,156 individuals through a neighbourhood-based approach and 133,222 individuals through mass media with COVID-19 awareness messages in host and Rohingya communities. In the camps, WASH Sector partners provided soap to 31,631 households and family hygiene kits to 10,063 households, and installed a total of 2,705 hand-washing stations (HWS), including 268 HWS with stools and buckets at household-level, 986 HWS in public spaces, and 1,451 tippy taps in public places and near toilet facilities. As part of COVID-19 risk prevention measures and IPC compliance in the host communities and camps, WASH Sector partners disinfected 50,950 WASH facilities and 3,887 public buildings.



Disinfecting hands at a camp entry point in Ukhiya. Photo: Jadunath Dali

COMMUNICATION with COMMUNITIES (CwC WG)

CwC WG partners organized 9 cascade training sessions on COVID-19 with 81 staff and volunteers. CwC WG partners reached 193,805 people in the camps and host communities with key COVID-19 messages through community engagement activities, including 44,879 neighbourhood-based sessions; 10,183 community consultation meetings; 422 listening group sessions; 452 video/film viewings; and 2,105 sessions led by religious leaders. CwC WG partners organised COVID-19 awareness announcements via loudspeakers/megaphones in 15 camps. For receiving community feedback/complaints, 83 information service centres in the camps and 4 information service centres in the host communities were operational. [7 new audio messages on COVID-19](#) were developed by CwC WG partners.



Rohingya religious leaders attend an awareness session on COVID-19 prevention and response. Photo: DSK/CAID

FOOD SECURITY (FSS)

FSS circulated [gender equality and gender-based violence prevention messages](#) and a [child protection tip sheet](#) in the context of COVID-19 to its partners to take into account during implementation. FSS partners completed unconditional food assistance to a total of 40,462 vulnerable households affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in the host communities in Chakaria, Maheshkhali and Pekua. FSS partners also provided unconditional cash grants to a total of 23,666 households in the host communities in Sadar, Maheshkhali, Chakaria, Kutubdia, Pekua, Ramu, Teknaf and Ukhiya.

SHELTER/NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFI)

During the week, Shelter/NFI Sector partners distributed 21 NFI kits including blankets, floor mats, mosquito nets, solar lamps, and kitchen utensils, to quarantine centres in Nayapara and at the Transit Centre.

PROTECTION, including Child Protection (CPSS) and Gender-Based Violence (GBVSS)

Protection Sector partners including Protection Focal Points (PFP) and Protection Emergency Response Units (PERU) reached 17,547 refugees with COVID-19 messaging. Rohingya Community Outreach Members conducted 240 household visits and 168 monitoring assessments for 1,177 refugees, and conducted 1,207 COVID-19 awareness sessions, reaching 5,191 refugees including 709 older persons and 55 persons with disabilities. In line with JRP 2020 objectives and the Protection Working Group's efforts to mainstream protection across the response,

three additional PFPs were established to provide technical support to Nutrition, FSS and Shelter/NFI Sectors, ensuring a Do No Harm, age, gender and diversity approach in activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Trained Child Protection volunteers provided psychosocial support to children, adolescents and caregivers in the camps and host communities through household visits, small group sessions, and remotely. GBVSS partners trained 51 Rohingya leaders of women support network groups on the risk of GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic, stress management, referral to specialized services, self-care and LGBTI issues.

SITE MANAGEMENT and SITE DEVELOPMENT (SMSD)

SMSD Sector partners supported two families (13 people) in a quarantine facility in Camp 20 Extension, providing hot meals and regular health check-ups, and screened 19,247 individuals at camp entry points, where visitors' temperatures were checked and they were requested to wash their hands. SMSD Sector partners worked with Rohingya community members and other service providers to initiate "No Mask, No Entry" campaigns at service points throughout the camps. SMSD Sector also provided support to individual refugees, their families, and health partners as members of the Rapid Investigation and Response Teams in each camp by tailoring COVID-19-related responses to individual family and community needs, in order to improve trust between refugees and humanitarian workers.

NUTRITION

Nutrition Sector partners trained around 4,000 Rohingya mothers on measuring Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) and referring children to the nearest integrated nutrition facilities. In the host community, Nutrition Sector partners reached 8,800 caregivers with COVID-19 awareness messages. Partners also counselled around 1,350 Rohingya and 3,000 Bangladeshi mothers and caregivers on infant and young child feeding practices in emergencies, particularly in the COVID-19 context. Nutrition Sector identified 56 suspected COVID-19 cases at nutrition facilities in the camps and referred them to health facilities.

EDUCATION

During the week, 3,387 volunteers and Burmese Language Instructors (BLIs) disseminated COVID-19 awareness messaging in the camps through audio clips to 121,536 children and 22,145 parents, community members and caregivers. 863 BLIs provided at-home educational support, explaining learning materials and activities to 63,313 learners. Meanwhile, educational facilitators shared COVID-19 awareness messages and caregiver-led education instruction to 96,155 parents, caregivers and community members. In the host communities, 95 volunteers and facilitators distributed 1,182 COVID-19 awareness leaflets and disseminated educational instruction and COVID-19 awareness messages to 223 children and 2,095 parents, community members and caregivers.

LOGISTICS

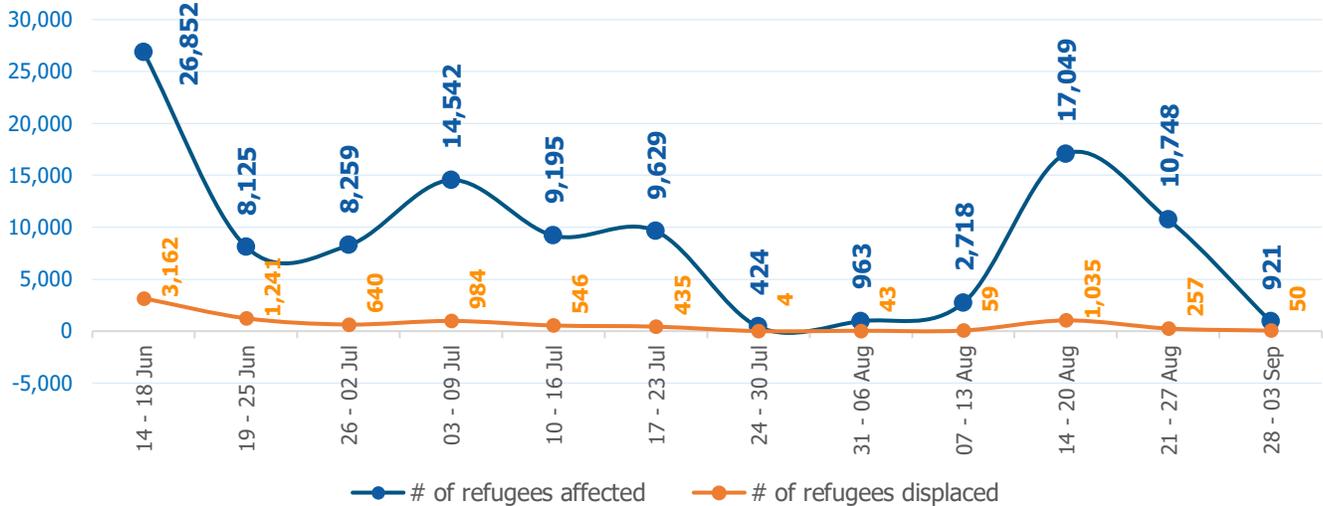
Logistics Sector received six solar direct-drive vaccine refrigerators from Denmark for cold storage of vaccines and medicines at its common service logistics hubs in Cox's Bazar District for use by SARI ITCs. The refrigerators are in the process of airport customs clearance in Dhaka and will then be moved to Cox's Bazar.

GENDER IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION (GiHA WG) and GENDER HUB

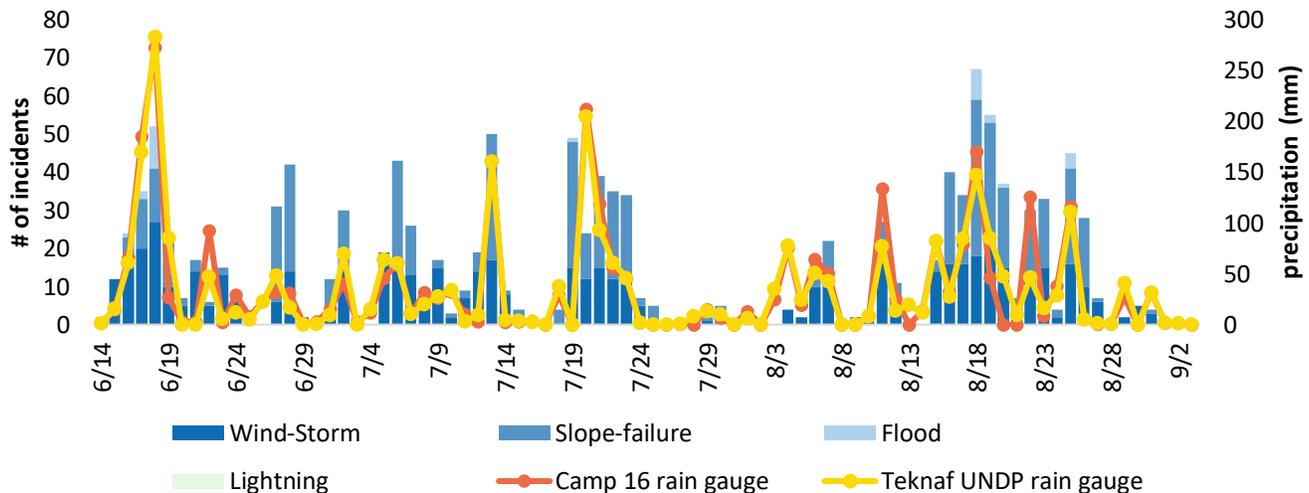
A GiHA WG member established a new Virtual Safety Network of local women's and men's groups in the host communities to strengthen their capacities to address gender issues during the COVID-19 pandemic. GiHA WG members reached 429 elderly women, 3 women with disabilities and 31 girls with disabilities with COVID-19-related messages in the camps; and provided female staff in SARI ITCs with headscarves and salwar kameez scrub tops to ensure their safety and comfort.

MONSOON**Cumulative incidents reported in Camps since 14 June 2020 (SMSD Sector)**

CUMULATIVE CASUALTIES: Since 14 June, 5 fatalities have been reported in the camps as a result of monsoon-related events. Some 17 refugees have been injured. The peak was recorded on 18 June, when over 13,900 refugees were affected by wind and slope-failure on one day.

**Cumulative precipitation compared to number and type of incidents reported by rain gauge (Geological Survey of Bangladesh/UNDP)**

Please note the pre-determined risk thresholds are - 3 hours: 75 mm; 24 hours: 200 mm; 72 hours: 350 mm. The slope failure risk is significant when those thresholds are reached with the given time period. Peak rainfall of 282.95 mm was recorded on 18 June.

**WATER, SANITATION and HYGIENE (WASH)**

Monsoon rains affected 73 toilets, 38 bathing cubicles, 3 tube wells, and 2 waste pits in different camps in Ukhiya, and impacted 4 toilets, 18 bathing cubicles, 1 tap-stand, 1 faecal sludge management site (FSM) and 2 waste pits in camps in Teknaf. WASH Sector partners started repairing the damaged toilets, bathing cubicles, and FSM sites in Ukhiya and Teknaf.

COMMUNICATION with COMMUNITIES (CwC WG)

CwC WG partners engaged with Rohingya and host communities to raise awareness on the risks of heavy monsoon rains and reached 12,678 individuals through different community engagement activities, including 46 community awareness sessions, 2,341 neighbourhood-based sessions, 26 radio listeners' group sessions, and 71 video/film shows. Additionally, 87 information service centres were operational, with staff disseminating monsoon-related information and receiving feedback and complaints from both communities.

SHELTER/NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFI)

800 Rohingya refugee households were partially moderately damaged	48 Rohingya refugee households were partially severely damaged	41 Rohingya refugee households were fully damaged	0 Rohingya refugee households were completely destroyed
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Shelter/NFI Sector partners continued providing emergency support to vulnerable Rohingya refugee households affected by monsoon rains. Shelter/NFI Sector partners verified shelter damage for 889 households and provided them with emergency shelter assistance, and 2 households with older persons without caretakers were provided with home deliveries of emergency shelter materials and received support to repair their shelters.

PROTECTION, including Child Protection (CPSS) and Gender-Based Violence (GBVSS)

Protection actors, PFPs and PERUs referred 383 cases from the refugee community to Registration, Health, SMSD, Shelter, and WASH partners to address needs arising from the monsoon rains. CPSS developed community action plans to support child protection mechanisms in the monsoon period. Rohingya community members, volunteers and CPSS actors disseminated CPSS standardised messages across the camps to mitigate risks for children during the monsoon season. GBVSS partners conducted multi-functional team visits in seven camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf to consult with refugee women and girls on the selection and installation of solar street lights, to mitigate GBV risks during the monsoon season.

SITE MANAGEMENT and SITE DEVELOPMENT (SMSD)

SMSD Sector partners continued monsoon repairs and maintenance works across all 34 camps, including through engagement of women's groups in mitigation works such as fencing around ponds. Construction was completed for a pathway in Camp 9 that provides improved access to services for 2,000 refugees, bridges of a total length of 526 metres, and an access pathway in camps 8E and 8W. SMSD teams also assessed lightning arrestors and signal poles in the camps; and held 14 meetings on road safety during the monsoon season for 81 Rohingya participants, including 40 women, in Camp 20 Extension.



Rohingya refugee women support with construction of a fence around a pond as part of monsoon mitigation measures. Photo: IOM

EDUCATION

Monsoon rainfall affected 272 learning centres this week. Education Sector partners completed repairs on 53 learning centres and started repairs on 143 learning centres affected by the rains.

GENDER IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION (GiHA WG) and GENDER HUB

GiHA WG members engaged Rohingya and Bangladeshi women and women leaders in monsoon/cyclone related awareness raising, with a focus on gender/GBV aspects and the COVID-19 context. Elected Union Disaster Management Committees (UDMC) member from the host community, Ms. Nasrin Parvin Kabir, facilitated a UDMC meeting in Teknaf, discussing preparedness and mitigation measures for slope failures and COVID-19.



Elected host community female UDMC member facilitates a UDMC meeting on slope failure and COVID-19 preparedness in Teknaf. Photo: IOM