

HIGHLIGHTS

- Humanitarian access needed to all areas of Rakhine State
- Violence breaks out in Thandwe
- Increase in boat departures from Rakhine State
- Kachin cross-line missions show major humanitarian needs
- Sustained access and coordination with local NGOs key to meeting needs in Kachin
- Floods across the country highlight continued need for disaster preparedness

KEY FIGURES

# of IDPs in Kachin, Rakhine, Meikhtila and the Southeast	646,800
# of Stateless people	808,000

Source: UNHCR, OCHA, TBC, CCCM

FUNDING

Rakhine Response Plan

\$109.3 million
requested (US\$)

72.5% funded

Kachin Response Plan

\$50.9 million
requested (US\$)

47.5% funded



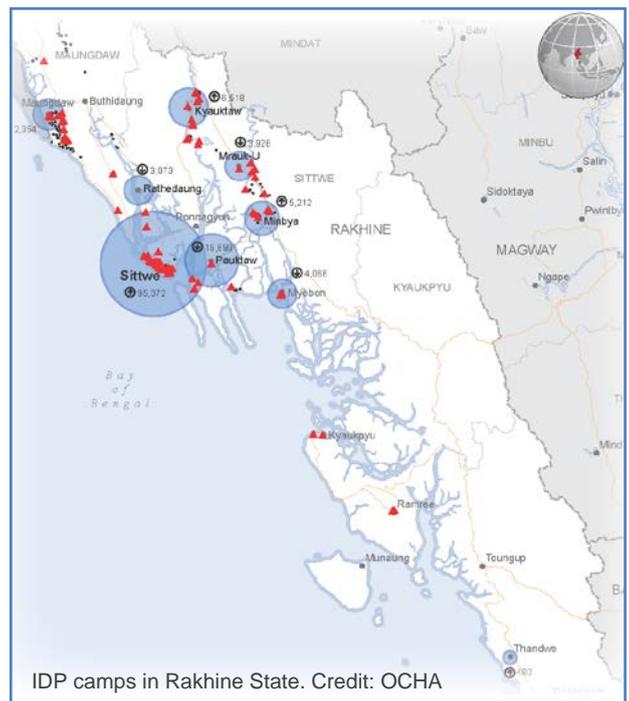
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Full and unimpeded humanitarian access needed across all areas of Rakhine State

Humanitarian agencies operating in Rakhine State in support to the Government-led humanitarian response are finding it increasingly difficult to operate and deliver emergency assistance to thousands of people displaced following last year's inter-communal violence. Despite the Government's efforts to clarify that international partners are operating at the invitation of the Government, and that the response is in line with government priorities, growing community resistance about the perceived bias of assistance and increased inter-communal tensions, as well as persistent threats and intimidation of staff has created an increasingly menacing atmosphere for aid workers. In some circumstances this has led to a disruption of assistance to all vulnerable families, irrespective of which community they belong to.

The situation is particularly critical in Myebon town, south of the state capital Sittwe, where there are two camps for the displaced, the Kan Thar Htwat Wa that houses 296 Rakhine and Taung Paw where 3,844 Muslims are housed. However, incidents have also been reported in other parts of the State, including in Sittwe. In Myebon, the escalation of tensions has led to a serious decline in the provision of basic services for all IDPs as some relief agencies have been forced to temporarily suspend relief activities. Some of these activities have since resumed. Health services provided by weekly mobile health clinics for both camps in Myebon have recently been able to resume with the support of the Rakhine State Government (RSG).



Incidents reported in Sittwe and Myebon include the refusal by owners to rent their buildings for office premises or for accommodation of aid workers, following pressure by the local communities. In many locations harassment by some community members in some instances led to staff members resigning, problems securing supplies and contractors for essential relief works, and blocking of access to camps.

Durable solutions and long-term strategies for the overall development of all of Rakhine State are imperative. Additional funding and resources are needed to support these activities.

Humanitarian partners have continually raised concerns with the State Government, over these incidents which have increased in the past weeks. Although the Rakhine State Government has taken action and stressed in public meetings that international organizations are working in support of the Government-led response, recognizing that the same assistance is going to IDPs of all communities, and that the number of Muslim IDPs is much higher than the ones belonging to the Rakhine community, tensions and community resistance continue unabated.

Any obstruction of aid efforts is a violation of international humanitarian law. The government has also highlighted that intimidations will not be tolerated, and action will be taken against those responsible for acts which are against the law. Nonetheless, more must be done at both the state and national level to ensure the aid workers can safely reach people in camps with vital assistance, and to help address community misconceptions about the work of the aid community, to ensure that all affected people receive much-needed humanitarian assistance.

UN and NGO partners are increasing the ways they communicate with communities to increase acceptance and build trust. This is happening in conjunction with efforts to strengthen outreach work with local community leaders and civic society groups, to promote dialogue and improve the understanding of the humanitarian response and existing development projects across the State.

Investment in early recovery and development efforts needed

A total of 180,000 vulnerable people in camps and isolated communities remain highly dependent on life-saving assistance from aid agencies, including over 105,000 children. Many IDPs have been housed in temporary shelters in camps for over a year, with many of them facing severe restrictions on their movements, leaving them completely cut off from local markets, schools and income generating activities.

Aid agencies are providing assistance to the most vulnerable from all communities, purely based on evaluated needs, in accordance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality. Similar conditions applied to those in need of assistance following Cyclone Giri in 2010.

RAKHINE EMERGENCY - KEY FIGURES



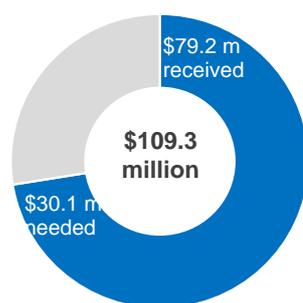
180,000
people in need



143,000
Internally displaced



103,000
people relocated



Rakhine Response Plan

While in the short-term there is a critical need for humanitarian and early recovery activities, given the low levels of development in the State, durable solutions and long-term strategies for the overall development of all of Rakhine State are imperative. Additional funding and resources are needed to support these activities. Furthermore, it is essential that access and support to livelihood opportunities, including freedom of movement and access to markets, paddy fields and fisheries, and firewood collection is increased for all affected communities to alleviate tensions and build resilience.

Inter-communal violence in Thandwe

On 29 September, internal-communal violence broke out in Thandwe Township, in the south west of Rakhine State. A dispute between a Kaman shop owner and Rakhine motorcycle taxi driver triggered violent incidents in Thandwe town and nearby villages between 29 September and 2 October, in which seven people were killed.

A total of 480 people have been displaced from seven villages, where 110 houses and two mosques were burned. Most people are housed with friends and relatives close to their places of origin, while some 14 Rakhine households took refuge in a monastery.

Relief efforts began on 3 October as the situation was brought under control. The Government has provided assistance (food, NFIs, and tents), together with the Myanmar Red Cross Society. An inter-agency assessment mission visited the worst-affected villages from 5 - 6 October and did not find any gaps in the response which required immediate international support.

Security has been strengthened in affected villages and a number of people detained. It is important that those responsible of these incidents are held accountable and that the rule of law is enforced. Priority should also be given to reconciliation activities between communities to help restore an atmosphere where communities can once again coexist.

Increase in boat departures from Rakhine State

UNHCR estimates that there has been a dramatic increase in the number of people leaving Rakhine State by boat to seek protection abroad since January 2013. Most of them reportedly belong to those stateless within the Muslim community, with a growing number of Kaman Muslims also choosing to leave. The exact number of departures is difficult to monitor since many people do so via smugglers' boats; hoping to avoid detection in their search for more stable future.

According to the UN's Refugee Agency, there are credible reports that the previously used method of departing by smaller boats via the Bay of Bengal has changed, with bigger boats now being used to transport a larger number of passengers, and that the price has been lowered and methods of payment have eased, facilitating the greater numbers of departures. Also, **whereas before the inter-communal violence began in June 2012, the overwhelming majority of people fleeing Rakhine State were men, more women and children are now also risking their lives on the perilous journey.** Those leaving are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, including trafficking, abuse and forced labour.

The Protection Sector works in IDP camps to raise awareness on the perils of the journey, but the impact has been minimal as many people who chose to leave see a bleak future for themselves and their families in Rakhine State as the situation becomes more protracted.

Many of the 143,000 displaced by last year's outbreaks of violence have been housed in camps for over a year, with little or no access to formal education, protection or livelihood support. There is an urgent need to address the underlying causes that worsen the humanitarian situation, including inequality between groups, chronic poverty, poor access to basic services, lack of freedom of movement, application of the rule of law, issues of impunity, and protection of human rights. These concerns also pertain to a likely further one million people affected by statelessness, ongoing discrimination, and protracted humanitarian need, and urgently require further development support and effective political solutions. The situation is of particular concern as the rainy season comes to an end and the number of departures by boat is likely to increase over the coming months. A growing number of people from affected communities, including Maungdaw in northern Rakhine State where people have been departing from for years, as well as other villages, may also leave amidst persistent tensions.



Family at Set Yone Su Camp in Sittwe, Nov 2012.
Credit: OCHA

Concerted peace-building and reconciliation efforts towards better community relations are crucial to Myanmar's future.

New education programme to strengthen peace and reconciliation in Rakhine State

As inter-communal tensions in Rakhine State and elsewhere in the country continue unabated, UNESCO will launch a new education programme, jointly with the Myanmar Ministry of Education, as a means to support much-needed peace and reconciliation efforts at the community level. The project will be implemented in three townships in northern Rakhine State – Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Rathedaung— and will train 350 teachers from 40 conflict-affected schools in peace education, benefiting approximately 10,000 students. According to UNESCO, the project also aims to reactivate 40 Parent-Teacher Associations and set up three Community Learning Centres. Activities in schools are expected to be rolled out in the first quarter of 2014.

Through a conflict-sensitive approach to education, the project will help address underlying causes of communal tensions by supporting local community leaders, teachers, students, parents and members of civil society to facilitate a constructive dialogue that promotes inter-cultural awareness and peaceful co-existence. The project will help promote the long-term goal of education to overcome discrimination and exclusion through human rights-based education.

The Myanmar Ministry of Education has indicated an interest in seeing the training modules developed under this project rolled-out for use in other cease-fire areas in Myanmar. Concerted peace-building and reconciliation efforts towards better community relations are crucial to Myanmar's future.

Kachin cross-line missions reveal major needs

Cross-line missions reach over 22,000 people with essential relief in September



Between 26 August and 4 October, four cross-border missions delivered much-needed assistance to non-government controlled areas of Kachin State. Three of these missions reached camps in and surrounding Laiza, an area which hosts more than 15,000 IDPs, whom UN and international partners had not been able to access since December 2011. The fourth mission reached people displaced by the conflict living in camps in the Maija Yang area.

In total, 22,370 people were provided with assistance, including food supplies and nutritional supplements, Non-Food-Items (NFIs) like mosquito nets, sanitary kits, tarpaulins and cooking utensils, hygiene kits, educational materials, water purification tablets, and medicines. WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOCHA, UNFPA, MDM, DRC, ACTED, and Solidarités International took part in the missions, which were coordinated with local relief

organisations operating in the area to ensure complementarity of efforts.

Along with delivering basic relief supplies, aid workers also conducted rapid needs assessments in the camps. Their findings show that **there are substantial needs in terms of food, livelihoods, education, health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), shelter, NFIs, and protection** to better complement the assistance provided by local organisations present in these areas.

Local organisations have been playing a leading role in the humanitarian response in Kachin, helping ensure people's basic needs are covered.

Regular and sustained access and coordination with local NGOs key to meeting needs in Kachin

Since June 2011, fighting between the Government of Myanmar and the Kachin Independence Organization has displaced an estimated 100,000 people, over 52,000 of whom are living in areas beyond Government control. 15 cross line missions have been granted access to non-government controlled areas, delivering assistance to some 40,000 people since December 2011. These activities supplement ongoing relief efforts by local organisations that have had more regular access to these communities and have been able

to provide basic assistance. However, despite their efforts, the assistance has not been enough to meet the increasing needs of displaced communities.

With the crisis now in its second year, the situation has become protracted for many of those displaced. Unfettered and regular humanitarian access to all areas in Kachin State affected by the conflict is essential to improve the situation for displaced communities and supplement the local response.

Local organisations have been playing a leading role in the humanitarian response, helping ensure people's basic needs are covered under highly difficult circumstances. Strengthening coordination with and support for local organisations operating in non-government controlled areas remains key to scaling up the response and better meeting the needs of IDPs.

During the inter-agency missions in September, the teams also provided training for local NGO staff and community representatives who are able to have ongoing operations in the area and have been managing the camps. Sessions on how to develop of women and child protection programmes were also conducted for local NGOs who have a permanent presence in the camps. In addition, Camp Coordination and Camp Management trainings were held for staff of local organisations and camp managers. Health education sessions were also conducted.

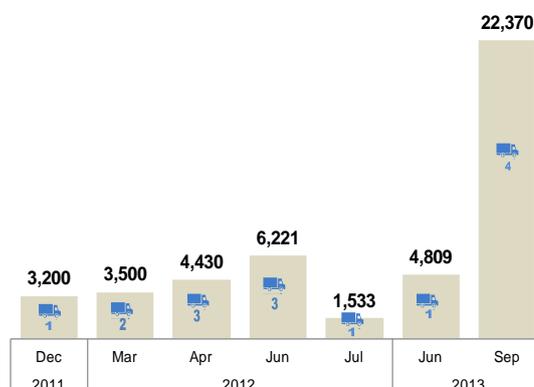
Durable solutions and informed choice a prerequisite for return of IDPs

From 5 to 6 September, UN partners delivered the first workshop for local government officials from areas hosting IDPs, as well as Kachin State ministerial departments and the KIA Technical Assistance Team on the humanitarian response and the Myanmar Humanitarian Country Team Interim Framework for Durable Solutions to Displacement in Kachin and Northern Shan State. This plan sets out the basic conditions which need to be met, including improving access to livelihoods, removing the threat of landmines, and ensuring access to basic services.

Participants were introduced to humanitarian principles and durable solutions standards. The workshop was well received and replication of the workshop to reach a broader groups of government and other actors was encouraged.

In view of the ongoing peace discussions, the humanitarian community reiterates that any return, resettlement (relocation) or local integration of displaced people must be voluntary and based on an individual informed decision, and occur in safety and dignity.

IDPs REACHED IN THE AREAS BEYOND GOVERNMENT CONTROL BY CROSS-LINE MISSIONS Dec 2011 – Sept 2013



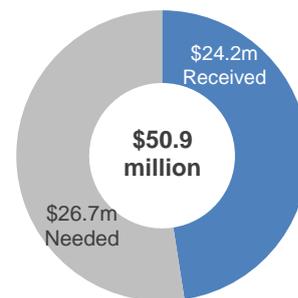
The high number of people who have been displaced or affected by flash floods month on month during this year's rainy season, highlights the pressing need to strengthen disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction activities.

Additional funding needed ahead of winter

The Kachin Response Plan is underfunded at US\$24.2 million, with a total of \$50.9 million needed to provide humanitarian assistance to 120,000 displaced people and host communities across Kachin and northern Shan states.

With the rainy season coming to an end and the winter season fast approaching, there is an urgent need to repair damaged or dilapidated shelters, and to ensure those living in over-crowded shelters receive better housing. Blankets and warm clothes are also needed to help displaced people stay warm over the coming months, as are food and nutritional supplements.

In addition, most of those displaced have very limited access to income generating activities to help support themselves and their families. Early recovery and community-based protection activities are a priority, especially since many people have been displaced for up to two years without access to livelihoods. Additional funding is urgently required to meet these and other humanitarian needs. In March 2013, seven local organisations developed a Joint Strategy which outlines funding needs for their response covering the period 2013 to 2015 and requires donor support.



Recurrent floods highlight need strengthen disaster preparedness

Flash floods displace over 22,000 people in September

As the annual rainy season winds down in Myanmar, floods still displaced more than 22,000 people across many areas of the country during the month of September, according to the Relief and Resettlement Department (RRD) of the Ministry of Social Welfare. Those displaced were sheltered temporarily in up to 75 camps in Kachin, Kayin and Shan States, as well as Ayeyarway, Bago, Magwe, Mandalay and Sagaing regions, with the Government and local humanitarian partners providing assistance. An even greater number of people are estimated to have been affected by the floods, with some families choosing to stay in their partially flooded homes rather than relocate.

Following the floods in Kayin State in August, WFP and FAO, together with ADRA and Save the Children, conducted a joint evaluation mission to the worst affected areas in late September. The assessments looked at damage to crop production, food stocks and other livelihood opportunities, as well as food availability for the coming months. Preliminary findings indicate that there are no immediate concerns for food insecurity.

Many of those affected have since been able to return home after flood waters subsided. While some people were displaced for several weeks, most were displaced only for several days. However, the high number of people who have been displaced or affected by flash floods month on month during this year's rainy season, highlights the pressing need to strengthen disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction activities. At the height of the rainy season, during the months of July, August and September 38,000, 48,000 and 22,000 people were displaced respectively, and many more families affected. The recurrent floods are reminder of the vulnerability of many communities across the country and the need to build resilience and strengthen disaster preparedness programmes across all areas potentially affected by natural disaster.

The situation is particularly precarious for tens of thousands of internally displaced people across the country. More must be done to ensure resilient shelter solutions and to strengthen natural hazards' early warning dissemination mechanisms across all communities and in local languages. Importantly, communities should be consulted on disaster preparedness measures and be well informed so they are able to respond quickly when disaster threatens. UN and humanitarian partners remain ready to assist the government in these activities.

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