**Myanmar: Meikhtila inter-communal violence**

**Situation Report No. 4 (as of 9 April 2013)**

This report is produced by OCHA Myanmar in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It covers the period from 2 to 9 April 2013.

**Highlights**

- Since 6 April IDPs have been allowed to return to their damaged houses to search through debris in Meikhtila prior to land clearance in preparation for rebuilding homes.

- As a result of the Government-led ‘family reunification process’ several persons have been reunited with family members. IDPs sheltering in monasteries are now relocated to two schools (BEMS 2 and BEPS 16) whilst others will be relocated from four schools to training centers.

- Official Government IDP population figures as of 9 April 2013

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**Situation Overview**

According to the updated Government figures released on 9 April, the total number of IDPs in seven camps in Meikhtila currently stands at 8,441. As a result of the family reunion process, begun on 27 March, some people have relocated from camps to settle with family members whilst others have returned to their homes. Moreover, the Government has relocated some IDPs from schools to the Transportation and Communication Training Center in preparation for classes to resume in June. Further movements of those who lost their homes and were temporarily housed in monasteries are now reported to be settling into two schools (BEPS 16 and BEMS 2) as they await a return to their homes. This process of relocation to shelters is expected to be completed in the coming days.

For more information, see “background on the crisis” at the end of the report.
On 2 April unconfirmed reports from local residents estimated 3,000 IDP may be sheltering in Yin Daw within Meikhtila township and more located in Sue Lay Kone in Myit Tahr township. Agencies are on stand-by to proceed with assessment to these areas, in collaboration with the government.

The official Government figures on the number of houses in and around Meikhtila that were destroyed or damaged by arson sits at 1,594. Starting on 6 April, family members have been allowed to return to their properties and search for personal belongings before the debris and land is cleared in preparation for rebuilding.

No further reports of unrest have been recorded in Meikhtila and all indication points to life in Meikhtila is returning to normal, although IDPs report that they are cautious and there remains a sense of anxiety. The Government maintains a state of emergency for the four townships of Mahliang, Meikhtila, Thazi, and Wundwin that was imposed following the unrest in late March.

Similarly, no further incidents have been reported in the townships of Nattalin, Thagon, and Zigon of west Bago Region. As is the case in Meikhtila, the Government has maintained the curfew in Gyobingauk, Minhla, Monyo, Nattalin, Okpo and Zigon townships of Bago. The Bago Regional Minister for Security and Border Affairs reported that security measures are in place and the Government is reporting more than 140 suspects have been arrested on accusations of inciting the unrest.

On 3 April the Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, U Wunna Maung Lwin, hosted a meeting for the diplomatic corps in Nay Pyi Taw where he outlined the Government's position on the recent unrest and response and shared the most recent information on government contributions and private donations.

### Humanitarian Response

#### Food

**Needs:** Inter-agency rapid assessment recognized require regular distribution of commodities such as rice, pulses, oil, and salt, to guarantee standards of assistance as a major food need. Blended food for lactating and pregnant women is also prioritized.

**Response:** The WFP team is in place and coordinating the distribution with other agencies. WFP has distributed to allocations 15 day rations to all displaced persons, this includes 1,000 bags of rice, 4,164 bottles of edible oil, 28 bags of salt, and 46 bags of nutrition powder. Save the Children supplied 10,500 packages of dried noodles. Other food is being distributed by private donors, community based organizations and Government (mainly in the form of rice and instant noodles or snacks).

**Gaps & Constraints:** Ensure regular food distribution in all sites and return packages for those households coming back to their homes and assistance to host families has yet to be determined.
**Health**

**Needs:** Two cases of postnatal care needs reported on 6 – 7 April that have been referred to the Ministry of Health.

**Response:** Kyauske and Mandalay hospitals and Public Health Care Department of the Ministry of Health are providing services to all locations with the support of MRCS and UNICEF. UNICEF has agreed to be the focal agency for the Meikhtila response; MRCS provides transfer of patients from the camps to the hospitals as required and is operating camp-based health awareness campaigns on issues such as heatstroke. Furthermore, MRCS will follow up on TB/HIV patients for continuous medical support. AAM plans to support delivery support and materials for pregnant and lactating women, toilet pan and wheel chair for disabled person.

**Gaps & Constraints:** Improved sanitation and water provision in some locations to avoid any disease outbreaks.

**Protection**

**Needs:** Psycho-social support is highlighted as a major protection need by Government and humanitarian agencies.

**Response:** Action Aid and Save the Children have focused on provision of psycho-social activities and support through resourcing support centers in all camps; Save the Children constructed of a Child Friendly Space (Psychosocial Support) in High School No. 5, which will be operated in collaboration with Mandalay Social Welfare Department and Action Aid. MRCS and Save the Children in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare are operating a Restore the Family project for any separated children. Child Protection Assessment has been completed and the report will be circulated by UNICEF in coming days. Given the emphasis on psycho-social needs, a training session is scheduled on 10-12 April with support of the Department of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (DSWRR) and ActionAid for 41 volunteers and staff from ActionAid, Save the Children, DSWRR, and MRCS.

**Gaps & Constraints:** Psycho-social experts and other resources are limited.

**Shelter, CCCM and Non-food Items**

**Needs:** Temporary shelter is prioritized for those in the Stadium and those, in other locations, living in open shelter and who lost their homes. As current IDP populations move between shelter locations, the need for coordination and registration remains a high priority.

**Response:** A total of 1,192 households have received NFI kits and CESVI and UNICEF will provide further assistance to any IDP gaps. UNICEF 200 tarpaulins, 400 ropes for use in the Stadium; MRCS has provided 20 family tents, 400 jerry cans, 200 tarpaulins, 1,000 blankets, and 1,000 mosquito nets. ADRA and People in Need have distributed a total of 1,170 mosquito nets and UNHCR will fill any gap if needed relating to family tents for those sheltering in the Stadium. ICRC has deployed to the area to support MRCS efforts and has provided shelter materials. Save the Children have begun establishing distribution committees in 7 camps.

**Gaps & Constraints:** Communal cooking pots and utensils for those sheltering in larger sites remain a need; this is being followed up by Action Aid in the coming days. Strengthen committees and identify agencies to lead on camp management. Distribution of NFI kits, particularly clothing, remains an expressed need.

**Water, Sanitation and Hygiene**

**Needs:** Availability and use of a water purification method; availability and use of sanitary latrines, including the segregation for women’s safety and dignity is needed; bathing facilities are limited in some camps and those that do are not separated for men and women. With the rainy season approaching, hygiene promotion was identified as a concern.

**Response:** People in Need have distributed 400 hygiene kits in addition to Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) provision of 2,000 hygiene kits and 1,500 dignity kits with the support of UNFPA. UNICEF will coordinate with MRCS to provide hygiene kits to all families in all locations. Save the Children has provided 103 hygiene kits and 12,030 bottles of drinking water. The Government has begun construction of some latrines for the Stadium. ADRA will supply 10, 400 gallon water containers and 100 bathing cups over the coming days.
Government has been providing bottled water in major camps. UNICEF, in collaboration with Department of Development Affairs (DDA), has constructed 90 low cost latrines (5 per building). UNICEF, Save the Children, CESVI, Action Aid, AMDA, and AVSI are coordinating for latrine construction in the remaining locations, their assessment, based on the Sphere Standard, will be finalized once figures of the IDPs for each location is known after the current closure of monasteries and movement from the schools to the training centers.

**Gaps & Constraints:** Supplies of bottled drinking water are currently being sourced as private donation will continue only until the end of the festive season (water festival). Water storage containers need to be installed in major camps and water trucking organized.

Findings from the WASH Assessment indicate the critical needs are domestic water use, purification supplies, particularly during the upcoming rainy season, water storage facilities, bathing facilities, hygiene kits, semi-permanent latrines, hand washing facilities for latrine use, solid waste disposal systems, drainage construction and hygiene promotion.

**General Coordination**

The State Minister from the Mandalay Government, Minister U Aung Zan, has been appointed as the focal person for all further coordination, as the RRD team from Nay Pyi Taw led by the Deputy Minister MoSWRR deployed to the area at the beginning of the crisis returned to the capital.

The Government-led Meikhtila General Coordination meeting is now going to take place twice a week. On 8 April all agencies were requested to update the ‘who-does-what-where’ report before the festive season.

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**Background on the crisis**

The inter-communal violence began on 20 March with an argument in a gold shop in the Eastern Market of Meikhtila, Mandalay Region, which escalated quickly with crowds setting fire to business properties, religious buildings and houses. In Meikhtila estimates that over 12,000 people have been displaced by the violence, including some 9,710 in six temporary locations (schools, football stadium) and another 2,800 in local monasteries. Since 22 March incidents have been reported in neighboring townships of Mahlaing, Tatkon, Thazi, Thedaw, Yamethin and Wundwin. High-level Government and UN delegations visited the area and appealed for calm. The Inter-faith Friendship Organization issued a statement calling for restoration of peace and stability on 23 March. On the same day, the Government has requested international partners to mobilize humanitarian assistance.

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