

Rohingya people are concerned about mosquitoes

WHAT MATTERS?

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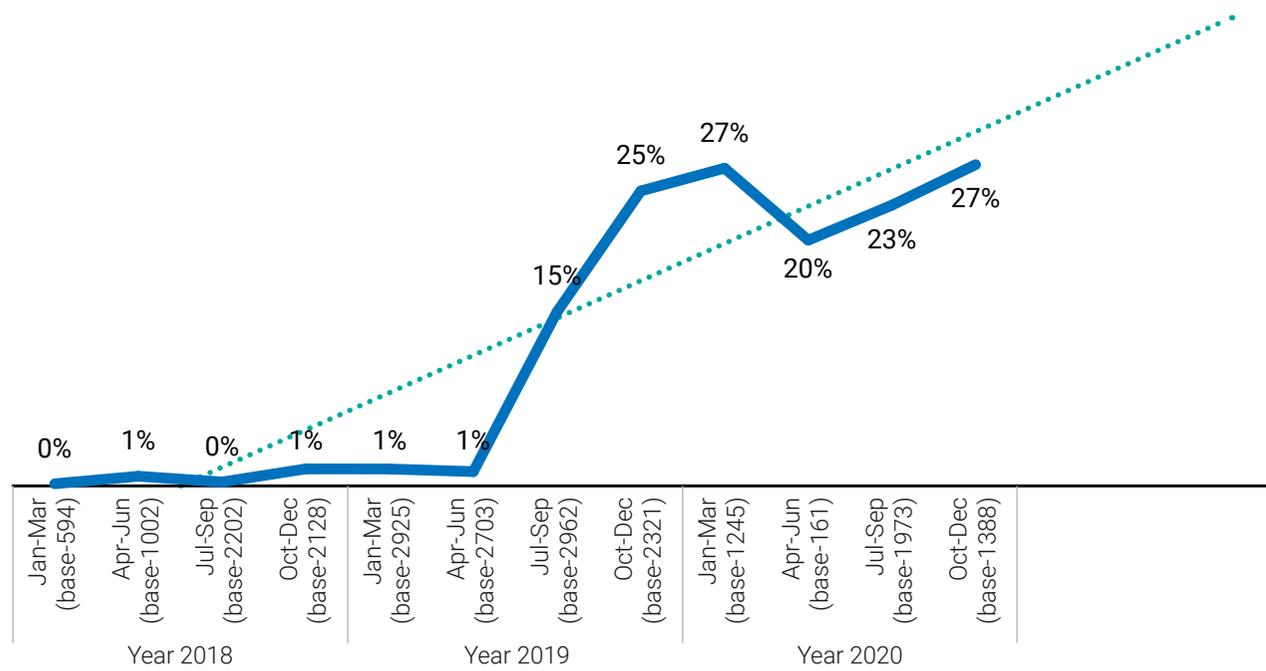


Source: Since 2017, different organisations have conducted listening group sessions, collecting feedback from Rohingya people living in camps located in Cox's Bazar. BBC Media Action collates this feedback and shares highlights in *What Matters?*

From January 2018 to December 2020, BBC Media Action has studied over 20,000 listening group feedback from members of the Rohingya community: men, women, boys, girls, pregnant mothers, mothers with babies (including lactating mothers), older people, marginalised people and people with disabilities across all 34 camps. BBC Media Action has been able to document these concerns at specific points in time as well as study how they have shifted over time.

In this issue, BBC Media Action focusses on mosquito related problems. To understand the Rohingya community's concerns, BBC Media Action conducted 10 telephone interviews on the 11th and 14th of February 2021, five with women (age 20 - 60) and five with men (age 36 - 50). Some of the participants had attended listening groups and shared their concerns regarding WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene), non-food items (NFI) items and mosquitoes. Participants were encouraged to discuss the impact of mosquitoes and how they cope.

The major problems faced by the Rohingya people are related to documentation, shelter, site, and health. This has consistently included the health risks associated with mosquitoes. The data shows that more people raised these concerns from April 2019.



In phone interviews participants said there are many mosquitoes and as a result they have trouble sleeping. In both phone interviews and listening group sessions, people said mosquitoes can make people sick, and even cause death as a result of being bitten. They also expressed concerns about mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue and malaria as well as the availability of medical support if people get sick.

They said the number of mosquitoes increases from *Asar* (afternoon prayer time) as it gets darker and then becomes a problem at night. Half the participants said the problem is worse in winter while others said it is worse in the rainy season when water systems are clogged and backed up.

Participants identified dirty, backed up water as a place where mosquitoes can easily breed. They suggest that problems with mosquitoes will not be resolved unless the drains are cleaned on a regular basis. They observed that people living near the drains suffer more from mosquito bites. The participants suggested that proper waste management (including cleaning the sewerage system and drains) would help reduce the number of mosquitoes. They also said that people dump rubbish everywhere, which allows mosquitoes to breed. While

some participants said they try to keep the environment clean to reduce risks associated with mosquitoes, their individual efforts have limited impact given the size of the camps.

In both listening group discussions and telephone interviews, people said they have problems with mosquito nets i.e., the mosquito nets they are using are in poor condition, are old and easily tear resulting in holes. They said they don't have enough nets for the whole family, thus children and older people use the nets and others go without.

According to the participants people buy mosquito coils as an alternative to mosquito nets. However only a few people can afford these. (One pair of mosquito coil costs between BDT 10-15; a packet between BDT 55-80). Participants said they use a coil for a short period at night so they can save it and make it last for a longer period of time. Participants said they are concerned coils could cause fires. They are also concerned inhaling the smoke can cause diseases. Parents said they worry about children playing inside the house and near the coils. Some participants said they have seen spray used in other camps to kill mosquitoes but were unsure how it worked and if it was an alternative solution.

“ Mosquito bite is more in the rainy season because then the trees get wet and dirt accumulates.”

– Rohingya woman, 21, Camp 15

“ There is more dirt in the camp, so there are more mosquitoes here.”

– Rohingya woman, 57, Camp 11

“ I told the NGO about the mosquito nets and mats, but they never came back.”

– Rohingya woman (age 30), Camp 15

“ We received three or four mosquito nets for eight family members, now two of them have been totally worn out. We are using two now, our parents use one and the children use the other one. Two mosquito nets are not enough for our family, we need more nets.”

– Rohingya woman (age 21), Camp 11

BBC Media Action and Translators without Borders are working together to collect and collate feedback from communities affected by the Rohingya crisis. This summary aims to provide a snapshot of feedback received from Rohingya and host communities, to assist sectors to better plan and implement relief activities with communities' needs and preferences in mind.

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If you have any comments, questions or suggestions regarding *What Matters?*, you are welcome to get in touch with the team by emailing info@cxbfeedback.org