North-East Myanmar

Representation in Myanmar | **Fact Sheet | July 2023**

Overview

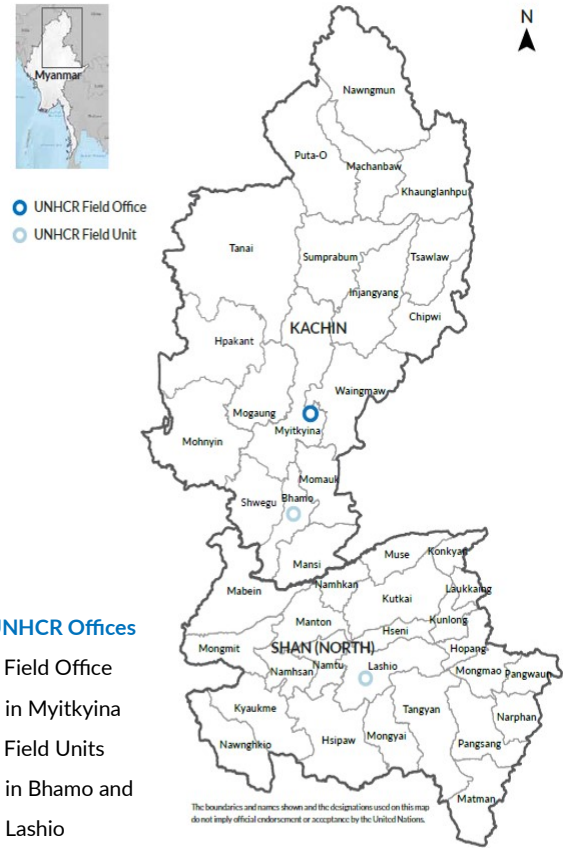
UNHCR's operation in North-East Myanmar covering Kachin and Shan (North) States was established in 2011 primarily to support internally displaced people (IDPs), uphold their rights and advocate for sustainable solutions.

With a presence in Myitkyina and Bhamo in Kachin State and Lashio in Shan State (North), UNHCR engages with displaced and conflict-affected communities to understand their concerns, delivers critical humanitarian assistance to them, tracks displacement dynamics, facilitates humanitarian advocacy and supports communities pursuing solutions. These activities are often carried out jointly with local organizations through strong partnerships to ensure support reaches all areas.

A decade of conflict since the collapse of a ceasefire between the Tatmadaw and Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in 2011 has lead to elevated protection risks for civilians in Kachin State, including attacks, landmines and protracted displacement. In Shan State (North), complex conflict dynamics involving a multiplicity of armed actors continue to result in displacement.

Since the military takeover of February 2021, the humanitarian situation has deteriorated further. Along with increased protection risks and livelihoods difficulties for protracted IDPs, camp closure has become a concern. Increasing insecurity and armed conflict are also causing new displacement.

At the same time, IDPs and host communities continue seeking pathways to attain more dignified living conditions following years of conflict and displacement. UNHCR continues to support all communities in pursuing longer term solutions.



UNHCR Offices

1 Field Office in Myitkyina

2 Field Units in Bhamo and Lashio

IDPs in Kachin	IDPs in Shan (North)
116,400	15,200
of which 89,600 are protracted	of which 8,800 are protracted

Returnees in Kachin	Returnees in Shan (North)
20,800	3,300

Note: Protracted IDPs refer to those displaced prior to 1 February 2021.
All figures are as of 26 June 2023.

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Main Activities

Protection

UNHCR and partners conduct regular on-site and remote protection monitoring analysis to identify gaps and needs. People with specific needs, including the elderly, people with disabilities, children and female-headed households, are supported with emergency cash assistance aimed at addressing their most pressing needs.

Enhancing community resilience is a key protection priority for UNHCR in the North-East. Through bottom-up initiatives such as youth service projects and community resilience building projects, communities are empowered to lead in proposing and implementing initiatives that improve living conditions, reduce vulnerabilities and promote social cohesion.

UNHCR also works with partners to advocate for actions that aim to reduce risks faced by IDPs. These include safety and security, civil documentation, housing, land and property rights and access to basic services and livelihoods.

Relief Distributions, Shelter & Camp-Based Support

In the event of displacement, UNHCR and partners distribute core relief items (CRIs) comprising mosquito nets, kitchen sets, jerry cans, clothing items, soap bars, sleeping mats, blankets and solar lamps to meet the basic needs of conflict-affected communities. In addition, UNHCR pre-positions emergency supplies at warehouses in key locations in anticipation of increased needs during times of conflict or natural disaster.

Emergency shelter assistance such as roofing sheets and tarpaulins is also provided. In situations where families are displaced over extended periods of time, longhouses and single-unit shelters are constructed along with communal infrastructure like solar street lights. UNHCR also conducts repairs on damaged shelters, ensuring displaced communities continue to live in safe, dignified conditions.

Furthermore, UNHCR plays an active role in supporting camp coordination and management, including basic running costs and enhancing camp self-management capacity among displaced populations as well as local communities.

Transitional Solutions

While continued fighting and insecurity have diminished prospects for return to places of origin, displaced families continue to seek ways to transition out of displacement. Between January 2021 and December 2022, over 7,000 IDPs have moved out of camps to restart their lives.

Recognizing that durable solutions are not achievable in the immediate term, UNHCR and partners support communities in pursuing transitional solutions to improve conditions and lay foundations for longer-term solutions. Technical support is provided to displaced communities so that they can formulate their own voluntary initiatives to return, locally integrate, or relocate to other areas.

Once these IDP-led plans have been drawn up, UNHCR works through the Kachin Durable Solutions Working Group to carry out resource mobilization and provide small-scale grants that facilitate access to livelihood opportunities, basic social services, shelter, community-managed educational activities as well as basic community infrastructure.

Coordination & Capacity Building

To ensure everyone receives the assistance they need and in the longer term, rebuild lives in safety, dignity and peace, UNHCR works with UN agencies, NGOs and CSOs in coordinating responses.

At the national and sub-national levels, UNHCR leads the Protection Cluster and the combined Shelter, Non-food items (NFI) and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster. UNHCR also leads the Durable Solutions Working Group in Kachin State which provides guidance, organizes joint missions and shares information and analyses for identifying needs and support community-led responses.

Local organizations are key in implementing community-based interventions that build resilience, promote social cohesion and encourage community participation. As such, UNHCR carries out frequent trainings on best practices and international standards, so that partners and communities are able to better support needs.

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