



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations**



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Briefing note

FAO's response to the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh

Since 25 August 2017, 671 000 Rohingya refugees escaping violence in Myanmar have sought protection in Cox's Bazar district, Bangladesh, increasing the area's refugee population to 884 000. Some 91 percent live in highly congested makeshift settlements and camps.

The refugees are in urgent need of emergency food and nutrition support. The majority do not have sufficient food, cooking fuel or cooking utensils.

The speed and scale of the influx has placed extensive pressure on public services in host communities and may have a long-lasting environmental impact. Firewood collection has exacerbated ongoing serious deforestation in areas surrounding refugee camps, resulting in a dwindling supply of cooking fuel. Refugees – mainly women and children – walk up to 8 km to collect firewood from isolated forests, making them vulnerable to gender-based violence.

The crisis has cost the host community significantly, through loss of natural resources, rises in food, cooking fuel and transportation prices, and a highly competitive labour market with greatly decreased wages. Firewood selling was previously one of the few local income-generating activities. Anti-refugee sentiment and conflict are on the rise.

Ensuring livelihood opportunities for host communities is vital to maintain peace and foster social cohesion. FAO is working with the Government to link local production to expanding refugee food markets to generate income and improve refugees' nutrition.

The risk of landslides has increased as a result of extreme deforestation. FAO is working with the Government of Bangladesh and humanitarian partners on preparedness plans for the approaching cyclone season. FAO's future cash-for-work activities in watershed management will help to stabilize the land, prevent topsoil loss and re-establish forests.

FAO chairs the Energy and Environment Technical Working Group and the Livelihoods Working Group, which link United Nations agencies with government ministries. With the Bangladesh Agricultural University, FAO is conducting a market assessment and supply chain analysis for major agricultural commodities to inform a five-year agroforestry programme.



FAO requires

USD 9.8 million



to assist

485 000 people

under the Rohingya Refugee Crisis

Joint Response Plan

March – December 2018

Situation analysis



1.2 million people

are in need of food security assistance

– **80% of refugees** and

30% of host communities

are vulnerable to food insecurity



884 000 refugees

in Cox's Bazar

FAO's 2018 activities

In collaboration with the Government and humanitarian partners, FAO's emergency programme focuses on increasing local food production, supplying alternative cooking fuel, supporting livelihoods, and improving food security and nutrition. It also aims to curtail environmental degradation and rehabilitate the natural resource base.

Ongoing activities, with funding from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Government of Ireland:

- Home gardening kits to improve nutrition and dietary diversity (seeds for high-value crops, vermicompost and tools).
- Safe food storage drums to keep food rations dry and free from infestations, such as insects, rats and mould, and prevent food-borne illnesses.
- Agricultural production kits for farmers' groups (power tillers, water pumps and sprayers for organic pesticides).
- Host community farmer field school (FFS) training in climate-smart production of high-demand, nutritious food crops, to improve the nutrition of refugees while providing income for host community families.
- Nursery establishment (trees, shrubs and grasses) in preparation for reforestation cash-for-work activities.
- Provision of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cooking sets to reduce reliance on firewood as a cooking fuel, and training in efficient cooking and nutrition. This also aims to reduce gender-based violence and social conflict created by firewood collection.

Planned activities, in coordination with partners including the World Food Programme (WFP), IOM and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees:

- Expand safe food storage drums provision for cyclone season protection.
- Support environmental restoration and reforestation for land stabilization through cash for work.
- Train fishers in 'sustainable catch' methodologies and distribute standardized, regulated fishing gear.
- Support small livestock rearing, including animal care and breeding training.
- Support farm-to-market business modelling by linking farmers' groups to WFP's digital cash card programme and food stores.
- Enhance capacity of the departments of agricultural extension, livestock and fisheries.
- Provide training in climate-sensitive agriculture technology through FFSs.
- Support water management committees with water use planning.



Vegetable production will provide income for host communities and improve the nutrition of refugees.



FAO distributed agricultural inputs and machinery to host community farming families for home gardening.