



**BANGLADESH**



**World Food Programme**

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# Cox's Bazar: Ration Cuts Alert

May 2023

Three months since funding shortages forced WFP to reduce food assistance for the Rohingya population in Cox's Bazar, further cuts are likely unless WFP receives immediate funding. In March, WFP had to reduce its life-saving food vouchers from US\$ 12 to US\$ 10 per person per month. With the funding gap persisting, starting 1 June WFP will have no choice but to decrease the voucher value for a second time – from US\$ 10 to US\$ 8.<sup>1</sup>

Six years into the refugee crisis, the Rohingya rely completely on humanitarian assistance to survive. They are not permitted to earn a living or leave the camps. WFP's general food assistance (GFA) has been the only source they could count on to meet their essential food and nutrition needs.

The situation in the camps is already dire. Even before the ration cut in March, 12 percent of children were acutely malnourished and 41 percent of children were chronically malnourished. Any further ration cut will likely lead to a precipitous spike in acute malnutrition.

WFP is urgently appealing for US\$61 million to restore the full voucher value until the end of the year.

**930K**



PEOPLE WILL BE AFFECTED BY RATION CUTS

**61M**



US\$ URGENTLY REQUIRED TO RESTORE FULL RATION VALUE

## ANTICIPATED CONSEQUENCES ON THE POPULATION



**Widespread decline in food consumption** as families opt for more calorie-dense, less nutritious foods, and parents skip meals to give more to their children. This is already happening.



**Sharp rise in malnutrition**, increased admissions to treatment programmes, relapse and length of stay; increased sickness and mortality among children; and increased micronutrient deficiencies and stunting.



**Adoption of dangerous coping strategies**, e.g., children risk being withdrawn from school and girls may be offered in child marriage. Increased risks of exploitation and abuse if the refugees seek illegal employment outside of the camps.



**Violence and insecurity**, e.g., increased domestic violence against women; and increased violence, crime, and human trafficking.

Despite concerted humanitarian efforts, 44 percent of all Rohingya families were not consuming enough food before the ration cut. With food vouchers valued less than the full US\$ 12 per person per month, families will not meet their minimum daily energy, protein, fat or micronutrient needs. This is particularly dangerous for women, children and adolescent girls.

As food insecurity rises in the camps, the refugees face grim choices to make ends meet. Children risk being withdrawn from school to help their families at home or to work, and girls may be offered in child marriage. If refugees seek illegal employment outside the camps, they face heightened risks of exploitation and abuse, which may fuel tensions between the refugees and the local community. There is also a high potential for destabilization in the camps. Those desperate enough to take to the high seas face dangerous journeys and uncertain fates.

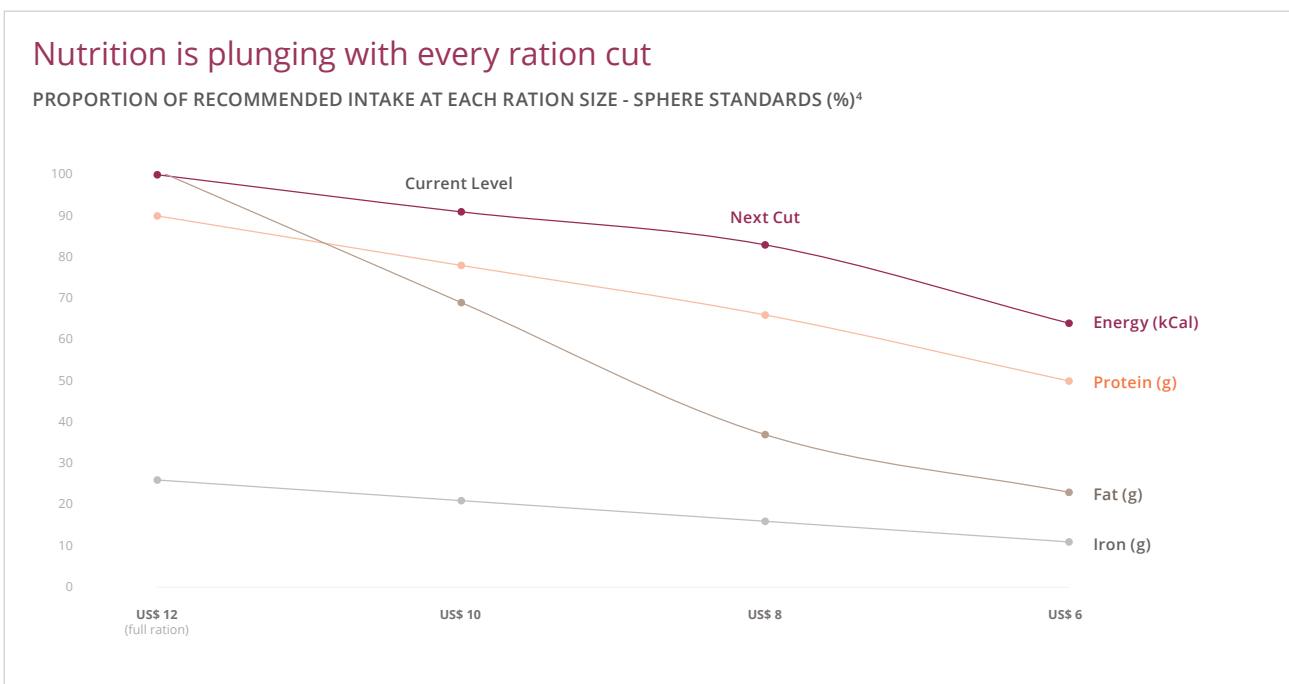
Cuts in assistance today drive up the needs for tomorrow. Every effort must be made to keep this lifeline intact. If the global acute malnutrition rate exceeds the 'Emergency' threshold<sup>2</sup> due to scaled back humanitarian aid, WFP will have to expand its nutrition programme for all children under five and pregnant and breastfeeding women – meaning more funding is required.

Cutting assistance is a last resort. WFP has cut its operating costs to maximise the amount refugees receive – its workforce has been shrunk by 20 percent, and transport and handling costs have also been reduced. These measures have helped save millions of dollars since 2022, but they are not enough to counteract the absence of funds.

We are also advocating for the Government of Bangladesh – who has generously hosted the refugees over the years – to allow the Rohingya to engage in livelihood and income-generating activities in order to support themselves. **Collective action must be taken today to avoid long-lasting consequences on the Rohingya population and the safety, security and stability in the camps and beyond.**

In 2023, funding towards general food assistance (GFA) has been received from: USA (\$21 m), Australia (\$10 m), UK (\$5 m), Switzerland (\$1.5 m), Japan (\$1 m), Germany (\$1 m), Norway (\$1 m), and Luxembourg (\$550 k).<sup>3</sup>

GFA is part of the firewalled activities in the 2023 Rohingya humanitarian crisis Joint Response Plan. Funding gaps in such activities will directly affect the very survival of the population and have a severe domino effect on other activities in the response.



1. Ration cuts refer to the transfer value for general food assistance programme.

2. Standardized Expanded Nutrition Survey (SENS) 2022

3. All figures in US\$

4. This is a simulation of impacts of general food assistance transfer value reductions only, and does not estimate expected reductions in other targeted and/or conditional programmes. The simulation also assumes that Rohingya refugees will continue to purchase the same amount of rice US\$12 to US\$8, regardless of the transfer value, at the expense of micronutrient-rich foods. However, at transfer values equal to or less than US\$7, they would have to be purchasing a reduced quantity of rice.

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