Bulletin • Rohingya
Safety and outlook

GROUND TRUTH SOLUTIONS

Summary findings

Do you feel safe in your shelter?

mean: 4.1, n=1034

| 7 | 8 | 50 | 35 |

Results in % ∧

Do you feel safe in your day-to-day life?

mean: 4.1, n=1032

| 7 | 11 | 48 | 34 |

Results in % ∧

Do you feel you have the information you need to stay safe during the monsoon season?

mean: 3.3, n=1033

| 5 | 27 | 21 | 30 | 17 |

Results in % ∗
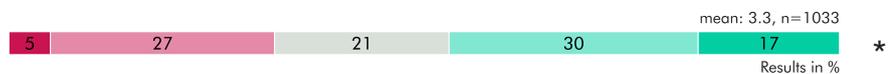
Do you feel you have the information you need to stay safe during the cyclone season?

mean: 3.1, n=1031

| 9 | 27 | 21 | 26 | 17 |

Results in % ∗

Do you feel the support you receive helps you to become self-reliant?

mean: 3.3, n=1029

| 2 | 36 | 6 | 38 | 18 |

Results in % =

Overall, has your life been improving?

mean: 3.5, n=1033

| 3 | 30 | 5 | 41 | 21 |

Results in % ∧

① Not at all ② Not really ③ Neutral ④ Mostly yes ⑤ Yes completely

If a crime takes place in your community, are you confident that there will be justice?

n=1016

| 11 | 89 |

Results in % ∗
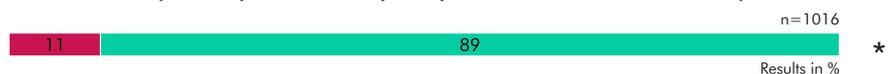
● No   ● Yes

This thematic bulletin presents findings and recommendations based on Ground Truth Solutions' surveys conducted with 1,034 Rohingya in Bangladesh in April 2019. The survey was administered in 30 camps in the Ukhia and Teknaf subdistricts. It is the third round of data collection, with the first having taken place in July 2018 and the second in October 2018. The goal is to use the views of affected people to inform the humanitarian response and adjust programming accordingly.

Ground Truth Solutions has published five bulletins from the third round of data collection on the response: two more addressing Rohingya perspectives on feedback and relationships and needs and services; and one on social cohesion, which includes the views of both Rohingya and host communities living within or in close proximity to the camps. Separately, there is dedicated reporting on the perceptions of the same host communities.

Changes in responses since October 2018

⋀ Increase in mean score of 0.5 or more

∧ Increase in mean score of less than 0.5

= Change in mean score by less than 0.1

∨ Decrease in mean score of less than 0.5

⋁ Decrease in mean score of 0.5 or more

∗ This question was added since the previous round

A full overview of changes over the three rounds can be found on page 4.

Reasons for feeling unsafe in day-to-day life n=77

43%
Lack of lighting

38%
Uncertainty about future

34%
Lack of safe access to water and sanitation facilities

21%
Attacks/fights/violence

Only the top four responses are shown. Percentages do not total 100 because respondents could choose multiple options.

Key takeaways

Feelings of safety, both within shelters and in the everyday lives among Rohingya surveyed, have steadily improved since August 2018. In October 2018, 76% of Rohingya surveyed felt safe in their day-to-day lives, compared to 82% in April 2019. A lack of lighting in shelters and in the camps remains one of the key reasons people feel unsafe, as well as overcrowding within shelters, lack of safe access to WASH facilities, and vulnerability to floods, rain or landslides. Latrines are not separated between men and women, which is seen as the main problem related to WASH access for women.[1] In fact, the primary locations of safety issues experienced by girls and women are latrines, waterpoints, and bathing facilities (demonstrating the different experiences of safety between men and women, for boys and men the most common safety issue is listed as "none," followed by issues at firewood collection sites).[2] Uncertainty about their future also continues to make Rohingya feel unsafe in their day-to-day lives. While these issues have remained consistent since October 2018, concerns around theft, attacks, fights, and violence have emerged more clearly as key concerns this round. This might point to growing perceptions of criminality in the camps, which is in line with police records in Cox's Bazar showing an escalation in violence in the camps in recent months.[3] According to the International Crisis Group, violent gangs and militant groups operate with relative impunity in the camps.[4]

The majority of Rohingya surveyed believe that if a crime takes place in their community there will be justice for that crime. However, it is unlikely this would come through a formal justice system; research by the International Rescue Committee shows a reliance on and preference for informal justice systems among Rohingya communities, which reinforce harmful gender power dynamics.[5] Our findings show a correlation between feelings of safety and trust in some sort of justice system, where those who believe that justice exists for crimes committed feel safer, both in their shelters and in their day-to-day lives. Moreover, Rohingya who know how to make suggestions and complaints to aid providers are more likely to have trust in a justice system – formal or informal – than those who are unaware of available feedback mechanisms (for more on suggestions and complaints see the Feedback and relationships bulletin).

Roughly **one third of Rohingya surveyed do not feel they have the information they need to stay safe during the monsoon and cyclone seasons**, with people feeling slightly less informed about safety measures during a cyclone than a monsoon. Rohingya communities have expressed concerns about the impending rainy season causing a deterioration in camp roads, paths, and stair networks, as well as drainage systems.[6]

Reasons for feeling unsafe in shelters n=73

51%
Lack of lighting

51%
Overcrowded shelter

36%
Shelter vulnerable to floods/rain/landslides

27%
Theft

Only the top four responses are shown. Percentages do not total 100 because respondents could choose multiple options.

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1   Needs and Population Monitoring, "Site Assessment: Round 14" (14 January -19 February 2019)

2   Ibid.

3   Simon Lewis, Poppy McPherson, Ruma Paul, "In Rohingya camps, a political awakening faces a backlash," Reuters (24 April 2019)

4   International Crisis Group, "Building a Better Future for Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh," Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°155 (25 April 2019)

5   International Rescue Committee, "Access to Justice for Rohingya and Host Community in Cox's Bazar" (February 2019)

6   BBC Media Action, Internews, and Translators without Borders, "What Matters?" (Issue 23, April 2019)

Remaining consistent since October 2018, **over half of Rohingya surveyed feel the support they receive helps them become self-reliant**. Sixty-six percent of those who have received cash or vouchers feel the support they receive helps them become self-reliant, compared to 54% among those who have not received support in the form of cash or vouchers. People who know how to make suggestions or complaints about the support they receive also feel more self-reliant, with 64% responding positively, while only 43% of those who are unaware of how to make suggestions or complaints feel the support helps them achieve self-reliance.

Sixty-two percent of Rohingya surveyed feel their lives are improving. The vast majority of Rohingya surveyed, namely 87%, would want to stay in the camps with their families if unable to return safely to Myanmar. In the medium to long term, **improved, more permanent shelters in the camps and cash distributions would make Rohingya feel more optimistic about their future**. Only 0.1% of Rohingya surveyed would want to relocate to Bhasan Char, the island where the Bangladeshi authorities plan to relocate over 100,000 Rohingya refugees. Concerns have been raised about the suitability of the island because it is low-lying, and there are fears that "part of the island is eroded by the monsoon every year" and is exposed to significant tidal surges.[7]

Recommendations

⬢ It is positive that the progress on safety has continued since the last round. Nevertheless, there is still more to be done on this important issue. Despite a lot of focus on safety for the monsoon and cyclone periods, there is still anxiety around this within the camps. This is unlikely to disappear entirely, but preparedness messaging should continue nonetheless.

⬢ More specifically, **improvements around camp lighting and WASH provision (including separate male and female facilities) should continue**. These both offer very real and tangible ways to further improve the sense of safety in the camps. Shelter improvements, while being a more long-term endeavour, would also improve security, especially with regard to adverse weather.

⬢ Given the lack of a formal justice system within the camps, **there is a need to foster the creation of a trusted and reliable formal justice system**, as suggested by the International Rescue Committee.[8] This would help combat growing instances of violence, and would do so while better protecting the rights of women and children.

⬢ Given ongoing uncertainty over their future, **supporting the resilience of Rohingya is critical**. Resilient communities are more likely to be healthier and happier. NGOs should consider how their programming contributes to resilience. As mentioned in the Needs and services bulletin, cash for work should be used more, as should vocational training and the encouragement of small-scale businesses.

If you were unable to return safely to Myanmar in the next five to ten years, and you could decide where to live with your family, **where would you want to live?** n=1,022

Stay where I am in the camp	**87%**
Live in/around Cox's Bazar	**6%**
Live elsewhere in Bangladesh	**6%**
Resettle in another country	**1%**
Relocate to Bhasan Char	**0%**

If you were to stay in Bangladesh for the next five to ten years, **what would make you more optimistic for your future?** n=1,034

63%
Improved, more permanent shelters

61%
Cash distributions

31%
Food distributions

29%
The right to work in the local economy

Only the top four responses are shown. Percentages do not total 100 because respondents could choose multiple options.

7   Human Rights Watch, "For Rohingya, Bangladesh's Bhasan Char 'Will Be Like a Prison'" (14 March 2019)

8   International Rescue Committee, "Access to Justice for Rohingya and Host Community in Cox's Bazar" (February 2019)

# Demographics

1,034 Rohingya respondents

Location

- Ukhia: 79% (822)
- Teknaf: 21% (212)

Gender

- Male: 59% (607)
- Female: 41% (427)

Head of household

Solely male-headed	58% (597)
Multiple-headed	23% (242)
Solely female-headed	19% (195)

Age (years)

18-28	36% (377)
29-40	36% (374)
41-85	27% (283)
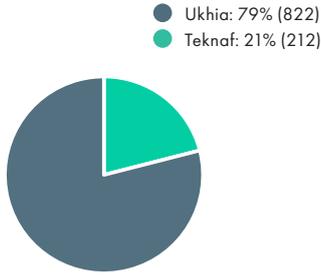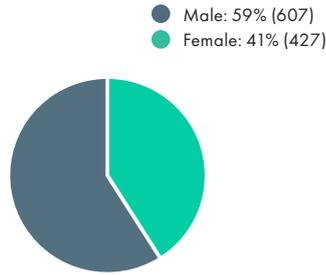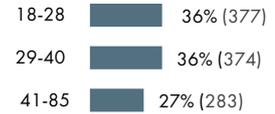
Camps covered

Ukhia (23 camps)

1E, 1W, 2E, 2W, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8E, 8W, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 (Hakimpara), 15 (Jamtoli), 16 (Potibonia), 17, 18, 19, 20 Ext

Teknaf (7 camps)

21 (Chakmarkul), 22 (Unchiprang), 23 (Shamlapur), 24 (Leda), 25 (Ali Khali), 26 (Nayapara), 27 (Jadimura)

Respondents with a disability

- No: 91% (949)
- Yes: 9% (99)

Arrival in Bangladesh

Before October 2016	6% (63)
October 2016 - August 2017	25% (254)
September - December 2017	61% (621)
After January 2018	8% (83)
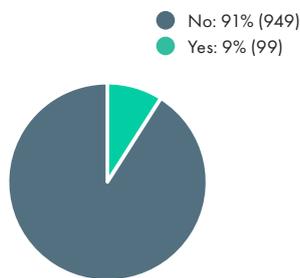
Overview of responses over time

Do you feel safe in your shelter?
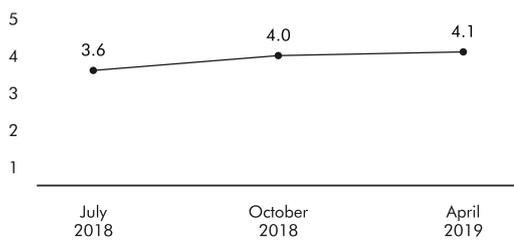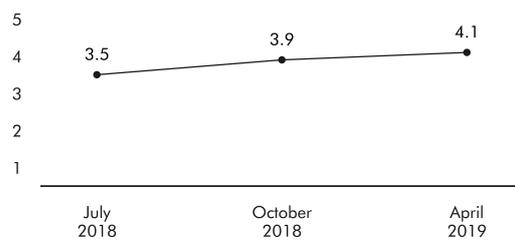
July 2018	October 2018	April 2019
3.6	4.0	4.1

Do you feel safe in your day-to-day life?

July 2018	October 2018	April 2019
3.5	3.9	4.1

Do you feel the support you receive helps you to become self-reliant?

July 2018	October 2018	April 2019
3.0	3.3	3.3

Overall, has your life been improving?

July 2018	October 2018	April 2019
3.0	3.4	3.5
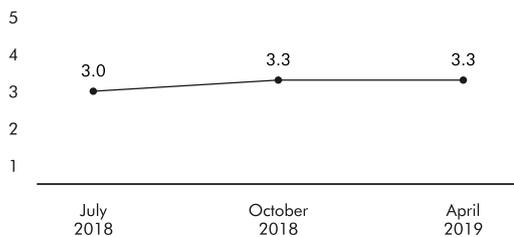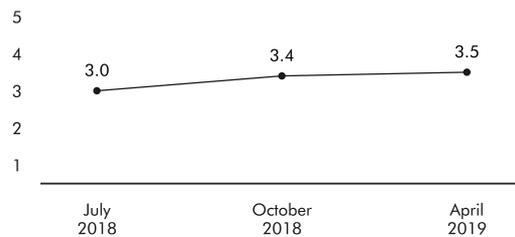
Methodology

Sampling methodology

Rohingya were surveyed in 30 camps in the Ukhia and Teknaf subdistricts. Households were selected to participate in the survey by randomly assigning shelters to approach from a site-map of each camp. The enumerators did not specifically target heads of households but rather surveyed the first person they encountered who was willing to participate, to ensure that as broad a range of experiences as possible were reported. Enumerators were instructed to try to achieve gender balance for each camp. Certain small camps were over-sampled as we tried to survey at least 30 responses per camp, in order to ensure some minimum reliability on the camp level.

Piloting

The survey translations and question structure were initially reviewed by experienced enumerators. It was then field piloted with randomly selected members of the target population and edits were made based on feedback from enumerators on comprehension and wording.

Data collection

Data collection was conducted from 16-25 April 2019 by IOM's Needs and Population Monitoring (NPM) enumerators. Teams were split into mixed pairs, with male enumerators interviewing male respondents and female enumerators interviewing female respondents. A member of GTS staff conducted training for the data collectors on the survey instrument.

The recommendations were developed based on secondary research and feedback from humanitarian staff in Cox's Bazar.

Data disaggregation

Data was disaggregated by location, age, gender of respondent, gender of head of household, date of arrival and disability. To identify groups of persons with disabilities within the sample, respondents were asked a condensed series of questions developed by the Washington Group.

Language of the surveys

All enumerators had experience in conducting surveys in spoken Rohingya. The survey was translated into Rohingya using Bangla script as well as into Bangla by Translators without Borders. This survey was conducted in Rohingya and Chittagonian – enumerators were advised to use primarily the Rohingya language survey, with the written Bangla translation to serve as a support.

Challenges and limitations

Sampling. Due to time constraints, it was not possible to conduct surveys in all 34 camps. Thirty of the 34 camps were covered and as a result our sample size and catchment are sufficient to get a good estimation of general Rohingya opinions in Ukhia and Teknaf. The margin of error is .04 for 95% confidence intervals for the Likert-scale questions and .03 for the binary questions. However, there is not sufficient data to provide reliable camp-level estimates. It is important to note that while our aim was to interview at least 30 people per camp, logistical issues as well as data cleaning post-collection resulted in less than 30 respondents in the following camps: 1W (24 respondents), 3 (29 respondents), 10 (27 respondents), 19 (28 respondents), 24 (25 respondents), 25 (28 respondents), 26 (29 respondents), and 27 (26 respondents).

Gender split. We aimed to reach a roughly even 50:50 gender split. However, since there were more male enumerators than female enumerators, the final gender split was 41:59, with more men surveyed than women.

Language issues. Since there is no universally accepted written script for Rohingya, the survey was translated into Rohingya with Bangla script and Bangla. Enumerators, native Bangla and Chittagonian speakers, were expected to conduct the survey in Rohingya. In previous rounds, enumerators raised some issues with reading the Rohingya in Bangla script, which is why they were provided with the Bangla translation to use as support. As such, it is possible that enumerators less familiar with the Rohingya language relied more heavily on the Bangla translations and that not all surveys were conducted entirely in Rohingya.

The risk of oversampled groups skewing the aggregate results was evaluated by calculating weighted means based on the proportion of the total target population living in each camp. These weighted means did not differ from the raw means by more than .1, suggesting that any bias introduced by the oversampling is negligible. Because the weighted means and unweighted means are so similar, we present the unweighted information in the report, to provide readers with a direct perspective on the opinions of the sample. This methodology allowed us to maximise reliability within each camp, as well as population-level parameter estimation.

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