A Route-Based Snapshot: Data & Trends for Refugees from Myanmar

as of 31 May 2026

Refugees from Myanmar attempting to find safety and protection by land or maritime movements[1]

1 January 2022 - 31 May 2026

380,700

352,600 estimated land movements

28,100 estimated maritime movements

2,600 reported dead/ missing at sea/river

In 2026, as of end-May 2026

10,700

6,400 estimated land movements

4,300 estimated maritime movements

280 reported dead/ missing at sea/river

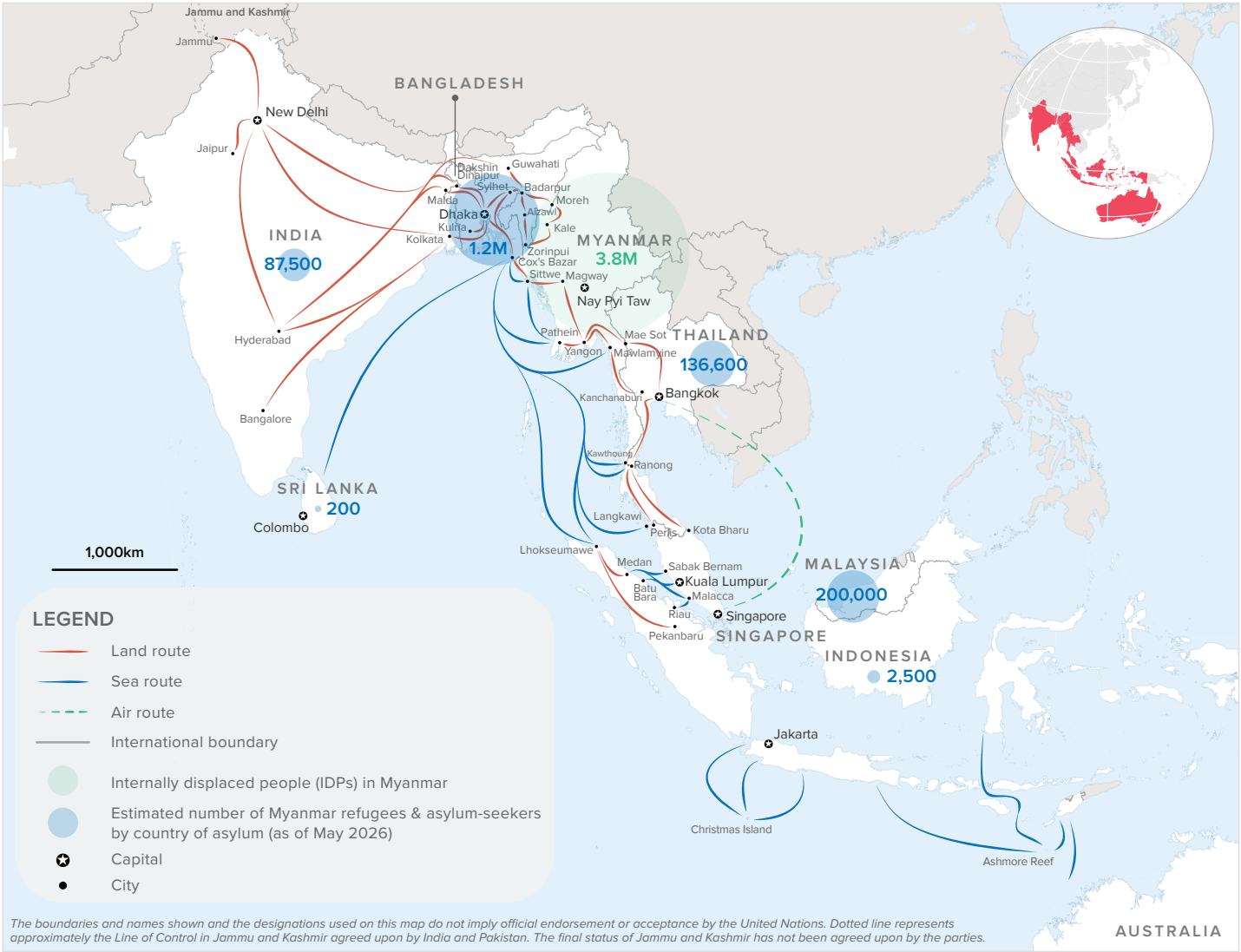
South & South East Asia (SSEA) Route | Situation overview

The humanitarian crisis in Myanmar remains one of the world's most complex and protracted, marked by repeated waves of displacement and limited prospects for durable solutions. Escalating conflict and human rights violations have forced millions to flee within Myanmar and across borders. As of March 2026, 3.8 million people are internally displaced, and 1.62 million are refugees and asylum-seekers. The crisis has been worsened by disasters and extreme weather in recent years, including Cyclone Mocha (May 2023), Typhoon Yagi (September 2024), and a 7.7 magnitude earthquake (March 2025). With no sign of improvement, prospects for safe and voluntary returns, especially for 1.3 million Rohingya remain bleak.

As humanitarian resources in host countries grow increasingly strained, thousands of Myanmar refugees are undertaking dangerous journeys in search of protection, safety, family reunification, and livelihoods.

UNHCR is adopting a Route-Based Approach to improve early access to protection and solutions for refugees and asylum-seekers - ultimately reducing the need for risky onward movement. UNHCR continues to urge States across the region to strengthen coordination to save lives at sea, fully deploy rescue capacities, and ensure safe, timely disembarkation—upholding the principles of humanity, solidarity, and shared responsibility.

Which routes do people fleeing Myanmar take?



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not been agreed upon by the parties.

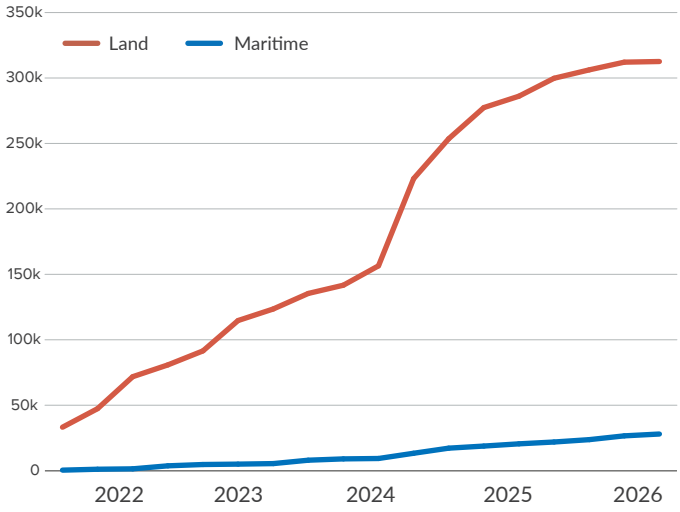
[1] For the purposes of this document, the simplified term "movement" or "journey" refers to people from Myanmar fleeing by land and/or sea/river directly from Myanmar and/or travelling onwards from a country where they sought refuge and international protection. 'Attempted' movements include intercepted/stopped movements as well as those reaching their intended destinations. The information in this report is compiled and triangulated from various sources, including governments, partners, UNHCR, media reports and interviews with refugees. All data is provisional and subject to change.

How have the movements evolved over time?

From January 2022 to May 2026, an estimated 380,700 people fled Myanmar by land and sea—93% by land and 7% by sea or river. Land and maritime movements peaked in 2024, with a notable increase in the second half of the year. The movements trend continued in the first half of 2025.

The first half[3] of 2025 recorded 53% higher land movements than the same period in 2024. Many reported facing detention or other protection risks along the land routes. Due to limited access and the often clandestine nature of these movements, the actual numbers are likely higher. Maritime movements surged by 153% in the first half of 2025. However, in the last six months of 2025, trends aligned more closely with those observed in 2022–23, with around 35% as many maritime movements recorded compared to the same period in 2024. The total movements in 2025 fell by 56% when compared with 2024, with a 42% reduction in land movements and a 66%, in maritime movements. Inspite of the decreasing trends in the latter half of 2025, the significant number of movements highlight the urgent need for a coordinated and comprehensive response.

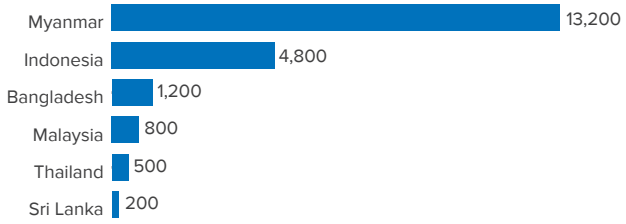
Estimated movements (cumulative since 2022)[2]
Number of people in thousands



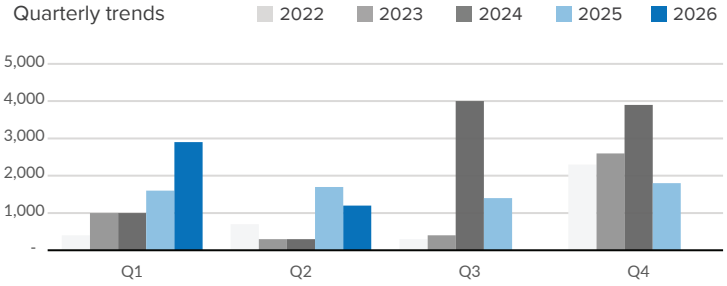
Maritime movements

In 2026, more than 4,300 people attempted the journey across 74 boats. This marked the highest number of maritime departures recorded in the first four months of the year, since UNHCR began systematically tracking these movements in 2022, including through continuous triangulation of information from multiple sources. During this year, women and children accounted for approximately 51% of the total movements. The majority of arrivals (77%) occurred along routes between Myanmar and Malaysia.

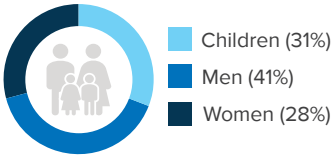
Known maritime arrivals per country[4] | January 2022 - May 2026



Quarterly trends



59% of those embarking on boats are women and children

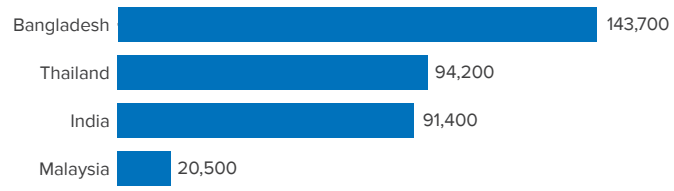


Land movements

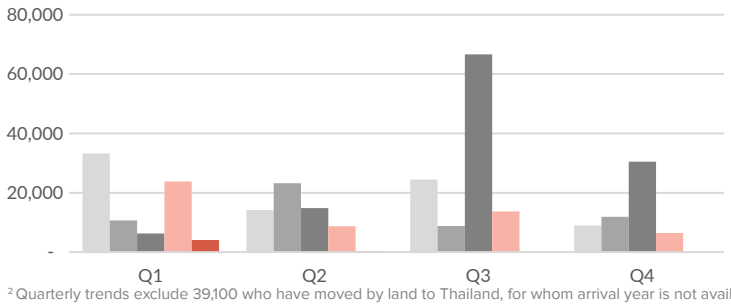
In 2026, some estimated 6,400 people have undertaken desperate land journeys, with the majority (89%) fleeing to Bangladesh. The figures may include stateless Rohingya refugees attempting to cross into Bangladesh by land but intercepted by Myanmar authorities.

From January 2022 to March 2026, 79% of Myanmar refugees arriving by land were women and children.

Estimated arrivals by land | January 2022 - May 2026



Quarterly trends[2]



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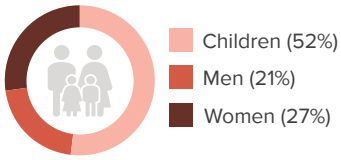


[2] Quarterly trends exclude 39,100 who have moved by land to Thailand, for whom arrival year is not available.
[3] Considering that the registration of refugees moving by land often take place with a few months delay, comparison has been limited to the first six months.
[4] Maritime arrivals exclude dead and missing persons. It entails situations where a boat was intercepted in transit by authorities and the passengers arrested. These situations are the majority of arrivals in Myanmar and also applies to Bangladesh.

Why are people continuing to move along the SSEA Route?

The worsening situation in Myanmar—particularly the escalating conflict in Rakhine State—along with insecurity and hardship in countries of asylum, continues to push Rohingya and other refugees from Myanmar to seek safety, protection, and dignity elsewhere in the region.

While many express a willingness to return home, they stress this can only happen when conditions allow for a voluntary, safe, dignified, and sustainable return that addresses the root causes of displacement. In the meantime, most refugees from Myanmar hope to contribute to their host communities but face limited access to education, work, and skills training. Combined with legal uncertainty and economic hardship, this leaves many vulnerable to exploitation and compels some to take irregular and dangerous journeys in search of better opportunities.

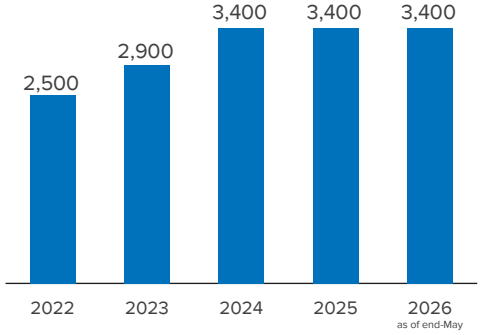
In the absence of a comprehensive refugee protection framework in many first countries of asylum, refugees from Myanmar remain in limbo. UNHCR continues to advocate for access to asylum and protection-sensitive entry systems at borders. Refugees must be allowed to access territory and be protected against refoulement, in line with international human rights and refugee law—including the principle of non-refoulement- which applies regardless of whether a country is signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention.

What are the protection issues along the SSEA Route?

Refugees from Myanmar travelling on the South and South East Asia Route face significant protection risks before, during and after arriving at their destination. This includes incidents of online and offline hate speech, disinformation and misinformation. The impact of this on access to territory and to asylum, physical protection, self-reliance, and social cohesion, is felt by refugee communities from Myanmar in the sub region.

Human trafficking networks frequently operate across borders and are connected to broader transnational criminal syndicates. Threats to physical integrity include abuse, torture and death and are often perpetrated by traffickers or smugglers. Refugees and migrants from Myanmar are often denied the use of telephones or other means of communication by smugglers and traffickers and may be separated from their family during the journey. Unaware of the risks, many undertake a people smuggling journey that later becomes a trafficking situation. Trafficking for the purpose of child marriage and forced labour continues to be of particular concern with reports emerging from several countries in the sub-region. Smugglers often take money without providing the promised service or demand a higher fee than initially agreed, threatening to stop the journey or harm refugees from Myanmar or their family members unless they pay more money.

Refugees from Myanmar are frequently held in prolonged or indefinite detention, with limited access to due process. Nearly 3,400 are currently known to be held in detention outside Myanmar. While in detention, refugee women, girls, men and boys are at risk of gender- based violence.

Unseaworthy vessels led to shipwrecks and death or distress situations. Cases of malnutrition, skin and communicable diseases contracted during the journey have been reported by refugees and migrants moving on the SSEA Route.

Detention trends
Number of refugees from Myanmar known to be in detention