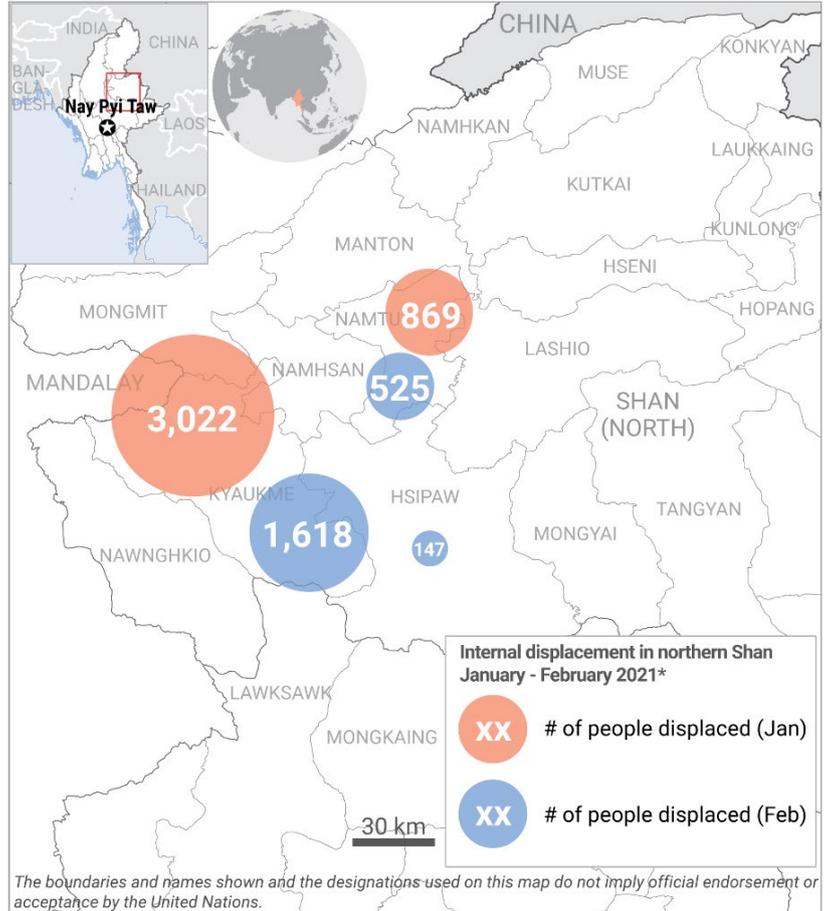


This regular humanitarian update, covering the period from 20 January to 24 February, is produced by OCHA Myanmar in collaboration with the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group and UNHCR. The next update will be issued towards the end of March 2021.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Myanmar reaffirms the commitment of the UN and its partners to stay and deliver humanitarian assistance and protection services and calls for donor support for the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan, which seeks US\$276.5 million to respond to the needs of 945,000 people.
- Humanitarian response efforts are affected by operational challenges resulting from the recent developments, such as cash shortages and concerns for staff safety and security.
- In northern Shan, around 2,300 people were newly displaced in Kyaukme, Namtu and Hsipaw townships in February due to armed clashes between the Myanmar Armed Forces (MAF) and ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) or between EAOs. Another 1,000 people remain displaced in Kyaukme in northern Shan since January.
- In Lashio and Laukkaing townships in northern Shan, nine people were reportedly killed and eight others, including an unidentified number of children, injured due to armed clashes on 5 February.
- Over 5,300 people remain displaced in Kayin State and Bago Region since late December; sporadic clashes continued to be reported between the MAF and the Karen National Union (KNU) throughout February.



KEY FIGURES

126K

IDPs in camps since 2012 violence in Rakhine

101K

people displaced by conflict in sites and host communities in Rakhine and Chin

106K

people in protracted displacement in Kachin and northern Shan

5.3K

people displaced by recent clashes in Kayin State and Bago Region

2.3K

people newly displaced by February clashes in northern Shan

SITUATION OVERVIEW

UNITED NATIONS AND PARTNERS COMMIT TO CONTINUE ASSISTANCE: The political developments nationwide have impacted the ability of partners to respond to the needs of vulnerable communities and IDPs in conflict-affected areas. The impacts include, among others, the closure of banks and interruptions of payments and cash withdrawal systems, as well as a reported increase in prices of basic commodities, including food, construction materials and fuel in some areas. Changes in counterpart entities and interlocutors have also affected humanitarian operations. Many international and national humanitarian actors continue to strive to resume or are resuming their humanitarian and COVID-19-related programmes in camps, displacement sites and villages affected by conflicts (see relevant sections below for details). Their commitment to stay and deliver humanitarian assistance was echoed by the UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) in Myanmar in a [statement](#) on 12 February, in which he also called for donor support to the [2021 Humanitarian Response Plan](#), which seeks US\$267.5 million in funding to deliver humanitarian assistance and protection services to close to 1 million people in need. Various international institutions, missions and member states have also stated that they would continue providing support to respond to the needs of vulnerable communities in Myanmar. Humanitarian access remains constrained by administrative procedures and the presence of landmines in all conflict-affected areas and by the ongoing hostilities in northern Shan, Kayin State and Bago Region. The importance of safe and unimpeded access to deliver a timely and principled humanitarian response was emphasized by the UN Security Council in the [Press Statement](#), as well as by the RC/HC and other member states and organizations.

THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE NEWLY DISPLACED IN NORTHERN SHAN: The security situation in parts of northern Shan remained volatile in February, with armed clashes reported between the MAF and ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) or between EAOs across several townships, leading to new internal displacement and casualties among civilians. A series of clashes were reported in mid-February between the MAF and the Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA) in Hsipaw Township, as well as clashes between the MAF and the Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army (SSPP/SSA) in Kutkai and Muse townships, and between the RCSS/SSA and the allied forces of SSPP/SSA and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army in Hsipaw, Namtu and Kyaukme townships.



2,290

people newly displaced in three townships in northern Shan in February due to clashes between the MAF and EAOs or between EAOs.

A total of 2,290 people were displaced over the course of February, mainly in Kyaukme Township. While some small-scale and sporadic returns were reported, 2,143 people remain displaced in 16 sites in Namtu and Kyaukme townships. The clashes reportedly injured at least three civilians in Namtu

Township, according to local partners. The short-term humanitarian needs of newly displaced people have largely been met by local CSOs and national and international actors, complementing the efforts of the local authorities. Another 1,000 people remain displaced in Kyaukme Township since early January, when a total of 3,891 people fled clashes over the course of the month. Northern Shan already hosts around 9,800 IDPs in protracted displacement camps established since 2011.

REPORTS OF SPIKE IN CIVILIAN CASUALTIES: In a separate incident on 5 February, clashes between the MAF and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army in Lashio and Laukkaing townships in northern Shan killed nine civilians and injured eight, including an unidentified number of children, according to various sources. A civilian was also killed by artillery shelling during clashes between the MAF and the Kachin Independence Army in Tee Ma Village in Muse Township in northern Shan on 20 February, according to the same sources.



254 people killed or

injured by landmines and ERW in Myanmar over the course of 2020

Landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) continue to pose life-threatening risks to people in conflict-affected areas. According to local sources, a landmine explosion in Namhsan Township in northern Shan on 26 January injured three civilians, two of whom sustained severe injuries and were transferred to Kyaukme Hospital for treatment. On the same day, another landmine explosion in Kyaukme Township injured a man,

who was transferred to the same hospital. In another incident in Buthidaung Township in Rakhine State on 4 February, a 14-year-old child was reportedly killed and two more injured by an unexploded ordnance (UXO) explosion. Another civilian was injured by a landmine explosion in Ann Township in Rakhine State on 17 February. The MAF has reportedly commenced demining activities along the Ann-Sittwe road in Rakhine State. According to a [UNICEF](#) report, 69 people were killed and 185 injured nationwide from 144 landmine/ERW incidents over the course of 2020. The total number of casualties (254) exceeded the 227 casualties recorded in 2019.

DISPLACEMENT IN KAYIN AND BAGO: Armed clashes between the MAF and the Karen National Union (KNU), which erupted in early December 2020, continued during the reporting period. Hostilities on 15 February displaced over 200 people in Hpapun Township in Kayin State, according to UNHCR, which brings to over 4,200 the number of people currently displaced in Hpapun Township. The conflict has also led to the displacement of around 1,100 in Nyaunglebin and Kyaukkyi townships in Bago Region since late December 2020. Most of the displaced people in Kayin State are reportedly hiding in the nearby jungle; others are staying with host communities in Kayin and neighboring Mon states. The KNU, a signatory to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, and the MAF reportedly had more than 20 armed engagements in the first two weeks of January, and small-scale clashes continued at the time of reporting, according to partners and public sources. The dispersed nature of the displacement and the volatile security situation pose challenges for CSOs and humanitarian partners to assess and respond to the

needs of those displaced, even two months following the initial reports of displacement. A number of displaced families in Kyaukkyi Township in Bago Region received essential household materials from local organizations and host communities, according to partners. However, a large number of IDPs remains inaccessible, which warrants urgent action on the part of parties to the conflict to provide safe and sustained access to reach everyone in need.

UPDATE ON IDP RETURNS: Around 220 IDPs in Myitkyina, Tanai and Sumprabum townships in Kachin State plan to move to the Ngwe Pyaw San Pya (Pa La Na) Government resettlement site in Myitkyina Township before the onset of the monsoon season, according to a local partner. Another 44 families from Robert and AD2000 IDP camps in Bhamo Township and a Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC) IDP camp in Mansi Township also plan to return to their villages of origin in Mansi Township, according to Karuna Mission-Social Solidarity. The KBC indicated that around 600 IDPs in Myitkyina have requested transitional assistance to enable them to return to their places of origin. The MAF have reportedly been conducting demining activities since 28 January in three villages of return in Waingmaw Township, where KBC is trying to facilitate these returns. The returns, however, remain uncertain due to the security situation and the latest political developments.

In Rakhine, 84,187 people displaced by the MAF/Arakan Army (AA) conflict remained in 155 sites and 7,127 people in 31 host communities, according to 7 February data. Representatives of the MAF visited several displacement sites and discussed issues pertaining to the return of IDPs, including possibly facilitating returns in Kyauktaw, Minbya, Mrauk-U, Ann, Pauktaw, Ponnagyun and Sittwe townships. There are reports that some IDPs are spontaneously returning to areas less affected by conflict and where livelihoods opportunities are perceived as better. The number of people who have returned and their locations were not known at the time of reporting. At least 9,841 people displaced by the MAF/AA conflict remained in 27 sites in Chin State, as of 21 January.

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

Many partners temporarily paused activities after 1 February, with a gradual resumption of some activities over the following weeks. In Rakhine, the Travel Authorization (TA) procedure remains the same, and some partners were able to implement their humanitarian activities with pre-existing TAs in IDP camps, displacement sites and villages.

In Kachin, humanitarian partners made independent decisions about whether to continue activities or take a temporary pause as they assessed the fluid situation. One UN agency received a TA approval for



transportation of food to IDP camps in Puta-O in February. In northern Shan, ongoing security concerns due to the recent clashes led to further movement restrictions, especially in and towards the areas controlled by non-state armed actors.

The TA approval process, however, does not depict the full picture with regards to humanitarian access, which was already challenging before the 1 February events. By and large, access to many displacement sites continues to be sporadic, particularly in rural areas. In Rakhine, at least 54 out of 155 displacement sites and 16 out of 31 host communities resulting from the MAF/AA conflict remain inaccessible due to security and access restrictions.

FINANCIAL IMPACT OF UNFOLDING DEVELOPMENTS: A number of partners in Rakhine, Kachin and northern Shan reported cash liquidity difficulties caused by interruptions to the banking system. Some of them have paused activities due to the lack of cash for distributions, as well as the inability to transfer cash to implementing partners. This has also had an impact on cash and voucher assistance (CVA) options. The cash-in-envelope programming, which accounts for a significant proportion of cash activities in Myanmar, was negatively affected by the recent reduced access to physical cash. However, some partners have been successful in accessing limited amounts of cash from local bank branches to continue their programmes. The Cash Working Group (CWG) will continue to assess the situation and identify solutions to ensure continuity of cash and voucher activities, which have become crucial in the overall operations, not least since the COVID-19 outbreak. This includes assessing options for the expanded use of mobile money providers, like Ooredoo M-Pitisan and Wave Money, who are putting plans in place to address the existing physical liquidity challenges.

CLUSTER/SECTORAL HIGHLIGHTS

Protection

- In Rakhine, Kachin, northern Shan and Kayin, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) partners continued to provide critical GBV services, including case management and psychosocial support, remotely and in-person, where the situation permitted. The provision of legal support, both in-person and online, has also resumed after a few-days of pause in early February. Safe houses for GBV survivors are re-operating in Lashio and Myitkyina in northern Shan and Kachin, respectively. Timely access to the clinical care for GBV survivors, however, remains a concern due to the political developments.
- In Rakhine, Kachin, northern Shan and Chin, Child Protection (CP) partners sustained critical CP services, including remote and in-person case management and psychosocial support. The CP responders continued the delivery of child protection in emergencies services in Rakhine, remotely and in-person, where possible, while camp-based volunteers provided CP activities in targeted locations in Kachin. In northern Shan, partners ensured the continuity of case management support, despite increased presence of military and armed clashes. In response to the political developments, the CP partners are working to disseminate information on child safety/protection as well as justice for children, and update and facilitate the use of referral pathways to ensure appropriate and timely case management support. The CP Working Group partners are also working to strengthen the child protection monitoring and organized activities in Kachin State to reach people on the streets and increase their awareness of child protection issues.

Health

- COVID-19-related response activities and services, including surveillance, contact tracing, laboratory testing, infection prevention and control, case management and operational support and logistics have significantly declined since 1 February. Prior to this, the epidemiological data was available to inform COVID-19 prevention, containment and control efforts. In Kachin this data suggested that 80 per cent of cases was asymptomatic, since 1 February data is only available for positive and symptomatic cases. Communities will potentially require a health-care expenditure as health services are sourced from private providers due to a decrease in availability of public services for now. In areas controlled by non-state armed actors, the current political situation accentuates pre-existing needs for essential health services. Current supplies are sufficient for up to two months. However, shortages and stock-outs will be inevitable if supply chains continue to be affected, which makes prepositioning even more critical. In addition, operational partners were reportedly hesitant to conduct field activities across all target locations due to the presence of military checkpoints.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- As COVID-19 response, partners distributed hygiene items to around 39,360 families in IDP camps, displacement sites and villages in seven townships in Rakhine. Partners reached 30,130 people in over 70 displacement sites in five townships with life-saving humanitarian response, including provision of safe drinking water, improvement of sanitation facilities and distribution of basic hygiene items. Additionally, partners conducted hygiene promotion and awareness raising sessions. Partners also conducted an exercise to map out the contingency stock and the response capacities of partners.

Education

- Education in Emergency (EiE) partners remotely sustained provision of home-based learning assistance and non-specialized psychosocial support and implemented life skills and COVID-19 prevention programmes for conflict-affected populations in Rakhine, Kachin, and Shan States, and with plans to continue these activities in Chin State and the South-east. The EiE partners also ensured volunteer teachers received payments in the IDP camps in Rakhine and Kachin states. Unconfirmed number of teachers and students experienced arrests and detainment following their participation in demonstrations and civil disobedience movement.

Shelter

- In Kachin and northern Shan, partners will carry out remote monitoring depending on if the TA approvals are secured. Partners continued the distribution of COVID-19 related items, including soaps, hand gels and masks, as in previous reporting periods, in a number of IDP camps, in addition to shelter constructions, renovations and replacements in camps and resettlement sites. In central Rakhine, a technical working group was set up to enhance coordination in thematic areas, such as addressing technical solutions for shelter, harmonizing site profile and data collection tools, camp coordination and camp management trainings, capacity building of relevant partners and finding relevant solutions to address the fuel and cooking needs.

Nutrition

- In Rakhine, partners reached 9,990 children aged under five and 1,970 Pregnant and Lactating Women (PLW) with preventive nutrition services as well as 180 children aged under five with severe acute malnutrition. Over 440 children aged under five and 80 PLW in northern Shan, in addition to 1,400 children aged under five and 810 PLW in Kachin, received essential nutrition preventive services. In the second week of February, all main nutrition partners in Rakhine resumed minimal nutrition services, including treatment of acute malnutrition, Infant and Young Child Feeding Counselling (IYCF), nutrition screening, blanket food supplementation and micronutrient supplementations through mobile clinic visits. In Kachin and northern Shan, some partners gradually resumed essential services, such as IYCF counselling and nutrition screening activities through community staffs by providing virtual support. Nutrition activities in areas controlled by non-state armed actors in Kachin and northern Shan were ongoing. However, due to the current political developments, transportation routes were temporarily closed, hampering distribution and transportation of further nutrition supplies.

Food Security

- In southern areas of Chin State, WFP reached around 5,200 IDPs on 21 January in Paletwa Town and four neighboring villages in Paletwa Township with emergency food assistance. WFP also reached around 3,500 IDPs in five urban sites in Samee town in Paletwa Township on 24 January. In Rakhine, nearly 80 people from host communities in Mrauk-U Township benefitted from business grants worth 28,710,000 Myanmar kyats (appx. US\$20,340). In addition, 115 qualified beneficiaries out of the 164 trained will receive small business grants. In Sittwe Township, six beneficiaries managed to obtain business cash grants worth 2,700,000 Myanmar kyats (appx. US\$1918). With support from the partners, more than 40 Technical and Vocational Education and Training graduates in Mrauk-U Township made 44,000 masks, which were distributed to target villages in Kyauktaw and Mrauk-U townships. A total of 150 beneficiaries in Maungdaw Township received materials for production of face shields and masks. Partners provided business planning trainings to 160 beneficiaries in Mrauk-U Township. In Kachin State, partners made a rapid agricultural assessment in Bhamo Township and developed methodologies for food market assessment in areas controlled by non-state armed actors to prepare a cash for food programme for nine months.

Logistics

- International flights, connecting Yangon-Vientiane-Kuala Lumpur, operated by WFP proceeded on 7 and 14 February. The ongoing suspension of international air service in Myanmar was further extended until 30 April. Transportation

of humanitarian cargo from Yangon to Sittwe, both by road and waterway, is permitted and no movement restrictions have been reported for cargo movement via the same route. Transport permission was secured to move WFP relief items from Sittwe to northern Rakhine by waterway until 28 February and by road until 10 March.

- Potential challenges in the supply chain and procurement, including cargo from abroad, custom clearance, domestic transportation of relief items are expected in the coming months, according to a quick survey by WFP. Securing transport authorization for WFP food transportation to Paletwa in Chin State may be delayed due to the changes in procedures. The closure of banking sector, curfews, labor shortage, limited availability of trucks and drivers may arise as further challenges to humanitarian supply chains countrywide.

Maungdaw Inter-Agency Group

- The Maungdaw Interagency Group (MIAG) coordinates the multi-sectoral humanitarian response for northern Rakhine in both villages and displacement sites. Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, the MIAG partners have continuously adapted and readjusted programming in line with COVID-19- related instructions and have integrated COVID-19 risk reduction measures into ongoing operations. In January, in close coordination with relevant agencies, the MIAG partners were able to effectively reach some 247,800 beneficiaries with assistance and life-saving support. The MIAG partners will continue to monitor the unfolding political developments. MIAG partner activities have largely remained without interruption since 1 February as they have been able to successfully deliver services across a number of sectors, including with respect to food security, health and nutrition, livelihoods, protection, and WASH. Activities include food distributions, support to mobile clinics, COVID-19 prevention and response activities, non-food items distribution, infrastructure support, including construction of water points and school construction, protection activities, including running child-friendly spaces.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

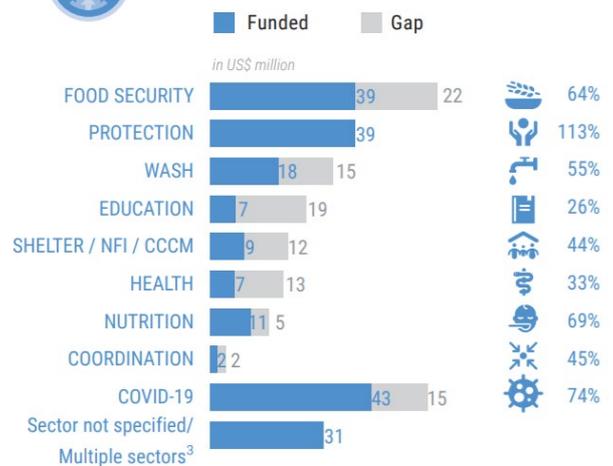
The 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) was 75 per cent funded, with US\$205.9 million received against the \$275.1 million requested, according to OCHA’s 2020 [Humanitarian Funding Update](#). Education, Shelter/NFI/CCCM, Health and Coordination received less than half of the requested funds, while Protection and COVID-19 related response were the best funded (113 and 74 per cent, respectively).

In 2021, the HRP seeks to mobilize US\$276.5 million to provide humanitarian assistance and protection services for around 945,000 people in in Kachin, Shan, Rakhine, Chin, Kayin and Bago, and it has so far received around \$693,000, according to FTS.

In 2020, the Myanmar Humanitarian Fund (MHF) received US\$16.7 million from 10 donors, with an additional funding from the Access to Health Fund and private donations (see MHF funding [update](#)). For 2021, the MHF aims to mobilize US\$31 million, which represents 15 per cent the HRP and as of 15 February, three donors have committed US\$4 million.



HRP FUNDING BY SECTOR



3. Disaggregated data by sector was not available at the time of reporting.

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