
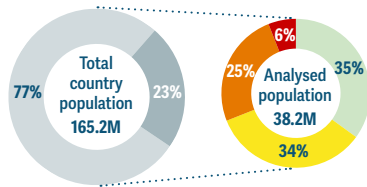
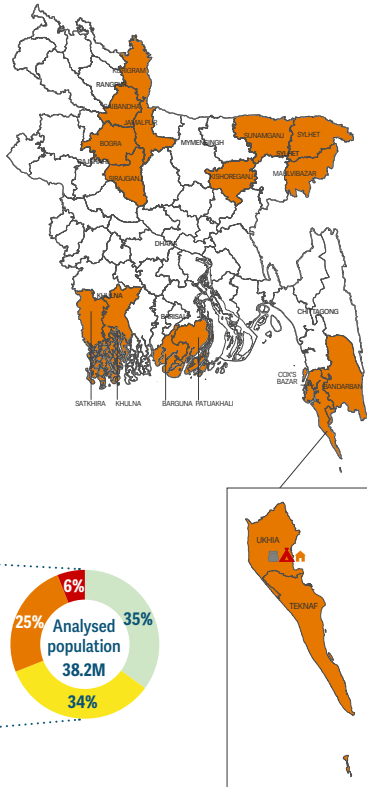


ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY | Record cereal harvests improved food availability, but high food inflation severely constrained food access.

PEAK 2023 (MAY–SEPTEMBER)

 **11.9M** people or **31%** of the analysed population were projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity during the lean season.

This includes over 0.6M Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, or 65% of the refugee camp population. Out of over 2 million people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4), around 240 000 were Rohingya refugees.



Source: Bangladesh IPC TWG, June 2023.

A protracted food crisis A lower-middle-income country, Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar district has been included in the GRFC as a major food crisis since 2017, due to the arrival of around 750 000 refugees from Rakhine State in Myanmar.

In 2023, an IPC analysis expanded coverage to approximately 30 percent of the country and 23 percent of its population, focussing on areas prone to climatic disasters – monsoon floods, cyclones, tidal surges, landslides and riverbank erosion – as well as forcibly displaced Rohingya refugees and host communities in Cox's Bazar. Bangladesh is highly vulnerable to disasters, and there is no prospect of dignified return of Rohingya refugees in the foreseeable future.


DRIVERS OF THE CRISIS 2023

 **Economic shocks** Despite record cereal harvests in 2022 and 2023 improving food availability, food prices remained high with food inflation reaching 7.8 percent in January 2023 and 12.6 percent by the end of October. This marked the highest food inflation for over a decade, stemming from the country's reliance on the Russian Federation and Ukraine for imports of fuel, essential food commodities like wheat, and fertilizer and livestock feed. The war in Ukraine disrupted supplies of these commodities, which, coupled with steep currency depreciation and decreased foreign reserves, drove up the cost of producing domestic cereals at a time of lower cereal imports (FAO-GIEWS, October 2023; WFP, October 2023).

The persistent high food inflation severely constrained food access for vulnerable households who faced increasing expenditure and lower incomes, especially during the monsoon (FAO-GIEWS, October 2023; WFP, October 2023).

Almost 1 million Rohingya refugees face extreme restrictions on movement and are not legally

permitted to work, leaving them dependent on humanitarian assistance. Yet in the first half of 2023, funding shortfalls forced WFP to cut rations from USD 12 in March 2023 to USD 8 in June (IPC, June 2023).

 **Weather extremes** Atypical monsoon floods in 2022 impacted over 7 million people and displaced over 2 million mainly in the northeast region. They caused widespread asset loss and damage and weakened households' ability to cope with shocks in 2023.

Heavy monsoon rains in August brought severe flash floods and landslides in Chattogram (including Cox's Bazar) and Sylhet divisions, which affected 1.3 million people (WFP, August 2023). Of these, 0.6 million were in critical need of basic necessities, such as food, clean water, medicine and electricity (UN Bangladesh, September 2023). During the same month, Rajshahi experienced heatwaves and there were cyclones and landslides throughout the country (WFP, October 2023).

 **Conflict/insecurity** Rohingya refugees have no foreseeable prospect of return to Myanmar due to the country's protracted conflict that escalated in both 2022 and 2023.

Tensions between the Rohingya refugees and vulnerable host community members are widening due to the strain on labour market opportunities, incomes, land, and drinking water sources (Bangladesh Red Crescent, October 2023).

DISPLACEMENT

 **1.1M** forcibly displaced people by 2023


 **0.1M** IDPs

 **1.0M** refugees and asylum-seekers


Source: IOM, September 2022.

Source: UNHCR Nowcasted estimate, December 2023.


ACUTE MALNUTRITION


 The 2023 SENS results indicated a deteriorating acute malnutrition situation of Very High public health concern in Mega Camps (15.4 percent) and an unchanged situation of Medium public health concern in Registered Camps (9.6 percent).

DRIVERS OF ACUTE MALNUTRITION 2023

 **Lack of food** The impact of seasonal employment and recurrent disasters on food access and availability created major nutritional gaps. Nationally, only 13 percent of households had iron-rich food in their regular diet, falling to only 6 percent of low-income households. All households had a large protein and vitamin A-rich food consumption gap (WFP, October 2023).

Two ration cuts for Rohingya refugees in 2023 had a deleterious impact on food consumption. Due to ration cuts, by December 2023, only 30 percent of Rohingya refugee households had an acceptable Food Consumption Score, down from 56 percent in 2022 (WFP, June 2023).

 **Inadequate practices** Only 16 percent of Rohingya refugee children aged 6–23 months received a Minimum Acceptable Diet, which is a Very High public health concern and 70 percent of infants under 6 months old were exclusively breastfed, considered Acceptable (UNHCR, January 2024). Anaemia levels were a severe public health problem (>40 percent) across all camps for women, and children aged under 5, reaching over 60 percent for children aged 6–23 months (UNICEF, March 2023).

 **Inadequate services** While 93 percent of sanitation facilities were reported as functional in the refugee camps, challenges remained, especially in hygiene and solid WASH management, as only 45 percent of the waste is properly processed and latrines often overflow. Health services in the camps are under enormous pressure as they struggle to keep pace with the medical outcomes of dire living conditions, including frequent outbreaks of scabies, dengue fever and cholera (MSF, March 2023).

Reduced calorific and nutritional intake due to ration cuts increased the risk of outbreaks of infectious diseases, such as measles (MSF, March 2023). As of 7 November 2023, 283 600 dengue cases had been recorded, with 1 400 deaths (UNICEF, November 2023).