

MYANMAR | Operational Update

Since the military takeover on 1 February, insecurity and 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, healthcare, communications, and supply chains ensue, while tensions and confrontations in the north and southeast intensify between Tatmadaw and ethnic armed organizations.

UNHCR and partners continue providing critical life-saving humanitarian assistance, while following the development of the situation closely to better understand the full potential impact on people of concern, including IDPs and stateless populations. Early warning systems, initiated by UNHCR and partners, continue to be employed to detect changes on the ground which could impact on operations and people of concern with the view to inform timely mitigating measures and responses.

At the same time, in this rapidly evolving context, the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis continues to pose additional potential challenges to already strained or disrupted health services. While integrating COVID-19 prevention and response into regular programming, UNHCR will continue to monitor the impact on populations of concern given the heightened risks they may face with critical protection service and assistance increasingly restricted.



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

285,000

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in Rakhine, Chin, Kachin, northern Shan, Kayah states, and Bago (east) region, including some **93,100*** in **201** sites displaced due to the AA-MAF conflict, and at least **58,600** due to the resumption and intensification of clashes between the Tatmadaw and ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) in the north-and south-east

42

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

46,746

Displaced and affected people in Myanmar supported with basic [non-food items](#) and [shelter material](#) by UNHCR and partners in 2021

Financial requirements in 2021 (as of 04 May 2021)

USD 52.7 million (14% 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.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS | March - April 2021

Kachin & northern Shan

- The resumption and intensification of armed clashes in the Kachin and northern Shan states between the Tatmadaw and ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) since March have resulted in the displacement of over 18,000** individuals by 10 May, 14,300 of whom remain in displacement.
- In March and April, UNHCR and partners continued 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](#) benefitting 207 PSNs and their families. 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 or taking on debt, or reducing expenditure on key items including water, food, education and healthcare.
- UNHCR continues to provide [targeted non-food items \(NFI\)](#) to meet the needs of displaced persons. In March and April, UNHCR distributed NFI items including blankets, mosquito nets, plastic mats, kitchen sets, tarpaulins, solar lights, soap, and jerry cans to 1,034 families (4,354 individuals) in Kachin and northern Shan states.
- In March, UNHCR and partners, completed a [community-based project](#) in Mogaung Township, Kachin State. A communal hall was completed with the involvement of the community and will benefit 450 individuals. Since the beginning of the year, UNHCR and partners have completed several projects benefitting over 4,000 individuals. Examples of projects, which are aimed at improving conditions in communities and strengthening social cohesion, include the construction and renovation of schools, road construction, and the construction of gravity flow water systems.



NFI distributions in Hsipaw Township, northern Shan. Photo: UNHCR

Rakhine & southern Chin

- As of April 2021, there are over 93,100 persons displaced across 201 sites and in host communities in Rakhine and southern Chin states in connection with the AA-MAF conflict.
- [Support to displacement sites and IDP camps continue](#) despite limitations imposed by the current political and COVID-19 context. In March and April, UNHCR contributed 10,560 CGI sheets and 811kg of nails for shelter reconstruction through combined efforts of Shelter Cluster partners and UNHCR direct implementation in central Rakhine, and 1,351 families (6,755 individuals) in 31 displacement sites received shelter material to prevent damage during the rainy season in April. In addition, 48 families (240 individuals) received tarpaulins and rope as well as portable solar lamps.
- Based on assessments carried out in northern Rakhine townships to identify [persons with specific needs](#) in both villages and displacement sites, including persons with disabilities, elderly, and single/female headed households, 1,218 households (6,090 individuals) received NFI support, items included kitchen sets, mosquito nets, sleeping mats, jerry cans, blankets, tarpaulins.
- Field activities within the framework of creating conditions for sustainable solutions for displaced persons from Rakhine State remain ongoing. During the reporting period, a number of [community-based projects](#) have been progressing; two community water pond rehabilitation projects are near completion, as is the drilling of a borehole, while another borehole is in the early stages of work. The installation of 59 solar streetlights has been completed in three villages, and a road project and water pond project have been initiated in two village tracts. In another location, a project to improve village paths and access roads in two villages is more than halfway complete.



Road project, before and after compaction, Maungdaw. Photo:

**Displacement figures for the northeast (Kachin and northern Shan states) are according to OCHA data as of 10 May 2021

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 44,300 people, 5,000 of whom have crossed the border into Thailand and have subsequently returned to Myanmar and remain displaced internally.
- The current political situation continues to result in the suspension of many activities in the southeast, both of UNHCR's and partners', aside from a few including those carried out by UNHCR through direct implementation.
- On 27 April, UNHCR distributed [non-food items \(NFIs\)](#) to new IDPs who fled from airstrikes in Hpa-Pun Township, benefitting 46 families (191 individuals).
- In coordination with the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS), UNHCR facilitated two first aid and trauma [trainings](#) targeting 35 members of the community and civil society organizations (CSOs) in Loikaw Township, Kayah State. Given the positive feedback received, two more similar trainings will be organized for May targeting 60 individuals.
- In March and April, the implementation of [community-based projects](#) in Kayin State progressed with an aim of improving infrastructure and supporting peaceful co-existence among communities. Several projects are in various stages of completion, including solar streetlight installation and the construction of a primary school, which are nearing completion, and the construction of a health centre including staff housing and the construction of a study hall are nearly half complete.



Installation of solar streetlights, Kayin State. Photo: UNHCR

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 northern Shan 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, northern Shan and the southern east. Among key concerns identified among communities include water shortages during the dry season, challenges accessing health services, constraints related to freedom of movement, and concerns related to safety and security.
- Read more about the regional impact of the current political crisis in Myanmar [here](#).

COVID-19 response

- UNHCR Myanmar 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.
- During March and April, 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, northern Shan 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), and chairs state/regional Inter-Agency Coordination in Kayin and Kayah states.

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



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