Humanitarian Bulletin

Myanmar

Issue 4 2016 | October 2016 – January 2017

OCHA

In this issue

Humanitarian crisis in Rakhine P.1
Fighting in Kachin and Shan P.4
New landmine victim rehabilitation centre P.5
UN Relief Chief visits Myanmar P.6
2017 Humanitarian Response Plan P.7

HIGHLIGHTS

- Access constraints hinder the humanitarian response to the crisis in the north of Rakhine.
- Intensified fighting endangers civilians and prompts displacement in Kachin and northern Shan.
- The Emergency Relief Coordinator visits Myanmar and calls for more humanitarian access and increased protection of civilians.
- 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan requests $150m to reach 525,000 people in need.

FIGURES*

# of IDPs Kachin	87,000
# of IDPs Shan	11,000
# of IDPs Rakhine	120,000
# of non-displaced affected people	307,000

FUNDING 2016

190 million
requested (US$)

55% funded

FUNDING 2017

150 million
requested (US$)

3% funded

*Numbers in pre-existing camps/sites.
Does not include all recent displacement.

At least 92,000 people displaced after October attacks on police posts in northern Rakhine

A series of attacks on Border Guard Police posts on 9 October 2016 in which nine police personnel were killed and subsequent security operations have triggered a new humanitarian crisis in the northern part of Rakhine State. At least 92,000 people have fled their homes, hundreds of houses and buildings have been burned, many people have been killed and allegations of serious human rights violations have been widely reported. Due to access restrictions imposed by the Government, the United Nations has not been able to independently investigate the reports of abuse. UN agencies in Bangladesh estimate that 69,000 people have fled across the border into Bangladesh since the attacks, while more than 23,000 (over 12,300 women/girls and over 11,100 men/boys) are estimated by the UN to remain displaced inside Maungdaw north. The majority of those displaced are Muslims who identify themselves as Rohingya, however members of other communities were also displaced. The majority of the ethnic Rakhine and Mro people who were displaced have returned to their villages, although around 272 Rakhine and Mro people remain displaced in Maungdaw and Buthidaung. Security sweeps are continuing in the north of Rakhine State and a dawn to dusk curfew remains in place.

After a three month interruption to most of the services being provided by UN agencies and humanitarian organizations in northern Rakhine, the Government has been permitting an incremental resumption of some activities, but with national staff only. International staff still face severe movement restrictions. While they have been permitted to observe some Government-led food distributions and while some high level visits are being permitted, most international staff based in northern Rakhine remain confined to the township capitals (Maungdaw and Buthidaung towns). While distribution of food and some other relief items is now being permitted (with national staff

Credit: WFP
Maungdaw, Rakhine State (9 November, 2016) - WFP Food being delivered in Zin Paing Nyar village in Maungdaw Township.

Travel restrictions and fear preventing affected people accessing health services

only), the Government has not yet permitted humanitarian organizations to resume protection activities.

A Multi-Sector Initial Rapid Assessment was initiated in Maungdaw south in January but permission has not yet been granted by the authorities for a similar assessment to be carried out in Maungdaw north where security operations are ongoing. While WFP has been able to gather information related to its food deliveries in some areas of Maungdaw north, completion of a comprehensive needs assessment across all affected areas is critical to understanding the overall situation facing affected people. In the meantime, observations from humanitarian staff working in affected areas suggest that food, shelter, household items, medical kits, water, sanitation and hygiene assistance, education and protection support are the key humanitarian needs. Health services, including some NGO clinics, have resumed in some areas, but coverage is patchy and humanitarian staff report low patient attendance as the situation remains tense. People are still afraid to move freely to access services and travel passes are restricted. Emergency medical referrals have also been severely impacted, limiting options for treatment and placing patients at risk. Emergency medical referrals outside Maungdaw District are not permitted for Muslim patients.

150,000 people affected by interruption to food and nutrition services after 9 October attacks

Food deliveries resume amid a backlog of need

Concerning assistance provided by the Government, the UN does not have full details of all relief delivered. According to the Global New Light of Myanmar, from 6-11 January the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement delivered food to 59,962 people from 52 villages in Maungdaw Township. The same newspaper also reports that the Ministry of Border Affairs provided food for 139,745 people from both ethnic Rakhine and Muslim communities in the northern part of Rakhine on 10 January. In addition, ten containers of food and clothes donated by Indonesia arrived in Rakhine State during January for distribution by the Government in Maungdaw and in IDP camps. Distribution of the Indonesian aid began in Maungdaw north on 27 January. Additional relief items sent by Malaysian NGOs will also soon arrive in Yangon for distribution to affected people in Rakhine State, according to latest reports.

Emergency food deliveries reach almost 35,000 people in Maungdaw north

Prior to 9 October, the UN and other humanitarian organizations had been supporting more than 150,000 people with regular food and nutrition assistance in northern Rakhine. In the wake of the attacks and subsequent security operations, access for the purposes of delivering this assistance has been severely restricted and many people missed out on their seasonal food assistance, school feeding and regular nutrition support for three months. Where access has been permitted since 9 October, it has been unpredictable and has often involved one-off distributions. In recent weeks, nutrition support has resumed to pregnant and lactating women, as well as malnourished young children, in Rathedaung, Buthidaung and Maungdaw. On 13 January, WFP was permitted to start the delivery of emergency food assistance to 158 affected villages in Maungdaw north. As of 30 January, almost 35,000 people (almost 15,500 men/boys and almost 19,500 women/girls) had been reached. Distributions were conducted by national staff and international humanitarian personnel were not allowed to participate.

Links: Read more about malnutrition in Rakhine

- *UNICEF Annual Report 2015*
- *Myanmar Ministry of Health Demographic and Health Survey 2015-6*
- *Nutrition Sector, 2017 HRP, p 31*

Many of those reached with food support since 13 January are being assisted for the first time in three months and there are concerns about the long term implications of disruptions to food deliveries and nutrition support, as well as mobile health clinics and other humanitarian services. Rakhine State has long had one of Myanmar's highest rates of malnutrition, particularly among children (see links). Even before the events of 9 October, Global Acute Malnutrition was above World Health Organization emergency thresholds in Maungdaw and Buthidaung. More than 3,400 children were under treatment for Severe Acute Malnutrition in the affected area when the attacks happened and had their assistance interrupted.

Harvest and fishing activities have been interrupted and markets are dysfunctional

The food situation has been further compounded by movement restrictions and insecurity which has made it difficult, if not impossible, for many people to harvest their crops in Maungdaw north. WFP reports that around 90 per cent of small markets are still dysfunctional in Maungdaw north. The ability of Muslim people to supplement their diets and income through fishing has also been severely curtailed by movement restrictions. Even in Sittwe and Pauktaw townships in Central Rakhine, the Fishery Department has cut the number of consecutive days Muslim fishermen are allowed to spend out at sea from ten days down to three citing security concerns and new regulations that are being introduced.

Shelter needs escalate in the face of displacement, house burnings and building demolitions

Hundreds of homes burnt down and more than 1,000 buildings demolished

Shelter is emerging as a key need in the affected areas. Human Rights Watch has released satellite images showing at least 1,500 buildings have been destroyed by fire in Muslim villages in the northern part of Rakhine since 9 October. In at least some of the villages where houses were burnt down, residents are now living in temporary shelters within the boundaries of their home village. Others have fled to neighbouring host communities and 69,000 people have crossed into Bangladesh. Shelter pressures have been further compounded by the fact that the Government has listed 1,978 structures, mostly Muslim houses, for demolition in the northern part of Rakhine State alleging they have been erected without proper permission. During December and January a total of 1,078 buildings were pulled down. Following advocacy from humanitarian partners, the Government issued orders to suspend the process and there have been no further demolitions since 10 January. An early start to the Government's annual household survey in the three northern townships of Rakhine in December also creates the risk that those who have been displaced may be removed from the Government's 'household list'. Inclusion in this list is the only official documentation many of the Muslims have in the northern part of Rakhine State. The survey was completed in mid-January 2017. The forced removal of fences in many villages by security forces since 9 October on security grounds has also reduced privacy for residents and has resulted in some ponds becoming contaminated, creating additional need for water, sanitation and hygiene support.

80 per cent of demolished structures are Muslim houses

Serious protection concerns for people displaced inside northern Rakhine and in Bangladesh

Numerous reports have emerged about serious human rights violations including summary executions, torture and rape perpetrated by the security forces against the Muslim population. It has been difficult for the UN to verify these allegations due to the continued restrictions on access to communities in northern Rakhine. Many people arriving in Bangladesh have testified to human rights violations in Rakhine. The UN has expressed its deep concern at the reports and a group of UN Human Rights experts urged the Government to address the growing reports of violations. The Government of Myanmar has refuted most of the allegations.

Special Rapporteur calls for international humanitarian access across northern Rakhine

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Yanghee Lee, was in the country

Credit: Aye Win/UNIC
Rakhine State (16 January 2017) - The Special Rapporteur visited Kyee Kan Pyin West in Maungdaw north.

on an information-gathering visit from 9-20 January. During the trip, Ms. Lee visited the northern part of Rakhine. The Special Rapporteur will present a report to the UN Human Rights Council in March.

Almost 7,000 people newly displaced in Kachin and 4,000 people newly displaced in Shan.

At the end of her mission, Ms. Lee called on the security forces to always act within the parameters of the rule of law and in compliance with human rights. She also urged the Government to allow increased humanitarian access to the affected area.

"Humanitarian actors are mandated to use their expertise to help suffering individuals but are currently being prevented from doing so by the Government…..Access is slowly starting to improve in the north of Rakhine state, but it remains mostly limited to national staff, with international staff stuck in towns unable to do their jobs," Ms. Lee said.

Fears for the safety of civilians as fighting intensifies in Kachin and northern Shan

Almost 11,000 flee hostilities close to camps and urban centres

The humanitarian situation in Kachin and northern Shan has deteriorated significantly over recent months as a result of intensified conflict between the Myanmar Military and ethnic armed groups ahead of the next round of peace talks in February 2017. In Kachin State, almost 7,000 people are newly displaced from three main IDP camps, as well as Mansi and Shwegu townships, amid intensified fighting between the Myanmar Military and the Kachin Independence Army. As of 26 January, a further 4,000 people are also estimated to be temporarily displaced across seven townships in northern Shan (Muse, Namtu, Hsipaw, Kutkai, Manton, Nawnghkio, Lashio) as a result of continued fighting between the Myanmar Military and an alliance of ethnic armed groups. In late November, thousands were displaced by intensified fighting in towns around the 105-mile area, restricting movement on the Muse-Mone Koe road. The displacement situation across both states remains fluid as a result of rapid changes in the security situation.

Whole IDP camps emptied in Kachin

Entire camps (Zai Awng/Mung Ga Zup, Hkau Shau and Maga Yang) in areas beyond Government control have been virtually emptied as a result of fighting nearby and a growing number of people have now been displaced multiple times in recent months. While people from the three camps were initially displaced to temporary locations within non-Government areas, particularly near the Chinese border, an increasing number of people have recently started to arrive in Government areas. Access for the UN and other international humanitarian organizations to many relocation areas remains blocked by the Government. National humanitarian organizations are supporting those displaced.

Credit: Joint Strategy Team
Kachin (December 2016) - IDPs fleeing fighting near Zai Awng/Mung Ga Zup Camp

High risk to civilians as fighting moves close to camps and urban areas

Up to 15,000 displaced people were estimated to have crossed from northern Shan into China in early December. The majority of these displaced people have since returned to northern Shan and are now being temporarily accommodated in existing public and

Landmines a key concern for populations on the move

religious buildings which have repeatedly been used to shelter various waves of displaced people.

The displacement across both states is being driven by a worrying escalation in hostilities close to displacement camps and in civilian areas, often involving air strikes and heavy artillery. In one incident, two civilians, including a six year old boy, were reportedly killed when artillery shells landed in a village in Namshan Township in northern Shan on 12 January. This was the second deadly incident of this nature reported within a month. Mortars also damaged shelters at a displacement camp in the Woi Chyai area of Kachin in mid-December, prompting hundreds of displaced people to be evacuated. With fluid frontlines and large numbers of civilians on the move across both Kachin and northern Shan, there are concerns about the increased risk posed by landmines and other explosive remnants of war.

159 new mine/ERW casualties, including 54 children, in Myanmar in 2015 (Landmine Monitor, Dec 2016)

Link: Read more about the landmine rehabilitation centre

New centre brings physical rehabilitation services to northern Myanmar

The first physical rehabilitation centre in the northern part of Myanmar has officially opened its doors in Myitkyina, Kachin State, following an investment of 1.98 billion Myanmar Kyats (US$1.5 million) by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The 60-bed centre will have around 30 staff and is expected, once it reaches full operational capacity, to serve up to 1,500 patients a year with prostheses, orthoses and physiotherapy. The centre will significantly increase access to such services for people in northern Myanmar, in particular those who have been injured by landmines or other unexploded ordnance.

"Previously, patients would have had to travel to Mandalay, more than 20 hours away by bus from Myitkyina, for consultations and physiotherapy and to get their prosthesis fitted," said Jurg Montani, head of the ICRC delegation in Myanmar.

The facility was recently handed over to the Ministry of Health and Sports and is the second biggest ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centre in the world in terms of working surface area, after the centre in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Credit: Therese Powell/ICRC
Kachin State (November 2016) - A client being assessed before being fitted with a prosthetic at the new physical rehabilitation centre in Mytkyina.

Systematic restrictions on humanitarian access in conflict-affected areas.

Limits on humanitarian access undermine international assistance to displaced people in Kachin and Shan

Almost 100,000 people in Kachin and Shan are enduring long-term displacement as a result of the armed conflict which reignited in 2011. Humanitarian access to these people remains severely restricted in both states. Since May 2016, the UN has been systematically blocked by the Government in its efforts to deliver aid to displaced people in areas beyond Government control in Kachin State. Previously, the UN had far greater

Shrinking humanitarian access

access with convoys regularly taking supplies to displaced people in camps on both sides of the front line but this is no longer the case. The UN and other international organizations have not been able to deliver relief supplies to over 40,000 displaced people in areas beyond Government control. Humanitarian access for the UN and other humanitarian organizations is also becoming more restricted in Government controlled areas, resulting in a heavy reliance on national humanitarian organizations to deliver assistance. However, even local and community-based organizations report that they are now experiencing more difficulties in carrying out their operations. Despite the increase in fighting, the Government is also persisting with its policy that displaced people in areas beyond Government control should cross active front lines to receive their assistance at designated distribution points in Government-controlled territory. In Shan State, some of the areas recently affected by fighting, such as Mone Koe, remain inaccessible for international and most national organizations.

During her recent visit to Myanmar, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Yanghee Lee, requested permission to visit both the Laiza and Hpakant areas in Kachin, and was refused.

“In Kachin and Shan states, as well as in the north of Rakhine, humanitarian access is now worse than it was when I last visited, with access shrinking month on month,” Ms. Lee said.

Emergency Relief Coordinator urges equal access to health services for Muslim people in Rakhine State

UN Humanitarian Chief visits Kachin and Rakhine states

Calls for strengthened humanitarian action in Myanmar

From 11-14 October 2016, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O’Brien, was in Myanmar to review the humanitarian situation. The visit took place only days after the attacks on Border Guard Police posts in northern Rakhine and at a time of intensified fighting in Kachin and Shan states.

During his time in Kachin, Mr. O’Brien expressed concern that humanitarian aid to some areas had recently been blocked and urged local authorities to drop their demand for displaced people in areas beyond the Government’s control to cross an active conflict line to receive humanitarian assistance. He stressed that many of those currently receiving humanitarian assistance are women and children, elderly, sick or disabled people. Mr. O’Brien also travelled to Rakhine State where he visited displaced Muslims in camps and met with displaced ethnic Rakhine people who had just arrived from Maungdaw.

Credit: Peron/OCHA
Kachin (October 2016) - The Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O’Brien visited Woi Chyai IDP Camp during his mission to Myanmar.

Link: Read more about the Emergency Relief Coordinator’s visit

- Press Release
- Photo Story

2017 HRP Highlights:

Education
141,000 people in need
$7.1m required

Food Security
383,525 people in need
$50m required

Health
474,228 people in need
$16.5m required

Nutrition
121,658 people in need
$14.1m required

Protection
244,336 people in need
$20.2m required

CCCM/Shelter/NFIs
217,514 people in need
$20.3m required

WASH
356,014 people targeted
$17m required

Coordination and common services
$5.1m required

Web links to new OCHA resources:

Update on Kayin and southern Shan states,7 Oct 2016

Statement by UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Myanmar – 11 Oct 2016

Humanitarian News Digest, 31 Oct 2016

IDP Sites in Rakhine State, Sept 2016

IDP Sites in Kachin and northern Shan States, Sept 2016

New displacement and return in Shan State, UNOCHA, Sept-Nov 2016

Myanmar Humanitarian News Digest, Nov 2016

Myanmar Humanitarian Response Plan: Jan - Dec 2017

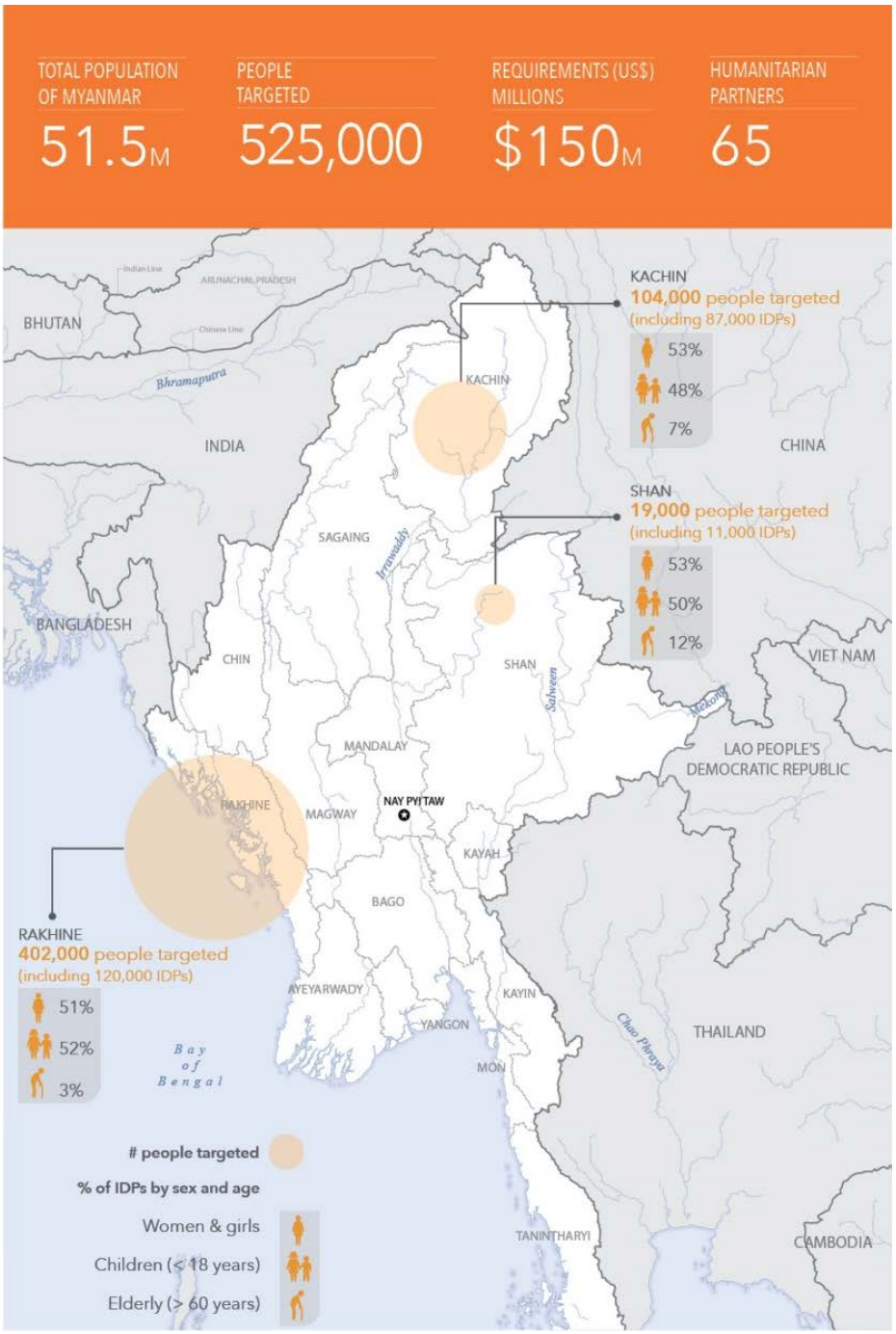
OCHA Update - Humanitarian situation in the northern part of Rakhine State, Myanmar, 13 Dec 2016

Myanmar Humanitarian Needs Overview 2017

Press statement, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, 20 Dec 2016

Myanmar Humanitarian News Digest, Dec 2016

2017 Humanitarian Response Plan



For further information, please contact:
Danielle Parry, Reports and Public Information Officer, parryd@un.org, Tel. (+95) 979 7007 816
Pierre Peron, Public Information Officer, peronp@un.org, Tel. (+95) 979 7007 815

OCHA Humanitarian Bulletins are available at www.unocha.org/Myanmar | www.unocha.org | www.reliefweb.int
United Nations OCHA Myanmar Facebook www.facebook.com/OCHAMyanmar