

Inter-agency assessment mission to Laiza and
Maija Yang areas in Kachin State,
September 2013



Displaced woman in Laiza area with WFP food rations, 26 September.
Credit: UNICEF

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Background

The conflict in Kachin and Northern Shan States has displaced an estimated 100,000 people. As of 31 August 2013, the total number of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) registered in camps stands at over 91,000, across both Government areas and areas beyond Government control. Approximately 53,000 IDPs are staying in camps located in the areas beyond Government control, representing over 50% of the total IDP population.

While IDPs in Government areas receive regular assistance by the Government, national and international organisations, direct international assistance in areas beyond Government control had until recently reached approximately only 10,000 people (approximately 20% of the displaced population) via 10 inter-agency cross-line missions, which took place between December 2011 and June 2013. These missions – with participation from the United Nations agencies and International Non-Governmental Organisations – were meant to complement the regular assistance provided since the beginning of the conflict by local NGOs in these areas. Local relief organisations have been the only regular source of assistance in the areas beyond Government control since the beginning of the crisis, with international support. Despite the enormous efforts of the local organizations, not all needs in areas beyond Government control have been attended to. Access limitations for international organizations have resulted in a variation in the quality and quantity of assistance provided to those within Government areas, compared to those beyond.

Inter-agency cross-line missions to areas beyond Government control carried out in September 2013

In August 2013, the Government granted permission for UN and INGOs to carry out cross-line missions to four areas of Kachin State where a total of approximately 25,000 IDPs are located. The permission covered the period of one month, from 26 August to 4 October, during which partners planned six missions to cover these areas. Three out of those six missions assisted IDPs in and surrounding Laiza, an area which missions had not been able to reach since December 2011 and has the highest concentration of IDPs in the areas beyond government control (over 15,000 people). The fourth mission assisted camps in the Maija Yang area. Given adverse road conditions due to above-average rainfall during the month of September, the remaining two missions to the surrounding areas of Mansi and Sadung could not go ahead. In total, 14 cross-line missions have taken place since the beginning of the conflict.

Table 1. People assisted in camps during the September 2013 cross-line missions

Area	Camps	People Assisted
Lwegel	5 camps* (Baptist Camp, Nyaung Na Pin Camp, Seng Ja Camp, Lisu Camp, Catholic Camp)	1,563
Maija Yang	Pa Kahtawng	3,105
	Nhkawng Pa	1,604
	Dum Bung	612
Laiza	Je Yang Hka	6,860
	Boarding School	1,864
	Hpun Lum Yang	1,521
	Masat (3) Gat	1,904
	Woi Chyai	3,337
Total		22,370

*These camps are in Government areas

The following UN agencies and INGOs participated in the September 2013 missions: WFP, UNCHR, UNICEF, UNOCHA, UNFPA, MDM, DRC, ACTED, and Solidarites International. During the missions, organisations distributed humanitarian assistance to a total of over 22,000 people. Items delivered included one-month supply of food (rice, pulses, cooking oil and salt - with variations in rations adapted to the assistance being provided by local NGOs on a regular basis), non-food items (bed nets, sanitary kits, tarpaulins and cooking utensils), hygiene kits, educational materials, water purification tablets, and medicines. Protection trainings and capacity building sessions on the development of women and child protection programmes were also organised. In addition, CCCM (Camp Coordination and Camp Management) trainings were held for staff of local organisations and camp managers. Health education sessions on personal hygiene and correct usage of health products distributed were also conducted.



WFP food distribution at Seng Ja camp on Maija Yang area, 13 September. Credit: WFP

An important goal of the missions was also to increase coordination and collaboration between actors based in Kachin State and local organisations which provide assistance on a regular basis in these camps and boarding schools where IDP children are hosted. The missions met and coordinated with the local organisations, prior to and during the trips, in order to avoid overlaps of assistance and to identify gaps which could be filled by the international partners. Given the uncertainty surrounding the timing of potential future missions – which are subject to approval from the authorities – it was agreed that none of the ongoing activities in the camps should be discontinued or adapted because of these missions, and that international direct support should complement ongoing activities.

Additional coordination meetings – including WASH cluster and food sector meetings – were set up to increase coordination. The meetings will be organised on a monthly basis and regular information-exchange between Myitkyina-based and border-based organisations was agreed upon. More complete who-what-where (3W) information is being compiled by these sectors. Similar coordination meetings for the remaining sectors are planned as a next step.



UNICEF public hygiene promotion in Laiza area, 26 September. Credit: UNICEF

Findings of need assessments conducted in IDP camps

During the mission, rapid assessments to identify food, livelihood, education, WASH, shelter, health, non-food items and protection needs were conducted at the camps in Laiza and Maija Yang areas, in conjunction with the distribution of assistance. Summary findings on the needs in each of these sectors are outlined here.

3.1. Education

In the Laiza area, over 2,700 IDP primary and middle school students are able to access schools which are located either inside or near the camps. One boarding school exists for over 1,700 middle and high-school level IDP students. However, living quarters in the boarding school are inadequate and over-crowded. Local organizations, including Shalom and Metta, have been providing support including textbooks and stationery for students. During the mission, UNICEF distributed story books, bookshelves, posters and pamphlets. Early Childhood Development (ECD) centers are running in four IDP camps, for 740 children. KBC and UNICEF will provide support to 10 out of a total of 23 ECD centers in areas beyond Government control in Kachin State.

Significant needs for the education sector include the conducting of a comprehensive education needs assessment, improvement of WASH facilities at schools, provision of story books for ECD and lower primary students, capacity building trainings for volunteer teachers, ECD kits with playing items and sports items for primary school students. Identifying solutions for the space constraints and living conditions in the boarding school will also be important.

In the Maija Yang area, there is a lack of assistance for middle school and high school students. Results of matriculation exams from the Maija Yang area are not recognised, a problem for all of the areas beyond

Government control. Students and schools require more qualified teachers, textbooks, stationery, and furniture.



Students at the Laiza IDP boarding school, 24 September. Credit: UNICEF/OCHA

3.2. Food

In the Laiza area, rice is generally supplied on a regular basis by organizations present there, but other commodities such as pulses, cooking oil, and salt, which are part of the WFP basic food basket provided, countrywide, to affected people in emergency situations are not distributed regularly and in adequate amounts. Cash and voucher distributions are carried out in several camps to cover some of the additional food needs. Supplies provided by WFP during the mission will cover food needs for one month, complementing the food basket provided by local partners. However, regular supply of pulses, salt and cooking oil is required to prevent food shortages and additional funding is urgently required for adequate food supply to cover the next six months.

The situation is similar in Maija Yang area, where rice and cash distributions are regularly carried out across most camps by local organisations. However, regular supplies of pulses, cooking oil, and salt are needed for all camps and a more regular supply of rice is required for some of the camps.

3.3. Health

In the Laiza area, IDPs have free access to health care through clinics established in three camps, as well as at the Laiza General Hospital, which is within walking distance from the fourth camp. Some of the clinics need improvement, such as in Mast (3) Gat. All clinics require proper storage space for medical supplies and a systematic inventory control system. While immunisation coverage is high in certain areas (including Laiza) thanks to the support of NGOs, the coverage is unequal and many camps along the border are still lacking immunisation coverage. Vaccination for ATT (tetanus) is still needed in all camps.



Medical supplies delivered to Laiza General Hospital on 17 September. Credit: UNICEF

There are inadequate supplies of ORS, Zinc, antibiotics, emergency health kits, child survival kit A and B, Vitamin A, micro nutrient sprinkles and micro nutrient tablets. Refresher training for medical staff is highly recommended. Severe Acute Malnutrition among children is reported to be at 2 to 3% and Global Acute Malnutrition at 10%. Health staff requires training for the monitoring and management of malnutrition, and exclusive breastfeeding practices are low.

In the Maija Yang, clinics are operational in all three camps, although with limited staffing, equipment and supply only. Health was identified to be the biggest concern for IDPs in this area. In Lwegel, only two out of the five camps have their own health clinic. All clinics

lack adequate supply of medicines. Immunization coverage is limited and needs to be expanded.

3.4. Livelihood

In all areas visited, livelihood opportunities are extremely limited for the displaced people, making them dependent on assistance provided by organisations. In the Laiza area, there are intermittent casual labour opportunities at the banana plantations during the peak seasons (May to June and November to December). However, this opportunity is only available to less than 10% of IDPs. Monthly cash assistance of Ks. 7,500 per head is provided by local organizations to offset the lack of income for IDPs. In some of the camps, small plots of land are provided for farming, but these are insufficient due to lack of space in the surroundings of the camps. There is a need for additional livelihoods activities, while cash assistance programmes need to be sustained and expanded to those not yet covered.

In the Maija Yang area, the situation is similar and monthly cash assistance is equally crucial for the IDPs given the scarce or non-existent employment opportunities.

3.5. Non-Food Items

In the Laiza area, non-food items such as bet nets, cooking utensils and clothes were last distributed comprehensively in May 2012 and required replacement, which was carried out during the missions. In addition, the approaching winter season makes the supply of blankets and warm clothes necessary.

In the Maija Yang, the situation is similar. However, there is an additional need for firewood in the camps, as people are not able to collect firewood due to the risk of landmines.



NFIs distributed in No. 3 Masat market in Laiza area , 26 September. Credit: UNICEF

3.6. Protection

In the Laiza area, women and child protection activities are lacking. Trafficking of women and children has been reported before and during the displacement and remains a serious concern. There is also a high risk of occurrence of Gender Based Violence (GBV) due to crowded camps. In addition, the lack of separated bathing spaces (and in some camps of separated latrines) for men and women is a problem. Children lack proper facilities for playing and recreation. No games and sports materials are being distributed yet by organisations. Domestic violence against women and corporal punishment against children are reportedly prevalent as a result of stress suffered by IDP parents from the protracted displacement.

In the Maija Yang area, the situation is similar with the absence of women and child protection programmes and with the poor amenities of the camps which are not in favour of creating a safe and private environment for women.

3.7. Shelter



Over-crowded living conditions for IDPs in Woi Chyai in Laiza area. Credit: OCHA

In the Laiza area, no families are currently living in open spaces. However, there is an urgent need to identify new sites and provide family units to 170 IDPs households who are currently staying in over-crowded communal buildings in two camps (Woi Chyai and No. 3 Market) with very limited space and lack of privacy.

In the Maija Yang, some of the students who have been living in over-crowded communal facilities without separate spaces between girls and boys need additional shelter. Some shelters need repair and more space is required for cooking.

3.8. WASH

In the Laiza area, surface water is abundant in the camps but the inadequate design of water systems leads to frequent shortage of water supply. The turbidity of water during the rainy season is a concern as it reduces the lifespan of water filters and entails water supply disruptions. The lack of drinking water quality monitoring prevents identification of possible health hazards linked to water quality. Additional facilities for bathing and hand washing, as well as additional latrines are needed, including at the schools. Hygiene kits and dignity kits should be provided more systematically and on a regular basis. Awareness-raising for personal hygiene is required.

In the Maija Yang area, hand dug-wells are the main water source in some of the camps around Lwegel, leading to water shortages in the dry season. Gravity flow water supply systems are required for these locations. Latrines need repair in several camps. Awareness-raising for personal hygiene is required.

Conclusion

Four cross-line missions to IDP camps in areas beyond Government control took place in September. Needs assessments were conducted at the camps in conjunction with the missions. The findings show that there are still substantial needs in the camps in terms of food, livelihoods, education, health, WASH, shelter, Non-Food Items, and protection to better complement the assistance provided by local organisations present in these areas.

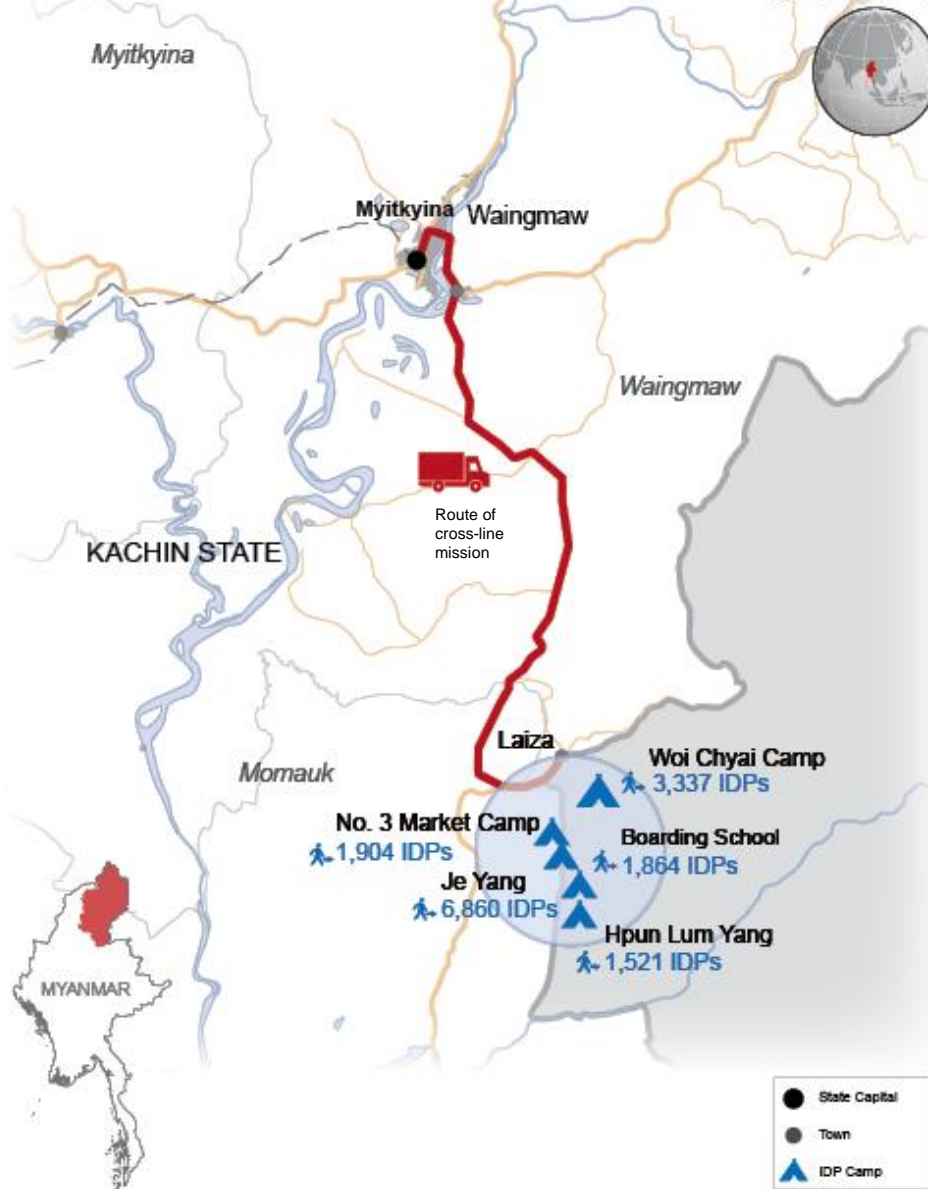
More regular and access is required to IDPs in these hard-to-reach areas, for assistance, monitoring and coordination purposes. Similarly, as access improves, additional funding support will continue to be crucial to ensure the required assistance is provided to the over 53,000 IDPs in areas beyond Government control in Kachin and Northern Shan States.



Cross-line mission to Laiza area, 23 September. Credit: UNICEF/OCHA

Annex: Maps showing cross-line missions to Laiza and Maija Yang areas

UN-led cross-line mission in Laiza area - Kachin (Sept 2013)



UN-led cross-line mission in Mai Ja Yang area - Kachin (Sept 2013)

