

# Burma – Complex Emergency

FEBRUARY 9, 2024

## SITUATION AT A GLANCE

<p><b>5.3</b> MILLION</p> <p>People Targeted for Humanitarian Assistance in Burma in 2024</p> <p><i>UN – December 2023</i></p>	<p><b>2.3</b> MILLION</p> <p>IDPs in Burma Displaced Since February 2021</p> <p><i>UNHCR – January 2024</i></p>	<p><b>800</b> THOUSAND</p> <p>IDPs in Burma Displaced Since Late October 2023</p> <p><i>UN – January 2024</i></p>	<p><b>12.9</b> MILLION</p> <p>Number of People in Need of Food Assistance in 2024</p> <p><i>UN – December 2023</i></p>	<p><b>3</b> MILLION</p> <p>People Targeted for Protection Assistance in Burma in 2024</p> <p><i>UN – December 2023</i></p>
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- Three years after the MAF launched the February 2021 coup d'état, conflict and a lack of funding hindered relief actors from reaching an estimated 1.9 million people prioritized for humanitarian assistance in 2023.
- Access constraints—including insecurity, military roadblocks, and rejected travel authorizations—in Rakhine State restricted humanitarian actors' ability to provide health assistance between November 2023 and January 2024.
- Despite signing a temporary ceasefire agreement on January 11 to suspend fighting in northern Shan State, the MAF and the 3BA continued to engage in hostilities in other regions of the country, resulting in new displacements.



## TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

For the Burma Response in FY 2024

USAID/BHA<sup>1</sup>

\$41,500,000

*For complete funding breakdown with partners, see detailed chart on page 5*

**Total**

**\$41,500,000**

<sup>1</sup> USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)

## **KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

### **Three Years After the Coup, Hostilities and Funding Constraints Exacerbate Humanitarian Needs**

Three years after the Myanmar Armed Forces (MAF) launched the February 2021 coup d'état, violence between ethnic armed organizations (EAOs), MAF, and People's Defense Forces continued to drive deteriorating humanitarian conditions across Burma as of October 2023, the UN reports. Hostilities had resulted in more than 550 civilian deaths between October 2023 and January 2024 alone, according to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). These deaths contributing to the more than 1,600 total civilian deaths recorded in 2023, according to OHCHR. Since the coup, continued hostilities had displaced more than 2.3 million people—comprising the majority of the total internally displaced persons (IDPs) population of 2.6 million people in Burma—as of January 1, according to the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM) partner the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). IDPs around the country lack access to adequate shelter, with most residing in informal sites, and basic services, including clean water.

Despite elevated needs in Burma since the coup, significant underfunding of the humanitarian response impeded international and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and UN agencies from reaching an estimated 1.9 million people of the 4.5 million targeted for humanitarian assistance in 2023, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Children ages five years and younger were among the most at-risk population affected by the absence of humanitarian assistance, with approximately 42,000 children projected to face severe acute malnutrition in 2024, in part due to a lack of malnutrition treatment in 2023, according to OCHA. The 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan identifies 6 million children who will need food, health, and protection assistance out of the total 18.6 million people projected to need humanitarian assistance during the year. This is approximately 1 million more people in need than projected in the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan and nearly 20 times the number of people in need before the February 2021 coup.

### **Hostilities and Access Constraints in Rakhine State Limit Humanitarian Actors' Ability to Provide Health Care Assistance**

Insecurity and other access constraints have continued to impede health care access in Burma. Following the coup d'état, more than 1,200 incidents of violence or obstruction had adversely affected health care across the country as of February, an analysis organization reports. In western Burma's Rakhine State, escalated violence starting in mid-November had impeded a humanitarian organization's ability to provide health assistance between November and January, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) reports. Since mid-November, insecurity has forced MSF to temporarily close all of its mobile health care clinics in Rakhine, which previously provided medical assistance to an estimated 1,200 people per week. In addition, at least two hospitals where MSF referred patients for emergency care in central Rakhine were non-functional due to damage from insecurity as of January 16, the NGO reports. Military authorities' use of roadblocks and their lack of travel authorizations for relief actors also obstructed humanitarian organizations from delivering assistance in recent months. Even in areas where relief actors are able to operate, significant increases in the price of fuel since February 2021 have impeded many patients in rural areas from traveling to operational clinics to seek medical care.

### **Violence Continues Despite a Temporary Ceasefire in Northern Shan**

The MAF and the Three Brotherhood Alliance (3BA)—a coalition comprising the Arakan Army, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army—reached a

temporary ceasefire agreement—the Haigeng Agreement—for northern Shan State on January 11 following negotiations in China’s Yunnan Province, according to international media. Prior to the announcement of the ceasefire, MAF–3BA hostilities between late October 2023 and early January 2024 had contributed to the new displacement of nearly 800,000 people across Burma, out of whom 164,000 people have either returned to their places of origin or been displaced for a second time, leaving IDPs and affected communities in need of food assistance, health services, hygiene kits, and shelter support, according to OCHA and UNHCR. The temporary ceasefire resulted in the opening of food markets and improved access in areas of northern Shan’s Kutkai and Lashio townships as of January 17, a humanitarian analysis organization reports.

However, the ceasefire has not held throughout all of northern Shan; immediately following the ceasefire announcement, MAF airstrikes reportedly hit four townships in the state between January 12 and 15. Additionally, 3BA and MAF have not applied the ceasefire to other areas of the country, with ongoing fighting reported in Magway, Mandalay, and Sagaing regions, as well as Kachin and Kayin states, according to international media. In neighboring Sagaing Region, violence by MAF increased across four townships, including Kanbalu, in January, resulting in the displacement of an estimated 10,000 people after the MAF burned houses in surrounding villages, exacerbating shelter and protection needs among affected populations, according to international media.

## Rohingya Refugees Flee to Indonesia via Boat, Report Humanitarian Challenges During Transit

More than 1,700 Rohingya refugees—the majority of whom are women and children—traveled from Burma and Bangladesh to Indonesia via sea routes from mid-November to late January 2024. The journey by sea remains a dangerous route for Rohingya refugees; individuals en route to Indonesia face severe protection risks, including gender-based violence (GBV) and physical abuse, and lack basic essential supplies, such as food and water, according to UNHCR. Nearly 1,000 Rohingya refugees—an estimated one in eight people—traveling by boat perished or went missing at sea in 2022 and 2023. This includes a boat bound for Indonesia believed to have sunk in November 2023 carrying approximately 200 refugees from Burma.

### KEY FIGURES



**\$38.4 Million**

In dedicated USAID/BHA  
FY 2024 support for  
food assistance



**\$6.5 Million**

In dedicated USAID/BHA  
FY 2023 support for  
health care programming

### U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

#### FOOD SECURITY

USAID/BHA provides funding to the UN World Food Program (WFP) to deliver emergency food assistance—including cash transfers for food; food vouchers; and in-kind food assistance through local, regional, and international procurement—to communities in need in Burma. USAID/BHA also supports complementary nutrition services, as well as coordination and capacity-building activities among other food security actors in the country to strengthen response efforts to food needs.

#### HEALTH

USAID/BHA and State/PRM partner with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and three implementing partners to provide life-saving health care for violence-affected people in Burma. USAID/BHA partners provide health assistance, including health awareness trainings, maternal

health assistance, and medical consultations to IDPs and vulnerable communities across Chin, Kayah, Kayin, and Rakhine states and Magway and Sagaing regions.



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USG partners implementing standalone protection interventions

## PROTECTION

USAID/BHA and State/PRM support 11 humanitarian partners to address protection concerns among displaced and violence-affected populations throughout Burma. Ongoing U.S. Government (USG)-supported protection activities in Burma focus on increasing access to protection assistance, such as GBV prevention and response services and community-based mental health and psychosocial support. USG partners also work with the broader humanitarian community in Burma to advocate for and promote the delivery of protection services in areas with significant humanitarian access constraints.



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USG partners supporting WASH activities

## WASH

USAID/BHA and State/PRM fund water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programming throughout the country to prevent waterborne disease outbreaks and promote access to safe drinking water. USAID/BHA supports nine partners to implement critical WASH activities, including conducting hygiene awareness sessions, rehabilitating water systems and latrines, and providing safe drinking water to violence-affected people.

## CONTEXT IN BRIEF

- On February 1, 2021, Burma's military staged a coup d'état against the civilian government during which soldiers detained senior civilian government officials, including State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint, and announced a one-year state of emergency. Military authorities have extended the state of emergency five times since the coup, with the most recent extension from February 2024 to July 2024 which has further delayed elections. Three years since the February 2021 coup happened, clashes between EAOs, MAF, and other local non-state armed groups across Burma have persisted, resulting in continuous displacement and humanitarian needs. Coup-related instability has also resulted in access challenges, limited cash availability, and restricted banking operations, challenging the provision of assistance by relief actors at a time of significant humanitarian need.
- The coup d'état exacerbated the already complex issues in Burma. The MAF launched large-scale and indiscriminate military operations—which the USG has since characterized as genocide—in Rakhine's Buthidaung, Maungdaw, and Rathedaung townships following Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army attacks on northern Rakhine checkpoints and police posts in October 2016 and August 2017. As of June 2023, more than 123,800 refugees fled to neighboring countries, such as Bangladesh, India, and Thailand. As of June 2023, an estimated 630,000 ethnic Rohingya—a minority group not recognized by Burma's military forces and denied rights to citizenship, freedom of movement, and public services—remained in Rakhine. Many IDPs in Rakhine are Rohingya, including approximately 147,000 people affected by the 2012 clashes who remained displaced as of July 2023. In addition, approximately 78,000 civilians, mostly ethnic Rakhine, remained displaced in Rakhine and Chin states as of mid-March 2022 due to clashes between the Arakan Army and the MAF that erupted in 2018. Displaced populations, as well as other vulnerable individuals,

continue to lack access to basic services and livelihood opportunities due to persistent violence and associated movement restrictions.

- On November 17, 2023, U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Susan N. Stevenson re-issued a declaration of humanitarian need in FY 2024 for Burma due to the ongoing complex emergency. USG partners are continuing to support affected populations in Burma with emergency food, health, nutrition, protection, shelter, and WASH assistance, as well as other critical relief commodities.

### USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE BURMA RESPONSE IN FY 2024<sup>2,3</sup>

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
<b>USAID/BHA</b>			
<b>BURMA</b>			
OCHA	Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management, and Assessments	Countrywide	\$1,500,000
WFP	Food Assistance—Cash Transfers for Food, Local, Regional, and International Procurement; Nutrition	Bago, Chin, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Magway, Mon, Rakhine, Shan, Sagaing Tanintharyi	\$40,000,000
<b>TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING FOR THE BURMA RESPONSE</b>			<b>\$41,500,000</b>
<b>TOTAL USG FUNDING FOR THE BURMA RESPONSE IN FY 2024</b>			<b>\$41,500,000</b>

<sup>2</sup>Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of February 9, 2024.

### PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://www.interaction.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed, often in the affected region; reduce the burden on scarce resources, such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space; can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
  - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](https://www.cidi.org)
  - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](https://www.reliefweb.int).

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)