On 9 October and 3 November, unidentified armed groups attacked the Border Guard Police in Maungdaw and Rathedaung Townships of northern Rakhine State, followed by recurrent violence. The Government forces initiated security operations in the affected areas, which are ongoing, to apprehend those responsible.

The movement of UN personnel in the most affected areas has been restricted by the authorities.

There are reports of people being displaced by the recent violence and potentially in need of food assistance, subject to verifications and assessments.

There are concerns that the recent shocks can have a serious impact on the food security situation, both due to the disruption of food distributions and the timing that may prevent people from harvesting their crops.

On 2-3 November, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator along with the Ambassadors of China, Egypt, the European Union, India, Indonesia, Thailand, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States of America participated in the Government-led mission to visit several affected areas.

From its field office in Maungdaw, WFP provides regular cash and food assistance to 152,000 of the most vulnerable and food-insecure people in northern Rakhine State. The recent security incidents have disrupted food distributions for the month of October.

Normally, 44,000 people receive food or cash assistance during the lean agricultural season. WFP provides nutrition support to 43,000 pregnant women, nursing mothers, young malnourished children, people living with HIV and TB clients. WFP also gives nutritious biscuit snacks to 65,000 schoolchildren in northern Rakhine.

On 6 November, the United Nations Department of Safety & Security (UNDSS) and WFP conducted a rapid assessment in the four affected villages of north Maungdaw Township. Local authorities have granted WFP an exclusive access to distribute relief food to people found most food-insecure.
Food and Nutrition Assistance

- WFP’s monthly relief food basket for people benefiting from the lean season programme from May to November, consists of 13.5 kg of rice, 1.8 kg of pulses, 450 ml of cooking oil and 150 g of salt per person. In areas with access to markets, people receive monthly cash-based transfers amounting to MMK 8,500 (US$ 7) per person.

- WFP provides a monthly ration of 3 kg of blended fortified nutritious food to pregnant women, nursing mothers and young malnourished children to prevent wasting. Children being treated for moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) receive 6 kg of nutrient-dense food monthly. WFP distributes a daily ration of 75 g of high-energy biscuits to schoolchildren.

- From 28-31 October, WFP in partnership with local NGO Myanmar Heart Development Organization (MHDO) was able to resume assistance and delivered cash to 9,000 of the most vulnerable people from both Muslim and Rakhine communities in downtown and south Buthidaung. Distributions for the remaining 11,000 people in the northern part of the township have been suspended due to ongoing security operations.

- On 6 November, WFP received an authorisation to deliver food to its regular recipients and newly displaced persons in Kyat Yoe Pyin, Ngar Sar Kyeu, Pyaung Pite and War Deik villages in north Maungdaw. Distributions of two-week food rations, consisting of 7 kg of rice, 800 g of pulses, 450 g of oil, and 100 g of salt, initially for the 6,500 of the most food-insecure people are expected to commence on 8 November.

- WFP is on standby to resume regular food and cash distributions for the remaining 11,000 people in Buthidaung and 50,000 people in Maungdaw. Furthermore, 17,000 pregnant women, nursing mothers and young children in the rural areas of Buthidaung will be able to receive nutrient-dense food as soon as logistical difficulties are overcome.

- Given the current volatile security situation, the 6,000 returned/resettled former internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Kyauk Taw, Minbya and Mrauk U (Zone 1), Myaebon, Pauktaw, Rathedaung and Sittwe, who had been hitherto excluded from the targeted protracted relief beneficiary list of most vulnerable, have been reinstated and receive full food rations.

Supply Chain

- WFP has sufficient stocks in Maungdaw for the initial distributions to meet the immediate food needs of the affected people. Additional food supplies are currently in transit from the WFP warehouse in Sittwe.

- WFP has not been able to reach the distribution points to provide nutrient-dense food to 17,000 pregnant women, nursing mothers and young malnourished children in rural areas of Buthidaung Township accessible only by river. The current volatile situation has made it challenging to find boat transporters willing to move the food. WFP is now working with service providers and partners to resolve this logistical issue, which is not related to humanitarian access.

Resourcing Update

- WFP urgently requires US$ 30 million in order to continue providing timely and uninterrupted food assistance to the most vulnerable people, most importantly conflict affected IDPs, through June 2017. WFP overall needs for 2017 currently amount to US$ 53 million. Given the lead time of procurement and delivery of food to operational areas, new contributions are required as soon as possible. A major pipeline break is expected in January 2017 if no fresh funding is received.

Contacts

- Dom Scalpelli
  Country Director & Resident Representative

- Arsen Sahakyan
  Partnerships Officer
  arsen.sahakyan@wfp.org

Photo: Children and adults benefiting from various WFP food assistance programmes in Rakhine State ©WFP