



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Myanmar Country Brief

April 2020



Photo: Migrant returnees collecting WFP-supported cooked meals in a quarantine site in Myawaddy Township along the Thai-Myanmar border. © WFP/ Moh Moh Win Aung

Operational Context

Myanmar continues to present a complex and dynamic operating context where ongoing socio-economic and political challenges, including conflict, displacement, widespread poverty and food insecurity, hinder development efforts. An estimated 24.8 percent of its 54 million population live near or below the poverty line. Many struggle with inadequate physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food, with women, girls, persons with disabilities and minorities affected most.

Malnutrition is a major challenge, and wasting rates prevail at 6.5 percent nationally. Likewise, Myanmar is one of the world's 20 high tuberculosis (TB) burden countries. It is also among the 35 countries accounting for 90 percent of new HIV infections globally. Ethnic conflict exacerbates an already fragile situation. Over 1 million people have been displaced from their places of origin since June 2011. With restrictions on movement and limited access to livelihoods, many conflict-affected people urgently need food assistance. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic presents particular risks in humanitarian settings in Myanmar, where internally displaced persons in overcrowded camps and communities in conflict-affected areas are at higher risk in the event of local-level outbreaks. Moreover, COVID-19 is likely to have a significant impact on livelihoods and further adverse socio-economic consequences on poor communities across Myanmar.

WFP implemented its first operation in Myanmar in 1978 in northern Rakhine and established its first office in 1994. Given the protracted humanitarian crisis in Rakhine, high rates of malnutrition countrywide, and high susceptibility to natural hazards, WFP remains committed to improving coordination with its national and international partners and developing innovative solutions to meet acute needs across the country.

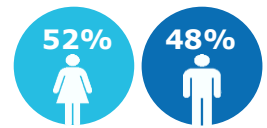
Read the [Annual Country Report 2019](#) to learn more about key WFP activities and results in Myanmar during 2019.



- Population: **54.1 million**
- Income Level: **Lower middle**
- 2019 Human Development Index: **145 out of 189**
- Chronic malnutrition: **29% of children aged 6-59 months**

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In Numbers



354,500 people assisted in April 2020

3,030 metric tonnes of food distributed

US\$ 2.0 million cash-based transfers made

US\$ 22.54 million six months (May - October 2020) net funding requirements

Operational Updates

- Response to COVID-19:** WFP provided food and nutrition assistance to over 10,000 migrant returnees under quarantine in Kayin, Mon and Yangon, as requested by the authorities. As for common services support, WFP regularly updated partners on supply chain information and engaged partners to utilize WFP's newly established International Consolidation Hub in Guangzhou, China, and the WFP-managed UN Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) in Subang, Malaysia, for transporting COVID-19 supplies (Please refer to Situation Report #2; #3 and #4 for further details).
- Rakhine and Chin:** Months of fighting between the Myanmar military and the ethnic armed group, the Arakan Army, have left thousands of people in southern Chin State isolated and food-insecure. WFP, in close coordination with the Chin State Government, provided emergency food and cash assistance to some 3,700 conflict-affected people in Paletwa Town. The WFP delivery of assistance was hampered by a security incident in which a convoy of WFP-contracted trucks came under attack by unidentified armed persons while en route to Paletwa.

Across Rakhine State, despite a volatile security situation, WFP reached 16,300 newly-displaced people. In northern Rakhine, WFP assisted 96,000 conflict-affected people in March with emergency food and nutrition assistance, including 3,100 pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and 17,600 children aged 6-59 months in Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships. In central Rakhine, WFP provided 130,500 food-insecure people with food and cash assistance, including 19,600 children aged 6-59 months and 4,500 PLW who received fortified blended food.

- Kachin:** WFP assisted 44,000 displaced people with cash-based transfers, in addition to providing fortified blended food to 1,200 children aged 6-23 months and 720 PLW.
- Shan:** WFP distributed cash to 7,200 displaced people across northern Shan State. WFP's monthly nutrition assistance benefited 2,750 children aged 6-23 months and 1,400 PLW.

Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	May – Oct 2020 Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
425.3 m	152.9 m	22.54 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Crisis-affected people in food-insecure areas meet their food and nutrition needs all year round.

Activities:

- **Activity 1:** Provide unconditional food transfers and/or cash-based transfers (CBTs) to populations affected by crisis.

Strategic Outcome 2: Vulnerable people in states and regions with high food insecurity and/or malnutrition have access to food all year round.

Activities:

- **Activity 2:** Provide technical advice, policy support and training for the Government to improve delivery of national social protection and emergency preparedness programmes and food systems.
- **Activity 3:** Implement a comprehensive social school feeding programme in targeted schools in support of the national programme.
- **Activity 4:** Provide conditional food or cash-based assistance in support of the creation and rehabilitation of assets, combined with nutrition messaging for targeted populations.

Strategic Result 2: End malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 3: Children under 5 in Myanmar have improved nutrition in line with national targets by 2022.

Activities:

- **Activity 6:** Provide implementation support, research-based advice and technical assistance on national policies and action plans for the Government and partners.
- **Activity 7:** Implement preventive nutrition interventions for adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and girls, and children under the age of two, and roll out community infant and young child feeding programmes, CBTs for mothers of young children, and social behaviour change communication SBCC).
- **Activity 8:** Provide specialized nutritious foods for the treatment and management of acute malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women and adolescent girls, and children under the age of five.
- **Activity 9:** Provide unconditional food and/or cash-based assistance combined with nutrition messaging and counselling for people living with HIV and TB patients.

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

Australia, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Germany, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Livelihoods and Food Security Fund (LIFT), Luxembourg, Myanmar Humanitarian Fund, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Private Donors (including Japan Association for WFP), Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland, Republic of Turkey, United Kingdom, United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund, United States of America

*Listed in alphabetical order.

Operational Updates (continued)

- **Yangon peri-urban areas:** To allow more flexibility for beneficiaries in purchasing essential food, WFP transitioned to cash-based transfers in April to 400 people living with HIV and tuberculosis.

Monitoring

- WFP introduced remote monitoring in all the operational areas to track the food and nutrition security of WFP-supported beneficiaries.
- WFP market monitor in early April showed an increase in the average prices of the four main food commodities in Myanmar compared to March. These included a significant price spike for pulses (16 percent), rice (6 percent), oil (4 percent) and salt (2 percent). While COVID-19 uncertainties prompted people to purchase more quantities of food than normal, sufficient quantities of basic food commodities were available in the markets.

Challenges

- Due to a volatile security situation, WFP was unable to reach 5,000 IDP beneficiaries in Minbya and Myebon townships in central Rakhine. WFP efforts are ongoing to reach these beneficiaries.

WFP adapts its humanitarian operations amidst COVID-19 challenges

To minimize exposure to the risk of COVID-19, WFP has developed a new set of standard operating procedures for its food and cash distributions. In April, WFP shifted its emergency relief distributions to two- to three-months cycle in Kachin, central Rakhine and northern Shan states.

Upon their arrival at the distribution sites, WFP beneficiaries are required to wash their hands either at handwashing facilities or using hand sanitizers. In addition, physical distancing is practiced, where people are divided into small groups and asked to stay 1.5 metres apart from one another.

Furthermore, WFP has procured personal protective equipment such as masks, gloves and basic hygiene supplies for WFP and cooperating partners staff to wear throughout the distribution and monitoring processes.



Photo: While loading WFP relief food assistance onto boats in central Rakhine, labourers are required to wear masks and maintain a physical distance. © WFP/ Photo Library