


695

 Individuals arrived in
 Indonesia by boats in
 2025

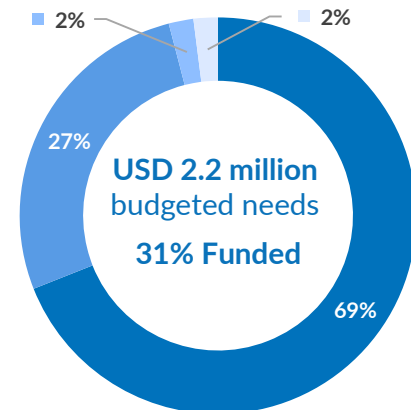
1,076

 Individuals currently
 hosted in temporary sites
 in Aceh, North Sumatera,
 and Riau

2,563

 Rohingya Refugees
 currently in
 Indonesia

UNHCR Funding Requirements Rohingya Boat Arrivals January-December 2025



■ Food & CRIs ■ Protection
 ■ Shelter & WASH ■ Peaceful Co-Existence

FLASH UPDATE

In January, three boats carrying 343 individuals (70% women and children) disembarked in Aceh. In February and April, 352 individuals (50% women and children) were identified in Sumatera and reported that they had recently arrived on undetected boats. Outside of documented boat arrivals, Rohingya continue to discreetly disembark in small numbers, often moving undetected through Indonesia and on to Malaysia.

SITUATIONAL OVERVIEW

Rohingya refugees have undertaken perilous sea journeys from Myanmar and Bangladesh seeking protection, family reunification, and access to livelihoods and education for years. Many of those traveling by boat to Indonesia disembark in Aceh and North Sumatera provinces. From 2023 to date, 3,770 individuals (primarily Rohingya) refugees) landed in Aceh and North Sumatera, Indonesia on at least 27 boats. While many have since departed Indonesia, over 1,000 remain in temporary sites in Aceh, North Sumatera, and Riau Provinces while others have secured alternative accommodations.

According to information provided to UNHCR by refugee arrivals, the increase in the number of individuals undertaking the sea journey in recent years has been driven by a number of factors. These include the continued instability in Myanmar, lack of progress in addressing the root causes of Rohingya displacement and enabling conditions conducive for return, growing insecurity and declining humanitarian assistance in the camps in Bangladesh, more active smuggling networks, and a decrease in the cost of sea journeys.

Sea journeys are extremely dangerous and are often undertaken on unseaworthy vessels under the command of unscrupulous smugglers and traffickers. In March 2024, a boat carrying approximately 142 Rohingya capsized off the coast of West Aceh, killing 67 passengers, including at least 27 children. Over 1000 Rohingya refugees traveling by boat perished or went missing at sea in 2023 and 2024*, including a boat bound for Indonesia carrying approximately 200 refugees that is believed to have sunk in November 2023. Disembarked refugees report experiencing protection and security challenges at sea, including gender-based violence, physical abuse, malnutrition, exploitation, and extortion. Rohingya refugees confirm that they are aware of the risks but still board boats, highlighting the pervasive fear and sense of hopelessness that precipitate their decision to embark on these journeys.

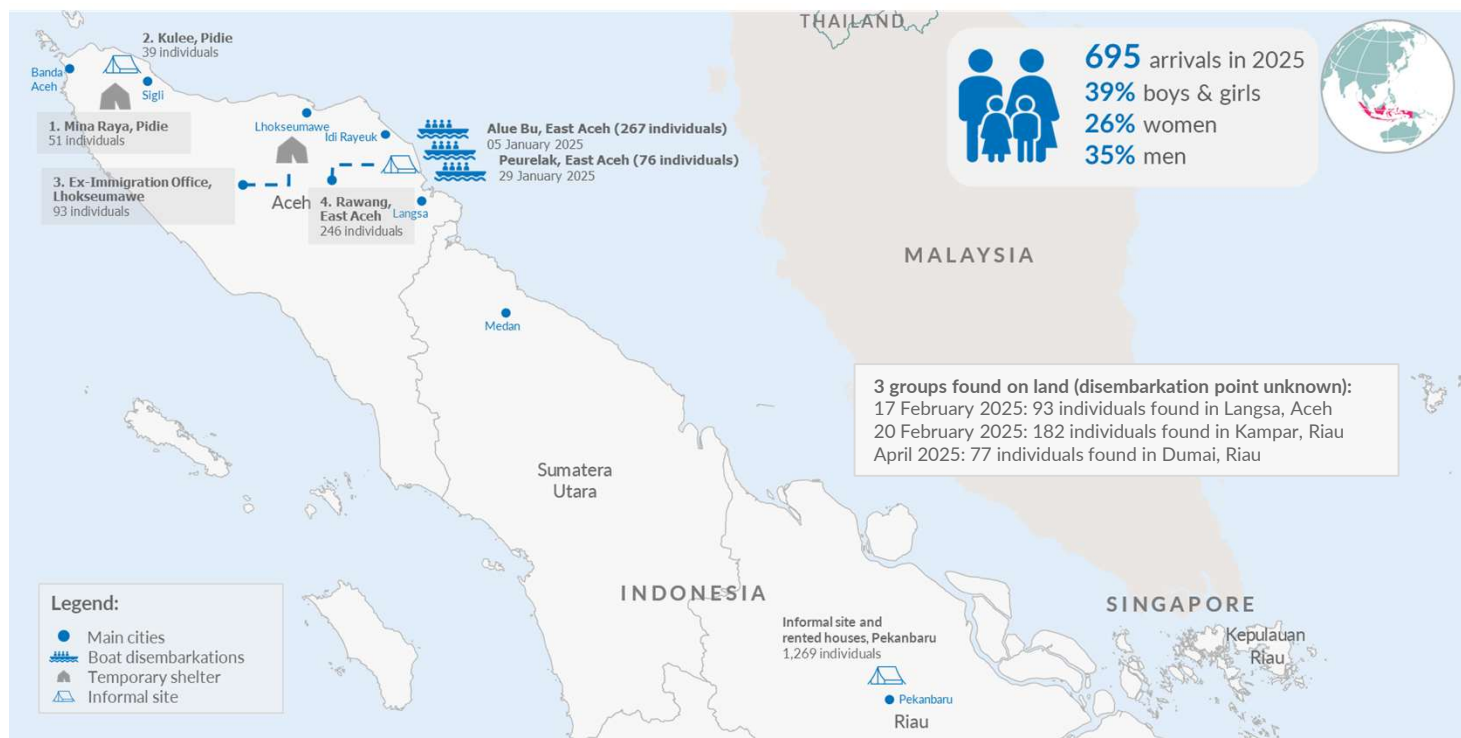
In previous years, as per the 2016 Presidential Regulation 125 on the Handling of Refugees, Rohingya boats in distress were rescued and allowed to disembark in Indonesia by the navy, local authorities, and Acehese coastal communities. Following disembarkation, authorities designated host sites where UNHCR, IOM, and other partners provided protection and basic assistance.

While many Indonesians remain supportive of and sympathetic to the challenges facing Rohingya refugees, many refugees who arrived by boat since 2023 have met unprecedented resistance in Indonesia. Some Rohingya were prevented from disembarking, others disembarked only to be forced by local communities back on the boats and returned to sea, and many of those who disembarked have yet to be allocated adequate shelter by authorities. As a result, hundreds of Rohingya refugee arrivals remain in perilous, overcrowded, and sub-standard temporary sites in which the protection and assistance response is compromised.

While Rohingya refugees undertake journeys from Bangladesh and Myanmar throughout the year, the majority typically move between November and March when sea conditions are most favorable. Support is needed to bolster the response in the likely event that more boats carrying Rohingya refugees arrive in Indonesia in 2025. UNHCR anticipates 2.2 million USD will be required to respond to the needs of the current population and anticipated new arrivals in 2025. Only a fraction of needed funding has been received by UNHCR to date. The Rohingya boat arrival response remains seriously underfunded.

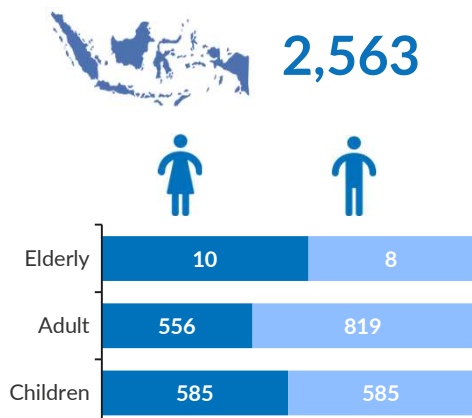
* DATA SOURCE: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/myanmar>

OVERVIEW: 2025 CONFIRMED DISEMBARKATIONS AND CURRENT HOSTING SITES

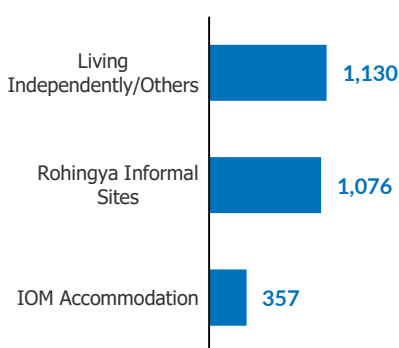


Population figures per hosting site include individuals who arrived by boat and babies born post-arrival.

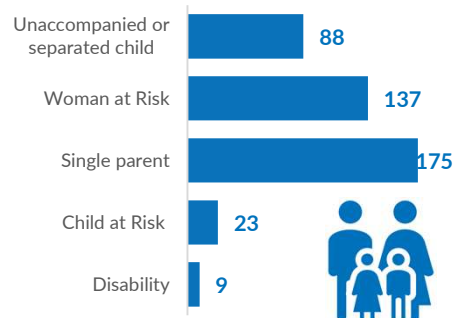
Rohingya Refugees in Indonesia



Type of Accommodation



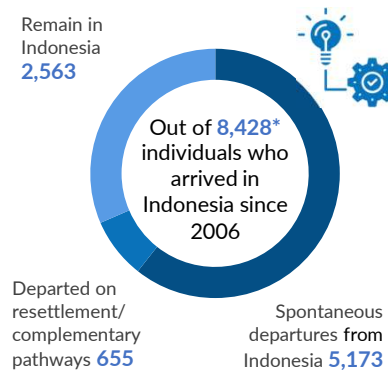
Vulnerabilities at the Temporary Sites



Indonesia: Maritime Arrivals and Departures*



Solutions



UNHCR RESPONSE



COORDINATION

UNHCR supports Indonesian authorities by leading and coordinating inter-agency preparedness and response at the local, provincial, and national levels, in close cooperation with IOM and other humanitarian partners in Aceh, North Sumatera, Riau, and Jakarta. UNHCR's coordination role includes regular advocacy with the government, security agencies, and local communities on issues related to Rohingya refugees, international protection principles, and the humanitarian response. UNHCR also chairs inter-agency coordination meetings at the local and national levels. In addition, UNHCR maintains a 4W (Who is Where, When, doing What) matrix to identify assistance gaps and ensure protection issues and basic needs are covered in the sites where Rohingya refugees are currently accommodated in Aceh and North Sumatera. UNHCR continues to engage with media outlets, civil society groups, universities, social media platforms/companies, religious leaders, Islamic philanthropies, community-based organizations (CBOs), and influencers at the national and local level to address disinformation, misinformation, and hate speech and contribute to a supportive and informed civil society in Aceh, North Sumatera, Riau, and throughout Indonesia.



PROTECTION

UNHCR leads the protection response for Rohingya refugees. Protection activities include advocacy with local authorities and communities to permit the disembarkation of **all boats** in distress at sea and ensuring UNHCR presence at the beach and points of disembarkation to advocate on behalf of individuals arriving by boat. Since 1 January 2023, **3,625** new arrivals have been registered and have had their biometrics captured. **3,625** new arrivals have been issued UNHCR documentation. Verification or refugee status determination to assess international protection needs has been carried out for **593** individuals. UNHCR has finalized **153** best interest procedures as well as other child protection work for the large number of child spouses, unaccompanied children, and otherwise at-risk children. UNHCR is working with local authorities, security agencies, private security, and host communities to maintain the safety and security of refugee hosting sites, though security remains highly compromised in remote locations. Refugees and others engaged in the sites have been informed of and engaged in key protection activities, including gender-based violence prevention and response; protection reporting and referral systems; prevention and response activities on fraud, sexual exploitation and abuse, and other forms of mistreatment; etc. UNHCR works closely with the host community to build and maintain social cohesion and peaceful coexistence between refugees and the Indonesian communities hosting them.



ASSISTANCE AND SERVICES

UNHCR, IOM, and partners are working together to deliver lifesaving assistance following initial disembarkation and establish service delivery to ensure basic needs are met. Assistance sectors are led by IOM (shelter, health, and WASH) and UNHCR (cash/food). Assistance and basic services - the provision of cash for food, CRIs, shelter repairs and rehabilitation, access to WASH, health care, and mental health/psycho-social support - have been established for Rohingya refugees in all hosting sites, although the extent and scope of assistance and services is dependent on the level of access humanitarian partners have to the sites, site locations, the security situation surrounding the sites, the engagement and position of host communities, whether a site has been officially designated by authorities, budget limitations, etc. As of August 2025, UNHCR provides monthly cash assistance to **572** refugees in Aceh to cover food needs and provides weekly in-kind supplemental nutritional support to **116** children under 5, nursing mothers, and pregnant women.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS AND CHALLENGES

Site designation and consolidation

- Refugees are currently hosted in four temporary sites in Aceh and one in Riau. The two sites in Pidie and the site in East Aceh have been officially designated or recommended as refugee hosting sites by Indonesian authorities, enabling the sites to be utilized to host the Rohingya refugees currently there and perhaps future arrivals who disembark in the same district/city. The government has recently communicated that the Lhokseumawe site can no longer be utilized to host refugees and has requested the relocation of the refugees living there to another site.
- It is imperative that, as per the Presidential Regulation, local authorities – in consultation with provincial and national authorities – designate shelters that can accommodate those currently in the sites as well as future Rohingya boat arrivals. The designation of sites and the consolidation of the current hosting sites into fewer locations will enable more robust protection and assistance programs; allow for more consistent coverage of the sites by UNHCR, IOM, and partners; enhance security for refugees; and reduce tensions with local communities.

Recreational/educational opportunities at the sites

- While freedom of movement remains limited in many sites and children do not currently have access to formal education, there has been progress in implementing recreational and learning opportunities for children and adults at the hosting sites. These efforts are imperative to provide opportunities for personal growth, improve mental health, and advance efforts toward peaceful co-existence and social cohesion with host communities.
- Activities, most of which are implemented by community-based organizations and local foundations, include organized sports, vegetable farming, movie nights, Bahasa Indonesia and English classes, sewing classes, art classes, Quran lessons, etc.

Misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech

- An online campaign of misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech directed at Rohingya refugees and UNHCR, in particular, was prevalent in Indonesian media and social media in late 2023 and 2024. This [negatively impacted](#) refugees and humanitarian actors on the ground in Aceh, resulting in pushbacks, protests, a mob attack, forced relocation, personal threats to staff members, etc.
- Efforts have been undertaken to understand the reasons behind the campaign, remove online hate speech, and correct misinformation and disinformation. These include engaging with social media platforms to address issues of concern, sharing facts on UNHCR and Rohingya refugees online and in traditional media, working with security agencies and relevant government ministries, engaging prominent and influential Acehnese, and holding discussions with universities, civil society, CBOs and other groups to promote mutual understanding.

Most recent disembarkations

- On 5 January 2025, two boats carrying 267 individuals (73% of whom are women and children) disembarked in Alue Bu, East Aceh. In the last week of January, a third boat carrying 76 individuals disembarked in East Aceh. Local authorities immediately permitted relocation of those disembarked to a temporary hosting location in Rawang, East Aceh. This decisive response from authorities and local communities enabled the immediate provision of protection and assistance to the new arrivals and helped dissipate any tension around the disembarkation site.
- UNHCR continues to work closely with Indonesian authorities and local communities to ensure boats in distress at sea are promptly rescued and that those traveling on these boats and seeking asylum are permitted to disembark on Indonesian soil, as per the Presidential Regulation and other domestic and international law.

Smuggling, trafficking, and onward movement

- As in previous years, many refugees arriving in Aceh have since departed the hosting sites, moving – often with the assistance of smugglers – to other locations in Indonesia or to Malaysia, where refugees move to marry, access employment opportunities, join family members, etc. UNHCR continues to monitor onward movements to assess trends and identify protection risks.
- Concerns remain regarding the risk of trafficking and the development of heightened protection and security issues in the hosting sites and elsewhere as a result of these onward movements.

Funding gap

- UNHCR has received 31% of the USD 2.2 million funding needs for the 2025 Rohingya boat response. In order to respond to the needs of new Rohingya arrivals, UNHCR has had to re-prioritize activities using its current budget. As the response remains critically underfunded, more support is needed to scale up assistance in the sites and to respond to anticipated Rohingya boat arrivals throughout the year.

UNHCR is grateful to the following donors who are funding the Indonesia operation with earmarked, softly earmarked funding as well as those supporting UNHCR operations globally with unearmarked funding.

Australia | Belgium | Canada | Denmark | European Union | France | Germany | Ireland | Japan | Netherlands | Norway | Private donors Australia | Private donors Canada | Private donors Germany | Private donors Indonesia | Private donors Republic of Korea | Private donors United Arab Emirates | Private donors United Kingdom | Private donors USA | Republic of Korea | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS



Rohingya women and children at a temporary shelter in Aceh. © UNHCR/A. Jufrian