

Burma and Bangladesh – Regional Crisis Response

APRIL 23, 2021

SITUATION AT A GLANCE

1 MILLION	106,000	126,000	99,000	884,041
People in Need of Humanitarian Assistance in Burma	IDPs in Protracted Displacement in Burma's Kachin and Northern Shan	IDPs—Originally Displaced in 2012—in Burma's Rakhine IDP Sites	IDPs Displaced by Burmese Military—AA Fighting in Rakhine and Chin	Refugees in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar
UN – January 2021	UN – March 2021	UN – March 2021	UN – March 2021	UNHCR – February 2021

- A major fire in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar District displaces more than 10,000 Rohingya refugee households in late March. In response, USG partners deliver food, health, nutrition, protection, shelter, and WASH assistance to affected households.
- Violence and insecurity in Burma escalate following the February 1 Burmese military coup d'état against the civilian government. The UN, USG, and humanitarian organizations call for an immediate end to violence against civilians.
- Clashes between Burmese military forces and ethnic armed organizations in Kachin, Kayin, and Shan generate additional displacement and humanitarian needs.



TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

For the Burma and Bangladesh Response in FY 2021

 USAID/BHA¹ \$18,400,000

 State/PRM² \$15,303,294

For complete funding breakdown with partners, see detailed chart on page 6

Total \$33,703,294
¹USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)

²U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM)

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

USG Partners Respond to Major Fire in Bangladesh Refugee Camps

A fire of unknown origin spread across three Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar District on March 22, resulting in 11 deaths and approximately 600 injuries, according to the Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG). The fire displaced more than 10,000 households and damaged approximately 1,600 facilities providing services for refugees and host community members, directly affecting more than 48,000 people. As of April 5, an estimated 12,500 people remained displaced as a result of the fire, while approximately 32,500 individuals had returned to the camps they previously resided in, the ISCG reports. As of April 15, a total of 84 fires had erupted in Cox's Bazar refugee camps in 2021, surpassing the 82 fires recorded during the entirety of 2020.

In response to heightened humanitarian needs following the March 22 fire, humanitarian organizations—including U.S. Government (USG) partners—are delivering food, health, nutrition, protection, shelter, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) assistance to affected households in Cox's Bazar. USAID/BHA partner the UN World Food Program (WFP) had distributed approximately 1.3 million prepared meals, more than 92,000 gallons of safe drinking water, and an estimated 15,200 rations of High Energy Biscuits to fire-affected households as of April 12, while State/PRM partner the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had provided approximately 317,000 gallons of safe drinking water and 11,000 jerry cans to affected households. In addition, USG partner the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) established temporary child-friendly spaces and nutrition screening sites and provided access to emergency latrines for more than 23,000 people, while USG partner the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has distributed more than 8,000 hygiene kits, in addition to providing health services, psychological first aid, and shelter assistance to vulnerable individuals. State/PRM partner the UN World Health Organization (WHO) also reached more than 9,500 individuals with psychological first aid. Moreover, the UN released \$14 million from its Central Emergency Response Fund for relief agencies to provide multi-sector assistance for approximately 82,000 people, and the European Union also announced \$588,000 in emergency funding to provide emergency shelter support and WASH assistance to households affected by the fire.

Violence Escalates Following Burma Military Coup; Fighting Drives Displacement in Kachin, Kayin, and Northern Shan

Relief actors continue to express concern over the escalating insecurity and violence in Burma following the February 1 military coup d'état against the civilian government. Burmese security forces have used lethal force in response to civilian protestors during recent weeks, resulting in more than 730 civilian deaths and hundreds of injuries between February 1 and April 18, international media report. The UN continues to condemn the escalated violence against civilians and call for a cessation of hostilities. The U.S. Embassy in Burma has also issued statements calling for an immediate end to the violence.

Clashes between Burmese military forces and ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) in various parts of the country have also escalated in recent weeks, resulting in new displacements and humanitarian needs. In southeastern Burma's Kayin State, fighting between the Burmese military and the Karen National Union—an opposing EAO—and subsequent Burmese military airstrikes that started March 27 reportedly displaced thousands of people within Kayin and neighboring Bago region, as well as displaced more than 3,800 people to Thailand, the UN reports. Since December 2020, clashes between EAOs and Burmese military forces have internally displaced more than 7,000 people in southeastern Burma. USAID/BHA continues to support partners to provide limited life-saving interventions in southeastern Burma amid continued access constraints. USAID/BHA support to the Myanmar Humanitarian Fund—managed by

the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)—is also facilitating emergency assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs) across several townships in Kayin.

Separately, clashes between Burmese military forces and the Kachin Independence Army in Kachin State from mid-March to mid-April resulted in civilian casualties and the displacement of nearly 5,000 people, according to the UN. The clashes represent the first major hostilities reported in Kachin since mid-2018. Meanwhile, Burmese military and EAOs continued to engage in clashes in northern Shan State during March and early April, resulting in the displacement of nearly 1,000 people in Hsipaw and Lashio townships between April 6 and 12; furthermore, more than 4,000 individuals in Shan's Kyaukme and Namtu townships remain displaced due to heightened insecurity since January. In addition, an estimated 95,500 and 9,800 IDPs displaced in 2011 continue to reside in state-managed protracted displacement camps in Kachin and Shan, respectively.

While insecurity has hampered humanitarian access to some areas in Kachin and Shan, USAID/BHA partners continue to provide life-saving assistance to displaced and other populations affected by insecurity in the region, including through food, health, protection, and WASH interventions. Furthermore, a USAID/BHA non-governmental organization (NGO) partner conducted protection assessment and monitoring activities in Kachin's Bhamo and Myitkyina townships and in Lashio in response to increasing hostilities in the area. As of early April, the UN reports that current humanitarian operations in the area are sufficient to meet persistent and emerging needs.

Prices of Food, Fuel, and Other Essential Commodities Increase in Burma

Ongoing civil unrest in Burma has disrupted local food markets and supply chains, causing the prices of fuel, rice, and other essential commodities to significantly increase across the country from January to mid-March, according to WFP. Coup-related disruptions caused gasoline and diesel imports to decline to the lowest recorded levels since August 2017, resulting in a more than 23 percent price increase countrywide. From January to March, the average prices of rice and cooking oil—staples in the Burmese diet—increased by approximately 5 and 18 percent, respectively. Rising prices were particularly pronounced in some areas of the country affected by insecurity, with the cost of rice increasing between 27 and 43 percent in Kachin's Bhamo, Mansi, and Putao townships and cooking oil prices rising by 32 and 26 percent in Kachin and central Rakhine State, respectively. The price increases, which have likely compounded acute food insecurity among vulnerable households, are primarily due to rising transportation costs, as well as related shortages of transport workers and limited banking operations in Burma following the coup, WFP reports. On April 19, WFP announced plans to provide food assistance for up to 2 million vulnerable people in urban areas and locations with newly displaced populations who require humanitarian assistance following the coup.

KEY FIGURES



1.7 Million

People supported
through FY 2020 BHA
emergency food
assistance

U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

USAID/BHA continues to support WFP to provide cash transfers for food, food vouchers, and locally, regionally, and internationally procured in-kind food assistance to populations in Burma and Bangladesh. Through WFP, USAID/BHA-supported food assistance reached nearly 1.7 million people in FY 2020, including approximately 355,000 vulnerable individuals in Burma and more than 1.3 million Rohingya refugees and host community members in Cox's Bazar. USAID/BHA also supports coordination and capacity-building activities among food security agencies in the two countries to

strengthen response efforts. Additionally, USAID/BHA assistance to UNICEF, WFP, and one NGO partner supports nutrition assistance in Burma, while State/PRM assistance to IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, and NGO partners supports the delivery of complementary livelihoods and nutrition services to vulnerable individuals in Bangladesh.



9
USG partners
implementing stand-
alone protection
interventions

PROTECTION

The USG supports nine partners to address protection concerns among people affected by violence and displaced populations in Burma's Chin, Kachin, Rakhine, and Shan states; host communities and Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh; and Rohingya refugees across Southeast Asia. USG-supported protection activities in Burma and Bangladesh aim to increase access to and the provision of protection services, including gender-based violence prevention services and case management, child-friendly spaces, community-based mental health and psychosocial support, and legal assistance. USG partners also work with the broader humanitarian community in Burma to advocate for access to distribute life-saving humanitarian assistance and to promote the delivery of protection services in areas with significant humanitarian access constraints.



\$6.7 Million
in FY 2020 funding for
shelter and settlements
emergency and DRR
activities

SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS

The USG provides shelter and site management assistance in Burma and Bangladesh to support newly displaced persons, improve living conditions, and strengthen resilience to the impact of cyclones and other natural disasters. With more than \$6.7 million in FY 2020 funding, USAID/BHA partners in Burma are constructing and repairing durable shelters and distributing essential household items for vulnerable IDPs in Kachin, Rakhine, and Shan, while partners in Bangladesh are conducting disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities to establish and strengthen shelters in host communities and refugee camps in Bandarban and Cox's Bazar districts. State/PRM-supported shelter assistance includes emergency shelter repairs and distribution of shelter materials, such as plastic sheeting to prevent roof leaks, complemented by site coordination and site management capacity-building activities. USG partners are also providing cash assistance for host community members and refugees to purchase local shelter materials.



5
NGO partners
implementing critical
WASH programming

WASH

The USG supports WASH programming in Bangladesh's Bandarban and Cox's Bazar districts and across Burma to ensure access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities, prevent communicable disease outbreaks, and mitigate the risk of acute malnutrition in vulnerable children and mothers. With USG funding, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), IOM, and five NGO partners are addressing critical WASH needs by installing handwashing stations and latrines, improving drainage and waste removal systems, providing safe drinking water and hygiene supplies, and strengthening community awareness of

proper WASH practices to reduce the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and other communicable diseases.

CONTEXT IN BRIEF

- Continued hostilities between Burmese military forces and EAOs since June 2011 in Kachin and northern Shan states has generated widespread displacement and exacerbated humanitarian needs. As of March 2021, more than 106,000 people remained displaced in Kachin and northern Shan, with many IDPs residing in areas outside of Burmese military control and with limited or no humanitarian access, hindering efforts to provide assistance to displaced and other populations in need.
- Burmese military forces launched large-scale and indiscriminate military operations in Rakhine's Buthidaung, Maungdaw, and Rathedaung townships following Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army attacks on northern Rakhine State checkpoints and police posts in October 2016 and August 2017 that have since been characterized by the international community as ethnic cleansing. More than 884,000 people had fled Burma into neighboring Bangladesh and taken shelter in Cox's Bazar's 34 refugee camps as of March 2021, while other refugees are sheltering in host communities, UNHCR reports. Refugee populations largely rely on humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs, including food, shelter, and WASH services. The Government of Bangladesh limits refugees' access to basic education services, capacity to engage in income-earning activities, and freedom of movement. Refugees and host communities in Cox's Bazar are also vulnerable to natural hazards such as cyclones and flooding.
- Approximately 99,000 civilians, mostly ethnic Rakhine, remained displaced in Rakhine and Chin states as of late March due to clashes between the Arakan Army and Burmese military forces, which have continued since November 2018. In addition, intercommunal violence in 2012 displaced tens of thousands of people in Rakhine, and approximately 126,000 people affected by the 2012 clashes remained displaced in the state as of March 2021. Displaced populations, as well as other vulnerable individuals, continue to lack access to basic services and livelihood opportunities due to ongoing tensions and movement restrictions. Many IDPs in Rakhine are Rohingya, a minority group not recognized by Burmese military forces and denied rights to citizenship, freedom of movement, and public services. As of January 2021, an estimated 600,000 ethnic Rohingya remained in Rakhine.
- On January 8, 2021, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Gwendolyn J. Cardno re-declared a disaster for Burma due to the ongoing complex emergency.
- On February 1, 2021, the Burmese military staged a coup d'état against the Burmese civilian government during which soldiers detained senior civilian government officials, including State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint, and announced a one-year state of emergency.

USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE BURMA-BANGLADESH RESPONSE IN FY 2021¹

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
FUNDING IN BURMA FOR THE REGIONAL CRISIS RESPONSE²			
USAID/BHA			
OCHA	Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management, and Assessments	Countrywide	\$400,000
WFP	Food Assistance—Cash Transfers, Local, Regional, and International Procurement; Nutrition	Chin, Kachin, Rakhine, Shan	\$18,000,000
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING IN BURMA			\$18,400,000
TOTAL USG FUNDING IN BURMA			\$18,400,000
FUNDING IN BANGLADESH FOR THE REGIONAL CRISIS RESPONSE²			
STATE/PRM			
IOM	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-sector	Bangladesh	\$4,000,000
TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING IN BANGLADESH			\$4,000,000
TOTAL USG FUNDING IN BANGLADESH			\$4,000,000
REGIONAL FUNDING FOR THE BURMA AND BANGLADESH REGIONAL CRISIS RESPONSE²			
STATE/PRM			
International Rescue Committee (IRC)	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-Sector	Thailand	\$5,079,298
	Humanitarian Assistance for COVID-19 - Multi-Sector	Thailand	\$623,357
IRC - The Border Consortium	Food and Nutrition	Thailand	\$5,188,139
IOM	Humanitarian Assistance - Multi-Sector	Indonesia	\$412,500
TOTAL STATE/PRM REGIONAL FUNDING			\$11,303,294
TOTAL USG REGIONAL FUNDING			\$11,303,294
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE BURMA-BANGLADESH RESPONSE IN FY 2021			\$33,703,294
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING FOR BURMA AND BANGLADESH IN FY 2021			\$18,400,000
TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING FOR BURMA AND BANGLADESH IN FY 2021			\$15,303,294
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE BURMA AND BANGLADESH REGIONAL CRISIS IN FY 2021			\$33,703,294

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. USAID/BHA and State/PRM funding includes funding for both Burmese refugees and asylum-seekers in the region, as well as IDPs inside Burma. Funding does not include USAID/BHA support for activities in Bangladesh that are not related to the Rohingya refugee response.

² USG funding represents publicly announced funding as of February 26, 2021.

³ Country-based pooled funds are country-based multi-donor humanitarian financing instruments managed by OCHA under the guidance of the Humanitarian Coordinator.

⁴ Figures represent supplemental International Disaster Assistance (IDA) and Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) funding committed for COVID-19 preparedness and response as of October 22, as well as non-supplemental funding to support COVID-19 preparedness and response.

⁵ Funding for populations in Burma and Bangladesh affected by the violence in Rakhine State totals approximately \$1.2 billion—including more than \$965 million in Bangladesh and more than \$243 million in Burma—since the outbreak of violence in August 2017. This includes more than \$639 million in State/PRM funding, more than \$550 million in USAID/BHA assistance funding for populations affected by the violence in Rakhine State and other vulnerable populations. The FY 2021 total includes funding from October 1, 2019, through February 26, 2021.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://www.interaction.org).

- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
 - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](https://www.cidi.org)
 - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at reliefweb.int.

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)