

Myanmar – including the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS ANALYSIS 2020

20191230

Each year, Sida conducts a humanitarian allocation exercise in which a large part of its humanitarian budget is allocated to emergencies worldwide. The allocation and subsequent disbursement of funds takes place in the beginning of the year to ensure predictability for humanitarian organizations and to allow for best possible operational planning. In an effort to truly adhere to the humanitarian principles, Sida's humanitarian assistance is grounded in the four humanitarian principles, and in particular **impartiality**, with its compelling urge to ensure that humanitarian action is carried out based on **"needs alone"**, giving priority to the **"most urgent cases of distress"**. Therefore, Sida's allocation methodology is grounded in several objective indicators such as; the *scale* of humanitarian needs (number of people in need), the *severity* of humanitarian needs (including food insecurity/IPC levels), the number of people targeted for the humanitarian response, the *financial coverage* of the respective humanitarian appeal, *national capacities* to respond and underlying risks, as well as distinct indicators related to *forgotten crises*. Sida also strongly supports the humanitarian coordination structures. Besides this initial allocation, another part of the humanitarian budget is set aside as an emergency reserve for sudden onset emergencies and deteriorating humanitarian situations. This reserve allows Sida to quickly allocate funding to any humanitarian situation throughout the year, including additional funding to Myanmar - and the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh.

For 2020, the Myanmar crisis – including the Rohingya response in Bangladesh - is allocated an initial (65 MSEK). Close monitoring and analysis of the situation in Myanmar and Bangladesh will continue throughout the year and will inform possible decisions on additional funding.

1. CRISIS OVERVIEW

1.1. Type of crisis

Conflict

Background/Underlying cause:

Ethnic minorities in Myanmar have, for decades, faced severe and institutionalized discrimination. The situation is further aggravated by the fact that Myanmar is seriously under-developed, after years of isolation and social and economic mismanagement. Ranked 148 out of 189 in the UNDP's Human Development Index, one third of the country's population lives below the poverty line, with some areas experiencing serious food and nutrition insecurity. If left unaddressed, these challenges pose significant risks to Myanmar's stability and progress on sustainable development.

Armed conflicts between the Myanmar military and ethnic armed groups have intensified over the course of 2019; in particular in Northern Shan State and in Rakhine state. Civilians are endangered by the military's and Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) indiscriminate attacks, forced displacement, and aid blockages, with indications that the military is using civilians as human shields.

The renewed outbreak of violence in August 2017 in Rakhine, followed by the Myanmar Armed Forces "clearance operations", led to an exodus of over 700 000 Rohingyas. The long and extensive institutionalized discrimination of the Rohingya population was exposed to the world and the Government of Myanmar (GoM) and the Myanmar armed forces faced massive criticism from the international community, including the UN. Recently, Myanmar was faced with legal action for the crime of genocide and crimes against humanity under international law, through the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC).

To put the Rakhine/Rohingya crisis into context, Myanmar has during the recent years experienced major political and economic reform processes and the country is continuing to undergo major transitions. In 2016, a new, democratically elected government led by Aung San Suu Kyi took power with a huge popular mandate. However, the constitution is based on a military-civilian balance of power and Myanmar's military continues to have a very strong influence, particularly with regards to security and sovereignty. In reality, the division of power between the civilian government and the military is often unclear, which makes Myanmar an even more complex context to navigate. Addressing ethnic minorities' grievances in Rakhine, Kachin and Shan, but also other conflict affected areas in Myanmar, is still one of the key challenges to achieve a sustainable peace process for the country.

Main stakeholders in the conflict:

There are currently multiple non-international armed conflicts in Myanmar between the Myanmar Armed Forces - Tatmadaw and several EAOs in Rakhine. Furthermore, parallel non-international armed conflicts are taking place between EAOs in Kachin and Shan states. Parties to the conflict are bound by Article 3 common to the 1949 Geneva Conventions under International Humanitarian Law (IHL), however violations of IHL and international Human Rights Law are widespread.

The 2018 and 2019 reports compiled by the Independent International Fact-Finding mission on Myanmar outline severe crimes against humanity committed in Kachin, Shan and Rakhine States, including murder, torture, rape, sexual violence, persecution and enslavement. The 2018 report concludes that “rape and sexual violence are part of a deliberate strategy to intimidate, terrorise or punish a civilian population, and are used as a tactic of war”, referring to the Tatmadaw’s “clearance operations” in August 2017. The 2019 report states there is enough information to warrant the investigation of genocide. Violations and abuses are also committed by non-State armed groups, including the EAOs in Kachin and Shan States, and Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) in Rakhine State.

Each conflict in Myanmar presents its own characteristics, and in each setting, humanitarian actors must consider context-specific histories, needs, and access constraints. For example, the Rohingya crisis entails systematic discrimination, denial of human rights and violence aimed at the predominantly Muslim Rohingya population, which is not considered to be “people of Myanmar” by the Government of Myanmar (GoM) and by the majority Buddhist Rakhine population (as well as a large part of the general population of Myanmar). Furthermore, the Rohingya “conflict” is highly asymmetrical in terms of power, resources and military assets.

Cross-border implications:

The increased violence in 2017 in Rakhine State caused over 800,000 Rohingyas to flee from Myanmar and cross the border into Bangladesh. This large refugee exodus was an addition to the previous Rohingya refugee population already living in Bangladesh, who fled Rakhine due to previous outbreaks of violence in 2012 and earlier.

The large number of refugees crossing the border into Bangladesh created a rapidly escalating humanitarian crisis in the area of Cox’s Bazar. Despite the rapid response from many international humanitarian organisations and national organisations in Bangladesh, the situation in the large camps is still unsatisfactory in terms of protection, safe drinking water, insufficient shelter, health, fuel and several other areas of concern. The situation in terms of physical needs has become more stable over the last year, however there is little progress in terms of livelihoods and quality education.

Trends:

The Rohingya remaining in Rakhine state, are still facing discriminatory practices, including segregation and a denial of basic rights such as citizenship, freedom of movement, and access to livelihood opportunities, health, and education. Prospects for voluntary and dignified return of Rohingya refugees to their places of origin or choice are likely to remain limited in 2020. Prevailing protection challenges across much of Rakhine State remain, as well as significant outstanding challenges in relation to addressing the root causes of the crises such as lack of freedom of movement and pathways to citizenship.

Since January 2019, there has been an escalation of armed conflict between the national army, the Tatmadaw, and the Arakan Army (AA) in Rakhine state and neighbouring Chin state, leading to new displacement of more than 30,000 people as well as serious concerns related to protection of civilians. It is civilians belonging to the majority ethnic group in Rakhine that bear the brunt of this armed conflict, even if minorities, including Rohingya, also suffer from the increased violence and insecurity. In Chin state, the conflict is weighing down very heavily on ethnic Chin people with AA claiming part of Chin state on behalf of “Arakan” (= Rakhine). Since August 2019 there has also been an increase of fighting between Tatmadaw and EAOs in northern Shan state, which has temporarily displaced 12,000 people. Kachin state has seen limited new armed conflict and new displacement since August 2018, however over 100,000 persons remain in protracted displacement. The conflicts in northern Rakhine as well as Central Rakhine and Northern Shan states show no signs of de-escalation.

The relations between the GoM and the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) are tense, as the GoB see little progress in terms of voluntary, safe and dignified repatriation of refugees to Rakhine. The GoB is pushing for

the partial relocation of an approximate 100,000 refugees to the island of Bazan Char, an island that is still pending a technical review from humanitarian organisations to assess whether it is suitable for relocation.

Natural disasters

Myanmar is among the most disaster-prone countries in the world (nr 15 out of 191 countries in the INFORM Risk Index), prone to natural hazards including cyclones, floods, landslides, earthquakes, drought and forest fires. During 2019, 13 states or regions were affected by flooding during the monsoon, resulting in temporary displacement of close to 230,000 people. When it comes to response to natural disasters, the government has proven willingness although capacity and resource constraints are significant. Emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction have improved in recent years, but access, capacity and funding are persistent challenges.

Bangladesh is also highly prone to natural disasters, with Cox's Bazar being one of the most cyclone-prone districts in the country. Refugee camps and surrounding areas are especially fragile due to the temporary structure of shelters and camp infrastructure. It is essential to continue to build on Bangladesh's effective disaster response mechanisms and risk mitigation efforts within and around camp areas to deal with weather related events, and to ensure adequate contingency planning for natural disasters. These efforts have mobilised substantive resources from development partners, including the World Bank.

1.2. Geographical areas and affected population

Affected population and geographical focus in Myanmar

Currently 990,000 people in Myanmar are estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance during 2020, including 274,000 internally displaced people (IDPs). The most severely affected areas are Rakhine, Shan, Kachin, Chin and Kayin states. In this context the frequent natural disasters occurring in Myanmar also needs to be taken into consideration.

In northern Rakhine access is extremely challenging and it is difficult to verify information and data, however it is estimated that 154,000 people are currently internally displaced across Rakhine state. In addition, 470,000 persons in Rakhine are considered "stateless", and while they are not displaced, they are still in need of humanitarian assistance. The ethnic minorities are subjected to violence, discrimination, restrictions on freedom of movement, and issues related to health care access, food, education, protection, access to livelihoods and other basic services. Restrictions imposed by the GoM has led to a heavy dependency on humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs. The situation is especially dire for IDPs living in collective shelters known as "long houses", originally constructed in 2012-13 as a temporary measure, and designed to last for only two years. For Rohingyas living outside of the camps, the situation is similar since they are subjected to much of the same restrictions and discrimination. The recent conflict between the AA and Tatmadaw has also led to an additional 4,000 people in need in neighbouring Chin state.

In Kachin State approximately 100,000 people remain displaced due to the protracted crisis, with many of the IDPs experiencing multiple displacements since 2011. Prolonged displacement has put a strain not only on the displaced but also on host communities' coping mechanisms. In Shan state the upsurge in violence since August 2019 has displaced over 12,000 people, whereas an additional 33,000 persons, mainly in host communities, are affected by the conflict and in need of humanitarian assistance. Whereas the situation in Kachin is more stable, the situation in Shan is very intense with ad-hoc, short-term displacements of populations linked to escalations in conflict. A UN fact-finding mission has determined that the military's actions in Shan and Kachin States has amounted to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

In south-eastern Myanmar, decades of armed conflict have resulted in protracted displacement, with approximately 10,000 IDPs estimated to be in need of life-saving assistance in Kayin state. Meanwhile, 80 000 refugees remain in refugee camps in Thailand, under constant threat of camp closure. The needs of the displaced population in south-eastern Myanmar are closely interlinked with peace and state-building agendas, and include landmine risks, land ownership and equal access to public services. In this context it is difficult to separate humanitarian needs from longer term development needs.

Despite contextual differences, many issues concerning humanitarian access and protection challenges are similar across Myanmar. There are also distinct gender dimensions to the humanitarian needs. Women and girls are exposed to protection risks including Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and trafficking, as well as gendered barriers to accessing relief, services and information. Boys and men face higher risk of

forced labour, arbitrary detention and extrajudicial killings as well as forced recruitment. Grave child rights violations remain key concerns in conflict affected areas, where incidents of recruitment and use of children by armed actors and killing and maiming of children have been documented.

A thematic report on SGBV issued by the by the Independent International Fact-Finding mission earlier this year concludes that impunity for gender-based violence in Myanmar is exacerbated by underlying gender inequality. Ethnic women and girls are doubly victimised: as women and girls and as members of ethnic minority communities. However, men and boys have also been victims of sexual and gender-based violence by security forces, especially in the context of detention settings. The physical and psychological consequences are severe and far-reaching, exacerbated by the stigma attached to male rape.

Bangladesh – Rohingya refugees in Cox’s Bazar

Over many years Rohingya refugees has fled to Bangladesh due to the violence and deprivation in Rakhine. Approximately 200,000 Rohingya were living in Bangladesh before the 2017 exodus, living in deplorable conditions far from meeting basic humanitarian standards, with shortage of food and water and little access to basic services.

Since August 2017 and up to mid 2018, more than 740,000 additional Rohingya people from Myanmar crossed the border into Bangladesh to escape the ethnic violence. The Rohingya refugees have since lived in severely overcrowded camps in the Cox’s Bazar district. The Bangladeshi authorities allow all refugees to enter the country, however without formally recognizing them as refugees, but as displaced Myanmar citizens. A formal registration process finalised in December 2019, identified a total of 845,000 persons.

During 2019 the humanitarian organisations have, in general, been able to address physical needs and temporarily stabilize the refugee crisis and thus avoid mass casualties, however without benefiting from long-term and sustainable support such as formal education, livelihoods support, or having access to job or cash opportunities. Besides these areas, adequate protection assistance, both in relation to previous incidents and to the current camp context, remains a key critical priority area.

1.3. Critical assumptions, risks and threats

Assumptions, risks and threats in Myanmar

Affected populations in Myanmar are facing a great number of protection-related risks, such as forced recruitment, arbitrary arrests, SGBV and the presence of landmines and explosive remnants of war. Civilians are also at risk of being killed or injured in the fighting and shelling of villages. The living situation of the displaced population with undignified living conditions, inadequate space and privacy are creating additional stress and risks for families and communities. Exacerbate poverty force families to resort to risky survival strategies, which exposes them to additional protection risks. As mentioned above, underlying gender inequalities also contributes to increased SGBV-related risks for women, men, boys and girls.

Efforts to achieve nationwide peace are continuing, and while ceasefire agreements are in place between some of the ethnic armed groups, some of the armed conflicts have intensified over the last year, resulting in new displacements. Not only does this show that the risk for further displacement stemming from ongoing armed clashes and military operations remains a likely scenario. There is also a risk that the recent escalations may undermine and destabilize the peace process.

The violence in Rakhine has had serious negative effects on relations between different ethnic and religious groups. Despite the agreement between the GoM and GoB on the return of the Rohingya population to Rakhine, the obstacles for a *de facto* return are many. As the situation has not improved for Rohingya in Rakhine, Rohingyas risk falling into the same situation again if they would return. The return process must not be rushed or premature, and the decision on a possible return should be determined by the refugees.

In October 2019 the GoM launched a “National Strategy on Resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons and Closure of IDP Camps” which aims to “rebuild lives of internally displaced persons in safety and dignity without dependency”. Implementation has not yet started, however it is important to stress the need for a comprehensive approach, including meaningful consultation with affected people and allowing freedom of movement for IDPs.

The main risk to the humanitarian operations in Myanmar is related to a continued deterioration of access to people in need, which significantly hinders delivery of humanitarian aid. Aid organizations must negotiate access with a large variety of actors, including the government, the Myanmar Armed Forces and non-state EAOs. The highly militarized presence continues to have an impact on the protection environment and 2019 has shown further negative developments.

Another risk is that the humanitarian assistance is not always conducted in a conflict sensitive way, which could contribute to increased tension and reinforced segregation between communities. A recent study by HERE shows how INGOs negotiate their role within the parameters set by the government, focusing purely on the 'technical' side of aid delivery, instead of addressing the critical policy and ethical issues related to the identity of humanitarian action. There are also risks of undermining a more principled approach, taking into account donors' different political agendas. This approach is however already compromised in the current humanitarian response, given the increased access constraints and restrictions imposed by the Government.

Myanmar ranks as number 132 out of 180 on Transparency International's Index from 2018 and considering the complex humanitarian context with severe restrictions in terms of access, the risk for corruption is particularly high. The interlinkages between corruption and conflict needs to be well understood to ensure conflict sensitivity, especially in contexts where rules and restrictions provide ample opportunities for corrupt practices at the expense of those who are already marginalised.

A serious risk to the already vulnerable population of Myanmar is the frequent exposure to natural disasters such as floods, landslides, droughts and earthquakes. This underlines the critical importance of building long-term resilience including focusing on disaster risk reduction measures.

Assumptions, risks and threats in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Considering the lack of progress allowing for a voluntary return to Myanmar, it is expected that the refugee situation in Bangladesh will remain static, with a large refugee population remaining in Bangladesh over a long period of time. The threat of refoulement has diminished with Bangladesh repeatedly expressing that the principles of a safe, voluntary and dignified return will be respected. The recent verification process on voluntary returns was an indication that principles will be ensured.

Meanwhile, the Government of Bangladesh has initiated a political flagship project where an estimated 100,000 refugees might be relocated. The government has indicated that the principle of voluntariness will be respected, however, a relocation of refugees to Bazar Chan would bring a number of additional challenges. There are questions related to the island's suitability to cater for a large population in terms of water/livelihoods/protection and accessibility, and to withstand natural disasters such as floodings and cyclones. In addition, it is expected that such an intervention will be logistically challenging and highly costly. There are still many challenges to long term living in the camps in Cox Bazar. Protection issues, violence, lack of livelihoods and education, the risk of increased tension between the refugees and the host community, and perhaps, the risk of radicalisation, are some of the key concerns.

The Rohingya refugee response has had a fairly good financial coverage, amounting to an approximate 70% of the needed humanitarian funding, not taking development funding for activities in camps into account. In addition, the situation has mobilized major development investments, currently assessed to amount to around 460 MUSD. The development funding has benefited both the refugee population and the host community in Teknaf and Ukhiya sub-districts, but also other parts of the wider Cox's Bazar district. Due to the lack of a development coordination mechanism or strategic framework, the response to the host communities has suffered from a somewhat uncoordinated approach, resulting in a lack of visibility of development investments and a negative pressure by the GoB on humanitarian actors to increase their support to the wider Cox's Bazar district, one of the more under-developed districts in Bangladesh.

During the last half of 2019, following a major mobilisation of refugees marking the second anniversary of the exodus, at the time of increased tensions between host communities and refugees, the Government imposed restrictions on the response, including on the issuing of working permits, recruitment and payment of refugee volunteers, and rupture of telecommunication in the camps. Government representatives have publicly raised an ambition to reduce the number of humanitarian actors in the camps and to remove cash opportunities for

refugees. More recently, decision have been taken to lift some of the restrictions, and there is a need to analyse trends and possible consequences of possible maintained restrictions more systematically.

As previously mentioned, the Rohingya population in Cox Bazar is particularly vulnerable to disasters, such as recurring floods and cyclones. The Bangladeshi government, UN and NGOs have been working hard to improve the situation, but the large number of refugees concentrated in an area unsuitable to host a large refugee population, has created a challenging situation where only the permission to use sustainable infrastructure and housing, as well as camp digestion, will reduce risks related to natural disasters.

1.4. Strategic objectives and priorities of the Humanitarian Response Plans

Myanmar HRP:

The overall funding requested for the 2020 Myanmar Humanitarian Response Plan is US\$216 million, to assist approximately 850,000 vulnerable, crisis-affected people. This is 10 percent fewer than last year, as a result of a more realistic and proritized targeting. The 2020 Myanmar HRP focuses primarily on Kachin, Shan, Rakhine, Chin and Kayin states, which have the most urgent humanitarian needs stemming from conflict, movement restrictions and discriminatory policies or practices.

The HRP for Myanmar has the following two strategic objectives:

1. The physical and mental wellbeing of 847,000 people affected by conflict or disasters in targeted states is improved and respect for their rights is enhanced in 2020
2. Living standards of 844,000 people affected by conflict or disasters in targeted states are improved and their resilience is strengthened in 2020.

The 2020 HRP for Myanmar prioritizes the provision of life-saving support and programmes to ensure equitable access to essential services for the most vulnerable crisis-affected women, men, boys and girls. The plan also focuses on achieving durable solutions to internal displacement, and aims to build resilience and national capacity to prepare for, and respond to, disasters and other emergencies.

Bangladesh Joint Response Plan:

The overall funding requested for the 2020 Bangladesh Joint Response Plan (JRP) is US\$ 877 million, to assist approximately 1,300,000 vulnerable, crisis-affected people, including host communities. Approximately 845,000 refugees reside in 34 congested camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf sub-districts (upazilas). The JRP will include programming for 444,000 individuals in Bangladeshi host communities, with specific consideration of those living closest to the camps.

The JRP for Bangladesh has the following four strategic objectives:

1. Strengthen the protection of refugee women, men, girls and boys
2. Deliver quality, life-saving assistance to populations in need
3. Foster the well-being of communities in Ukhiya and Teknaf upazilas
4. Work towards achieving sustainable solutions in Myanmar

Besides support to Bangladeshi local communities directly affected by the refugee crisis, the JRP will include some interventions of a developmental character, identified through the District Development Planning Process.

2. IN COUNTRY HUMANITARIAN CAPACITIES

2.1. National and local capacities and constraints

Capacities in Myanmar

The Myanmar government and armed forces have imposed restrictions resulting in very limited access for international organisations. These restrictions severely hamper humanitarian operations, which normally require both international and national/local NGOs working together.

Food distribution is currently being done by WFP as well as ICRC, but with no real possibility of doing distribution based on needs, as needs assessments are not permitted by the GoM. It is worth noting that access is more limited in northern Rakhine as well as central Rakhine, where conflict is ongoing between the military and AA, compared to the areas around Sittwe in central Rakhine.

In Rakhine state, the local capacities are still limited, as few of the NGOs there have strong capacity. There are many national and local NGOs in Kachin and Shan, implementing programmes together with international NGOs and the UN. National and local NGOs have an especially important role in the delivery of humanitarian aid in areas where access is restricted as national staff do not require travel permits.

Capacities in Bangladesh (Cox's Bazar refugee camps)

Approximately 150 organisations are currently operating in the camps, where several of the Bangladeshi national NGOs have a strong operational capacity (such as BRAC - one of the largest NGOs in the world).

A key constraint is related to the haste at which the camps were planned/constructed, with absence of roads, unsuitable terrain, at a very limited physical area. Restrictions by the government on camp structures and the use of more sustainable construction methods and materials, as well as limitations related to education and livelihoods activities, makes the refugee population less resilient and more dependent on humanitarian assistance. Cash assistance is currently not allowed, which place significant constraints on the refugee's access to local markets and self-sustainability.

National government structures are faced with lack of resources, unclear mandates and a centralized, Dhaka-focused, decision making. The direction of work is also made unclear by uncertainties on the return process and/or relocation of refugees to other areas of Bangladesh (the "island solution").

2.2. International operational capacities and constraints

International capacities in Myanmar

The number of operational aid organisations in Rakhine, were for a period after August 2017, limited to mainly ICRC and the Myanmar Red Cross, as regulations were imposed by the Myanmar government/military. During 2018 other aid organisations have been allowed to restart their activities in central Rakhine, but more slowly in northern Rakhine. Presently ICRC and WFP are the major international organisations, however other organisations such as UNICEF are also increasing presence in Rakhine. In other areas of Myanmar, many international NGOs and UN organisations are present, although their deep field presence is limited by GoM/military regulations and by cumbersome permits for movement and staff visas.

The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in Myanmar is led by the Humanitarian Coordinator who also is the UN Resident Coordinator. The coordination mechanisms include clusters and sectors at national level, with inter-cluster coordination as well as clusters/sectors and inter-cluster coordination at regional levels. There is also a coordination forum for INGOs. There is a need to further strengthen coordination between different humanitarian actors as well as in strengthening synergies and coordination between humanitarian and development actors. The current discussions on the possibilities of imposing sanctions on the GoM (including aid) calls for strong leadership and an even stronger coordination between donors.

Sweden, and Sida in particular, play a relatively limited role in coordination forums, considering the limited Swedish humanitarian in-country capacity in Myanmar. Nevertheless, Sweden is seen as a vocal donor in the events/meetings that we do have the possibility to attend. Sweden has taken an active role in humanitarian development nexus programmes, with substantial development investments.

International capacities in Bangladesh (Cox's Bazar)

In Cox's Bazar the number of international organisations has decreased somewhat after the initial surge just after the 2017 exodus. Few new humanitarian actors attempt to establish a presence in Cox's Bazar, and established organisations have challenges to receive working permits and visa for staff in a timely manner. However, there is still a very large number of INGOs and UN agencies present, creating a huge need for coordination.

In the initial phase, a unique coordination structure was established, under a triple leadership, consisting of UNHCR, the Resident Coordinator and IOM supported by an informal operational coordination platform; the Inter-Sectoral Coordination Group (ISCG). The coordination has improved over time, but can be further

strengthened. Several real-time evaluations focusing on the Rohingya response in Bangladesh have identified a number of weaknesses and gaps throughout the response, mainly related to protection issues. However the 2020 JRP has a more strategic and focused approach to protection.

As has been mentioned earlier in the document, official restrictions exist when it comes to, among other things, land usage and type of construction materials.

2.3. International and regional assistance

The major humanitarian donors in Myanmar include Japan, the US, ECHO, DFID, Australia, Germany, Switzerland and Sweden. These donors have traditionally been important donors to Myanmar and are expected to continue their engagement over the next few years. The main donors to the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh are US, UK, EU, Canada and Australia. Sweden's assistance to Cox's Bazar consist of both humanitarian and development funding. In 2019, the funding amounted to 52 MSEK from the humanitarian budget, and 390 MSEK from the development budget, including 50 MSEK in emission reducing financing.

2.4. Access situation

Access is a serious operational challenge in Rakhine, Kachin and northern Shan states. In all these places humanitarian partners are still hampered by regulations put in place by the GoM and the Myanmar armed forces. Although 2018 saw a slight improvement in terms of access, additional restrictions imposed by the Government since the beginning of 2019 have worsened the situation for the affected population and humanitarian partners. OCHA estimates that 100,000 people in north Rakhine have been cut off from critical services due to the new restrictions. In Kachin, UN agencies and INGOs have been unable to reach an estimated 40,000 IDPs in areas controlled by EAOs. Unpredictable and cumbersome bureaucracy around travel authorization procedures and insecurity complicate efforts to assess needs; reaching people with assistance and monitor impact.

The UN has not been permitted to deliver assistance to areas beyond government control since June 2016. Local NGOs, supported by the international community, have in many cases been the only regular source of assistance to people in need since the beginning of the crisis. Access challenges have resulted in a reduction of the quantity and quality of humanitarian support to displaced people and other vulnerable communities. It also leads to under-reporting of violations against IHL. A Humanitarian Access Working Group (HAWG), co-chaired by OCHA and the INGO Forum, was established in October 2019. Supporting and monitoring the successes of this working group will be highly relevant to ensure a principled humanitarian assistance in Myanmar.

In Bangladesh, aid organisations require permits both as organisations as well as acquiring permits for individual staff members. Physical access can also be an issue in the refugee camps, especially during the rainy season as roads get damaged. Transportation in the camps is to a large extent done by foot.

3. SIDA'S HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN

3.1. The role of Sida

Earlier assistance and results

During 2017 there was a significant increase in humanitarian funding, reaching an unprecedented 205 MSEK (163 MSEK in Bangladesh and 42 MSEK in Myanmar) for protection and life-saving humanitarian operations to displaced Rohingya population in Myanmar and Bangladesh. During 2018 and 2019 Swedish support decreased, and at the end of 2019 the humanitarian funding to Myanmar was 42,5 MSEK whereas the funding to Bangladesh was 64 MSEK, including Rapid Response Mechanism funding (RRM-funds) focusing on flooding in non-refugee areas. In addition, 50 MSEK for the continued support to UNHCR focusing on liquid gas distribution was delegated from the budget frame for development cooperation in Bangladesh. Over the last two years, the number of humanitarian partners in the portfolio has decreased, to allow for more effective follow up and control.

In Myanmar, the main focus of the humanitarian response has been on protection, health and nutrition. The humanitarian response has clear links to the long-term development cooperation, focusing on health and protection in conflict areas, such as for example the support to UNFPA's Women and Girls First programme as well as the Acces to Health fund.

Examples of results in Myanmar are improved access to health for vulnerable population in central Rakhine through a multi-year (3 years) Swedish Red Cross project and improved access to food/nutrition for the remaining Rohingya population in northern Rakhine through Sida funded ICRC activities.

The humanitarian support to Bangladesh has focused on protection, health, nutrition, livelihoods, water and sanitation and environmental fuel solutions. The support to UNHCR focusing on liquid gas distribution in the refugee camps has had several positive results. The refugees' cost for re-fuelling the gas stoves is lower compared to using firewood. In addition, introduction of gas has de-escalated the conflict over scarce forest resources, shared by host and refugee-community.

Lessons learnt

Any acceptable return process for Rohingyas is still far away. Hopes of a quick return process is no longer a realistic planning scenario and the medium-term plans for the Rohingya refugee population in Bangladesh must be adjusted accordingly. Solutions will require major policy changes as well as actual changes on the ground in Rakhine and Myanmar.

As one of the key humanitarian donors, Sida has an important role to play. In both Myanmar and Bangladesh, the response plans are not clearly focused, with little prioritisation of life-saving, humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, many partners, projects and programmes are receiving both humanitarian support and development funding, and there is a clear need for improved coordination between the various initiatives. In Myanmar, a new RC/HC (of Swedish origin) has just been appointed and thus there might be a momentum for increased dialogue. In addition to improved prioritisation, it will also be important to lobby for increased access, while ensuring a principled approach.

Regarding the nexus-focus there are a number of important lessons to learn from both Myanmar and Bangladesh, and there is a need to document these lessons and share with colleagues, internally at Sida as well as among the wider donor community, focusing on both policy and operational issues.

3.2. Response Priorities 2020

Humanitarian Focus

The focus of Sida's humanitarian assistance to the Myanmar crisis in 2020 will continue to be protection and life-saving humanitarian needs of displaced populations as well as other conflict-affected groups. Protection is still a an area of concern in both Rakhine, Shan, Kachin and Cox's Bazar. Given the complexity and broad spectrum of protection challenges in Myanmar, there is a need to address both the protection issues that arise from ongoing armed conflict, as well as the entrenched human rights violations being perpetrated against different groups, and in particular against the Rohingya. In order to prevent or respond to protection risks effectively, a comprehensive, system-wide and multi-sector effort has to be mobilized. HCT in Myanmar has developed a comprehensive protection strategy, which needs to be supported and encouraged on all levels.

The funding of the refugees in Bangladesh (and in Rakhine in the event of a return process) will continue to be a priority for Sida. In 2020, stronger complementarity will be sought with the development portfolio, and approaches towards more durable solutions will increasingly be covered through the development strategy.

In Bangladesh, the 2020 JRP will aim to provide a stronger protection framework for the humanitarian response. The situation of women, girls, children and youth needs further attention. Security and safety are other areas which require additional attention from humanitarian actors. Assessments have shown that Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) needs further attention. This needs to be followed up further during 2020 with all partners, ensuring that appropriate complaints and reporting mechanisms are put in place.

Sida's humanitarian assistance is based on multi-year cooperation with a limited number of pre-selected humanitarian partners. Many of these partners are active in several different areas of work; mainly protection, health, nutrition and food, water and sanitation as well as support within livelihoods.

Field follow-up

At Sida's section office in Yangon, the focal point for humanitarian issues has 10% of a full time position for follow up of humanitarian issues. The Embassy recently recruited a National Programme Officer (NPO) who will work with nexus issues. Considering the complexity of this crisis, 10% does not allow enough time to participate in humanitarian coordination meetings and follow up on Swedish key humanitarian priorities. Through regular field visits and dialogue, including at high-level, Sida must try to ensure having a strong Swedish "humanitarian voice" in Myanmar.

In Bangladesh, the Embassy has created a "nexus-position" who coordinates the response to Cox Bazar, focusing on connecting humanitarian and development programming, at the same time as being the focal point for humanitarian issues at 25%. This nexus function is extremely relevant in the challenging context of Bangladesh, ensuring that the programming is appropriate and relevant and adhering to the shifting policy environment.

3.3. Partners

Sida will work with the following partners in Myanmar and Bangladesh during 2020, all of which have a long and solid experience of the Myanmar/Rohingya crisis context:

Humanitarian partners in Myanmar

OCHA

Coordination of humanitarian assistance remains a challenge in Myanmar. The role of OCHA and the RC/HC function are therefore crucial. OCHA presence is also needed for the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) as well as for a well-functioning Myanmar Humanitarian Fund.

ICRC

Just after the August 2017 violence in Rakhine, the ICRC (together with the Myanmar Red Cross Society - MRCS) was selected by the GoM as the only aid organisation allowed to work in the area. ICRC provides vital assistance to people affected by armed conflict in Rakhine State and other conflict-affected states, working in close co-operation with the MRCS. The geographical focus of ICRC's work during 2019 has been on Rakhine, but also on Kachin and Shan states.

In 2020 the ICRC will continue to respond to the needs of IDPs and other people affected by armed clashes and other situations of violence, helping them restore their livelihoods, supporting primary health-care, hospital and physical rehabilitation services, and repairing water, health and prison infrastructure.

Myanmar Humanitarian Fund - MHF

The MHF is a Country Based Pooled Fund (CBPF) providing strategic humanitarian response identified within the HRP, as well as its emergency reserve allocations. Currently there are eight contributing donors to the fund (UK, USA, New Zealand, Australia, Switzerland, Canada, Denmark and Sweden).

The MHF serves as an important tool providing support to national NGOs in Myanmar. Sida is supportive of the CBPF mechanism in general - and believes that the MHF can significantly contribute to an improved humanitarian assistance and coordination in Myanmar.

ACF

ACF has regained most of its access in northern Rakhine, which was severely hampered in the beginning of 2019. The ACF country programme in Myanmar aims to address the high malnutrition rates in northern and central Rakhine through an integrated nutrition, WASH and mental and health care practices approach, focusing on children, caregivers and pregnant and lactating women. The support builds on ACF's ongoing country programme, while also adding new activities focusing on maternal and reproductive health.

Humanitarian partners in Bangladesh

UNHCR

Over the last two years UNHCR has increased its presence and regained some of its core mandate, while taking a stronger lead on the refugee situation Bangladesh. It is important to continue supporting UNHCR in this role, also recognising their mandate as a refugee agency. By supporting UNHCR's appeal for Bangladesh, Sida will support the overall coordination of refugees, strengthen protection in the current response, as well as providing basic humanitarian aid.

ICRC

Present in Bangladesh since 2006, the ICRC works to protect and assist civilians affected by violence, including people who had fled across the border from Myanmar. ICRC visits detainees to monitor their treatment and living conditions, reunite missing people with their families and facilitate the repatriation of migrants. The organisation promotes IHL and its implementation among the authorities and the armed and security forces, and supports the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) in building its capacity. ICRC also provides physical rehabilitation services for people with physical disabilities. In Bangladesh, ICRC has interventions in Chittagong Hills Tracts, and provides protection and in kind assistance in the refugee hosting area in Cox's Bazar. Sida will continue supporting ICRC.

ACF

ACF is currently the largest implementer of integrated nutrition activities in Cox's Bazar. ACF's activities in Bangladesh during 2020 builds on the ongoing country programme, providing integrated nutrition services while addressing needs within WASH, food security and livelihoods, mental health and care practice, gender and protection, with the aim of improving the well-being and health among children as well as pregnant and lactating women. Sida considers ACF to be a relevant humanitarian partner and will continue to support ACF's programme addressing urgent food, nutrition and health needs among refugees in Cox's Bazar.

Swedish Red Cross

Sida has supported the Swedish Red Cross (SRC) focusing on WASH in Cox Bazar since 2017, providing life-saving WASH-interventions focusing on safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene promotion and aiming at preventing WASH-related diseases for 20,000 people in one camp in Cox Bazar. During 2020, SRC will build capacity of BDRCS to gradually take over operational responsibilities of the WASH programme.

SIDA's HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO MYANMAR AND BANGLADESH in 2020

(Insert total sum allocated to country. If another sum is proposed, please indicate that sum with a second/separate table)

Recommended partner for Sida support	Sector/focus of work (incl. cross sectoral/multipurpose programming) and response modalities (e.g. in-kind, services, CVP or a mix)	Bangladesh Proposed amount	Myanmar Proposed amount
ACF	Nutrition, health	8	8
ICRC	Protection	5	15
UNHCR	Protection	12	0
SRC	Water, sanitation	7	0
MHF	Multisector	0	8
OCHA	Coordination	0	2
IRC	Health	0	(multi year 5,0)
	TOTAL:	32	33

3.4. Strategic funding in protracted crises

IRC (Myanmar)

In 2019, Sida took a decision to support IRC's multi-year project "Responding to urgent humanitarian needs and strengthening accountability for rights violations in Kachin State" with two-year funding. The project responds to protracted needs among the IDP population in Kachin State, focusing on protection against

violence perpetrated by State and non-State actors, protection from and treatment for consequences of gender-based violence and provision of primary and reproductive health services. Building capacity for quality implementation of health and GBV prevention and response services requires significant time and resource investments. According to IRC, Sida's multi-year funding allows for more meaningful capacity development and investments, so that local partners will be in a better position to deliver services on their own at the end of the project (also relevant for the exit/phase out).

SIDA'S MULTIYEAR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO MYANMAR				
<i>(Insert total sum allocated to country. If another sum is proposed, please indicate that sum with a second/separate table)</i>				
Recommended partner for Sida support	Sector/focus of work (incl. cross sectoral/ multipurpose programming) and response modalities (e.g. in-kind, services, CVP or a mix)	Category: a) Protracted crisis b) Exit/phase-out	Time-span (2020-20XX)	Proposed amount MSEK (2020)
IRC	Health	a)	2019-20	5,0
				TOTAL: 5,0

3.5. Synergies and Nexus

Synergies and Nexus-focus in Myanmar

The real solutions to the Myanmar crisis lie in sustainable peace and development, which is not likely to occur in the nearby future given the current trends, including escalating conflict in some areas. In order to counter the protractedness of the crisis, and rig the humanitarian response in a more efficient way, more durable solutions should be sought to accommodate people in need.

Sweden's strategy focusing on development cooperation with Myanmar 2018-2022 identifies the need for greater collaboration between humanitarian and development initiatives through shared analyses, planning and goals formulation. For example, activities in support of equitable health prioritise areas where the state does not have capacity or access, areas affected by conflict and/or areas controlled by ethnic groups.

There are clear synergies within the health portfolio supported by the Swedish development cooperation and the humanitarian support. UNFPA's programme "Women and Girls First" focuses on the most vulnerable women and girls in the remote and conflict-affected provinces of Rakhine, Kachin and northern Shan, with the aim of preventing and responding to sexual and gender based violence, and improving sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in conflict affected areas. The largest contribution in the development portfolio in Myanmar is the support to the multi donor fund Access to Health Fund. This Fund aims to increase access to quality essential health care in conflict-affected areas, explicitly targeting underserved and vulnerable populations, including IDPs and Rohingyas. Implementing partners include IRC, ACF and UNICEF.

There is substantial interest and focus in Myanmar on nexus approach and programming. The two programmes above both have a clear nexus approach to complement the ongoing humanitarian response, with a strong donor support from UK, EU, US, Switzerland, Australia among others. However, there is a clear need for a stronger and better coordinated approach, focusing on complementarity. Sweden is increasingly prioritizing this area of work, in particular through a new national position focusing on humanitarian development nexus.

The multiyear (3 year) health programme in Rakhine supported through the Swedish Red Cross (SRC) under the humanitarian allocation will end in March 2020. The programme has worked to improve health and WASH in Rakhine and Rohingya villages in central Rakhine state. The two townships where SRC has implemented this project, Minbya and MraukU, are two townships severely affected by the recent intensified conflict between the military and AA. This has of course affected the implementation severely, in particular when it comes to monitoring. The Swedish Section Office is in close dialogue with SRC regarding the potential to

develop and expand the SRC programme in Rakhine and Shanstates within Sweden's strategy for development cooperation with Myanmar 2018-2022.

Sweden's development cooperation is focusing on human rights, democracy, the rule of law and gender equality, as well as peaceful inclusive societies, including support for activities implemented by Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), which aims at addressing the root causes of the conflict. Since this work is taking place very much in the nexus between humanitarian and development, coordination is of great importance.

Synergies and Nexus-focus in Bangladesh

Cox's Bazar is one of the districts in Bangladesh with the worst indicators in terms of health, education, nutrition etc. Besides the humanitarian funding into Cox's Bazar, donors have put significant amounts of development funding into the refugee response in Cox's Bazar to support the district in hosting the refugee population. Following the large influx of Rohingyas in August 2017, the Swedish government took a decision to allocate an additional 300 MSEK to the Results strategy for Sweden's international development cooperation in Bangladesh 2014 – 2020, to strengthening the capacity to prevent crises, conflicts and disasters and increase resilience of vulnerable groups in refugee reception areas, among host communities and Rohingya refugees, especially women and children. The additional Swedish funding for the refugee response was initially aligned to the main results areas in the strategy, focusing on environment, WASH, health, child protection and gender, supporting interventions by i.a. IOM, UNWOMEN, Save the Children, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Bank.

A shared local development strategy and coordination platform can further increase the impact of the support to development of the broader district of Cox Bazaar. In 2019 Sida thus took a decision to support the elaboration of a district development planning process, lead by the local government together with the UNDP and the UN Resident Coordinator's office.

While there are many challenges linked to the nexus-programming in Bangladesh, there are also many opportunities, as well as synergies with the humanitarian response. Through the flexibility attached to the development funding, and as the situation evolves, partners can shift their attention to upcoming needs and strengthen longer-term development systems. Such an approach is also expected to contribute positively to local peace and decrease tensions between host and refugee populations.

Swedish humanitarian support to liquid petroleum gas distribution through UNHCR in the Rohingya camps is expected to have had positive effects on many different levels, ranging from securing cooked food/nutrition levels, improving household economy for refugees, indications of a slowing down of deforestation and providing way to decrease tensions between refugees and host population over forest reserves in Cox's Bazar. This support was extended into a two-year programme, now funded with emission reducing development funding through a delegation of funding from the budget frame for Bangladesh to the humanitarian budget frame. While the intervention has addressed critical gaps, issues regarding sustainability and hand over, in particular the part of the intervention that is delivered in host communities, will require further reflection.