



MYANMAR

Urgent needs in Kachin State

REACTION As the conflict in Kachin State wears on, the number of displaced people remains near 70,000 with initial resources depleting rapidly across the camps. SOLIDARITES INTERNATIONAL, from Southern Kachin, is pleading with other international actors for increased commitment & funding to respond to the displaced people's needs.

"Host families, exhausted local NGOs and churches, continue to bear the burden of the increased numbers of people who fled their villages due to fighting since last June. Local resources, private donations and sporadic international funds are no longer sufficient to provide for such a sustained presence in the camps, churches, or host families, says Matthew Gray, our head of mission. The rainy season is already upon some areas of Kachin and with it comes increased needs in terms of shelter, food and access to water, hygiene and sanitation. The needs of the people have changed now with the shift from facing the cold to dealing with the rain and depleted resources in the camps."

SOLIDARITES INTERNATIONAL and a few other NGOs have managed to gain access from the government to carry out relief work during the crisis. This is now emboldened with UNOCHA's recent negotiated access for both UN and INGOs to work in all areas of Kachin except for the Laiza area. *"Political access was originally a very real and perceived issue, yet with the genuine cooperation of the government and other key actors over the past few months, the only remaining issues are related to funding or logistical challenges against the elements."*

One of the few INGO permanently based in Southern Kachin

Working in South of Kachin in the Bhamo, Momauk, Mansi and Shwegu townships, SOLIDARITES INTERNATIONAL is permanently based in Southern Kachin. Supported by the French Government's crisis fund and the Government of Denmark, SOLIDARITES INTERNATIONAL is responding to the emergency by supporting the vulnerable people affected by the recent displacements caused by fighting. *"We are focusing primarily on the distribution of Non-Food Items and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion activities in 16 camps. Our team is also now conducting a comprehensive livelihoods assessment in the empty villages for when they eventually return; but now we need to go back to the emergency needs because these people aren't going home anytime soon despite the situation in the camps worsening. The funding is running out, and every day we're being called upon by beneficiaries at our office door with requests for support. But our hands are just tied even though we're one of the few international organization based there. If this continues, we will have to leave this critical operational area."*

Improve people's access to water and sanitation

Given that SOLIDARITES INTERNATIONAL has successfully managed to secure access for its relief work, the organization is now in need of support to ensure that displaced people's needs are being tackled adequately. Political engagement needs to be accompanied with humanitarian funding commitments. SOLIDARITES INTERNATIONAL could target the affected people's needs in a more comprehensive manner.

"We have to improve people's access to water and sanitation by building or rehabilitating wells that would cater to the needs of the camps and put pressure off the limited resources of the host population. Hygiene promotion campaigns could enable people to be better equipped to deal with the shortcomings of their new daily life in the camps and contribute towards the reduction of waterborne diseases."

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For any additional information, we will put you in contact with Matthew Gray, our head of mission in Myanmar.

For over 30 years, the humanitarian organization SOLIDARITES INTERNATIONAL has provided aid to victims of war or natural disaster. Our vocation is to meet their vital needs: water, food, shelter; and to help them to recover their independence. Based on our experience from the most severe humanitarian crises (Afghanistan, Haiti, Balkans, Rwanda, Indonesia, Darfur), our teams use proven expertise in the fields of drinking water access, hygiene and sanitation, as well as the essential fields of food security and reconstruction. SOLIDARITES INTERNATIONAL - 50 rue Klock, 92110 Clichy - Tél. : 01 80 21 05 05 - www.solidarites.org