

MYANMAR | Operational Update

Since the military takeover on 1 February, insecurity and armed clashes continue to be reported across much of the country with arrest, detention and use of excessive force against protestors by police and security forces. Disruptions to banking services, communications, healthcare and supply chains ensue, while armed conflict in the north- and southeast resumed and intensified between the Tatmadaw and ethnic armed organizations (EAOs), and/or People's Defence Forces (PDFs) resulting in displacement and civilian casualties.

Throughout the reporting period, UNHCR and partners continued providing critical life-saving humanitarian assistance, while following the development of the situation closely to understand the full impact on people of concern (PoCs), including IDPs, stateless populations and host communities. Early warning systems, initiated by UNHCR and partners, are employed to detect changes on the ground which could impact on operations and PoCs with the view to inform timely mitigating measures and responses.

At the same time, within this rapidly evolving context, the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis continues to pose additional challenges to already strained or disrupted health services, particularly as cases begin to surge mid-year. While integrating COVID-19 prevention and response into regular programming, UNHCR takes proactive measures to adapt in an agile manner to the evolving context in order to minimize risks to PoCs and to devise ways in which to continue interventions that support them.



Disclaimer: The names shown, the boundaries and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by UNHCR

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

600,000

Estimated stateless Rohingya in Rakhine State, of which some **144,000** are living in 21 displacement camps as well as among the host community since 2012

570,320

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in Rakhine, Chin, Kachin, Shan, Kayin, Mon states, and Bago (east), Sagaing and Magway regions, including some **93,000*** in around **200** sites in Rakhine and southern Chin displaced due to the AA-MAF conflict, and an estimated **200,000** due to the resumption and intensification of clashes between the Tatmadaw and ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) after 1 February

42

Townships across Rakhine, Chin, Kachin, and Shan (North) states, and the south-east where UNHCR has consulted with communities through the [Early Warning Systems](#)

119,669

Displaced and affected people in Myanmar supported with basic [non-food items](#) and [shelter support](#) by UNHCR and partners in the first half of 2021

Financial requirements in 2021 (as of 22 June 2021)

USD 52.7 million (29% funded)

UNHCR in Myanmar works with partners and relevant stakeholders to progressively realize favourable and inclusive protection environment so that its populations of concern have access to rights, services, and sustainable solutions, aligned to people-centred and age, gender, and diversity principles. UNHCR's strategic priorities are; responsive humanitarian protection and assistance delivery; contributing to improving legal/policy frameworks and the human rights environment; promoting resilience and phased pathways to durable solutions.

HIGHLIGHTS | January - June 2021

From **January to June 2021**, UNHCR Myanmar has reached **76,276** individuals with non-food item (NFI) support and **43,393** individuals with emergency and transitional shelter support. **423** protection monitoring missions were carried out and at least **4,813** remote monitoring calls were made. At least **19,845** persons with specific needs (PSNs), their families and community members benefitted from support including cash assistance, home visits and referrals, and in-kind support (e.g. NFIs). Approximately **70** community-based projects, aimed at fostering social cohesion and improving community infrastructure, were completed or underway.

South-east

- Sustained armed clashes in the southeast region of Myanmar between the Tatmadaw and ethnic armed organizations (EAOs), including the use of airstrikes, have led to the displacement of an estimated 176,900 people, around 7,000 of whom crossed the border into Thailand, subsequently returning to Myanmar and remaining displaced internally.
- In response to the rapidly growing humanitarian needs in view of recent new displacement in the southeast, UNHCR has redoubled efforts to ensure that the life-saving basic needs of people of concern are met in a timely manner. Since the intensification of armed conflict resulting in increased displacement, critical **non-food items (NFIs)** have reached 10,012 individuals (1,835 households) in Kayin and Kayah states and Bago (East) region.
- In the first half of the year, the implementation of **community-based projects** in Kayin State progressed with an aim of improving infrastructure and supporting peaceful co-existence among communities. Ten projects are completed or in various stages completion. These include the construction of primary schools, provision of IT equipment and construction of a dormitory, WASH improvements in schools, construction of wooden bridges, provision of gravity flow water systems, the distribution of school furniture, and solar streetlight installation. These projects are expected to benefit at least 6,400 people in 12 villages.
- In coordination with the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS), UNHCR facilitated four first aid and trauma **trainings** in Kayah State targeting members of the community and civil society organizations (CSOs).
- Between 3-18 June, UNHCR participated in joint inter-agency rapid needs assessments in Kayah and Shan (South) states to assess the humanitarian situation in 75 IDP sites where some 72,715 IDPs reside. Key findings include identification of protection risks such as lack of gender segregated living spaces, psychological trauma, absence of learning activities, unsafe conditions for collecting water; health concerns including lack of access to health facilities, lack of hygiene/sanitary kits; insufficient food supplies; and lack of livelihood opportunities. An insecure environment has resulted in movement restrictions for IDPs in 20 per cent of assessed locations, and an estimated 50 per cent of IDPs do not possess civil documentation – a requirement for passing checkpoints in many cases.



NFI distribution in Kayin State. Photo: UNHCR

Kachin & Shan (North)

- As of 28 June, over 14,100** individuals remain displaced in Kachin and Shan (North) states due to the resumption and intensification of armed clashes since March between the Tatmadaw and EAOs.
- UNHCR and partners continue to provide **support to persons with specific needs (PSNs)**, including persons with disabilities, elderly, single/female headed households, and those with serious medical conditions, through provision of **emergency cash assistance** reaching 520 PSNs and their families this year. The support is aimed at addressing their most pressing needs such as medical expenses while reducing the risk of resorting to negative coping mechanisms such as borrowing money, taking on debt, or reducing expenditure on key items including water, food, education and healthcare.
- UNHCR continues to provide **non-food items (NFI) and shelter support** to meet the needs of displaced persons. In the first half of 2021, UNHCR distributed NFI items including blankets, mosquito nets, plastic mats, kitchen sets, tarpaulins, solar lights, soap, and jerry cans to 10,072 individuals (2,418 households) in Kachin and Shan (North) states. Shelter support, including emergency and transitional assistance, renovations, and maintenance benefitted 1,425 individuals (288 households).
- In 2021, UNHCR and partners completed eight **community-based projects** aimed at improving conditions in communities and strengthening social cohesion in several locations in Kachin and Shan (North) states, benefitting 698 households, or around 4,000 individuals. These projects include construction and renovation of school buildings, the construction of gravity flow water systems, and the construction of a community hall with involvement from community members.



NFI distribution in a displacement site in Shan (North), Photo: UNHCR

**Displacement figures for the northeast (Kachin and Shan (North) states) are according to OCHA data as of 28 June 2021

Rakhine & southern Chin

- As of April 2021, over 93,000 persons remain displaced across around 200 sites and in host communities in Rakhine and southern Chin states in connection with the Arakan Army (AA) and Myanmar Armed Forces (MAF) conflict. In addition, due to recent conflict since 1 February, some 10,000 individuals remain displaced in Chin State, while around 15,000 people have sought refuge in neighbouring India according to estimates by the Indian state governments.
- [Support to displacement sites and IDP camps](#) remained ongoing throughout the first half of 2021 despite operational challenges in the post 1 February and COVID-19 context. Since January 2021, UNHCR provided non-food items (NFIs), including blankets, mosquito nets, sleeping mats and kitchen sets, to 26,011 Rohingya (5,082 households), as well as to a further 17,714 individuals (4,444 households) displaced by the AA-MAF conflict. Families affected by hazards such as flooding of fire outbreaks are provided with emergency shelter support, reaching 39,758 individuals (8,267 households) so far in 2021, while an additional 2,210 individuals (408 households) received transitional shelter support such as the reconstruction of long houses. In addition, 110 longhouses reconstructed by operational partners have received UNHCR in-kind roofing material. Each long house has the capacity to house 40 individuals.
- In northern townships of Rakhine, UNHCR undertook field visits and conducted assessment for [persons with specific needs \(PSNs\)](#), including persons with disabilities, elderly or single/female headed households, distributing NFIs to 12,467 vulnerable individuals, reaching 2,444 families. In some locations, particularly vulnerable people were provided with solar panels, and in a few urgent cases, PSNs received multi-purpose cash assistance. A further 4,761 PSNs were supported in central Rakhine through regular home visits carried out by partners and referrals to relevant service providers.
- Field activities within the framework of creating conditions for sustainable solutions for displaced persons from Rakhine State remain ongoing. Since January 2021, 12 [community-based projects \(or Quick Impact Projects\)](#) reached technical completion, these include the installation of solar lighting and the construction/rehabilitation of roads, boreholes, and ponds. Some 40 additional community-based projects in 16 village tracts are currently underway through community engagement.



Engaging communities in shelter rehabilitation in a Kaman IDP camp. Photo: UNHCR



Longhouse in a Rohingya IDP camp. Photo: UNHCR

COVID-19 response

- At the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, UNHCR Myanmar adopted a 'stay and deliver' policy. Since then, UNHCR has integrated COVID-19 prevention and response activities into regular programming. Activities have focused on continuing, adapting and increasing delivery of protection and assistance, while ensuring fair and equal access to essential services for internally displaced persons and stateless populations. UNHCR is working closely with partners to assess the situation and ensure that preparedness and preventative measures are in place to respond to the recent increase in COVID-19 cases observed mid-year.
- Over the first half of the year, COVID-19 awareness raising activities remained ongoing in areas where UNHCR has presence. Read more about UNHCR's [US \\$9.4 million programme](#) in 2020 aimed at ensuring the inclusion of persons of concern in Myanmar's COVID-19 response [here](#).

Working in partnership

- UNHCR Myanmar collaborates closely with relevant stakeholders including UN agencies, international and local NGOs, as well as other humanitarian and development partners. The Agency is an active member of the UN Country Team (UNCT), the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and the Cooperation Partners Group (CPG). As part of the inter-agency response in Kachin, Shan (North) and central Rakhine states, UNHCR leads the Protection Sector and the Shelter, Non-food Items (NFI), Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster at the national and sub-national levels. In the three northern townships of Rakhine State, UNHCR coordinates the humanitarian response through the Maungdaw Inter-Agency Group (MIAG) under the overall leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO). UNHCR also co-chairs, alongside UNDP, the South-East Working Group (SEWG), which has been the main forum for coordination and discussion related to the peace process and major development issues, and chairs state/regional Inter-Agency Coordination in Kayin and Kayah states. In response to the deteriorating situation in the southeast of Myanmar, UNDP and UNHCR have strengthened the humanitarian pillar of the SEWG.
- Read more about the regional impact of the current crisis in Myanmar [here](#).

Communication with communities

- Despite operational constraints experienced post-1 February 2021 as well as due to COVID-19 related restrictions, UNHCR has maintained and enhanced effective communication with communities during the reporting period, including through the Early Warning Systems. In the first half of the year, UNHCR carried out **423 protection monitoring missions**, and when physical presence was not possible employed remote methodologies of maintaining regular contact with communities, making at least **4,813 phone calls** to people of concern.
- **Community feedback mechanisms** were strengthened during the first half of the year. UNHCR has taken measures to formalize and enhance community awareness and engagement in community feedback mechanisms. Standardized complaints mechanisms in camps were further strengthened in the first half of 2021, with 12,000 submissions received and followed-up with by Camp Management Agencies (CMAs) in central Rakhine; CMAs also support the identification of people with specific needs and referrals processes. In the southeast, existing community-based protection mechanisms enabled effective two-way communication with communities, which contributed to the success of the early warning systems in the SE and facilitated communities to act as first responders.
- UNHCR has taken steps to **operationalize age, gender and diversity/ gender equality and women's empowerment (AGD/GEWE)** approaches throughout programmes and activities. For example, awareness raising sessions on AGD/GEWE issues have been conducted in communities as part of regular activities. In addition, in missions to IDP camps UNHCR has engaged with relevant stakeholders and community groups including persons with disabilities, elderly, women and youth, to learn about existing AGD-AAP (accountability to affected populations) good practices while also identifying gaps to inform follow-up.

Early warning system

- Following 1 February, UNHCR, with support from partners, put in place **early warning systems (EWS)** in areas of responsibility including in Rakhine and southern Chin states, Kachin and Shan (North) states, and in the southeast, enhancing communication with communities, including through direct contact with communities. The EWS aims at analyzing changes in the situation on the ground, including human rights violations and the potential impact on people of concern, to inform timely mitigating measures and responses by UNHCR and partners. Some trends observed since the onset of the crisis include new appointments of township and village administrators, price increases on basic commodities, reimposition of previously lifted reporting rules and new limitations on freedom of movement in some locations – impacting stateless populations in particular, new displacement both internally and cross-border, intensification of armed clashes between the Tatmadaw and ethnic armed organizations (EAOs), particularly in Kachin, Shan (North) and the southeast. Among key concerns identified among communities include water shortages during the dry season, challenges accessing basic services, including health and education, constraints related to freedom of movement, and concerns related to safety and security.

UNHCR Myanmar's programme in 2021 is in partnership with:



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For more information please see: UNHCR Myanmar Operational Data Portal | Refugee Response in Bangladesh Operational Portal | Thailand-Myanmar Cross Border Portal | Global Shelter Cluster - Myanmar | Global CCCM Cluster - MYANMAR | Or contact: Stephanie Ferry, Reporting Officer (ferry@unhcr.org).