

Clear Country Contexts

Based on data for January 2015-December 2017



Aid assistance in Bangladesh includes disaster preparedness, sustainable development, healthcare and food security. Since August 2017 more than half a million people have fled from Myanmar to Bangladesh, joining more than 200,000 others who had arrived in previous cross-border influxes.

This country profile is based on the analysis of security incidents and concerns shared by nine aid agencies through the Aid in Danger project. It provides a unique insight into the environment in which aid agencies work.¹

Reported concerns affecting aid delivery in Bangladesh



- **Crime:** Violent crime – robberies (predominately unarmed) and sexual violence. Petty crime – burglaries, fraud and thefts.



- **RTAs:** 77% of reported road traffic accident (RTA) incidents caused NGO staff injuries.



- **Unrest:** Political, predominately BNP-led demonstrations; civil unrest linked to the Rohingya crisis.



- **Terrorism:** IEDs targeting cafés, bars, restaurants and military posts.



- **Killed, injured, kidnapped (KIK):** Twelve NGO staff members were killed, three injured, one kidnapped and two assaulted since January 2015.



- **Weapons use:** 22% of NGO-related security incidents involved weapons use.²

Some changes to the country-typical patterns have been identified in recent months (October-December 2017)



- **Operational space:** Questioning and detention at IDP camps; access denials; new NGO regulations and NGO closures.



- The main threat continues to be **crime**.
- Decrease in reported KIK, RTAs, unrest and terrorism-related incidents.



- One aid worker injured since October 2017.

¹ All decisions made on the basis of or with consideration to such information remain the responsibility of the organisations taking such decisions. Staff are advised to secure travel briefings prior to travel.

² Weapons use reported during 20 incidents related to crime, conflict, KIK and terrorism. Weapons were used in 83% of KIK incidents; 82% of terrorism incidents; 50% of conflict-related incidents; and 4% of crime incidents.

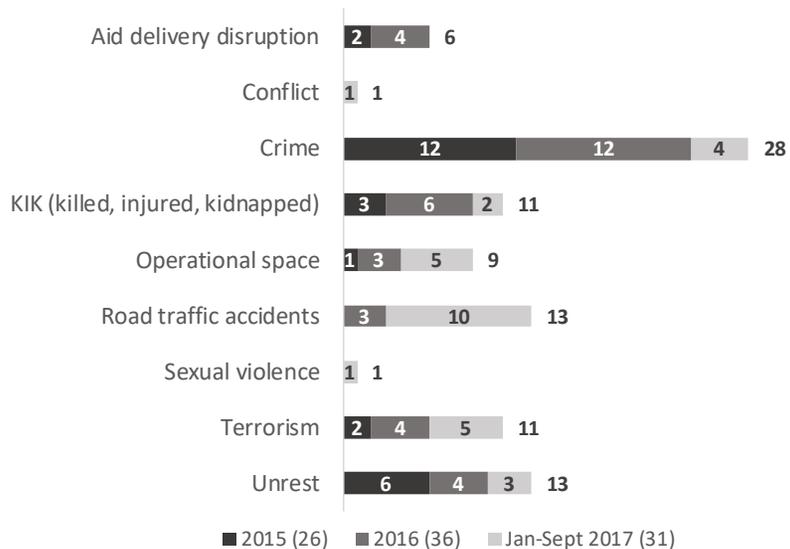
Long-term threat patterns and recent changes

Based on data for January 2015-December 2017



Long-term threat patterns, January 2015-September 2017

A high number of incidents were criminally motivated, including burglaries, fraud, robberies and thefts. Next highest were RTAs and unrest.



Aid delivery disruption: Remote death threats against staff members over aid activities; reputational risks.

Conflict: Active fighting led to restricted NGO staff movement.

Crime: Fraudulent activity by NGO staff members (see [Crime](#) on p. 3 for other incidents).

KIK: Five incidents were attributed to or claimed by Islamic State (IS) and Ansar al-Islam militants.

Operational space: Mostly arrests. Authorities prevented staff members and aid supplies from accessing refugee camps.

Road traffic accidents: 23% of reported RTA incidents did not cause NGO staff injuries.

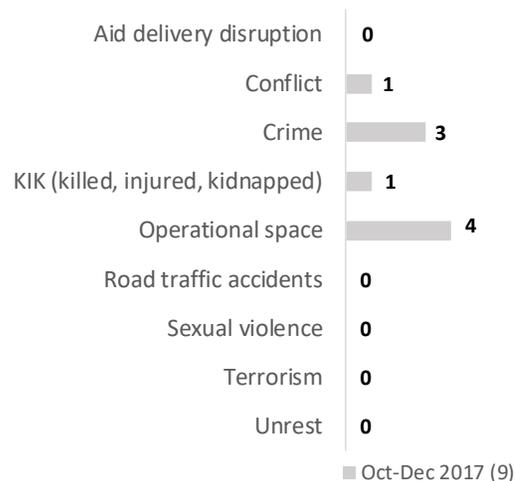
Sexual violence: From local males.

Terrorism: Dhaka, Khulna, Rangpur, Sylhet divisions.

Unrest: Civil unrest, demonstrations and election-related violence.

Recent concerns to aid delivery, October-December 2017

Most recent incidents reflected Bangladesh’s country-specific patterns, with reports of arrests, access denials, stop and searches, and criminally motivated incidents that affected aid workers and NGO assets.



Aid delivery disruption: No incidents identified.

Conflict: Related to the Rohingya crisis; led to restricted NGO staff movements.

Crime: No incidents identified.

KIK: LINGO staff member killed by gunfire and a homemade bomb in an attack by unidentified perpetrators.

Operational space: Access denials; stop and searches of aid convoys; national aid worker imprisoned (see [Operational space](#) on p. 6 for further information)

Road traffic accidents: No incidents identified.

Sexual violence: No incidents identified.

Terrorism: No incidents identified.

Unrest: No incidents identified.

Long-term threat patterns and recent changes

Based on data for January 2015-December 2017



Crime: Violent crime – robberies (predominately unarmed) and sexual violence. Petty crime – burglaries, fraud and thefts.



- National crime rates have reportedly increased in recent years. Criminals may target foreigners. Women may face physical and verbal harassment.
- Homicides, sexual assaults, robberies and break-ins are regularly reported. However, violent crimes tend to be situational, because the perpetrators typically have some level of familiarity with their victims.



- Petty crimes common in buses, trains and rickshaws. Rickshaw and taxi passengers can be vulnerable to attacks and to being robbed at gunpoint. Thieves often work in pairs on motorcycles. Passengers have been robbed in taxis, including airport taxis.
- Crime is highest in Dhaka. Other areas of concern include Chittagong, Sylhet, Feni and Khulna. Travel to the Chittagong Hill Tracts (districts of Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban) can be unsafe.



- Agency-reported crime incidents included actual and attempted unarmed robberies, burglaries, fraud, sexual violence (see [Sexual violence](#) on p. 6 for further information) and theft.
- NGO staff member attacked and shot in a daytime street robbery by 4-5 motorcycle-borne perpetrators (2016-06).

Type of location

- **Roads:** Nearly half of reported crime incidents occurred on the road, often while staff members were travelling in rickshaws.
- **Public buildings:** Mobile phone theft from female NGO staff member at Shahjalal International Airport (Dhaka).
- **Offices:** Laptop, audio equipment and digital cameras taken.
- **Residences:** Five crime incidents reported at staff residences. Computer equipment and phones taken.



Weapon use in crime incidents

- **Unarmed:** In 96% of reported crime incidents the perpetrators were unarmed.
- **Armed:** One reported crime incident during road travel involved firearm use.

Aid in Danger project reported locations



Long-term threat patterns and recent changes

Based on data for January 2015-December 2017



Road traffic accidents: Dangerous driving practices and poor infrastructure.



- RTAs are common and can pose a risk to staff.
- Traffic congestion, dangerous driving practices, poorly maintained vehicles and roads, livestock on roads, and a lack of street lighting all contribute to RTAs.
- Drivers can be impatient and show little consideration for pedestrians or general safe driving practices.
- Traffic police can be inefficient; enforcement of traffic regulations can be haphazard.
- Police are reportedly known to signal motorists to pull over and demand bribes for passage.



- Heavy traffic and dangerous driving in Dhaka are of particular concern. Other large city streets can be congested.



- 13 vehicle aid-worker-related road traffic incidents were identified by the Aid in Danger project.
- 77% of reported RTA incidents caused NGO staff injuries. There were no reports of RTAs causing NGO staff member deaths.
- Motorcycle accidents were reported more often than vehicle accidents.
- 92% of RTAs were attributed to dangerous driving practices.
- One RTA caused by infant running into the path of an NGO vehicle. Minor injuries to infant reported.
- An NGO worker engaged in an argument with traffic police over repeated bribery demands.

Aid in Danger project-reported locations of RTAs



Aid in Danger project identified RTA incidents, by year

| | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---------------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Fatal injuries | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Major injuries | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Minor injuries | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| No injuries | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| Total incidents per year | 0 | 3 | 10 |

Long-term threat patterns and recent changes

Based on data for January 2015-December 2017



 **Terrorism:** Presence at wrong place at wrong time during bombings or violence.



- Terrorist activity increased in 2016. The ongoing potential for extremist violence is credible and further attacks are possible.
- Acute political polarisation has played a prominent role in facilitating violent flare-ups, breakdowns in governance, social divisions, and the rise of extremist groups.
- Active anti-Western terrorist groups: Islamic State (IS), al-Qaeda in Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) or al-Qaeda in India (AI), Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), Ansar al-Islam, Ansarullah Bangla Team, and Harakat ul-Jihad al-Islami Bangladesh (HUJI-B).



- Attacks have taken place around religious occasions and public holidays. The government tends to attribute attacks to political opposition and local militants.
- Previous attacks have taken place in Dhaka, Khulna, Rangpur and Sylhet divisions.



- Targets have included: foreigners, religious minorities, police, secular bloggers and newspaper publishers .
- Infrastructure targets include cafés, bars, restaurants and military posts.



- 82% of NGO reports mentioning terrorism-related incidents were reported over the last 18 months (since July 2016).
- Five KIK incidents were attributed to or claimed by IS and Ansar al-Islam militants, and took place between September 2015 and July 2016.
- Four incidents of explosives use in terrorism incidents in Dhaka and Sylhet division led to security measures being taken to protect staff, assets and programmes. A crude bomb was found outside an NGO office; not targeted at NGO – available information suggests the target was the building next door.



Aid delivery disruption: Threats over aid activities.



- Ongoing Rohingya refugee crisis (see [Aid in Danger Rohingya Response](#) for further information).



- Death threats made towards NGO staff member via telephone and by letter over aid activities (2015-03; 2015-12, 2015-12).
- Potential reputational risks after an NGO was named in a negative media article.
- Three Rohingya refugees killed in a stampede during aid distribution in Kutupalong camp.



Sexual violence: From local males.



- Against NGO staff member from two males who robbed her of her mobile phone.

Unrest: Political, predominately BNP-led demonstrations, civil unrest linked to the Rohingya crisis.

Political

- Political tensions between government and opposition parties. Protests and demonstrations/*hartels* can quickly turn violent and lead to clashes with law enforcement agencies.
- BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation previously organised protests/*hartels*. Restrictions on freedom of movement common during demonstrations.



- These demonstrations occurred in Dhaka, including in the Gulshan and Baridhara areas of the city, as well as around the Parliament building, the Secretariat Area, the National Mosque, Dhaka University, Purana Paltan, Naya Paltan, Motijheel, Mirpur, Kawran Bazar and Shahbag.



- Over half of unrest-related incidents were due to demonstrations that led to security measures being taken to protect staff, assets and programmes. In addition:
- Election-related unrest led to security measures being taken to protect staff, assets and programmes.
- No NGO staff member deaths or injuries reported in the context of political unrest and demonstrations.



Operational space: Questioning and detention at IDP camps; access denials; new NGO regulations and NGO closures.



- The adoption of the Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Bill allows the suspension of the registration of foreign-funded organisations, or they can be closed down if they make inimical and derogatory remarks about the Constitution and constitutional bodies (2016-10).



- Nearly half of operational space-related incidents involved NGO staff member detentions involving personal issues and alleged links to terrorism while en route to Rohingya IDP camps. In addition:
- Five incidents of access denials to NGOs and staff members at IDP camps in Cox's Bazar.
- Several NGOs were banned from working with Rohingya IDPs amid concerns over the radicalisation of displaced Muslims in IDP camps (2017-10).
- LINGO staff member imprisoned on charges that included passing state information to Myanmar (2017-10).



Reported KIK incidents (12)

The table below lists KIK incidents reported between January 2016 and December 2017. KIK incidents are any incidents that resulted in a staff member being killed, injured or kidnapped. KIK includes beaten, kidnapped, killed, missing, tortured, and wounded.

| | | |
|---------|----------------------------|--|
| 2017-12 | Southwest region | LNGO staff member killed by gunfire and a homemade bomb in an attack by unidentified perpetrators. |
| 2017-07 | Rajshahi division | NGO staff member kidnapped while on way home from work by perpetrators who demanded a ransom. The staff member was later rescued by the police, who arrested the perpetrators. |
| 2017-01 | Chittagong division | Unspecified number of NGO staff members assaulted after intervening in a dispute between a staff member and family members. |
| 2016-08 | Cox's Bazar | NGO security guard physically assaulted by a relative of an NGO guesthouse landlord. The perpetrator was reportedly drunk when the incident happened. |
| 2016-07 | Dhaka | Seven NGO international staff members killed in a terrorist attack on a restaurant frequented by ex-pats. |
| 2016-06 | Dhaka | NGO staff member shot in the leg by 4-5 motorcycle-borne perpetrators during a robbery while on his way to work. |
| 2016-05 | Khulna division | NGO volunteer doctor killed by three motorcycle-borne perpetrators armed with machetes. IS claimed responsibility, citing religious motivations. |
| 2016-04 | Dhaka | NGO national staff member hacked to death with machetes in his apartment. Ansar al-Islam claimed responsibility. |
| 2016-03 | Sylhet division | One NGO staff member stabbed in the throat with a knife during a personal dispute with another staff member who was later arrested. |
| 2015-10 | Rangpur division | NGO international volunteer fatally shot by two motorcycle-borne perpetrators. IS claimed responsibility. |
| 2015-10 | Location unknown | NGO international staff member killed in a reported IS-inspired attack. |
| 2015-09 | Dhaka | NGO international staff member fatally shot in a suspected premeditated attack by three armed men. IS claimed responsibility. |

Weapon use in KIK incidents

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 - 83% of KIK incidents involved weapons use.
 - Six incidents involved NGO staff members being killed or injured by firearms.
 - Three KIK incidents reported perpetrators being armed with knives or machetes.
 - One report of explosive weapons use killing an NGO staff member.