

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

WEEKLY UPDATE #29 | 18 to 24 September 2020

Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

HIGHLIGHTS

“The hygiene promotion trainings have helped me to better protect myself, my family and my neighbours from illnesses like coronavirus. My family and I are now in better condition than before.”

– Shoktara, a 12-year old Rohingya refugee girl living in Kutupalong mega camp, the largest refugee settlement in the world. Shoktara arrived in Bangladesh with her family in 2017 after fleeing violence in Myanmar. Since then, she has been engaged in menstrual hygiene management training for adolescents and has also been sharing her knowledge and training with other adolescents. Recently with the COVID-19 pandemic, Shoktara and her family members have also learned about personal hygiene and COVID-19 mitigation measures such as the importance of washing hands thoroughly and regularly and what to do if someone has COVID-19 symptoms. WASH Sector partners have scaled up hygiene promotion activities to refugee households like Shoktara’s family across the camps and in nearby host communities as part of the COVID-19 response, including distribution of soaps and menstrual hygiene kits.



Photo: CARE Bangladesh/ Shorma Ojha

Key COVID-19 figures¹

<p>242 confirmed COVID-19 cases in the refugee camps, and 4,440 cases in the host community</p>	<p>43 Rohingya refugees in quarantine who were in contact with a COVID-19 suspected or confirmed case, and 917 host community members</p>	<p>1,257,424 Rohingya refugees and vulnerable Bangladeshi individuals received at least 2 reusable masks as of 24 September</p>
<p>8 Rohingya refugee fatalities due to COVID-19, and 68 fatalities of host community members</p>	<p>138 Rohingya refugees in isolation who are suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19, and 563 host community members</p>	<p>65,529 WASH facilities in the host communities and camps were disinfected as part of COVID-19 risk prevention measures</p>

Monsoon-related Incidents² reported this week

<p>4,197 Rohingya refugees affected³</p>	<p>0 Rohingya refugee fatalities due to drowning⁴</p>	<p>0 Rohingya refugees injured</p>	<p>119 Rohingya refugees displaced</p>
<p>86 Rohingya refugees affected by 15 slope failures</p>	<p>4,111 Rohingya refugees affected by 49 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

During the week, 40 new COVID-19 cases were confirmed in the Rohingya refugee camps. Over 50% of the samples tested from the camps were from persons 17 years and younger. Health Sector partners continued messaging to improve testing among older persons in the camps through community health working groups, surveillance teams, and at sentinel sites. Community Health Workers (CHWs) conducted outreach to families with children to encourage participation in the routine immunization exercise that has continued during the pandemic.



Vaccinator speaks with the Surveillance and Immunization Medical Officer and Health Field Monitor. Photo: WHO/ Tatiana Almeida

WATER, SANITATION and HYGIENE (WASH)

WASH Sector partners reached 280,287 individuals through a neighbourhood-based approach and 158,680 individuals through mass media with COVID-19 awareness messages in host and Rohingya communities. In the camps, WASH Sector partners provided soap to 22,587 households and family hygiene kits to 5,210 households, and installed a total of 2,979 hand-washing stations (HWS), including 574 HWS with stools and buckets at household-level, 609 HWS in public spaces, and 1,796 “tippy taps” in public places and near toilet facilities. As part of COVID-19 risk prevention measures and infection prevention and control (IPC) compliance in the host communities and camps, WASH Sector partners disinfected 65,529 WASH facilities and 6,207 public buildings.



A Rohingya volunteer disinfects latrines in Camp 16. Photo: CARE Bangladesh/ Maksuda Sultana

COMMUNICATION with COMMUNITIES (CwC WG)

CwC WG partners organized 17 cascade training sessions on COVID-19 with 135 staff and volunteers. CwC WG partners reached 245,527 people in the camps and host communities with key COVID-19 messages through community engagement activities, including 55,427 neighbourhood-based sessions; 16,246 community consultation meetings; 906 listening group sessions; 550 video/film viewings; and 10,152 sessions led by religious leaders. CwC WG partners organised COVID-19 awareness announcements via loudspeakers/megaphones in 19 camps. For receiving community feedback and complaints, 97 information service centres in the camps and 4 information service centres in the host communities were operational. [2 new audio messages](#) and [1 video on COVID-19](#) were developed by CwC WG partners.



Rohingya refugee religious leaders attend an audio awareness session on COVID-19. Photo: CAID / DSK

FOOD SECURITY (FSS)

FSS partners continued to provide unconditional cash grants to vulnerable host communities affected by the economic repercussions of COVID-19. Considering physical distancing measures, FSS partners provided skills development trainings through smaller groups, cascade training through training-of-trainers, and the use of information, education, and communication (IEC) materials. Partners also continued self-reliance activities such as mask production and agricultural input distributions in the camps. As a key measure for preventing the transmission of COVID-19, partners reached 744,969 Rohingya individuals and 512,455 vulnerable Bangladeshi with at least 2 reusable masks as of 24 September.

SHELTER/NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFI)

During the week, Shelter/NFI Sector partners distributed 126 NFI kits including blankets, floor mats, mosquito nets, solar lamps, and kitchen utensils, to quarantine centres in Nayapara, Camp 4 Extension, and Camp 20 Extension.

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

Suicide attempts in the camps have doubled since the beginning of the year, particularly of female GBV survivors, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the degrading protection environment. To address this situation, the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Working Group and the Protection Sector strengthened

coordination between Protection Focal Points, Protection Emergency Response Unit Team Leaders, and MHPSS Focal Points for early identification and timely referral of cases. Protection Sector partners worked closely with existing community-based structures in the camps to raise awareness on COVID-19. This week, Rohingya and community outreach volunteers conducted 2,236 awareness sessions in 20 camps. CPSS with Health Sector facilitated an on-site training on child care for health workers and a virtual training on Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS+) to enhance information management for child protection cases. GBVSS partners conducted an awareness campaign on the risks of GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic through household visits and other activities, reaching 26,804 refugees, including 15,051 females.

SITE MANAGEMENT and SITE DEVELOPMENT (SMSD)

SMSD Sector partners met with Rapid Investigation and Response Team members in the camps to discuss roles, responsibilities and challenges. One of the main challenges raised was how to bring a COVID-19-positive individual to the ITC. SMSD teams continued to support contact tracing volunteers to locate the shelters of COVID-19-positive patients and supported CHWs in counselling patients' family members on the available isolation and quarantine facility options.

NUTRITION

Nutrition Sector partners trained 2,936 Rohingya mothers and 95 Rohingya adolescent girls on measuring Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) and referring children to the nearest integrated nutrition facilities. Partners also counselled 1,854 Rohingya and 4,224 Bangladeshi mothers and caregivers on infant and young child feeding practices in emergencies, particularly in the COVID-19 context. Nutrition Sector partners identified 16 children and 6 pregnant and lactating women as suspected COVID-19 cases at nutrition facilities in the camps and referred them to health facilities.

LOGISTICS

Logistics Sector recruited a pharmacist for the temperature-controlled storage in Cox's Bazar COVID-19 Hub to manage specialized logistics medical warehousing requirements.

GENDER IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION (GiHA WG) and GENDER HUB

GiHA WG members conducted awareness-raising and outreach consultations on the gendered impacts of COVID-19, positive and equal gender roles and norms, mental health and psychosocial support, and self-care for Rohingya women leaders and support groups, including transgender persons and female sex workers.

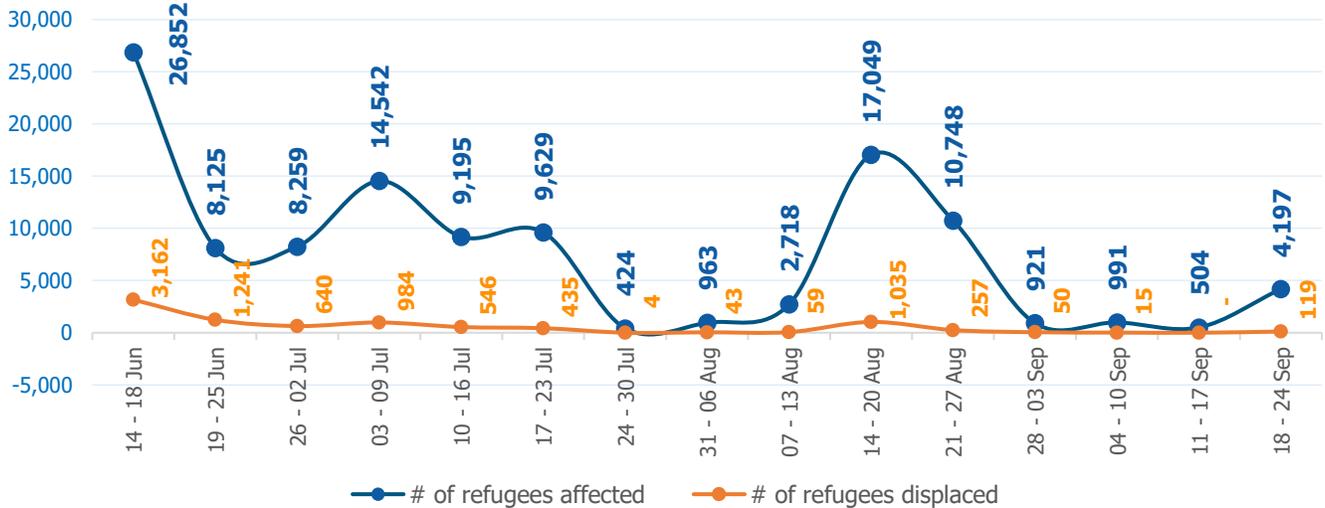
EDUCATION

During the week, Burmese Language Instructors (BLIs) and educational facilitators disseminated COVID-19 awareness messaging in the camps through audio clips to 14,025 parents, community members and caregivers. BLIs and facilitators also provided remote guidance on COVID-19 prevention, wellbeing and self-care to 20,563 children, youth and adolescents; and provided COVID-19 awareness messages and caregiver-led education instruction to 52,678 parents, caregivers and community members, explaining learning materials and activities. In the host communities, volunteers and educational facilitators distributed 1,025 COVID-19 awareness leaflets and conducted COVID-19 awareness sessions for 1,176 parents, community members and caregivers.

MONSOON

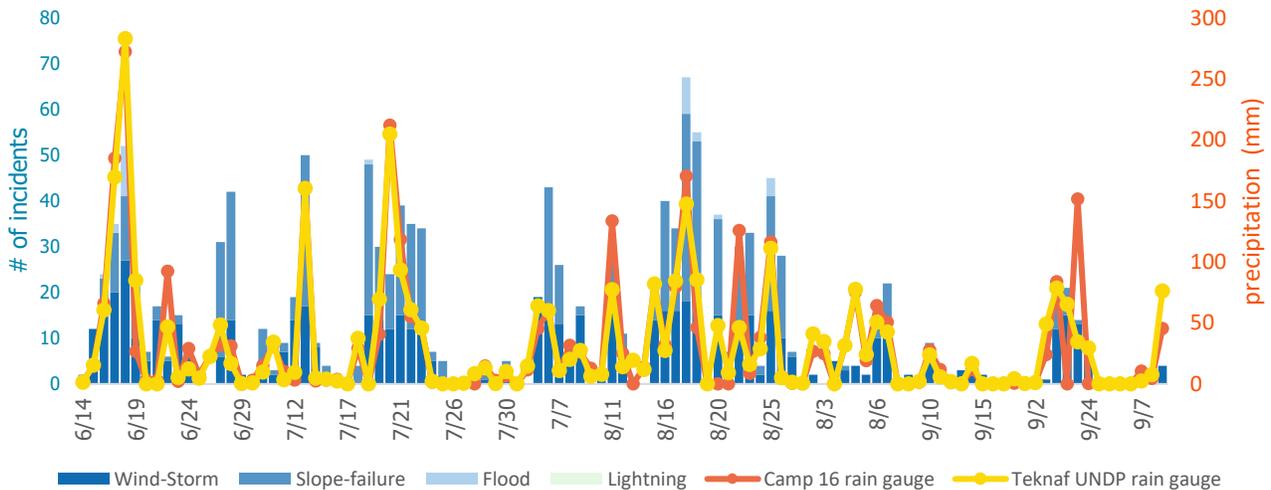
Monsoon-related incidents reported in Camps since 14 June 2020 (SMSD Sector)

CUMULATIVE CASUALTIES: Since 14 June, 7 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.



Precipitation compared to number and type of incidents reported by rain gauge since 14 June (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.



HEALTH

Health Sector completed the process of updating its emergency preparedness and response contingency plans for all 34 camps.

WATER, SANITATION and HYGIENE (WASH)

Monsoon rains affected 88 toilets, 29 bathing cubicles, and 5 tube wells in different camps in Ukhiya, and impacted 5 toilets, 1 tube well, 1 bathing cubicle, and 1 solid waste management pit in camps in Teknaf. WASH Sector partners started repairing the damaged toilets and bathing cubicles 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 11,061 individuals through different community engagement activities, including 65 community awareness sessions, 1,958 neighbourhood-based sessions, 29 radio listeners' group sessions, and 87 video/film shows. Additionally, 101 information service centres were operational, with staff disseminating monsoon-related information and receiving feedback and complaints from both communities.



FOOD SECURITY (FSS)

FSS partners provided rapid food assistance to households displaced by floods and landslides in the camps, including high energy biscuits to 6 households (32 individuals) in Camp 3 and Camp 11.



SHELTER/NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFI)

424

Rohingya refugee households were partially moderately damaged

197

Rohingya refugee households were partially severely damaged

164

Rohingya refugee households were fully damaged

0

Rohingya refugee households were completely destroyed

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 785 households and provided them with emergency shelter assistance, and 10 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)

Rohingya Community Outreach Members (COMs) conducted 787 home visits and 386 monitoring assessments, reaching 3,759 refugees with messages on protection during the monsoon season. Protection actors identified and referred 397 protection cases in the camps to service providers for urgent interventions. Emergency Child and Caregiver Information Points were operational across camps, providing support in case of protection incidents/ family separation during the monsoon season. CPSS actors disseminated child protection messages in the camps as part of the emergency preparedness and response plan. GBVSS partners faced challenges this week in providing remote GBV case management in the camps as part of the COVID-19 response, due to limited mobile network connectivity.



SITE MANAGEMENT and SITE DEVELOPMENT (SMSD)

In addition to regular disaster risk reduction (DRR) and site development work, SMSD teams continued repairing damages from monsoon rains and winds in the camps and implemented mitigation measures including improvements for pathway access, slope stabilization, and bridge repairs. SMSD Sector partners ensured a community-based monitoring approach for quality implementation of DRR and site development work, conducted safety audits to identify risky sites in the camps, and informed relevant Sectors and partners of the identified issues for their action.



GENDER IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION (GiHA WG) and GENDER HUB

GiHA WG members engaged Rohingya and Bangladeshi women and women leaders in awareness-raising activities on monsoons and cyclones, with a focus on gender and GBV issues and the COVID-19 context.



EDUCATION

Education Sector partners continued repairs on 142 learning centres affected by the monsoon rains.