



Protection assessment in Kachin and Northern Shan states

With support of Oxfam

November 2012



This paper was written by Valentina Bacchin. The data collection was conducted by the teams of Karuna Myanmar Social Services (KMSS), Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC), Kachin Relief and Development Committee (KRDC), Metta Development Foundation (Metta), Shalom Foundation and Wunpawng Ninghtoi (WPN).

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Acknowledgements

This study has been made possible by the work and commitment of a wide range of individuals, authorities and organisations. Special thanks goes to the volunteers among the camp management committees and camp residents for the enthusiasm and commitment shown during training and data gathering.

Many thanks also to all the local organisations involved in the process, to Oxfam Novib, to the IDP and Refugees Relief Committee (IRRC), to local groups and authorities participating in the assessment, for their time, support, facilitation and dedication. Additional thanks goes to the Metta Development Foundation for logistical support throughout the entire process. A final word of appreciation to Seng Raw Lahpai for convening this initiative and to Clarita Benzon from Oxfam Novib for supporting it, and to Rachel Hastie, Nang Kai Lahpai, Rene Adrian for their technical support.

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Executive Summary

This protection assessment was carried out by a group of six local organisations working in camps in Kachin and Northern Shan states, and covered 33 camps in Government and Non-Government controlled areas. The research focused on three main pillars: gaining a better understanding of the vulnerabilities of the displaced population, as well as of the threats they are most exposed to; analysing the extent to which camp structures and management committees contribute to IDPs' protection; and finally, creating a space for the displaced populations to present their intentions as well as concerns and needs for future return or resettlement options.

After a 17-year ceasefire, the conflict between the KIA and the Burmese Army resumed on 9th of June 2011 causing the displacement of 75,000 to 97,500 people as of November 2012.¹

People started fleeing their villages as a direct consequence of the fighting, with makeshift camps being established spontaneously in locations that people fleeing considered safe, such as church compounds and monasteries. **The displacement started in early June 2011, but arrivals in the camps continue to date.**

The majority of the displaced communities is constituted of subsistence farmers who used to rely completely on their cultivations and farms. As a result, in the initial phases of the displacement, a significant proportion of the people fleeing tried to remain in the vicinity of their villages and farms to protect their sources of livelihoods. But this behaviour became progressively more dangerous and unsustainable over time, obliging people to abandon their fields and cattle. It was found that among residents in the assessed camps, there is a high rate of secondary displacements, with **71% of interviewees having arrived in the camps after previously spending time hiding in the jungle, or with relatives, or in other camps** for up to six months. The situation was further exacerbated in **August 2012 when the Chinese authorities forced all Kachin refugees hosted in camps in Yunnan province² to return to Burma, in violation of international legal obligations.**

¹While there is general agreement on the number of people registered in camps in Government controlled areas (GCA), there is a significant discrepancy in the numbers of registered people in the camps in Non-government controlled areas (NGCA). According to UN OCHA, as of November 2012 there were 39,000 people residing in camps in NGCA areas; while according to the IDP and Refugee Relief Committee of the KIO, as of October 2012 there were 58,817 IDP in Kachin and additional 2,396 in camps in Northern Shan state.

²According to Human rights Watch, there were between 7,000 and 10,000 People who sought refuge in China. See Human Rights Watch (2012), *Isolated in Yunnan: Kachin refugees from Burma in China's Yunnan Province*, HRW: USA; and HRW, *China: refugees forcibly returned to Burma*, 24 August 2012. Retrieved at www.hrw.org

The protection situation

One of the assessment's objectives was to understand the threats the displaced were exposed to, and the causes of their vulnerability. Overall it was found that camps are generally considered safe by the IDPs to a certain degree, with only six out of the 33 camps not considered safe by over 40% of their residents. Factors **positively contributing to the sense of safety** are: distance from the areas of active fighting, being often **hosted within the compound of a church or a monastery, or in a location designated by the authorities in power, and regular access to assistance**. On the other hand, IDPs feel unsafe in camps for two main reasons: **lack of income and livelihood opportunities, and the type of shelter provided**, both directly caused by life in the camps. **Lack of income and access to livelihood opportunities is identified by 29% of the target population as the main cause for feeling insecure**. But it also has a number of other repercussions on people's lives - from eroding the resilience of individuals and communities leading them to adopt dangerous coping strategies, to the negative psychological impact it has on the most vulnerable groups.

On the other hand, **the protection situation outside camps is depicted as significantly worse, with 61% of the displaced population in camps in GCA and 45% in NGCA feeling insecure when they leave the camps**. The difference in the protection situation between GCA and NGCA camp residents is due to the difference in distance people have to cover to visit their villages (one of the main reasons for people to leave the camps). The risk proportionally increases particularly in the context of high military personnel presence, that is to say, within GCA, or Government army check points. **The type of threats experienced outside the camps is also different** from those in camps, with **67% of respondents indicating a general fear of violence**. This pervasive sense of insecurity, is caused by what people experienced at the time of fleeing their villages and when directly witnessing the fighting. Some of them had seen their houses and villages destroyed, or lost close relatives and friends, and these experiences continue to have a serious impact on their lives and will be crucial in future choices the IDPs will have to make. The other threats identified vary between men and women, as well as between people in GCA and those in NGCA camps. In particular, **arrests and detention** are reported by all respondents, and represent **16% of the threats for GCA camps residents and 7% in NGCA**. This is usually identified as the main risk people are exposed to when travelling back to their villages, and in particular at military check points. **Killings and exploitation are reported by 7% of respondents in NGCA**. Whereas killings are due to proximity to areas of fighting, exploitation is an issue that exists along the Sino-Burmese border even before the conflict, now further exacerbated by the current situation. To end with, **sexual violence and rape** was often mentioned by men as an example of what people experienced in the villages and during the fighting, but it continues to be **identified as the main threat by 8% of the women currently living in camps**.

Another significant component in the protection landscape, which is tightly linked with some of the elements discussed above, is people's perception of their freedom of movement. As explained so far, the displaced communities have strived to continue visiting their houses and farms. Despite the high level of threats mentioned in the previous paragraph, **59% of the target displaced population, have been able to visit their villages and farms** since the beginning of their displacement, **often to find that all their houses and crops had been destroyed**. Due to the high risks experienced by people when travelling, **a number of camps have established monitoring systems to record the movements of the camp population**. These measures have a protective value in the eyes of both camp committees and the IDPs.

Travellers are provided with official documents by camp committees when they do not have valid proof of identity, and camp authorities have at times been able to intervene when an IDP is arrested. On the other hand, this monitoring system, coupled with the dire protection environment outside camps have led **24% of respondents in GCA and 47% in NGCA to state that they do not feel free to leave camps.**

It emerges clearly from the assessment that **the camp committees are perceived as the main protection actors among the displaced population, and they are often at the origin of a number of coping mechanisms utilised.** As mentioned above, the 'in and out' system of recording those who leave the camps for limited periods of time allows some sort of protection for IDPs even when they are outside camps. More broadly it was found that **camp committees and religious authorities had generally been able to minimise some negative behaviours through the establishment of camp regulations,** as in the case of the ban on the sale and use of alcohol inside camp premises, or by directly intervening in instances of domestic violence.

Perceptions on life in the camps

Another research objective focused on the IDPs' perceptions of life in the camps is having camp residents as well as key informants looking in detail at their levels of satisfaction with the main sectors of assistance and the work of the camp committees. The assessment focused on beneficiaries' levels of satisfaction rather than on international standards, as this approach contributes to understanding how displacement affects people's lives, their levels of vulnerability, coping strategies and how it influences future decisions.

When looking at the humanitarian assistance provided in Kachin, it must be said that **the restrictions imposed by the central government to international humanitarian actors has determined important limitations to the levels and quality of assistance provided to the affected population, especially in the camps in NGCA.** While a number of local organisations were able to maintain continuous access to the camps, they have been obliged to operate on very limited resources. On the other hand, international organisations, those were generally able to secure a significant part of the financial resources required, struggled to gain access to the affected population. The denial of humanitarian access to the camps in NGCA imposed by the Myanmar Government for international organisations, has posed grave limitations on the quality and quantity of relief assistance provided in the area where the majority of the displaced are currently residing.

As can be deduced by people's feedback about their lack of access to any form of income, **livelihood is the main sector of concern for IDPs, followed by shelter, health and education. Opinions on the situation regarding food and water are more varied, based on individual camps.** There was general agreement on the **need to improve sanitation facilities** both in terms of durability and building sufficient units to allow segregation between male and female latrines in order to improve women's protection.

Lack of access to livelihood opportunities and the related lack of income are perceived as the main vulnerability factor by the displaced, with consequences on all aspects of people's lives from their general sense of security, to families' ability to access appropriate medical services, or to provide the required support for children's education. In the absence of people's traditional sources of income, life in the camps becomes particularly challenging. On the one hand, people living in isolated camps are obliged to be fully reliant on assistance, which is often not able to cover all needs.

While on the other hand, people living in the proximity of towns find themselves having to buy everything they need, with life becoming much more expensive than they are used to. Both situations are pushing people to look for solutions through **daily labour**, where **IDPs are reported to be paid less than villagers**, or in some cases adopt risky coping strategies like working illegally across the border, or in a few instances selling family members to traffickers. **Cash grant projects and small-scale income generating activities have therefore received positive feedback** from the displaced population; showing that these types of intervention are extremely necessary especially with the period of displacement becomes progressively longer.

Looking at other areas of assistance, it was found that while **primary health care services are present in the majority of camps**, usually with one nurse visiting the camps on a daily basis, the level of satisfaction among beneficiaries is quite low. The main issues reported are the **lack of sufficient medicines, a perceived lack of sympathy from health workers, and the inability to access appropriate health care when having to pay for it**. A similar situation is experienced in the education sector, with **primary schools and nurseries being accessible in the majority of cases, but with limited infrastructures and insufficient numbers of teachers** even where there are volunteer ones. In the case of education though, it was found that two other main issues arise. Firstly the fact that children coming from former KIO schools that are currently closed, or those transferring from other schools, experience difficulties in registering in government schools as they often lack the necessary documentation which they were not able to retrieve due to the conflict. The second problem is posed by the payment of tuition fees that is once again impacted by the lack of income.

The other main sector of concern is shelter, whereby shelters are **often overcrowded** and different families are obliged to live together in one room, or the units are simply not big enough for the number of people living in them. In addition **some of the existing shelters are in dire need of repair**, and it is estimated that the majority of shelters will need to be rebuilt before the next rainy season in 2013. In relation to the protection situation in camps, **shelters were also often quoted among the key factors that make people feel unsafe** in the camps.

The last element that was analysed regarding life in camps was people's satisfaction with the work of camp committees, in particular regarding their degree of representation and their role in protecting the displaced. As previously mentioned, it was found that **camp managers and committees play a crucial role in the camps and respondents offered positive feedback on their work**. Camp committees are identified as **the primary providers of security in camps, and receive a positive feedback in 82% of the cases** with regard to this task. They are also regarded as the entity to which people address their complaints to, and intervene in the resolution of disputes between IDPs and host communities. On the other hand, more in depth analysis found that **the extended duration of displacement is starting to affect the quality of work and the level of commitment of camp managers and committee members** who also need to attend to their own families and occupations. This issue will need to be addressed in the near future, in order to find more sustainable solutions, like looking into the possibility of involving more the IDPs in the management of the camps where they reside, so that they can feel more represented.

Intentions and conditions for return

With fighting in most parts of Kachin still ongoing and people still fleeing to camps, it is clear that **at the moment the conditions for a safe and voluntary return for the displaced are not present**. As a result, none of the statements presented in the report should be interpreted as implying that a return is imminent or that people are willing to return at this point in time.

Due to the risk incurred by people travelling to the villages, **only 59% of the displaced living in the target camps has been able to visit their houses**, but there were no conditions in place for them to be able to stay. A total of **87% of the respondents stated that when real peace is achieved, they would like to return** to their villages and homes. But to be able to do so, **a number of conditions would need to be fulfilled. The main factor that would influence a decision to return is therefore security and the access to the necessary resources to restart one's life**. Among the anticipated needs, people mentioned food in 47% of cases, as after having lost at least two planting seasons and faced with the need to rebuild their houses and restart their farms in the majority of cases, the displaced **expect they will be faced with serious difficulties in accessing food**. The second main area of concern and for which they will need assistance, regards the **presence of mines and UXOs in the areas of return**. Until UXOs are removed, the returning population will be exposed to serious risks even after the end of the fighting, and this could have an impact on their access to livelihoods as mines could be in the fields or in the forests where people go to collect farm and forest produce.

On the other hand, for the **12% of people who mentioned they would not return** to their villages even in the event of peace, **they do not have sufficient information to be able to make an informed decision**. While **their decisions are influenced by trauma and the fear** that even peace would not allow them to feel safe in their homes, the majority of them did not know where they would be able to stay, and more importantly how they could restart their lives in a new place.

Overall, as in most return and resettlement programmes, the process of preparing the recovery phase will need to ensure that the displaced are consulted, that the conditions mentioned as part of this assessment are met, and that the necessary information is provided so that people can make an informed decision.

In light of the information gained, this study provides recommendations to the humanitarian community and the parties to the conflict on ways and measures that should be adopted in order to improve the protection provided to the displaced population in Kachin.

1 Recommendations

1.1 To the parties in conflict

- The Parties to the conflict should seek a peaceful and political solution that leads to an end in the fighting.

- Respect of International Humanitarian Law and Human rights

For as long as the fighting continues, the parties to the conflict must respect International Humanitarian Law and the human rights of civilian population.

The principles of distinction between civilians and combatants should be observed by all parties, as well as the principle of precaution in the case of attacks, in order to avoid civilian victims. Parties to the conflict also have «the duty to refrain from the use of weapons which are indiscriminate or which, by their nature, cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering»³.

Respect of the IHL and human rights law also requires that civilians are not exposed to any «violence to life and person, ... cruel treatment and torture; [... *nor to any*] outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment.»⁴

- Humanitarian access to camps in NGCA

Both parties to the conflict have a duty to permit that impartial relief is provided to the affected civilian population.⁵ Humanitarian actors should be granted unimpeded access to all IDP's independently from where they are currently residing.

- Voluntary, safe and dignified return or resettlement

Return and resettlement must be voluntary processes based on informed decision-making of the displaced population. IDPs have the right to a voluntary, safe and dignified return or resettlement.

1.2 To the United Nations

- Humanitarian access to camps in NGCA

The United Nations should continue to advocate for unimpeded humanitarian access to all Kachin IDPs for the impartial provision of aid to the whole displaced population based on needs, independently from where they are residing.

- Support to local organisations

UN agencies, in recognition of the challenges faced in accessing these areas, should continue and increase their support to local organisations working in the hard-to-reach areas.

- Improved coordination among humanitarian actors

³The Sphere project (2011), *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian response*, Practical Action Publishing: UK, pages 22-23

⁴See common Article 3 to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, ratified by Myanmar on August 25, 1992

⁵«According to a customary rule, parties to non-international armed conflicts must facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need. In addition, humanitarian relief personnel and objects must be respected and protected, and the freedom of movement of authorized humanitarian relief personnel must be ensured.» in Schwendimann F., «The legal framework of humanitarian access in armed conflict», in *International Review of the Red Cross*, Volume 93 Number 884 December 2011, pp. 993-1008. See also Sphere project (2011), pp. 22-23

UN coordination for operating in Myitkyina and Banmaw should be further strengthened ensuring the participation of all relevant stakeholders, in particular local organisations and CBOs, as they constitute the primary and at times the only providers of relief assistance to the displaced.

1.3 To all humanitarian actors

- Improving Coordination

In recognition of the limited resources available and the challenges in accessing certain areas, and also in respect of good practice, humanitarian actors should strengthen coordination mechanisms in the areas of response. There is a need for improved information sharing and coordination in the planning and implementation of relief activities as well as overall programming. This would avoid duplication of services and improve the level of efficiency in the use of limited resources, not to mention accountability to beneficiaries.

- Recognition and support of local efforts

In line with the Humanitarian Charter, the efforts and measures taken by local people - private donors and informal institutions as well as local groups and religious entities running the camps - should be supported by all humanitarian actors in a constructive way that does not undermine but rather recognises and advances these institutions in the efforts made thus far.

- Respect of protection principles

All humanitarian actors should be guided by the Humanitarian Charter and Sphere Protection Principles. These principles should 'inform all humanitarian action', from avoiding exposing people to further harm as a result of *the organisations'* actions, to ensuring people's access to impartial assistance, and protecting them from physical and psychological harm arising from violence and coercion.⁶ Working in an environment still affected by fighting and violence, it is crucial that all actors operate in respect of these principles.

- Medium-term planning of relief assistance

Camp facilities and infrastructure should be improved and tailored in view of a protracted displacement situation. Shelter structures, WASH facilities, set up of camp committees and support of the education and livelihood sectors need to be reassessed and adapted to suit a longer displacement period.

- Improve livelihood opportunities

Livelihood activities should be boosted, and viable solutions explored, especially in camps where provisions for kitchen garden space or livelihood opportunities outside camp perimeters haven't been possible so far, as in the case of the most isolated camps.

⁶Sphere Project (2011), p.36

2 Introduction

This initiative is the product of a collaborative effort involving six local organisations and institutions working with the displaced population in the Kachin area namely: Karuna Myanmar Social Services (KMSS), Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC), Kachin Relief and Development Committee (KRDC), Metta Development Foundation (Metta), Shalom Foundation and Wunpawng Ninghtoi (WPN). All these organisations and entities are directly implementing programmes in IDP camps in government and non-government controlled areas (further in the text referred to respectively as GCA and NGCA), and therefore have direct and sustained access to the camp population. All decisions regarding assessment methodology and process were taken through a participatory process that included also a group of representatives from some of the IDP camps.

2.1 Research objectives

The **objectives for this study** focus on the three key areas that determine respective research questions:

- a. To understand which groups of displaced people are vulnerable to what kind of threats, in which places, and the threats they are most fearful of.
- b. To identify IDP intentions for return or resettlement and their basic needs and conditions.
- c. To determine the extent to which camp management committees contribute to IDP protection.

For more details on the process and the methodology used for the study, refer to Annex II to this document.

3 The displacement crisis

3.1 The Kachin Conflict

The conflict that led to this displacement crisis started in June 2011, putting an end to 17 years of cease fire between the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) and the Government of Myanmar.

The demands of the Kachin people and that of most other ethnic groups represented in the signing of the Panglong agreement date back to the creation of the Union of Burma. The Panglong Agreement stipulated Union created on the basis of autonomy and equality for all ethnic groups in the country, but the historical development and politic of the central Government have led to a progressive abandonment of the principles, without ever actually implementing them.

In response to these developments in the country's politics, Kachin resistance began with the Pawng Yawng movement in 1949, and was continued with the creation of the Kachin Independent Army (KIA) in 1961.

After years of fighting, in 1994 the KIO signed a ceasefire agreement with the Government of Myanmar that lasted for 17 years. During the ceasefire period, despite general peace, there was progressive militarisation of the territory by the national army, significantly increasing its presence in Kachin state.

In 2010-2011 tensions between the national government and the KIO began to grow, in reaction to the KIA turning down the government's Border Guard Force proposal to ethnic armed groups, and the agreement between the Burmese and Chinese governments to construct hydro-electric dams on the Irrawaddy River, stipulated without consultation with the Kachin authorities and the KIO.

Hostilities between the two sides escalated into open conflict on June 9th, 2011, causing the displacement of the local population.

3.2 Patterns of displacement

All the respondents fled their villages either due to direct attacks or because of fear of violence from military operations in neighbouring areas. Initially people, especially men, tried to remain in the surroundings of the villages, either in bigger towns, or hiding in the jungle, so as to be able to monitor the situation and continue feeding the livestock and taking care of the fields. But in most cases, after some time, when it became evident that the fighting would continue, those who had the strength or the means, and particularly women and children, fled to the camps.

Reportedly, only in a few cases have the people been able to stay or go back to their villages or farms. In some instances elderly people decided to stay in the villages to look after their property and their fields and livestock. Sometimes this decision was taken with the assumption that they would face fewer threats as compared to younger people, while in other cases, the decision was determined by the challenges that a long and potentially dangerous trip would pose for them.

3.2.1 Arriving in the camps

Most people arrived in camps between June and November of 2011, some of them fleeing directly from the villages to the camps, others taking up to six months hiding in the jungle. In GCA, camps usually started as spontaneous settlements with people gathering in places where they considered they would be protected and safe: church compounds and monasteries. In NGCA people gathered either in locations they considered safe, often along the border with China, or in camps established at a later stage by the KIO. Due to their locations and the services provided, these camps are generally considered safe heavens where people are far from the fighting and receive sufficient support to meet their basic needs.

The main challenges faced by IDPs in order to reach the camps were the distance from their villages, the threats faced during the trip, and the sudden and exponential increase of transportation prices.

Overall the assessment shows that while the peak of arrivals was in mid to end 2011, people have continued to flow into camps for most of 2012 as well, causing a continuous increase in the number of displaced. Those who arrived in camps at a later stage report having spent some time with relatives or hiding in the jungle until such a time when they felt the situation had become unbearable. Of the respondents, 20% arrived in the camps after hiding in the jungle, 20% previously stayed with relatives or with host families, 26% report coming from another camp, and 5% from camps in China. Secondary or multiple displacements are therefore common, with a significant impact on the resilience and coping strategies of the displaced families and individuals. Reportedly in most camps people have been able to maintain pre-existing community networks, but further displacements might undermine this initial positive situation.

«...in the beginning the price of the trip per person per trip was of 5,000 Kyat, but then it increased to 15,000 Kyat. They only accepted people, we couldn't bring any luggage. Drivers didn't make exceptions: those who didn't have enough money, hid in the jungle»
IDP woman, over 36 years old

Figures of the total number of displaced populations vary among reporting institutions. According to the UN OCHA as of November 5th 2012 there were 75,000 IDPs, of which 36,000 are 'fully accessible' and 39,000 were in hard-to-reach areas.⁷ While IRRC registration figures, including both the displaced in Kachin and those in Northern Shan state, suggest that the total number of IDPs as of 13 October 2012 had reached 97,598.⁸ To these figures should be added some unknown numbers of displaced people still with host families or hiding in the jungle.



3.2.2 The refoulement of Kachin refugees from China

Since the beginning of the displacement crisis, a number of people have fled across the Chinese border. Human Rights Watch estimates that between 7,000 and 10,000 people sought refuge in China, mainly in Yunnan province.⁹

While throughout the year there have been instances where Chinese authorities have forcibly returned small groups of Kachin refugees back to Myanmar¹⁰; it was in late August 2012 that all the people in camps across Yunnan province were asked to leave the camps and the country, given an ultimatum of one week to return to Myanmar¹¹. Such a decision by the Chinese Government violated international legal obligations for the protection of refugees. By forcibly returning the refugees to Myanmar, to an on-going conflict zone, the Chinese Government was violating the principle of non-refoulement.¹² It was reported that the communication of this order was accompanied by heightened security presence at the camps, and a ban on taking pictures or using telephones. The refugees also received some assistance from the Chinese in dismantling their shelters and packing their belongings. As a result, an estimated 5,900 people were pushed back into Myanmar¹³.

⁷This terminology indicates IDPs in camps or host families in Non-Government Controlled areas. Data from OCHA, *Humanitarian situation in Kachin and Rakhine*, November 5th, 2012. Retrieved at <http://themimu.info/Kachin> on November 24th, 2012

⁸Figures refer to Official registration data from GCA and NGCA camps

⁹Human Rights Watch (2012), *Isolated in Yunnan: Kachin refugees from Burma in China's Yunnan Province*, HRW: USA

¹⁰HRW, *China: refugees forcibly returned to Burma*, 24 August 2012. Retrieved at www.hrw.org

¹¹*Ibidem*

¹²*Ibidem*

¹³OCHA (2012), *Myanmar Humanitarian snapshot (November 2012)*, retrieved on November 25, 2012 at <http://reliefweb.int/map/myanmar/myanmar-humanitarian-snapshot-november-2012>

For refugees who opted for staying in NGCA, the KIO provided transport for people as well as their belongings to a makeshift camp near Maijyang, with the aim of resettling them at a later stage at a number of existing camps. On the other hand, refugees returning to camps in Government-controlled areas generally had to make private arrangements as transport was provided only in a few cases. The majority of refugees relocating in NGCA camps settled across a total of six camps, five already existing and one created especially to host IDPs coming from China¹⁴. Some of the interviewees among those who had returned from China expressed concerns about the risk of being asked to move again, which adds to the already existing sense of precariousness.

3.3 Freedom of movement: visiting the villages and the need for livelihoods

The majority of the displaced population depends on subsistence farming as a livelihood, which makes them completely reliant on their land and livestock. As mentioned above, according to the reports of many interviewees, the majority of the current IDPs tried to remain in the vicinity of their farms and houses to take care of their property, their fields and livestock. But as the conflict escalated, this option became progressively more risky, and often impossible. As a result people fled to camps to be safe. Nonetheless, even while in camps, people tried to maintain some level of control over their farms: 59% of the respondents have visited their houses at least once since they fled, despite the high risk they face in doing so. The main reasons for visiting their villages are to check on the conditions of the house (55% of respondents), the land and livestock (in 24% of cases), but also to try and retrieve some of the belongings left behind (7%).

«We couldn't bring much luggage, so we came with summer clothes and we hid our winter clothes [in the house]: we never thought we would be away for so long.»

IDP woman, over 36 years old

While people are theoretically free to move within the country and in the State, access to their villages has been risky for IDPs due to the fighting in the areas of origin and the high level of militarisation of the territory. As explained by a number of interviewees, the security situation along the road to the village needs to be carefully assessed before starting the trip, especially when travelling from camps in the GCA. The main protection threats described by the interviewees are arrest and forced labour, which usually entails being obliged to work as porters. In a number of cases people reported not having any information about people who had been arrested.

In addition to these threats, some of the IDPs were further at risk having lost their identity documents when they fled their homes. One of the coping strategies adopted by the majority of camp managers and committees, at times with the support of local authorities, is to issue travel letters to IDPs when leaving the camps for predetermined periods of time to go and visit their houses or villages. This travel document, while not a substitute for official identity documents, offers at least some degree of protection to the people who are travelling. In addition, it enables the committees to keep track of travelling IDPs, in cases of delayed returns to the camps.

¹⁴The camps are Lana Zup Ja, Bum Tsit Pa, Pa Hkawatng, Ma Winggyi, Loi Je, while the newly established one is Hka Hkye.

Despite the fact that these measures are in place, and the urge among the displaced population to visit their houses and farms, at least one third of the displaced in the targeted camps report not having been able to visit their houses since they fled.

3.4 Humanitarian access and assistance

While access to camps in GCA areas has been possible for all humanitarian actors, it has been more challenging to reach the displaced in camps in KIO controlled areas, not to mention those who sought refuge in China. As a result of these differences in access, the level and quality of assistance in the camps is not consistent, and in many cases below international standards. The level of local support provided to camps by communities, hosting institutions, and Kachin groups in country and abroad has been significant, and often crucial in the initial phases of the crisis. This support is still on going in many cases, but with the displacement crisis lasting for over a year now, the support might not be sustainable for a much longer period of time, or at least not at the necessary level.

At the beginning of the crisis, camps in government controlled areas received immediate support from the local communities and many of the religious institutions hosting the displaced population. Further to that, the government provided access to existing healthcare centres, hospitals, schools, municipal water sources and donor visits. In the initial phase, the government's Kachin Relief and Resettlement Department (RRD) also provided family kits, rice, cooking oil and cash in some camps in Myitkyina, Wai Maw and Banmaw district. RRD is also responsible for maintaining and updating registration figures for the camps in GCA. In addition to institutional assistance, a number of local and international organisations were able to operate in the area and continue to provide humanitarian support to camps, and in some cases also to IDPs staying with host families.

On the other hand, providing assistance to the displaced population in camps in Non-Government controlled areas, where the majority of the IDPs are currently residing¹⁵, has been more challenging. Through 2011 and possibly during part of 2012, the Kachin Independence Organisation has been the main aid provider to the displaced in areas under its control: establishing and building camps, providing food, constructing and administering school and health services. Some local NGOs and CBOs have also been active in the area since June 2011, but the scale and quality of their work has been hampered by insufficient access to resources, and teams often formed by volunteers receiving limited funding as compared to the needs on the ground¹⁶. Despite the fact that the majority of IDPs are in NGCA camps, both international NGOs and United Nations agencies have seen their access to these camps restricted by the central government. Since the onset of the crisis in June 2011, UN agencies have been able to provide some initial assistance in kind in August 2011, and then in December 2011, as part of a convoy allowed access to NGCA that included a local civil society. Further to this, in March and April 2012, the UN received approval from the central government for a total of five convoys to access these areas and provide in kind assistance¹⁷. The convoys started on March 23rd and continued until April 26th. Nonetheless, plans to return to the areas to provide additional assistance, particularly in areas of shelter and WASH that require spending longer periods of time on the ground to train IDPs and local NGOs, had to be put on hold as the agencies have not been granted further access to date.

¹⁵The number of people residing in camps in NGCA varies depending on sources. The UN talks about 39,000 people, while IRRRC registration as of 13 October 2012 indicated 58,817 in Kachin and 2,396 registered IDPs in Northern Shan state.

¹⁶Confidential document on humanitarian actors in KIO controlled areas.

¹⁷For details on the types and quantities of relief items provided see "Assistance Provided United Nations to Internally Displaced People in Kachin State in hard-to-reach areas March-April 2012",

In a press release issued on December 6th, 2012, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos states «The UN has not been allowed access to provide badly needed assistance to some 39,000 people in areas outside the Government's control since July 2012. Local partners are providing food and other assistance but their stocks are depleted and with the winter months approaching getting more supplies in is critical.»¹⁸

As a result of these access limitations, some of the international organisations and UN agencies have been channelling part of their resources through local NGOs and CBOs that operate in the areas. However, the resources provided have not been able to meet the existing needs. Even more concerning is the fact that the amount of aid provided to Non-Government controlled areas, where the majority of the displaced people are concentrated, is proportionally less than in areas where all organisations have been having continuous and unimpeded access.

This issue poses a number of practical as well as ethical concerns with regard to humanitarian principles, in particular in terms of the principle of impartiality, the right of affected populations to receive humanitarian assistance and the obligation of providing this assistance.¹⁹ According to international humanitarian law, the state bears primary responsibility to protect and ensuring the basic needs of affected populations²⁰. In situations where the state is unwilling or unable to provide for those needs, the obligation of the state not to unduly interfere or deny access for the provision of impartial relief assistance is stipulated under customary international humanitarian law.²¹

4 Protection situation in the camps

The standard definition adopted by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) defines protection as '*all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e., human rights law, international humanitarian law, refugee law)*'. Further elaborating on this initial definition, the purpose of this survey is to identify concerns related to people's protection in order to identify measures to '*improve the safety of civilians*'²². According to this approach '*where there is a threat and people are vulnerable they are at risk. The more time people face the threat, the higher the risk.*'²³ On this basis, the assessment started by asking people to describe their perception of security both in camps and in the broader living environment, to identify the threats they face, to describe the elements that make them feel safe, the actors that can contribute to improving their protection, and finally to identify vulnerability factors.

All of this information, when analyzed together, offers a comprehensive picture of the protection situation of IDPs in camps in Kachin and Northern Shan, at this specific point in time.

¹⁸ UNOCHA, Press Release: UN humanitarian chief says insecurity should not prevent humanitarian access in Kachin, Myanmar, Yangon/New York, December 6th, 2012. Retrieved at: <http://us6.campaign-archive1.com/?u=0e08e13a2a699c8c3a8da80ae&id=3b20c45d46&e=4bd20bad43>

¹⁹ With regard to humanitarian principles see *The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief*, and the *Humanitarian Charter*, in *The Sphere project* (2011), *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian response*, Practical Action Publishing: UK

²⁰ This is based on the principle of sovereignty and is recognised in international practice. On this subject see Schwendimann F., «The legal framework of humanitarian access in armed conflict», in *International Review of the Red Cross*, Volume 93 Number 884 December 2011, pp. 993-1008

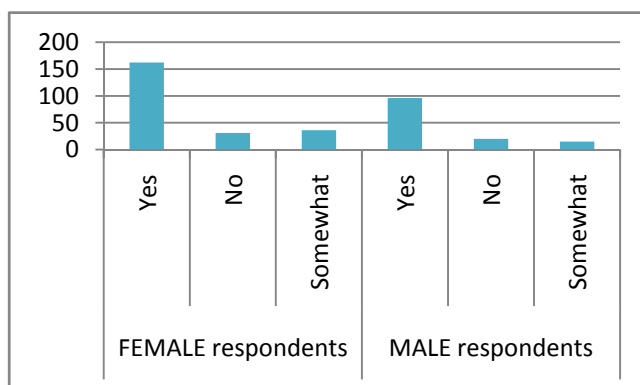
²¹ *Ibidem*

²² Hastie, R. and Swithern, S. (2009), *Improving the safety of civilians: A training Pack*. Oxfam GB: UK

²³ *Ibidem*, p.33

4.1 Perceived safety and protection in the camps

As mentioned above, most camp locations were spontaneously chosen by IDPs because they perceived them to be safe havens to start with. The facts that camps are generally far from conflict areas and that they are often hosted in church or monastery compounds, or that they had been designated by the authorities in power, in the case of NGCA, transmit a sense of security to their residents.



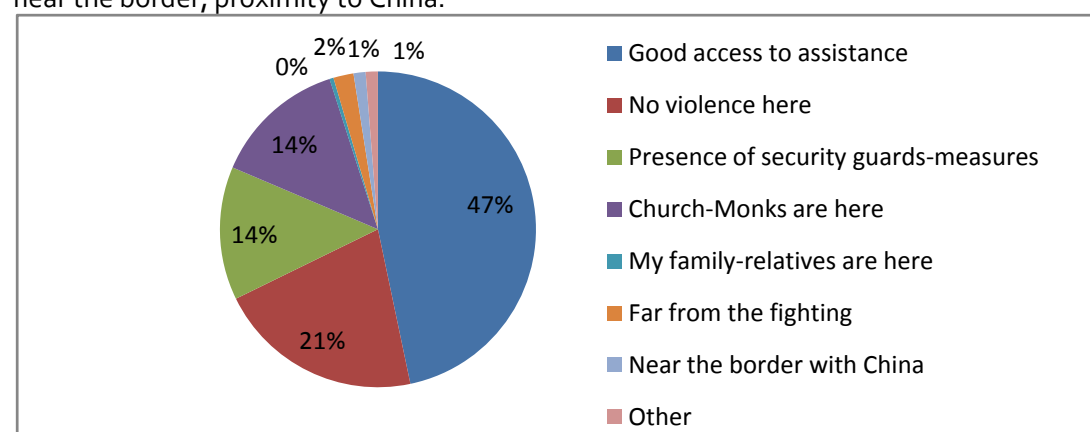
As a result, when asked if they feel safe inside the camp, respondents replied quite positively, as can be seen in the chart on the left. Nonetheless, a more in depth analysis, together with discussions with key informants and organisations' staff working in the camps, suggest that concerns are being under-reported.

This was confirmed during FGDs when people were asked to rank from 1 to 5 their perception of safety inside the camp, as compared to providing a 'yes' or 'no' answer: the majority of respondents reported feeling safe, but to a lower degree.

Aside from the general analysis, it is also important to point out that a few of the target camps are actually perceived as fairly unsafe by their residents, as the table on the side shows.

The main factor contributing to people's feeling safe is identified with regular access to assistance. Other factors considered as conducive to creating a sense of protection are the presence of religious authorities or being hosted in religious compounds, and the existence of fencing or gates around the camp. Under the category 'Other', respondents mentioned the location of camps being far from the areas of active fighting, and for camps near the border, proximity to China.²⁴

Do you feel secure in this camp?			
Camp name	Yes	No	Somewhat
Nhkawng Pa	7	8	0
Woy Chyai	18	5	7
Bum Tsit	4	2	2
Hkat Cho	2	2	2
Lana Zup Ja	15	5	6
Je Yang	47	8	8



²⁴ In this case China is considered a place to flee to, although on the other hand, since the forced return, other people have mentioned the inability to flee to China as one of the factors negatively contributing to the sense of safety as, 'If we cannot go to China, where else will we escape if the fighting gets worse?' (IDP, individual interview).

On the other hand, when asked to identify factors undermining the perception of insecurity, respondents indicated the lack of income and insufficient assistance provided as their main concerns, followed by the type of shelter they live in.²⁵ It was noticed that there were differences between GCA and NGCA camps when responding to other mentioned threats.

GCA	2. Separated from family	6%
	3. Inadequate assistance	13%
	4. No income	22%
	6. Detention	16%
	7. Domestic Violence	6%
	8. Other	38%
NGCA	1. Violence inside camp	2%
	2. Separated from family	11%
	3. Inadequate assistance	12%
	4. No income	31%
	5. Sexual violence or rape	1%
	7. Domestic Violence	1%
	8. Other	41%

Additional threats to people's safety as recorded under the option 'Other' are shelter, as explained above, the use of drugs and abuse of alcohol by some of the camp residents, with consequent episodes of violence, and the fact that some of the camps are not part of church compounds. Finally there is a general awareness that if the camps were to be attacked by either army, nothing could be done to impede it, and the consequences for the civilian camp residents would be disastrous.

4.2 Outside the camp: an equally protective environment?

Due to the ongoing conflict and the violent and often traumatic experiences that a number of IDPs have had before fleeing the village, during the flight, and at times when returning to visit their houses, the situation outside the camps is considered comparatively more dangerous.

Overall it was found that IDPs living in GCA camps are proportionally more critical of the security situation for civilians outside the camp, with 61% reporting that they do have concerns about their safety when outside the camp and travelling back to the village, compared with 45% of those currently residing in NCGA camps. This difference can be explained by the fact that usually IDPs living in camps in GCA have to travel farther when going to visit their villages, hence the exposure to more threats.

Do you have concerns about your safety outside the camp?		
GCA	1. Yes	39%
	2. No	61%
NGCA	1. Yes	55%
	2. No	45%

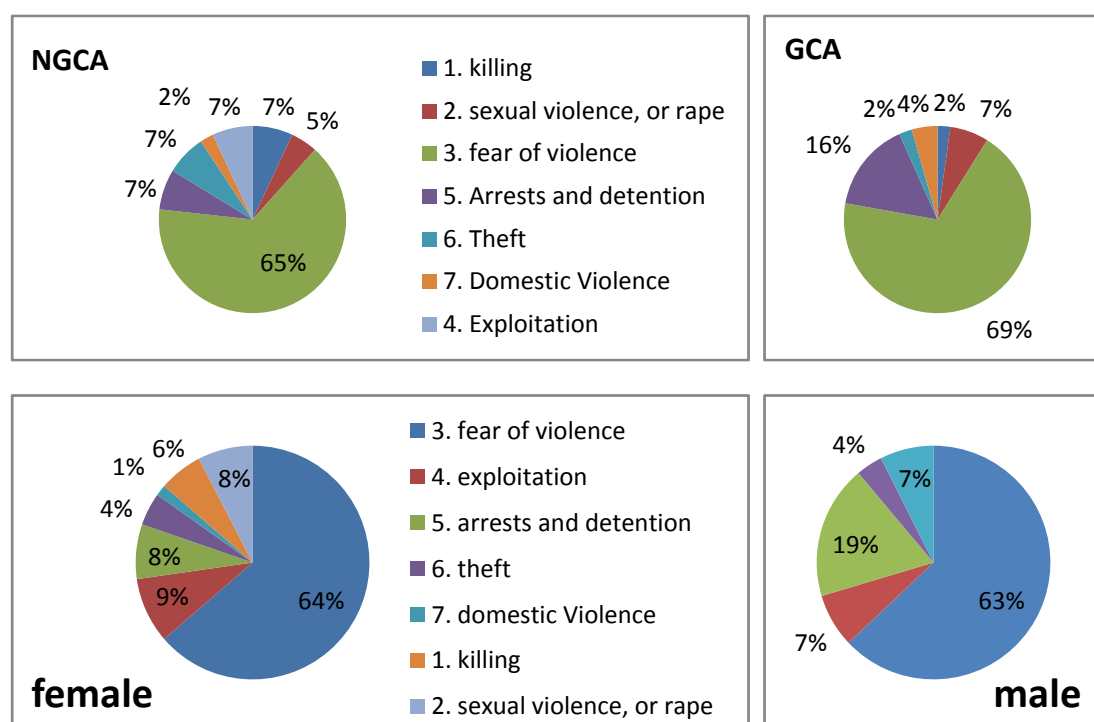
Do you have concerns about your safety outside the camp?		
Female	Yes	52%
	No	48%
Male	Yes	39%
	No	61%

²⁵ To this regard interviewees identified some main elements of concern in the shelters: having to share a room with unknown people, some shelters not having doors, the shelter seeming weak and built with material that will get damaged very soon, toilets being far away from shelters.

Furthermore the authorities that are able to protect them inside the camps have only limited powers outside, leaving them feeling more exposed. Perceptions are remarkably different also when comparing men and women respondents, whereby men consider the environment outside the camps to be significantly less safe. On the other hand, no significant difference is registered among age groups, or ethnic and religious groups.

Interviewees have also been asked to identify the threats they face and how they form their perception of the security situation in the wider environment in which they live. The main cause of concern for all respondents, across the board, is the fear of violence, having experienced violence at the initial stages of the conflict, or for the entire time they have been in areas of fighting. The displaced have often lost their belongings and their houses and farms due to the fighting, and in a number of cases also family members. Experiencing such a high level of insecurity has left a pervasive sense of insecurity among the entire camp population, across the board.

Threats other than the fear of violence are perceived differently by men and women, and they appear to be different also for people residing in camps in the NGCA as compared to those in GCA.



First of all, the assessment shows that arrests and detention represent a concern more for people in camps in GCA (16% compared to 7%). This can be explained by a well-known case where an IDP residing in one of the camps in Myitkyina was arrested inside the camp by the government and has not yet been released. Since then, especially in the Myitkyina area, IDPs remain afraid of arrests both inside and outside the camps. But the risk of arrests, mainly by Government forces according to the interviewees, is also very high for people travelling to their villages and moving around in conflict areas in general. People can be detained for indefinite periods of time, and there have been reported instances of torture and forced labour under these circumstances. Since, displaced people residing in camps in GCA have to travel longer distances to reach their villages, they feel more exposed to risk as they are obliged to go through a higher number of government military posts – that they identify as a threat.

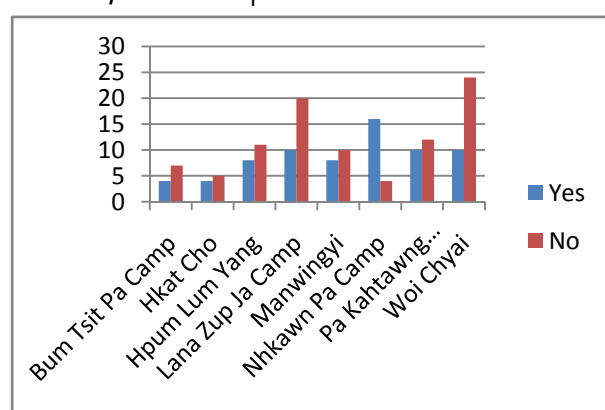
On the other hand, the threat of being killed is of higher concern for people living in NGCA (7% compared to 2% in GCA), an issue that might be explained by the camps' proximity to areas of fighting. Another threat specific to the camps in NGCA is exploitation (7%). This type of issue is typical of the border areas in both Kachin and Northern Shan states, as even during periods of peace, there existed widespread illegal cross-border labour migration and related risks of trafficking.²⁶

To end with, a remarkable difference can be seen in the gender perception of threats, with men attributing a higher importance to arrests and domestic violence, while women are the only ones reporting the presence of sexual violence inside and outside the camps (8%) and the fear of killings (6%). Lack of privacy and frustration by the men at camps may have led to violence and the elders have noticed and acknowledged it. In relation to the threats identified by women, during FGDs men often mentioned they are less concerned about themselves being killed than having their wives and women family members raped. On the other hand, women often mentioned being afraid of remaining alone or losing their husbands in the conflict. This shows once again the impact that indiscriminate killing, as well as the use of torture and rape in the conflict, as reported by respondents in a number of occasions and confirmed by other specialised sources is having on the IDPs' perception of threats.²⁷

4.3 Discrimination and relations with host communities

Discrimination does not seem to be an issue for the majority of IDPs, as shown by 83% of respondents saying there is no discrimination problem in the camps. For the remaining 17%, the main concerns are perceived discrimination due to one's religion, economic conditions and gender (only reported by women). Discrimination on the basis of religion is a concern for only 4% of the non-Christian minority. Conversely it is the main issue of concern for 35% of Christian interviewees.

Discrimination and tense relations with host communities outside the camps seem to be somehow more of a concern. While 77% of respondents to individual interviews state that there is no tension with the host community, the majority of FGD participants reveal a number of examples of discrimination against IDPs that are quite subtle, yet widespread. In addition, a few camps seem to have some serious problems with the host communities, as shown in the graph on the left.



According to the displaced people, the main reasons for these tensions with the host communities are the general feeling of not being welcome (34%), together with conflict over resources (13%) and tensions among specific groups of the community (11%).

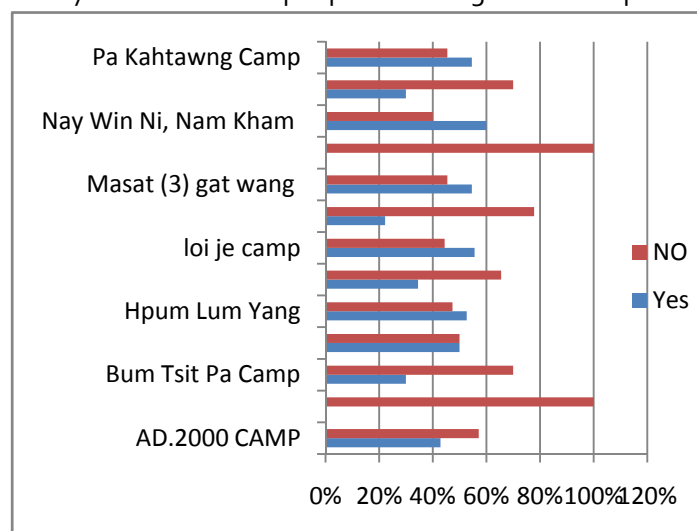
²⁶ As will be further explained in the paragraph on livelihoods, a number of camp residents seek daily labour outside the camp, hence also across the border, when geographical proximity allows. Clearly this behavior, together with the increased level of vulnerability of people caused by the situation of displacement, creates a higher protection risk. On the other hand, during an interview with a staff member of an organisation working on protection, it was mentioned that the fact that assistance is provided in camps seems to allow some people – who in the past would have sought work across the border – to rather try and live on assistance.

²⁷ For more details on human rights and International humanitarian law violations in the conflict, see HRW (2012), *Untold Miseries: wartime abuses and forced displacement in Kachin state*, Human Rights Watch.

When talking about feeling unwelcomed, a number of respondents gave examples such as teachers treating IDP pupils differently, or referring to them as 'IDP children' rather than just as children. This is often reflected in the behaviour of host children teasing the displaced kids. Other significant elements of concern are the fact that IDP daily workers are paid less for the same job, and also instances of offence and physical abuse by the hosts against IDPs, as in the case of a few reported episodes of stone throwing at camps.

4.4 Freedom of movement in and out of the camps

Movement in and out of camps is strictly regulated by camp committees with curfew hours and systems to record people travelling out of camp for specific periods of time. As a result,



it is inevitable that people cannot feel completely free to move in and out of camps. Nonetheless the number of people who stated they do not feel they have freedom of movement does raise a certain degree of concern, particularly in NGCA area, and especially for certain camps. The assessment shows that 76% of respondents in camps in GCA feel free to move in and out of the camps despite also reporting a high level of risk

associated with this behaviour, compared to only 47% in NGCA. This situation becomes even more concerning in some specific camps where up to 100% of respondents state they are not free to move in and out of the camp, as can be seen in the graph above.²⁸

4.5 Coping mechanisms

Overall it was found that camps have very strict rules that are imposed by camp managers or committees. This was partially to ensure good management of the camp, but more in depth discussions reveal that some of these measures have a protective aim. Particularly interesting in this sense is the presence in most camps of regulations for IDPs who want to travel to their villages or leave camp for a short period of time. Anyone wanting to do this needs to request permission from the camp committees and inform them of the intended destination and for how long. In some camps there are even time limits after which people are taken out of the registration lists. Camp management committees established these rules as a result of incidents of arrest, torture and rape that affected IDPs on their way to their villages. It was explained that in this way camp managers and committees could find out if IDPs have fallen into situations of danger, for example being arrested on the way to their village. In such cases, there have been times when camp management, especially religious leaders, have intervened for the release of these individuals²⁹.

²⁸In Border Post 6 and Nampaka camps 100% of respondents reported not feeling free to move in and out of the camp.

²⁹Interviews with camp managers and camp committees in Banmaw and Myitkyina.

Among other coping mechanisms and ways of addressing some of the issues identified as protection threats, respondents suggested that camp managers or committee members should resume sleeping in the camps as they used to in the early stage of the crisis. In other camps, respondents have asked the construction of gates or fences as a way of controlling who enters the camp. With regard to the use of alcohol in particular, a number of camps have prohibited the sale and even drinking of alcohol within camp premises. According to interviewees these provisions have reduced episodes of violence, although at times people drink outside camp and come back drunk, posing the same problem.

5 Life in the camps

During individual interviews and in focus group discussions, respondents were asked about their level of satisfaction with the different sectors of assistance they receive in camps as well as the work of camp management teams. Despite the fact that satisfaction is an individual perception and can vary from one person to another and therefore it is not measurable in terms of humanitarian standards, assessing such perception of camp residents allows a better understanding of how different sectors of assistance influence their lives, their levels of vulnerability, their coping mechanisms as well as decisions about their future.

5.1 IDPs' perspectives on humanitarian assistance

Respondents were asked to express their level of satisfaction with the main sectors of assistance provided in camps, namely: shelter, health, food, WASH and education. During FGD interviewees were requested to identify priorities and specific gaps. While some situations are specific to individual camps, it was found that concerns are common across the whole target population.

5.1.1 Health

While primary health care services are present in the majority of camps, with a nurse often assigned by the local hospital to each individual camp, the degree of satisfaction with health services emerging from the assessment is quite low. The main reasons given by IDPs for this judgment are on the one hand, the lack of sufficient medicines so that nurses are often unable to actually treat patients, and their perception of a lack of sympathy from the nurses on the other.

The insufficient quantity of medicines has been confirmed in interviews with some of the health workers met in the camps. In fact, this was further corroborated by the fact that levels of satisfaction with health services were higher in camps where external organisations are providing additional medicines.

The other main problem identified is the difficulty people are facing in accessing medical assistance at nights, or in the event of serious health problems that cannot be treated in the camps. In these instances IDPs are expected to seek healthcare outside the camps, which is quite difficult with camps located far from towns and cities. Further to this, accessing health care in hospitals and other structures often requires the payment of fees, currently a major challenge for the IDPs due to their lack of reliable income and savings³⁰.

³⁰See a more in depth description of issues posed by lack of income in the paragraph below.

5.1.2 Livelihoods

Lack of livelihood opportunities and access to income has been identified as the main concern for all interviewees. Lack of income is clearly identified as a vulnerability factor, as shown by the fact that 29% of interviewees quote this as the main reason for them not to feel protected.

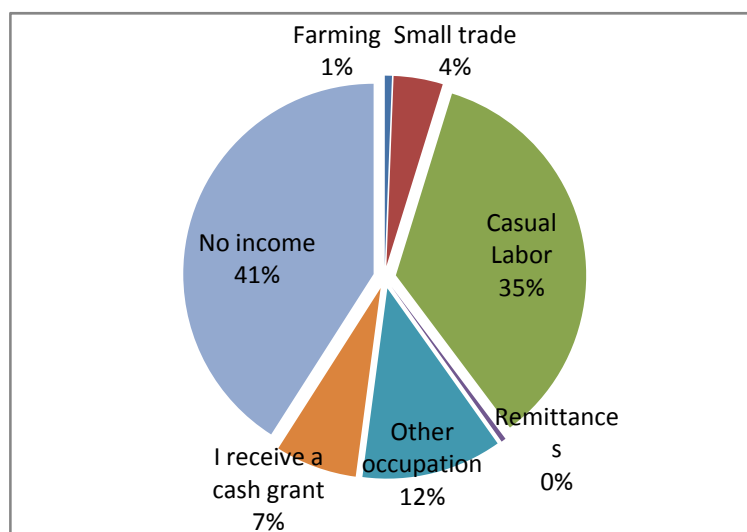
As previously explained, the great majority of IDPs are subsistence farmers, and their whole household economy over the years has been based on land cultivation, livestock breeding and collection of products of the forest³¹. Being in the camps, especially for those in towns, IDPs are unable to rely on the traditional sources of income. In addition, life in towns is perceived as more costly compared to the villages, as there is a need to buy almost everything. On the other hand, camps far away from urban centres often do not offer any income opportunity, nor do they provide sufficient space for land cultivation. In some areas, the high concentration of people has led the KIO to ban the collection of bamboo shoots for sale, allowing it only for household consumption. Similar issues are being raised with regard to firewood. As a result, it is extremely difficult for IDPs to produce any income while living in the camps, and this awareness is producing both economic consequences as well as negatively impacting their sense of self-reliance and psychological health, especially among the elderly people³².

When asked what were their main sources of income while in camp, the interviewees replied as can be seen in the graph below. Cash grant projects have received good levels of appreciation among the interviewees, although they often admitted having to use part or most of the money for education rather than food – which is what the grants are initially meant for. In addition to cash grants, some organisations have launched small-scale income generation activities in

the camps by distributing piglets, facilitating kitchen gardens or women groups producing food to sell outside the camp. Nonetheless, these initiatives at the moment are quite limited and not able to respond to the needs of the whole population.

« We cannot leave just on the assistance and the cash grants, if we don't work outside we won't have enough to feed our children. Those attending school need a lunch box, and otherwise we couldn't afford it.»

IDP women, over 36 years old

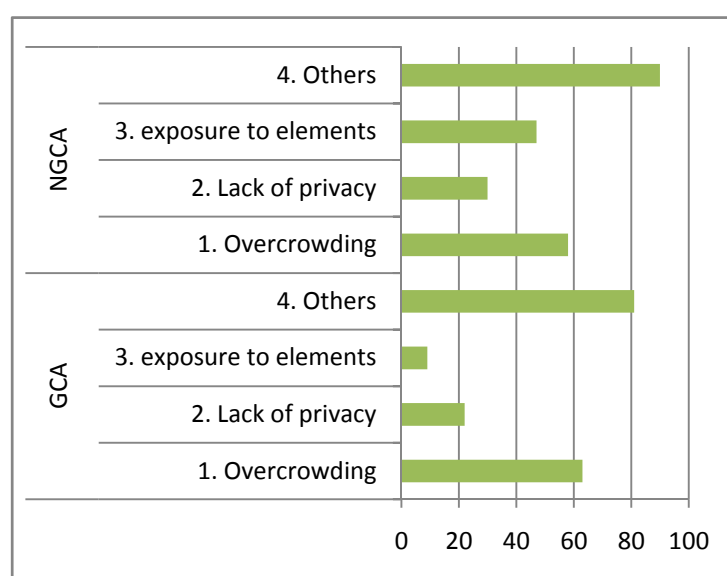


³¹ Products from the forest were used either to complement the family diet, or to boost the household economy in periods of higher needs, such as paying for school fees or unplanned medical costs.

³² Interview with a camp manager in an IDP camp in Banmaw and with a camp committee member in Myitkyina.

As indicated in the chart, the other main source of income for IDPs is casual labour. The availability of this type of labour varies significantly based on the location of camps: camps in the towns or near the border offer more work opportunities than those in more isolated areas. While casual labour is indeed the most viable option for most of the displaced, it is important to mention that it was often reported that IDPs are offered lower rates compared to the local population. A group of women explained that when participating in harvesting activities, an IDP would earn 2,000 to 2,500 Kyat as compared to the standard rate of 3,000 Kyat paid to the local community. According to the interviewees «People know that as we are IDPs. We don't have a choice, and we have to take the job»³³. Similar principles seem to be applied by middlemen mediating jobs across the border, in China. In such cases it is reported that they can take up to 50% of the salary earned by the workers. Once again this seems to happen only with the displaced³⁴, as IDPs are even more vulnerable being on Chinese territory illegally.

5.1.3 Shelter



Shelter conditions vary significantly among different camps, and between camps in GCA and NGCA. As can be seen from the table on the left, there are more concerns on the durability of shelter and its degree of exposure to natural elements in NGCA camps than in the others. This could be explained by the length of time these shelters have been in place, with the older ones becoming progressively less reliable. In a number of GCA camps, some organisations,

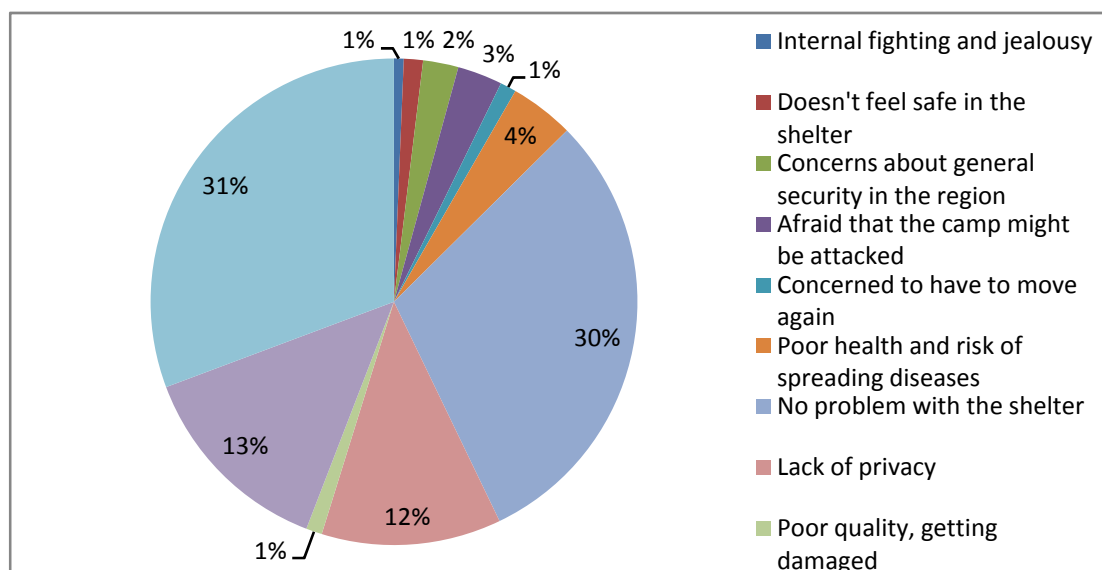
mainly with the support of UNHCR, have recently been building new additional shelters.

When asked what their main concerns were about shelter, the interviewees replied as can be seen in the table below.

While shelter conditions have progressively improved since the beginning of the displacement, overcrowding remains one of the main problems. In some of the camps, different families still have to share one-room shelters, while in other camps they have to live in communal spaces, with the space having to be vacated during the day for other activities to take place.

³³ Displaced women, over 36 years old, participating in a FGD in Ziun camp, Myitkyina.

³⁴ Reported by an NGO staff working in the IDP camps in Northern Shan, near the border with China.



The quality of the shelters also raises a number of concerns and small-scale complaints, particularly regarding units built in the initial phase, which are now starting to show wear and tear, and those built using young bamboo and tarpaulins. During an assessment in March and April 2012 the UN team that visited NGCA camps indicated that most of the shelters were not appropriate for the rainy season and for winter, and recommended that shelters be rebuilt before the arrival of the rains. While UNHCR has been able to support some organisations in the construction of new shelters in some of the camps, there continues to be a need to improve the conditions of the existing shelters, especially in NGCA areas. Overall some organisations estimate that all shelters will need to be rebuilt before March 2013.

To sum up from the protection point of view, it is important to draw attention to the fact that in the questionnaire session regarding shelter, a number of concerns regarding security were raised by the interviewees. This can probably be explained by the fact that protection and physical security are often associated with one's shelter. As mentioned in the questions regarding protection, inadequate shelter is often quoted as one of the factors that make people in camps feel unsafe, reinforcing once again the importance quality and perception of shelter plays on people's wellbeing.

5.1.4 Education

Both primary schools and nurseries are usually present in camps or in the vicinity of the camps. Hence 97% of the target population report having access to education while in the camps.

While this can be considered a positive element, there are a number of factors associated with education that can be interpreted as one of the priority concerns of the displaced, especially with women. The main challenge regarding education is posed by the payment of tuition fees, together with other costs related to education. Once again, lack of income shows its influence on a range of sectors in the life of the displaced, and education is identified as the most affected after food.

«At the time of fleeing I had just bought all the books our children needed for school, but I had to leave them behind, and now I cannot afford to buy them again.»

IDP woman, over 36 years old

The other main concern in this field is the impact that this phase will have in the long run on the education of displaced children. The change of school, in some cases the lower level of teaching provided, the limited resources that parents are able to allocate for education could all have a negative impact on the educational path of IDP children. In many occasions interviewees and teachers report a lack of appropriate and sufficient classrooms and in some cases even teachers. Some of the camp schools are run by volunteers, or teachers paid by camp committees or NGOs, as there are not enough government appointed teachers. Infrastructure-wise the schools that already exist in the villages are often unable to host additional students and are having to establish double shifts. In some cases older school buildings that are no longer in use have been made available for IDP students and their teachers, but often there are not enough tables and chairs.

A further layer of challenge often quoted with regard to the continuity of education is the documentation requirement by GCA schools for children to transfer from another school. Due to the conflict most schools in NGCA no longer exist, or they are not in a position to issue these certificates. So far children in camp schools have had no problem with enrolment, but for those not residing in camps enrolment has not been possible. Furthermore, during the cease-fire period, NGCA 10th standard (matriculation) students could sit for final exams in government schools, making them eligible to attend government universities if they pass the exams. This mechanism is no longer accessible, posing clear obstacles for access to university education.

5.1.5 Food

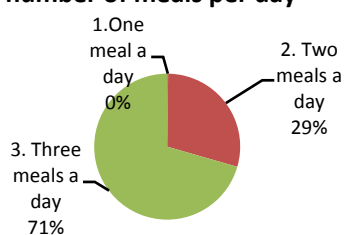
Without aiming at being a food security assessment, this study asked three basic questions on people's perceptions on their ability to access food.³⁵

The feedback on this subject has generally been quite positive, with 90% of respondents saying that they receive sufficient food aid. A deeper analysis of the issue though, together with more in depth discussions with key informants, suggest that this overwhelmingly positive response is among other things a way of showing gratitude, in particular for the rice received. In general, when living in the villages people weren't used to eating rice regularly. Hence having regular supplies of rice is regarded very positively. On the other hand, the displaced themselves, especially women, often mention the lack of accompaniment for rice ('curry') as one of their main concerns, as this is what actually constitutes a meal.

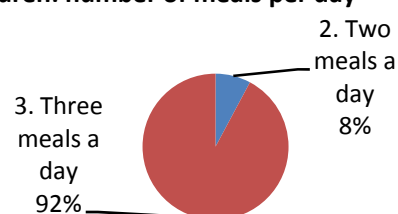
«Now we eat three times a day, but maybe soon there won't be any more help and we won't have enough food.»

IDP woman, over 36 years old

Adults: number of meals per day



Children: number of meals per day

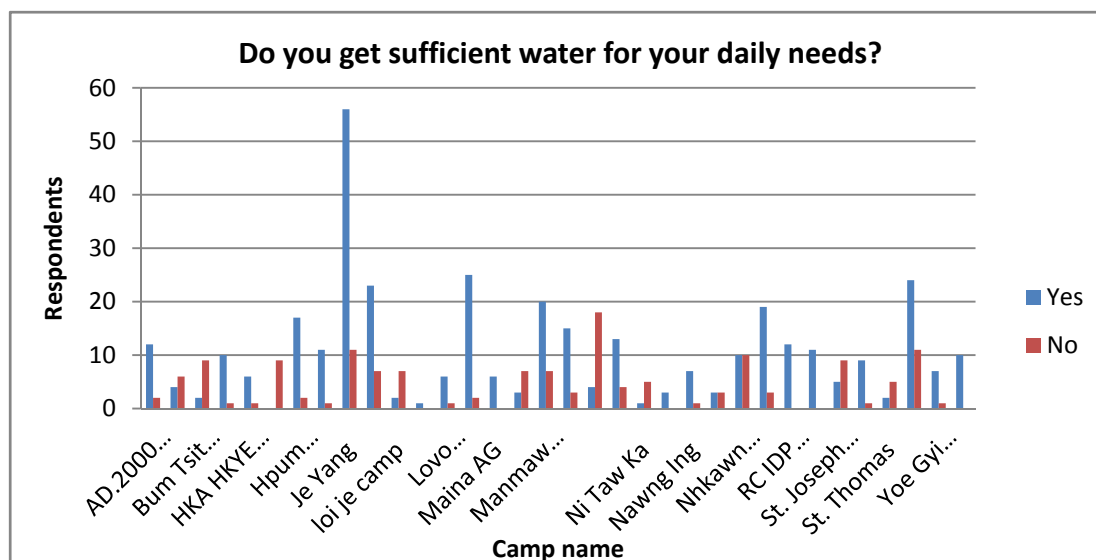


It is also interesting that when asked how many meals a day adults and children in the family have, they answered as shown in the graphs above.

³⁵To see the exact questions see questionnaire in Annex 2

5.1.6 Water

As for shelter and other aspects of assistance, access to water varies significantly across different camps. As shown in the graph below, in some camps the majority of residents believe they have access to sufficient quantities of water for their daily needs, while in



others there is clearly a problem of access or the quantity of water available.

While water does not seem to be a priority problem in most of the camps, it was found that there are quite widespread concerns about sanitation facilities, specifically latrines. The respondents highlighted two main concerns in this regard. First of all the majority of latrines are starting to need repairs and septic tanks are starting to fill up as they had been planned for a shorter period of time. The second key concern, that has also protection implications especially for women, is the fact that there are not sufficient numbers of latrines in the majority of camps, which often leads to situations where latrines for men and women are not segregated. As a consequence, the security of women when using latrines, especially in the evening and at night, has been identified as a serious preoccupation by interviewees.³⁶

5.2 The camp management committees

As part of the assessment, interviewees were asked a series of questions on the functioning of camp committees, the quality of their work, and their contribution to providing security in the camps. Questions aimed at understanding if people were aware of the existence of the committees, whether they knew what the roles and responsibilities of these governing bodies are, were also asked.

Data collection for this objective was possibly among the most difficult in terms of the reliability of the answers. Despite questions being formulated in a way that would not be perceived as judgemental, it was expected that interviewees would not feel completely at ease providing negative answers about the work of camp committees. A mixture of gratefulness towards the work of the committees combined with a concern that this might somehow impact the assistance received are the main reasons for such behaviour. Therefore the numerical results provided in this section should be interpreted in this light, and FGDs and interviews with key informants have been used to gain a more in depth understanding of the actual opinions on camp committees.

³⁶ See also "Assistance Provided United Nations to Internally Displaced People in Kachin State in hard-to-reach areas March-April 2012"

5.2.1 Are camp committees working properly?

Overall it was found that 95% of IDP respondents agreed that camp managers and camp committees are doing good work. This opinion was the same across respondents of different ethnic groups and religions, with a slight difference between men (97%) and women (93%). Interestingly, when camp management committee members, as key informants, were interviewed on this topic, more women (86%) than men (75%) had a positive view of the work of the committees, despite the fact that men make up the majority of camp committees.

As confirmed by further prompting in some individual interviews and during FGDs, while people are generally satisfied, there are some elements that in the longer term could affect the acceptance of the camp committees and their ability to work. The great majority of committees created at the beginning of the crisis were appointed by religious or community leaders and comprised mainly of volunteers from church or social committees. As the displacement situation has been going on longer than initially expected, it is becoming difficult for committees to continue working at the same rhythm, as they need to dedicate time to their families and other activities³⁷. This is creating some friction with the camp populations who report not being treated with sympathy at times, and feeling not well represented or understood. While over time in some of the camps, sub-committees have been created that included IDPs, they are at a lower level in the management structure.

Another element that might cause friction is the fact that committees are quite strict in the implementation of camp regulations. To this regard families have expressed discomfort with committees that used physical punishment with the children living in the camps.

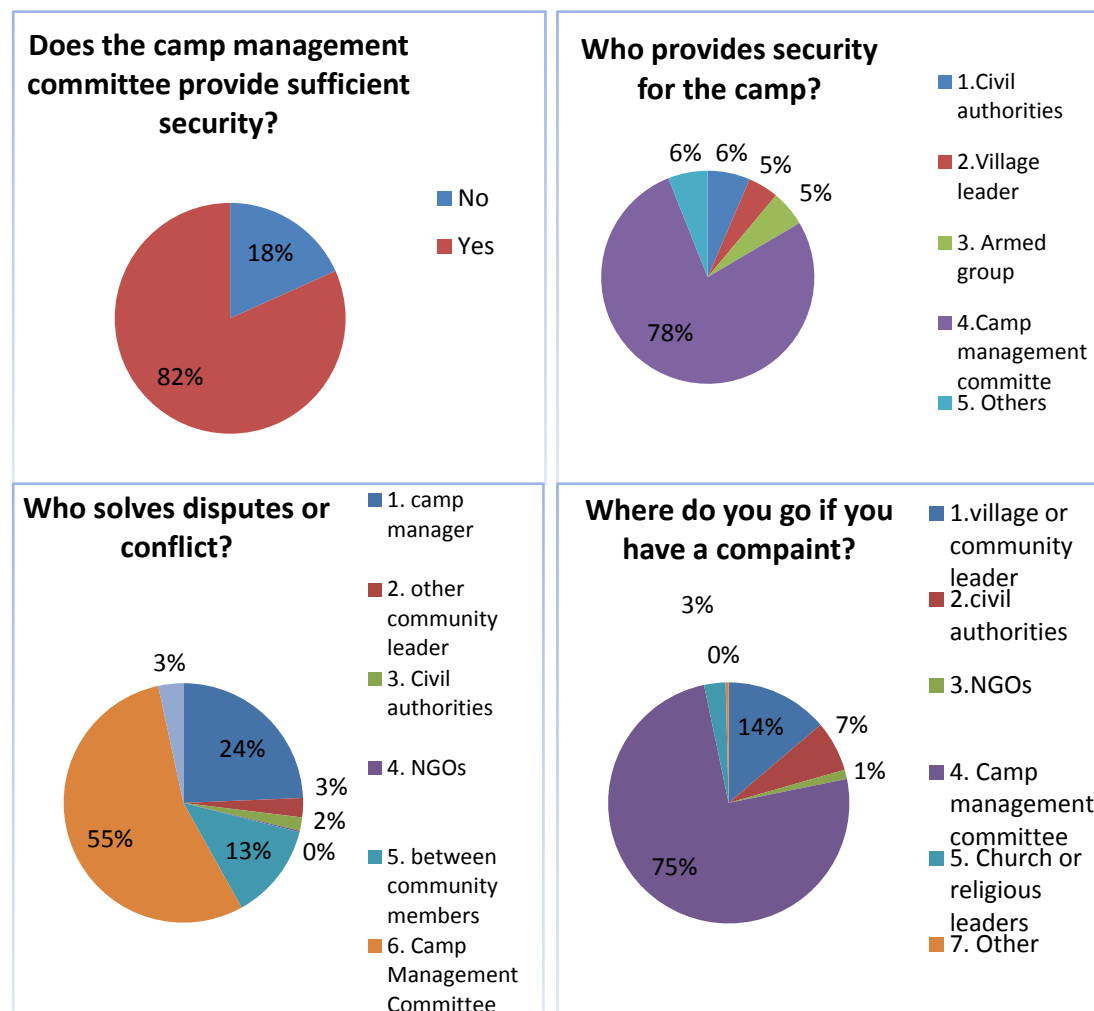
5.2.2 Are camp committees and sub-committees providing sufficient security?

It has emerged clearly that camp management committees and camp managers play a key role in the functioning of the camps and the protection of IDPs. This is generally the case in camp settings, and it is especially so when camps come into being as spontaneous areas of refuge, meaning people fleeing from danger often attribute a special role and capacity to the institution hosting them.

As mentioned more in depth in chapter 4, it is important to notice how camp committees are identified as fundamental in the provision of security for the camps, resolution of disputes among IDPs or between IDPs and communities, and as the entity to which people address their complaints. It is therefore encouraging that 82% of respondents report being satisfied with the degree of security camp committees are able to provide.

³⁷ Some organisations are providing salaries to one or two members per committee, and this seems to be helping in maintaining the necessary degree of support, but this is not uniform across camps, and in any case it does not provide for the whole committee

Nonetheless, when asked which measures could further improve their perception of security, it emerged that a number of people are concerned about the increasing number of committee members not sleeping in the camps anymore. The absence of representatives of the camp committees during the night is often perceived as a security risk, particularly in GCA camps.



6 The hope and the conditions for return

The third major part of this assessment aims at understanding the intentions of the displaced vis-à-vis a possible return to their homesteads after the fighting. It is clear that at the moment, due to the on-going conflict, the basic conditions for a voluntary and safe return are not in place. This is demonstrated by the fact that people are still fleeing into camps. As a result none of the statements presented in this chapter should be interpreted as implying that a return is imminent or that people are willing to consider returning at this point in time. This information should rather be used to understand people's feelings and intentions about return in the event of peace, the main condition for return given by all interviewees; and it should inform future return programmes.

6.1 The Right to voluntary and dignified return

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement are drawn from and consistent with international humanitarian and human rights law, as well as refugee law, with the aim of guiding governments, parties to conflict and international organisations in the assistance to and protection of internally displaced people. These principles have specific provisions regarding durable solutions for the internally displaced, clearly stating under principle 28 that:

1. *Competent authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to establish conditions, as well as provide the means, which allow internally displaced persons to return voluntarily, in safety and with dignity, to their homes or places of habitual residence, or to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country. Such authorities shall endeavour to facilitate the reintegration of returned or resettled internally displaced persons.*
2. *Special efforts should be made to ensure the full participation of internally displaced persons in the planning and management of their return or resettlement and reintegration*³⁸.

The Government of Myanmar, as the primary responsible for the protection of its citizens, as well as the KIO, are called to respect the rights of the internally displaced to an informed, safe and dignified choice to return to their original dwellings or to resettle in another location. Humanitarian actors should act in respect of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

The GPID also include guidance with regard to the responsibility of governments after people have returned or resettled. Under Principle 29, paragraph 2 states:

Competent authorities have the duty and responsibility to assist returned and/or resettled internally displaced persons to recover, to the extent possible, their property and possessions, which they left behind or were dispossessed of upon their displacement. When recovery of such property and possessions is not possible, competent authorities shall provide or assist these persons in obtaining appropriate compensation or another form of just reparation.

To end with, Principle 30 exhorts governments to guarantee unimpeded access to humanitarian organisations and other relevant actors sponsoring the displaced population in order for them 'to assist [the IDPs] in their return or resettlement and reintegration'.³⁹

6.2 Intentions and Conditions for a safe, dignified and voluntary return

According to the assessment only 59% of the displaced have been able to visit their houses since they fled. 79% of those who were able to visit their houses went with the intention of checking on the status of their houses and farms, fields and livestock. The second main reason for visiting was to retrieve some of their belongings (the first reason for visiting according to 9% of respondents, and the second priority for 16% of the respondents).

Despite being able to visit their houses, none of the interviewees was able to stay there, having had to come back to the camps. The reasons for this were the lack of security in the village in 62% of the cases, and the fear that the village could be attacked again for 22% of the respondents. These answers further confirm that at the moment, there are clearly no conditions for a safe or voluntary return.

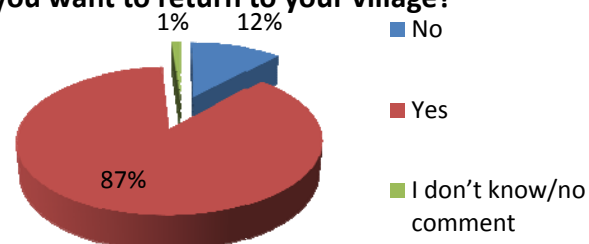
³⁸ UNOCHA (2004), *Guiding Principles on Internal displacement*, p. 18

³⁹ *Ibidem*

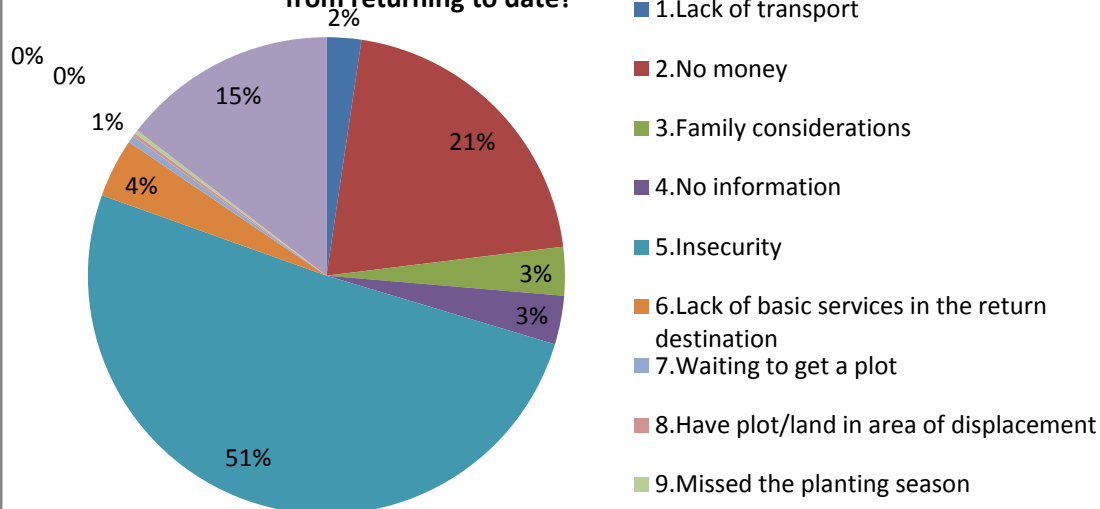
But looking hypothetically into the future, when asked if they would like to return to their village once the situation becomes peaceful, the IDPs in the targeted camps gave a positive answer in the great majority of cases.

The main factors that have impeded so far the return or even the consideration of a long-term return are presented in the chart below. Among the answers for 'other', the presence of UXOs and land mines in particular is quoted as one of the main concerns. These issues will have to be addressed before any of the IDPs can consider returning to their villages.

Do you want to return to your village?



What reasons have prevented or are preventing you and your family from returning to date?



In addition, once the pre-conditions mentioned above are met, there are a number of other elements that will influence people's decisions for returning. The majority of these factors are listed below:

INFLUENCING FACTORS	RESPONDENTS
Assets in the village	12%
Conditions in areas of return	11%
Family unification	9%
Desire to return, miss the village	8%
Worried about the farm and livestock back home, fear of losing it	8%
If I cannot get a plot here	7%
Lack of livelihood opportunities here, while at the village we can work	7%
If the situation gets worse here	6%
Living conditions in place of displacement	6%
Other	18%
Lack of services in current place of displacement	3%
Ethnic considerations	2%
Information from others (trusted sources) who encourage a come back	1%
The weather in place of displacement is too cold	2%
Lack of freedom and control of our own life	2%
Discrimination	1%

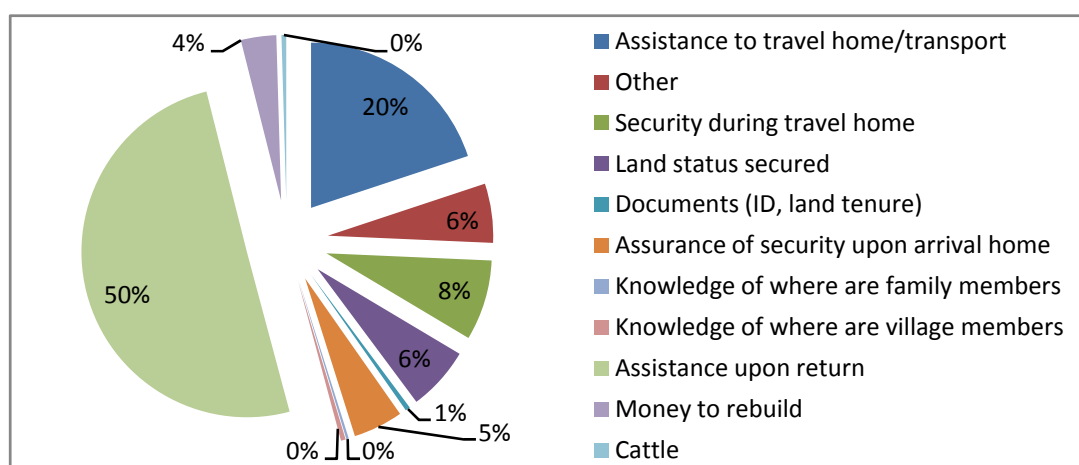
6.3 The decision not to return

As mentioned above, only 12% of IDPs in the surveyed camps are considering the option of not going back to their villages of origin. Their decision is dictated in the majority of cases by the fact that after what they have seen during the fighting they believe they would not be able to feel safe in the village again. The other main reason cited by interviewees is the knowledge that they have lost all they had in the village, from their house to their farms and orchards, and they would have to restart their lives.

But upon further questioning it is also clear that this decision would be difficult to take for most of them, and that there is no clarity about what they would do if they were to stay or resettle. When asked what they would do if they were to stay, 44% of respondents said that they did not know, while 30% stated they would stay in the camp. This clearly shows that the option of not returning, which would be a difficult choice to make anyway, poses additional challenges for people as they do not have all the necessary elements to make an informed choice. Being aware of this challenge, most IDPs have been giving indications of some of the likely conditions that would enable them to pursue this option: it would need to be the government that allocates land for the displaced, and this land should offer some opportunities for agriculture or for another livelihood activity. Based on these considerations, 38% of respondents mentioned that the main challenge, should they decide to stay, would be what to do if assistance stopped. In the same way as those deciding to return to their villages and houses, people who intend to resettle will need to restart their livelihoods. Therefore a need for support in the start up phase is foreseen.

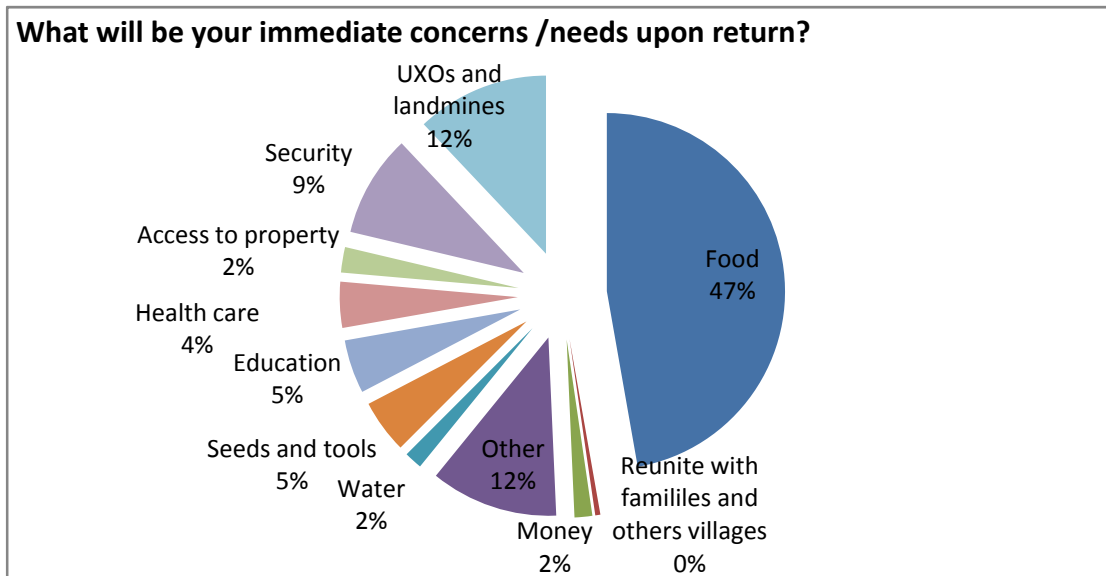
6.4 Need for humanitarian assistance upon return

In order to be able to return home – but as we have just seen, this could be applied also to those deciding to resettle - respondents have identified the following categories of support as the first priority:



As in the majority of return support programmes, it can be anticipated that when people will be able to return, they will need some support both before leaving the camps, as well as upon arrival at their destinations. As 59% of the IDPs in target camps have visited their houses, it can be said that the majority of people are aware that their houses and their sources of livelihood have been damaged if not completely destroyed, and will therefore need to restart their lives from the beginning. In addition, some of the issues that people will face upon return will not be solved short-term, in particular the presence of landmines and the impact that this will have not only on people's physical security but also on their livelihoods and mobility.

In order to have a more in depth understanding of people's perceptions and intentions, interviewees were also asked to identify the main issues they expect to experience when they return, and the immediate support they would need to be provided with. The answers can be seen in the table below.



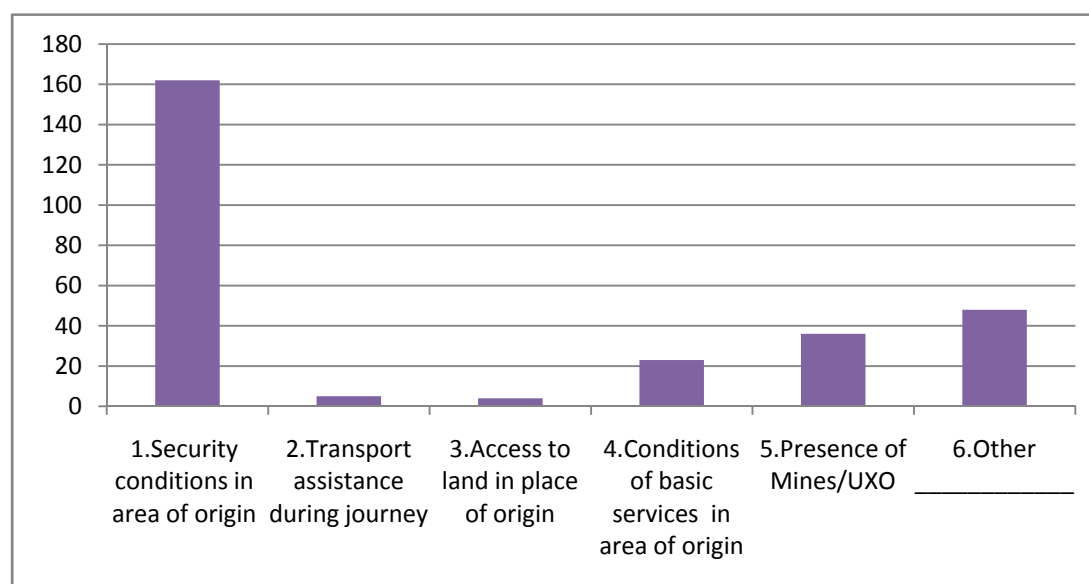
Once they are able to return, IDPs will have missed at least 2011 and 2012 planting seasons, which would have caused the loss of seeds that people need for planting. This awareness of the situation is reflected in the identification of food as the primary need, at least until their livelihoods are able to sustain them again. In addition in the majority of cases they will need to renovate or rebuild their houses completely, and the same will probably be applicable to the farms and other small infrastructure they might have had on their land. Furthermore, they will be returning to villages severely affected by the fighting, where community infrastructure such as schools or clinics might have been damaged or destroyed as well. The existence of UXOs in the areas of return has been identified as the second main area requiring intervention from specialised organisations and institutions. The presence of landmines, planted by both parties, certainly constitutes a serious threat to people's safety, and it also represents an element that will hamper reconstruction of the villages and will impede the return to normal livelihood activities such as planting or collection of products from the bush.

6.5 Current information and sources of information

To end with, as we have seen that less than 2/3 of IDPs living in the selected camps have been able to visit their houses, it can be anticipated that when the time for return comes, people will need adequate information to make informed and voluntary decisions. The assessment dedicated a small section of the questionnaire to understanding the main sources of information that the displaced populations currently rely on. Once again this knowledge can be useful in the future, to identify the most appropriate media to use to channel information for the displaced.

At present IDPs are receiving most of the information regarding the situation back at their villages from village chiefs (19%), government officials (29%), relatives who have gone home (19%) and finally, in 10% of the cases, from the media.

After having identified the conditions for return and the factors that will influence their decision to this regard, the interviewees were asked to name the type of information they would need to make an informed decision to return. As can be seen from the table that follows, respondents indicated information about the security situation in the area of return, as their primary area of concern. A second issue is the presence of mines and other UXOs, followed by information on the condition of basic services in the areas of return.



7 Executive Conclusions

7.1 Fears and concerns over protracted displacement

Interviews and discussions with IDPs and especially with key informants reveal quite clearly that at the beginning of the crisis it was not expected that the displacement would last for more than one year. This has a two-fold impact: on people's psychology and on the way the initial relief efforts were set up.

To begin with, when people were offered the possibility of asking questions to the interviewers or to present their main concerns at the end of the interviews, the majority of IDPs asked when there would be peace and when they would be able to go home. Discussions with camp managers as well as pastors and priests, and also with organisations specialising in trauma healing, reveal that an indefinite number of IDPs are suffering from trauma and are struggling to deal with life in camps. The sense of being obliged to live in an enclosed space, combined with the fact that the majority of people are unable to conduct any meaningful livelihood activities are making people feel completely dependent on relief aid and other sources. This was confirmed by the fact that over half of the people participating in FGDs raised questions as to what would happen should the crisis last longer and donors stopped providing support. This awareness is very strong among the displaced population, further adding to the already uncertain projections of their future, straining the resilience capacity of the displaced population.

7.2 The need for medium-term interventions

The second impact of this short-term planning regards the type of relief assistance provided and the camp infrastructure. As was acknowledged in the interviews, the quality of shelter is probably the first example of the fact that at the onset of the displacement crisis it was difficult to estimate the number of displaced people to expect and the duration of their stay. The lack of livelihood opportunities and the limited – despite reportedly successful – income generation activities also denote an initial phase mainly focussed on immediate relief assistance. Lastly, some of the camp infrastructure such as latrines, water facilities⁴⁰, as well as temporary schools are also showing their limitations vis-à-vis a longer displacement situation. Further challenges may be posed by the fact that the majority of the in kind and financial assistance in the initial phase of the emergency was provided by communities, religious institutions, private donors within Myanmar and the Kachin community abroad. Once again while this internal solidarity is continuing, such levels of support are not expected to be sustainable in the long run.

It is impossible at this stage to know how much longer people will have to stay in camps, but the fact that fighting is continuing, that the peace talks held at the end of 2012 weren't successful, and the presence of UXOs in the areas where IDPs come from, lead to an estimation that the displacement will probably last for at least another year, but more likely even longer. If this estimate is accepted, camps will need to be significantly upgraded:

- Shelters will need regular maintenance and in some cases they will probably need to be replaced before the next rainy season.
- WASH facilities should be upgraded and redesigned adopting technical solutions that will allow them to last for longer periods of time. As part of this, it will be of paramount importance to build sufficient latrines, and to ensure that they are segregated by gender to improve the safety of beneficiaries while using the facilities.
- While the education sector has received limited external support so far, mainly relying on private donations and the good-will of teachers who have been working as volunteers or for lower salaries, this will not be sustainable in the long run and risks impacting adversely the educational path of displaced children. Appropriate measures should be taken both in terms of infrastructure and with regard to regulations, so as to offer consistent solutions to the issues raised by beneficiaries, for example official recognition of the schooling period of children attending school in camps and KIO schools.

7.3 The protection situation and the need for safe programming

The assessment shows clearly that while people face a very high level of risk outside the camps, the situation in camps although generally better, still needs improvement.

The protection situation outside camps is extremely dire and this is recognised by the displaced themselves with 39% of men and 51% of women saying they do not feel secure outside the camps. The main threats reported are arrests, often leading to disappearance or long-term detention, torture and rape. This creates a very unsafe environment for people in the villages, who to date are continuing to flee into camps in search of safety. It also impedes IDP contemplation of any possibility of return.

⁴⁰During the visit to a camp hosting over 2,000 people, it was found that there were four water tanks, established by three different international organizations, but none of them was working. The tanks were supposed to be filled by a pump requiring fuel, which the camp committee did not have sufficient funding to buy anymore.

Camps are still generally considered safe heavens by the majority of IDPs in the target camps, and camp committees have identified measures to reduce the impact of both external threats – for example through the 'in and out' recording system - and internal ones, as in the case of banning alcohol inside many camps.

But in order to further improve the sense of protection people experience in the camps, it would be beneficial for organisations and camp committees to strictly adhere to the first Sphere protection principle of «Avoid causing harm»⁴¹ by adopting all possible measures in order to «take steps to avoid or minimise any adverse effects of their intervention, in particular the risk of exposing people to increased danger or abuse of their rights»⁴² as a result of the humanitarian assistance provided or the approach used in programme delivery.. All humanitarian programmes implemented should strive to ensure that while implementing WASH, shelter, livelihood or any other type of project, they contribute to improving the safety of civilians: this is referred to as 'safe programming'. An example in this context would be to build separate latrines and bathing facilities for men and women, or to improve the quality of shelters ensuring that they have doors and that the design makes people feel safe.

Safe programming can also be taken one step forward, in line with protection principles 3 «Protect people from physical and psychological harm arising from violence and coercion» and 4 «Assist people to claim their rights, access available remedies and recover from the effects of abuse» of the Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum standards. Once again these principles do not require a specific protection mandate, or technical protection related knowledge, but can be implemented or operational through small-scale activities often identified together with the beneficiaries themselves. These principles can be respected in various ways, from encouraging and supporting some of the already existing coping mechanisms identified – as suggesting camp committees to assign someone responsible for security during the night; to suggesting some changes in the existing set up to include more women in camp committees so as to offer a point of reference for women living in camps when faced with difficulties or abuse, and to help minimise some of the identified threats through advocacy with relevant authorities. Organisations working in the camps should also consider how to manage some of the information they receive regarding human rights violations and abuses. While on one hand they might be compelled to report to relevant authorities or agencies the information received, organisations working in camps should also take care to ensure they are perceived as neutral, as this could otherwise have negative repercussions on the population living in those camps.

A serious and joint reflection on how to adapt programmes to further contribute to people's safety should be considered by all actors working in the camps.

⁴¹The Sphere project (2011), p. 30

⁴²*Ibidem*, p. 33

7.3.1 The protective value of livelihoods

One of the key findings of the assessment is certainly the importance of livelihoods and income generation opportunities for the displaced. Livelihood plays a central role in the perception of vulnerability of the IDPs themselves, as indicated by an average 29% of respondents indicating lack of income as one of the factors contributing to their feeling insecure even inside the camps. The lack of income, or sufficient income, can erode the resilience of the target population, and can – and in some cases this has already happened⁴³ – lead to people adopting harmful behaviours in search of livelihoods. The assessment is giving early indications of how lack of income is having an impact on the quality of education families can offer their children, and their ability to access appropriate health care. If this were to continue, the impact on the families will be extremely negative.

Cash transfers and livelihood projects, such as kitchen gardens and small-scale food production for selling; have been praised by the interviewees as positive initiatives. It is therefore recommended that livelihood activities be boosted, and viable solutions explored, especially in the case of the most isolated camps.

7.3.2 The gap in psycho-social support

Some dedicated attention will need to be directed towards the widespread need for psychosocial support among the camp population. As mentioned under protection principle 4, it is important that organisations engage with communities to help them recover from the effects of the abuses. Currently, there is insufficient capacity and resources in the area to provide much needed specialised psychological support for the camp population. Nonetheless, other indirect measures could be adopted to contribute to the wellbeing of IDPs. In relation to the provision of psycho-social support, the Humanitarian Charter mentions that «aid should be delivered in a compassionate manner that promotes dignity, enables self-efficacy through meaningful participation, respects the importance of religious and cultural practices and strengthens the ability of affected people to support holistic well-being»⁴⁴. Some of the organisations involved in this assessment have experience with community measures that can offer some level of psychosocial support to people affected by disasters. In some of the camps there are elderly people with masonry skills, and activities could be organised for them in a way that would contribute to the healing process. Another example comes from the experience of Metta during the Cyclone Nargis where the construction of communal kitchens proved to be a way of offering women opportunities to spend time together and offer and receive mutual support.⁴⁵

⁴³Examples of harmful behaviours range from women going into areas affected by military operations to collect food from the forest, to reports of parents selling four young girls to a Chinese businessman in February. The last report was made by one of the organisations working in the camps and has not been verified by the author.

⁴⁴The Sphere project, *Ibidem*, p.17

⁴⁵Metta Development Foundation, *Accomplishment report on Community kitchen projects*, 30 August 2012

7.4 Camp management committees: sustainability and representation

The assessment has clearly shown the central role camp management teams play, both in the functioning of the camps and in the protection and perceived sense of safety of the displaced population. It is therefore of paramount importance that committees are able to continue working for the entire duration of the displacement. Nonetheless, the assessment has also shown that an increasing level of dissatisfaction with the committees, most notably due to the fact that the majority of camp managers and committee members are not IDPs. This set up constitutes a challenge both for the committee members and the IDPs themselves. For camp managers and committee members, leaving their normal life occupations to work in the camps is in some cases becoming a burden for themselves and their families. For the IDPs, they feel committees often do not understand them or their difficulties, and resent the fact that they are not sufficiently present in the camps.

As part of a medium-term approach, it is recommended that camp management structures be reconfigured and the level of IDP representation increased. While some organisations are already providing some degree of financial support to camp committees and to a few camp managers or committee members, there is a risk that these structures will not be sustainable in the longer term. It would be useful to consider including more IDPs in the committees, perhaps even as camp managers, as this would both increase the sense of representation, while also providing an occupation – not only or not necessarily in terms of income, but also as a way of feeling useful for the community - for some camp residents who feel underutilised. While clearly there are a number of challenges that an IDP would be called to face in managing the camp where he or she is currently living, on the other hand, this approach would have a positive impact boosting people's confidence, allowing them to contribute to their own community, and the added advantage that IDPs would most likely be able to dedicate themselves full time to the task.

7.5 Preparing durable solutions

While the majority of people residing in the target camps have indicated they want to return to their houses once the conflict is over, it is clear that at the moment there are no conditions for a safe and voluntary return or resettlement. With people still flowing into the camps, and a continuous need for relief assistance, it is difficult to think of durable solutions.

Nonetheless, engaging the displaced population in the design of a durable solution strategy from the very early phases is crucial for the success of any return and resettlement process. It is often argued that the design of a recovery – and return – strategy should start as early as possible in the relief phase, so as to ensure LRRD, or continuum from relief to development. Clearly any return programme will need to include a significant component of reconstruction and support to restart people's livelihoods, and also an element of reconciliation among the different actors. This preliminary information on people's understanding of the situation and their conditions and fears upon return represent a precious set of information to be used in the near future.

Annexes

Annex I List of Acronyms and abbreviations

GPID	Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement
IRRC	IDP and Refugee Relief Committee (KIO)
KBC	Kachin Baptist Convention
KIA	Kachin Independence Army
KIO	Kachin Independence Organization
KMSS	Karuna Myanmar Social Services
KRDC	Kachin Relief and Development Committee (KIO)
LRRD	Linking relief, rehabilitation and development
Metta	Metta Development Foundation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
RRD	Relief and Resettlement Department (Government)
Shalom	Shalom Foundation
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
WASH	Water sanitation and hygiene
WPN	Wunpawng Ninghtoi

Annex II Methodology

All decisions regarding assessment methodology and process were taken through a participatory process that included also a group of representatives from some of the IDP camps. The entire process - from defining objectives to formulating methodology and questionnaires - was discussed step-by-step in the course of a four-day workshop, prior to reaching a consensus. Participants in the workshop were representatives of the six organisations involved in the process.

In addition, two of the workshop sessions were attended by a group of representatives from some of the IDP camps selected for assessment. The representatives provided insight on issues likely to emerge from this exercise, and participated in shaping an assessment that would be most appropriate and acceptable to the beneficiaries.

The assessment was carried out in 33 camps, of which 20 are in Government Controlled Areas, and the rest in NGCA or areas under variable control⁴⁶. The selection of camps was based on organisational coverage, security of the areas⁴⁷, possibility of access, as well as ethnic composition of the camp populations.

As of 13th October the total population registered as living in the selected camps is 38,256, while the total population registered, as living in camps and host families in both GCA and NGCA is 97,598⁴⁸. The selection of target camps takes into account the proportion of people currently displaced in GCA and NGCA areas, making sure similar proportions are reflected in the target population. The planned breakdown of the target population is tabulated as:

	Camp population	% of total	Population in selected camps	No of target camps	Sample size	% of total
GCA	38 781	40%	12 501	20	124	33%
NGCA	58 817	60%	25 755	13	256	67%
Total	97 598		38 256	33	380	

For more details, see Annex III.

Through the use of mixed methods, the research aims at providing a representative sample of the target displaced population and offer a comprehensive overview of the situation in the selected camps. Random sampling was used for individual interviews for a total of 392 people. This sample size, calculated on the target population of 38,256, provides a 95% confidence level with a confidence interval of 5%.

In addition to this sample, individual interviews were also conducted with 132 individuals from four pre-selected categories in each camp, resulting in a total of 525 people interviewed for this assessment. Finally, 24 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held in 19 camps with a total of 152 participants selected through purposive sampling, based on a set of four pre-identified criteria. FGDs were usually conducted after completing individual interviews as a way of validating information collected in the previous phase.

⁴⁶ The expression "grey areas" refers to parts of the territories that are either under fluctuating control, or that are under the control of other militia groups.

⁴⁷ For example the Western Division in the NGCA areas had to be excluded due to ongoing fighting in the area.

⁴⁸ The figures refer to data by RRD from September 28, 2012 for camps in GCA and data provided by IRR as of October 13, 2012 for Non Government Controlled Areas in Kachin and Northern Shan.

Overall the use of mixed methods combined with the geographical spread of the targeted areas contribute to triangulating the information collected, further strengthening the methodology.

a. Individual interviews with IDPs

Individual interviews were conducted with a randomly selected sample of 392 IDPs. The number of interviews conducted in each camp was proportional to the size of the respective camp population against the total population in all camps (see Annex 1).

Interviews were conducted with a standard questionnaire comprising of both open and closed questions. The questionnaire, while drawing on previous questionnaires used in similar displacement contexts, was designed in country during two phases. In the first phase a group of IDP representatives identified and formulated the questions based on the research objectives. The second stage of consultations saw IDP representatives and members of the participating organisations working together to compare the initial draft questionnaire with other existing protection and return assessment questionnaires to produce a comprehensive product that was then approved by the forum. The questionnaire was pre-tested in Yangon.

Individual interviews used random sampling. Each team of interviewers identified the central point of each camp (usually church, school, or camp management committee office) and after twisting a pen, selected the direction to follow to conduct the household surveys. The interval was calculated based on the number of shelters and number of interviews planned for the camp, making each camp different from the other. Interviewers were either members of the organisations participating in the initiative, or IDP members of the camp management committee. Interviews were usually held in Kachin or Burmese, depending on the language spoken by the IDP, and took place in the room of the interviewee.

b. Key Informant Interviews

Individual interviews were conducted with 3 to 5 people in each camp, depending on availability, with the result that a total of 132 people were interviewed from the following categories:

Category of key informant	
Religious leaders	30
Local authorities	16
Camp management committee members	62
Service providers	24
Total	132

The key informants were selected from four categories namely: local authorities, religious leaders, members of the camp management committee, and service providers such as nurses or teachers. These categories had been identified by workshop participants as representative groups, with an overall or general knowledge of the IDP situation. Key informants were asked the same set of questions as IDPs, making the findings and opinions comparable at least to a certain extent.

c. *Focus group discussions*

Focus group discussions were held in 19 of the 33 camps⁴⁹. The selection of participants was based on purposive sampling, a sampling matrix produced during the planning workshop. The four criteria used for forming the groups were gender, age (three age groups: 14-17, 18-35 and over 36 years of age), ethnicity and area of origin (GCA or NCGA). These criteria had been identified by workshop participants as the main elements influencing different opinions among IDPs.

In the camp selection process, an attempt was made to strike a balance between camps in GCA and NCGA, as well as camps in Christian and Buddhist compounds. Nonetheless, practical considerations also informed the selection⁵⁰.

d. *Additional Information Gathering*

Further to the interviews and group discussions mentioned above, the researcher proceeded to gather additional information through literature review and discussions with other humanitarian organisations and entities working in the camps. The information collected in these discussions has been used to improve contextual analysis, but does not influence the data or its interpretation.

e. *Scope and Limitations*

This assessment has been designed and conducted in respect of standard principles of social research, while also taking into account the humanitarian context in which the research was carried out. This at times imposed limitations in terms of access, and also required a certain degree of flexibility. Due to the sensitive nature of the assessment, as the focus is on protection and return intentions, principles of informed consent, accountability and confidentiality were at the centre of the assessment process and its implementation⁵¹. All interviewees were provided with an agreed upon explanation of the assessment process and its purpose, and were requested to provide their consent to participating in the survey. As a result all participation in the survey was completely voluntary. In addition, all relevant authorities as well as camp management committees and organisations were informed of the assessment.

While only a small percentage of the camp population was interviewed, this is justified by the use of a statistically calculated sample of randomly selected participants that adequately ensures representativeness even in a predominantly qualitative type of research. The use of purposive sampling further contributes to ensuring representativeness of the interviewees, selected across different groups.

⁴⁹The camps in which FGD were conducted are: Loi Je, AD 2000, Jan Mai Kawng (KBC), Jan Mai Kawng (KMSS), Man Wing Gyi, Ziun, Hkat Cho village, Lovho Baptist, Momauk KBC and RC, Yoe Gyi, Maina, Bum Tsit, Lana Zup Ja, Pa Kahtawng, N Hkawng Pa, Nay Wunn Ni, Ni Thaw Ka, Maina Ag (Lisu) and Je Yang.

⁵⁰As for individual interviews, practical considerations included access, organisational presence in the camps, as well as the availability of staff members with training and experience in conducting FGDs, so as to ensure the quality of the research.

⁵¹International Committee of the Red Cross (2009), *Professional standards for protection work carried out by humanitarian and human rights actors in armed conflict and other situations of violence*, Geneva: ICRC

It must be recognised that the assessment and the data collected through it, represent the perception of the participants at a specific point in time, based on personal experiences. Thus perceptions would differ from person to person, depending on individual life experiences. Nonetheless, due to the methodology explained above, they can be considered representative of the opinions of the IDPs in the surveyed camps.

f. Basic statistics

Some of the key features of the respondents to the interviews and FGDs in the 33 camps can be seen below. As previously mentioned, participants in the interviews were selected randomly, hence the higher representation of certain groups rather than others is related to the characteristics of the population residing in the camps, but also to some social norms. To this regard, the fact that a low number of children and young people under 17 years of age were interviewed despite their high representation among camp populations, can be explained, at least in part, with social norms whereby senior members of family are traditionally addressed in case of consultations, or as in this case when conducting interviews. The limited representation of children and youth was partially addressed through dedicated focus group discussions with people from this age group.

Gender		Village/area of origin of IDP respondents	
Men	220	GCA	202
Women	303	NGCA	185
		Grey areas	5
Ethnicity		Age groups	
Kachin	488	14-17	9
Shan	20	18-25	59
Burmese	5	26-45	265
Others	11	46-65	161
		66+	29

Annex III Camps matrix

	Overall total	% of total	Total in surveyed camps	% of selected camps	Sample size	Actual number of interviewees	Actual - Key informants
GCA (Data as of 28 September 2012)	38.781	40%	12501	33%	124	141	76
NORTHERN SHAN	2396	6%	869	7%	9	11	5
1. St Thomas camp			217	2%	2	3	4
2. Nampaka			271	2%	3	3	0
3. Nay Wunn Ni			381	3%	4	5	1
Myitkyina	12930	33%	3806	30%	43	44	36
MYITKYINA	5392		2381	19%	24	24	18
1. Ziun			671	5%	7	6	5
2. Jan Mai Kawng			751	6%	7	7	5
3. Jan Mai Kawng - KMSS			427	3%	4	5	5
4. Hkat Cho Village			532	4%	5	6	3
WAING MAW	4850		1425	11%	19	20	18
1. Lhaovo Baptist			235	2%	2	3	5
2. Maina Ag (Lisu)			205	2%	2	3	3
3. Maina – KMSS			985	8%	10	9	5
4. Maina – KBC			505	4%	5	5	5
Bhamo	15.797	41%	7739	62%	77	83	30
BHAMO	5462		5497	44%	55	62	22
1. Shwegu			432	3%	4	11	0
2. Yoe Gyi			108	1%	1	3	5
3. Robert			2405	19%	24	22	5
4. Ad 2000			1099	9%	11	10	4
5. Man Wing Gyi (KMSS)			1373	11%	14	13	5
6. Ni Tahw Ka Monastery			80	1%	1	3	3
MOMAUK	4055		2242	18%	22	21	8
1. RC camp			951	8%	9	9	3
2. KBC camp			1291	10%	13	12	5
Moe Hnyin	7.369	19%	87	1%	1	3	5
1. Nawn Ing			87	1%	1	3	5
Put-a-O	289	1%	0				
NGCA (Data as of 13 October 2012)	58817	60%	25755	67%	256	250	54

Central division	23354	40%	17301	67%	172	169	30
Sadung Gingwang	6196		516	2%	5	5	
1. Border Post 6			516	2%	5	5	5
LAIZA Muklum	5215		5215	20%	52	52	10
1. Woi Chyai			3327	13%	33	33	5
2. Ma Sat 3			1888	7%	19	19	5
MA GA YANG - Laiza Ginwang	11752		11570	45%	115	112	20
1. Ma Ga Yang			2481	10%	25	25	5
3. Dumbung			605	2%	6	6	5
4. Je Yang			6909	27%	69	65	5
5. Hpun Lum Yang			1575	6%	16	16	5
Eastern division	18049	31%	8118	32%	81	81	24
MAI JA YANG Gaiwang/district			1834	7%	18	16	6
1. Pa Kahtawng			1834	7%	18	16	6
MAN MAW Ginwang/district			5948	23%	59	58	15
2. Lana Zup Ja			2672	10%	27	26	4
3. Bum Tsit			674	3%	7	8	3
4. N Hkawng Pa			1647	6%	16	15	5
5. Loi Je			955	4%	9	9	3
U Lang Pa Ginwang/district							
			336		3	7	3
1. Hka Hkye			336	1%	3	7	3
Southern division	1070	2%	0				
Northern division	4653	8%	0				Very far
Western division	11691	20%	0				Ongoing conflict
Camps inside China	3906	7%	0				People are not there anymore
Totale	97.598		38256		385	391	130

AnnexIV Assessment tools**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS**

- A.1 interview location
- A.2 Place of Origin
- A.3 Ethnic Group
- A.4 Religion
- A.5 Gender
- A.5 Age Group
- A.6 Size of the household, incl. Respondent
- A.6.1 How many children are in the households? (Under 18) How many under five?
- A.7 when did you leave your village/place of origin?
- A.8 Why did you leave your village/place of origin?
- A.9 When did you arrive in this site/camp?
- A.9.1 If you did not come directly from your village or from place of origin, where did you move from?

B. Conditions in camp/site, host families

- B.1. How many times did the adults in this household eat per day?
- B.1.1 How many times did the children in this household eat per day?
- B.2 In your current location, have you received any food aid sufficiently since your arrival?
- B.3. Main concerns about shelter?
- B.4 .Do you have access to medical care here?
- B.4.1 If not, where else do you go?
- B.5 Is there a school?
- B.6 Do you get sufficient educational opportunities?
- If No, what are the additional requirements?
- B.7 Do you get sufficient water for your daily drinking, hygiene, and cooking needs?
- B.7.1 If No, where do you get the extra water?
- B.8 What do you or your family does to earn income while displaced?
- B.9 Before the crisis, did you own land?
- B.9.1 Which type of land?
- B.9.2 If YES, are you aware of the situation of your land now?

C. Camp management committee

- C.1. Is there a camp manager?
- C.2 Is there a camp management committee?
- C.2.1 If yes, do you know camp management committee member?
- C.3 Are there sub-committees?
- C.3.1 If yes, do you know the members?
- C.4 Does camp management committee and sub-committee provide sufficient security?
- C.4.1 Can you explain why?
- C.5 Is the camp management committee working efficiently (properly)?
- C.5.1 Can you explain why?
- C.6. Is there any organizations or agencies providing humanitarian aid?
- C.6 .1 Which organizations are they?
- C.6.2 Are they working properly?

D. Safety and security

- D.1 Do you feel secure in this camp or location?
- D.1.1 If "yes" (feel safe), why?
- D.1.2 If "not" (don't feel safe) or "somewhat", why not?
- D.2 What would make you feel more secure in this camp/location?
- D.3 Do you have concerns about your security more in general or outside the camp?
- D.3.1 If YES, what sort of threats do you face?
- D.4 Are there cases of discrimination within the camp? Due to what?
- D.5 Are there tensions with the host community?
- D.5.1 If yes, why?
- D.6. Do you feel free to move in and out of the camp?
- D.6.1 If NO, why _____
- D.7. Who provides security services?
- D.8. Who manages conflicts-tensions between groups in the camp/host families?
- D.9. Where do you go to complain about abuses/violation?

E. Opinions about return

- E.1 Have you or any member of your family gone back to your home since you were displaced?
- E.1.1 If yes, Why did you return to your village (2 answers):
- E.1.2 Why you didn't stay in the village?
- E.2 Do you want to return to your village/land?
- If the answer is NO (do not want to return),*
- E.3 Why not?
- E.3.1 If the answer is NO (do not want to return), what are your plans?
- E.3.2 What problems do you or your family anticipate encountering if you remain where you are living?
- If the answer is YES (do want to return)*
- E.4 What will influence your decision to return/leave the camp?
- E.4.1 What reasons have prevented or are preventing you and your family from returning to date?
- E.5 What do you need in order to be able to return home? (indicate the most important by indicating a rank of 1-3)
- E.6. What do you or your family anticipate will be your immediate concerns /needs upon return to your or your family's place of origin?
- E.7 What information would be useful to assist you in making a decision on return and timing?
- E.8 Where do you receive information about conditions in your home village?

Questions or concerns posed by IDPs about return.

QUESTION GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

- 1. When and why did you leave your village/place of origin?
- 1.1 And when did you arrive here?
- 2. Do you feel secure in this camp? (Give a score from 1 to 5) and what are the reasons for your answer?
- 2.1 What are the threats people face in this community? How are people threatened?
- 2.2 Are there specific groups in the camp that are being threatened more than others and who are they?
- 2.3 What do people do to protect themselves from these threats? Can you give us some examples?
- 2.4 What would make you feel more secure here? Or what would you like to see changed?
- 2.5 Who could contribute to improving the security or to make these changes happen? Who can contribute to protecting the population?

3. What do you think of the living conditions in the camp? What are the 3 main things that need improvement? (Ask people to rank in order of importance 1-3)

3.1 Who could contribute to improve them? And how?

3.2 What do you think of the work of the camp manager? And of the camp committee?

3.3 Do they contribute to your security?

3.4 And what do you think about the organisations supporting the camp? Which organisation is it?

4. What will determine your decision to return/leave the camp or to decide to settle?

4.1 Are there other factors that you consider important for your decision?

4.2 Do you know what the situation is like in your place of origin? How did you get the information?

4.3 If someone was to decide not to return and to rather settle in this town/village, do you know if this would be possible or if there would any obstacles? Like what?

4.4 What do you or your family anticipate will be your immediate concerns /needs upon return or if you decide to settle here?

5. Do you have any questions for us or other concerns that you would like to tell us about?



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