

MYANMAR | Operational Update

The **COVID-19 health crisis** has placed the forcibly displaced and stateless populations at heightened risk with the delivery of critical protection services and assistance severely restricted. Ensuring equal and fair access to essential services for these populations remains a key priority. For many, the loss of income and livelihood opportunities is inevitable as the pandemic prolongs; UNHCR will continue to monitor the socio-economic impact and resilience of populations of concern.

In Rakhine State, while there has been a lull in the armed clashes between the Myanmar Armed Forces (MAF) and the Arakan Army (AA) this month, still more than **90,000 individuals remain displaced** in Rakhine and southern Chin states as of 30 November. Identification of needs and provision of emergency relief assistance continue in coordination with the Government and humanitarian partners.

Myanmar's November General Elections, which saw a landslide victory for the ruling National League for Democracy (NLD) party, placed vulnerable and marginalized groups further disenfranchised when voting was cancelled in several locations across the country.



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 **130,000** are living in 21 displacement camps as well as among the host community since 2012

200,000

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Rakhine, Kachin, northern Shan and Kayah State, of which some **110,000** are living in 138 camps and more than **90,000** are recently displaced in 192 sites due to AA-MAF conflict

47,385

Newly displaced and affected persons in Rakhine State provided with assistance by UNHCR and partners in 2020

60,000

COVID-19 testing kits procured and over **400** quarantine centres supported in 2020 aimed at bolstering the Government's prevention efforts

Financial requirements (as of 01 December 2020)

USD 52.2 million (61% funded)

UNHCR in Myanmar works with the government and partners 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.

Kachin & northern Shan

- During the month of November, UNHCR and partners provided [support to persons with specific needs](#) in the form of emergency cash assistance to 209 IDPs. The support is aimed at addressing their most pressing needs and mitigating protection risks.
- UNHCR provides support with [critical non-food items \(NFI\)](#) to meet the needs of persons of concern. In November, UNHCR distributed 59 solar lamps and 177 bars of soap to 355 IDPs in Kachin State, contributing to enhancing their overall protection and hygiene. UNHCR takes precautionary measures against COVID-19, including wearing face masks and social distancing, during all distributions.



Solar lamp and soap distribution, Kachin State. Photo: UNHCR

Rakhine & southern Chin

- As of 30 November, the Rakhine State Government estimates more than 90,000 newly displaced persons in 192 displacement sites in Rakhine State.
- [Support to displacement sites continue](#) despite limitations imposed by the current COVID-19 context. In November, UNHCR directly supported seven sites with shelter kits and three sites with NFI kits, benefitting more than 779 families (3,895 individuals) in Rakhine, while an additional 1,000 NFI kits were handed over to partners for distribution to newly displaced families.
- In central Rakhine, access to IDP camps remains limited due to COVID-19. Through partners, however, UNHCR is able to ensure that essential activities continue through the support of camp-based staff. In November 1,994 households (9,970 individuals), in two camps benefitted from [NFI support](#), including items such as mosquito nets, sleeping mats, blankets and kitchen sets.
- UNHCR maintains a stockpile of shelter material and NFI items in warehouses strategically located across the country to ensure timely distribution when urgent needs arise. The construction of a fourth warehouse in Rakhine is currently underway.
- Most field activities under the [tripartite Memorandum of Understanding \(MoU\)](#) in Rakhine State between the Government of Myanmar, UNDP and UNHCR remain suspended due to COVID-19 and related restrictions in place. Approval to resume a road construction project in northern Rakhine, however, has been received, and work has re-commenced.



UNHCR warehouses in Rakhine State. Photo: UNHCR

South-east

- During November, UNHCR continued to provide technical and material support to an agriculture programme in Kayin State aimed at [promoting income generation](#) for IDP families, with a particular focus on empowering women.
- Promoting [sustainable and lasting solutions](#) for some 97,000 Myanmar refugees displaced in Thailand remains a key priority for UNHCR. Since 2016, UNHCR has been working in Kayin and Kayah states to support the Government and reintegration efforts in return areas through the implementation of community-based projects (also known as QIPs, or quick impact projects) to improve community infrastructure, promoting coexistence and benefitting both the existing host communities and returning refugees. In November, [the construction of kitchen and dining facilities to improve the infrastructure of an Early Childhood Care and Development \(ECCD\) in Kayah State was completed](#). There are 30 QIPs ongoing in 2020 including provision of school furniture, installation of water tank and piping system, provision of roofing sheets, NFI distribution in quarantine centres, mask distribution, and capacity building in the form of psycho-social training for partners. Through continually monitoring the situation concerning spontaneous return, UNHCR gains a better understanding among spontaneous refugee returnees as to their prospects upon return and challenges faced, including protection concerns, which informs programming in areas such as service delivery and identification of QIPs.
- Further contributing to COVID-19 prevention efforts during the month of November, UNHCR distributed 2,000 cloth masks and 43 bottles of hand sanitizer to communities in the south-east.



Agricultural support in Kayin State. Photo: UNHCR

16 Days of activism against gender-based violence

- UNHCR supported a number of 16-days of activism activities which took place across the country beginning in November. Including, support to the Department of Social Welfare in carrying out GBV awareness training in the south-east, support to the Department of Social Work in Rakhine State to erect 20 billboards in seven townships, contribution of 1,000 face masks in northern Rakhine to a partner as part of its 16-Days awareness campaign, and in the south-west UNHCR participated in an awareness campaign together with the Department of Social Welfare and other UN agencies and NGOs.



Distribution of IEC material in Shan State. Photo: UNHCR

COVID-19 response

- UNHCR in Myanmar has redoubled efforts to support the Government of Myanmar in responding to the COVID-19 health crisis. 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. Read more about UNHCR's [US \\$9.4 million programme](#) to aimed at ensuring the inclusion of persons of concern in Myanmar's COVID-19 response [here](#).



UNHCR partner, LWF, on site carrying out awareness raising for stateless communities in central Rakhine

Working in partnership

- UNHCR Myanmar collaborates closely with the Government of Myanmar, 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); a platform bringing together development, peace and humanitarian stakeholders engaged in the states where the Office is working to support refugee returnees from Thailand.

UNHCR Myanmar's programme in 2020 is in partnership with:



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