

HIGHLIGHTS

- Humanitarian and development assistance needed for vulnerable people in Rakhine
- Rakhine: Some positive developments but access to healthcare remains a major challenge
- Cross-line missions reach 30,000 displaced people in Kachin
- Resettled families in Pa La Na need further livelihood support
- Floods displace over 11,000 people in Shan State, Sagaing, Mandalay and Ayeyarwaddy regions

Key FIGURES

People targeted for humanitarian assistance in Rakhine State

IDPs*	139,000
Food insecure people	70,000
People in isolated villages	50,000
People in host communities	50,000

People targeted for humanitarian assistance in Kachin and northern Shan states

IDPs*	99,000
People in host communities	20,000

FUNDING

192 million
requested (US\$)
48% funded

Source: UNHCR, OCHA, CCCM * UNHCR (CCCM) figures on 1 September.



Boy at school in Je Yang camp, Laiza Kachin. Credit: OCHA

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Humanitarian and development assistance needed in Rakhine to help communities

From 8 – 11 September, UNDP Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific Haoliang Xu and UNOCHA Director of Operations John Ging visited Rakhine State, Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw. During their visit they met with displaced people, Government officials, including with the Vice President, and humanitarian organizations in the country. In Rakhine, Mr. Xu and Mr. Ging visited camps for displaced people in Sittwe and Pauktaw where the UN and the international NGOs are providing humanitarian assistance. They also visited villages in Minbya and Sittwe townships, where UNDP and international NGOs (INGOs) are working with communities to strengthen social cohesion and improve basic services.

At the end of their visit, Mr. Xu and Mr. Ging said that while in Rakhine they had seen appalling human suffering but also signs of hope. They acknowledged that progress had been made in the last year in terms of meeting basic needs of displaced people in camps, but that much more needs to be done to meet the humanitarian needs of people affected by the ongoing inter-communal tensions. They also agreed that there is a need to massively accelerate development in Rakhine State for the benefit of all communities.



Mr. Xu and Mr. Ging visiting communities in Rakhine, September 2014. Credit: UNDP

“We need to scale up poverty eradication across Rakhine, with a particular focus on development solutions which promote peaceful co-existence,” said Mr. Xu.

“Stability and peace can be achieved only when the needs of all communities are met.”

“Underdevelopment is a cause of conflict, but it is clear that development alone is not enough,” said Mr. Ging. “Without a just and equitable solution to the citizenship crisis in Rakhine there will never be lasting peace and prosperity in Myanmar. This is a humanitarian crisis which has the potential to be resolved in a way which will stand as an international success story. We need to engage to ensure that this crucial opportunity is not missed.”

Mr. Xu and Mr. Ging said that government officials at the national and local levels had expressed commitment to finding a solution to the crisis. They called on all United Nations agencies to engage in and support this process to help ensure that the outcome was just, equitable and promoted human rights for all.

“This is a humanitarian crisis which has the potential to be resolved in a way which will stand as an international success story. We need to engage to ensure that this crucial opportunity is not missed,” John Ging, OCHA Director of Operations.

There are now two hospitals in Rakhine State, instead of one, that Muslims are able to get access to when in need of critical medical care.

Early recovery programmes target 85,000 people in Rakhine in 2014

UNDP, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and international NGOs are aiming to assist some 85,000 people from both communities in Rakhine in 2014 with livelihoods and other community programmes. Projects support small-scale farming (through distribution of seeds and fertilizers), and provide cash grants, skills and livelihoods training, as well as construction or restoration of community infrastructure. UNDP’s activities aim to support social cohesion between communities living in neighbouring or adjacent villages by assisting both Rakhine and Muslim villages; meeting infrastructure needs that benefit both communities; and facilitating inter-village cash-for-work schemes.

Rakhine: Some positive developments but access to healthcare still a major challenge

One of the biggest challenges faced by humanitarian organizations working in Rakhine State is that of ensuring that displaced and vulnerable people have adequate access to healthcare services. Of particular concern are the Muslims, including all those in the camps for displaced people, who since 2012 have faced huge difficulties in reaching Sittwe hospital as a result of the ongoing inter-communal tensions. A referral system exists, but in practice only patients in the most critical condition tend to reach the Sittwe hospital, and even then it is often too late.

In one positive development, in September Myaung Bwe station hospital in Mrauk-U Township started accepting referrals of critically ill Muslim displaced people. This means that there are now two hospitals, instead of one, that Muslims are able to get access to when in need of critical medical care. In addition to this, two health clinics (Sin Tet Maw camp in Pauktaw and Thet Kae Pyin camp in rural Sittwe) are now providing services 24 hours a day. People from neighbouring camps and villages can also access these services. However, despite these efforts, access to health services in Rakhine State remains significantly below levels prior to the suspension of Médecins Sans Frontières Holland (MSF-H) and Malteser in late February 2014, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

On 8 September 2014, the Myanmar Ministry of Health signed a renewed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with MSF-H. According to MSF-H, the MoU establishes a framework for the organization’s medical activities in Kachin, Rakhine and Shan states, as well as in the Yangon region. In the case of Rakhine, MSF-H has begun consultations with community representatives and all relevant stakeholders in the State regarding the resumption of its activities. MSF-H has said that the timeframe and modalities for it to be able to resume critical health services for vulnerable communities in Rakhine are still to be determined.

Joint health teams comprised of staff from the Ministry of Health and health staff from national and international organizations, as well as independent health teams, continue to provide health services to displaced people and other vulnerable communities in Rakhine.

Cross-line missions reach 30,000 people in Kachin in August and September

During August and September, the UN and international NGOs conducted ten cross-line missions to camps for displaced people in Laiza, Maing Hkaung, La Na Zup, Bum Tsit Pa and Mai Ja Yang in the areas beyond Government control in Kachin. These convoys are still the only way for international organizations to provide assistance to some 50,000 people who remain displaced in these areas after more than three years of conflict between the Government of Myanmar Army and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA). While national NGOs are providing regular assistance to displaced families in these

areas, assessments have shown the need for more regular and sustained access for international humanitarian organizations to support local NGOs to improve the quality of assistance.

During the cross-line missions in August and September, humanitarian organizations delivered assistance to approximately 29,900 people. The World Food Programme (WFP) distributed one-month food rations to 15,000 people in September and organizations delivering water, sanitation and hygiene assistance, distributed 250,000 aquatabs to purify water in five camps. UNHCR distributed blankets, mosquito nets and other essential household items. UNICEF

delivered school text books and monitored their Temporary Learning Spaces and Early Childhood Development programme being implemented by Karuna Myanmar Social Services (KMSS), which supports 2,800 pre-primary and primary school-age children and 140 teachers in the Laiza area. Humanitarian organizations provided protection services, including UNHCR support and tailor training for widows, women with many children, students who have dropped out of school and people living with disabilities in camps in Kachin.



Tailoring training, part of community-based protection activities. Credit UNHCR/M. Savary

Given that many displaced people in Kachin have been living in shelters in camps for over three years, many shelters, as well as water filtering systems, are reaching the end of their life-span and are in need of replacement, maintenance or repairs.

Displaced people need livelihood support

As part of the cross-line missions, humanitarian organizations also identified a number of needs and gaps in services and support for displaced people. Given that many people have been displaced and living in shelters in camps for over three years, many shelters, as well as water filtering systems, are reaching the end of their life-span and are in need of replacement, maintenance or repairs. Livelihoods support is needed for displaced families, who lack means of generating an income. Assessments also found that due to the increasing number of students there are now insufficient classrooms in primary schools. There are also protection concerns, with vulnerable women and girls in some locations at risk of trafficking across the border.

Kachin: Displaced people who resettled in Pa La Na need further livelihood support

On 10-11 May, the Kachin State Government resettled 113 families from camps for displaced people in Myitkyina and Waing Maw townships to newly built houses in Pa La Na, located 20 kilometers west of Myitkyina. From 8 - 13 September, UNDP conducted a follow up visit to Pa La Na to assess sustainable livelihoods opportunities and social cohesion for resettled families. The assessment aimed to obtain information for UNDP's future activities to create opportunities for reintegration, as part of longer-term recovery for the affected families.

The assessment found that certain services and facilities were provided by the Government and international organizations. This includes food distributions for six-month by WFP and ACTED and temporary learning spaces for children set up by the Government, with the construction of a school underway. UNICEF will be providing latrine and water facilities at the school. FAO, in partnership with AVSI and ACTED, have distributed seeds and tools for home gardening. The assessment also found that there were a number of gaps which need to be addressed, including: lack of drainage, which increases the risk of flooding and water borne diseases; lack of accessibility to the resettlement site during the rainy season; and further need for sustainable livelihood and

The UN and humanitarian organizations in Kachin are working with local authorities to ensure that all resettlements are safe, voluntary and based on adequate information.

income generating opportunities. Protection services for the most vulnerable are also needed.

The UN and humanitarian organizations in Kachin will continue to work closely with local authorities and provide support to help ensure that all returns and resettlements are safe, voluntary and based on adequate information.

Over 11,000 people displaced by seasonal floods in September

Seasonal floods continued to displace and affect thousands of people across Myanmar during the month of September. According to the Relief and Resettlement Department (RRD), approximately 11,500 people were displaced by floods in September. One of the worst affected areas was Tarchileik Township, Shan State. On 5-6 September, rivers over-flowed forcing over 4,000 people to be temporarily evacuated to religious buildings and the city hall. Typhoon Kalmaegi caused flooding in four states, including Tachileik in Shan State, Katha in Sagaing, Singu in Mandalay Region and Ingapu in Ayeyarwaddy Region. The floods and strong winds affected some 1,250 households in these areas and resulted in six deaths. Over 4,600 people were temporarily displaced to evacuation centres and 1,273 houses were damaged, according to RRD. The Government and the Myanmar Red Cross Society provided food rations and relief goods to displaced families.

Simulation exercises strengthen disaster preparedness

As one of the countries in Southeast Asia most prone to natural disasters, preparedness is critical to an effective response and saving lives in Myanmar. On 3 September, over 140 participants from the UN, INGOs, national NGOs, the Red Cross, donors and Government officials conducted a disaster simulation exercise. The exercise was intended to test the preparedness and response capacity of humanitarian organizations to a major natural disaster. Key recommendations from the exercise included the need for strong coordination and communication between humanitarian organizations and the Government to ensure effective preparedness and response. In addition, clearer procedures for bringing humanitarian aid into the country in the event of major natural disasters is required to ensure import regulations do not delay assistance.

From 23 to 25 September, the Government of Myanmar organized a Disaster Preparedness and Response simulation exercise to improve coordination and information sharing between the government and organizations involved in disaster response. The Relief and Resettlement Department of the Minister of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, lead the exercise, with support from the AHA Center, WFP, MRCS, UNDP and OCHA. The exercise provided an opportunity for strengthened partnerships, coordination and communications between the Government, ASEAN and the international humanitarian community.



Government-led simulation exercise, from 23-25 September. Credit: OCHA

Strong coordination and communication between humanitarian organizations and the Government is key to ensuring effective preparedness and response to disasters.

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