

Bangladesh – Complex Emergency

JANUARY 5, 2024

SITUATION AT A GLANCE

<p>1.6 MILLION</p> <p>Number of People in Need in 2023</p> <p><i>UN – March 2023</i></p>	<p>1.47 MILLION</p> <p>People Targeted for Humanitarian Assistance in 2023</p> <p><i>UN – March 2023</i></p>	<p>938,280</p> <p>Number of Rohingya Refugees in Cox’s Bazar</p> <p><i>UN – November 2023</i></p>	<p>31,439</p> <p>Number of Rohingya Refugees on Bhasan Char Island</p> <p><i>UN – November 2023</i></p>	<p>\$876 MILLION</p> <p>Required Funding to Meet Needs of the 2023 Joint Response Plan</p> <p><i>UN – March 2023</i></p>
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- USAID/BHA announced \$87 million in humanitarian aid to support Rohingya refugees and host communities in Cox’s Bazar and Bhasan Char Island on December 13.
- The GoB relocated nearly 1,700 Rohingya refugees to Bhasan Char in November and December, the fourth and fifth such relocations of 2023.
- With the support of USG and other donor funding, WFP increased the value of e-vouchers for food for Rohingya refugees in Cox’s Bazar from \$8 to \$10 per person per month, increasing the purchasing power of households for essential food.



TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

USAID/BHA¹ \$87,000,000

For complete funding breakdown with partners, see detailed chart on page 5

Total \$87,000,000

¹ USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

USG Announces \$87 Million in Humanitarian Assistance for Rohingya Refugees and Host Communities in Cox's Bazar for FY 2024

On December 13, the U.S. Government (USG) announced \$87 million in additional humanitarian aid in support of Rohingya refugees and host communities in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar District and Noakhali District's Bhasan Char, a silt island in the Bay of Bengal. The additional funding through USAID/BHA will support the UN World Food Program (WFP) to provide critical food and nutrition assistance, infrastructure maintenance in refugee camps, disaster risk reduction assistance, and livelihood support for vulnerable communities. Additionally, the funding will support WFP with addressing malnutrition among children ages five years and younger and pregnant and lactating women. The announcement brings the total USG assistance in response to the Rohingya refugee crisis to nearly \$2.4 billion overall—including nearly \$1.9 billion for refugees and host communities in Bangladesh alone—since August 2017.

Between June and November, the number of people who faced challenges in meeting their food consumption needs in Cox's Bazar increased by 11 percent—from 79 percent to 90 percent—among refugees, including children, according to WFP. USAID/BHA's additional funding announced in December, combined with other donor support, enabled WFP to increase the value of e-vouchers for food rations for Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar from \$8 to \$10 per person per month beginning on January 1; rations in Bhasan Char will remain at \$15 per person per month. Additionally, the most vulnerable households will continue to receive an additional \$3 to purchase micronutrient rich foods, including fresh produce and animal protein sources. Previously, global funding shortages had forced the UN agency to reduce the ration value twice during 2023. The reversion to the \$10 ration value will increase populations' ability to meet food consumption needs.

Following USAID's funding announcement, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and stakeholders convened at the Global Refugee Forum in December to assess and discuss the ongoing crisis among Rohingya refugees and how to address the challenges and needs among refugees across Bangladesh, Burma, Malaysia, India, Indonesia, and Thailand. Humanitarian actors noted that current international refugee policies and institutions have not addressed the Rohingya refugee situation in a sustainable or coordinated fashion, resulting in an insufficient response with potentially negative consequences for refugees. Forum participants ultimately concluded that humanitarian actors, including the UN, NGOs, and local communities, will work on providing immediate aid for basic needs, including education, food, health, and shelter assistance in a sustainable way to promote the self-reliance of Rohingya refugees.

Government of Bangladesh Relocates 1,700 Rohingya Refugees to Bhasan Char Between November and December

The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has relocated more than 31,000 Rohingya refugees to Bhasan Char since 2021, with the GoB citing overcrowding in Cox's Bazar as the rationale for the relocations. On November 8, the GoB relocated nearly 170 Rohingya refugee households—or 565 people—to Bhasan Char, nearly 60 percent of whom were children, according to U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM) partner the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). On December 1, the GoB relocated more than 250 households—approximately 1,200 people—to Bhasan Char, bringing the total number of refugees relocated since November to 1,700 people. According to a UNHCR assessment of the new arrivals relocated to Bhasan Char in November, relocated people cited better security conditions, livelihood opportunities, shelter, and family reunification as reasons for moving to the island. However, despite the interest in improved conditions, only approximately 30 percent of new arrivals were informed of living conditions on the

island prior to relocation. Among the relocated children in November, UN partners note that 17 children are in need of protection assistance, including those that are unaccompanied or in early marriage.


Maritime Movements of Rohingya Refugees Increase; More Than 1,500 Refugees Arrive in Indonesia by Boat Since November

Rohingya refugees sheltering in Bangladesh and Rohingya residing Burma have continued attempts to travel to Indonesia by boat due to ongoing humanitarian needs in Bangladesh and violence in Burma. More than 1,700 Rohingya arrived in Indonesia between January and December 2023, with more than 1,500 people arriving during the last two months of the year alone, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR. Furthermore, due to the region's upcoming dry season and improved conditions at sea, relief organizations anticipate that more Rohingya will likely attempt to embark for Indonesia and Malaysia by March 2024. New arrivals required food, health, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) assistance. Additionally, an estimated 1,000 Rohingya have been relocated to overcrowded shelters in Indonesia's Aceh Province, while approximately 700 new arrivals remained without shelter as of December 12.

Health Actors Identify Nearly 17,500 Cases of Dengue in Cox's Bazar in 2023

During 2023, Bangladesh experienced a severe outbreak of dengue fever, according to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). As of December 7, health actors had identified nearly 316,200 dengue cases and 1,643 related deaths, with the vector-borne disease spreading to all 64 districts of Bangladesh, including Cox's Bazar. Cases of dengue fever have resulted in deaths and hospitalizations among both Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshi host communities, with UNICEF reporting nearly 17,500 cases of dengue, including more than 13,400 Rohingya refugees, approximately 3,800 dengue-related hospitalizations, and 18 deaths in Cox's Bazar as of December 2. However, the spread of the disease began to decrease in late 2023, with approximately 35,300 detected cases countrywide in November compared to 67,800 cases in October. In Cox's Bazar refugee camps, State/PRM partners UNICEF and the UN World Health Organization (WHO) have been working to identify and eliminate mosquito breeding sites in homes and surrounding areas and disseminate information about dengue prevention and control to Rohingya households.

KEY FIGURES



\$74 Million
In USG support for
emergency food
assistance
in FY 2024

U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

FOOD SECURITY

USAID/BHA provides funding to WFP to deliver emergency food assistance—including food vouchers and in-kind food assistance through local, regional, and international procurement—to refugees and host communities in Bangladesh. USAID/BHA also supports complementary nutrition services, as well as coordination and capacity-building activities among other food security actors in Bangladesh to strengthen response efforts. In addition, State/PRM supports IOM, UNICEF, UNHCR, and NGO partners to deliver complementary livelihood and nutrition services to refugees and other vulnerable individuals in Bangladesh. USAID/BHA also supports UNICEF in providing nutrition assistance, including malnutrition screenings for mothers and children and the delivery of ready-to-use therapeutic food.



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USG partners supporting protection assistance programming

PROTECTION

USAID/BHA and State/PRM support humanitarian partners to address protection concerns among host communities and Rohingya refugees in Cox’s Bazar. USG-supported protection activities focus on increasing access to protection services such as gender-based violence prevention and response, child-friendly spaces, community-based mental health and psychosocial support, and legal assistance.



70,000

Households received tie-down kits from USG partners for cyclone and monsoon prevention during FY 2023

SHELTERS AND SETTLEMENTS

USAID/BHA works with partners in Bangladesh to enhance community resilience to cyclones and other natural disasters by conducting disaster risk reduction activities, as well as infrastructure rehabilitation in host communities in Bandarban and Cox’s Bazar districts. State/PRM-supported shelter assistance in Bangladesh includes emergency shelter repairs and distribution of shelter materials, such as plastic sheeting to prevent roof leaks, complemented by site coordination capacity-building activities. USG partners also provide cash assistance for host community members and refugees to purchase local shelter materials to improve the resilience of their living spaces to natural disasters.



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USG partners implementing critical WASH programming in FY 2023

WASH

With State/PRM funding, BRAC, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IOM, Terre des Hommes Foundation, UNHCR, and UNICEF address critical WASH needs in Cox’s Bazar by improving drainage and waste removal systems, installing handwashing stations and latrines, providing hygiene supplies and safe drinking water, and strengthening community awareness of proper WASH practices to reduce the spread of disease.

CONTEXT IN BRIEF

- Bangladesh hosts nearly 1 million Burmese refugees, the majority of whom belong to the Rohingya ethnic minority group. The refugees fled neighboring Burma’s Rakhine State in August 2017 after Burma’s military forces launched large-scale and indiscriminate military operations, which the USG has since characterized as genocide. More than 931,000 of these refugees are residing in 33 crowded camps in southeastern Bangladesh’s Cox’s Bazar District, while more than 31,000 refugees had been relocated to Noakhali District’s Bhasan Char—a silt island in the Bay of Bengal—as of November 2023.
- Repatriation of Rohingya refugees to Burma remains a primary concern among humanitarian actors and international community, due to continued human rights violations against Rohingya populations in Burma; and persistent humanitarian access restrictions that would limit relief actors’ ability to provide assistance upon repatriation. Since the initial influx of more than 742,000 refugees in August 2017, the GoB has made multiple attempts to repatriate the refugees to Burma in November 2018 and August 2019, as well as renewed talks during 2023, which remain ongoing. Rohingya populations in Bangladesh have expressed concern regarding the physical safety of refugees upon their return and uncertainty

regarding citizenship status, voting rights, and whether refugees will be allowed to return to their home villages.

- Bangladesh is one of the most climate-affected countries in the world, regularly exposed to recurrent natural hazards, including cyclones, floods, monsoon rains, and storm surges. Climatic shocks during FY 2023 exacerbated Rohingya refugee needs in Bangladesh. Tropical Cyclone Mocha in May and heavy monsoon rainfall in August, resulted in damage to critical infrastructure and temporarily displaced refugees, thereby increasing refugee needs for food assistance, protection services, safe drinking water, livelihood support, and shelter.
- On October 15, 2023, U.S. Ambassador Peter D. Haas re-issued a declaration of humanitarian need for FY 2024 in response to ongoing humanitarian needs among Rohingya refugees and host communities in Bangladesh.

USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE BANGLADESH RESPONSE IN FY 2024¹

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
USAID/BHA			
WFP	Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and Practice; Food Assistance—Local, Regional, and International Procurement (LRIP), Food Vouchers; Nutrition	Cox’s Bazar, Bhasan Char	\$87,000,000
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE BANGLADESH RESPONSE IN FY 2024			\$87,000,000

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of January 5, 2023.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://www.interaction.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed, often in the affected region; reduce the burden on scarce resources, such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space; can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
 - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](https://www.cidi.org)
 - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](https://www.reliefweb.int).

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)