

REFUGEES ARE CURRENTLY SHELTERED IN TEMPORARY SAFETY AREAS.

According to RTG sources, **1,197 refugees remain in Mae Sot District**. All are staying in one site, the Moei Khong cowshed at Mae Kone Kane village. **In Mae Hong Son Province, all refugees have reportedly returned**. In Mae Hong Son, the refugees were sheltered in two Temporary Safety Areas (TSA): 585 Hill TSA at Ban Nam Pieng Din, Pha Bong Subdistrict and Tanakwai Route TSA which used to be the COVID19 quarantine area adjacent to the Ban Mai Nai Soi (BMN) refugee camp. Reportedly, the group that subsequently returned to Myanmar from the 585 Hill TSA, did not return to their homes but are currently displaced inside Myanmar in areas close to the Thai border. UNHCR and Partners are advocating for the transfer of the remaining populations to Holding Areas - to be identified by RTG and managed by the provincial authorities - where they could have more suitable temporary accommodation and receive improved humanitarian assistance.

UPDATE ON PARTNERS' RESPONSE TO REFUGEE INFLUX INTO THAILAND



PROTECTION

UNHCR and Partners have not been granted access to the Temporary Safety Areas (TSA), which continue to be under the Royal Thai Army jurisdiction. The assistance currently implemented by the Government with the support of local communities and community-based organizations (CBOs) may not be sustainable or sufficient for individuals with specific needs.

UNHCR, together with partners, continues to engage with the authorities to advocate for the improvement of the protection environment and the provision of adequate humanitarian assistance. A remote Rapid Needs Assessment was conducted on 29-30 December for the Mae Kone Kane TSA. Needs highlighted by key informants remain of concern, notably the location of the site close to the border and the ongoing fighting nearby; the risk of Gender Based Violence due to crowded communal shelters and lack of electricity and lighting at the site; the possibility of unaccompanied or separated children (UASC) being present at the site as well as persons with specific needs, such as the elderly, and persons with disabilities.

Non-Food Items (NFI) s and food were considered by some key informants to be insufficient due to unequal distribution at the site. Inadequate food for children under five years of

age was also an area of concern. Lack of information due to limited mobile and internet connectivity, as well as electricity for the charging of phones hindered access to information, including on the situation in areas of origin. Mental Health Psycho-Social Support (MHPSS) support was also highlighted as a need, as confirmed by the authorities.

However, without direct access, there are limited possibilities for the identification of persons with specific needs and an appropriate response by specialized agencies. In view of the lack of humanitarian access, the Protection Sector is advocating with relevant Thai government agencies to address immediate protection needs, including child protection. Almost four weeks after the first arrivals in Tak province, the stay in a TSA along the border is clearly not suitable nor sustainable for periods exceeding 1-2 weeks.



WATER AND SANITATION

In Mae Hong Son, IRC has delivered WASH supplies (latrine bowls, water containers, etc.), hygiene items support. In Mae Sot, IRC has installed water tanks and set up water filters for drinking water to secure refugees' access to clean water and prevent the spread of waterborne disease.



EDUCATION

Education and child protection partners (i.e., SCI, SVA, COERR) conducted an activity for children on Sunday 9 January at the TSA in Mae Kone Kane, Mae Sot, with permission from the authorities for this specific event.



HEALTH

The health sector provided ATKs, facemasks and alcohol gel to support the prevention of COVID19. At Mae Kone Kane, there is a medical team from the District Health Office providing care at times. Health actors now direct referrals for medical cases to Mae Sot hospital and the Mae Tao Clinic. The latter hospital also supports the supply of medicine, and three doctors have volunteered to assist local medics with consultation onsite.



FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

In Mae Hong Son, TBC supported the Ban Mai Nai Soi Refugee Camp Committee with preparing meals for refugees as refugees were not allowed to cook on site. Each day, volunteers prepared about 2,400 packs of meals. In Mae Sot, TBC initially supported the temporary safety areas with ready cooked meals. Following the consolidation by the Thai authorities of refugee populations to the Mae Kone Kane TSA, TBC transitioned to supporting the refugees with basic food items that are cooked on site by a community kitchen, and all meals since 30 December have been provided by this facility.



SHELTER

Partners have provided shelter support with “event tents”. These tents are not designed for human habitation and are only suitable for very temporary stays.

NFI

NON-FOOD ITEMS

Partners continuously review the standard NFI kits to ensure items distributed meet the needs of the population adequately. In Mae Hong Son, Partners and UNHCR delivered blankets, tarpaulins, hygiene sets, kitchen sets, candles, sleeping mats and mosquito nets through the Camp Committee and local Thai communities. In Mae Sot, Partners and UNHCR delivered mosquito nets for mothers and babies and play and learn kits for children.

Thank you to all our donors who have generously contributed: ECHO, Canada, Denmark, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. Contributions have also been received from Caritas and its partners, OANDA, Save the Children and UNICEF.

