

This update is produced by UNHCR and OCHA in Myanmar, in collaboration with the Maungdaw Inter-Agency Group and broader humanitarian partners. It was issued on 30 June 2020. The next update will be issued as more information becomes available.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **The security situation in northern areas of Rakhine State remains volatile**, with ongoing fighting and an increased presence of security forces in the area of Kyauk Tan village track in Rathedaung Township.
- Humanitarian partners are working to assess the scale and severity of impact on civilians, **however numbers are difficult to verify due to fluidity of the crisis**.
- According to initial estimates, based on reports by local partners and public sources, **some 1,500 people have been newly displaced across downtown Rathedaung**, with a further **1,300 displaced in Buthidaung, Ponnagyun and Sittwe townships**.
- **Rathedaung hosted some 14,575 internally displaced people (IDPs)** prior to the ongoing escalation of hostilities.
- Some assistance has been provided to people displaced, **but access to assess and respond to needs remains a challenge**, particularly in rural areas.
- **The new displacement is further aggravated by COVID-19 situation**, placing affected communities at additional risk, and adding to response challenges.



SITUATION OVERVIEW

On 25 June, the security situation deteriorated in the Kyauk Tan area of Rathedaung Township, following an announcement of a “clearance operation” by the Myanmar Armed Forces. While instruction for the operation was revoked by the Rakhine State Government on 26 June, local sources report that incidents continued in the area at the time of reporting.

According to local reports, as a result of an intensification of fighting, an increased presence of security forces both army and navy followed, with reports of shooting as well as shelling across several villages of the Kyauk Tan village tract. The scope and impact of clashes in the area are not fully known at this time, at least in part due to the limited access to the area by humanitarian workers.

On 28 June, the United Nations issued a [statement](#) expressing concern over the humanitarian impact of the conflict, and called on all parties to respect International Humanitarian Law, protect civilians and infrastructure and allow for humanitarian access. Similar concerns were echoed by the [diplomatic missions](#) and the [INGOs](#).

HUMANITARIAN IMPACT

The impact and severity of the hostilities on civilians is difficult to verify, due to the unpredictable nature of the situation and a lack of access by humanitarian organizations to affected areas. Local reports indicate that civilians,

including children, continue to be exposed to fighting. There have been reports of some 1,500 people fleeing from several village tracts including, Kyauk Tan, Htee Swea, Yae Myet, Kyauk Yan Thar Si, Kyayk Yan Thar Si, Tha Mee Hla, Nwar Hla Kyaw, La Mont Taing and Pyein Taw villages towards downtown areas of Rathedaung. Additionally, humanitarian partners report that close to 1,300 people have fled to other areas, with 340 people fleeing towards Buthidaung, some 400 to Ponnagyun and around 560 to Sittwe townships, as of 29 June, with few hundreds seeking shelter in these areas.



newly displaced

1,500 downtown Rathedaung

1,300 Buthidaung, Ponnagyun and Sittwe

Local reports also indicate population movement outside Kyauk Tan village tract, with small-scale displacements taking place from several village tracts in central eastern Rathedaung within the past week, including from Pyar Chaung Gyi, Htun Ya Wai and Kyein Tar, where there have also been recent clashes and security incidents. Initial information from agencies and local sources suggest that new arrivals are being hosted in different arrangements, including with host families, relatives previously displaced, and in public buildings, such as monasteries and

government warehouses. The number of people affected by the conflict is likely to be significantly higher than the early estimations. The vulnerability of affected populations is compounded by a lack of access for humanitarian partners to rural locations in Rathedaung as well as in Ponnagyun.

The new displacement is in addition to the 77,250 IDPs currently displaced in some 155 sites in central and northern Rakhine due to the conflict between the Myanmar Armed Forces and the Arakan Army, including some 14,575 persons hosted in Rathedaung township as of 21 June. This is in addition to more than 130,000 displaced people in Rakhine, most of whom are Rohingya, who have been displaced since 2012.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

NEEDS

- While a humanitarian partner provided food items to some 3,000 people in Rathedaung before the escalation of hostilities, initial reports indicate that immediate needs of those affected and displaced include food. In addition, water, sanitation and other necessities, such as hygiene items and dignity kits have been identified as emerging needs. There are also reports that those displaced continue to seek shelter.
- Further needs include continuation of COVID-19 risk communication messages as well as other preventive measures in host communities and displacement sites.

RESPONSE

- Operational partners are coordinating closely to assess the situation and respond to the needs based on the existing capacity on the ground, while additional capacity is being deployed where required.
- Coordination is also closely maintained with the Rakhine State Government, local partners, local Government authorities and civil society organizations.
- Efforts are focused on the response and getting support to the affected communities in a COVID-sensitive manner.

CHALLENGES

- Securing access to the newly displaced remains challenging, particularly in rural locations and is a key impediment to the response.
- Assessment is particularly challenging with the fluidity of the situation, conflicting reports and diverging figures reported.

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