

# INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONAL UPDATE

## Myanmar Situation

Thailand, 18 May 2021

The volatile situation in Myanmar following the 01 February 2021 coup has **resulted in increased displacement** both within the country and across borders, including into Thailand

Humanitarian actors stand ready to **support the Royal Thai Government (RTG)'s efforts** to receive Myanmar refugees fleeing at this time to ensure that they receive the protection they need

Agencies have taken a number of **key preparedness actions** to ensure that complementary activities are delivered in a timely and coordinated manner



### Latest Situation Overview

In view of the ongoing civil unrest and conflict in Myanmar, humanitarian actors continue to engage with the RTG in Bangkok and in the border provinces on potential support to its preparedness and response efforts to a potential refugee influx. The most affected area in Thailand has been Mae Hong Son (MHS) Province, where several groups have been crossing over to seek safety since late March. In the latest such developments, **a total of 2,300+ refugees (per official statistics) crossed into the province** from 27 April 2021 following increased fighting between the Tatmadaw and KNU forces, including airstrikes. The majority were reported to be women, children, and older persons and were subsequently hosted in four government-managed "temporary safety areas" in very remote locations in Mae Sariang District (please refer to map), with humanitarian assistance provided by the Thai authorities. On 08 May 2021, a number of partners received reports that the remaining group of 2,191 refugees who had been accounted and officially reported by local authorities were being convinced to return to Myanmar by the Royal Thai Army (RTA). The majority of this group had come from Ei Thu Hta IDP camp, less than 2km into Myanmar territory. **It was subsequently confirmed on 10 May 2021 that 2,000+ individuals from this group had been returned to Myanmar.** Furthermore, during the daily update issued by the Thai-Myanmar Border Command Center in Mae Hong Son on 13 May 2021, the presence of 1,600+ individuals in 5 temporary safety areas in Mae Hong Son Province was reported. As of 18 May 2021, humanitarian actors have not yet formally been granted access to this group. In a separate development, it is planned that on 19 May 2021 several humanitarian agencies will conduct a site visit to a designated "Holding Area" in the Ko Heng River area, located in the north of Mae Sam Leap Sub-District along the Salween River, following a request made by MHS Province to UNHCR to support with site planning. Meanwhile, the situation in Tak Province is said to be quiet for the moment. No information has been received about groups of CDM supporters gathering close to the border with an imminent risk of a crossing into Thailand. This has reportedly led to a slight adjustment of the Province's contingency plan, which remains internal. Since March, no site visits have been organized by the RTG in Tak. In Kanchanaburi/Ratchaburi provinces, according to reports received from partners there are currently no displaced groups on the Thai side.

#### DISPLACED POPULATION ON THAI SIDE (18 MAY 2021)

**1,775 individuals\***  
**4 locations\*\***

\* As per official RTG statistics, 18 May 2021

\*\* 4 "Temporary Safety Areas" located in Mae Khong Subdistrict, Mae Sariang District and Mae Sam Laeb Subdistrict, Sob Moei District.

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## Humanitarian Agency Preparedness Activities

### Education

Education partners are prepared to **distribute prepositioned learning materials** such as reading books, notebooks and pens to at least 150 school-aged children in the event of a sudden influx of refugees from Myanmar into Thailand. Technical resources such as manuals and IEC materials on areas such as COVID-19 prevention, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), Explosive Ordnance/Mine Risk Education (EORE) are available and ready for immediate deployment. Partners are also ready to **conduct group activities** for children such as story-telling, puppet shows and arrange community libraries in holding areas. Planning with a wide range of education partners to prepare for a potential refugee influx is ongoing.

### Food

The Border Consortium (TBC) continues to support and work collaboratively with the Border Emergency Relief Team (BERT) – a network of local CSOs - to **provide essential food for refugees** in various locations in Mae Sariang proximal to the border. Displaced persons have gathered on both sides of the border, however a reported total of 1,698 refugees on the Thai side have been supported with assistance as of 10 May 2021. All are ethnic Karen displaced by Tatmadaw offensives and comprise predominantly of elderly, women, children and babies. Nutritionally diverse in-kind food items were supplied (together with key NFIs and WASH items). **TBC is prepositioning essential food ration items for potential holding areas**, and specific food for nutrition of children and pregnant/breastfeeding women, with established suppliers for the four provinces of its current operation, with focus on Mae Hong Son and Tak.

### Health

Health sector agencies have planned essential activities for an influx scenario of 4,000 arrivals/month over 6 months to include the following essential response categories: Communicable Disease, Child Health, Sexual/Reproductive Health, Injury/Trauma Care, Mental Health, Non-Communicable Disease, and Rehabilitation. **Response includes COVID-19 screening and quarantine management** with referral to Government District Hospitals for case management. Health sector agencies currently working to identify additional partner organizations capable of responding in areas where current agencies do not have or cannot ensure operational presence. Malteser International and the International Rescue Committee have participated in short informal visits to government identified holding areas for cursory informal site reviews.

### NFIs

A number of **Core Relief Items (CRIs)** and **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** is being prepositioned by UNHCR. The items, which could potentially be provided to up to 5,000 households (16,200 individuals) comprising 10,000 sleeping mats (2 per household), 10,000 blankets (2 per household), 5,000 plastic tarpaulins (1 per household), 5,000 mosquito nets (1 per household), arrived in Thailand on 08 May 2021 from UNHCR's emergency stockpile. Local procurement of a **contribution of 10,000 face masks** was completed in April 2021.

### Protection

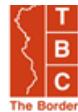
During 06-18 May 2021, **consultations with protection sector partners** took place at the provincial and national levels to develop a protection sector-specific contingency plan and inform the development of a joint appeal which is currently under finalization. UNHCR stands ready to **expand its existing protection activities** on the Thai-Myanmar border to complement the efforts of the Thai authorities, in the event that a request is made for such assistance and is in the process of recruiting additional capacity to support delivery of activities including mainstreaming of gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response across sectors, child protection activities delivered through NGO partners, assistance for persons with disabilities (PWD) delivered through NGO partners and support provided to registration activities.

### Shelter

In collaboration with BERT, **TBC has helped support shelter needs of newly-arrived refugees** in various locations in Mae Sariang. Shelter provided includes plastic rolls, plastic sheeting and tents. These were delivered with other key items such as mats, blankets and mosquito nets. Access to displaced persons remains difficult for BERT, as has the logistical management of generous donations from many parties. In addition to funding for shelter, food and other, TBC is supporting BERT with seconded human resources and transport costs. TBC is delivering an **initial order of 1,200 pieces of durable plastic roofing sheets (5mx6m) to border sites**, and prepositioning bamboo, eucalyptus poles and other building materials with established local suppliers. These are in readiness for construction of houses for refugees in holding areas. In accordance with SPHERE standards, this initial procurement will house up to 6,000 refugees (five per household).

### WASH

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sector agencies have planned essential activities for an influx scenario of 4000 arrivals/month over 6 months to include the following essential response categories: **Water Supply, Hygiene Promotion, Excreta Management, Vector Control and Solid Waste Management**. WASH sector agencies currently working to identify additional partner organizations capable of responding in areas where current agencies do not have or cannot ensure operational presence. Malteser International and the International Rescue Committee have participated in short informal visits to government identified holding areas for cursory informal site reviews.



\* Logos representative of sector leads.  
Other partners are also participating in preparedness activities.