

*This report is produced by OCHA Yangon in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It covers the period from 20 to 25 March 2013. The next report will be issued on or around 27 March.*

## I. HIGHLIGHTS/KEY PRIORITIES

- The Government estimates that over 12,000 persons have been displaced following the inter-communal violence that erupted on 20 March in Meikhtila, Mandalay Region. The number of casualties is yet to be confirmed. Some spontaneous return is being reported.
- Curfew and state of emergency has been imposed in Meikhtila, Tharzi, Yamethin and Tatkon townships on 20 March following security incidents. Additional troops have been deployed in the area.
- The Government established a relief management committee on 22 March, including local authorities and led by the Deputy Minister of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MoSWRR).
- The Government is distributing food and water and the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) volunteers are providing health assistance as well as some family kits. A UN/NGOs rapid assessment team was dispatched from Yangon, Mandalay and Magway to assess immediate needs on 24 March.

## II. Situation Overview

The inter-communal violence began on 20 March with an argument in a gold shop in the Eastern Market of Meikhtila, Mandalay Region, which escalated quickly with crowds setting fire to business properties, religious buildings and houses.

The Government estimates that over 12,000 people have been displaced by the violence, including some 9,710 now in six temporary locations (schools, football stadium) and another 2,800 in local monasteries. These figures, according to the Deputy Minister MoSWRR, who is in charge of the response, are still provisional. Reports indicate that another unspecified number of people may have fled the area. Media reports indicate several casualties and fatalities but numbers are still unclear and vary depending on the source.

The violence continued throughout the night and into the 21<sup>st</sup> of March, subsequently spreading to other areas of the town and in the neighbouring town of Tharzi on 22 March. In Meikhtila, although the atmosphere remains tense, there are no reports of violence since 22 March. However, other minor incidents occurred in Tharzi, Yamethin and Tatkon townships on 23 March. The Meikhtila market remains closed although a number of shops in the area reopened on the weekend.



The government deployed additional troops to control the situation and declared a curfew from 18:00 to 6:00 on 20 March and subsequently the State of Emergency in Meikhtila and 3 neighboring townships: Tharzi, Wandwin and Ma Hlaing on 22 March. High-level Government and UN delegations visited the area and appealed for calm. The Inter-faith Friendship Organization issued a statement calling for restoration of peace and stability on 23 March. On the same day, the Government has requested international partners to mobilize humanitarian assistance.

### III. Humanitarian Needs and Response

The Government has been providing, since the beginning of the unrest, food and water to the displaced, through the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. The Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) and the Ministry of Health are providing health assistance to the displaced locations. MRCS has also distributed some family kits. ICRC has deployed to the area to support MRCS efforts and has provided shelter materials. Private donors have also supported those affected through the recently established committees for peace and stability in the Mandalay region.

Initial findings from the Government's Emergency Management Team for Shelter and WASH needs are: aluminum sheets for 1,300 households; 5,000 bags of cement to construct Water containments; and 20 rolls of tarpaulin. Other sectoral needs are yet to be announced.

On 24 March, a joint UN/NGO rapid assessment team was deployed to the area. Following discussion with the authorities to ascertain needs, the team moved to visit camps on the same day. The team (composed of Action Aid, MRCS, Save the Children, UNICEF, UNOCHA, WFP) agreed with the Deputy Minister MoSWRR assessment proceedings before moving to the field locations. Most of the camps are expected to be assessed by 26 March, when an initial discussion on response planning will take place with the Government.

Humanitarian agencies will continue to monitor the response and offer assistance while operating in full respect of the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.

### IV. Contact

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