

UNICEF BANGLADESH Dengue Outbreak

Situation Report #1
21st August 2023



Eleven-year-old Fahim is one of hundreds of children being treated for dengue across Bangladesh.
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Highlights

- Between 1st January and 19th August 2023, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of Bangladesh reported a total of 97,476 dengue cases (including 37.6 per cent women and 17.8 per cent children (0-18 yrs), with 466 deaths (56.9 per cent females, 18.7 per cent children up to 18 years old).¹ According to WHO, the mosquito-borne disease has spread to all 64 districts in Bangladesh, with one in every five people infected being a child (17.8 per cent so far infected).
- In Cox's Bazar, Rohingya camps 1W, 3, 4, 9, 17 and 18 have become hotspots for dengue cases. As of 19th August 2023, a total of 7,196 persons [885 Bangladeshi and 6,311 from Rohingya camps] have confirmed positive for dengue. A total of 609 persons (451 Bangladeshi and 158 Rohingya refugees) were admitted to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital and another 437 persons were admitted to Upazilla Hospitals. 10 persons (8 from Rohingya camps, 2 from the host) died due to Dengue-related complications.²
- A total of 90,000 community engagement tools have been produced and distributed with a user guide to the implementing partners and RCCE members throughout Bangladesh. As a result, 1.4 million people (51.85 per cent female) received practical and lifesaving information and more than 60 thousand (55.37 per cent female) people are engaged in mobilization action on dengue prevention through different SBC activities of the UNICEF field offices.
- Social media posts with messages on awareness and prevention have reached over 48 million people.
- WASH Team jointly with SBC, municipality staff and Field Services conducted a fact-finding mission to various a Mosquito Breeding Sites in urban areas and the Section is currently setting the priorities for the WASH interventions with the Dengue Prevention and Control.
- A Case for Dengue Outbreak Response has been developed, seeking **US\$ 5.6 M** to support the national efforts in controlling the spread of dengue in Bangladesh. So far UNICEF made **US\$ 981,000** available for immediate response, leaving a funding gap of **US\$ 4.6 M** to support an integrated multi-sectoral response to the dengue outbreak and prevent more women, children, and other vulnerable members of the population from further infections. More details in Table 1 below .

SITUATION IN NUMBERS¹



97,476

Dengue cases (37.6 per cent female) recorded (Health Emergency Operation Centre and Control Room, DGHS 19th Aug 2023)



17,332

children 0-18 yrs, (41.2 per cent girls) infected (Health Emergency Operation Centre and Control Room, DGHS 19th Aug 2023)



64/64
Districts

Districts affected (Health Emergency Operation Centre and Control Room, DGHS 19th Aug 2023)

¹ Health Emergency Operation Center and Control Room, DGHS

² Reported Monthly Dengue & suspected Dengue Cases and Confirmed Deaths, Bangladesh. Date of Reporting: 19 Aug 2023, Cox's Bazar Dengue Situation, 20th August y 2023, Civil surgeon Office, Cox's Bazar. No latest data is available.

Humanitarian Situation Overview

Bangladesh is experiencing the largest nationwide outbreak of dengue in its history, which is causing a significant public health challenge to the country. Sporadic outbreaks have been occurring in Bangladesh since 1964. There was a major epidemic dengue outbreak in 2000 and since then, there have been varying intensities of dengue every year in Bangladesh. In 2019, Bangladesh experienced a major dengue epidemic, with 101,354 dengue cases recorded and 164 dengue-related deaths.¹ However, since the beginning of this year the number of cases has increased significantly, exceeding cases over the same period in the previous years and the number of deaths is the highest ever recorded (Table 1 below).

Between 1st January and 19th August 2023, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of Bangladesh reported a total of 97,476 dengue cases (including 37.6 per cent women and 17.8 per cent children (0-18 yrs.), with 466 deaths (56.9 per cent females, 18.7 per cent children up to 18 years old).¹ Even worse, one in every five people infected is a child, and children under five are at greater risk of severe illness (4 per cent so far infected), with a case fatality rate (CFR) of 0.47 percent.² For every five deaths, one is a child. Though the majority (62.4 per cent) of cases are among male, nearly three of every five deaths (56.8 per cent) are among females. The overall CFR, which is higher compared to previous years, is also higher in female than in male (0.72 per cent v 0.33 per cent) with female having four times higher CFR than male among those aged 21-40 years (0.71 per cent vs 0.18 per cent).² As many as 63 per cent of cases and 62 per cent of the deaths were reported in the month of July 2023.

Table 1: Dengue cases, deaths, and case fatality rate in Bangladesh for 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022 and 2023³

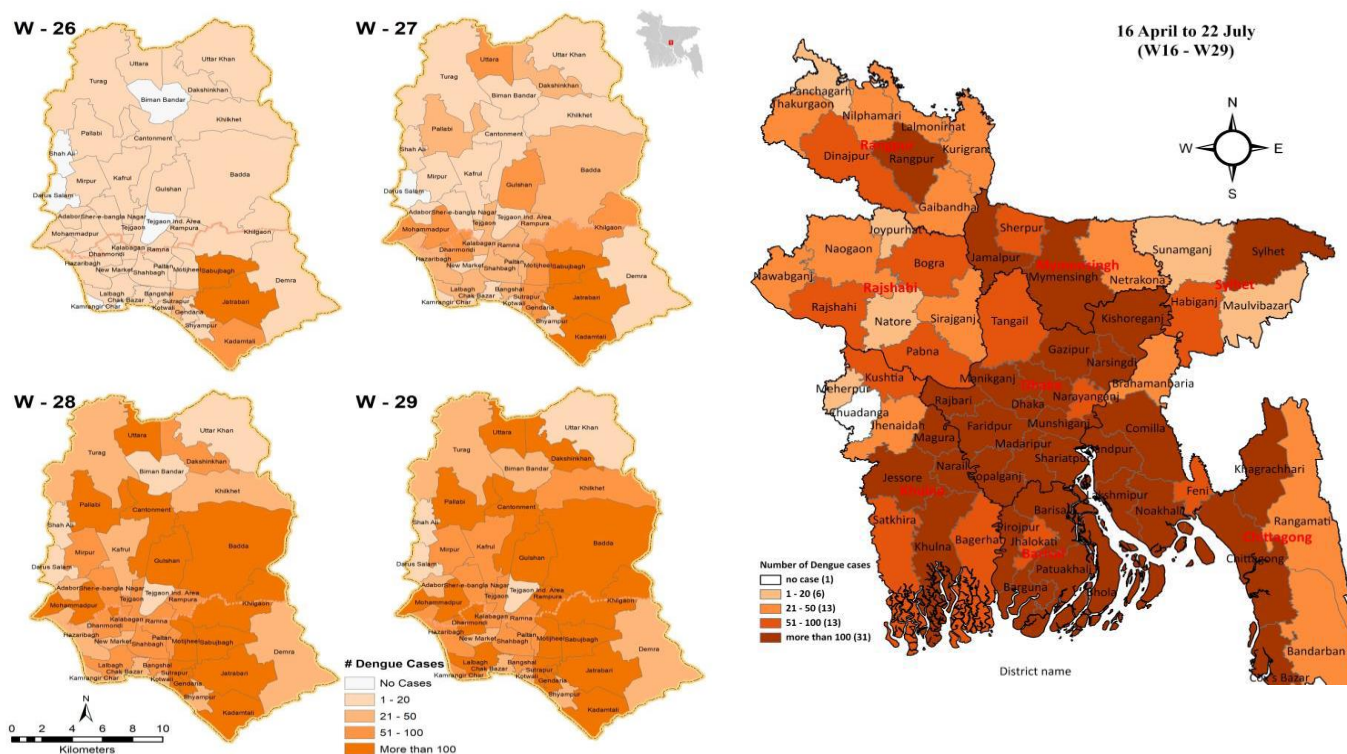
Year	Cases	Deaths	Case fatality rate (CFR)
2018	10,148	26	0.26 per cent
2019	101,354	164	0.16 per cent
2020	26,429	105	0.37 per cent
2022	62,382	281	0.45 per cent
2023 (as of 19 th August)	97,476	466	0.47 per cent

Data source: DGHS (*data for 2020 is limited due to COVID-19)

The reported number of dengue cases this year are the highest compared to the same periods recorded since 2000. Dengue cases started to rise in May 2023 and have been continuing since then, and the peak is unlikely to have been reached.³

In Cox's Bazar, Rohingya Camps 1W, 3, 4, 9, 17 and 18 have become hotspots for dengue cases. Till 19th August 2023, a total of 7,196 persons [885 Bangladeshi and 6,311 from Rohingya camps] have been confirmed with dengue. A total of 609 persons (451 Bangladeshi and 158 Rohingya refugees) were admitted to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital and another 437 persons were admitted to Upazilla Hospitals. 10 persons (8 from Rohingya camps, 2 from the host) died due to Dengue-related complications.²

Map 1: Map of Dengue hotspots across Bangladesh and Dhaka city³



UNICEF Preparedness and Response

Social and Behaviour Change (SBC)

- By 16 August 2023, UNICEF had reached over 41 million people (27.69 per cent female) with awareness messages on dengue symptoms and preventive measures including an explainer video through our social media channels.
- A total of 90,000 community engagement tools have been produced and distributed with a user guide to the implementing partners and RCCE members throughout Bangladesh. As a result, 1.4 million people (51.85 per cent female) received practical and lifesaving information and more than 60 thousand (55.37 per cent female) people are engaged in mobilization action on dengue prevention through different SBC activities facilitated by the UNICEF field offices.
- The design of an awareness creation campaign on a request from DGHS has been completed with the SBC Section, with the support of USAID, producing two Public Service Announcement (PSA) videos on dengue prevention and care for the Government of Bangladesh. The campaign will be launched tentatively by the end of August 2023.
- A network of 70,000 imam (religious leaders) has been mobilized through Islamic Foundation to disseminate dengue preventive and care related messages during *khutba* (sermon preached by imam in a mosque in Friday prayer) nationwide.
- The Islamic Foundation is also using the *Khutba* (mosque sermons) throughout the country and is encouraging cleaning campaigns around the mosques in 13 hotspot areas of Dhaka City.
- Betar and BTV (local TV stations) are disseminating standard messages on Dengue prevention in their regular programs and through special announcements.
- SBC section supported CDC-DGHS to organize and facilitate two discussion sessions on dengue with all 64 districts' Civil Surgeons, 8 Division Health Directors and 2 Chief Health Officers of Dhaka City Corporations to initiate a coordinated RCCE response at the sub-national level.



Divisional level advocacy meeting in Chittagong on Dengue prevention



Discussion sessions on dengue

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

- WASH Section initiated meetings with Dhaka North City Corporation including the Waste Management Department to discuss the outbreak and develop a strategy to control its spread.
- The UNICEF-led WASH Cluster convened a meeting on the Dengue Outbreak with Cluster members and other relevant stakeholders to coordinate the response. As a result, 4W matrix for the response is due to be developed with cluster members to identify gaps and the collaboration with the Health Cluster to ensure the health and hygiene awareness is further enhanced.
- WASH team jointly with SBC, municipality staff and Field Services conducted a fact-finding mission to various Mosquito Breeding Sites in urban areas and the Section is currently setting the priorities for the WASH interventions with the Dengue Prevention and Control.



Fact-finding mission to Mohammadpur, Dhaka City

Child Protection

- The Child Protection Section has conducted dengue awareness sessions in 1,162 Child Protection Community Hubs (CPCs) with MoWCA.
- Over 80,000 children including adolescents and caregivers (68 per cent female) received information on Dengue prevention through more than 4,500 sessions of at least 45 minutes each.

Education

- With UNICEF support, an online meeting was held with all the national and sub-national officials to reinforce the messages on dengue response by Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME), Ministry of Education (MoE), Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) and Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE).
- The District Primary Education Officers (DPEOs) have engaged with sub-district officials and Head teachers across the country and are tracking the progress in the implementation of the directives from the Ministries and Directorates to keep the schools clean and free from Dengue.
- UNICEF is currently undertaking an Operational Study for communication and social mobilization and will include a section for dengue and an action plan in close collaboration with the Education Ministry Directorates as part of the humanitarian-development nexus.

Health

- UNICEF is providing support to strengthen coordination among the Health Cluster partners and advocating for health system capacity strengthening for effective case management, mortality audit and implementation of recommendations.
- UNICEF is planning to support capacity building of health workers to improve case management and data visualization to facilitate response actions. The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) has established a technical review committee and convening regular meetings for review of hospital case management data and death audit to identify gaps in care for corrective action.
- UNICEF procured and delivered 13,475 dengue test kits to DGHS.
- UNICEF will continue to provide technical support during the weekly coordination meetings organized by the Communicable Diseases Control (CDC) and Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) for coordination of dengue interventions.

Communication

- The Communication Section has been promoting public advocacy campaigns to raise awareness on 1. How to prevent infection; 2. How to identify and recognize symptoms; 3. Seek early care.
- Social media posts with messages on awareness and prevention have reached over 48 million people.
- Human interest stories on dengue have been posted on websites and different social media platforms for awareness creation.

Cox's Bazar Field Office

Social and Behavior Change (SBC)

- SBC Cox's Bazar, through its partners, continued community engagement on dengue prevention to both Rohingya Refugee camps and host communities through different communication and community interventions to prevent the community transmission.
- In collaboration with the Camp administration, WASH, Education and SBC implementing partners, the clean-up campaigns continued, cleaning garbage and destroying the breeding sites of the mosquitoes around the houses.
- Approximately 386,956 Rohingya refugees in 17 camps and 45,690 people in host communities were reached with dengue prevention interventions through interpersonal communication (IPC) sessions including house-to-house visits, mother-to-mother support groups, adolescent club sessions and messaging through street miking, mosque-based loudspeakers, and megaphones. A total of 13,376 adolescents and 11,625 mothers were also reached through group sessions on dengue prevention.
- The Information and Feedback Centres (IFCs) provide dengue prevention information to the community, targeting those who visit the centers. A total of 14,224 visitors visited 18 IFCs and received information on dengue prevention.



Cleaning camping at camp 18 PC:
Photo credit: Ali Haider

Funding situation

UNICEF Bangladesh reprogrammed US\$ 231,000 from internal resources, an additional US\$ 500,000 from UNICEF HQ has been allocated, and US\$ 250,000 was committed by USAID, to support immediate response to the dengue outbreak and meet the priority needs of girls, women and people with disabilities. UNICEF Bangladesh also placed a request for US\$ 1.5 million loans from UNICEF HQ to ensure the continuity of the response while fund raising efforts continue.

The table (1) below shows the funding situation and needs per sector to prevent and mitigate the impact of dengue on vulnerable women, children and the overall population:

SECTOR	Funding Requirement (USD)	Received (USD) Available/ Received / Pipeline	Funding gap
Health	\$422,000	\$150,000 (Global Thematic Fund) \$125,000 (USAID) \$10,000 (Reprogrammed)	\$137,000
WASH	\$2,907,500	\$250,000 (Global Thematic Fund) \$200,000 (Reprogramme)	\$2,457,500
Education	\$1,650,558	0	\$1,650,558
SBC	\$265,500	\$100,000 (Global Thematic Fund) \$125,000 (USAID) \$21,000 (Reprogramme)	\$19,500
Operational costs (7%)	\$367,189		\$367,189
Total	\$5,612,747	\$981,000	\$4,631,747

As of 20 August 2023

*Emergency Programme Fund (EPF) is to be reimbursed.

Human Interest Stories and External Media

- The Daily Star report on Dengue 2023: <https://www.thedailystar.net/health/disease/news/deadlier-ever-3375121>
- The Business Standard report on Dengue situation in coming months of 2023: <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/health/dengue-situation-may-worsen-august-september-experts-say-667894>
- The Dhaka Tribune report on Dengue outbreak: Tragic deaths of children raise concern <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2023/07/10/dengue-outbreak-tragic-deaths-of-children-raise-concern>
- The Business Standard report on Dengue: 5 kids among 12 dies in Chattogram in last 20 days <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/health/dengue-5-kids-among-12-die-ctg-last-20-days-669218>

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