



IPPF's Response to Rohingya Crisis in Bangladesh

26th September, 2017

OVERVIEW

Since August 2017, nearly 436,000¹ new Rohingya refugees have fled from violence affected areas of Myanmar into Bangladesh. Most of these refugees have arrived exhausted and traumatized by their weeks-long ordeal. Some have arrived with injuries caused by gunshots, fire and landmines. Thousands paid exorbitant fees to make risky crossings from Myanmar in small boats, and dozens of people have reportedly drowned as a number of overcrowded boats capsized.

Bangladesh currently hosts more than 700,000 Rohingya refugees, and this number continues to increase daily with new arrivals. Humanitarian needs are considerable and growing rapidly.

Humanitarian partners continue to deliver basic food assistance, shelter, water, emergency latrines, psychosocial support and informal education to Rohingya refugees, but gaps remain enormous and urgent needs are still unmet. Relief workers have noted this latest wave of refugees suffers most acutely from basic needs of life including health care, nutrition, and personal safety in the increasingly crowded camp sites. International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) response team have reported that women, girls and children are the most affected with serious need for hygiene and health services.

Key Concerns

- Over half of the new arrivals are still living in spontaneous settlements with little access to aid, including shelter, food, clean water, and sanitation.
- With no access to roads or necessary drainage in these spontaneous settlements compounds there are challenges of reaching out to the new arrivals with necessary aid.
- Most of shelters in low-lying areas are flooded due to persistent rains, which are expected to continue. This is exacerbating the situation, as among the arrivals are 67% women & girls, while 13% are pregnant and breastfeeding (UNFPA, 2017). Accessibility to services has become utterly challenging along with other hygiene and sanitation related needs.
- The Rohingya refugee camps are reportedly overcrowded and it is expected that large number of women may experience sexual and physical violence.

¹ IOM Bangladesh Rohingya Crisis Response - Situation Report, 25 September 2017

IPPF Response

Looking at the current situation, IPPF has reached out to more than hundreds of young women, girls, boys and men by providing timely lifesaving sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services through medical camps.

IPPF has conducted sexual and reproductive health camps in Ukhia and Teknaf areas where there is a huge number of Rohingya refugee population. Through community consultation and discussion with the local partners, IPPF has designed and conducted medical camps in the areas where the need for reproductive health services is extremely high. During the camps, IPPF has provided essential SRH services under the MISP (Minimum Initial Service Package) including Family planning services, Child and Maternal health care and HIV/STI services. Also, women and young girls were provided with sanitary napkins and supplies for basic hygiene. IPPF has been working closely with other partner organizations at Cox's Bazar for planning, co-ordination and provision of the MISP services. During the IPPF medical camps, it was observed that a significant number of women were pregnant with a huge unmet need for family planning services that needs to be addressed. Varun Kumar Anand, Regional Director (Acting), IPPF South Asia Region said "There is a massive need for health services particularly for women and young girls where the vulnerability and risk of further life-threatening illnesses are so high and to address this, IPPF aims to ensure provision of reproductive health services to these communities in coordination with local partners."

Through the response, IPPF plans to provide Reproductive Health Kits such as dignity, clean delivery and new born kits to the affected population. IPPF has joined hand with other National and International SRH partners to facilitate a coordinated response to address the high unmet need for SRH services of Rohingya refugees.



Upcoming Focus Areas

- To continue provision of sexual and reproductive health services to women and girls through mobile medical health camps.
- Mobilising Funds to ensure timely delivery of life saving SRH services.
- Strengthen partnership with local agencies for quality assurance, timely service delivery and monitoring through qualitative technical support.
- Leveraging support from trained Youth Volunteers for community mobilisation and delivery of hygiene kits.

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Skype: [aashishbhardwaj](https://www.skype.com/people/aashishbhardwaj)* Photo credit: Subhalaxmi Mohanty/ IPPF SAR/2017

