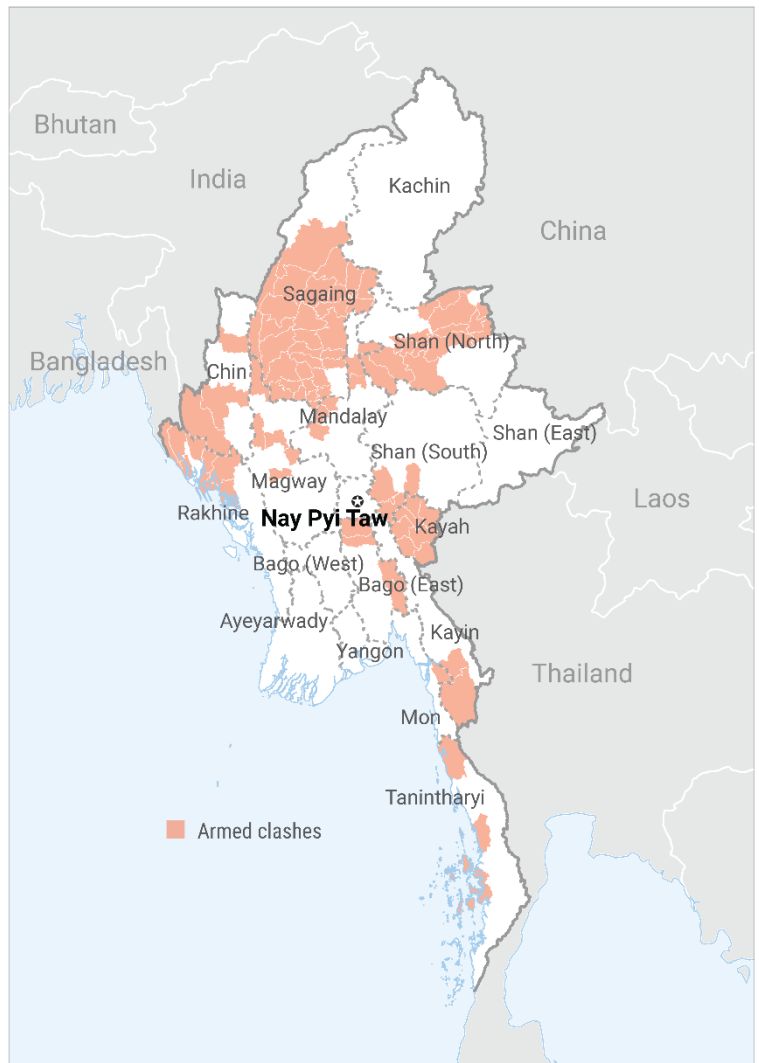


### Highlights

- More than half a million people are estimated to have been newly displaced due to the escalation of armed conflict since 26 October, although figures are fluid due to returns and re-displacement, while communication challenges are making numbers difficult to verify. This adds to the 2 million people who were already displaced before the current escalation of violence.
- Fighting between the Myanmar Armed Forces (MAF) and various groups, including Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) and People's Defence Forces (PDFs), persists in about two-thirds of the country.
- Intense clashes have been reported in many townships across northern and southern Shan, Rakhine and Chin, Sagaing, Magway, Kayah, eastern Bago and Kayin in early December, causing further humanitarian needs and challenges.
- Despite insecurity, access, and telecommunication challenges, provision of essential humanitarian assistance to affected people continues where possible using a variety of flexible approaches by humanitarian responders and partners.
- In northern Shan, an estimated 85 per cent of the newly displaced population in northern Shan have received some form of basic humanitarian assistance at least once although this is not sufficient to fully meet their needs.
- Extensive needs and gaps remain in providing regular support to all people in need with displaced people in some parts of the country normally heavily reliant of humanitarian assistance for their survival.
- The UN and partners are exploring pathways to access a greater proportion of affected people, particularly at the China-Myanmar border.
- Key challenges include road closures, movement restrictions, as well as the safety and security of aid workers. The response is further complicated by a fuel crisis, serious banking issues, and soaring commodity prices.
- In Rakhine, high market prices and the scarcity of food and household items have added layers of hardship for entire populations and vulnerable communities, including internally displaced people (IDPs) who have been facing the consequences of years of conflict and the aftermath of Cyclone Mocha.
- The 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) is grossly under-funded with only 29 per cent of required funding received from the donor community. An urgent injection of support is critical to enable humanitarians to respond effectively and at-scale to the escalating needs in Myanmar.



## Situation Overview

Six weeks into the renewed fighting, intense fighting continues between the MAF and various armed groups, including EAOs and PDFs, across multiple states and regions. Ongoing armed clashes, air strikes, landmines, arbitrary arrests and roadblocks are rapidly increasing protection risks for civilians and are severely restricting the movement of essential goods, as well as people seeking places of safety.

More than 578,000 people are estimated to 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. However, these numbers are very difficult to verify in the current conditions with people constantly on the move both between displacement locations and back to their places of origin. Telecommunications blackouts in many conflict-affected areas are also making verification more challenging. Work continues to triangulate numbers across many areas. The widespread displacement is creating urgent humanitarian needs for support for both new and protracted IDPs, as well as host communities. Almost 363 civilians, including men, women, and children, have reportedly been killed and 461 others have been injured in the fighting and related insecurity over six weeks, according to field reports.

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 agencies, continue to provide critical and lifesaving assistance to displaced and affected communities wherever access is possible. Despite an extremely challenging operational context, including supply stockpiles that are heavily depleted due to underfunding as well as the rapid and unpredictable escalation of needs, humanitarian 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 and humanitarian needs persist. An emergency allocation of US\$7 million from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) was granted this week to provide survival support to people most affected by the escalation of violence and surging displacement.

## Humanitarian Needs and Response

### Northeast

- In northern Shan, the intensified conflict is continuing in several townships in December. Heavy fighting has reportedly claimed at least 20 civilian casualties, including 4 children, and destroyed dozens of houses in Namhkan, Muse, Kyaukme and Hseni townships between 2 and 6 December. Since late October, conflict-related hostilities have reportedly killed 126 civilians, injured additional 204, and damaged or destroyed 400 homes in multiple townships. The ongoing conflict has forced 115,000 people to flee their homes since the escalation began; 105,000 remain in 178 sites across 16 of 22 townships in northern Shan and some 10,000 have returned to their places of origin, as of 7 December. The newly displaced people 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 have had access to 70 per cent of the 178 displacement sites. Approximately 85 per cent of the displaced people in northern Shan are estimated to have received some form of basic humanitarian assistance at least once, but this remains insufficient to fully meet needs. In the border areas of Laukkaing Township, more than 40,000 displaced people have only received minimal assistance. UN agencies and partners are working to overcome challenges in accessing and meeting the emerging humanitarian needs here.
- In Kachin, the security situation remains volatile, with ongoing tension and clashes at the border area with Sagaing. Despite no reports of significant displacement, prices of basic commodities including food and fuel have surged since the escalated conflict in neighboring northern Shan and Sagaing began in late October. Telecommunications and internet services in Kachin have been challenging, with minimal availability or no access in some areas, hampering all communications including between humanitarian partners.

### Rakhine and southern Chin

- In Rakhine and southern Chin, the conflict between the MAF and the Arakan Army (AA) has persisted, with intense fighting reported in Maungdaw, Pauktaw and Paletwa townships to date. Indiscriminate artillery shelling and gunfire have caused a surge in civilian casualties; 32 fatalities and 96 injuries were reported between 13 November and 4 December. Since the resumption of fighting on 13 November, arbitrary arrests have continued across Rakhine, with more than 130 people placed in detention for unlawful association. Hundreds of homes have reportedly been burnt down in Ponnagyun and Pauktaw townships. The renewed conflict has resulted in the new displacement of more than 101,000 people, mostly from Pauktaw, Minbya and Ponnagyun townships since 13 November.
- The humanitarian response for the 205,000 pre-existing and new IDPs has been severely constrained due to the closure of roads and waterways and the absence of travel authorizations. The closures have also led to shortages and increased prices of essential goods in markets. Food scarcity has become a major issue, particularly for low-income families, due to high commodity prices and limited availability. Fuel stocks have also been running low, with prices increasing sharply,

affecting the capacity of local organizations to provide aid. Some local organizations and responders are managing to provide limited aid to some affected people despite these enormous challenges.

### Northwest

- In the Northwest, armed clashes have intensified in Homalin, Myinmu and Pale townships in Sagaing, and Chauk, Gangaw, Pwintbyu, Saw and Seikphyu townships in Magway since the start of December. As a result, about 7,300 people from Homalin and Saw townships fled their homes to safer locations. This has added up to nearly 170,000 IDPs across Chin, Sagaing, Magway and Mandalay since early November although figures are still being verified. The hostilities, which have included indiscriminate gunfire, artillery and air strikes, have reportedly resulted in 112 civilian deaths and 60 injuries, as well as the destruction of about 430 homes and religious buildings.
- Humanitarian access remains hindered by ongoing fighting, threats to the safety and security of humanitarian workers, road closures, movement restrictions, lack of travel authorizations, further complicated by a fuel crisis and serious banking issues. However, humanitarian and community-based organizations continue to provide limited assistance to people in need. In Mandalay, partners provided relief items to some 10,500 IDPs in Nyaung-U township and food assistance to some 240 IDPs in Pyinoolwin township. In Sagaing, multi-purpose cash assistance has been provided to nearly 10,000 IDPs in Ayadaw, Indaw, Kale, Katha, Kawlin, Mawlaik, Tigyaing Tamu, Wetlet, Ye-U and Yinmarbin townships.

### Southeast

- In the Southeast, armed conflict continued in almost all states and regions in the first week of December. Intense armed clashes were reported in Kyaukkyi Township in eastern Bago; Demoso, Hpruso, and Loikaw townships in Kayah; Pekon Township in southern Shan; and Kawkareik Township in Kayin. Since 11 November, the indiscriminate use of small and heavy weapons has resulted in the reported deaths of 93 civilians and injuries to an additional 101 people, many of them along the Shan-Kayah border. The destruction of numerous public assets and civilian properties, including religious buildings, hospitals, and homes, was reported as a result of urban fighting in Loikaw, the capital of Kayah. The ongoing escalation of conflict in the Southeast has led to an estimated 232,500 people being displaced in multiple townships. This includes the new displacement of an estimated 40,000 people from Kyondoe and Kawkareik towns in Kawkareik Township; 7,000 people from Kyaikdon and Kyainseikgyi towns in Kyainseikgyi Township; and 3,000 people from and around Mone town in Kyaukkyi Township since 2 December. These figures are preliminary and are being verified. Given the fluidity of the situation and the nature of the displacement, verification of figures is particularly challenging. Humanitarian agencies, with the support of religious leaders and other stakeholders, are providing aid. However, humanitarian needs are growing, particularly for food, shelter, medicines, blankets, and mosquito nets. The UN and partners are seeking to undertake further assessments of needs and distribute assistance to IDPs from Kayah who are sheltering in southern Shan, but travel authorizations remain pending.

## Key Challenges and Gaps

- The surge in conflict 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 engagement with affected communities and the assessment of their emerging needs which is essential for guiding the humanitarian response. Shortages of cash and commodities, combined with the rising costs of essential items in conflict-affected areas, are straining the resources of host communities already supporting new IDPs.
- The 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan is only 29 per cent funded. An urgent injection of funding is critically needed to allow humanitarians to respond effectively to escalating needs at scale.

**\*\* Information in this update is based on initial inputs from humanitarian partners on the ground. The situation is fluid and estimated figures are subject to change.**

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