

# NRC's operations in Bangladesh

## Humanitarian overview

More than eight years have passed since a major influx of Rohingya refugees arrived in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, seeking safety and protection. Today, 1.2 million refugees live in 33 highly congested camps across the district, making it one of the largest and most densely populated refugee settlements in the world.

Despite years of response efforts, refugees in Bangladesh continue to lack formal legal status. They face strict limitations on movement, have no access to formal employment, and rely almost entirely on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs. Statelessness remains at the core of their vulnerability, restricting access to rights, essential services and long-term protection.

Living conditions in the camps remain extremely fragile. Families live in temporary bamboo and tarpaulin shelters built on steep, hazard-prone terrain, leaving them highly exposed to seasonal monsoon rains, flooding, landslides, cyclones and extreme heat. Infrastructure is aging and overstretched, while access to essential services—such as education, WASH, health, protection and livelihoods—is increasingly constrained by declining funding and operational challenges.

Security concerns have also intensified. Refugees face growing risks linked to criminal networks, extortion, forced recruitment, gender-based violence, trafficking and movement restrictions.



Photo: Ratul Piul/ NRC

Tensions, insecurity and instability within certain areas of the camps frequently affect humanitarian access, limiting the safe delivery of services and further restricting community mobility.

The Bangladeshi host community in Cox's Bazar, who responded first and with great generosity during the initial influx, continue to shoulder significant social, economic and environmental pressure due to the protracted nature of the crisis. Strain on local resources, infrastructure, and livelihood opportunities have deepened over time, underscoring the need for balanced support to both refugees and host populations.

With humanitarian funding decreasing and operational space becoming more constrained, needs remain acute while opportunities for durable solutions remain limited. Sustained, principled humanitarian engagement and coordinated advocacy remain essential to safeguard protection, dignity and access to services for refugees and host communities alike.

## Our areas of operation

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



## Our core activities



Education



Information, counselling  
and legal assistance  
(ICLA)



Protection  
from violence



Water, sanitation  
and hygiene (WASH)

### NRC Bangladesh

Established	2018
International staff	11
National staff	127

## 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 155,000 people per year. Our approach to humanitarian action focuses on principled aid delivery and promotes the agency and dignity of impacted populations.



8,957 people reached in 2025 ▼

## Education

In collaboration with local partners, NRC's education programmes support children, adolescents and youth 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
- access to the Myanmar Accelerated Learning Programme (MCALP)
- first Line Education Response for learners affected by emergencies
- foundational literacy and numeracy learning hubs for hard to reach and vulnerable learners

- digital library and remedial learning support for the host community
- 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
- NRC co-leads the Youth Working Group (YWG) in the Rohingya refugee response



60,694 people reached in 2025 ▼

## Information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA)

NRC's team of trained lawyers provides legal protection services to Rohingya refugees and vulnerable host communities in Bangladesh. Through a network of legal hubs, helpdesks, mobile teams and community-based structures, ICLA supports individuals to understand and claim their rights, resolve disputes and safely access essential services.

The programme focuses on addressing legal and protection risks linked to housing, land and property (HLP), civil documentation and access barriers, while strengthening community-based solutions and coordination with authorities and partners.

NRC's ICLA programme provides its lifeline support through:

- awareness-raising, counselling and legal assistance on access to essential services, civil documentation and legal identity, including support related to identity and registration processes and administrative procedures affecting refugees and host communities

- legal case management and dispute resolution, including mediation and negotiation to address housing, land and property (HLP) issues such as eviction risks, rental disputes, shelter access, safe relocation and land-related conflicts
- strengthening security of tenure and due diligence practices, including support to reduce exploitation and prevent housing, land and property disputes affecting refugees in camp settings and host communities
- community-based conflict resolution mechanisms, through the establishment and strengthening of collaborative dispute resolution (CDR) structures and capacity building of community members
- protection analysis, including evidence-based analysis of legal and protection issues to inform programming and support coordinated responses
- integrated and mobile service delivery, ensuring access to legal assistance through ICLA hubs, helpdesks and mobile outreach, including support to hard-to-reach and vulnerable populations



3,665 people reached in 2025 ▼

## Protection from Violence (PfV)

The Protection from Violence (PfV) approach aims to prevent, mitigate, and respond to physical violence, deliberate deprivation, and coercion. It is implemented through three core pillars: thought leadership and PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE (PfV) influence, individual protection assistance, and Community Safety and Violence Prevention (Civilian Self-Protection).

The programme targets Rohingya refugees living in the camps in Cox's Bazar, including men, women, boys, and girls, with a particular focus on youth who are at heightened risk of recruitment into armed groups and gender-diverse individuals who may face heightened vulnerability within the community due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Under its strategic approach, PfV works to reduce protection risks by addressing key threats and vulnerabilities while strengthening the capacities of individuals and communities.

Through its interventions, PfV promotes resilience, safety, and self-reliance, ultimately enabling communities to take greater ownership of their own protection.

Key Activities (2025) include:

- Case Management: provision of comprehensive, individualized protection case management
- Individual Protection Assistance (IPA): in-kind support to address urgent protection needs
- Community Engagement: support to 15 community groups using the Civilian Self-Protection Toolkit; identification of protection risks and harmful coping strategies; development of community-led self-protection and resilience plans
- Awareness Raising: community sessions on roles and responsibilities in preventing and mitigating violence, deprivation, and coercion. Protection message delivery and continuous situation monitoring to identify risks, inform responses, and strengthen community awareness and safety.



78,302 people reached in 2025 ▼

## 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
- supporting solid and fecal waste management in the camps
- supporting hygiene activities through sessions, meetings, and action-oriented behaviour change initiatives

## Advocacy

Advocacy and the protection of the rights and dignity of displaced communities are central pillars of NRC's work in Bangladesh. We work with authorities, donors, UN agencies, partners and refugee-led groups to amplify the needs and perspectives of affected populations. NRC promotes principled, evidence-based and sustainable solutions through:

- leading and contributing to joint advocacy platforms, including consortium working groups
- producing concise, evidence-based briefs and analysis to highlight key protection concerns
- regular engagement with donors to inform priorities, funding needs and emerging risks
- collaboration with national partners and research institutions to strengthen visibility and influence
- promoting inclusive and sustainable planning for both refugees and host communities
- advocating for access to education, skills development and safe livelihood opportunities, especially for women, girls, youth and persons with disabilities
- supporting improvements in civil documentation and legal identity systems to reduce protection risks
- ensuring any population movements are voluntary, safe, dignified and informed
- advocating for safe access to humanitarian assistance for people arriving or moving in search of safety
- promoting safer camp environments and improved mobility, including efforts to reduce extortion, violence and forced recruitment

## 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 2025 assisted over 56,365 people.

We respond to emergencies through:

- 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

## Contact NRC Bangladesh



Country director: Dipankar Datta



[info@nrc.no](mailto:info@nrc.no)



+880 1888 026 754



[www.nrc.no/bangladesh](http://www.nrc.no/bangladesh)



House no CEN D3 (6th floor), Road no-95, Gulshan 2, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh

## 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)
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) Country Based Pooled Fund

**NRC**

NORWEGIAN  
REFUGEE COUNCIL

[www.nrc.no](http://www.nrc.no)  
For feedback: [bd.feedback@nrc.no](mailto:bd.feedback@nrc.no)