



# THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR

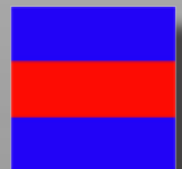
**The 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census**

**The Union Report: Religion**

**Census Report Volume 2-C**



**Department of Population**  
**Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population**  
**MYANMAR**  
**July, 2016**



# The 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census

## The Union Report: Religion

Census Report Volume 2-C

For more information contact:

Department of Population  
Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population  
Office No. 48  
Nay Pyi Taw  
**MYANMAR**

**Tel: +95 67 431 062**  
**[www.dop.gov.mm](http://www.dop.gov.mm)**

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## Foreword

The 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census (2014 Census) was conducted with midnight of the 29th of March 2014 as the Census Night. This is the first Census in thirty years; the last was conducted in 1983. Census planning and execution was led by the former Ministry of Immigration and Population, now the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population (MOLIP) on behalf of the Government – in accordance with the Population and Housing Census Law, 2013. The main objective of the 2014 Census was to provide the Government, and other stakeholders, with essential information on the population, in regard to demographic, social and economic characteristics, housing conditions and household amenities. By generating information at all administrative levels, it was also intended to provide a sound basis for evidence-based decision-making, and to evaluate the impact of social and economic policies and programmes in the country.

The results of the 2014 Census have been published to date in a number of volumes. The first was the Preliminary Results (Census Volume 1), which was released in August 2014. The Census Main Results were launched in May 2015. These included *The Union Report* (Census Report Volume 2), *Highlights of the Main Results* (Census Report Volume 2-A), and the reports of each of the 15 States and Regions (Census Report Volume 3[A - O]). The report on *Occupation and Industry* (Census Report Volume 2-B) was launched in March 2016.

This report shows that Buddhism is the faith professed by the great majority of people in Myanmar, followed by Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Animism, and all other faiths, which are equally entitled to freely profess and practice their religion without discrimination. Hence I would invite you to welcome the release of census data on religion as an insight into the diverse array of faiths that characterize our country.

The Government extends its sincere gratitude and thanks to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and development partners, namely Australia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America for their financial and technical support to undertake the Census.

Special appreciation also goes to the officers of the MOLIP, who worked arduously throughout the Census process. All leaders at union and community levels who supported the Census process in every part of the country deserve recognition and commendation. Last but not least, I express my gratitude to the people of Myanmar for their participation in the Census enumeration. It is their answers that form the basis of the data in these reports. The Government will continue to draw upon the data contained in the Census reports to improve the welfare of all people in Myanmar and to affirm the diversity that exists in our country.



U Thein Swe  
Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population  
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

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## 1. Introduction

The 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census was conducted in March - April 2014<sup>1</sup>, after more than three decades without a census. Previous censuses were held in 1983 and 1973. The 2014 Census employed a *de facto* methodology where, with some exceptions, individuals were enumerated at the place they were residing on the 29th of March 2014 (Census Night). A population census gives information about a country at a particular moment in time. The information collected provides data on how many people live in the country, and their demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. Everyone who is present in a country at the time of a census is counted, regardless of gender, citizenship, ethnicity, religion, age, or other status.

In addition to providing benchmark data on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the population and households, censuses are unique sources of information for small geographical areas. Such disaggregated information is vital for planning and decision-making at national and subnational levels. Additional data uses include improved allocation of resources during the national budget process; the review of administrative and electoral boundaries; and the provision of public services and infrastructure such as schools, health facilities and roads. A census also provides data to monitor and report on national and international development commitments, including national development plans, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action, among others.

The results of the 2014 Census have been published to date in a number of volumes. The first was the Preliminary Results (Census Volume 1), which was released in August 2014. The Census Main Results were launched in May 2015. These included *The Union Report* (Census Report Volume 2), *Highlights of the Main Results* (Census Report Volume 2-A), and reports for each of the 15 States and Regions (Census Report Volume 3[A - O]). The report on *Occupation and Industry* (Census Report Volume 2-B) was launched in March 2016.

This report “Census Report Volume 2-C: The Union Report: Religion” is a supplement to “The Union Report, Volume 2”. It contains information on religion, as reported by respondents. This report presents the results in two parts. Part one presents the results for those enumerated during the Census, at the Union level and by State/Region. Part two provides considerations related to the non-enumerated population. Data on religion has not been made available earlier, due to the political changes that were taking place in the country, including the general election and the subsequent formation of a new Government.

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<sup>1</sup> The methodology of the 2014 Census is described in detail in *Department of Population (2015), Main Report (Census Volume 2)*. This publication can be referred to for a detailed description of the process of planning and implementation of the Census.

## 2. The non-enumerated population

The Census enumerated a total of 50,279,900 persons at the place they were present on the 29th March 2014. An estimated 1,090,000 persons residing in Rakhine State, 69,753 persons living in Kayin State and 46,600 persons living in Kachin State<sup>2</sup> were not enumerated in the Census. This represents an estimated total of 1.2 million non-enumerated people residing within Myanmar, and corresponds to 2.3 per cent of the overall population. When the enumerated population and non-enumerated population are combined, Myanmar’s population was 51,486,253 in March 2014.

The size of the non-enumerated population in Rakhine State is significant enough to have an impact on the results on religion at both the Rakhine State level and at the Union level. Consequently, the results presented in “Part I: Results for enumerated population” are inconclusive in terms of drawing a profile on the composition of religion in Rakhine State and at the Union level. “Part II: Results with considerations regarding non-enumerated populations” applies an assumption that the population not enumerated in Rakhine belong to one religious faith. The estimate of the non-enumerated population is drawn from the mapping data which was collected prior to the census enumeration, and constitutes a reliable source. The non-enumerated population in Rakhine belongs to a defined population group that is known to be primarily, if not wholly, of the Islamic faith.

## 3. Source of data

Information on religion was obtained for all persons who were enumerated in both conventional households and institutions. The available options for the respondents as detailed in the questionnaire were Buddhist, Christian, Islam, Animist, Hindu, Other religion and No religion. Figure 2 shows the question on religion.

**Figure 2 Religion question in the 2014 Myanmar Census questionnaire**

The image shows a screenshot of a questionnaire titled "7. Religion". It lists seven options: Buddhist, Christian, Islam, Hindu, Animist, Other Religion, and No Religion. Below each option is a red radio button with a number inside: 1 for Buddhist, 2 for Christian, 3 for Islam, 4 for Hindu, 5 for Animist, 6 for Other Religion, and 7 for No Religion. The options and buttons are arranged in a vertical column.

*Source:* Department of Population (2015) Annex 1, pages 254-257.

<sup>2</sup> The reasons for non-enumeration in these States, and the basis of estimates are outlined in the Union Report, Census Report Volume 2.



## 4. Part I: Results for the enumerated population

The data presented on religion in this section represents only the population that was enumerated in the 2014 Census.

Table 1 provides an overview of the religious composition at the Union and State/Region levels for the enumerated population. The table includes a column highlighting the estimated non-enumerated population. At the Union level, the breakdown by religious composition of the enumerated population is 89.8 per cent Buddhist, 6.3 per cent Christian, 2.3 per cent Islam, 0.5 per cent Hindu, 0.8 per cent Animist, 0.2 per cent Other religion, and 0.1 per cent No religion. These percentages vary between States and Regions.

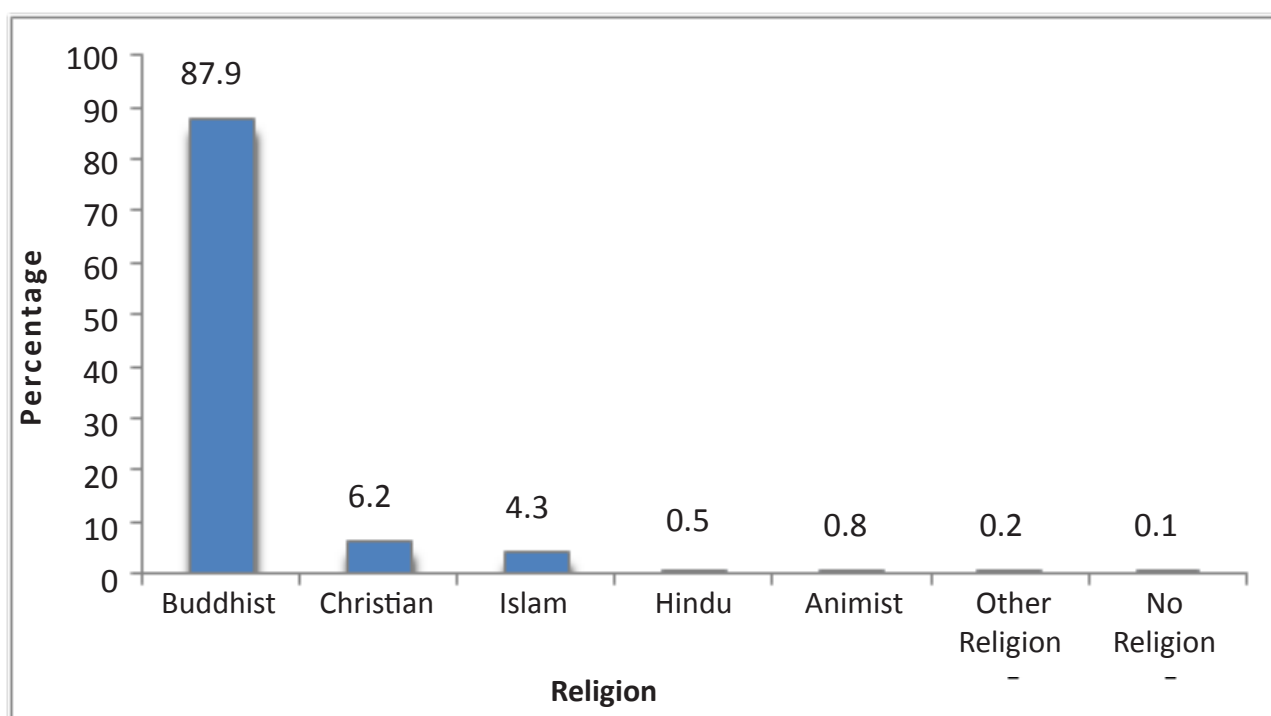
**Table 1 Number and percentage of persons by religion and State/Region for the enumerated population, and estimated non-enumerated population**

State/Region		Total	Religion							Estimated Non-enumerated population
			Buddhist	Christian	Islam	Hindu	Animist	Other religion	No religion	
Union	Number	50,279,900	45,185,449	3,172,479	1,147,495	252,763	408,045	82,825	30,844	1,206,353
	%		89.8	6.3	2.3	0.5	0.8	0.2	0.1	
Kachin	Number	1,642,841	1,050,610	555,037	26,789	5,738	3,972	474	221	46,600
	%		64.0	33.8	1.6	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.0	
Kayah	Number	286,627	142,896	131,237	3,197	269	5,518	3,451	59	
	%		49.9	45.8	1.1	0.1	1.9	1.2	0.0	
Kayin	Number	1,504,326	1,271,766	142,875	68,459	9,585	1,340	10,194	107	69,753
	%		84.5	9.5	4.6	0.6	0.1	0.7	0.0	
Chin	Number	478,801	62,079	408,730	690	106	1,830	5,292	74	
	%		13.0	85.4	0.1	0.0	0.4	1.1	0.0	
Sagaing	Number	5,325,347	4,909,960	349,377	58,987	2,793	89	2,928	1,213	
	%		92.2	6.5	1.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	
Tanintharyi	Number	1,408,401	1,231,719	100,758	72,074	2,386	576	567	321	
	%		87.5	7.2	5.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Bago	Number	4,867,373	4,550,698	142,528	56,753	100,166	4,296	12,687	245	
	%		93.5	2.9	1.2	2.0	0.1	0.3	0.0	
Magway	Number	3,917,055	3,870,316	27,015	12,311	2,318	3,353	1,467	275	
	%		98.8	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	
Mandalay	Number	6,165,723	5,898,160	65,061	187,785	11,689	188	2,301	539	
	%		95.7	1.1	3.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Mon	Number	2,054,393	1,901,667	10,791	119,086	21,076	109	1,523	141	
	%		92.6	0.5	5.8	1.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	
Rakhine	Number	2,098,807	2,019,370	36,791	28,731	9,791	2,711	759	654	1,090,000
	%		96.2	1.8	1.4	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.0	
Yangon	Number	7,360,703	6,697,673	232,249	345,612	75,474	512	7,260	1,923	
	%		91.0	3.2	4.7	1.0	-	0.1	-	
Shan	Number	5,824,432	4,755,834	569,389	58,918	5,416	383,072	27,036	24,767	
	%		81.7	9.8	1.0	0.0	6.6	0.5	0.4	
Ayeyawady	Number	6,184,829	5,699,665	388,348	84,073	5,440	459	6,600	244	
	%		92.1	6.3	1.4	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	
Nay Pyi Taw	Number	1,160,242	1,123,036	12,293	24,030	516	20	286	61	
	%		96.8	1.1	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	

## 5. Part II: Results with considerations regarding non-enumerated population

In the case of Kayin and Kachin States, the size of the non-enumerated population is not significant enough to change the proportion of religious groups at either the Union or State level. However, in the case of Rakhine State, the size of the non-enumerated population is significant enough to have an impact on the proportion of religious groups both at the State and Union levels. In Rakhine, an estimated 1.09 million people were not enumerated in the Census because they were not allowed to self-identify using a name not recognized by the Government. It is assumed that the non-enumerated population in Rakhine is mainly affiliated with the Islamic faith. Applying this assumption, Figure 3 shows the impact at the Union level of including the non-enumerated population in Rakhine State. Buddhists constitute 87.9 per cent of the total population of Myanmar, followed by Christians who make up 6.2 per cent, Islam at 4.3 per cent, Animists at 0.8 per cent, Hindus at 0.5 per cent, Other religion at 0.2 per cent and No religion at 0.1 per cent.

**Figure 3 Percentage of population (enumerated and non-enumerated) by religion\*, 2014 Census**



Note: \*Based on the estimated overall population, including both the enumerated and non-enumerated population (51,486,253), and on the assumption that the non-enumerated population in Rakhine State affiliate with the Islamic faith.

## 6. Trends

Table 2 details the percentage of the population of different religious groups in Myanmar based on the censuses of 1973, 1983 and 2014. Taking into consideration the assumptions on the religion of the non-enumerated population in Rakhine in 2014, Buddhists constituted 88.8 per cent of the total population in 1973, 89.4 per cent in 1983 and 87.9 per cent in 2014. Christians made up 4.6 per cent of the total population in 1973, 4.9 per cent in 1983 and 6.2 per cent in 2014. The percentage of the population whose religion is Islam was 3.9 per cent in both 1973 and 1983, and 4.3 per cent in 2014. The proportion of Hindus has remained constant at around 0.5 per cent over the forty year period.

Animists made up 2.2 per cent of the total population in 1973, 1.2 per cent in 1983 and 0.8 per cent in 2014. The percentage of “Other religion” was 0.1 per cent in both 1973 and 1983, and 0.2 per cent in 2014. The response option “No religion” represented 0.1 per cent of the total population in 2014 compared to less than 0.1 per cent in both 1973 and 1983.

**Table 2 Percentage of the population by religion in Myanmar based on the 1973, 1983 and 2014 censuses**

Religion	Percentage			
	1973	1983	2014*	2014**
Union	100	100	100	100
Buddhist	88.8	89.4	89.8	87.9
Christian	4.6	4.9	6.3	6.2
Islam	3.9	3.9	2.3	4.3
Hindu	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5
Animist	2.2	1.2	0.8	0.8
Other Religion	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
No Religion	***	***	0.1	0.1

**Note:** \* Percentages are based on the 2014 Census enumerated population (50,279,900).

\*\* Percentages are based on the estimated overall population, that is, the enumerated and non-enumerated populations (51,486,253). In the case of Rakhine State, where non-enumeration was significant, it is assumed that the non-enumerated population is predominantly affiliated with the Islamic faith.

\*\*\* is less than 0.1 per cent

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