

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

## WEEKLY UPDATE #31 | 2 to 8 October 2020

Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

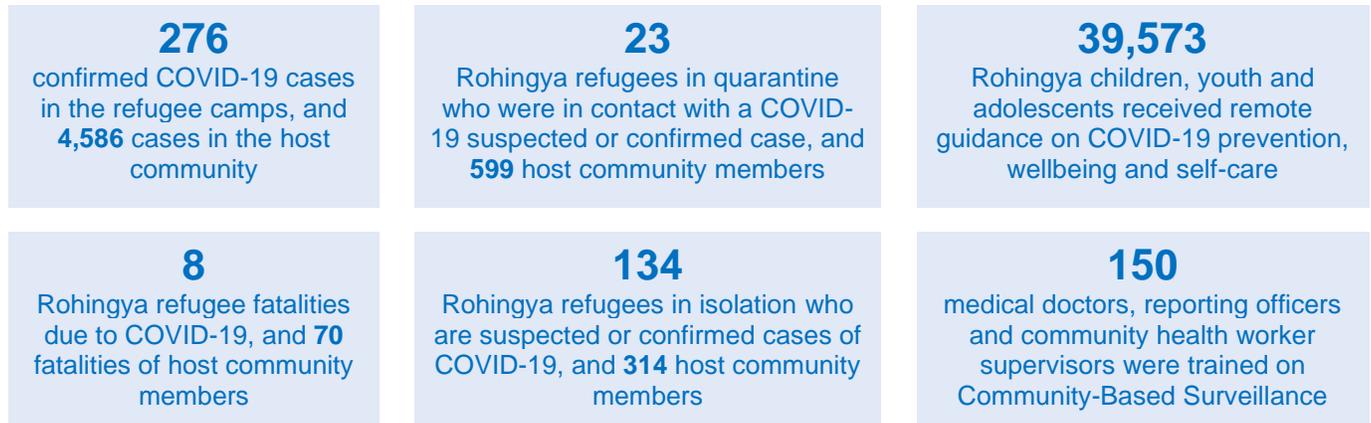
### HIGHLIGHTS

*“We have prepared and shared with all Health Sector partners a contingency plan for monsoon and cyclone seasons for all 34 camps in Teknaf and Ukhiya, which this year includes an evacuation plan for COVID-19-positive patients under treatment at the Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) Isolation and Treatment Facilities (ITCs).”*

– **Taherul Khan, WHO Partner Coordination Officer in Cox's Bazar.** A national of Bangladesh, Taherul was one of the first responders helping Bangladeshi people affected by the cyclone in 1991, one of the most devastating cyclones in Bangladesh's history. This life-changing experience inspired him to help disaster-affected populations around the world and now the Rohingya and Bangladeshi host communities in Cox's Bazar District. As part of emergency preparedness efforts, Taherul, together with the WHO team, ensures Camp Health Focal Points are extending assistance to health partners and communities, while Health Field Coordinators monitor the situation. Mobile Medical Teams are on stand-by, and are trained to support triage, stabilization, referrals and transport of patients. [Read more](#)



### Key COVID-19 figures<sup>1</sup>



### Monsoon-related Incidents<sup>2</sup> reported this week



<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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, e.g. by not being able to access affected facilities.

<sup>4</sup> 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

Routine immunisation sessions continued in the camps with coverage data showing an increasing trend in persons being vaccinated, though Health Sector partners faced challenges tracking unvaccinated and under vaccinated children in the context of COVID-19. During the week, COVID-19 testing of refugees decreased: 652 refugees were tested, compared to 1,172 in the previous week. In host communities, testing also decreased with 353 tests conducted, compared to 382 in the previous week. A total of 25 COVID-19 sample collection sites for suspected COVID-19 cases are operational in the camps, and efforts are ongoing to establish collection sites in all 34 camps. WHO completed training sessions on Community-Based Surveillance, focusing on mortality and reporting for 150 medical doctors, reporting officers and community health worker supervisors.

### WATER, SANITATION and HYGIENE (WASH)

WASH Sector partners reached 249,957 individuals through a neighbourhood-based approach and 135,205 individuals through mass media with COVID-19 awareness messages in host and Rohingya communities. In the camps, WASH Sector partners provided soap to 21,623 households and family hygiene kits to 3,819 households, and installed a total of 4,447 handwashing stations (HWS), including 451 HWS in public spaces, 3,992 HWS at household level, and 4 HWS near toilet facilities. As part of COVID-19 infection prevention and control (IPC) compliance in the host communities and camps, WASH Sector partners disinfected 64,981 WASH facilities and 5,426 public buildings.



*A Rohingya volunteer disinfects WASH facilities in Camp 16 as part of IPC measures. Photo: Maksuda Sultana*

### COMMUNICATION with COMMUNITIES (CwC WG)

CwC WG partners organised 14 cascade training sessions on COVID-19 with 140 staff and volunteers. CwC WG partners reached 224,535 people in the camps and host communities with key COVID-19 messages through community engagement activities, including 46,790 neighbourhood-based sessions; 12,673 community consultation meetings; 807 listening group sessions; 632 video/film viewings; and 10,385 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, 100 information service centres in the camps and 4 information service centres in the host communities were operational. [5 new audio messages and 4 videos on COVID-19](#) were developed by CwC WG partners.

### FOOD SECURITY (FSS)

In coordination with FSS partners, Rohingya volunteers began household-level community consultations and dissemination of messages on changes to food assistance, nutrition and food utilization. FSS partners participated in a protection mainstreaming training organised by Protection Sector to integrate protection principles into the delivery of food assistance in the context of COVID-19. As a key measure for preventing the transmission of COVID-19, partners reached 728,216 Rohingya individuals and 641,120 vulnerable Bangladeshi individuals with at least 2 reusable masks as of 8 October, nearing its target to reach a total of 1.5 million Rohingya and Bangladeshi individuals with masks.

### SHELTER/NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFI)

During the week, Shelter/NFI Sector partners distributed 13 NFI kits including blankets, floor mats, mosquito nets, solar lamps, and kitchen utensils, to quarantine centres in Nayapara, the Transit Centre, and Camp 4 Extension.

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

Protection Mainstreaming Focal Points trained 22 participants from FSS on how to include protection principles while planning, implementing, and monitoring sectoral projects, which is particularly important as fewer protection staff are working on the ground due to restrictions for preventing the spread of COVID-19. Protection Sector partners reached 11,580 refugees with COVID-19 messages. Rohingya imams and community outreach volunteers conducted 2,236 COVID-19 awareness sessions in 20 camps. This week, CPSS partners introduced Social Hubs in the camps to raise

awareness on child protection during the COVID-19 pandemic. The hubs are equipped with internet connections and display child-friendly protection messages. As part of GBVSS efforts to engage Rohingya women and support their livelihoods, 25 sewing machines were distributed to trained women to produce cloth masks and sanitary napkins.

## **SITE MANAGEMENT and SITE DEVELOPMENT (SMSD)**

SMSD Sector partners screened 71,077 individuals including checking temperatures and handwashing at camp entry points, and referred over 40 suspected COVID-19 cases to health facilities. Partners continued to support health facilities with infrastructure work improvements, which included repairing access routes to the United Purpose Hospital and installing slope stabilization around the IOM Health Post in Camp 10.



*SMSD Sector partner screens the temperature of a camp visitor. Photo: IOM*

## **NUTRITION**

Nutrition Sector partners trained over 3,208 Rohingya mothers and 129 Rohingya adolescent girls on measuring Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) and referring children to the nearest integrated nutrition facilities. Partners also counselled 1,846 Rohingya and 4,325 Bangladeshi mothers and caregivers on infant and young child feeding practices in emergencies, particularly in the COVID-19 context. Nutrition Sector partners identified 40 suspected COVID-19 cases, including children and pregnant and lactating women, at nutrition facilities in the camps and referred them to health facilities.

## **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.

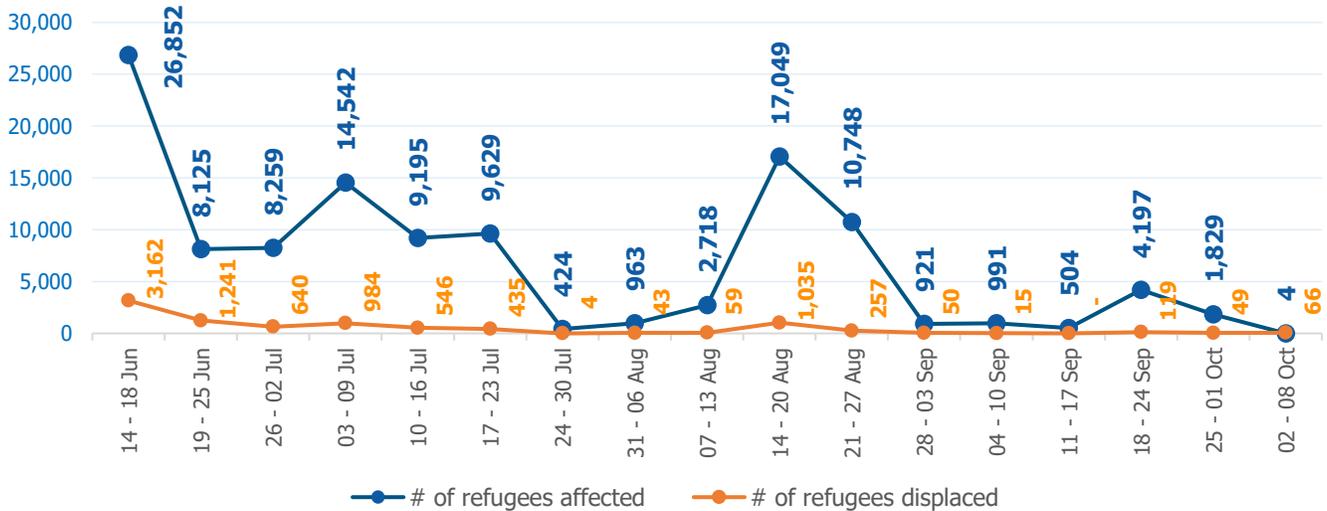
## **EDUCATION**

During the week, Burmese Language Instructors (BLIs) and educational facilitators disseminated COVID-19 awareness messaging in the camps through audio clips to 14,587 parents, community members and caregivers. BLIs and facilitators also provided remote guidance on COVID-19 prevention, wellbeing and self-care to 39,573 children, youth and adolescents; provided COVID-19 awareness messages and caregiver-led education instruction to 1,242 parents, caregivers and community members; and supported 35,803 learners in their studies at home. Educational facilitators also trained 90,217 community volunteers, youth and adolescent volunteers on Education in Emergencies and child, adolescent, and youth-friendly awareness messages on COVID-19. In the host communities, educational facilitators distributed 1,009 COVID-19 awareness leaflets and provided awareness messages to 1,319 parents and community members.

## MONSOON

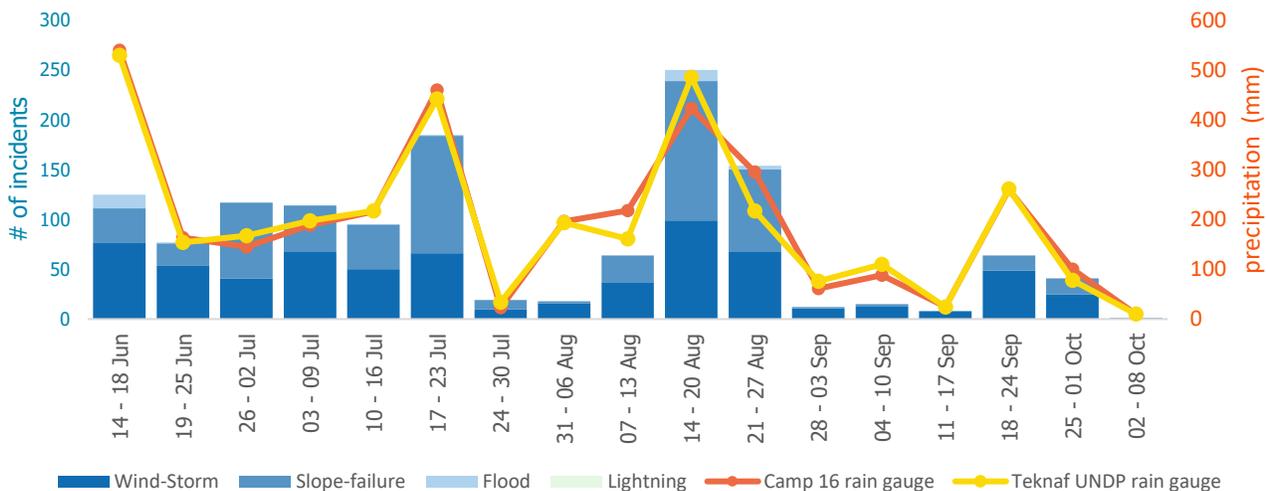
### Monsoon-related incidents reported in Camps since 14 June 2020 (SMSD Sector)

**CUMULATIVE CASUALTIES:** Since 14 June, 8 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 has stored contingency supplies in the event of a weather-related incident at 20 locations in Cox's Bazar District including in the camps. Supplies include inter-agency emergency health kits, trauma kits, surgical kits, cholera kits, sexual and reproductive health kits and other critical items. As part of its emergency contingency plan for monsoon and cyclone seasons, Health Sector identified 39 priority health facilities in the camps that would operate 24/7 in case of emergency.

## WATER, SANITATION and HYGIENE (WASH)

Monsoon rains affected 16 toilets and 4 bathing cubicles in different camps in Ukhiya. WASH Sector partners started repairing the damaged toilets and bathing cubicles in Ukhiya.



## 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 10,152 individuals through different community engagement activities, including 42 community awareness sessions, 1,830 neighbourhood-based sessions, 23 radio listeners' group sessions, and 63 video/film shows. Additionally, 104 information service centres were operational, with staff disseminating monsoon-related information and receiving feedback and complaints from both communities.



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

Rohingya Community Outreach Members conducted 595 household visits and 265 monitoring assessments, reaching 2,923 refugees with messages on protection during the monsoon season. Rohingya volunteers and community members disseminated information on child protection in emergencies in the camps, and organised trainings on child protection during the monsoon season for community-level child protection actors. CPSS partners also continued to support communities to develop child protection action plans for the monsoon period. GBVSS partners provided information to refugees on assistance available in the camps for shelters damaged by landslides or heavy rainfall. GBVSS volunteers continued supporting emergency referrals during monsoon periods.



## SITE MANAGEMENT and SITE DEVELOPMENT (SMSD)

SMSD teams worked closely with Child Protection, Protection, and WASH partners and community members to conduct child safety audits in five camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf, to identify risks faced by children during the monsoon season. In Camp 9 alone, the team identified 128 severe and 73 moderate safety risks for children for referral to relevant partners. SMSD construction works continued to respond to and prevent monsoon damage to infrastructure in the camps. For instance, in Camp 13, SMSD Sector partners finished construction of a tertiary brick drainage system to prevent water logging and soil erosion. Partners also completed canal protection, grass planting, and tree plantation this week, and planted 2,000 tree saplings throughout the camps as part of annual plantation work to mitigate slope failures during heavy rains.



## GENDER IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION (GiHA WG) and GENDER HUB

GiHA WG members conducted outreach messaging on cyclone preparedness, targeting Rohingya women volunteers and community leaders. Gender Hub and GiHA WG supported the Emergency Preparedness and Response Working Group to ensure gender is fully integrated in its review of the multi-hazard contingency plan.



## LOGISTICS

Logistics Sector published a [map of partners' warehouse locations in Cox's Bazar District for 2020](#), which will support the humanitarian community to plan storage of critical supplies to the Rohingya refugees and nearby host communities during the monsoon season.



## EDUCATION

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

For more information: Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG)

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