

Myanmar Situation

05 JULY 2022

The volatile situation in Myanmar following the 01 February 2021 coup has **increased armed conflict and subsequent population displacement** within and across borders, including in Thailand.

As of 4 July 2022, the Royal Thai Government (RTG) reports that **there are 802 refugees remaining** on the Thai side of the border. Since February 2021, the RTG estimates that over 21,000 Myanmar refugees have sought temporary safety in Thailand.

Refugees are sheltered in **temporary safety areas (TSA)**, which are placed under the general jurisdiction of the Royal Thai Army by the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) established by the RTG in March 2021.

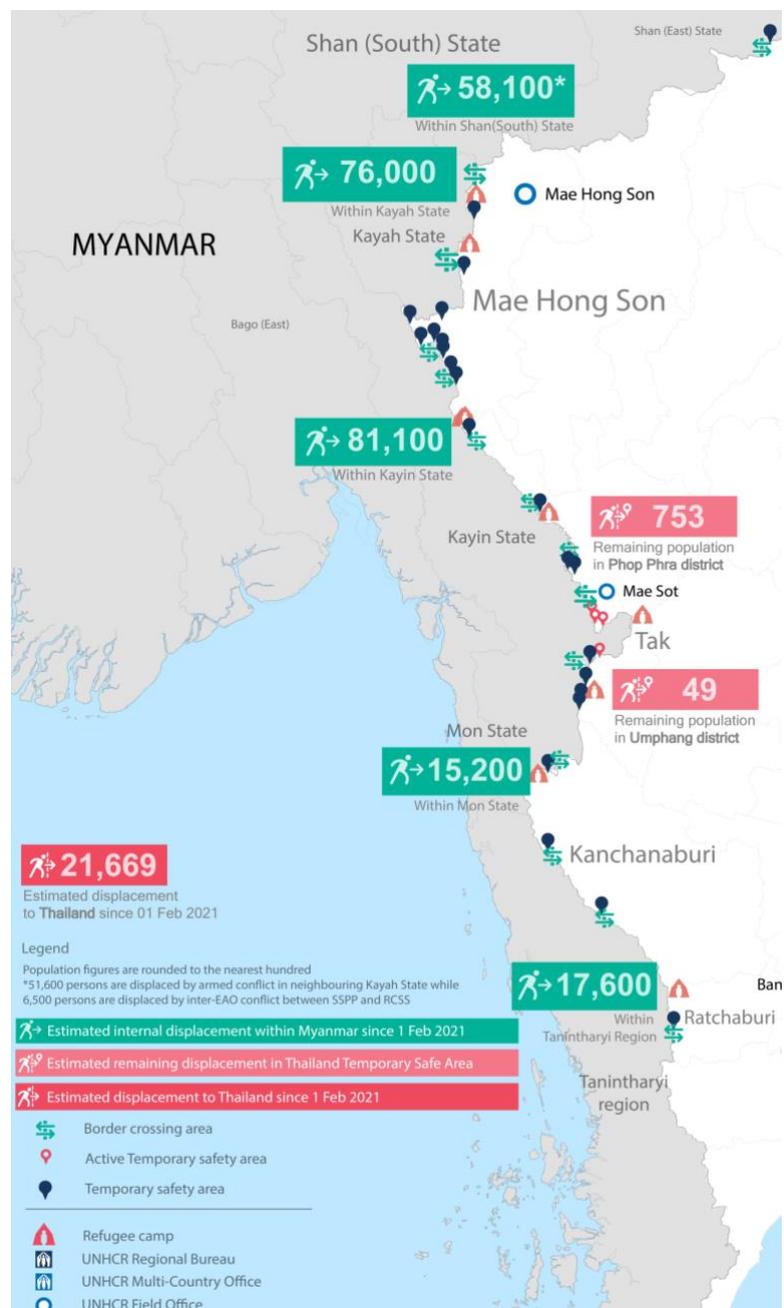
SITUATION OVERVIEW ON THE THAI MYANMAR BORDER

The security situation continues to deteriorate in Southeast Myanmar with the intensification of armed clashes reported between the Tatmadaw and ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) or People's Defence Force (PDF) in several areas. The Military continues to deploy security forces and has increased the use of heavy artilleries. In Kayah State, armed clashes continue, and the State Administration Council(SAC) has been deploying more troops to the area since mid-May. According to the Tagaung Institute of Political Studies and the US-based Wilson Center, there are more than 20,000 resistance fighters in Karenni State

In Kayin State, fierce clashes have been ongoing between the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and the Tatmadaw following a KNLA attack on a military outpost in Myawaddy Township on 26 June. The battle for control over the outpost is the fiercest fighting that has taken place since last year. In neighboring Mon State, around 7,000 residents from six villages in Thaton Township fled their homes due to arson attacks carried out by security forces, the first time such attacks have taken place in the state.

In the Tanintharyi region, The People's Defense Force (PDF), KNU, and the Tatmadaw continue to clash, with the latter pressuring the former with logistic hindrances (e.g., road blockage). Since June 24, around 100 military council troops have been entering the area from Kazina village to Sipin Taung, Myanadi Taung. Fighting was occurring mostly in Dawei and Myeik District and scaled up with the Military using heavy artillery throughout the night.

As of 30 June, the total number of internally displaced people (IDPs) in Myanmar displaced since 1 February is **758,500**, of whom **244,500 are in the southeast provinces** – Kayah, Shan, Kayin, Mon States, and Tanintharyi and Bago regions. In Kayah State, more than 4,000 people were able to return to Loikaw and Demoso Townships. Nevertheless, the security situation in Demoso Township continues to be unstable, with more than 2,000 people unable to return to their places of origin and to experience multiple displacement.



THE CURRENT RESPONSE TO THE REFUGEE SITUATION IN TAK PROVINCE



Since 29 June, the Royal Thai Government (RTG) reported new arrivals of Myanmar refugees in Pho Pra district following clashes between the KNU and Tatmadaw in Mywaddy, opposite Wah Lay Tai village Wah Lay subdistrict, Phop Phra district. Then, there was another influx of individuals to the Umphang District. As a result of the fighting, the RTG reported **1,429 new arrivals** in Thailand since 29 June. Some refugees have already returned to Myanmar, and as of 4 July, there are **802 refugees remaining** in four Temporary Safety Areas, as per the following breakdown: 180 Maw Ker Thai village (Pah Kaew WH), 311 in Wah Lay Nua village, 262 in Muen Rue Chai monastery and the TSA in Umphang district, 49 individuals in Hser Tha village. In addition, over the past weeks, partners have received reports of Myanmar refugees seeking refuge outside the TSA. Regarding the most recent influx. There were reportedly between 800 and 1,500 new arrivals outside TSAs between the village of Waw Lay Tai in the south and Maw Ker Thai village in the north.

In the TSAs, some partners have been able to get minimal access to provide material assistance. (e.g. TBC). The assistance continues to be distributed via the local authorities. However, partners are aware that **humanitarian needs are extensive**. **UNHCR** distributed NFI and **COERR** in TSAs (mats, mosquito nets, tarpaulins, and blankets). In addition, the **International Rescue Committee (IRC)** provided 157 water bottles, ten mobile toilets, and 900 first aid kits. The Food sector via **TBC** provided three days of rice boxes to the group in Pho Pra. As TBC has been granted more access, the NGO has now shifted to providing dried goods for communal cooking. This assistance has been complementary to other food supplies from the local community and community-based groups.

Partners provided plastic sheeting for shelter to individuals accommodated outside of the TSAs. Most new arrivals stay in decaying huts and leaking makeshifts and need tarpaulins to protect them from rain. In Pho Pra, **Save The Children** set up two reading corners and child-friendly spaces with the support of the local community. However, the reading corners had to be suspended due to safety reasons following the airstrikes in Kayin State along the Thai-Myanmar border.

REFUGEE PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN – ACHIEVEMENTS BETWEEN JANUARY – JUNE 2022

The Inter-Sector Working Group will extend the funding appeal until the end of December 2022 based on the same scenario of a possible mass influx of 24,000 individuals over the next six months. Between January and June 2022, the sectors have coordinated the response to assist the Thai-led response during several influxes and set up activities to remain prepared in case of a more significant influx.

Between January and June 2022, newly arrived refugees have only stayed short-term in Temporary Safety Areas and other remote areas on the border. Therefore, the **Shelter Sector** via **TBC** has provided basic shelter in tents, tarpaulins, and plastic sheets. Where there are no shelter facilities, the aim remains that building materials will be supplied to construct shelters designed for weather resistance and privacy in accordance with SPHERE standards. Plastic tarpaulins, bamboo, eucalyptus poles, and fixtures, as well as construction toolkits, will be procured by TBC. In case of new arrivals, the Shelter sector stands ready to provide temporary shelter within 24 hours.

The **WASH Sector** coordinated the joint response of international partners (i.e., **IRC**, **Malteser**, **ICRC**, and **UNICEF**) and locally-based partners (**Committee of Internally Displaced Karen People (CIDKP)**, **Help Without Frontier (HWF)**, and **Imagine Thailand**). The sector distributed personal hygiene items, latrine construction materials, water containers, water buckets,

tarpaulin sheets, sand abate, LLIN mosquito nets, and drinking water bottles to the influx population.

The **NFI Sector** has shifted away from standardized NFIs kits to a distribution informed by the needs and the season (e.g., blankets in January vs. mosquito nets during the rainy season). Between January and June 2022, **UNHCR** distributed sleeping mats, mosquito nets, and tarpaulins to new arrivals from Myanmar in Tak province. **HwF** also contributed to NFI distribution by providing shelter materials, hygiene products, and other materials on a needs-based basis. These were distributed in collaboration with CBOs and CSOs. Partners have not been granted direct access, and the authorities conduct the distribution. Agencies monitor the distribution and delivery of assistance via reports and photos shared by local partners.

The partners from the **Education Sector**, **Save the Children (SCI)**, and **UNICEF** procured 4,800 home-based learning (HBL) kits in preparation for Myanmar Influx and have distributed HBL kits to newly arrived

children. Furthermore, SCI has trained and contracted seven community volunteers to manage book bank corners for the influx of children. More specifically, **SCI** trained the volunteers with a strategy on educational activities and child-safe guiding guidelines. In addition, **UNICEF** has established Temporary Learning Space, Child / Adolescent Friendly Space. The Children Agency also provided training on Psychological First Aid (PFA) and informal education and conducted child protection activities.

Under the **Protection Sector**, SCI provided six child protection training, including Psychological First Aid (PFA) and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS). The training targets 95 child protection practitioners. Besides, **IRC** developed a Protection monitoring tool for Border monitoring translated into Burmese and Thai for use by local CBOs. In Mae Hon Song, **IRC** trained eight partner staff on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) prevention and case management. Furthermore, the sector finalized the translation of protection tools into local languages and the development of referral pathways for gender-based violence in Mae Hong Son and Tak Provinces. The Referral Pathways are one-pagers that list contacts of relevant focal points which can provide adequate protection services for GBV in case of a future influx.

The **Food Sector** via **The Border Consortium (TBC)** has backstopped food security to respond to each influx of new arrivals, tapping into local partnerships and networks to maximize delivery and conduct joint assessments and monitoring. **TBC** remains committed to providing humanitarian food assistance to all new refugees as soon as the need is identified, whether in Temporary Safety Areas, or other remote areas on the border. This is either by means of pre-prepared food parcels for the first few days, central kitchen preparations, nutritionally complete food baskets (rice, pulses, oil, salt, tinned fish) for households, or cash equivalents. Refugees' special dietary needs have also been considered, including supplementary and complementary food for pregnant and lactating women and children under five years of age. Food items have been prepositioned with local suppliers and arrangements made for temporary storage and distribution, together with refugee community representatives and partners. Moreover, **Help Without Frontier (HwF)** has distributed 2,442 food sets, each consisting of two weeks of food rations for a family of 4. The distribution was conducted via the Border Emergency Fund (BEF) and reached 4,563 people, of whom 361 are children

Thank you to all our donors who have generously contributed to the Refugee Preparedness and Response Plan since June 2021: ECHO, Canada, Denmark, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. Contributions have also been received from Caritas and its partners, OANDA, Save the Children and UNICEF.

