

# NRC's operations in Bangladesh

## Humanitarian overview

2024 marks seven years since violence broke out in Myanmar's Rakhine state in 2017, when over 742,000 Rohingya men, women and children fled across the border into neighbouring Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. There, they joined 37,119 other Rohingya refugees from previous waves of displacement.

The refugees continue to lack secure legal status in Bangladesh and cannot move freely or work. They must rely almost entirely on humanitarian aid. Considered stateless, the Rohingya now make their homes, with almost a million individuals, living in one of the world's largest, most severely congested refugee camps.

In the camps, households continue to live in temporary bamboo shelters perched precariously on land prone to extreme weather events, including flooding and landslides, and vulnerable to severe climatic events such as cyclones, intense seasonal monsoons and heat waves. Access to basic services, including adequate sanitation, healthcare, livelihoods and education, remains limited, and infrastructure is deteriorating while security and safety concerns are rising.

The Bangladeshi community living in Cox's Bazar, the first to respond to the 2017 crisis, continue to generously host and support the refugees, despite the local and environmental strains.



Photo: Imrul Islam/ NRC

## Our core activities



Education



Information, counselling  
and legal assistance (ICLA)



Protection  
from violence



Water, sanitation  
and hygiene (WASH)

### NRC in Bangladesh

Established	2018
International staff	14
National staff	126

## Our areas of operation

- Cox's Bazar District
- Khulna District
- Feni District
- Noakhali District
- Satkhira District



## Our activities in detail

NRC works in Cox's Bazar responding to the Rohingya crisis and support to the host community. We also work in other areas of Bangladesh such as the eastern areas, addressing the impacts of climate change.

Alongside partners, our integrated operations include water, hygiene, sanitation, responding to weather-related emergencies, ensuring education continuity for youths and adolescents, and providing information and legal counselling for refugees and Bangladeshis. Through these activities, we reach over **130,000** people per year. Our approach to humanitarian action focuses on principled aid delivery and promotes the agency and dignity of impacted populations.



Over 6,500 people reached in 2024 ▼

## Education

NRC's education programmes support youth and adolescents (aged 13–24 years) in the Rohingya refugee camps and Bangladeshi host community, by engaging in formal and non-formal education and skills development activities in safe spaces. We do this by providing:

- access to the Myanmar Curriculum Accelerated Learning Programme (MCALP)
- offline self-learning hubs for hard-to-reach and vulnerable adolescents and youths
- digital library and remedial learning support for the host community youth
- safe, inclusive learning spaces
- psychosocial support through NRC's flagship Better Learning Programme (BLP)

- vocational and skills development, life and soft skills, literacy and numeracy and entrepreneurship training
- distribution of teaching and learning materials
- teacher training and capacity building

We work with local NGOs to establish curriculum guidelines and tools to support skills development and vocational activities. NRC co-leads the Youth Working Group (YWG) in the Rohingya refugee response and is an advisor to the Education Sector for the annual Joint Response Programme (JRP).



Over 40,000 people reached in 2024 ▼

## Information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA)

NRC's team of trained lawyers works with national and international agencies and volunteers to assess protection concerns, mediate disputes, assist with housing, land and property (HLP) disputes and facilitate negotiations between refugees and host Bangladeshis. Our aim is to improve conditions and access to judicial mechanisms for affected community members. ICLA also works with Bangladeshi communities in the south-west, assisting with HLP disputes.

NRC's ICLA programme provides its lifeline support through:

- awareness-raising, counselling and legal assistance on access to essential services, securing tenancy rights, obtaining residency, and identity documents and registration such as smart cards, birth, death, marriage, divorce and national identity (NID) registration
- addressing housing, land and property (HLP) issues, including rental disputes, safe relocation and protection from evictions
- supporting the HLP Technical Forum by establishing an evidence base, through eviction monitoring, land tenure mapping and conflict analysis
- providing due diligence and strengthening community-based conflict resolution mechanisms with collaborative dispute resolution (CDR) training



Over 21,000 people reached in 2024 ▼

## Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

NRC helps refugee and host communities who endure ongoing WASH concerns, including access to safe, hygienic facilities. We do this by providing access to safe water and sanitation facilities, ensuring waste management systems and promoting personal hygiene management. We continue to promote and explore alternative

options including recycled plastic materials and organic waste recycling.

NRC WASH activities include:

- providing WASH interventions including construction and rehabilitation of latrines and bathing cubicles
- providing safe water sources, water points and hygiene promotion sessions
- distributing water containers for collecting and storing drinking water
- supporting solid and liquid waste management in the camps

## Advocacy

Advocacy and the commitment to the protection of the rights of displaced people and communities are pillars of NRC's work in Bangladesh. We engage with partner agencies, donors, authorities and grassroots organisations to advocate for and actively communicate the voices and needs of affected populations, and push for sustainable solutions through:

- leading consortium advocacy working groups
- reports, white papers and evidence-based briefings
- regular donor engagement, including quarterly briefings to inform response trajectory
- partnerships with national and international outlets and reputable think tanks
- promoting sustainable planning
- advocating the host government to allow refugees and host communities to access education, skills training and income-generating opportunities, including those from the most vulnerable groups such as girls, women, youths and people with disabilities
- ensuring any repatriation plan for Rohingya refugees is informed, safe, dignified and voluntary
- advocating to ensure that individuals fleeing conflict seeking safe passage are able to access essential humanitarian assistance

## Climate resilience

We are committed to providing emergency assistance and contributing towards the early recovery of affected communities across the country. Our ongoing emergency response is aligned with our goal to serve climate-affected Bangladeshis, one in seven of whom might be displaced by 2050.

We commit to working within the scope of our core competencies and in tandem with local and national partners, to respond to and support people to adapt to changing environmental conditions in ways that increase resilience and assist recovery.

## Emergency response

NRC in Bangladesh maintains an emergency roster of staff with various backgrounds and expertise, who are ready to be deployed and assist within 24 hours of an event. In 2023 we extended our emergency services to include internally displaced people (IDP) due to climate change and weather-related emergencies, and in 2024 assisted **over 65,000 people**. We respond to emergencies through:

- multi-purpose cash (MPC) assistance and cash for shelter
- WASH and shelter support to assist early recovery

- providing contingency stocks and emergency assistance including drinking water, hygiene kits and non-food items
- providing emergency awareness, preparedness information and capacity building for self-reliance to camp refugees and communities in Bangladesh affected by climate emergencies

## Our donors

### We are grateful for the generous support from our donors:

- Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA)
- European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)
- UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

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