




669
Individuals arrived in Indonesia on 7 boats in 2024

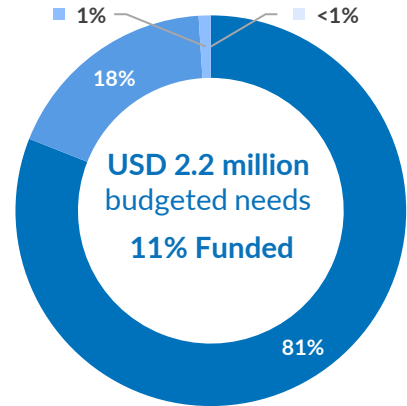


1,570
Individuals hosted in temporary sites in Aceh, North Sumatera, and Riau



2,658
Rohingya Refugees in Indonesia

UNHCR Funding Requirements
Rohingya Boat Arrivals
January-December 2024



FLASH UPDATE

In the last week of October 2024, three boats carrying nearly 400 individuals (78% women and children) disembarked in South Aceh, East Aceh, and North Sumatra. At least nine individuals, including six children, died during the course of these journeys. UNHCR, IOM, and partners are currently at disembarkation and host sites liaising with local authorities and responding to the protection and assistance needs of these new arrivals.

SITUATIONAL OVERVIEW

Rohingya refugees have undertaken perilous sea journeys from Myanmar and Bangladesh seeking protection, family reunification, and access to livelihoods and education for years. Many of those traveling by boat to Indonesia disembark in Aceh and North Sumatra provinces. From mid-November 2023 to date, 18 boats carrying 2,421 Rohingya refugees landed in Aceh and North Sumatra, Indonesia. While many have since departed Indonesia, over 1,500 remain in temporary sites in Aceh, North Sumatra, and Riau Provinces.

According to information provided to UNHCR by refugee arrivals, the increase in the number of individuals undertaking the sea journey in late 2023 and 2024 has been driven by a number of factors. These include the continued instability in Myanmar, lack of progress in addressing the root causes of Rohingya displacement and enabling conditions conducive for return, growing insecurity and declining humanitarian assistance in the camps in Bangladesh, more active smuggling networks, and a decrease in the cost of sea journeys.

Sea journeys are extremely dangerous and are often undertaken on unseaworthy vessels under the command of unscrupulous smugglers and traffickers. In March 2024, a boat carrying approximately 142 Rohingya capsized off the coast of West Aceh, killing 67 passengers, including at least 27 children. Nearly 800 Rohingya refugees traveling by boat perished or went missing at sea in 2022 and 2023*, including a boat bound for Indonesia carrying approximately 200 refugees that is believed to have sunk in November 2023. Disembarked refugees report experiencing protection and security challenges at sea, including gender-based violence, physical abuse, malnutrition, exploitation, and extortion. Rohingya refugees confirm that they are aware of the risks but still board boats, highlighting the pervasive fear and sense of hopelessness that precipitate their decision to embark on these journeys.

In previous years, as per the 2016 Presidential Regulation 125 on the Handling of Refugees, Rohingya boats in distress were rescued and allowed to disembark in Indonesia by the navy, local authorities, and Acehnese coastal communities. Following disembarkation, authorities designated host sites where UNHCR, IOM, and other partners provided protection and basic assistance.

While many Indonesians remain supportive of and sympathetic to the challenges facing Rohingya refugees, many refugees who arrived by boat in 2023 and 2024 have met unprecedented resistance in Indonesia. Some Rohingya were prevented from disembarking, others disembarked only to be forced by local communities back on the boats and returned to sea, and many of those who disembarked have yet to be allocated adequate shelter by authorities. As a result, hundreds of refugees who have disembarked in recent months remain in perilous, overcrowded, and sub-standard temporary sites in which the protection and assistance response is compromised.

While Rohingya refugees undertake journeys from Bangladesh and Myanmar throughout the year, the majority typically move between November and March when sea conditions are most favorable. Support is needed to bolster the response in the likely event that more boats carrying Rohingya refugees arrive in Indonesia in the last months of 2024. UNHCR anticipates 2.2 million USD will be required to respond to the needs of the current population and anticipated new arrivals in 2024. Only a fraction of needed funding has been received by UNHCR to date. The Rohingya boat arrival response remains seriously underfunded.

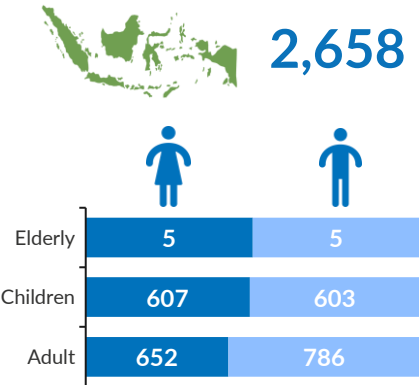
* DATA SOURCE: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/myanmar>

OVERVIEW: 2024 DISEMBARKATIONS AND CURRENT HOSTING SITES

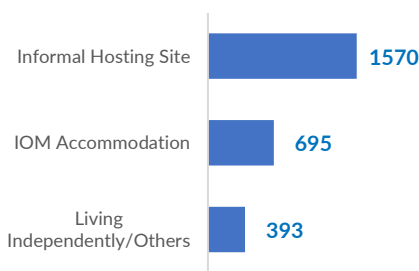


Population figures per hosting site include individuals who arrived by boat and babies born post-arrival.

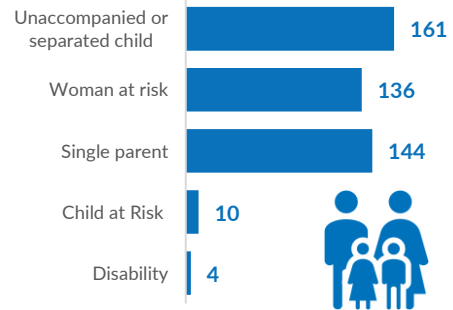
Rohingya Refugees in Indonesia



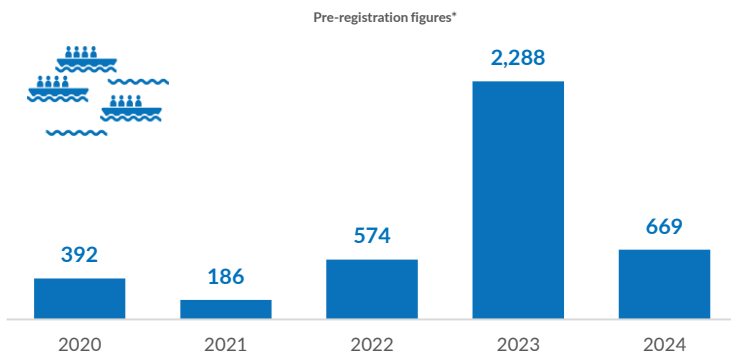
Type of Accommodation



Vulnerabilities at the Temporary Sites

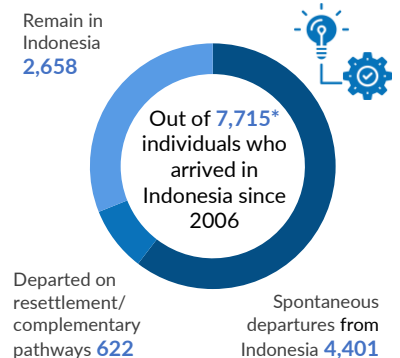


Rohingya Boat Arrivals In Indonesia



*Pre-Registration data refers to number of headcount during arrival. Some individuals have left before registration by UNHCR

Solutions



UNHCR RESPONSE



COORDINATION

UNHCR supports Indonesian authorities by leading and coordinating inter-agency preparedness and response at the local, provincial, and national levels, in close cooperation with IOM and other humanitarian partners in Aceh, North Sumatera, Riau, and Jakarta. UNHCR's coordination role includes **regular** advocacy with the government, security agencies, and local communities on issues related to Rohingya refugees, international protection principles, and the humanitarian response. UNHCR also chairs inter-agency coordination meetings at the local and national levels. In addition, UNHCR maintains a 4W (Who is Where, When, doing What) matrix to identify assistance gaps and ensure protection issues and basic needs are covered in the sites where Rohingya refugees are currently accommodated in Aceh and North Sumatera. UNHCR continues to engage with media outlets, civil society groups, universities, social media platforms/companies, religious leaders, Islamic philanthropies, community-based organizations (CBOs), and influencers at the national and local level to address disinformation, misinformation, and hate speech and contribute to a supportive and informed civil society in Aceh, North Sumatera, and throughout Indonesia.



PROTECTION

UNHCR leads the protection response for Rohingya refugees in Aceh and North Sumatera. Protection activities include advocacy with local authorities and communities to permit the disembarkation of **all boats** in distress at sea and ensuring UNHCR presence at the beach and points of disembarkation to advocate on behalf of individuals arriving by boat. Since 1 January 2023, **2,413** new arrivals have been registered and have had their biometrics captured. **2,338** new arrivals have been issued UNHCR documentation. Verification or refugee status determination to assess international protection needs has been carried out for **208** individuals. UNHCR has also undertaken **150** best interest procedures (of **176** children identified in need) as well as other child protection work for the large number of child spouses, unaccompanied children, and otherwise at-risk children. UNHCR is working with local authorities, security agencies, private security, and host communities to maintain the safety and security of refugee hosting sites, though security remains highly compromised in remote locations. Refugees and others engaged in the sites have been informed of and engaged in key protection activities, including gender-based violence prevention and response; protection reporting and referral systems; prevention and response activities on fraud, sexual exploitation and abuse, and other forms of mistreatment; etc. UNHCR is currently working with **20** host community volunteers who are contributing to the response in the sites. This work builds and maintains social cohesion and peaceful coexistence between refugees and host communities.



ASSISTANCE AND SERVICES

UNHCR, IOM, and partners are working together to deliver lifesaving assistance following initial disembarkation and establish service delivery to ensure basic needs are met. Assistance sectors are led by IOM (shelter, health, and WASH) and UNHCR (food). Assistance and basic services - the provision of food and CRIs, shelter repairs and rehabilitation, access to WASH, health care, and mental health/psycho-social support - have been established for Rohingya refugees in all hosting sites, although the extent and scope of assistance and services is dependent on the level of access humanitarian partners have to the sites, site locations, the security situation surrounding the sites, the engagement and position of host communities, whether a site has been officially designated by authorities, budget limitations, etc. UNHCR's contributions to assistance and services include the provision of three meals/day for an average of **1,228** refugees each month in 2024.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS AND CHALLENGES

Site designation and consolidation

- Refugees are currently hosted in five temporary sites in Aceh, three in North Sumatera, and one in Riau. Of these, only two (Mina Raya and the ex-immigration site in Lhokseumawe, Aceh) have been officially designated as refugee hosting sites by Indonesian authorities. The other sites are makeshift and often in isolated locations which leave refugees vulnerable to exploitation and abuse and impede the delivery of protection and assistance.
- It is imperative that, as per the Presidential Regulation, local authorities – in consultation with provincial and national authorities – designate shelters that can accommodate those currently in the informal sites as well as future Rohingya boat arrivals. The designation of sites and the consolidation of the current hosting sites into fewer locations will enable more robust protection and assistance programs; allow for more consistent coverage of the sites by UNHCR, IOM, and partners; enhance security for refugees; and reduce tensions with local communities.

Recreational/educational opportunities at the sites

- While freedom of movement remains limited in many sites and children do not currently have access to formal education, there has been progress in implementing recreational and learning opportunities for children and adults at the hosting sites. These efforts are imperative to provide opportunities for personal growth, improve mental health, and advance efforts toward peaceful co-existence and social cohesion with host communities.
- Activities, most of which are implemented by community-based organizations and local foundations, include organized sports, vegetable farming, movie nights, Bahasa Indonesia and English classes, sewing classes, art classes, Quran lessons, etc.

Misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech

- An online campaign of misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech directed at Rohingya refugees and UNHCR, in particular, was prevalent in Indonesian media and social media in late 2023 and 2024. This [negatively impacted](#) refugees and humanitarian actors on the ground in Aceh, including pushbacks, protests, a mob attack, forced relocation, personal threats to staff members, etc.
- Efforts to understand the reasons behind the campaign, remove online hate speech, and correct misinformation and disinformation are ongoing. These include engaging with social media platforms to address issues of concern, sharing facts on UNHCR and Rohingya refugees online and in traditional media, working with security agencies and relevant government ministries, engaging prominent and influential Acehnese, and holding discussions with universities, civil society, CBOs and other groups to promote mutual understanding.

Rescue and disembarkation of boats in distress

- On 24 and 31 October 2024, three boats carrying nearly 400 individuals (78% women and children) disembarked in South Aceh, East Aceh, and North Sumatra. At least nine individuals, including six children, died during the course of these journeys. UNHCR, IOM, and partners are currently at disembarkation and host sites liaising with local authorities and responding to the protection and assistance needs of these new arrivals.
- UNHCR will continue to work closely with Indonesian authorities and local communities to ensure boats in distress at sea are promptly rescued and that those traveling on these boats and seeking asylum are permitted to disembark on Indonesian soil, as per the Presidential Regulation and other domestic and international law.

Smuggling, trafficking, and onward movement

- As in previous years, some refugees arriving in Aceh have since departed the hosting sites, moving – often with the assistance of smugglers – to other locations in Indonesia or to Malaysia, where refugees move to marry, access employment opportunities, join family members, etc. UNHCR continues to monitor onward movements to assess trends and identify protection risks.
- Concerns remain regarding the risk of trafficking and the development of heightened protection and security issues in the hosting sites and elsewhere as a result of these onward movements.

Funding gap

- UNHCR has received only 11% of the USD 2.2 million funding needs for the 2024 Rohingya boat response. In order to respond to the needs of new Rohingya arrivals, UNHCR has had to re-prioritize activities using its current budget. As the response remains critically underfunded, more support is needed to scale up assistance in the sites and to respond to anticipated Rohingya boat arrivals in the last months of the year.

UNHCR is grateful to the following donors who are funding the Indonesia operation with earmarked, softly earmarked funding as well as those supporting UNHCR operations globally with unearmarked funding.

Belgium | Canada | Denmark | European Union | France | Germany | Ireland | Japan | Netherlands | Norway | Private donors Argentina | Private donors Australia | Private donors China | Private donors Germany | Private donors Indonesia | Private donors Italy | Private donors Japan | Private donors Republic of Korea | Private donors Singapore | Private donors Spain | Private donors Sweden | Private donors Switzerland | Private donors United Kingdom | Sweden | Switzerland | Private donors USA | United Kingdom | United States of America | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS



Rohingya women and children at a temporary shelter in Aceh. © UNHCR/A. Jufrian