



Myanmar/Burma

ECHO FACTSHEET

Facts & Figures

- Over 525 000 people in need of humanitarian assistance (Source: UN OCHA HRP 2017)
- Over 120 000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and over 480 000 in a dire humanitarian situation in Rakhine State due to a human rights crisis
- Over 98 000 IDPs in Kachin and northern Shan States, almost half of which are in camps located in non-Government controlled areas. (Source: UN OCHA, December 2016)

European Commission's relief assistance between 1994 and 2017:

Over €229 million, including €12 million in 2017

For further information please contact ECHO's Regional Office in Bangkok:

Tel.: (+66 2) 305 2600

Nicolas Louis,
Head of Yangon Office,
e-mail:
Nicolas.Louis@echofield.eu

Pierre Prakash,
Regional Information Officer
e-mail:
Pierre.Prakash@echofield.eu
ec.europa.eu/echo



* All the latest ECHO
Factsheets:
bit.ly/echo-fs



In 2014, the European Commission contributed €6.7 million in food assistance to displaced populations in Kachin, northern Shan and Rakhine States. Photo credit: WFP/Chris Terry (with EU support)

Key messages

- **Myanmar/Burma has experienced internal conflicts for more than six decades**, involving fighting between ethnic groups and the army in different locations throughout the country.
- Inter-communal violence in Rakhine State, which displaced over 140 000 Rohingyas in 2012, has resulted in **a de facto segregation between communities**. Although efforts to resettle displaced people are currently ongoing, **some 120 000 people remain displaced**.
- After the conflict in 2011 which left over 100 000 displaced in camps and with host families in Kachin and northern Shan States, renewed clashes in the area (including Kokang) caused further displacements in 2015 and 2016. Humanitarian space continues to shrink and access in areas not controlled by the Government has become totally restricted.
- Since 1994, the European Commission has provided over **€145 million in relief assistance for victims of conflicts**, communal violence and epidemics, and **€84 million for victims of natural disasters and to reduce the impact of natural disasters and improve the capacities of communities at risk to better prepare and protect themselves from disasters**.
- In Myanmar, the DIPECHO programme focuses on preparedness for coastal flood and cyclone-prone areas and urban earthquake risks measures.
- Following the 2015 floods that affected 20 million people, the European Commission donated **€6 million to assist the most vulnerable** in Myanmar/Burma, **particularly those in Rakhine State**.

Humanitarian situation and needs

Myanmar/Burma has been marred by internal conflicts for more than half a century. Political reforms were initiated in 2011 and peace negotiations are ongoing with most armed groups, but the country still faces several important challenges: in December 2016 UNOCHA estimated that there were **over half a million people in need of humanitarian assistance**, including some 218 000 living in displacement.

Inter-communal violence between Muslim minorities such as the [Rohingya](#)* and Buddhist communities in **Rakhine State** led to the displacement of around 140 000 people in 2012. While a process led by the government facilitated the resettlement and return of 20 000 people last year, some 120 000 remain displaced four years after the events. Over 800 000 people have become stateless and deprived of civic rights. Serious restrictions of movement are hampering their proper access to health, education and livelihood opportunities. Recent years have seen an unprecedented number of Rohingya refugees from the Myanmar/Bangladesh border area taking to sea to flee persecution: according to UNHCR, approximately 94 000 people are estimated to have departed by boat over 2014 and 2015, though this number also includes migrants from Bangladesh.

The latest bouts of violent incidents broke out in northern Rakhine State in early October following a deadly assault on three border guard posts. The violence triggered military operations that resulted in the suspension of humanitarian activities in the region. Although authorities have recently allowed the partial resumption of some pre-existing humanitarian initiatives, more than 130 000 out of 150 000 people who were dependant on aid remain deprived of much-needed regular assistance. In addition to displacing some 20 000 people internally (over half of whom have since returned to their places of origin), these events have also re-ignited simmering tensions between Buddhist and Muslim communities and more than 74 000 Rohingyas have fled across the Naaf River into [Bangladesh](#) in search for protection and assistance.

While the peace process is paving the way for possible future returns of displaced persons and refugees to the south-east of the country, the conflict in **Kachin State**, which re-erupted in 2011, has caused massive new displacements. Over 97 000 people remain displaced, scattered in some 150 camps or camp-like settlements, about half of which are located in non-government controlled areas (NGCA). Although access to government-controlled areas is regular, assistance to IDPs in the NGCA remains seriously limited. Access is often impacted by renewed fighting and administrative blockages. Intensified fighting and military operations in late December 2016 have displaced thousands of people in Kachin and northern Shan, while also forcing over 25 000 other to flee across the border to China from Kokang Self-Administered Zone. Humanitarian access to people in need in the region has been severely disrupted due to the escalated violence. Earlier, in February 2015, some 70 000 people were displaced after violence erupted in the Kokang self-administered region, the majority of whom fled to China. A further 16 000 were displaced in Kachin, northern Shan and central Shan; most have since been able to return to their places of origin.

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), an estimated 3 million people from Myanmar/Burma live in [Thailand](#)* as economic migrants, while more than 102 000 are living in nine refugee camps along the border between the two countries.

Myanmar/Burma is also highly exposed to natural hazards. Most recently, in July 2016, flooding caused by a series of torrential downpours led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people in various areas throughout central and northern regions. One year earlier in mid-2015, the double impact of monsoon rains and Cyclone Komen triggered the largest floods in the country's recent history, affecting over 20 million people, 1.6 million of which were displaced, and aggravating conflict-induced needs, particularly in Rakhine State where 13 000 houses were destroyed. Twelve of the country's fourteen states were impacted.

Cyclones are frequent along the coastline: Cyclone Nargis killed some 140 000 people and destroyed thousands of homes in 2008, while in 2011 Cyclone Giri caused destruction and death in Rakhine State, leaving some 70 000 people homeless.

Myanmar/Burma is the country with the highest risk of humanitarian crises in North and South East Asia, and ranks 12th worldwide (source: InfoRM original data: <http://inform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>).



*All the latest ECHO Factsheets:
bit.ly/echo-fs

The European Union's humanitarian response

The European Commission, through its humanitarian aid department (ECHO), has funded relief programs in Myanmar/Burma for 20 years. ECHO has an office in Yangon since 2005, to evaluate acute humanitarian needs, facilitate and monitor the delivery of aid, promote resilience building and close links with other EU funding instruments, as well as to promote the respect of humanitarian principles enshrined in the EU Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.

Responding to natural disasters

In response to the flooding in July 2016, the Commission contributed €200 000 to address the emergency needs of heavily-hit communities. The assistance focused on delivering life-saving non-food relief items and unconditional cash grants to the most vulnerable households.

Following the massive floods in mid-2015, the European Commission allocated €6 million to alleviate humanitarian needs, including €3.25 million for flood response activities in Rakhine, Chin and Sagaing States. The EU funds have been used to provide shelter and livelihood support, restore water and sanitation facilities and distribute winterization kits, as well as to scale up nutrition services in northern Rakhine State, where the floods have led to a dramatic increase of severe acute malnutrition. The balance of €2.75 million was used to scale up humanitarian support to conflict affected populations in Rakhine and Central Shan States.

Assisting victims of conflict

The European Commission allocated €6.2 million in 2017 to help those affected by conflict and communal violence in Myanmar/Burma, bringing its total humanitarian assistance since 2012 to over €82 million. Since 2013 a total of €2 650 000 have also been allocated for emergency education in the framework of the [EU Children of Peace](#)* initiative, including €1.5 million for 2016. This latest allocation included two projects in partnership with Unicef, on child protection in Northern Rakhine State and Mine Risk Education in Kachin and Shan states, as well as in the South East of the country.

Some 220 000 people remain displaced throughout the country, living in dire conditions. One of the European Commission's priorities remains the delivery of assistance to civilian victims of conflict and communal violence, in a conflict sensitive, coordinated and impartial fashion.

In Rakhine State, ECHO continues to address nutrition and health needs of the most vulnerable people, particularly in the northern townships. Following the 2012 June and October outbreaks of violence, the European Commission extended its humanitarian aid to all displaced people in need. Sectors of intervention include shelter, food and non-food items, nutrition, health care, water and sanitation, livelihoods support, coordination, education and protection.

The European Commission is also providing humanitarian aid to those displaced by the **Kachin/northern Shan State** conflict and living in camps. Along the eastern border, ECHO has contributed to mine awareness projects and to the rehabilitation needs of victims of anti-personnel mines as well as supporting the Myanmar Indigenous Network for Education.

Reducing the impact of natural disasters

Another priority of the EU in Myanmar/Burma is emergency preparedness and response, as well as Disaster Risk Reduction to increase the resilience of the most vulnerable. In line with the European Union's international commitments, ECHO ensures that all its relevant actions lead to the reduction of disaster risks and to the improvement of communities' resources for better preparedness to natural disasters. Relief interventions after the Nargis and Giri Cyclones directly contributed to the reinforcement of local preparedness and response capacities. In addition, the country benefits from ECHO's [Disaster Preparedness Programme](#)*. In this context, €9.65 million have been allocated between 2010 and 2017 for coastal flood-prone areas and urban earthquake risks measures.



EU-funded projects in Myanmar/Burma



With an aim to increase the capacity of local people to respond to natural hazards in disaster-prone Myanmar/Burma, the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) has since 2010 funded several disaster risk reduction projects in the country. As natural disasters usually have increased impacts on the most vulnerable populations, such as the elderly and people with disabilities, this project, implemented by Action aid-led consortium, encouraged the participation of people with disabilities. It was run in six high-risk regions across the country. © ACF

In the conflict-ridden state of Rakhine, tens of thousands of the displaced individuals are deprived of access to health care and other basic services due to restrictions of freedom of movement imposed after outbreaks of violence in mid-2012. Amongst other initiatives, the Commission has provided funding to enable Relief International to provide quality health care to the most vulnerable amongst both displaced people and local communities. Due to cultural sensitivity, the presence of female doctors is also ensured in Muslim communities. © European Union/ECHO



In the northern Kachin state, the ongoing conflict has displaced thousands of children. This has limited the access to formal education, psycho-social support and protection. As part of the EU Children of Peace initiative, the European Commission funded Plan International to provide quality primary education for children and life-skills education for adolescents in some 'non-government controlled areas' in the region. Implemented in 2014-2015, the initiative benefited over 11 500 children and teenagers. © Kaung Htet for Plan International



*All the latest ECHO Factsheets:
bit.ly/echo-fs