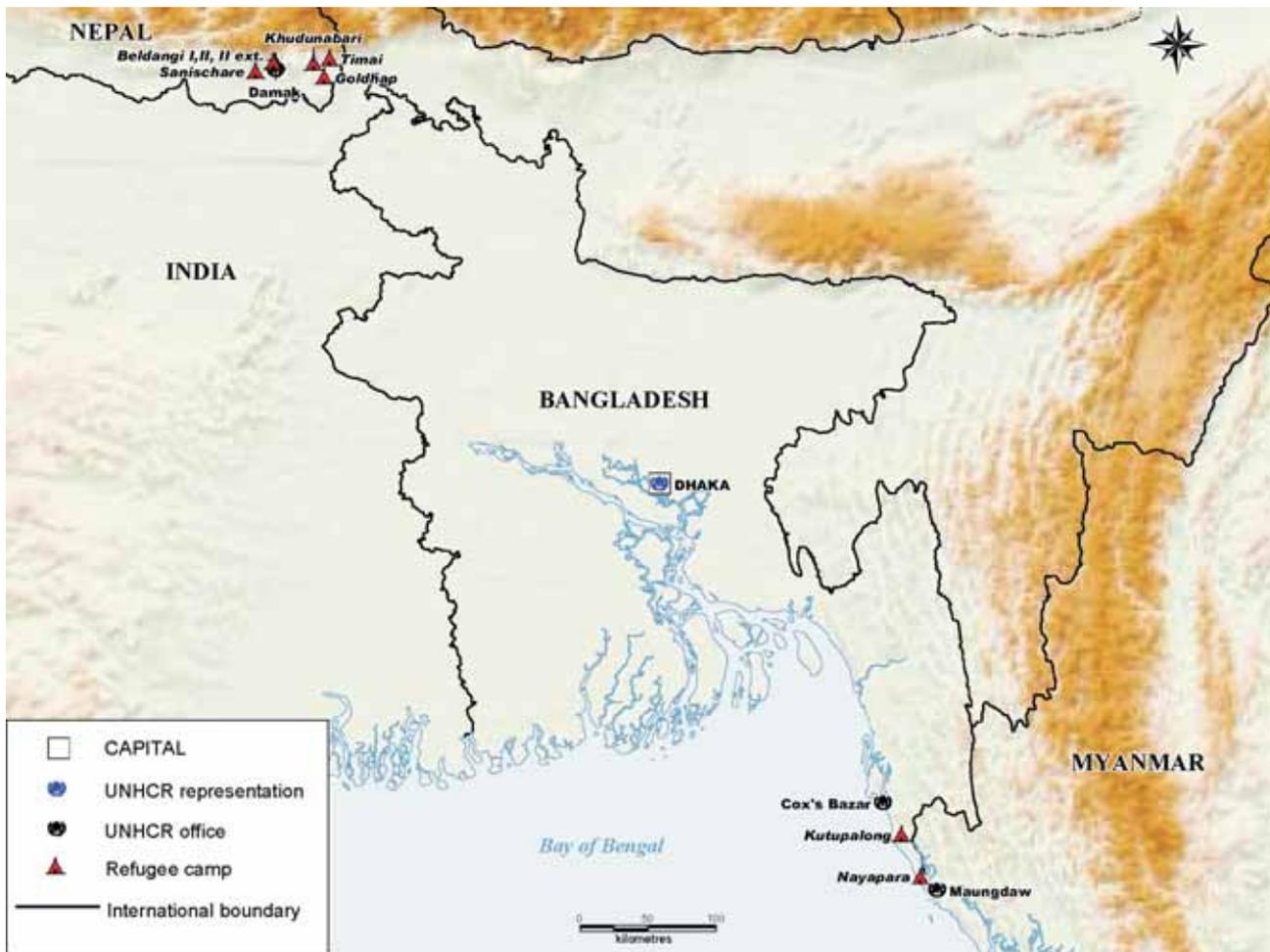


Bangladesh



Working environment

The context

Bangladesh has hosted Rohingya refugees from Myanmar's Northern Rakhine State for many years. More than 250,000 of them arrived in Bangladesh in 1991-1992, and although the majority of that influx have returned home, two remaining Rohingya camps still house some 26,000 refugees. This group has lived in the camps for more than 16 years without freedom of movement, permission to work and limited access to education. In addition, an estimated 100,000 to 200,000 Rohingyas live outside the camps. In the past year, the Government of Bangladesh has become increasingly open to working with international partners to find durable solutions for these Rohingyas, whose circumstances constitute one of the most protracted refugee situations in the world.

It was anticipated that the status and effective citizenship of an estimated 250,000 stateless Bihari/Urdu-speaking community would be resolved in

2007. The authorities have recommended that all of the Bihari/Urdu speakers outside the 116 settlements, as well as those up to the age of 54 who reside in the settlements, are to be considered Bangladeshi. Although this needs to be confirmed by the Ministry of Law, it represents a positive evolution.

The needs

Refugees from Northern Rakhine State in Myanmar

Several participatory assessments have been carried out with refugees in the two camps, with results again highlighting the extremely difficult situation they are in. The lack of prospects for durable solutions and long stays in camps without freedom of movement, permission to work or access to education have led to a climate of despair. Refugees in both camps are exposed to abuse and exploitation. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to domestic violence and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence.

Lack of administration of justice and inadequate camp management were identified as key issues that needed



UNHCR/G.M.B. Akash

Rohingya refugees from Myanmar collecting water from a spring in Teknaf, Cox's Bazaar District.

to be addressed. Most of the identified health risks were due to lack of adequate health services and, in some cases, drug shortages. Refugees often have to resort to selling part of their food ration in order to meet other basic needs. Education remains inadequate in the camps, with a shortage of teaching materials, books and classrooms as well as lack of access to post-primary education. Shelter needs are being partially addressed through the construction of semi-permanent structures which, when completed, should provide better housing for the entire camp-based population.

Urban refugees

General discrimination and intolerance, combined with lack of individual identity documents, have rendered the daily life of refugees and asylum-seekers difficult in urban centres, as well as in the more remote areas of Bangladesh. The country has not acceded to the 1951 Convention or its 1967 Protocol. There is no law that regulates the administration of refugee affairs in Bangladesh or guarantees the rights of refugees. The absence of a national legal and administrative framework for refugees and asylum-seekers leaves them exposed to serious protection risks.

Total requirements

2008: USD 5,097,910

2009: USD 4,599,423

Main objectives

- Promote and implement a comprehensive plan of action to attain durable solutions for Rohingya refugees from Myanmar.
- Ensure the protection of camp refugees and improve their self-reliance.
- Promote refugee law and the human rights of urban refugees.
- Strengthen the protection of refugees within broader migration movements.

Key targets for 2008 and 2009

- Rohingya refugees in camps live in adequate and durable shelters that offer physical protection and safety.
- Refugee children have access to formal primary education.
- Water at all points of collection is of potable quality and sufficient quantity.
- All refugees have unhindered access to primary and secondary health care.
- The refugee-camp community takes full responsibility and ownership of sanitation facilities.
- Refugees have the capacity to meet their socio-economic needs, and their dependence on food assistance is gradually phased out.
- A joint UN community development programme is established to support those communities hosting large numbers of both registered and unregistered refugees from Northern Rakhine State.
- A legal and practical framework for the self-reliance of urban refugees is agreed upon by all relevant stakeholders.
- Registration and refugee status determination of urban refugees is conducted jointly by UNHCR and the Government of Bangladesh.
- A national refugee institution is established.

Planning figures

Type of population	Origin	Jan 2008		Dec 2008		Dec 2009	
		Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR
Refugees	Myanmar	27,060	27,060	27,150	27,150	27,230	5,000
	Various	40	40	20	20	15	15
Asylum-seekers	Various	25	25	25	25	25	25
Total		27,125	27,125	27,195	27,195	27,270	5,040

Strategy and activities

UNHCR will engage with key stakeholders including diplomatic missions, the UN Country Team and NGOs to attain the short-term objective of enhancing the protection and living standards of Rohingya refugees from Northern Rakhine State. Based on a community-mobilization approach, projects will target refugees and the surrounding communities. In addition, UNHCR will participate in the training and capacity-building of NGOs and law enforcement agencies to deal with sexual and gender-based violence. The Office will help establish district-wide identification, response, monitoring and solution mechanisms. It will also promote Cox's Bazaar as a pilot for the newly introduced UNDP programme on police reform.

In the absence of a legal framework for refugee protection, UNHCR will continue to undertake refugee status determination for urban refugees. At the same time, it will promote Bangladesh's accession to the 1951 Refugee Convention, the adoption of a legal and practical framework for refugee rights and the establishment of national structures eventually leading to joint refugee status determination by UNHCR and the Government of Bangladesh. UNHCR will continue to build knowledge and awareness of refugee issues among NGOs, civil society and academics for joint advocacy.

Constraints

Continued commitment by all stakeholders to pursuing the road map leading to the self-reliance of refugees in the camps, pending identification of durable solutions, is needed. Also needed is an agreement on the freedom of movement of the refugees, their right to work and access to education and skills training.

While the majority of refugees have clearly indicated their strong wish to be able to lead normal productive lives, some refugees may resent any phasing out of the care and maintenance programme.

Organization and implementation

UNHCR presence

	2008	2009
Number of offices	2	2
Total staff	39	39
International	8	8
National	21	22
UNVs	9	8
JPOs	1	1

Coordination

UNHCR will continue to build its partnerships with key stakeholders such as the Government of Bangladesh, diplomatic missions, the UN Country Team, NGOs and civil society. Within the UN joint programme, UNHCR will work closely with IOM and ILO in the training and capacity-building of border officials, law enforcement, Union Parishads and village courts. UNHCR is fully engaged in the joint UN community-based development programme. The Office will lobby for increased NGO involvement in all sectors in the camps to ensure bridge-building with local communities.

Partners

Implementing partners

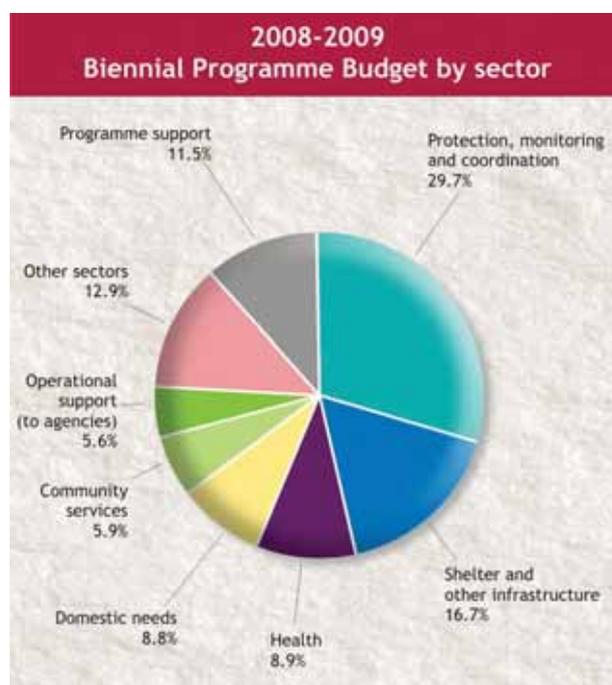
Government: Ministry of Food and Disaster Management.

NGOs: Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, Research Training and Management International, Technical Assistance Inc.

Operational partners

Government: Austcare, Handicap International, *Médecins Sans Frontières-Holland*.

Others: World Food Programme.



Budget (USD)			
Activities and services	Annual Programme Budget		
	2007	2008	2009
Protection, monitoring and coordination	1,147,443	1,438,000	1,443,123
Community services	114,881	285,471	285,471
Domestic needs	198,639	506,197	344,376
Education	65,574	90,819	70,312
Food	17,735	235,264	235,264
Forestry	5,000	0	0
Health	190,939	529,829	335,685
Income generation	13,436	10,000	10,000
Legal assistance	112,554	122,495	127,495
Operational support (to agencies)	265,345	293,641	249,080
Sanitation	56,788	101,683	92,432
Shelter and other infrastructure	52,665	843,287	779,214
Transport and logistics	65,000	41,148	39,909
Water	61,444	40,165	35,760
Total operations	2,367,443	4,538,000	4,048,123
Programme support	522,660	559,910	551,300
Total	2,890,103	5,097,910	4,599,423