



World Food  
Programme

SAVING  
LIVES  
CHANGING  
LIVES

# WFP Myanmar Country Brief February 2019



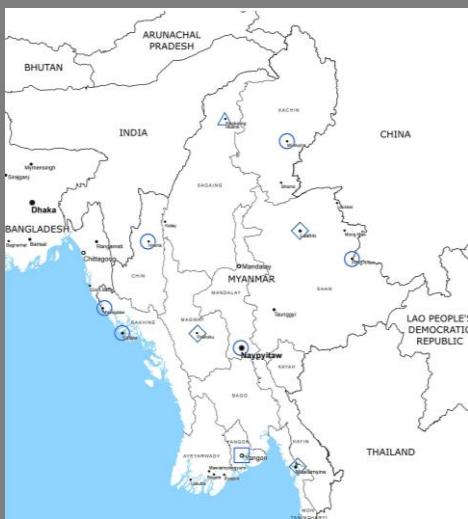
A family of refugees from Thailand on return to Myanmar

## Operational Context

Myanmar is amidst an important political and socio-economic transformation. The country is highly susceptible to natural disasters and climate risks. An estimated 37.5 percent of its 53 million population live near or below the poverty line. Many struggle with physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food with women, girls, elderly persons with disabilities and minorities affected most.

Wasting prevails at 7 percent nationally. Myanmar is one of the world's 20 high tuberculosis burden countries. It is also among 35 countries accounting for 90 percent of new HIV infections globally.

Ethnic conflict exacerbates an already fragile situation. Over one million people have been displaced from their places of origin since June 2011. With restrictions on movement and lack of access to livelihoods, many conflict-affected populations rely on assistance to survive. Attacks on border outposts in August 2017 and ensuing violence forced over 700,000 Muslims to flee Rakhine State and seek refuge in Bangladesh, leading to a humanitarian crisis and activation of WFP's corporate Level 3 response, since downgraded to Level 2.



2015 Human Development Index:  
145 out of 188

Chronic malnutrition: 29% of children  
under the age of five

## In Numbers



550,162 people assisted in February 2019

US\$ 1.05 million cash-based transfers made

4,096 mt of food assistance distributed

US\$ 16.05 m six months (March 2019 - August 2019)  
net funding requirements

## Operational Updates

**Rakhine:** The ongoing armed conflict between Myanmar military (Tatmadaw) and Arakan Army, a Rakhine ethnic armed group, in Rakhine State and Chin states has expanded into Mrauk-U Township of central Rakhine State causing further internal displacements in addition to the existing 6,000 displaced people. WFP has offered to the Government its readiness to assist the newly displaced communities, and WFP has continued to collaborate with local authorities, other UN agencies and humanitarian actors in verifying the needs of the newly displaced people.

WFP continued providing emergency relief assistance to 98,300 conflict-affected people from 187 Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu villages in Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships of northern Rakhine State. In addition, WFP reached over 19,700 pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and children under 5 years through nutrition interventions. In central Rakhine, 5,700 PLWs and 24,300 children under 5 years were reached with nutrition interventions, and over 128,500 food-insecure people received relief assistance.

**Kachin:** WFP continued to provide cash for emergency food assistance to 44,500 displaced people in 12 townships of Kachin State. WFP coordinated food security and livelihoods needs in both government-controlled and non-government-controlled areas through its role as the Chair of the Kachin Food Security Sector.

**Shan:** WFP's emergency relief distributions continued to support 15,000 beneficiaries across northern Shan State as well as from conflict-affected villages in the northernmost part of Kokang Self-Administered Zone. Over 1,900 PLWs and children under 2 years in Shan State received nutrition assistance.

- School Feeding:** WFP continued to provide nutritional snacks or meals to 245,000 primary school children from 4,300 schools in Magwe, Mandalay, Sagaing and Tanintharyi regions and in Chin, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Mon, Rakhine and Shan states until the academic year ended in the second week of February.
- Community Asset Creation:** Over 1,800 vulnerable people from Kayin and Mon states benefitted from WFP's cash for asset activities. Thirty-seven community asset creation projects were under implementation in Kayin and Mon states such as renovation of roads, irrigation canals, home gardens and ponds.

Contact info: [wfpmyanmar.pi@wfp.org](mailto:wfpmyanmar.pi@wfp.org)

Country Director: Dom Scalpelli

Further information: [www.wfp.org/countries/myanmar](http://www.wfp.org/countries/myanmar)

## Operational Updates cont.

- HIV & TB:** WFP assisted 2,300 HIV and tuberculosis patients in Kachin, Mon, Shan and Rakhine states, and Yangon Region. Three agreements with cooperating partners were under review for implementation throughout 2019.
- Nutrition in non-emergency areas:** Over 700 children and PLWs from suburban Yangon Region benefited from nutrition interventions.

## Challenges

The Rakhine State Government's restriction on international organizations, except WFP and ICRC, from conducting field operations in Buthidaung, Maungdaw, Ponnagyun, Kyauktaw and Rathedaung townships remained effective. WFP continued to advocate for unimpeded access of humanitarian assistance to all those in need by other partners too, as not all needs can be addressed with only life-saving food aid.

## Assistance to refugee returnees across Thai border

More than 500 refugees returned to Myanmar from Thailand mid-February through the reception center in Myawaddy, Kayin State, facilitated by the two governments and UN agencies. As with previous returns, WFP provided 2,100 Thai Baht (US\$ 66.3) per person covering for six months of food rations as part of the return package. WFP's cash transfers are complemented by the assistance of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

## New Project for Humanitarian and Development Reponse in Kachin, Rakhine and Shan states

The Government of Japan and eight UN agencies, including WFP, signed a US\$ 37 million value agreement on 26 February in Nay Pyi Taw to implement humanitarian and development projects in Shan, Kachin and Rakhine states throughout 2019.

With the new funding from the Government of Japan (US\$ 10.9 million in WFP's case), WFP will be able to assist up to 500,000 beneficiaries through emergency relief, school feeding, community asset creation and nutrition interventions including support to HIV/TB patients.



Photo: H.E. Mr. Ichiro Maruyama, Ambassador of Japan to Myanmar (left), and Mr. Domenico Scalpelli, Country Director of WFP Myanmar (right), exchanging agreement notes during the signing ceremony

## Donors & Funding Sources to WFP Myanmar Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)

Australia, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Germany, Italy, Japan, Japan Association for WFP, the Republic of Korea, LIFT, Luxembourg, Myanmar Humanitarian Fund, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Switzerland, the Republic of Turkey, the Russian Federation, United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund, the United States of America.