

HIGHLIGHTS

- Critical shelter, protection and livelihoods needs continue in northern Rakhine despite improvements in humanitarian access
- Muslim fishermen face new restrictions in Rakhine
- Closure of three IDP camps in Rakhine has mixed results
- Government Minister announces that IDP camps in Rakhine will be closed within five years
- Intense fighting in parts of Kachin and Shan in the recent months has led to new displacement in a number of areas

FIGURES*

# of IDPs Kachin	87,000
# of IDPs Shan	12,000
# of IDPs Rakhine	120,000
# of non-displaced affected people	307,000

FUNDING 2017

150 million
requested (US\$)

45.8 Million
received (US\$)

30.5%
Funded

*IDP numbers in pre-existing camps/sites from March CCCM data. May not include all recent displacement/re-displacement.



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Returnees in the northern part of Rakhine face urgent shelter needs

Seven months after the October 2016 attacks on border guard posts in northern Rakhine and the subsequent security operations that led to mass displacement, significant humanitarian needs remain, with persistent concerns over protection, movement restrictions, shelter, food security and livelihoods for thousands of affected people. United Nations officials in Bangladesh estimate that more than 74,000 people, most of whom identify themselves as Rohingya, crossed the border into Bangladesh as a result of the violence that began in October. UNICEF estimates that 57 per cent of those who have newly arrived in Cox's Bazaar District are children.

Some of those who fled to Bangladesh have since returned to the northern part of Rakhine, but exact numbers are not known as returnees are keeping a low profile to avoid penalties for having illegally crossed the border. In addition to the large number of Muslims who were displaced, a total of 332 Rakhine, Dynet and Mro evacuees continue to be hosted at two locations in Maungdaw Township. In February, the Government announced the end of the security operations and since then most of the 20,000 Muslim people who were internally displaced within northern Rakhine are believed to have returned to their villages or origin or places in the vicinity of their villages of origin.

Many returnees still in makeshift shelters as monsoon season approaches

Returnees face significant shelter needs due to the large number of homes burnt, damaged or dismantled during the security operations. Many are staying in makeshift shelters which are inadequate, especially in light of the upcoming monsoon season. A draft plan has been developed by the authorities to establish 13 "model villages" for 1,152 households whose homes have been destroyed. The authorities have indicated that the establishment of these model villages will enable them to provide better services and infrastructure to the communities. Each household will be provided by the Government with a cash grant for shelter construction. Land for the model villages is already being prepared.

Affected people have stressed to the Government that they would like to return to their original plots and they have raised concerns about the Government's "model villages" plan. Villagers are concerned about the size of the plots they are being offered as they are smaller than their previous plots. They have expressed concern about the fact that households are all being offered similar sized plots even though some households include extended family members and have a large number of people. Some have said

the size and location of the plots would prevent them from being able to continue the same livelihood support activities that they previously engaged in.

Access for humanitarian staff, including international staff, has improved following the introduction of new procedures, but restrictions still apply. It has still not been possible to conduct a comprehensive assessment of humanitarian needs in northern Rakhine. However, humanitarian organizations present in Maungdaw are currently planning individual sector-specific assessments in nutrition, food security/livelihoods, child protection, education, water/sanitation and health. WFP conducted a food security assessment with Government counterparts and humanitarian partners between 26 March and April 10 in the two affected townships of northern Rakhine. The results are being compiled and will be released soon.

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WFP has been continuing distributions under its lean season food/cash assistance programme for 57,000 people and its emergency relief program for 27,000 people. After many people were forced to spend three months without humanitarian assistance last year, there are concerns about malnutrition rates. Under WFP's Prevention of Moderate Acute Malnutrition programme, 50,000 children under five plus pregnant/lactating mothers were assisted with nutrition rations in April. WFP will continue providing assistance throughout the lean agricultural season until the end of 2017. By the end of April, UNHCR had distributed Non-Food Items to over 33,000 people affected by the recent crisis across 41 village tracts in Maungdaw district. Most of the humanitarian programmes that were being carried out before October 2016 have now resumed. However, humanitarian access is more tightly regulated than before October 2016.

Authorities cut fishing lifeline for Muslim people across Rakhine

During the security operations which followed the 9 October attacks, strict new conditions were imposed on Muslim fishermen, reducing the numbers of consecutive days they could spend

at sea from ten down to three. The new rules have been enforced in an ad hoc manner. In Sin Tet Maw Muslim IDP camp and in the neighbouring Muslim village in Pauktaw Township, the new rules are having a devastating impact. When OCHA recently visited the area, a large number of fishing boats were floating idle just offshore.



Credit: Parry/OCHA. Rakhine State, March 2017: Dozens of boats moored off Sin Tet Maw where fishermen say fishing restrictions are making it impossible for them to earn an income.

Kaman IDPs in Sin Tet Maw are originally from Kyaukpyu, where they made a living from fishing prior to 2012. The fishermen say three days (two nights) are not sufficient to reach their normal fishing areas and return with enough fish to cover their expenses. There have been reports of bribes being requested for longer fishing permits but in some cases

We have less food to eat because we cannot make extra money from selling fish...”, said a Muslim woman in a village near Sin Tet Maw

the fishermen have simply stopped going altogether, drastically reducing the funds available for their families’ education and medical expenses. They complain that they are being unfairly punished for events that happened far away in northern Rakhine. “There’s no conflict in our camp and the Government should remove the restrictions because we are not the ones doing any harm,” one member of the fishing boat association said. Some of the fishermen said they had been saving up the proceeds from their fishing operations for their eventual resettlement outside the camp. A number of fisherman said they had had to spend all their savings. “Now that the situation in Maungdaw is getting better, we really want the Government to reconsider these restrictions,” one of them said.

Residents of the neighbouring Muslim village said many people are short of food because of the restrictions and some have moved to the Sittwe camps in search of assistance. Villagers here usually supplement the rice they receive with fish or other food items bought with the profits from fishing, but they are now facing increased hardship because of the restrictions. “We have less food to eat because we cannot make extra money from selling fish... and instead of selling fish we now sometimes have to sell our rice to pay for healthcare if someone in the family is not well,” one local woman selling fish in the market said.

In northern Rakhine, fishermen are frequently forced to pay heavy taxes to fish in the sea. The number of consecutive days they are allowed to fish have also been reduced and they are being denied fishing licenses unless they have a National Verification Card. According to the Department of Fisheries for Maungdaw district, in April fish spawning was down 40 per cent on pre-October levels. Fishing is also down by just over 40 per cent.

New plans for closure of IDP camps in Rakhine

Advisory Commission on Rakhine recommends closure of all IDP camps

The Myanmar Government has begun initial steps towards closing three IDP camps in central Rakhine, in line with recommendations set out in a March 2017 [Interim Report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine](#), a national commission established by the State Counsellor and headed by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The Rakhine Advisory Commission recommended that “the Government of Myanmar should prepare a comprehensive strategy towards closing all IDP camps in Rakhine State”. It recommended that “as a first step and sign of goodwill, the Government of Myanmar should

facilitate the return and relocation of IDPs from three camps: “215 Muslim households” currently in Kyein Ni Pyin camp in Pauktaw Township; “approximately 65 Rakhine households”



Credit: Cutts/OCHA. Rakhine State, May 2017: The Ka Nyin Taw camp for ethnic Rakhine IDPs in Kyaukpyu has closed and the population has moved to this new resettlement site provided by Government.

The Government has been pursuing different solutions in each of the three IDP camps in Rakhine recommended for closure

from Ka Nyin Taw in Kyaukpyu Township; and “55 Kaman Muslim households” in Ramree.

The Government has been pursuing different solutions in each of the three camps recommended for closure. Muslims in Kyein Ni Pyin camp (most of whom self-identify as Rohingya) have been told by the authorities that the Government intends to provide individual houses for them in the place of their current displacement, as the Rakhine community will not accept their return to their place of origin. In the case of the Rakhine IDPs from Ka Nyin Taw, the Government provided individual homes and recently installed electricity and new drainage systems in the new resettlement site and all the Rakhine IDPs have now relocated there. In the case of Ramree, the Government offered the Kaman Muslims bus fares, air tickets to Yangon and some additional financial support if they chose to leave. Kaman Muslims told UN staff that having been given no option to return to their place of origin or to relocate to an alternative site in Ramree, most of the Kaman Muslims have left and others are planning to leave soon.

Humanitarian organizations have been monitoring the process closely and continue to advocate for durable solutions to be provided for IDPs in accordance with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and humanitarian standards and principles. This includes ensuring that IDPs are fully informed of their options and able to participate in decision-making, and that returns/relocation are safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable from a livelihoods perspective.

Five-year timeframe for all IDPs to be resettled or relocated

The return, resettlement or relocation of people in the three camps identified by the Commission represents just 1.4 per cent of the total of 120,000 IDPs living in camps in Rakhine. According to [recent comments](#) by the Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Dr Win Myat Aye, the Government anticipates it could take five years for all of the remaining camps to be closed. This could mean that some IDPs may spend as long as ten years confined in these displacement sites with limited services and severe movement restrictions.

Shelters and other facilities in IDP camps were originally constructed in 2012-13 as a temporary measure and many are now in a bad state of repair. In the short-term, they require urgent maintenance or repairs before the monsoon season. The Rakhine State Government is currently undertaking the repair of 250 longhouses and UNHCR is undertaking the repair of 150 longhouses, and there on ongoing efforts to ensure the repair of other damaged shelters before the monsoon. Work is underway by the humanitarian community in Rakhine to improve the available data on living conditions in the camps and the impact this is having on people residing there long-term. This data will inform strategies for meeting the needs of those who continue to stay in camps over the years to come.

More fighting and displacement in Kachin/Shan

30,000 people displaced from the Kokang Self-Administered Zone

In early March, a series of attacks reportedly carried out by members of the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) in Laukkaing, in the Kokang Self-Administered Zone (SAZ), killed at least 30 people and displaced an estimated 30,000 people. Approximately 20,000 people fled over the Chinese border, while a further 10,000 migrant workers from other parts of Myanmar fled to their home areas. Most of those displaced from Laukkaing have now returned. Local organizations working in Laukkaing report that the situation is gradually returning to normal.

Shelters and other facilities in IDP camps were originally constructed in 2012-13 as a temporary measure and many are now in a bad state of repair

In May, OCHA and WFP conducted an assessment mission to Laukkaing town. According to local authorities and partners, about 2,000 people are currently staying in camps and resettlement sites in or around Laukkaing. Some 400 people are reported to be staying with host families 20 kilometers North of Laukkaing town while another 400 remain displaced in China.



Credit: MRCS Shan State, March 2017: People displaced by fighting in Laukkaing take shelter and receive assistance at the Myanmar Red Cross temporary site in Lashio.

According to the authorities in Kokang and local groups, more than 2,000 people in villages in Laukkaing and Konkyan townships are also affected by the conflict. The UN has not been able to independently verify these figures. While most humanitarian needs in Laukkaing are being met, access to areas North of Laukkaing remains restricted and humanitarian assistance is reportedly needed, particularly in terms of food.

As fighting continues, ensuring the protection of civilians remains a top priority, while livelihoods support is also critical for those in displacement/ resettlement sites.

Intense fighting in Namhkan Township, northern Shan

At the beginning of May, the Joint Strategy Team (JST) reported intense fighting between the Myanmar Armed Forces and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) near Kaung Khe, Pang San, and Namhom villages in Namhkan Township in northern Shan. According to the JST, fighting on 2 May killed an elderly woman or injured three other civilians, including two children. This intensified conflict comes at a difficult time for local people as they try to harvest their tea crop which is their primary source of income.

Tensions between the Myanmar Army, the Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA) and the TNLA displaced some 300 people in Namtu Township in northern Shan State on 11 May. Small-scale displacements were also reported in Kyaukme and Maukme townships in May. Local authorities and community groups provided humanitarian assistance to the displaced.

In Kachin, IDPs newly displaced in December are spread out in 21 sites

Almost 7,000 people newly displaced or re-displaced by fighting in Kachin State since December 2016 have not returned to their previous locations. This includes almost 5,000 IDPs from three camps (Zai Awng/Mungga Zup, Maga Yang and Hkau Shau) which were completely emptied in January due to nearby fighting. According to local partners, the newly displaced people are staying in 21 alternative sites including both pre-existing IDP camps and new temporary sites mostly in non-Government controlled areas. Despite repeated requests, the Government has not authorized UN agencies and other humanitarian partners to travel to areas beyond Government control to visit and provide humanitarian assistance to those newly displaced by the fighting.

In spite of new displacement and increased humanitarian needs, access to areas beyond Government control remains blocked

Web links to new OCHA resources:

IDP Sites in Rakhine State (Feb 2017)

IDP Sites in Kachin and northern Shan States (Feb 2017)

Myanmar Humanitarian Fund: 2016 Overview

Myanmar: Humanitarian Snapshot (Mar 2017)

Northern Rakhine Flash Update (March 2017)

Note on 2017 Myanmar Humanitarian Response Plan - Update on Northern Rakhine (March 2017)

Supporting local humanitarian action in Myanmar (Mar 2017)

Inter-Agency Pre-Crisis Assessment Report (March 2017)

Myanmar Humanitarian News Digest (Feb-Mar 2017)

Cash transfer programming activities (April 2017)

Myanmar: Humanitarian Snapshot (April 2017)

Myanmar Humanitarian News Digest (April 2017)

Life on the Move in Myanmar (May 2017)

The JST conducted an assessment of needs in these sites in February/March. The assessment found that protection was a top concern with the majority of respondents having experienced heavy fighting in or near their original camps. Shelter was also identified as critical as the rainy season gets underway. There are substantial water, sanitation and hygiene needs in these sites. Livelihoods support is also much needed. According to the assessment, many children have stopped going to school due to health-related concerns, a lack of facilities or teachers, a lack of school transfer certificates and reduced interest in schooling in the current environment.

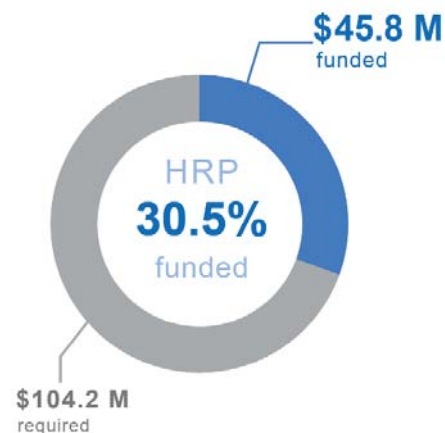
The Myanmar Humanitarian Fund has allocated more than US\$1 million to meet the urgent needs of people affected by the recent fighting in Kachin and northern Shan. This includes additional shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene, education and protection activities, mostly provided by local organizations.

More funds needed to meet urgent needs

The 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for Myanmar requests US\$150 million to meet urgent needs across Kachin, Shan and Rakhine states. By mid-May the plan was 30.5 per cent funded, with US\$ 45.8 million received against the UN appeal. In addition, US\$ 14.2 million has so far been allocated for humanitarian programmes outside the appeal, according to [OCHA's Financial Tracking Service](#).

The Myanmar Humanitarian Fund continues to grow in size and scope. Nine years since its inception, the Fund has established itself as a critical tool for humanitarian actors due to its flexibility, focus on localization, strong accountability, and complementarity with other funding mechanisms. During 2016, four reserve allocations of funds were launched to assist more than 185,000 people in Kachin, Shan and Rakhine states, of whom about 77 per cent were women and children. In 2016, the Fund directed 45 per cent of its allocations to national partners. This localized approach is continuing in 2017 with capacity building and intensive support to Myanmar-based organizations on the development of proposals and administrative processes. Where possible, documents are being translated into Myanmar language and approvals processes simplified to maximize the ability of national partners to access the Fund. Countries contributing to the Fund include Australia, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and for the first time Canada and Luxembourg.

Myanmar Humanitarian Response Plan Funding, May 2017



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