

UNFPA Fire Response in Cox's Bazar Situation Report #3



UNFPA is the sexual and reproductive health agency that ensures that women and girls live in safety and dignity. Both in the Rohingya refugee camps and in the host community, UNFPA envisions a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person’s potential is fulfilled.

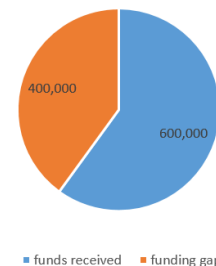
Context

- A massive fire broke out in the Kutupalong mega camp on 22 March 2021 affecting camps 8W, 8E and 9.
- A **UNFPA-supported Women-led Community Center (WLCC)** in Camp 8E was fully destroyed by the fire; all concerned staff are safe. A **UNFPA-supported Women Friendly Space (WFS)** in Camp 9 was fully destroyed by the fire; all staff and volunteers are safe. One of the primary health facilities where UNFPA is partnering with IOM to provide midwifery and related services was also fully destroyed by the fire.

Needs

UNFPA has determined that a total of **USD 1 million** is needed to rebuild the WFS in camp 9 and WLCC in camp 8E, replace **damaged furniture, sewing machines, generators, and provide educational and recreational materials to affected young people**. The funds will also cover the cost of deploying midwives and ambulances, and supply community health workers in the affected camps with necessary SRHR commodities and materials.

Total Funding Requirement 1 Million USD



Voices from Cox’s Bazar

Sexual and Reproductive health and rights

Hazera Khatun* (*not her real name) is a 27-year old pregnant Rohingya young woman who was living in camp 8W when the fire broke out. On the evening of the tragedy, she awoke suddenly in the night to find her shack engulfed in flames. Shocked and scared, she fled with no time to take any of her belongings with her. She watched in horror as the life she had built for herself since fleeing from Myanmar burnt down in front of her eyes. With several of her family members missing and all of her possessions destroyed, she cried helplessly through the night. The overwhelming distress of the traumatic event forced her into early labor. A **Community Health Worker** observed her doubled over in pain and accompanied her to the **Mobile Medical Team** for a consultation.



The **skilled midwife who examined Hazera determined that she was having an obstetric emergency, and immediately shuttled her to a local hospital.** Thanks to this swift response, her life and the life of her baby were saved.

Following the catastrophic blaze, UNFPA in collaboration with implementing partner RTMI activated **emergency midwifery services, antenatal care, postnatal care, family planning, referrals, general treatments and a wide array of available medicines to affected women through a Midwifery Mobile Team.** Those in surrounding camps who were displaced by the fire continue to receive information through SRHR community sensitization, while SRHR services continued in UNFPA-supported health facilities run by implementing partners (HOPE Foundation, IPAS, International Rescue Committee [IRC], and Partners in Health and Development [PHD]).

Gender-based violence in emergencies



At the time of the fire incident, Noor Begum was working in the **UNFPA-supported Women Friendly Space in Camp 9** as a staff supervisor. She noticed the flames from afar and went to investigate. By the time she arrived at the WFS site, she discovered that two sides of the facility's structure had already caught fire. There were **8 volunteers and 5 case workers present in WFS at that time.**

Immediately, she asked case workers and volunteers to escort all of the children off of the premises to safety. As most of the roads were already blocked by then, the team desperately searched for alternate routes so that they could save the children's lives and reunite them with their families. When Noor reached home that night, she checked on all the volunteers. In the process, she learned that the entire WFS and all its contents had been reduced to ashes.

In three-days' time, **three tents were installed by UNFPA partner Mukti Cox's Bazar** in the same location where the destroyed WFS had been located. **Integrated SRH & GBV services** resumed as soon as possible. In addition to losing access to many services, almost all of the WFS beneficiaries had lost their homes. UNFPA and Mukti responded immediately to the tragedy by providing Psychological First Aid (PFA), emergency referral, awareness information, and life-saving dignity kits to vulnerable women who had lost all of their clothes and belongings.

Adolescents and Youth

Rahima's home in the camps was gutted by the fire. Luckily, her family members survived, but her shelter was destroyed and all her and her family's belongings were lost. At the time, she was also experiencing her **monthly menstrual cycle**. Thanks to UNFPA's support, in collaboration with implementing partner DanChurchAid (DCA), a distribution of **life-saving menstrual health management kits** was possible. Each kit included panties, a flashlight, sandals, laundry detergent powder, pads, and other essential items during this difficult time. Despite the devastation and grief caused by the fire, this support provided Rahima with some relief and comfort as, in her words, *"Hygiene and protection is what we are needing now"*.

