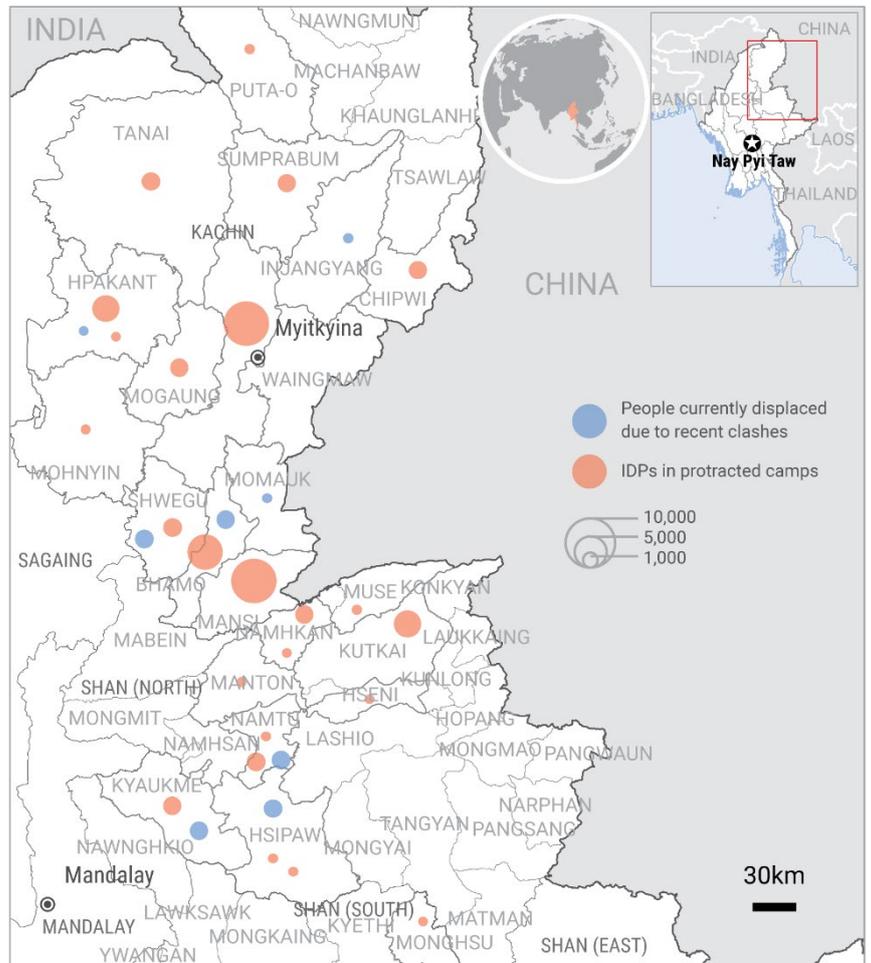


This regular update, covering humanitarian developments in conflict-affected areas from 26 March to 23 April, is produced by OCHA Myanmar in collaboration with the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group and UNHCR. The next update will be issued towards the end of May 2021.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- In south-eastern Myanmar, an estimated 40,000 people have been displaced due to insecurity, armed clashes between the Myanmar Armed Forces (MAF) and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), and indiscriminate attacks by the MAF on civilian areas.
- In Kachin State, around 5,800 people have been displaced since armed confrontation between the MAF and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) resurged in early March; about 5,000 remain displaced.
- In northern Shan, the volatile security situation and clashes, mostly involving Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs), have caused the displacement of about 11,000 people since January.
- In Rakhine and Chin states, casualties due to landmines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) are on the rise, with 11 civilians, including 9 children killed or injured in April.
- Humanitarian assistance and protection services in conflict-affected areas continue despite the impact of the political crisis on operations and pre-existing access challenges. The escalation of violence in parts of Myanmar increases threats to the safety of humanitarian operations and compounds existing access challenges.
- The 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan, which seeks US\$276.5 million to assist around 1 million people in conflict-affected areas, remains severely underfunded, with only 12 per cent of requirements covered so far – [FTS](#).



### KEY FIGURES

**40K**

people displaced in the South-east since December 2020

**11K**

people displaced in northern Shan since January 2021

**5.8K**

people displaced in Kachin State since mid-March 2021

**11**

civilian casualties due to explosive hazards in Rakhine and Chin states in April

## SITUATION OVERVIEW

**SURGE IN DISPLACEMENT IN THE SOUTH-EAST:** Armed conflict in the south-eastern parts of Myanmar continues to intensify between the MAF and the KNLA, an armed wing of the Karen National Union, resulting in further internal displacement and civilian casualties, mostly in Kayin State and Bago Region. The clashes, which erupted in early December 2020, had internally displaced around 7,100 people by mid-March, mostly in Hpapun Township in Kayin State, where the displaced families were hiding in the jungles with limited access to services and humanitarian assistance.

The humanitarian situation in the area has worsened since late March, with thousands of people having reportedly fled from their homes in Kayin State after the MAF launched airstrikes, including in civilian areas. The continued hostilities, shelling of civilian areas by the MAF, and increased insecurity reportedly led to the displacement of an estimated 40,000 people throughout south-eastern Myanmar by 20 April, according to data gathered from various sources by UNHCR<sup>1</sup>.

Prior to developments on 1 February 2021, Kayin State and Bago Region had hosted about 12,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) in four locations, both in camp-like and out-of-camp settlements, since 2006.



# 40,000

people estimated to be displaced in south-eastern Myanmar.

The hostilities in Kayin and Bago between 27 March and 8 April have killed at least 20 civilians and injured more than 25, according to public sources. There have also been reports of a local school destroyed in Dwe Lo Township in Hpapun District of Kayin State, in addition to damage to other civilian property. The details of civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure could not be verified at the time of reporting. Humanitarian interventions remain constrained due to severe and longstanding access challenges, compounded by growing insecurity in the area. Nevertheless, operational partners are doing their best to deliver assistance to the newly displaced and those otherwise affected by hostilities. Humanitarian partners are planning to roll out a displacement tracking system and carrying out a stocktaking exercise to assess the capacities of partners in Kayin State. This is to facilitate the efficient prepositioning of emergency supplies among partners to ensure a coordinated response.

**NEW DISPLACEMENT IN KACHIN DUE TO RESURGENCE OF CONFLICT:** The security situation in Kachin State, which began to deteriorate following the eruption of clashes between the MAF and the KIA in early March, remains volatile. Armed confrontations between the MAF and the KIA were reported in at least 12 townships, including Bhamo, Hpakant, Injayang, Kamaing, Mogaung, Momauk, Myitkyina, Putao, Shwegu, Sumprabum, Tanai and Waingmaw, ranging from local skirmishes, to attacks on convoys, airstrikes, artillery and mortar shelling. Hardly any clashes had not been reported in Kachin State since September 2018.



# 5,000

people remain displaced across Kachin since mid-March due to MAF-KIA clashes.

The conflict led to the displacement of over 5,800 people since early March 2021. Around 800 people returned to their places of origin within a few days, while about 5,000 remain displaced across several townships. Some 4,800 people are currently hosted in churches, monasteries and displacement sites in Injayang, Momauk and Shwegu townships. The remaining IDPs are dispersed in small numbers across Dawthponeyan and Hpakant townships. Attempts are being made to reach the affected communities with assistance; however, insecurity and other access constraints make it difficult for partners

to scale up the efforts to address needs, which include emergency shelter, food, basic household items and healthcare. The new displacement comes on top of protracted internal displacement in Kachin State, where about 95,000 people have been living in IDP camps established in 2011.

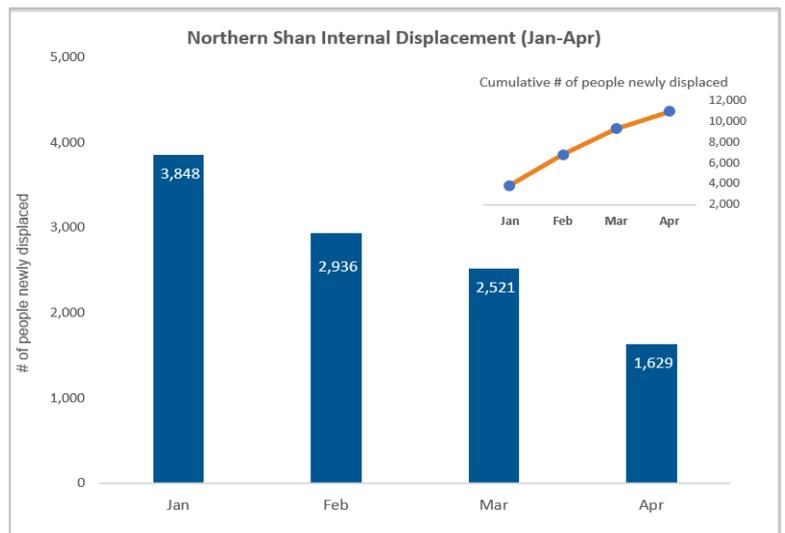
In addition to increased humanitarian needs and population movement, the ongoing insecurity is raising serious protection concerns, with reports of increased conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) perpetrated

<sup>1</sup> The exact location of the reported displacements and number of IDPs could not be independently verified at the time of reporting due to access and security challenges.

against women and girls. Reported incidents included brutal and systematic CRSV committed by multiple perpetrators and most of these violations were perpetrated against women and girls of ethnic minority groups.

**POPULATION MOVEMENT IN NORTHERN SHAN:** Clashes between the MAF and EAOs or between EAOs in northern Shan continued unabated in the first quarter of 2021 and escalated in March. The Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA) and the allied forces of the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and the Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army (SSPP/SSA) engaged in armed confrontations in Hsipaw, Kyaukme, Monghsu and Namtu townships. There were also clashes, albeit with less intensity and frequency between the MAF and the KIA in Lashio, Kutkai and Muse townships, between the MAF and the TNLA in Kutkai and Namhkan townships, and between the MAF and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army in Hseni and Kutkai townships.

Clashes between January and April displaced close to 11,000 people in Hsipaw, Kyaukme, Lashio, Namtu, Namhkan, Monghsu and Muse townships. Displacement generally remains temporary; over 6,000 people returned to their places of origin within a few days. The remaining 4,770 people are currently hosted in churches, monasteries and displacement sites, with Kyaukme and Namtu townships hosting around 1,650 and 1,340 IDPs respectively. Local humanitarian partners and host communities are providing life-saving assistance and protection services, although as with other states and regions, operational challenges, including due to pre-existing access constraints and insecurity, continue to hinder their abilities to scale up.



The conflict dynamics and their humanitarian impact in northern Shan so far in 2021 demonstrate an upward trend compared to the same period in 2020, when there were only a few brief armed skirmishes between the EAOs that temporarily displaced some 720 people. In addition to the most recent displacements, about 9,800 IDPs continue to reside in protracted displacement camps in northern Shan established since 2011.

**EXPLOSIVE HAZARDS A THREAT IN RAKHINE AND CHIN:** Despite the absence of hostilities in Rakhine and southern areas of Chin states since November 2020, the physical wellbeing of civilians remains threatened by the presence of landmines and ERWs. In April, a total of 11 civilians were killed or injured by landmines and ERWs, mostly in Rakhine. In Kyauktaw Township in Rakhine State on 4 April, the explosion of an ERW killed a mother and her two children and injured another child. Another explosion reportedly injured six children under 16 years old near Taung Ywar Village in Buthidaung Township on 8 April. A landmine incident was also reported in Paletwa Township in Chin State on 15 April, in which one civilian sustained injuries.



**11** civilian

casualties due to explosions of ERWs/landmines in April in Rakhine and Chin states.

Meanwhile, there are reports that the MAF is demining villages and roads across several townships in Rakhine, tied with efforts to encourage people displaced by the MAF-Arakan Army (AA) conflict to return to their places of origin. However, many IDPs remain unwilling to return due to the continued presence of armed personnel around their villages, concerns about landmines, and the lack of livelihood opportunities. As of 21 April, more than 78,000 people displaced by the MAF-AA conflict were hosted in 146 sites and 5,038 people in 28 host communities in Rakhine State. Another 9,841 IDPs remained in 27 sites in Chin State, as of 21 January. This is in addition to around 126,000 IDPs, mostly stateless persons, who are hosted in protracted camps established in 2012.

## HUMANITARIAN ACCESS AND OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

Insecurity and restrictive processes related to travel authorizations (TA) continue to interrupt or delay operations and impede rapid and comprehensive multi-sector responses and the scaling up of activities where needed.

In northern Shan, Kachin and Kayin states and Bago Region, active armed conflict and insecurity continue to complicate operations. Constraints include road blockages, increased presence of security personnel and restrictions on movement. The escalating conflict, including attacks or threats of attacks against transport infrastructures, including vehicles, roads and bridges, significantly increases safety concerns for humanitarian actors, compounding access challenges. Blanket restrictions on access to populations in areas controlled by non-state armed actors remain in place. In rural and remote communities, the response is often provided through small localized activities rather than a comprehensive multi-sector response, and even these activities are increasingly shifting to remote management modalities.

In Rakhine, 50 displacement sites (out of 146 hosting people displaced by the AA-MAF conflict) hosting an estimated 20,000 displaced persons remain on an official list of restricted sites for security reasons. An additional nine sites hosting some 1,100 persons are not recognized as displacement sites, preventing the delivery of humanitarian assistance there. Approved TAs continued to include specific restrictions and conditions, such as the requirement to hand over humanitarian supplies to village tract administrators or camp management committees or limiting activities to COVID-19 prevention only.

In addition to access challenges, challenges resulting from the ongoing political crisis continue to negatively impact operations in multiple sectors. For example, the disruption of banking services and the limited availability of cash are increasingly affecting the delivery of humanitarian assistance in all conflict-affected areas.

## CLUSTER/SECTORAL HIGHLIGHTS

### Protection

- In Kachin, northern Shan and Kayin, gender-based violence (GBV) partners continued to provide critical GBV services, including case management and psychological support, remotely as well as in-person, where the situation permitted. Social and legal support services are mostly available, while access to health care and access to justice remains limited in these areas. In Rakhine, the GBV partners resumed in-person services in locations where TAs were approved, while remotely providing critical services in inaccessible areas, since the beginning of March. Community mobilization for GBV prevention has resumed in a number of camps and IDP sites in Rakhine, while updated GBV referral pathways were disseminated to relevant stakeholders in Kachin and northern Shan. In collaboration with the food security actors, basic food basket support was provided to safe houses for GBV survivors in northern Shan.
- GBV partners distributed about 530 dignity kits to women and girls in central and northern Rakhine and are planning to distribute similar kits to new IDPs in Monghsu and Mongkaing townships in southern Shan, which were delayed due to access challenges. In northern Shan, partners distributed more than 300 dignity kits and clean delivery kits to displaced women and girls in Namtu Township, despite access challenges and insecurity. Meanwhile, the GBV partners in Kachin distributed 160 dignity kits and 130 solar lanterns in IDP camps targeting women and girls. The distribution of a further 500-800 dignity kits is also planned for women and girls recently displaced in Momauk and Bhamo townships.
- In central Rakhine, the sector is developing common core protection monitoring questions to integrate into the protection monitoring questionnaires to streamline and harmonize the data collection. The sector partners are also setting up movement tracking of IDP returns in central Rakhine and working on a household/individual questionnaire to identify IDP intentions on returns and conditions in villages of origin.

- Nationwide, case management workers reached 260 children in hotspot areas, who experienced violence, emotional abuse as well as separation from families and in detention due to the political crisis. In Rakhine, a remote case management training for frontline workers were completed for four organizations. An awareness raising session, including on mine risks and other child protection risks, was also conducted in Rakhine.
- Meanwhile, the disruptions to the banking services and related cash withdrawal issues across Rakhine State have impeded implementation of activities, despite a growing need for cash in settlements and majority of IDP camps and displacement sites. The shutdown of mobile data internet is also impacting capacity building activities as most of them are largely run online.



## Health

- Countrywide, there have been 120 attacks on health care that caused 11 deaths and 48 injuries according to the data recorded between 1 February and 21 April by the WHO [Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care](#). The attacks impacted 45 personnel, 68 patients, 74 facilities, 17 ambulances and medical vehicles and 6 supplies.
- In Rakhine, health partners continued the humanitarian response in Buthidaung, Kyauktaw, Maungdaw, Mrauk-U, Myebon, Pauktaw, Rathedaung and Sittwe townships, through primary care consultations, life-saving emergency medical referrals, sexual and reproductive health services, family planning services and clinical care for GBV survivors. The response also included support with mental health therapeutic counselling, malaria and TB testing as well as COVID-19 and disability-inclusion awareness raising in communities. There have been about 34,000 cumulative consultations reported between 1 January and 15 April. In Chin State, primary health care service continued in five IDP sites and four villages in Paletwa Township, while mobile clinic operations reduced coverage and operation hours due to safety and security concerns.
- In northern Shan, partners continued health response that included primary consultations and clinical care for GBV survivors in Hsipaw, Kutkai, Kyaukme, Lashio, Muse, Nawngkhio, Namhkan and Tangyan townships. On 26 March, health partners provided emergency basic health care services to more than 200 displaced people at Nam Aun monastery in Hsipaw Township. In Kachin State, most outreach activities are currently postponed due to insecurity, while location-based health services under remote supervision continued. There have been about 1,000 cumulative consultations reported between 20 March and 19 April. In Kachin and northern Shan, where possible, some partners also continued to provide essential services for women and children, immunizations, malaria prevention and treatment, patient referral and nutrition activities.



## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- At the national level, the cluster conducted partner capacity mapping and contingency stock exercise to prepare to address possible emergence of new needs. In Rakhine, partners arranged the delivery of water to the people in displacement sites in Kyauktaw, Ponnagyun and Sittwe townships, where water shortage is severe, in the week of 19 April. In northern Shan, partners installed emergency latrines for over 5,000 people displaced in Hsipaw, Kyaukme and Namtu townships due to recent clashes.
- By and large, disruption of banking services and limited availability of cash impeded the delivery of water, sanitation and hygiene assistance in camps and displacement sites in conflict-affected areas, resulting in challenges for payment to contractors, suppliers camp-based staff and volunteers. Activities related to hygiene promotion and hygiene kit distribution have been disrupted due to COVID-19 prevention measures, with limited availability of hygiene items.

## Education in Emergencies

- EiE sector partners were able to reach 8,500 boys and girls with home-based learning materials in the first quarter of 2021. Education services remain significantly disrupted and continued learning opportunities remain inaccessible for most children across the country, which threatens their wellbeing and likelihood to ever return to education spaces. The partners will consult with communities and develop

a harmonized analysis of the needs and response to ensure the support provided is the most appropriate and urgent for the children, youth and families.

- Limited cash and banking services are significantly impacting partners, including the payment of volunteer teachers. The situation is particularly severe for volunteer teachers at the IDP camps in Rakhine State, some of whom did not receive funding from their line ministry, despite being on payroll in previous years. The EiE partners are seeking out funding to cover their costs.

## Shelter/Non-Food Items/Camp Coordination and Camp Management

- In Kachin and northern Shan, partners are conducting rapid needs assessments to identify immediate needs of those displaced by the recent conflict. Ongoing NFI distributions, mainly in southern Kachin, will be covering about 2,800 displaced persons, while contingency NFIs are being planned to stockpile in remote areas in Kachin. Funds were transferred to most IDP camps for camp-running costs for March, while others face challenges in withdrawing cash for April due to disrupted banking operations. Resources for ongoing shelter construction plans are being redirected towards emergency and temporary shelter needs due to a lack of funds. The field visits are continuing but somewhat limited due to safety and security in some areas. Access to areas beyond government control remains restricted. With the increase of new displacements and shortage of space in existing camps or temporary shelters, local partners are to identify new locations to host potential new IDPs. Data collection for regular camp profiles started in April and will continue until the end of May.
- In central Rakhine, terms of reference for a technical working group were endorsed, which will work on shelter needs, capacity building and trainings, site profiles in displacement sites, cooking fuel and issues related to customer relationship management. With all workstreams proceeding as planned, partners collected information on all shelter needs in displacement sites, including needs for monsoon preparedness, to begin response once TAs are approved. Regarding emergency preparedness, shelter/NFI needs as well as partnerships, coordination structures, contingency planning, business continuity planning, frame agreements and stockpiling have been identified. In addition, emergency NFI supplies continue to be provided in response to fires and for COVID-19 awareness raising in IDP camps and displacement sites.

## Nutrition

- Partners provided preventive nutrition services for about 12,350 children under five and 2,400 pregnant and lactating women (PLW) with preventive nutrition services in Rakhine, Kachin and northern Shan during the reporting period. More than 70 PLW with acute malnutrition and about 870 children aged 6-59 months with severe and moderate acute malnutrition received life-saving nutrition treatment in Rakhine State.
- In collaboration with the global nutrition cluster and nutrition partners, the sector held an online workshop on 6-8 April to develop an emergency response preparedness plan. The sector also provided a Training-of-Trainers workshop on Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) from 4 to 9 April to enhance the capacity of nutrition partners for integration of IYCF counselling in their early childcare and development programs in Rakhine, Shan, Kachin states and Yangon Region.

## Food Security

- In Yangon, FAO identified households living in Hlaingtharya, one of the six townships under martial law, who do not have space in their backyard/houses to grow vegetables or raise livestock. FAO is also exploring a possibility to conduct an assessment in Bogale, Mawlamyinegyun and Labutta townships in Ayeyarwady Region to better understand the profile and vulnerability of host communities and the intention of people returning from Hlaingtharya and other townships.
- WFP worked with three CSOs to provide food (rice only) to poor families in Hlaingtharya Township since mid-March and has reached 25,000 people to date. WFP is looking for several possible options to scale up this response in urban areas of Yangon as well as elsewhere as needed. WFP is planning to reach 10 townships in Yangon, and townships with high population of informal settlement as the main target. WFP is also planning a 3-6-month intervention for food assistance, initially with 1 bag of rice per household, in

collaboration with partners on registration and targeting, to a market-based approach (cash/vouch/mix of modalities).

- A partner is preparing for food distributions in Shwepyithar Township, another township in Yangon under martial law, targeting 450 households in four wards. Households will be targeted according to the partner's vulnerability metrics and the assistance of pick-up food would be delivered through a partner's office.

## Logistics

- A fortnightly WFP scheduled relief flights connecting Yangon, Vientiane and Kuala Lumpur continued every other Sunday. The flight which landed on 23 March did not bring any incoming passengers due to delays in approval during the Thingyan Holiday. Meanwhile, domestic airlines continue to operate from Yangon to several destinations, without the need for COVID-19 tests. In Rakhine, transportation of humanitarian cargoes from Yangon to Sittwe and between Sittwe and Buthidaung/Maungdaw by waterway is permitted and no movement restrictions have been reported. In Mon, Kayin and Kachin, WFP experienced some delays in food delivery due to armed clashes.

## Maungdaw Inter-Agency Group

- The Maungdaw Interagency Group (MIAG) coordinates the multi-sectoral humanitarian response for northern Rakhine in both villages and displacement sites. In March, MIAG partners were able to reach 278,936 beneficiaries with assistance and life-saving support.
- While MIAG partners are monitoring the unfolding political developments partner activities have largely continued with minimal further interruption since 1 February. MIAG partners have been able to successfully deliver services across a number of sectors. Activities include food distributions, support to mobile clinics, health referrals, COVID-19 prevention and response activities, non-food items distribution, infrastructure support, including construction of water points and school construction and some protection activities to IDP sites and villages.

## RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

**2021 HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN IS SEVERELY UNDERFUNDED:** The 2021 [Humanitarian Response Plan](#) (HRP) remains severely underfunded, with only US\$34.6 million received of the \$276.5 million requested – 12.5 per cent funding – according to the [Financial Tracking Service](#). The sectors receiving the least earmarked funding include Education in Emergencies and Food Security, with no funding recorded to date, followed by Shelter/NFI/CCCM with 0.6 per cent, WASH with 1.0 per cent, and Protection, with 2.3 per cent funding received so far. A total of US\$45.3 million has been committed for humanitarian response beyond the 2021 HRP.

**MYANMAR HUMANITARIAN FUND FIRST STANDARD ALLOCATION IN 2021:** In line with the 2021 HRP priorities, the Myanmar Humanitarian Fund (MHF) is preparing to launch its first Standard Allocation in 2021 of about US\$10 million. The allocation is expected to support coordinated response to address urgent needs of people displaced in sites and people with specific vulnerabilities including those linked to age, gender, disabilities or other diversities such as ethnic background and sexual orientation in Chin, Rakhine, Kachin, Shan and Kayin states. The allocation may consider additional emergency response beyond the areas indicated in the 2021 HRP, particularly urban and peri-urban areas, as a consequence of the developments since 1 February 2021, if identified as a priority by sectors/clusters based on available information and needs analysis. COVID-19 related actions may also be mainstreamed throughout the response to the humanitarian needs. Meanwhile, implementation of most of the ongoing MHF projects (following two standard and one reserve allocations in the amount of US\$16.2 million over the course of 2020) is continuing across the conflict-affected areas.

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