

This regular biweekly update, covering the period from 16 October to 05 November 2021, is produced by the Myanmar Cash Working Group.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

* All CWG partners are facing cash liquidity and banking challenges since 1 February 2021, impacting all program-related activities such as delayed cash received from donors, procurement processes, distributions and reporting. Many partners continue to successfully use third party financial service providers (FSPs) to secure enough cash for distributions.
* Myanmar’s currency (kyat) started depreciating rapidly beginning in September and has led to higher market prices for many commodities. CWG partner agencies are looking to increase their transfer values where appropriate.
* In Rakhine, prices of basic food commodities continue to increase. The overall food basket (rice, vegetable oil, pulses and salt) cost increased by 31% since February 2021 and by 2% between August and September 2021
* In Kachin, Due to ongoing armed conflict, there is security concern for staff members who have access to IDP camps in different townships as staff members are asked by SAC about their activities at the checkpoints.
* As of 05 November, the official exchange rate is 1,760 MMK to 1 USD[[1]](#footnote-0); however, the private money changer rate is 1,950 MMK[[2]](#footnote-1). Yangon fuel prices are 1,465 MMK for 95 Octane and 1,345 MMK for premium Diesel per litre[[3]](#footnote-2).

**KEY FIGURES**

| **1,950 mmk/$**USD exchange rate at private counter | **5-7%**Yangon physical cash exchange fee | **1,345mmk**Yangon Premium Diesel rate |
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**SITUATION UPDATE**

Myanmar’s currency (kyat) has been depreciating rapidly since September 2021, leading to increase in basic commodity prices including food, medicines, and fuel. The currency has been steadily depreciating with the ongoing political unrest since the 1 February 2021 military coup, aggravated by shortages of foreign currency and the COVID-19 economic impact. This weakened the purchasing power of vulnerable households, pushing them into more severe humanitarian needs. Funding shortages, armed clashes, insecurity, and COVID-19 restrictions are preventing humanitarians from responding to people in need. Cash assistance programs have been particularly impacted because of disrupted banking services and limited cash availability.[[4]](#footnote-3)

All CWG members are facing cash liquidity and banking challenges since 1 February 2021, impacting all program-related activities such as delayed cash received from donors, procurement processes, distributions and reporting. Many partners continue to successfully use third party financial service providers (FSPs) to secure enough cash for distributions. While Ooredoo M-Pitesan services have been discontinued, others continue to operate, and are successfully used by Partners.

In Kachin, partners are still facing banking and liquidity issues though a few partners can withdraw cash. CWG Partners have been experiencing high cash out and delivery fees. Due to ongoing armed conflict, there is security concern for staff members who have access to IDP camps in different townships as staff members are asked by SAC about their activities at the checkpoints.The cash value for IDP response has been reviewed and updated by WFP based on market price monitoring results. The [new cash value](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GU0SD43aMi-C79VGrYHUttAFJBB_2_sW/view?usp=sharing) will be applied in IDP camps in Kachin starting from October onwards.

In Rakhine, prices of basic food commodities continue to increase. The overall food basket (rice, vegetable oil, pulses and salt) cost increased by 31% since February 2021 and by 2% between August and September 2021. The USD-MMK exchange rate went up 21% over the same period. Liquidity challenges continue to limit transactions as banks continue to limit withdrawals while ATMs have remained closed. A slight improvement has been noted but not significant enough to improve the supply chain that relies heavily on cash. The increase in fuel prices has resulted in an increase in transport costs for goods and services. This could explain the increase in food basket cost across all townships prompting WFP to increase the cash entitlements for three townships namely Kyauktaw, Minbya and Kyaukphyu from 15,000 to 17,000MMK per individual family member per month starting October 2021. Notable increases have been noted in other townships as well and these will also be considered for cash entitlement review on a case to case basis. The price for rice per kilogram decreased by 3% to 640MMK between late August and mid-October. This is a common seasonal occurrence as farmers start creating space for new harvests due in November. Compared to September 2020, the price for oil is 81% higher, pulses +30% and rice +26%. The price of salt is 14% lower due to challenges in exporting the commodity to other regions experiencing conflict.

Daily cash withdrawal limitations are CB and KBZ 200,000 MMK, Yoma 300,000MMK and AGD 150,000 MMK per day per savings account.[[5]](#footnote-4)

As of 05 November, the official exchange rate is 1,760 MMK to 1 USD1; however, the private money changer rate is 1,950 MMK2. Yangon fuel prices are 1,465 MMK for 95 Octane and 1,345 MMK for premium Diesel per litre3.

WFP’s cash distributions have reached 16,000 (35 per cent) of 45,000 IDPs in Kachin with a three-month ration (July to September) and 135,600 (73 per cent) of 184,700 people in central Rakhine with a two-month ration (July and August). In northern Shan, the resumption of food distributions to some 8,300 people in Konkyan Township has resumed, while cash distributions for 7,000 IDPs in Kutkai, Namhkan, Namtu and Mansi townships are currently ongoing. Distributions have also taken place to some 105,000 people in northern Rakhine and to some 9,450 IDPs in southern Chin in September.[[6]](#footnote-5)

WFP [September Market Price Update](https://analytics.wfp.org/t/Public/views/MarketMonitoringDashboardv2/Overview_?:iid=1&:isGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&:embed=y) informed that the deterioration of the Myanmar kyat relative to other currencies contributed to commodity price increases in September – the kyat dropped 60 percentage points over the course of September. In addition to that, the transportation challenges (rising fuel prices, restriction on movement, route blockages) continue to underscore high retail prices of food. In Kayah, traders reported that vehicles and types of goods are being restricted, raising issues of access to sufficient commodities for retailers and consumers. In other areas of high conflict (Chin, Kachin), accessibility issues due specifically to insecurity were also mentioned by traders.

According to the [September Market Price Report](https://themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/mau_public/Bulletin_MAU_Rakhine_-_September_2021_-_Market_Price_Report.pdf) published by Mercy Corps, Sittwe and Maundaw saw the most price hikes in September. Meat and fish prices were stable relative to other goods. The survey was conducted in Central and Northern Chin and Rakhine.

**key resources**

* The Myanmar Cash Working Group monthly meeting for October was organized on 14 October. The key presentation materials are here: [Market Price Update (September) from WFP](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1flf_f_WwUaAo5eXHtLiP-RPIHMoO37wb/view?usp=sharing), [October MEB presentation](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1n32DuwsQ2MALwXRCfOo4794R-EHr_PZ5/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=114142602097260620093&rtpof=true&sd=true), [Transfer Value Update from WFP](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LiSNxhhEaB79Rd8louxO49a0kR7kIVRo/view?usp=sharing). The October meeting minutes can be found [here](https://themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/Mtg_Minutes_CWG_Oct2021.pdf).
* Myanmar Cash Working Group and ICCG have endorsed the [MEB calculation](https://themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/Template_Myanmar_Minimum_Expenditure_Basket_MEB_Calculation_CWG_24Sep2021.xlsx) and [Technical summary note](https://themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/Summary_Myanmar_Minimum_Expenditure_Basket_MEB_Technical_Note_CWG_24Sep2021.docx) which are available on MIMU Cash Programming site.
* [Myanmar CVA 4W](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1xnQ8pFbqxr45WE4tXFFAKg3522Qyv8eR7cbpS8lm1Bw/edit#gid=1230035561)s for 2020 is available online and the dashboard can be found [here](https://datastudio.google.com/u/0/reporting/1ab3123c-1589-42c7-bcbe-29bae99a0281/page/IAE6B/edit). CWG has conducted 3Ws on partners’ implementing surveys in September 2021, data can be found [here](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1yNwgfqsyiNt28yP5gv2n0Lr66a-DW0YX/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=114142602097260620093&rtpof=true&sd=true).
* Mercy Corps Myanmar publishes the Market Price Report Dashboard. The dashboard is [live on MIMU](https://themimu.info/market-analysis-unit) and [standalone dashboard here](http://mau-mpr-dashboard-beta.herokuapp.com/).
* WFP also has a nationwide market monitoring [dashboard](https://analytics.wfp.org/t/Public/views/MarketMonitoringDashboardv2/Overview_?:iid=1&:isGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&:embed=y) and to access reports, here is a [reports link](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdataviz.vam.wfp.org%2Feconomic_explorer%2Freports&data=04%7C01%7Cthinthin.aye%40wfp.org%7Cd72f665ea4034f048bd608d998fc0135%7C462ad9aed7d94206b87471b1e079776f%7C0%7C0%7C637709030563950883%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=QwjvMviWsh%2FiQdNj93xKaDnTZTwIi7GXOv39dXUFyGU%3D&reserved=0).
* A comprehensive financial service provider mapping and [Emergency Cash Transfer Programme Tools for Humanitarian Actors](https://themimu.info/fsp-mapping) site are available on the MIMU website.
* [Myanmar-Emergency-Cash Assistance-Dashboard](https://analytics.wfp.org/t/Public/views/MyanmarEmergencyCashAssistanceInformation/OverallPage) together with FSP dataset and CTP SOPs can be found on the page.

**publication**

* Mercy Corps has released its September Market Price report which summarizes prices for goods in Central and Northern Chin and Rakhine. The full report can be found [here](https://mercycorps.us6.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8fb7875546a431ae7abdde05e&id=1479191d31&e=aa9b314360) and is also available on [the MAU page](https://mercycorps.us6.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8fb7875546a431ae7abdde05e&id=0b30f0a52d&e=aa9b314360) on MIMU. Additionally, the *Product Specifications* document (see [here](https://mercycorps.us6.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8fb7875546a431ae7abdde05e&id=ee752c57f6&e=aa9b314360)) provides detailed specifications used during price collection in order to help third parties interpret and use MPR data. These specifications may be updated periodically and are also available for download on [the MPR dashboard](https://mercycorps.us6.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8fb7875546a431ae7abdde05e&id=cd4ab8f0c0&e=aa9b314360) on MIMU.
* IFPRI Myanmar has released several reports on September survey round on Monitoring the agri-food system in Myanmar: [Food vendors](https://www.ifpri.org/publication/monitoring-agri-food-system-myanmar-food-vendors-september-2021-survey-round), [Agriculture inputs retailers](https://www.ifpri.org/publication/monitoring-agri-food-system-myanmar-agricultural-input-retailers-%E2%80%93-september-2021-survey), [Rice millers](https://www.ifpri.org/publication/monitoring-agri-food-system-myanmar-rice-millers-%E2%80%93-september-2021-survey-round), [Maize farmers - Monsoon season phone survey](https://www.ifpri.org/publication/monitoring-agri-food-system-myanmar-maize-farmers-%E2%80%93-monsoon-season-phone-surveys), [Agricultural crop traders](https://www.ifpri.org/publication/monitoring-agri-food-system-myanmar-agricultural-crop-traders-%E2%80%93-september-2021-survey) as well as [Community perceptions of the agricultural impacts of Myanmar’s health and political crises: Insights from the National COVID 19 Community Survey.](https://www.ifpri.org/publication/community-perceptions-agricultural-impacts-myanmars-health-and-political-crises-insights).

**regular and ongoing resources and mappings**

* There are many regular and ongoing resources, including mappings, and linking humanitarian cash and social protection, which can be found [here](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ctPU3xYoch2N3pSs92ExQ4KmvEj7XHR2lMLfVPL43Nw/edit).

**recent webinar and training**

* Teaching videos of a series of PRCI Trade Flow analysis training sessions are available on IFPRI website, [here](https://www.ifpri.org/publication/prci-trade-flow-analysis-training-lecture-6-analyzing-trade-flows-myanmar-using-baci).

**upcoming webinar and training**

| **Date** | **Activity** | **Host** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Tuesday09 November 2021 | Cash Strapped? A Learning Discussion on Market-Based Programming in Liquidity Crises. Announcement [here](https://seepnetwork.org/Event/Cash-Strapped-A-Learning-Discussion-on-Market-Based-Programming-in-Liquidity-Crises?calendar). ([Register here](https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6581825/Cash-Strapped-A-Real-Time-Learning-Discussion-on-Market-Based-Programming-in-Liquidity-Crises)) | Markets in Crises Community of Practice (MiC) and the Global Food Security Cluster (gFSC) Cash and Market Working Group |
| 1 November - 13 December 2021 | CVA & GBV Online Training, takes 7 weeks to complete. The course will be delivered in English. To express interest in participating in the English course, please fill out the [registration form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeP6MOxaLbAKNEhQoR8b7gyRjNcPU5nTDusYebnHH5Ygk6GgA/viewform) by October 18th. Any inquiries re the training, please email them to cvagbvresponse@gmail.com. | CARE and WRC |
| Online self-directed learning | Core CVA skills for program staff course, Free 12 weeks online self-directed course ([Visit here](https://www.calpnetwork.org/course/online-core-cva-skills-for-programme-staff/)) | CaLP |



1. Central Bank of Myanmar [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Northern Breeze money changer [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. Denko [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. CrisisInSight Weekly Picks, 13 October 2021, [link](https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/crisisinsight-weekly-picks-13-october-2021) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. CAR weekly monitoring report, 21 - 27 Oct 2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
6. Myanmar Humanitarian Update no 11, 01 Oct 2021, OCHA [↑](#footnote-ref-5)