



## About Meso Level and the Density in the Camp

**Background:** MSP would like to draw your attention on the ongoing crisis in the Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh. The camps, which were set up to house refugees fleeing violence in Myanmar, are severely overcrowded and lack basic resources such as clean water, food, and sanitation facilities. The density of the Rohingya refugee camp poses a significant threat to safety and wellbeing of the residents, particularly in the face of fire incidents, heat hazards, cyclones, and other natural disasters. In March 2023, a fire broke out in the Camp 11 that burned down 2000 shelters leaving around 12000 people homeless. Responsible agencies immediately started the response. It is challenging for the responder to provide support as there is hardly any planned access and egress specially for the fire brigades as well as humanitarians. Many camps are unplanned and overcrowded so fire of this extent can be seen as an opportunity to build back better with proper planning.

Reducing the density of some of the high dense camps can ensure that people are better protected in more secure locations during such disasters. In fact, in case of the camp-11 fire event it was not due able due to shortage of time to prepare a resettlement plan, considering the known flood and landslide risk maps nor reduce density while the influx of affected refugees rebuilding the shelters as shelter/NFI support was provided within 72 hours of the fire. Also, there was not adequate back up space to house the fire affected refugees or to relocate them.

Over the years, the population in the camp has grown significantly, leading to overcrowding and limited access and egress. This, in turn, makes it challenging for emergency responders to reach those in need during an emergency, putting everyone's lives at risk. In response to these challenges, the government of Bangladesh, together with international aid agencies, is working to reduce the density of the camp by relocating some refugees to other sites. This will help to ensure that everyone has enough space, access to resources, and better living conditions, making it safer for everyone.

**Measures and objectives:** The immediate safety risks, overcrowding also creates significant social cohesion challenges. It can cause tensions to rise among different groups within the camp, leading to conflicts and violence. By reducing the density of the camp, we can improve social cohesion and foster a more peaceful and harmonious community.

Moreover, the temperature in the camp can get very high during the summer months, leading to heat hazards that can put everyone's health at risk. By reducing the density, we can improve ventilation and provide more space for people to move around, making it easier for everyone to stay cool and safe during hot weather.

Another significant risk we face is the threat of cyclones and other natural disasters. The Rohingya camp is in a region that is prone to these types of hazards. In the event of a severe storm, the densely populated camp could be severely affected, putting everyone's lives in danger.

The decision to reduce the density of the camp is not taken lightly. It is being done in MSP best interest to ensure Rohingyas safety and wellbeing. Moreover, reducing the density of the camp will not only benefit the Rohingya community but also help us build better relationships with the other communities. The overcrowding of the camp has put a significant strain on the resources and infrastructure of the surrounding areas. By reducing the density, we can relieve some of that pressure from the access and egress which will help to move in the emergency for the fire brigade and other humanitarians.

To address this critical situation, by the help of government of Bangladesh, together with international aid agencies, MSP is working to reduce the density of the camps by relocating some refugees to other sites. This will help to provide a more livable environment for the remaining refugees and ensure that they have access to the resources they need to survive. The relocation process is being carried out in a voluntary and gradual manner, with refugees being given the choice to move to new sites or to stay in the existing camps. MSP coordinates with government and aid agencies to work closely with community leaders and refugee representatives to ensure that the process is transparent, fair, and respectful to carried out in a way that rights and dignity of the refugees. Humanitarians input and feedback will be essential to the success of this process, and MSP encourages us to discuss and provide feedback.

