



Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

**ALL PEOPLE AFFECTED BY CONFLICT IN MYANMAR
NEED ASSISTANCE, PROTECTION AND LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS**

Yangon, 14 May 2019 – After a six-day mission to Myanmar, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator Ursula Mueller underlined the need to sustain life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection for vulnerable, crisis-affected people throughout the country. She called on authorities to continue to work with all partners and affected people themselves to find durable solutions to displacement. She underlined the right of displaced people to voluntarily return home, in safety and in dignity, or resettle to another place of their choosing.

“We welcome the Government’s ongoing work to develop a national strategy to find solutions for the more than 270,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) across Myanmar. It is critical that the strategy be implemented in a way that addresses the root causes of displacement. The closure of camps must be linked to improvements in freedom of movement and access to services and job opportunities”, Ms. Muller said.

Ms. Mueller traveled to Rakhine State, where over 700,000 people need humanitarian assistance, including 128,000 Rohingya and Kaman IDPs who remain confined in camps. “After seven years of displacement, the conditions in camps have deteriorated and are simply unacceptable,” she said. Ms. Mueller added, “Muslim people living outside of camps, whose freedom of movement and ability to access health and education is severely restricted, are also facing extremely difficult circumstances.”

Ms. Mueller noted the importance of action on the recommendations of the Rakhine Advisory Commission. “While the Government has taken some steps to implement the Rakhine Advisory Commission recommendations, we must do more together to address the root causes of displacement and vulnerability”.

Ms. Mueller expressed serious concern about the upsurge in violence between the Arakan Army and the Myanmar Military, which has displaced over 30,000 people in the last six months. “The United Nations calls on all parties to uphold their obligations under International Humanitarian Law to protect civilians and allow access for humanitarian assistance” she noted. She acknowledged the efforts of the government and local organizations to provide assistance, and offered the further support of the United Nations and international partners to scale up the response.

Ms. Mueller said the OCHA-managed Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the Myanmar Humanitarian Fund (MHF) are considering ways to mobilize more financial resources to respond to the new displacement to cover the new needs over the next six months.

Ms. Mueller heard from many humanitarian actors in Myanmar their concerns regarding complex and restrictive procedures around travel to reach affected people. She stressed the importance of developing a simplified and flexible approach to ensure that impartial assistance can reach all people in need.

The Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator also visited people displaced by conflict and a new resettlement site in Kachin State and met representatives from local organizations who are delivering humanitarian assistance to displaced people and host communities.

“The situation in Kachin State remains challenging, but an impressive humanitarian operation continues, built on a strong partnership between local and international organizations.” Ms. Mueller welcomed the unilateral ceasefire issued by the Myanmar Military for Kachin and Shan, which was recently extended by an additional two months until the end of June. She expressed her hope that it would be further extended.

“In Kachin, everyone spoke about how much they want peace, so they can go home”, Ms. Mueller said.

In Nay Pyi Taw, the Deputy Emergency Coordinator met with State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the Union Minister of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Dr. Win Myat Aye. They exchanged views on humanitarian issues and ways to work together to enhance cooperation towards finding durable solutions for those most in need.

Ms. Mueller also discussed improving disaster preparedness and response. “Myanmar is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. The government has done much to improve preparedness and response since Cyclone Nargis in 2008,” noted Ms. Mueller. “We are looking to further enhance our relationship with Government partners and hazard-prone communities to build national capacity to respond to earthquake, floods and cyclones.”

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