

Myanmar Situation

05 MAY 2022

The volatile situation in Myanmar following the 01 February 2021 coup has **increased armed conflict and subsequent population displacement** both within the country and across borders, including in Thailand.

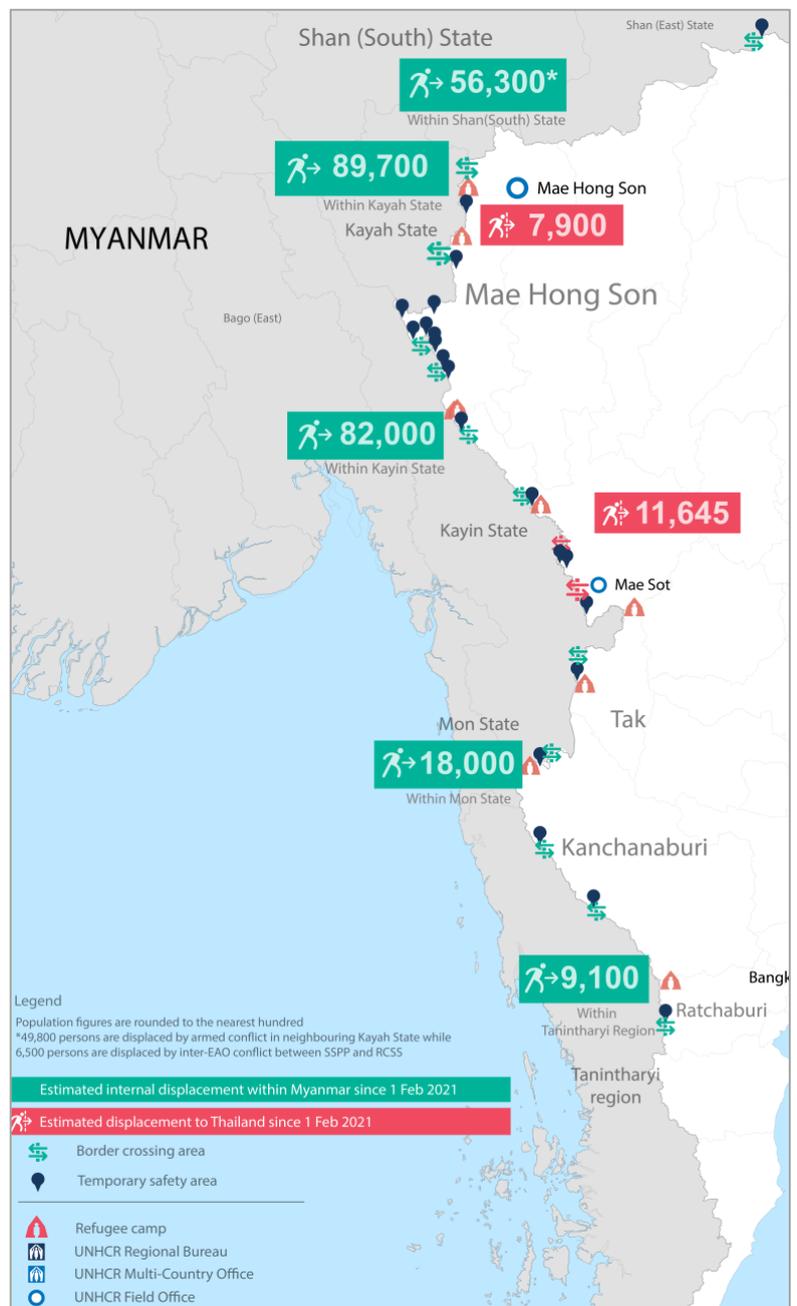
Since 17 March, **2,655 Myanmar refugees have crossed into Thailand**, according to the Royal Thai Government (RTG). The refugees have sought safety in Tak province and there are **1,543 refugees remaining** on the Thai side of the border according to the RTG.

Refugees are sheltered in **temporary safety areas (TSA)**, which are placed under the general jurisdiction of the Royal Thai Army by the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) established by the RTG in March 2021.

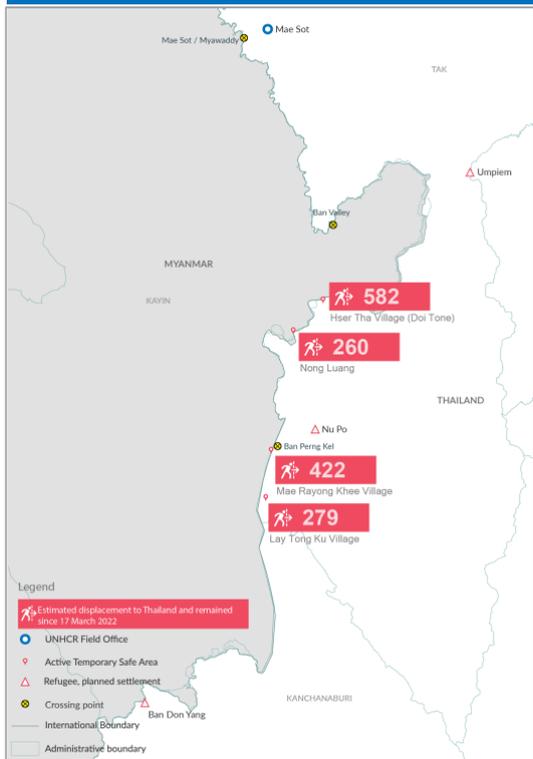
SITUATION OVERVIEW ON THE THAI MYANMAR BORDER

In Kayin State, the Tatmadaw conducted airstrikes on 10 April, targeting opposition groups as fresh fighting broke out for control of the town of Lay Kay Kaw in Myawaddy Township. The Tatmadaw is believed to be reinforcing the area with more manpower. Lay Kay Kaw has mainly been under the control of the Karen National Union (KNU) in recent months, but the Tatmadaw has at times sought to reassert control, and fighting broke out last December. The KNU reported that March had been the deadliest month for the Tatmadaw in 2022, with more than 400 soldiers killed in over 500 clashes. On 15 and 17 April, heavy fighting took place in the area opposite Umphang District. Myanmar troops and its ally, the Border Guard Force (BGF), are in control of the regions from Lay Kay Kaw to Waw Lay. **The Tatmadaw have expanded their military presence in Law Kay Kaw, Thay Baw Boe, U Kra Tha, and Kanele Tha.** They have carried out a series of airstrikes and surveillance in these areas. The offensive has resumed with both air and ground operations. Myanmar troops and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) are now stationed in strategic locations along the border opposite Mae Sot and Phop Phra districts. In the Tanintharyi region, fighting near the Thai border has been defused. On 17 and 18 April, protests against the Military occurred in Taku Village and Pulaw Township in Myeik District and Ye Phyu township - Dawei district.

As of 2 May, there have been **578,200 internally displaced people (IDPs) in Myanmar since 1 February**, of whom **236,000 are in the southeast provinces – Kayah, Shan, Kayin, Mon States, and Tanintharyi and Bago regions.**



THE CURRENT RESPONSE TO THE REFUGEE SITUATION IN TAK PROVINCE



The refugees are currently sheltered in Temporary Safety Areas (TSA) in **four different locations in Umphang district** (Hser Tha/Doi Tone; Nong Luang; Lay Tong Ku; Mai Royong Kee), which are placed under the general jurisdiction of the Royal Thai Army by the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) established by the RTG in March 2021. The largest groups are being accommodated at Hser Tha village (Doi Tone) (582 individuals) and Mai Royong Kee village (422) in the Umphang district. **An estimated additional 3,000 individuals** have sought safety in Umphang district in eight different rural locations. They are not included in the official statistics published by the RTG and receive assistance from the local communities, CBOs, and faith-based organizations. While some stay in villages with relatives and friends, others stay in open areas, including a cave.

While partners continue to advocate for being granted direct access to Temporary Safety Areas (TSA), humanitarian assistance is distributed to refugees via local partners and the authorities. The protection sector via IRC has provided 60 boxes of sanitary pads and 100 sets of women’s underwear at the TSAs in Umphang. Only a few

requests have been made for assistance, mostly NFIs, to the Field Inter-Sector Working Group in Tak province. On 2 and 3 May, sleeping mats, mosquito nets, and plastic sheets were provided to some 200 new arrivals in Mai Royong Kee (TSA) by **the NFI and Shelter sectors** upon request by the Ministry of Interior. Besides, **COERR** has been able to identify Persons with Specific Needs (PSNs) in some of the unofficial sites, thanks to local volunteers. However, the **Shelter Sector** continues to have concerns over the sustainability of current shelters in Temporary Safety Areas, given that some refugees have been staying now for over a month. **The WASH sector** has provided a large water tank and water gallons in Nong Luang, following the earlier provision of bottled drinking water and materials to construct eight latrines in Hser Tha village and four latrines in Nong Luang. Nevertheless, the challenges remain in ensuring that the RTG administrated TSAs meet minimum standards for WASH. The Ministry of Interior has requested sandbags to build a small dam in Nong Luang, which were provided by the camp committee of Nupo temporary shelter (Umphang district). **The Health sector** has been coordinating with Umphang hospital for refugees to receive health services and has provided the hospital with 100 mosquito nets for distribution. In the meantime, hygiene kits have been distributed to all households in Hser Tha/Doi Tone (TSA). **The Education sector/ Save the Children** has distributed home-based learning kits for children. Finally, **the Food Sector/TBC** has provided food assistance through local communities and faith-based organizations. In terms of needs, more tents and mosquito nets are needed by refugees in Hser Tha (Doi Tone) and other places since mosquito-borne diseases are endemic to the areas. Dignity kits are in high need even if there have been some distributions from aid agencies. According to the village chief of Nong Luang and Pueng Klerng village, food and latrines are inadequate for the refugee population.

PREPAREDNESS ACTIVITIES IN MAE HONG SON AND CHIANG MAI

In light of security development in Shan State and the northern border, **UNHCR Field Office in Mae Hong Son** and partners engage with local stakeholders for border monitoring and preparation for possible influxes. In this sense, UNHCR met with the local police and immigration authorities in Chiang Mai Province earlier this month. The purpose was to learn and analyze the movement of people from Shan State and the local plans and responses to the ongoing situation in the affected districts in the province, as well as to strengthen communication with the relevant local RTG agencies.

