



World Food Programme

WFP Bangladesh Rohingya Refugee Response

Situation Report #37



Situation Update

- As of 26 May, more than 20 COVID-19 cases have been confirmed in the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar. WFP and humanitarian organizations are taking all measures possible to contain the outbreak in the camps.
- According to the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG), testing capacity for COVID-19 was established in Cox's Bazar at the beginning of April. The Government of Bangladesh, UN agencies and NGOs have worked intensively to increase COVID-19 testing and isolation and treatment capacities for the refugees and the host communities in Cox's Bazar.
- It is [reported](#) that the Government of Bangladesh has relocated around 300 rescued refugees who were stranded in Malaysian waters for several weeks to Bhashan Char island.
- The cyclone season in Cox's Bazar is escalating the risks posed by COVID-19 in the congested camps and host community. For the upcoming monsoon season WFP is involved in prioritized preparedness activities in the camps.

In Numbers | | April 2020

859,808 refugees in the camps*

100 percent of the population provided with general food assistance

600,000 host community members are targeted as part of the COVID-19 special support

Highlights

- The **first WFP-chartered flight** arrived at Chittagong Airport from UNHRD Kuala Lumpur carrying humanitarian cargo for the COVID-19 response in Cox's Bazar. The cargo included generators, accommodation units and ablution units. The charter flight was part of an inter-agency response (WFP, UNHCR and IOM) coordinated by the Logistics Sector.
- WFP, alongside the World Health Organization (WHO) and Health Sector, is part of the **Supply Chain Task Force**. A COVID-19 supply chain system has been established to provide essential supplies; the supply chains are driven by strategic medical priorities through the identification of critical gaps among the organizations.
- WFP continues to support the most vulnerable households across all sub-districts of Cox's Bazar during COVID-19 through its **Special Support to the Host Community** programme. WFP plans to support more than half a million households through in-kind and cash assistance.
- From May, WFP resumed its **School Feeding activities in the host community**. Due to the current lockdown and school closure, WFP is conducting door-to-door, high-energy biscuit (HEB) distribution, targeting 134,519 children across five subdistricts in Cox's Bazar: Ukhiya, Teknaf, Pekua, Moheshkhali and Kutubdia.
- In collaboration with cooperating partners BRAC and Action Aid Bangladesh (AAB), **WFP has started mask production** in eight skills development centres in the camps. In one week, 3,707 masks were produced by refugees.

Emergency Preparedness and Response

COVID-19 Emergency Response

For the local community

- As part of the Special Support for the Host Community (SSHC) programme, WFP assisted more than 24,000 households (121,000 individuals) with High Energy Biscuits (HEBs) in Ukhiya and Teknaf in April.
- In May, WFP distributed BDT4,500 (USD53) of cash to more than 13,000 households (66,000 individuals) in Ukhiya and Teknaf.
- From June, WFP will step up its support at the isolation/quarantine centres in the camps and local community reaching up to 4,500 individuals as well as more than 500,000 individuals across six sub-districts of Cox's Bazar district.
- WFP is also engaging with participants from the local community livelihoods programme in a mask production project. In the local community more than 40 participants are engaged in production of masks, which will be distributed among community members in collaboration with local government officials.

For the refugees

- WFP has prepositioned food stocks to continue critical life-saving assistance in the camps. A total of 450 Mt of HEBs is prepositioned, which is sufficient to feed more than 90,000 families for three days. To ensure availability of food, WFP has strategically placed buffer stocks of food commodities in and around the camps to sustain uninterrupted general food distribution for two months.
- In response to COVID-19, WFP has modified its food distribution and introduced commodity vouchers, which is a pre-packaged food basket, in place of e-vouchers. This is to limit the amount of human-to-human contact as well as the amount of time beneficiaries spend in the outlets. From April 2020, the transfer value of e-vouchers increased from BDT 840 (USD 10) to BDT 976 (USD 11.5).
- WFP is planning to further amend the pre-packaged food basket and in-kind distributions to include blanket nutrition assistance which will minimize beneficiary movement around the camps during COVID-19.

- Beneficiaries under both in-kind and e-voucher modalities receive their entire monthly food basket in one visit to decongest the distribution sites. Additional porters have been engaged to support households transport an expanded quantity of food products.
- Hand washing stations have been set up and temperature checks are in place for beneficiaries and staff entering WFP distribution points.

Assessments

- The third edition of the Refugee influx Emergency Vulnerability Assessment ([REVA III](#)) has been published. This was conducted in December 2019 to assess the severity of food insecurity and other essential needs of the Rohingya and the local communities living adjacent to the camps. The report reveals that 94 percent of all Rohingya refugees are highly or moderately vulnerable in terms of meeting basic needs due to multiple factors, including limited livelihood opportunities, restrictions on movement to search for income opportunities, depleted savings and asset-stripping.
- WFP conducted a post-distribution survey among 247 SSHC beneficiaries from Ukhiya and Teknaf receiving HEBs. Key highlights from the survey were:
 - ✓ **Food Consumption Score (FCS):** 70 percent of beneficiaries seem to have reached an Acceptable Food Consumption Score (FCS). Beneficiaries in Teknaf appear to have a higher FCS (84 percent) than those in Ukhiya (59 percent).
 - ✓ **Negative coping strategies:** 63 percent of respondents have relied on less preferred and less expensive food during this period, and a significant proportion have had to borrow food (43 percent) or money (42 percent) from friends and relatives.
 - ✓ **Eating habits of HEBs:** 70 percent of the interviewees say they are consuming four to seven packs per person, along with regular meals, each day. They are satisfied with the HEB quality.

WFP Programme Updates

General Food Assistance

- WFP continues to assist 100 percent of the refugee population. In April, WFP assisted a total of 858, 401 individuals i.e., 173,840 beneficiaries (20 percent) through in-kind distributions (oil, rice and pulses) and

684,561 refugees (80 percent) through the e-vouchers.

- In April, one new e-voucher outlet opened in Lambashia targeting beneficiaries in camps 1E and 1W. WFP now has 16 e-voucher outlets and 12 in-kind distribution points in the camps.
- In April, WFP transferred USD 7.2 million through the 16 e-voucher outlets to Bangladeshi retailers engaged in the food assistance supply chain.
- WFP is finalizing the process of procuring 190,000 Frakta (Tote) bags to be used by refugee households to help transport heavy food packages to their shelters from food distribution points.
- The WFP 'Building Blocks' pilot is ongoing in three e-voucher outlets (Lambashia, Modhurchara 2 and Kutupalong Makeshift). This new technology is facilitating smoother and faster transactions in the outlets.

Nutrition Assistance

- In April, WFP assisted 24,170 pregnant and nursing women and 167,702 children under five in the refugee camps and in the host community under the prevention and treatment programmes.
- Nutrition services were provided in 45 integrated centres in the camps and 90 sites in the host community with preventative measures in place including thermal screening, hand-washing and social distancing.
- As a critical service for the most vulnerable population, WFP nutrition assistance continues uninterrupted. In an attempt to reduce the number of beneficiaries in the centres and movement around the camp, people have been receiving a two-month ration.
- From June, WFP plans to distribute super cereal at the e-voucher outlets and in-kind food distribution sites. This is being implemented as an effort to minimize risks of COVID-19 transmission in the camps.
- Training of CP staff and volunteers is ongoing for the programme adaptations for Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) and Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) services during COVID-19.

Disaster Risk Reduction

Refugee camps

- In April, WFP engaged 665 refugees through food-for-assets activities in the camps (86 women and

579 men). WFP transferred USD35,618 of entitlements to refugees for reforestation activities.

- All structural intervention works (road construction, asset creation, drainage construction and clearance, watchtower construction) are suspended until further notice both in camps and the host community.
- Monsoon preparedness: the DRR programme is working on a tentative implementation plan, soon to be rolled out in both host-community and camps, focusing on monsoon preparedness and response.

Livelihoods in the host community

- WFP continues remote awareness sessions (phone calls) with Livelihoods programme participants on COVID-19 prevention measures.
- In collaboration with the Department of Social Service nine beneficiaries in Ukhiya received a Disability Allowance Card. They will be receiving 8,400 BDT each year as a disability allowance as part of the government programme.
- 210 beneficiaries in Ukhiya received the widows and elderly people allowance in collaboration with the Department of Social Service.
- A total of BDT 41 million has been saved by 816 self-help groups, so far.

WFP Engineering Unit and Site Maintenance Engineering Project (SMEP)

- In response to the COVID-19 emergency, SMEP has activated its emergency roster with critical staff who can ensure continuation of emergency activities.
- SMEP is continuing critical engineering works in the camps and has prioritized projects to improve vehicle access to WFP facilities and COVID-19 isolation and treatment centres, material/container movement, culvert construction, and facility construction.
- Critical works also include drainage clearance in camps: 8E/W, 9, 10, 17, 18; construction of a decontamination area at Madhuchara hub; and the construction of access-roads to Lambashia and Camp 20 extension e-voucher outlets as well as a COVID-19 isolation and treatment centre in camp 20 extension.
- Access road/culvert construction work to the Relief Hospital in camp 3 was interrupted due to a dispute over land ownership.
- 429 male and 36 female workers in the camps were engaged to support implementation of the projects.
- Monsoon preparedness measures are ongoing as is construction of a decontamination tunnel for the

new WFP warehouse in Cox's Bazar.

Cross-Cutting Themes

- The Gender and Protection team conducted remote consultations with women, men, girls, and boys, including people with disabilities, to collect different perspectives on the impacts of COVID-19.
- WFP conducted two awareness sessions with 130 staff for the Food Security Sector to assess the impact of COVID-19 from a gender aspect.

Common Services

Food Security Sector (FSS)

- FSS drafted a narrative and monitoring framework for the COVID-19 Response Plan with inputs from 43 partners.
- FSS is working closely with partners to any duplication of assistances in Ukhiya and Teknaf, and to ensure that unconditional cash assistance reaches the most vulnerable host community households.
- As part of the addendum to the Joint Response Plan (JRP), 14 COVID-19 response projects have been approved by the Peer Review Committee. FSS partners will provide food and cash assistance, as well as agricultural inputs to Rohingya refugees and vulnerable Bangladeshi host communities and support the district health response.

The Logistics Sector

- In April, 185m³ of relief items were received into common storage on behalf of two organizations bringing the total to 3,399m³ of relief items stored on behalf of 18 organizations in the Madhu Chara, Balukhal, and Teknaf logistics hubs in Cox's Bazar district.
- A total of 320 litres of hand sanitizer was distributed to 12 organizations, including national NGOs, INGOs and UN agencies, to facilitate office hygiene and staff wellbeing as part of the COVID-19 response.
- In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Logistics Sector began a partnership with 'HI/ATLAS Logistique' through a WFP Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), to provide common storage in Cox's Bazar and facilitate local transportation of medical materials to isolation and treatment centres.
- The Logistics Sector provided technical support to the military in setting up Mobile Storage Units and Prefabs in the Army Coordination cell in Ukhiya.
- The Logistics Sector has shared the contacts for five oxygen and 80 COVID-19-related items

suppliers with their partners. The contacts have been compiled using inputs from partner humanitarian organizations.

- Prepositioning of emergency items including food, PPE, and medical supplies, is underway in Cox's Bazar. WFP has prepositioned a total of 450 Mt of fortified biscuits for emergency response. This can cover roughly 90,000 families for three days.

Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS)

- ETS is providing data-connectivity services in 20 sites in the camps, including 16 e-voucher outlets.
- ETS submitted its inputs for the COVID-19-specific Joint Response Plan to the Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG).
- ETS requires USD 230,000 to establish reliable data-connectivity services at the Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) treatment centres in the camps and other operational areas in Cox's Bazar.

Funding Outlook

- **Six months funding shortfall (June 2020 - September 2020):** USD 65 million.

WFP is thankful for the generous contributions in 2019 and 2020 from: USAID, UK, Australia, Germany, ECHO, Japan, Canada, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, Sweden, Saudi Arabia, France, Kuwait, Russian Federation, Italy, Luxembourg, United Arab Emirates, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Thailand, Qatar, Ireland, Estonia, World Bank, UN CERF and private donors.

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Additional Resources:

- [All previous WFP Rohingya Refugee Response reports on ReliefWeb](#)
- [All previous Inter-sector Coordination Group Reports on ReliefWeb](#)