

Annex 3

(Refugees)

The UNCT has been supporting the protracted Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh. Apart from providing lifesaving services, the recent influx of more than 500,000 Rohingyas (as of 1 October 2017), 53 per cent (estimated) of whom are women and girls, has resulted in a critical humanitarian emergency and increased the need to ensure critical lifesaving essentials such as food, WASH, health, shelter, NFIs and provision of protection to all Rohingya refugees with special attention to the most vulnerable refugees by prioritizing life-saving protection and critical sustenance support, in addition to protection by presence and in identifying the most vulnerable and ensuring their access to basic services, legal protection to be scaled up. That would include addressing restrictions of movement, access to territory and high risk of arrest which prevent Refugees from accessing life-saving services.

The safety and security of persons of concern will be ensured through advocacy for the civilian character of the settlements with the Bangladeshi security forces. Efforts will be geared towards support to the registration process by the government, through the provision of relevant resources including technical capacity to ensure that all refugees have access to their rights as well as legal protection. Timely registration and profiling of refugees is critical and will be further pursued in close consultation with the government, to include all family members and capture vulnerability and socio-economic indicators. UNHCR is supporting the GoB with registration to enhance documentations and provision of legal status to ensure access to justice and reduction of risk of arrest and detention under the Foreigners' Act. UNHCR is also working with the humanitarian community to cooperatively mainstream protection into services and assistance. With the establishment of new sites and the expansion of settlements, protection monitoring, protection interventions and up-scaled outreach and referrals are introduced at both the individual and community level to ensure that protection responses and services reach those most in need. Further strengthening of camp security is a priority for cooperation with the authorities, to enhance the safety of the refugees' living environment and to preserve the civilian character of asylum.

The UNCT notices needs for further improvement of access to critical primary health care services including the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for reproductive health in crisis. It also urges the GoB to building capacity of the service providers on clinical management of rape (CMR), EmONC services and deployment of midwives for providing midwifery-led-care services are needed. Mainstreaming human rights based approaches in all support system coordinated or operated by the GoB and right to movement, marriage, employment etc. of the registered and unregistered Rohingyas are to be protected.

34000 registered refugees living in the two official camps in Kutupalong and Nayapara, there were also an estimated 300,000 unregistered Rohingya refugees who fled Myanmar over the years before the latest influx. It was only in 2013 when the GoB developed a National Strategy that acknowledged the presence of this larger group on the Bangladesh territory and recognized that the basic humanitarian needs of these people should be met. However, these people have no legal

status as “refugee”, often treated as “illegal migrants” and hence subjected to Foreigner’s Act of 1946 for entering Bangladesh illegally.

While the implementation of the Strategy was in progress, a violence in Rakhine State in October 2016 caused a further displacement and, as per the UN estimation, 87,000 new arrivals have entered Bangladesh. The ongoing violence in Myanmar’s Rakhine State has forced more than 500,000 Rohingya refugees to flee and settle in Bangladesh since 25 August 2017, the fastest growing refugee crisis of the recent years. The emergency has an enormous impact. As new arrivals continue at an unrelenting pace, the number of the refugees from Myanmar in Bangladesh is stretching even more critically response and coping capacities already extended to the limit.

UNFPA estimates that amongst these new arrivals, almost 143,500 women of reproductive age and 24,000 women, who are pregnant or breastfeeding, are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Apart from providing lifesaving services, there is an increased need of ensuring sexual and reproductive health services, safe delivery, antenatal and postnatal care, STI case management, treatment of gender-based violence cases, family planning services, referral for EMoNC services, etc. The UNCT notices the need for further improvement of access to critical primary health care services, including the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for reproductive health in crisis.

Protection safety nets need to be strengthened considering the vulnerability of various groups such as the unaccompanied minor children among the community, who could potentially be the victims of trafficking, and women and girls exposed to further exploitation while being a refugee. SGBV prevention and response that includes psycho-social counselling for the traumatized victims, access to safety, emergency health support and access to legal redress need to be strengthened further by establishing a well-functioning referral mechanism, along with the Government and other actors.

UNHCR is working on community empowerment and outreach mechanisms need to be enhanced, aiming at identifying, advocating for and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable and at supporting community coping mechanisms, as well as fostering peaceful co-existence among the refugees themselves and with the host communities. A community-based approach to protection will be mainstreamed, including through structured communication with communities from the onset of the emergency. Peaceful co-existence with local communities will continue to be promoted to ensure that refugees live in safety, harmony and dignity with host communities, and together protect their natural environment while contributing to social unity.