

# Myanmar | Factsheet

October 2020

The ongoing [COVID-19 health crisis](#) has placed the forcibly displaced and stateless populations at heightened risk, further compounding existing vulnerabilities, particularly in light of the severe impact the crisis has had on the delivery of critical protection services and assistance and the loss of income as the pandemic prolongs.

Ongoing clashes between the Arakan Army and Myanmar Armed Forces have led to the [displacement of over 90,000 individuals](#) in Rakhine and southern Chin states as of 2 November. Since the beginning of 2020, almost 44,000 newly displaced and affected persons in Rakhine have been provided with emergency assistance.

UNHCR continues to monitor the socio-economic impact and resilience of populations of concern, while seeking to [ensure equal and fair access to essential services and the provision of emergency relief assistance](#) in coordination with the Government and humanitarian partners.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

**600,000** stateless persons in Rakhine State (estimate), of which some **130,000** are living in 21 displacement camps and among the host community since 2012

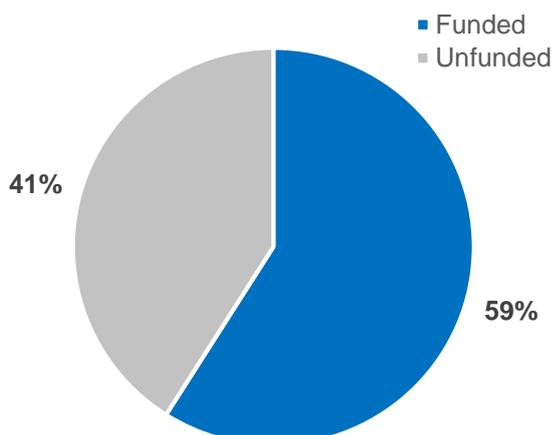
**200,000** internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Rakhine, Kachin, northern Shan and Kayah states, of which some **110,000** are living in 138 camps and **90,000** are recently displaced in 150 sites due to AA-MAF clashes

**1,039** persons voluntarily returned to Myanmar from refugee camps in Thailand since 2016 through the Facilitated Voluntary Return (FVR) programme

## FUNDING (AS OF 31 OCTOBER)

**USD 52.2 M**

requested for the Myanmar Operation in 2020



## UNHCR PRESENCE

### Staff:

-  **142** National Staff
- 34** International Staff

### Offices:

-  **1** Representation in Yangon
-  **1** Liaison Office in Nay Pyi Taw
-  **1** Sub Office in Maungdaw
-  **3** Field Offices in Hpa-An, Myitkyina, Sittwe
-  **4** Field Units in Bhamo, Buthidaung, Lashio, Loikaw



## Working with Partners

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.

## Main Activities

UNHCR in Myanmar works with the Government and partners to progressively realize a favourable and inclusive protection environment so that the forcibly displaced, stateless persons and returnees (IDPs and refugees) have access to rights, services, and sustainable solutions, aligned to people-centred and age, gender, and diversity principles. Strategic priorities include responsive humanitarian protection and assistance delivery; contributing to strengthening the human rights environment; and promoting resilience and phased pathways to durable solutions. UNHCR maintains protection leadership through standards setting, effective coordination, and operational delivery in its core areas of responsibility – protection, shelter, NFI and CCCM. UNHCR will expand dialogue, build capacity and provide technical support among Government stakeholders, humanitarian/development actors and civil society, as part of its catalyst role in bridging the humanitarian-development-peace building nexus.

### Protection

- UNHCR facilitates protection and life-saving assistance through protection monitoring, cohesive analysis, and evidence-based advocacy in protracted, pendular and emerging displacement contexts - while supporting operationalization of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) Protection Strategy. Following COVID-19 and its impact on humanitarian access, UNHCR seeks to strengthen its community-based protection programmes to maintain protection delivery and promote positive coping strategies and resilience amongst affected populations.
- While contributing to strengthening legal/policy frameworks, UNHCR collaborates with key actors to enhance awareness and mitigate rights violations around protection of civilians, access to civil documentation, citizenship, freedom of movement and housing land and property (HLP).
- Efforts to prevent and reduce statelessness, as well as ensure a level of protection for the stateless population on access to services and livelihoods, and freedom of movement, remain paramount. UNHCR will strengthen the UN's engagement to address the causes and consequences of statelessness in line with the UN Secretary General's Guidance Note on Statelessness, the UNICEF-UNHCR Coalition on Every Child's Right to a Nationality and the 2030 Agenda, as well promoting universal access to birth registration for stateless children in collaboration with UNICEF following passage of the 2019 Child Rights Law.
- Protection incident reporting and referral mechanisms enable the identification of protection risks faced by IDPs, stateless persons and refugee and IDP returnees. UNHCR provides targeted assistance to address immediate needs and mitigate protection risks of persons with specific needs (PSNs) who are at particular risk

of rights violations. In 2020, UNHCR and its partners provided cash and non-cash assistance, including home visits and referrals, to over 9,300 PSNs, including older persons, female-headed households, persons with serious medical conditions and those living with disabilities.

### Emergency Response through Shelter/ NFIs/ CCCM

- A key component of UNHCR's protection activities aims to ensure dignified and safe living conditions for persons of concern while sustainable solutions to displacement are sought, including through the provision of emergency non-food items (NFIs) and shelter material to communities affected by conflict and natural disaster. Throughout 2020, UNHCR has provided NFIs to some 80,000 individuals, while a further 72,000 persons were supported with emergency and transitional shelter interventions in Rakhine, Kachin and northern Shan states.
- UNHCR and partners support camp coordination and camp management (CCCM) activities in displacement sites across Kachin, northern Shan, and Rakhine states, benefitting over 276,000 persons by the beginning of the fourth quarter of the year.
- UNHCR maintains an emergency stockpile of non-food items and shelter material that can support up to 10,000 families.

### Durable Solutions and Social Cohesion

- In its efforts to facilitate sustainable and dignified solutions, UNHCR supports the Government on creating conditions conducive to return for refugees and IDPs and promoting cohesion and resilience among communities in Myanmar, while advocating that the rights of returnees be safeguarded. Ensuring that the views and voices of local grassroots organisations and affected communities are heard at all levels is vital to an inclusive, conflict-sensitive process.
- UNHCR, UNDP and the Government of Myanmar (GoM) signed a tripartite memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in June 2018, which was extended in June 2020 for an additional year. The MoU aims at creating conditions conducive for the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable repatriation of refugees from Bangladesh as well as supporting recovery and resilience-based development for the benefit of all communities living in **Rakhine State**, in line with the Rakhine Advisory Commission recommendations. As of October 2020, seven rounds of independent needs assessments have been conducted in 130 locations involving over 2,600 community members resulting in the identification of 115 community-based projects aimed at addressing the needs of the respective communities.
- In Myanmar's **south-east**, promoting sustainable and lasting solutions for some 97,000 Myanmar refugees displaced in Thailand remains a priority. Since 2016, four groups of refugees from Thailand returned through the Facilitated Voluntary Return (FVR) programme, coordinated by the governments of Myanmar and Thailand with support from UNHCR. The needs, priorities and capacities of returning refugees are identified through return monitoring assessment which in turn guide programming. UNHCR has been working with the Government in supporting reintegration in return areas through the implementation of community-based projects to improve community infrastructure, benefiting and promoting co-existence among host communities and returning refugees; 30 such community-based projects are ongoing in 2020.
- Under the designated leadership of the Resident Coordinator's Office, UNHCR contributes to the implementation of the National Strategy on Resettlement of IDPs and Closure of IDP Camps by engaging the Government on protection-sensitive response, resilience and solutions to displacement in line with international standards; enabling and empowering IDPs in decision making on solutions; and providing support where voluntary, safe and dignified solutions to end displacement materialise together with resilience/development actors. Responding to small-scale solutions self-initiated by IDPs in Kachin State, including local integration, return and resettlement elsewhere, UNHCR extended community-based and shelter projects, such as the construction of schools and water systems, to the **north-east** in 2020. Although only one of eight planned

projects have reached completion due to COVID-19, UNHCR continues to monitor the situation of IDPs at different stages of their solutions' plans.

## COVID-19 Response

- UNHCR Myanmar has largely mainstreamed its COVID-19 response into regular programming. Activities have focused on supporting the Government of Myanmar in responding to the COVID-19 health crisis through 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 about UNHCR's US \$9.4 million COVID-19 Response programme [here](#).

UNHCR Myanmar's programme in 2020 is in partnership with:



### UNHCR Myanmar 2020 Programme is funded by:

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UNHCR is very grateful to donors who have provided softly earmarked and unearmarked contributions to the organization: Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America; and for the support of private donors from the following countries: Australia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States of America.

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).