

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, ongoing armed clashes between the Myanmar Armed Forces and the Arakan Army persist and have led to the **displacement of over 90,000 individuals** in Rakhine and southern Chin states as of 2 November. Identification of needs and provision of emergency relief assistance continue in coordination with the Government and humanitarian partners.

The cancellation of polling in a number of locations across the country, including in Kachin, northern Shan and Rakhine states, ahead of Myanmar's **November General Elections** further disenfranchised already marginalized populations, including newly displaced IDPs and the over 600,000 stateless persons in Rakhine State.



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 **90,000** are recently displaced in 150 sites due to AA-MAF clashes

43,991

Newly displaced and affected persons in Rakhine State provided with emergency 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

Funding as of 31 October 2020

USD 52.2 million (59% 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 October, UNHCR and partners provided [support to persons with specific needs](#) in the form of emergency cash assistance to 180 IDPs. The support is aimed at addressing their most pressing needs and mitigating protection risks.
- UNHCR provides [critical shelter and NFI support](#) in response to emergencies as well as in support of those voluntarily pursuing durable solutions. In October, 100 recently displaced IDP families in northern Shan state received NFIs, including blankets, sleeping mats and mosquito nets from the support of UNHCR and partner. UNHCR also extended shelter support to 12 IDP families seeking to return to their villages of origin, as well as to another two families enabling them to repair their existing shelters.



NFI distribution in northern Shan. Photo: Meiksw Myanmar

Rakhine & southern Chin

- As of 2 November, the Rakhine State Government estimates around 88,300 displaced persons in 188 displacement sites in Rakhine State.
 - Support to displacement sites continue despite limitations imposed by the current COVID-19 context. In nine displacement sites in central Rakhine, 722 families (3,600 individuals) benefitted from [emergency NFI and shelter support](#), including items such as sleeping mats, mosquito nets, bamboo poles, tarpaulins, buckets, jerry cans, kitchen sets, solar lanterns and fuel-efficient stoves. In northern Rakhine, 133 newly displaced families (656 individuals) received similar NFI support in four locations in Buthidaung township.
 - Access to Rohingya IDP camps in central Rakhine remains strictly limited. Through partners, UNHCR is able to ensure that critical humanitarian items reach the camps for distribution by camp-based staff.
 - Field activities under the [tripartite Memorandum of Understanding \(MoU\)](#) in Rakhine State between UNDP, UNHCR and the Government of Myanmar, have been temporarily suspended largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing restrictions in place.
- On 22 October, during a [virtual conference](#) jointly hosted by the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union and UNHCR, the international community pledged over US \$600 million as part of an international response to aid Rohingya refugees and host communities in Bangladesh as well as support humanitarian needs in Myanmar and other countries in the region. The importance of addressing root causes of displacement was stressed as were safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable solutions for refugees in Bangladesh and those displaced internally in Myanmar's Rakhine State.



Shelter construction in Central Rakhine. Photo:

South-east

- 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 to support reintegration 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 October, the construction of kitchen and dining facilities to improve the infrastructure of an Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) in Kayah State commenced with completion expected in November. This QIP is the continuation of an ongoing project



Construction of Early Childhood Care & Development Centre in Kayah State. Photo: UNHCR

aiming to support returnee and host children. There are 30 QIPs ongoing in 2020 include 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.

- Further contributing to COVID-19 prevention efforts during the month of October, hygiene kits were provided for children in ECCDs across 18 communities in the south-east.
- UNHCR continues to monitor the situation concerning spontaneous return, aiming to gain a better understanding among spontaneous refugee returnees as to their prospects upon return and challenges faced, including protection concerns, which in turn informs programming in areas such as service delivery and identification of QIPs.

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](#).



Handover of specialized medical equipment to Rakhine State Government. Photo: UNHCR

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) and South-East Consultations; two platforms 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).