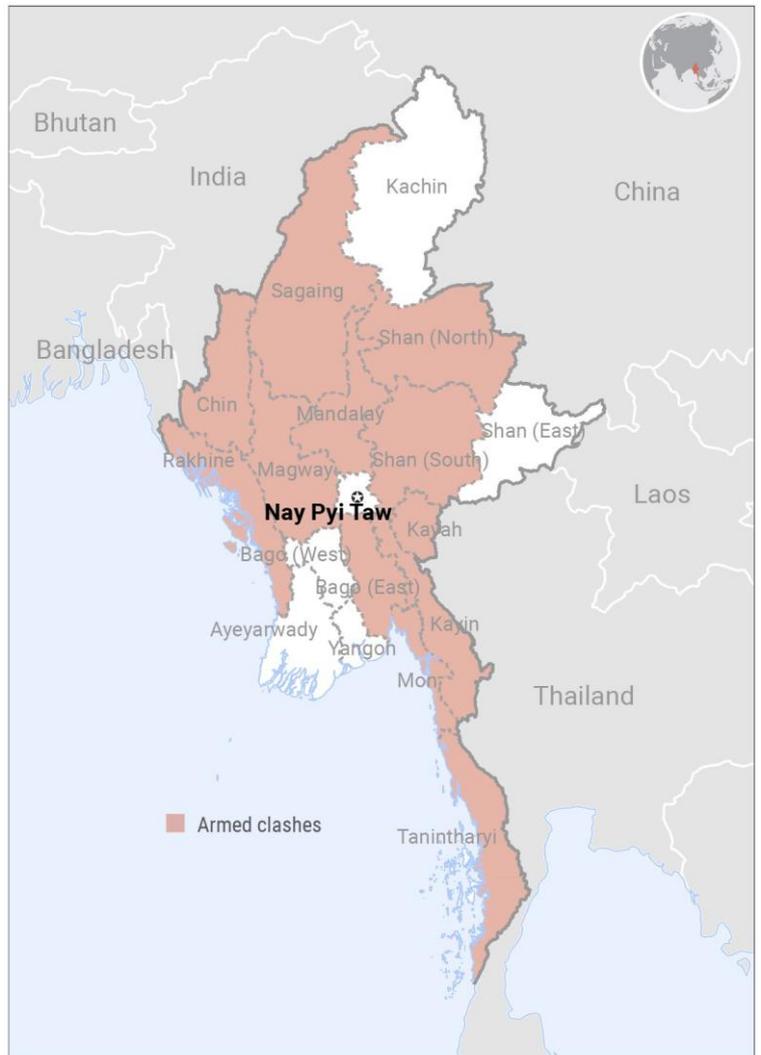


Highlight

- Conflict between the Myanmar Armed Forces (MAF) and various groups, including Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) and People's Defence Forces (PDFs), continues in many parts of the country.
- More townships across the Northwest and Southeast have been affected by widening conflict, causing fresh displacement and civilian casualties.
- More than half a million people in multiple states and regions have been newly displaced due to the escalation of fighting since 26 October. This adds to the 2 million people who were already displaced before the current escalation began.
- Despite insecurity, access, and telecommunication challenges, small-scale provision of essential humanitarian assistance to affected people continues where possible using a variety of flexible approaches.
- In northern Shan, an estimated 50,000 people displaced in Laukkaing township, on the border with China, have only been able to receive minimal assistance. Humanitarian partners are working to negotiate access and provide assistance.
- Key transport routes in townships experiencing active fighting nationwide have been blocked both by the MAF and EAOs, restricting people's movements to safer locations and hampering humanitarian access. Lashio and Loikaw airports remain closed.
- In Rakhine, commodity prices are rising due to shortages of food and daily household items in local markets, caused by blockages of roads and waterways both within and into the state.
- As of the end of 2023, the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for the year is only 29 per cent funded. An urgent injection of funding is critically needed to enable humanitarians to respond effectively and at-scale to the escalating needs. Provisional approval has been granted for a CERF Rapid Response Allocation of up to US\$7 million to address needs generated by the recent escalation of conflict and surging displacement.



Situation Overview

Intense military hostilities continue between the MAF and various armed groups, including EAOs and PDFs, across multiple states and regions. More than 500,000 people have been newly displaced in northern and southern Shan, Kayah, Rakhine, Chin, Sagaing, Mandalay, eastern Bago, Kayin, Mon, and Tanintharyi due to the surge in conflict since late October 2023. This widespread displacement is creating urgent humanitarian needs for support, including food, shelter, and medical aid.

to both new and protracted internally displaced people, as well as host communities. Additionally, almost 283 civilians, including men, women, and children, have reportedly died and 334 others have been injured in the fighting and related insecurity over the past month, according to field reports.

Northern Shan

- In northern Shan, the ongoing armed conflict since late October has led to significant civilian casualties, with 95 fatalities and 152 injuries reported. The conflict has damaged or destroyed more than 320 houses and civilian properties across 6 townships. Heavy fighting on 26 November reportedly resulted in the destruction of more than 150 cargo trucks and several buildings in the 105-Mile Border Trade Zone in Muse township. The conflict has driven more than 84,000 people to seek refuge away from the fighting. Nearly 82,000 IDPs are in 151 sites across 16 townships in northern Shan, 1,800 are in Mansi township in Kachin, and 500 are in Pyin Oo Lwin township in Mandalay. These IDPs are predominantly being sheltered in religious compounds, host communities, or are staying in informal sites in forested areas or paddy fields near the China-Myanmar border.
- Humanitarian partners are providing aid, including cash, food, and healthcare to those affected. More than half (55 per cent) of IDPs are estimated to have received assistance, but there are still gaps in Namhkan, Nawngkhio, and Pyin Oo Lwin townships due to security and access issues. In the border areas of Laukkaing township, around 50,000 displaced people have only received minimal assistance. Significant needs include cash, food, health supplies, shelter materials, NFIs, and dignity kits for the new IDPs. UN agencies and partners are working to overcome challenges in accessing and assisting the displaced populations.

Rakhine and southern Chin

- In Rakhine and southern Chin, the conflict between the MAF and the Arakan Army (AA) has escalated in Paletwa, southern Chin, and many Rakhine townships since the last report. Continuous artillery shelling and airstrikes have led to at least 20 fatalities and more than 85 injuries. Since 13 November, more than 69,000 people have been newly displaced by the AA-MAF fighting, with large numbers from Pauktaw, Minbya, and Ponnagyun townships. The humanitarian response for the 205,000 pre-existing IDPs, as well as those who have been newly displaced has been severely constrained due to the closure of roads and waterways. The closures have also led to shortages and increased prices of essential goods in markets. Some local organizations are managing to provide limited aid despite the challenges.

Northwest

- In the Northwest, armed clashes in nearly 40 townships across Chin, Mandalay, Magway, and Sagaing have caused the displacement of approximately 150,000 people since early November. The hostilities, which have included indiscriminate shelling and airstrikes, have reportedly resulted in 90 civilian deaths and 42 injuries, along with the destruction of more than 100 homes and public infrastructure. Some IDPs have returned to their villages in parts of Chin and Sagaing where security has improved. However, humanitarian access remains hindered by ongoing fighting and movement restrictions, further complicated by a fuel crisis and serious banking issues.

Southeast

- In the Southeast, the escalation of armed conflict between the MAF and various armed groups, including the Karen National Union (KNU), has led to an estimated 180,000 people being displaced across multiple townships since 11 November. The conflict has claimed at least 78 civilian lives and caused 55 injuries, mostly in Kayah and southern Shan. Humanitarian agencies, with the support of religious leaders and other stakeholders, are providing aid and have managed to relocate some IDPs to safer areas or provide them with temporary shelter. The UN and partners are seeking approval for further assessments of needs and aid distributions to the Kayah IDPs who are sheltering in southern Shan.

Humanitarian needs and response

- Humanitarian partners have identified the most urgent humanitarian needs across conflict-affected areas to be food, safe shelter, non-food items and hygiene kits, basic health services and protection support.
- Faith-based organizations and local responders, in collaboration with humanitarian organizations, continue to provide critical and lifesaving assistance to displaced and affected communities wherever access is possible. Simultaneously, operational partners are planning for the movement of life-saving stocks for rapid distribution, to address emerging needs in the various states and regions where fighting is taking place, however supply stockpiles are heavily depleted due to underfunding and the rapid escalation in needs.
- Advocacy on the obligations of parties to the conflict on the protection of civilians has been undertaken, particularly as this related to displaced people.

Key challenges and gaps

- Ongoing fighting and roadblocks are rapidly increasing protection risks and are severely restricting the movement of essential goods and people seeking places of safety. This is significantly impeding aid delivery and is placing humanitarian responders at heightened security risk, complicating the provision of urgent assistance, and amplifying the vulnerability of affected populations.
- Disruptions to telecommunication services are hindering communication with affected communities and the assessment of their emerging needs, essential for guiding humanitarian responses. Shortages of cash and commodities, combined with the rising costs of essential items in conflict-impacted areas, are straining the resources of host communities already supporting new IDPs.
- As of the end of the year, the 2023 HRP for the year stands at only 29 per cent funded. An urgent injection of funding is critically needed to allow humanitarians to respond effectively to escalating needs at scale. Provisional approval for an allocation of up to \$7 million under the CERF Rapid Response window has been approved by the Emergency Relief Coordinator to respond to the sharp increase in displacement since late October. It is hoped this will be a catalyst for further donor funding.

*** Information in this update is based on initial inputs from humanitarian partners on the ground. The situation is fluid and numbers are fluctuating.*

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