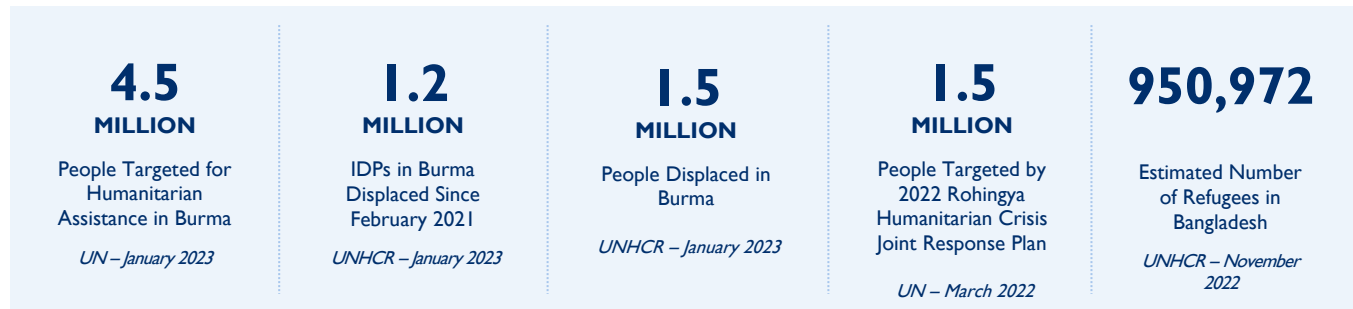


Burma and Bangladesh – Regional Crisis Response

JANUARY 31, 2023

SITUATION AT A GLANCE



- The 2023 Burma HRP targets approximately 4.5 million people for life-saving humanitarian assistance, of an estimated 17.6 million people in need, reflecting a significant rise in humanitarian needs countrywide since the February 1, 2021, coup d'état.
- Hostilities between the MAF and EAOs continued across Burma in early 2023, particularly in northern Shan State and southeastern areas of the country, displacing 68,700 individuals nationwide.
- At least 348 Rohingya refugees died attempting to leave Burma and Bangladesh via perilous boat journeys across the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal in search of safety and livelihood opportunities during 2022.



TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING		
For the Burma and Bangladesh Response in FY 2023		
	USAID/BHA ¹	\$76,503,100
<i>For complete funding breakdown with partners, see detailed chart on page 6</i>		Total
		\$76,503,100

¹USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

2023 HRP Targets 4.5 Million People for Humanitarian Assistance in Burma

The UN 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for Burma requests more than \$760 million to provide life-saving assistance to approximately 4.5 million people during 2023, as economic instability, food insecurity, ongoing violence, and political crises are expected to exacerbate humanitarian needs. The HRP was released in conjunction with the UN 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) for Burma, published on January 15. The HNO identifies 17.6 million people in need of assistance in Burma, representing a more than 22 percent increase compared to the 2022 HNO, with food security and protection assistance identified as sectors of highest need. Furthermore, the continued escalation of armed clashes during 2022 generated further displacement, with more than 1.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) residing across Burma as of January 9, according to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This figure includes more than 1.2 million IDPs displaced, approximately 800,000 of whom were displaced in 2022 alone, since the February 1, 2021, coup d'état. There are also an estimated 330,000 people that continue to experience protracted displacement from prior to February 2021. While many displaced individuals remain in urgent need of life-saving and humanitarian assistance, access restrictions—including military authority-imposed registration requirements for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in Burma, ongoing insecurity, physical barriers erected along roadways, and travel authorization requirements—continue to constrain humanitarian actors' ability to reach populations in need.

NGO Registration Law Further Restricts Humanitarian Access in Burma

Military authorities in Burma enacted a new registration law on December 27, which requires international and local NGOs register their operations with military authorities, as well as seek approval from local and national actors in Burma prior to commencing activities. NGOs who do not comply with the new registration requirements may face criminal penalties, including fines and up to five years in jail, and NGOs operating in Burma before the law came into effect must register within 60 days or face penalties. However, as of late January, the extent to which military authorities plan to enforce the registration decree remained unclear, as there remained no system in place for NGOs to officially register with military authorities. In addition, while the effects of the new NGO registration law on humanitarian operations in Burma remain unclear, relief actors have raised concerns that complying with the decree could generate increased security risks for humanitarian staff and operations in areas outside military authorities' control.

Ongoing Clashes Spur Displacement, Humanitarian Needs in Northern Shan and Southeastern Burma

Continued violence between the Myanmar Armed Forces (MAF) and various ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) across Burma, particularly in northern Shan and southeastern Burma—comprising Kayah, Kayin, Mon, and areas of southern Shan states, as well as Bago and Tanintharyi regions—spurred further displacement in late 2022 and early 2023, with an additional 68,700 IDPs recorded nationwide between December 2022 and late January alone, according to UNHCR. In northern Shan, EAOs abducted and forcibly recruited more than 150 civilians during 2022. To reduce their risk of arbitrary arrest, forced recruitment, robbery, or physical assault, many communities in northern Shan reduced their movements in public areas, challenging households' access to livelihoods and their ability to afford basic items, the UN reports. Meanwhile, airstrikes, indiscriminate artillery shelling, and military attacks had displaced more than 350,000 individuals since February 2021 in southeastern Burma as of January 23, according to

the UN. MAF forces also attacked a village under the control of an EAO in Tanintharyi's Dawei town on January 8, burning houses and reportedly causing the entire village of approximately 200 households to flee to neighboring villages and surrounding forest, according to local media. As of January 18, an estimated 2,000 people from Dawei remain displaced, according to Norwegian Refugee Council. Displacement continues to rise in Tanintharyi Region with more than 17,000 individuals displaced in December, according to Southern Monitor.

Across Burma, movement restrictions and the presence of landmines—which have contaminated farmland, residential areas, religious compounds, and transportation routes—in some areas have further exacerbated the vulnerabilities faced by civilian populations. Landmine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) incidents resulted in the deaths of 86 civilians and injured nearly 250 individuals—approximately one-third of whom were children—in Burma between January and October 2022, according to the UN. The highest number of landmine casualties occurred in Shan, which accounted for 33 percent of all landmines and ERW incidents recorded during the period. While landmines and ERW continue to limit the ability of humanitarian actors to reach populations in need of assistance in some areas, movement restrictions imposed by military authorities simultaneously drive increased prices for essential goods, as well as shortages of food and other basic commodities, further exacerbating humanitarian needs.

AA-MAF Ceasefire Enables Humanitarian Access in Southern Chin and Rakhine

The November 28 ceasefire between the Arakan Army (AA) and MAF in southern Chin and Rakhine states has allowed for the gradual restoration of civilian movement, humanitarian access, and the transportation of commodities along the main roads and rivers in northwestern Burma. The delivery of humanitarian assistance, including emergency food assistance, mobile medical care, nutrition support, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services, among other assistance, had resumed as of late December in areas of Chin and Rakhine states, previously inaccessible due to hostilities, according to the UN. Despite the ceasefire, armed conflict between multiple EAOs, indiscriminate shelling and landmine explosions were reported in multiple nearby townships, particularly in northern Rakhine, between November and late January, underscoring the fragility of the ceasefire agreement. Continued violence has prolonged the displacement of more than 16,000 people in Rakhine and Chin's Paletwa township as of December, the UN reports. Furthermore, the MAF continues to restrict access to rural areas of Rakhine's Buthidaung, Maungdaw, Minbya, Mrauk-U, Myebon, Pauktaw, Ponnagyun, and Rathedaung townships as of January 11, according to the UN.

Pressure on IDPs to Return Continues Across Burma's Rakhine and Shan States

Despite continued violence and related displacement, the MAF announced plans to close various IDP camps throughout 2022 and 2023, which could affect more than 50 protracted IDP camps across northern Shan and Rakhine states alone, according to international media. Additionally, on December 29, military authorities announced they intend to close 25 IDP camps near Rakhine's capital of Sittwe on, and IDPs residing at the location must relocate to a new location of their own choosing, return to areas of origin, or move to a new area assigned by military authorities. However, IDPs are reportedly unable to safely return to areas of origin due to the continued presence of armed actors and the risk of ERW and landmines in these areas, according to a UN Protection Situation Analysis. Military authorities have offered incentives, including bags of rice and cash, to IDPs who elect to move to areas assigned by the military. However, it remains unclear to what extent relocated IDPs will be able to access essential services such as health care and other essential services, livelihoods, and safe drinking water. On October 20, in response to the announced closures of IDP camps in Chin and Rakhine, UNHCR and the

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) issued a joint letter to military authorities, emphasizing that any IDPs returns must be voluntary, and authorities must allow relief actors to provide assistance to IDPs who choose to remain in the camps.

Rohingya Refugees Die at Sea as Humanitarian Needs in Burma and Bangladesh Rise and Refugee Camp Conditions Decline

At least 348 people, the majority of whom were Rohingya refugees, are estimated to have died at sea during 2022, after leaving Burma and Bangladesh via boat to cross the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal in search of improved livelihood opportunities and refuge in nearby third-countries, according to the UN. More than 1,900 individuals departed Burma and Bangladesh by sea between January and November 2022, representing a more than sixfold increase compared to 2021, the UN reports. Despite the danger of the sea journeys, which previously required state-led rescue missions by the governments of Indonesia and Sri Lanka, Rohingya refugees continue to depart via boat from the Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar District. Reports of continued criminal activity, gang violence, and harassment from local authorities within refugee camps in Cox's Bazar may have contributed to increasing numbers of Rohingya refugees seeking safety in neighboring countries during 2022, according to the UN.

USAID/BHA Provides WFP \$75 Million to Assist Rohingya Refugees in Cox's Bazar

On January 25, USAID/BHA announced an additional \$75 million in humanitarian assistance to help vulnerable Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar and members of the Bangladeshi host community meet ongoing humanitarian needs, particularly food and nutrition assistance, exacerbated by the rising global costs of food and fuel. This new funding will directly support WFP to provide humanitarian assistance, including cash transfers for food and food vouchers that support local markets, as well as nutrition services to pregnant and lactating women and children ages five years or younger. In FY 2022, the USG provided nearly \$286.1 million in humanitarian assistance in response to the needs of Rohingya refugees and vulnerable host community members in Bangladesh, including more than \$123.4 million from USAID/BHA and more than \$162.6 million from U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM).

KEY FIGURES



\$73.7 Million

In dedicated USAID/BHA
FY 2023 support for
food security activities

U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

USAID/BHA supports the UN World Food Program (WFP) to provide emergency food assistance—including cash transfers for food; food vouchers; and in-kind food assistance through local, regional, and international procurement (LRIP)—to populations in Burma and Bangladesh. In addition, USAID/BHA supports coordination and capacity-building activities among other food security actors in the two countries to strengthen response efforts. Meanwhile, State/PRM supports the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNHCR, and NGO partners to deliver complementary livelihood and nutrition services to refugees and other vulnerable individuals in Bangladesh.



9

USG partners implementing stand-alone protection interventions in FY 2023

PROTECTION

USAID/BHA and State/PRM support 9 humanitarian partners to address protection concerns among displaced and violence-affected populations throughout Burma; host communities and Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar; and Rohingya refugees residing across Southeast Asia. USG-supported protection activities in Burma and Bangladesh focus on increasing access to protection services such as gender-based violence prevention and response, child-friendly spaces, community-based mental health and psychosocial support, and legal assistance. USG partners also work with the broader humanitarian community in Burma to advocate for access to life-saving humanitarian assistance and promote the delivery of protection services in areas with significant humanitarian access constraints.



70,000

Households received tie-down kits from USG partners for cyclone and monsoon prevention

SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS

USAID/BHA works with partners in Bangladesh to enhance community resilience to cyclones and other natural disasters by conducting disaster risk reduction activities, as well as infrastructure rehabilitation in host communities in Bangladesh's Bandarban and Cox's Bazar districts. State/PRM-supported shelter assistance in Bangladesh includes emergency shelter repairs and distribution of shelter materials, such as plastic sheeting to prevent roof leaks, complemented by site coordination capacity-building activities. USG partners also provide cash assistance for host community members and refugees to purchase local shelter materials to improve the resilience of their living spaces to natural disasters. In Burma, UNHCR implements protection-sensitive shelter reconstruction in Rakhine by considering IDPs' specific needs in coordination with local actors.



7

USG partners implementing critical WASH programming in FY 2023

WASH

The USG supports WASH programming in Cox's Bazar and in conflict-affected areas of Burma to ensure access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities, prevent communicable disease outbreaks, and mitigate the risk of wasting—the deadliest form of malnutrition—in children ages five years and younger and pregnant and lactating women. With State/PRM funding, BRAC, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IOM, Terre des Hommes Foundation, UNHCR, and UNICEF address critical WASH needs in Cox's Bazar by improving drainage and waste removal systems, installing handwashing stations and latrines, providing hygiene supplies and safe drinking water, and strengthening community awareness of proper WASH practices to reduce the spread of disease.

CONTEXT IN BRIEF

- On February 1, 2021, Burma's military staged a coup d'état against the civilian government during which soldiers detained senior civilian government officials, including State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint, and announced a one-year state of emergency. In August 2021, military authorities extended the initial one-year state of emergency to August 2023. Since February 2021, clashes between the MAF, EAOs, and other local non-state armed groups across Burma have persisted, resulting in continuous displacement and humanitarian needs, particularly in southeastern and northwestern Burma, as well as in Kachin and Shan. Coup-related instability has also resulted in access challenges, restricted banking operations, and limited cash availability, challenging the provision of assistance by relief actors at a time of significant humanitarian need.
- Burma's military forces launched large-scale and indiscriminate military operations—which the USG has since characterized as genocide—in Rakhine's Buthidaung, Maungdaw, and Rathedaung townships following Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army attacks on northern Rakhine checkpoints and police posts in October 2016 and August 2017. More than 799,000 refugees—the majority of whom rely on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs—had fled Burma since August 2017 into neighboring Bangladesh and taken shelter in Cox's Bazar's 34 refugee camps as of November 2022, UNHCR reports. Meanwhile Government of Bangladesh policies limit refugees' access to basic education services, capacity to engage in income-earning activities, and freedom of movement. Refugees and host communities in Cox's Bazar are also vulnerable to natural hazards, such as cyclones and flooding. Additionally, the Government of Bangladesh had relocated nearly 28,760 refugees from Cox's Bazar to Bhasan Char between November 2020 and December 2022.
- As of January 2021, an estimated 600,000 ethnic Rohingya—a minority group not recognized by Burma's military forces and denied rights to citizenship, freedom of movement, and public services—remained in Rakhine. Many IDPs in Rakhine are Rohingya, including approximately 126,000 people affected by the 2012 clashes who remained displaced as of May 2022. In addition, approximately 78,000 civilians, mostly ethnic Rakhine, remained displaced in Rakhine and Chin states as mid-March 2022 due to clashes between the Arakan Army and the MAF that erupted in 2018. Displaced populations, as well as other vulnerable individuals, continue to lack access to basic services and livelihood opportunities due to persistent violence and associated movement restrictions.
- On November 3, 2022, U.S. Ambassador Peter D. Haas issued a declaration of humanitarian need (DHN) for Bangladesh in response to ongoing humanitarian needs among Rohingya refugee host communities. Additionally, on December 28, 2021, U.S. Ambassador Thomas L. Vajda re-issued a DHN/disaster declaration for Burma due to the ongoing complex emergency.

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
FUNDING IN BURMA FOR THE REGIONAL CRISIS RESPONSE			
USAID/BHA			
OCHA	Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management, and Assessments (HCIMA)	Countrywide	\$1,500,000
	Program Support	Countrywide	\$3,100
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING IN BURMA			\$1,503,100
FUNDING IN BANGLADESH FOR THE REGIONAL CRISIS RESPONSE			
USAID/BHA			
WFP	Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and Practice (DRRPP), Food Assistance, Logistics Support, Nutrition	Cox's Bazar	\$75,000,000
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING IN BANGLADESH			\$75,000,000
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE BURMA AND BANGLADESH REGIONAL CRISIS IN FY 2023			\$76,503,100

³Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. USAID/BHA assistance includes funding for both refugees from Burma and asylum-seekers in the region, as well as IDPs inside Burma. Funding does not include USAID/BHA support for activities in Bangladesh that are not related to the Rohingya refugee response.

⁴USG funding represents publicly announced funding as of January 31, 2023.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://www.interaction.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
 - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](https://www.cidi.org)
 - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](https://www.reliefweb.int).

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)