



MYANMAR AND BANGLADESH

Rohingya displacement and protection crisis

	Not required	Low	Moderate	Significant	Major
Need for international assistance	Very low	Low	Moderate	Significant	Major
Expected impact	Very low	Low	Moderate	Significant	Major

Crisis overview

Some 270,000 people have fled Rakhine state in Myanmar to Bangladesh following an eruption of violence on 25 August. The Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), an Islamic insurgent group, launched multiple attacks on government posts in Rakhine state, and Myanmar security forces then launched counter attacks causing mass displacement.

An estimated 400,000 Rohingya are still trapped in conflict zones of Rakhine state, where needs are unknown and access virtually impossible. In Bangladesh, the sudden influx, on top of an existing crisis, means needs are high. In addition to the 270,000 who have fled so far, a further 40,000 are stranded in an accessible area near the border after being stopped by border guards.

Limitations

Extremely limited access to Rakhine state has made information on the situation there difficult to source. This briefing note covers the situation in Rakhine as much as possible, as well as the situation for people crossing to Bangladesh and the conditions for those who have fled to Bangladesh.

Key findings

Anticipated scope and scale

Based on the atrocities reported by those who have fled it is likely that movement from Rakhine state to Bangladesh will continue. Border guards are likely to continue to apprehend those they catch trying to enter Bangladesh and to hold them on territory where humanitarian access is difficult. The conflict situation is likely to continue to deteriorate as large-scale retaliation is expected. Needs are likely to persist, and grow in Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Key priorities

- **Protection:** For those still in Rakhine, direct attacks on civilians are a high risk. Those trying to flee are at risk from landmines and dangerous river crossings. In Bangladesh side, large numbers of unaccompanied children and active trafficking groups make children and adolescents extremely vulnerable.
- **Shelter:** The rainy season is underway and people are in immediate need of shelter materials (tarpaulin, bamboo, rope). Land is scarce and adequate site planning and management is required. Site planning is also important because many settlements are located on steep and hilly areas where mudslides are possible.
- **WASH:** There are some areas in Bangladesh with no latrines or water points. This is a priority in order to avoid disease outbreaks. Settlements which have WASH facilities have their capacity extremely stretched and need upscaling.
- **Food:** Distributing needs to scale up due to the increasing number of arrivals.

Humanitarian constraints

Northern Rakhine state is completely inaccessible by humanitarian actors.

In Bangladesh, responders are present but the continuous movement of people, as well as longstanding access restrictions to Rohingyas, makes response planning difficult.

The rainy season has also made it difficult to access some areas by road.

Crisis impact

Situation in Bangladesh

Rohingya population living in camps in southeast Bangladesh until August 2017	33,000 in camps 600,000 undocumented living in communities
Estimated number of arrivals since August 2017	300,000

Sources: The Guardian 06/09/17, OCHA 01/06/2017, BenarNews 07/09/17

Situation in Myanmar

No. Rohingya estimated to be stuck in conflict zones in Rakhine	400,000
Ethnic Rakhine displaced within Rakhine state	27,000
Rohingya in Myanmar until August 2017	1.1 million
Rohingya in protracted displacement in Rakhine until August 2017	120,000

Sources: The Guardian 05/09/17; Amnesty International 07/09/17

Myanmar

On 25 August, the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), an Islamic insurgent group, launched multiple attacks on government posts in Rakhine state. Myanmar security forces launched counterattacks. There have been reports of massacres and arson by armed forces and Human Rights Watch satellite evidence of widespread burning of villages. (The Guardian 05/09/17). At least 400 people have been killed and over 6,800 houses and at least 60 villages have been burned to the ground (Free Radio Asia 06/09/17) (The Irrawaddy 08/09/17). An estimated 400,000 people are believed to be trapped in conflict zones of northern Rakhine state despite large scale population movement (The Guardian 05/09/17) Some 270,000 have fled Rakhine state since 25 August, representing a sharp increase in the past few days (ECHO 08/09/17). Security has tightened on the border and of those fleeing, an estimate, 40,000 are stranded, prevented from crossing into Bangladesh by Bangladeshi guards (AAH 07/09/17).

Protection: Reports of anti-personnel land mines along the border present serious protection concerns for people trying to cross by land (ECHO 05/09/17). River crossings are equally dangerous: at least 58 people have drowned in the Naf River so far (Benar

05/09/17). Some boat owners are trying to capitalise on the situation and are charging between 5,000 and 10,000 Bangladeshi taka (USD 60-122) per person. Those who cannot pay are being held by the boat owners until relatives can find the money or the police intervene (UNHCR 07/09/17).

In Rakhine state, Rohingya have told local media that the ARSA is attempting to recruit people and that while they have resisted joining, to speak negatively about the ARSA could jeopardise their safety (The Irrawaddy 08/09/17). The military's 'clearance operations', and crackdown on Rohingya has reportedly included extrajudicial killing, torture, and arbitrary detention, among other human rights abuses (ICG 27/08/2017).

The Border Guard of Bangladesh have reportedly turned away Rohingya attempting to cross the border. Since 26 August, over 2,000 Rohingya have reportedly been returned to Myanmar, despite the ongoing security situation (Dhaka Tribune 04/09/2017). This protection issue might increase as displacement numbers rise: the GoB pushed back 5,000 Rohingya from the border between October 2016 and January 2017 (Refugee International 30/07/2017). Bangladeshi authorities agree to temporarily shelter the displaced, but are clear that they will eventually send them back to Myanmar (Bd news 07/09/2017).

Shelter: Many of those trapped at the border are sleeping outside without shelter. Aside from shelter materials, space to erect shelters is a priority as arrivals continue and overcrowding becomes a problem (Arabnews 06/09/17). In Rakhine state thousands are thought to have fled to the mountains of northern Rakhine and be living without shelter (Amnesty 04/09/17).

Food: Within Rakhine state, in a village close to Maungdaw, residents have reported food shortages. Insecurity has forced them to stop their work as fishermen and traders and markets have closed. They claim they are receiving no support from NGOs or the government (The Irrawaddy 08/09/17). WFP had been providing food before their access was revoked in mid-July, and there are now some 250,000 people without regular food assistance (WFP 06/09/17).

Bangladesh

Rohingya are entering Bangladesh at six points across the Naikonchari border: Gundum, Tombru, Jolpaitoli, Reju Aamtali, Baishpari, and Kolabagan (The Daily Star 29/08/2017). Many arrivals are exhausted after a 60km journey on foot. Some have constructed makeshift shelters but many are sleeping in the open despite the ongoing rainy season. Bangladesh already hosts around 400,000 undocumented Myanmar nationals, as well as another 74,000 who arrived after violence in Rakhine in October 2016 (UNICEF 05/09/2017). Services

are becoming strained on the Bangladeshi side as the government, UN agencies, and NGOs struggle to cope with the increasing influx. Most of those arriving are staying in existing makeshift settlements and UNHCR-registered camps. Three new makeshift camps have arisen and some people are seeking shelter in the host community.

Protection: As authorities are refusing to admit new entries to the camps, new arrivals are reluctant to disclose their identities. This makes it difficult to identify separated or unaccompanied children and makes them extremely vulnerable. In a new settlement in South Balakhali, UNICEF identified more children in the camp than adults. Children and adolescents are especially vulnerable due to child trafficking groups that are active in the region (UNICEF 05/09/17)

Shelter: Rohingya stranded around border areas are reportedly setting up makeshift shelters out of polythene sheets and other basic materials (Daily Star 28/08/2017). The existing camps and settlements are already at full capacity and cannot accommodate new arrivals (Benar 05/09/17). Once across the border, Rohingya seem to be moving between locations, in search of shelter and services (OCHA 05/09/2017). Land allocation is problematic (ISCG 05/09/17). People are setting up shelters on the roadside and any available land in the Ukhiya and Teknaf areas. The population of the two UNHCR camps has doubled in two weeks (UNHCR 08/09/17).

Food: Most people are in dire need of food and water on arrival, after a 50–60km journey on foot (ECHO 06/09/2017). The newly displaced struggle to find enough food. Sources of income and livelihood for Rohingya in Cox's Bazar are limited. 66% sites report that main source of income is irregular daily labour (Refugees International 30/07/2017). This is exacerbated by the lack of formal identification or status, leaving Rohingya unable to access work (Refugee International 30/07/2017). 30% of sites reported that UMN's (undocumented Myanmar nationals, the vast majority of whom are Rohingya) engaged in begging (Refugees International 30/07/2017).

Health and nutrition: As of 5 September, around 33,000 newly arrived Rohingyas in three temporary sites were in need of emergency and basic health care services (ISCG 05/09/2017). This number is likely to have grown. Some incoming Rohingya are also wounded, including with gunshot and shrapnel wounds (ECHO 28/08/2017; Daily Star 28/08/2017). Many are suffering from fever, cold, diarrhoea, minor cuts and scrapes and skin diseases (IPS 01/09/2017). There are no large hospitals close to the borders. First aid

has to be provided in nearby refugee camps. More than 5,000 new Rohingya are under the age of five and need vaccinations (BDNews24 02/09/2017). In June 2017, the UN reported a global acute malnutrition (GAM) rate of more than 21% in one of the major camps near Cox's Bazaar (USAID 11/06/2017).

WASH: Overcrowding in informal settlements that lack latrines will likely lead to open defecation. In the Balukhali makeshift settlement there is an absence of latrines and no safe drinking water options. In other settlements where there are some latrines and water points, the increasing number of arrivals will soon overwhelm the existing WASH capacity. (UNICEF 05/09/17). In Teknaf, one of the sites being assessed for refugees has a limited potential for groundwater extraction, a common problem in the area. This will present WASH concern if a site is established there (ISCG 06/09/17).

Education: Among new arrivals, as of 5 September, 43,050 are Rohingya children of 4-14 years of age (ISCG 05/09/2017). The current capacity of emergency education facilities is only enough to cover 5,000 children. 500 more schools or learning centres are needed (BDNews24 02/09/2017).

Vulnerable groups affected

- Around 80% of Rohingya fleeing are women and children.(UNICEF 07/09/17) Women and girls are vulnerable to gender-based violence, especially in unofficial makeshift shelter. Women and girls in the past have indicated a fear of gathering firewood, food, or water, or a fear of using latrines in the dark. An estimated 200 GBV cases were identified in Cox's Bazar between December 2016–April 2017. Human trafficking is prominent, especially for drugs and sex trafficking (Refugee International 30/07/2017).
- Children are reluctant to identify themselves, which adds to their vulnerability

Humanitarian and operational constraints

Myanmar: There is no access for humanitarian actors in northern Rakhine state. Humanitarian response out of Central Rakhine is also stalled due to security concerns. (ECHO 08/09/17). All UN agencies have been denied access following allegations that they were providing aid to 'terrorist groups'. The government has restricted access to conflict areas to 16 major NGOs (The Guardian 06/09/17). Anti-NGO sentiment is high and there is pressure on landlords to stop doing business with INGOs. A civil society organisation in

Kyaukphyu was attacked. Despite ongoing negotiations for access, humanitarian response planning is difficult as it is impossible to estimate the number who have been affected. 40% of the population has been displaced in Maungdaw town alone (ECHO 07/09/17).

Bangladesh: Operational space is very limited. Bangladesh is yet to sign the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Protocol, which defines who is a refugee. It has not recognised Rohingya refugees (HRW 2000). International organisations do not have official authorisation to access this population, as they are officially considered illegal in Bangladesh. Incoming Rohingya are often not registered; organising and carrying out proper needs assessments is complicated (Refugee International 30/07/2017). Only unofficial agreement with local authorities has allowed humanitarian access, and often under strict conditions (HRW 2000).

One major challenge in response is the mobility of the newly arrived population (UNICEF 05/09/2017).

Aggravating factors

Seasonal information

The ongoing rainy season (June–September) limits access to certain areas. In July, Shawporir Dwip, Bargona, Monigona, Lambabeel, and Uttor Shikali in Bangladesh were inaccessible due to the heavy rain and weather conditions (Refugees International 30/07/2017). The rainy season will exacerbate any acute respiratory infections that may arise due to the lack of shelter or any waterborne disease that may emerge as a result of poor WASH conditions.

Cyclone Mora

On 30 May, cyclone Mora hit Cox's Bazar, aggravating the already critical humanitarian situation linked to the Rohingya influx since October 2016 (UNICEF 29/08/2017). Huge parts of makeshift settlements inhabited by over 130,000 Rohingya were destroyed. An estimated 25% of shelters were severely damaged, and more than 55% were partially damaged (UNICEF 29/08/2017; Dhaka Tribune 24/08/2017). Power connections to the settlements were cut off, food and fuel supplies hindered, and health and sanitation facilities badly damaged (Dhaka Tribune 24/08/2017). The affected population is likely to face more challenges in meeting its WASH and Health needs throughout the upcoming cyclone season especially when combined with additional pressures of the current influx.

Population coping mechanisms

Due to irregular livelihood activities, Rohingya in Cox's Bazar often engage in begging (IOM 30/07/2017). Women are said to have resorted to survival sex, and families have been undertaking early marriage (Refugee International 30/07/2017).

Contextual information

Drivers of the current conflict

On 25 August, the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), attacked 30 police posts and army bases in Maungdaw, Buthidaung, and Rathedaung townships in Rakhine state, Myanmar. The attackers carried machetes, small arms, and small explosive devices.

The current surge in violence began in northern Rakhine in October 2016. Three border posts were attacked by the ARSA, which sparked a crackdown by the Myanmar Army and state of emergency, which was lifted in February 2017 (UPI 16/02/2017). The Government of Bangladesh estimates that around 87,000 Rohingya crossed the border into Bangladesh from October 2016–July 2017, though the influx slowed after February 2017 (GoB 26/08/2017). Humanitarian access in northern Rakhine was severely restricted during the crackdown operations. Though information could not always be verified, the Myanmar Army was accused of torture, killing, arbitrary detention, rape, and burning of shelters. Conflict between Rohingya and others in Rakhine state spiked in 2012, leading to the displacement of over 100,000 Rohingya.

Past displacement

An estimated 400,000 Rohingya are in Bangladesh, predominantly in Ukhia and Teknaf Upazila of Cox's Bazar district. Around 33,000 Rohingya are recognised as refugees and predominantly living in two camps: Kutapulung in Ukhia, and Nayapara in Teknaf. The remainder are referred to as undocumented Myanmar nationals (UMNs), are unregistered, and are located either in host communities or makeshift settlements in Cox's Bazar.

Stakeholders

Rohingya are an ethnic Muslim minority, consisting of an estimated 1.1 million people in Myanmar. Around 90–95% of Rohingya live in northern Rakhine, where they are heavily discriminated against. Rohingya are denied citizenship, and are severely restricted in their freedom to movement. Following intercommunal violence in 2012, over 100,000

Rohingya were displaced in Myanmar. Their movement restrictions lead to needs for health, education, and livelihood opportunities, and a general dependency on aid. Human rights abuses against Rohingya are common.

The Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) was reportedly established after deadly riots between Muslims and Buddhists in Rakhine in 2012. They are reportedly behind the October 2016 border post attacks in Rakhine. Previously known as Harakah al-Yaqin (Faith Movement), the ARSA states it fights for the rights of Rohingya people. In October 2016, they consisted of 500 men. Their leadership is reportedly based in Saudi Arabia. In Myanmar, ARSA is labelled as a terrorist organisation (ICG 27/08/2017; ICG 15/12/2016).

Myanmar Army: also known as the Tatmadaw, the army operates separately from the government. The 2008 constitution ensures that 25% of seats are allocated to military official, giving them an effective veto. The military is in control of defences, internal affairs, and border security (Joliffe 27/08/2015). The army is thought to consist of around 510,000 soldiers (Myanmar Times 28/04/2016).

The Myanmar government: the National League for Democracy (NLD) headed by Aung San Suu Kyi has been in government since late 2015, and the first democratic elections. The government has consistently denied any reports of abuse against Rohingya.

delivered some supplies through an NGO partner (UNHCR 05/09/2017). The governments of Indonesia and Turkey are also offering help Bangladesh to support the influx of people (BDNews24 05/09/2017).

Information gaps and needs

- Information on needs of people inside Rakhine side is not available at present
- Registering and documenting the new arrivals would enable aid agencies to prioritise and provide assistance.
- The number of affected population in the host communities are unclear. There are areas, including in Bandarban district, where no agencies have a consistent presence.

Response capacity

Local and national response capacity

In Rakhine, Myanmar, local and national civil society groups are offering support to some of the displaced. However many still do not receive aid particularly in overcrowded temporary relief camps within Rakhine state (The Irrawady 08/09/2017).

The Bangladesh government has set up a camp in Cox's Bazar to accommodate all newly arrived Rohingyas from Myanmar. The new camp will be built in Tyingkhali near Balukhali camp. If necessary, the government will expand the unregistered Rohingya camps in Kutupalong and Balukhali of Ukhia, and in Noyapara and Leda of Teknaf. Movements of the newly arrived Rohingya will be monitored, and biometric fingerprints of unregistered Rohingyas will be collected (The Daily Star 06/09/2017).

International response capacity

In Bangladesh, a sector-based response has been established (UNICEF 05/09/17). The ISCG are conducting a Rapid Joint Needs Assessment and the report will be finalised by 10 September, after which a response plan will be developed (ISCG 06/09/17). UNHCR has