



BURMA – COMPLEX EMERGENCY

This is the final Burma fact sheet for FY 2012.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- Fighting between Government of Burma (GoB) forces and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA)—which has been ongoing for the past 15 months—temporarily displaced an additional 10,000 people from northern Kachin State in September, with approximately 80 percent of the displacement occurring in Hpakant township, according to the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). As of September 6, an estimated 70,000 people remained displaced as a result of fighting in Kachin and Shan states, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reports. Many internally displaced persons (IDPs) have sought refuge at camps supported by UNHCR, while others are residing among host communities. In August, the Government of the People’s Republic of China (GoPRC) began returning some of the estimated 7,000 Kachin refugees residing in China to Burma.
- In late September, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon engaged in talks with GoB President Thein Sein regarding the humanitarian situation for the approximately 70,000 people who remain displaced in Burma’s western Rakhine State as a result of sectarian violence that broke out in early June, as well as longer-term issues regarding the status of approximately 800,000 members of the Rohingya ethnic group living in Burma.
- In FY 2012, USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) provided more than \$1.7 million to support conflict-affected populations in Burma’s Rakhine, Kachin, and Shan states. In addition, USAID’s Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) provided \$4.5 million to meet emergency food needs, while the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Mitigation (State/PRM) provided nearly \$24 million to address the humanitarian needs of conflict-affected populations, including IDPs in Burma and Burmese refugees and asylum seekers residing in Bangladesh, China, Malaysia, and Thailand. In total, the U.S. Government provided approximately \$30 million in humanitarian assistance to assist conflict-affected populations in Burma, as well as refugees and asylum seekers from Burma residing in neighboring countries, in FY 2012.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE		Source
People Displaced by Conflict in Kachin and Shan States	~70,000	OCHA – September 6, 2012
People Displaced by Conflict in Rakhine State as of August 31, 2012	~70,000	OCHA – September 4, 2012

HUMANITARIAN FUNDING PROVIDED IN FY 2012 ¹	
USAID/OFDA Assistance to Burma	\$1,733,272
USAID/FFP Assistance to Burma and Refugees in Neighboring Countries	\$4,500,000
State/PRM ² Assistance to Burma and Refugees in Neighboring Countries	\$23,800,083
Total USAID and State Assistance to Burma	\$30,033,355

Context

- In early June 2011, a ceasefire between the GoB and the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) broke down when fighting erupted in southeastern Kachin State between GoB forces and the KIA—the military wing of the KIO. During the first five months of the conflict, approximately 30,000 Kachin State residents departed home areas in an attempt to flee the fighting. A majority of the IDPs sought refuge in KIO-controlled territory, beyond the reach of GoB-provided humanitarian services. In late March, after several months of negotiations, the GoB and the KIO allowed the U.N. and its partners to provide humanitarian assistance via convoys to IDPs living in KIO-controlled territory. Citing deteriorating security, the GoB indefinitely suspended the U.N.-led convoys in April.

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds.

² In addition, State/PRM provided more than \$23 million to UNHCR and the International Committee of the Red Cross East Asia regional appeals, a portion of which may have been used to assist vulnerable populations in Burma or refugees and asylum seekers from Burma residing in neighboring countries.

Local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) continue to access displaced populations in KIO-controlled areas, including along the Burma–China border; however, access to some areas remains unreliable.

- In early June, escalating sectarian clashes between the Muslim Rohingya population and ethnic Rakhine Buddhists led to riots, arson, looting, and other violence in northern Rakhine State, particularly affecting Buthidaung, Maungdaw, and Sittwe townships. By the end of June, violence had resulted in approximately 80 deaths and displaced more than 52,000 people, affecting an estimated 90,000 people in total, according to OCHA. The violence also damaged or destroyed approximately 4,800 buildings, most of which were houses. The majority of IDPs sought refuge in rural parts of Sittwe township, straining local capacity to meet the needs of displaced populations, while others attempted to cross into neighboring Bangladesh.
- On June 15, 2012, U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Michael E. Thurston declared a disaster due to the complex emergency in Burma. From June to September, USAID/OFDA regional advisors based in Bangkok, Thailand, conducted three visits to Rakhine State and one visit to Kachin State to assess humanitarian conditions, identify humanitarian gaps, and recommend response options.

Displacement and Returns

Kachin State

- Fighting between the GoB military and the KIA continues to displace residents of Kachin and northern Shan states, with a majority of IDPs residing in KIO-controlled areas. As of August 22, approximately 40 percent of registered IDPs were residing in GoB-controlled areas of Kachin and northern Shan states, while the remaining 60 percent of IDPs were residing in KIO-controlled areas.
- IDPs from Kachin and northern Shan states have sought refuge in camps, among host communities, and in remote, largely unpopulated areas. Most of the displacement has occurred in townships in eastern Kachin State, near the Burma–China border, as well as in the northernmost townships of Shan State. IDP camps are concentrated in Bhamo, Mansi, Momauk, Myitkyina, Puta-O, Shwegu, and Waingmaw townships in Kachin State and Kutkai, Muse, and Namhkan townships in Shan State. As of September 6, the GoB and humanitarian community were providing humanitarian assistance to more than 27,000 IDPs residing in areas serviced by the GoB, according to UNHCR.
- Since the beginning of the conflict in June 2011, areas of displacement have fluctuated along with the conflict’s shifting front lines, allowing some IDPs to return to areas of origin, while displacing others. In addition, some IDPs have separated from their families and returned to home areas to recover economic assets or tend to agricultural lands.
- Between mid-August and early September, the GoPRC returned approximately 5,000 ethnic Kachins, who had fled to China’s Yunnan Province to escape the conflict, to Kachin State. As of September 28, approximately 1,200 of the returnees were residing in four camps in the border town of Lwe Je, roughly 1,000 had attempted to resettle in areas of origin, and the remaining individuals were displaced in Kachin State.

Rakhine State

- As of August 31, more than 70,000 conflict-affected people remained displaced in Kyauktaw, Maungdaw, and Sittwe townships, according to OCHA. The IDPs were primarily residing in 50 camps and other temporary locations. Many IDPs had not returned to home areas due to loss of housing, economic assets, and livelihoods, as well as a perceived threat of violence. As of September 30, the GoB continued to enforce curfews in all three townships, as well as Buthidaung township.
- The GoB continues to temporarily segregate Rohingya and ethnic Rakhine communities in Sittwe township due to safety and security concerns. As part of these efforts, the GoB is attempting to consolidate the Rohingya IDP populations in Sittwe township into 15 primary camps, according to OCHA.
- Some IDPs have returned to areas of origin as the violence has subsided. As of early September, approximately 4,000 IDPs from Than Daw Li village in Sittwe township who had sought refuge in Thet Kel Pyin camp were returning to home areas, according to OCHA. New displacement continues to occur, as populations encounter violence or threats of violence or are unable to meet basic needs.

WASH

- From June to September, USAID/OFDA regional advisors conducted three humanitarian assessments in Rakhine State, identifying water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) as a primary humanitarian concern. While IDPs residing in camps had access to latrines and bathing facilities, the ratio of facilities to camp residents remained below Sphere-recommended standards—internationally recognized minimum standards for WASH in humanitarian response. The

July assessment noted an inadequate number of gender-separated latrines and bathing facilities, as well as insufficient access to water pumps in the camps visited. An August assessment to Kachin State by USAID/OFDA staff found that WASH facilities were available in all camps visited; however, water supply and latrine facilities did not meet Sphere standards in most camps.

- Interagency rapid assessment findings in Rakhine State indicate that nearly 70 percent of IDPs lacked access to safe drinking water as of mid-August, according to U.N. agencies and NGOs working with IDPs. In addition, more than 50 percent of IDP camps surveyed lacked sufficient numbers of latrines for the populations residing at the camps, confirming USAID/OFDA assessment findings. Humanitarian organizations reported some similar concerns in Kachin State, with a lack of access to safe drinking water and inadequate sanitation facilities identified in the 70 camps assessed in May. Humanitarian actors report poor hygiene practices in IDP camps in both Rakhine and Kachin states. Overall, humanitarian conditions in some of the camps in KIO-controlled areas appeared significantly worse than in GoB-controlled areas.
- In FY 2012, USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$1.5 million to support the WASH needs of conflict-affected populations in Burma. This included more than \$853,000 to the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) to construct and repair latrines, hand-washing and gender-separated bathing facilities, and drainage and rainwater harvesting structures. USAID/OFDA support to UNICEF also improved IDPs' access to safe drinking water through the rehabilitation of water points and the provision of water purification supplies. In addition, UNICEF, with funding from USAID/OFDA, supported hygiene promotion activities to ensure proper use of the constructed facilities and maintain a healthy environment within IDP camps. USAID/OFDA-supported UNICEF activities are benefiting approximately 10,000 IDPs in Kachin State and more than 20,000 IDPs in Rakhine State.
- USAID/OFDA provided an additional \$630,000 to UNICEF in FY 2012 to meet the WASH needs of IDPs in Rakhine State through the U.N. Rakhine Response Plan. WASH activities under the plan include the distribution of basic hygiene items, the provision of latrines and bathing areas, hygiene promotion activities, and maintenance of safe water supplies.

Nutrition

- In early July, humanitarian organizations, including Save the Children and Action Contre la Faim, conducted a joint rapid nutrition assessment in Sittwe township, Rakhine State, finding a 7.5 percent prevalence of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and a 23.4 percent prevalence of global acute malnutrition—exceeding the U.N. World Health Organization emergency threshold of 15 percent—in the IDP locations assessed. Other assessments have found lower levels of acute malnutrition; however, humanitarian organizations continue to express concern regarding the nutritional situation and lack of access to acute malnutrition treatment, emphasizing the need for therapeutic and supplementary feeding among affected populations.
- In FY 2012, USAID/OFDA provided \$100,000 to UNICEF to support nutrition activities outlined in the U.N. Rakhine Response Plan. These activities include therapeutic feeding for children suffering from SAM, supplemental blanket feeding for children less than five years of age, and nutritional support for pregnant and lactating women. UNICEF also conducts Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) surveys and provides support for identification, referral, monitoring, and surveillance of acute malnutrition in conflict-affected areas.

Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management

- The lack of humanitarian access to conflict-affected populations, combined with a limited number of humanitarian organizations active in some key areas of the country, increases the need for humanitarian coordination. During a June assessment to Rakhine State, a USAID/OFDA principal regional advisor noted a need for improved humanitarian coordination to ensure equal distribution of emergency resources between the two ethnic groups involved in the conflict, identifying humanitarian coordination as a primary humanitarian concern in conflict-affected areas.
- To ensure the provision of coordinated and effective humanitarian assistance in Burma, USAID/OFDA provided \$150,000 to OCHA in FY 2012. OCHA supports the planning and prioritization of humanitarian activities to minimize gaps and prevent duplication of efforts; collects, processes, analyzes, and disseminates information to improve needs-based response efforts in country; and strengthens partnerships among humanitarian actors and other stakeholders, including the GoB, local NGOs, and donors. USAID/OFDA support will primarily focus on coordination activities in Kachin and Rakhine states.

Emergency Food Assistance

- In FY 2012, USAID/FFP contributed \$3 million to the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) to procure and distribute approximately 3,400 metric tons (MT) of rice, sufficient to feed 55,000 people for six months. The rice is part of a full ration, which also includes pulses, vegetable oil, and salt, as well as fortified supplementary food for children under five, pregnant and lactating women, and the elderly. The food will benefit IDPs in Kachin and Shan states, including populations residing in both GoB- and non-GoB-controlled areas. In FY 2012, USAID/FFP also provided \$1.5 million in emergency food assistance to Rohingya refugees displaced to southeastern Bangladesh.

USAID AND STATE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO BURMA PROVIDED IN FY 2012¹

Implementing Partner	Activity	Location	Amount
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE²			
OCHA	Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management	Countrywide	\$150,000
UNICEF	WASH	Countrywide	\$853,272
UNICEF	Nutrition, WASH	Rakhine State	\$730,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$1,733,272
USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE			
WFP	Local and Regional Food Procurement	Kachin and Shan States	\$3,000,000
WFP	Local and Regional Food Procurement	Bangladesh	\$1,500,000
TOTAL USAID/FFP			\$4,500,000
STATE/PRM³ ASSISTANCE			
UNHCR	Assistance to Conflict-Affected Populations	Kachin State	\$1,500,000
UNHCR	Funding to the U.N. Rakhine Response Plan	Rakhine State	\$2,000,000
Taft Fund Grant to Local NGO	Humanitarian Assistance and Psychological Counseling to IDPs	Kachin State	\$18,000
UNHCR	Assistance to Burmese Rohingya	Bangladesh	\$1,542,051
UNHCR	Protection of Children in Thai Refugee Camps	Thailand	\$320,000
NGOs	Humanitarian Assistance	Thailand, Malaysia, Bangladesh, China	\$18,420,032
TOTAL STATE/PRM			\$23,800,083
TOTAL USAID AND STATE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO BURMA IN FY 2012			\$30,033,355

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds.

² USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of September 30, 2012.

³ A portion of the funding listed here was committed before the disaster declaration was issued for the current complex emergency.

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 response efforts in Burma can be found at 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, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
The Center for International Disaster Information: www.cidi.org or +1.202.821.1999.
Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at www.reliefweb.int.

USAID/OFDA bulletins appear on the USAID website at <http://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/working-crises-and-conflict/responding-times-crisis/crises-and-conflict-countries>