

MYANMAR | Operational Update

Since the military takeover against the democratically elected government on 1 February, mass protests, met with excessive force by police and military, have continued unabated across the country and disruptions to banking services, healthcare, communications, and supply chains have ensued. The national Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) has continued to grow, while tensions and confrontations in the north and southeast intensified as ethnic armed organizations positioned themselves within the evolving political crisis.

UNHCR and partners continue providing critical life-saving humanitarian assistance, while assessing the situation closely to better understand the full potential impact on UNHCR's operations and on people of concern, including IDPs and stateless populations. UNHCR and partners initiated early warning systems aimed at detecting 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 poses 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 socio-economic impact on populations of concern given the heightened risks they may face with critical protection and assistance severely 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

226,000

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in Rakhine, Chin, Kachin, northern Shan, Kayin states, and Bago (east) region, including some **103,000*** in **182** sites recently displaced due to the AA-MAF conflict.

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](#)

27,594

Displaced and affected persons across Rakhine State supported with basic [non-food](#) items and [shelter material](#) by UNHCR and partners in 2021

Financial requirements in 2021 (as of 16 March 2021)

USD 52.7 million (8% 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 | Jan-Feb 2021

Kachin & northern Shan

- In January and February, UNHCR and partners continued [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 67 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 January and February, UNHCR distributed NFI items including blankets, mosquito nets, plastic mats, kitchen sets, tarpaulins, and jerry cans to 393 households (1,522 individuals) in Kachin State.
- During January, UNHCR and partners completed several [community-based projects](#) (or quick impact projects, QIPs) in several return locations in southern Kachin and northern Shan states, aimed at improving conditions in areas of return and strengthen social cohesion among communities. These projects, benefitting 3,427 individuals, include the construction of a new school building and the renovation of an old one, the construction of three gravity flow water systems, road construction, and construction of one small dam to secure water for livelihood activities.

Rakhine & southern Chin

- In contrast to mass protests in other parts of the country against the military takeover, there has been more limited response from communities in Rakhine, with limited protests taking place and the security situation remaining relatively stable.
- As of 15 March, it is estimated that more than 103,000 newly displaced persons reside in 182 displacement sites in Rakhine and Chin states.
- [Support to displacement sites and IDP camps continue](#) despite limitations imposed by the current political and COVID-19 context. During January and February, 4,036 families (17,439 individuals) in central Rakhine benefitted from [NFI support](#), items included mosquito nets, sleeping mats, blankets, kitchen sets, while 1,345 families (6,725 individuals) in northern townships of Rakhine received such support. A further 686 families (3,430 individuals) received [shelter support](#), including bamboo poles, tarpaulins and myaw posts.
- Field activities within the framework of creating conditions for sustainable solutions for displaced persons from Rakhine State remain ongoing. During the first two months of the year, a number of community-based projects (quick impact projects, or QIPs) have been progressing; renovation of two access roads was initiated while renovation of another access road is near completion, the drilling of one borehole was completed and five more are planned, and 50 solar light installation points have been confirmed. Other support for schools, persons with specific needs, etc. are also planned. Furthermore, UNHCR is also supporting the improvement of facilities in market areas, with five water collection points, 20 handwashing stations and two firefighting points currently being installed.



Handover of water supply system, Shan State.
Photo: KMSS



NFI distribution in Maungdaw south. Photo:
UNHCR

South-east

- The current political situation has resulted in the suspension of many activities in the southeast, both of UNHCR's and partners. Despite this, UNHCR maintains its work in Kayin and Kayah states to support reintegration efforts through the implementation of community-based projects (also known as QIPs, or quick impact projects) to improve community infrastructure while promoting coexistence and benefitting both the existing host communities and returning refugees who participated in the facilitated voluntary return movements in 2016-2019.
- A [protection hotline](#) for the southeast operation was activated in Hpa-An and Loikaw Offices to ensure effective and continuous lines of two-way communication with people of concern. The [early warning system](#) in the southeast, a joint endeavor with UNHCR and several partners, draws from existing networks and communications with communities' efforts to monitor the rapidly evolving situation on the ground and potential impacts on people of concern.
- In February, the implementation of [community-based projects](#) in Kayin State progressed with an aim of supporting peaceful co-existence among communities. The construction of a primary school and health centre stand at around one third complete, while the initial works for solar light installation has commenced.



Ongoing construction of primary school in 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, increasing UNHCR presence in the field. The EWS aims to detect and record changes in the situation on the ground, including human rights violations, which could impact on persons of concern, and 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 and police, price increases on basic commodities, and concerns identified by communities including fear that the ongoing political crisis may impact service delivery and the provision of aid from humanitarian partners, and fear of renewed conflict in some areas.

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 February, through local partners, UNHCR handed over 25,000 PPE items, including gloves, protective goggles, and N-95 face masks, as well as hygiene items including soap, hand sanitizer, tooth paste and toothbrushes, to four COVID-19 Centres in non-government-controlled areas in Kachin State. In Rakhine, UNHCR distributed 6,540 bars of soap to 436 displaced families. 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](#).



Provision of PPE and hygiene items in Kachin State. Photo: KBC-HDD

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).

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



UNHCR is very grateful to donors who have provided softly earmarked and unearmarked contributions to UNHCR Myanmar and globally: Australia, Belgium, Denmark, the European Union, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, Private donors from Spain

For more information please see: UNHCR Myanmar Operation Page | Refugee Response in Bangladesh Operational Portal | Thailand-Myanmar Cross Border Portal | Global Shelter Cluster - Myanmar | Global CCCM Cluster - MYANMAR | Or contact: Stephanie Ferry, Reporting Officer (ferry@unhcr.org).