



**World Food Programme**

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# RELIEF

## WFP Myanmar

### CONTEXT

The humanitarian situation in Myanmar remains fragile, in particular following a military coup on 1 February 2021 which has led to countrywide protests; escalations in armed conflict; a nationwide general strike; and closures or slowdowns in numerous sectors, including banking, healthcare, education and transportation. The significant economic disruption caused by the socio-political crisis following the military takeover is likely to have serious consequences on food security in the short- and long-run, particularly in urban areas. Price monitoring indicates that food and fuel prices have risen significantly since February.

The military takeover has exacerbated an already challenging context where the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted livelihoods, particularly in vulnerable communities. In June 2020, WFP estimated that approximately 758,000 people were at risk of falling into food security due to the pandemic—this is in addition to the 2.1 million people already estimated to have been food insecure prior to the pandemic. WFP also projects that from April to October 2021, additional 3.4 million people will likely be pushed into food insecurity.

Prior to the takeover, ongoing armed conflict contributed to a fragile security situation, notably in border states. In Rakhine and Chin states, armed conflict between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army began intensifying in late 2018. This led to the displacement of over 104,000 people by November 2020. The complex operational environment in Rakhine and Chin is further compounded by the need to support the protracted needs of people, mainly Rohingya, displaced since 2012 and affected by violence in 2016 and 2017, as well as those whose livelihoods have been impacted by recent armed conflict. In Kachin and northern Shan states, sporadic armed clashes since 2011 have caused regular short- and long-term displacements.

Across Myanmar, an estimated 783,000<sup>1</sup> people living in conflict-affected areas are vulnerable to food insecurity. Over 336,000<sup>2</sup> remain internally displaced with limited access to farmland and other livelihood opportunities.

1. & 2. *Humanitarian Needs Overview 2021*

Myanmar's high susceptibility to natural hazards is an additional risk factor in food insecurity. Earthquakes, cyclones, floods and landslides have regularly affected the same population in the coastal zone and low-lying areas, compromising access to livelihoods and nutritious food. Myanmar ranks 19<sup>th</sup> out of 191 countries on the Index for Risk Management (INFORM) Global Risk Index 2020, with increased exposure to natural hazards and generally weak coping capacity.

### RESPONSE

WFP implemented its first emergency relief operation in Myanmar in northern Rakhine in 1978, following the return of 200,000 refugees from Bangladesh. For more than 40 years, WFP has provided emergency relief food assistance, often in conflict, post-conflict or disaster situations in Myanmar. To this day, WFP continues to be at the forefront in assisting over 360,000 internally displaced and conflict-affected persons in Kachin, Shan, Chin and Rakhine states. In the wake of the 1 February 2021 military takeover, WFP is expanding its crisis response to urban areas and other parts of the country affected by conflict.

### 2020 Relief Assistance in Numbers

PEOPLE ASSISTED	CASH TRANSFERS (US\$)	FOOD (MT)
566,000*	23 million	31,200

\*51% women/girls & 49% men/boys

### DONOR PARTNERS

Australia, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Finland, Germany, Italy, Israel, Japan, Republic of Korea, Luxembourg, Myanmar Humanitarian Fund, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, private donors, Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Republic of Turkey, United Kingdom, United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund, United States of America.

**Urban Response:** In response to rising food insecurity among urban populations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and political crisis, WFP is scaling up its food response, targeting up to 2 million people in Myanmar's main urban centres from May to October 2021, starting in Yangon and Mandalay.

**COVID-19 Response:** WFP recognizes the risk of COVID-19 transmission and at the start of the pandemic adopted a set of new standard operating procedures, focusing on proper hygiene practices and physical distancing. To safeguard the wellbeing of both beneficiaries and staff, WFP has adjusted its emergency relief assistance by distributing two- or three-month rations at one time. In 2020, WFP provided short-term emergency food assistance to 163,800 people cumulatively including 88,200 returning migrants in government-managed quarantine and treatment sites in 12 out of 14 states and regions.

**Cash-Based Transfers:** In areas with functioning markets, beneficiaries are assisted through cash-based transfers (CBT). In remote, unsafe areas where there are significant protection concerns and markets are poorly supplied, food remains the preferred transfer modality. The value of CBT is determined based on market prices through WFP's Market Monitor, taking into consideration price fluctuations.

**Use of Technology:** WFP has strengthened its beneficiary registration and redemption processes by ramping up the use of SCOPE, its beneficiary and transfer management system, in Kachin and preparing for a roll-out in central Rakhine, contingent upon government approval. As a result of a rapidly developing telecommunication industry and increased access to markets and livelihood opportunities in Myanmar, WFP has successfully implemented electronic cash transfers in Kachin State since 2017, and in central Rakhine since 2020.

**Capacity Strengthening:** As Myanmar remains highly prone to natural disasters, prior to the military takeover, WFP engaged in various emergency preparedness and response initiatives to strengthen the Government's capacity. WFP provided trainings on Emergency Telecommunications, Emergency Logistics and Warehouse Management, CBT awareness raising and Mobile Data Collection for Assessments. WFP also implemented the Logistics Capacity Assessment and CBT Feasibility Assessment in disaster-prone states and regions and refurbished state-owned warehouses.

Transfer Commodities (per person per month)	
Rice	13.5 kg
Pulses	1.8 kg
Oil	1 litre
Salt	150 g
Cash	Cash equivalent of all the above items at market prices

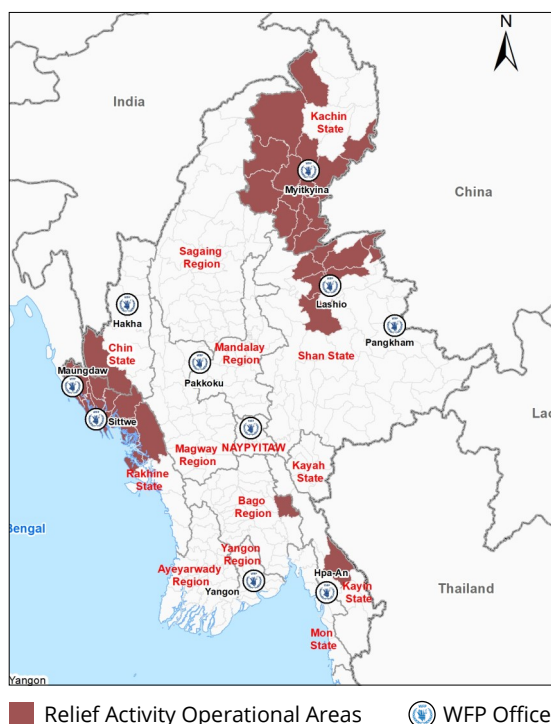
## PARTNERSHIPS

WFP collaborates with other UN agencies, international and local organizations to ensure maximum coordination and efficiency in saving lives, protecting livelihoods, and improving food security. Working with its partners, WFP advocates for unimpeded humanitarian assistance to all populations in need. WFP's relief operations are implemented by cooperating partner organizations, which bring in local and international expertise to maximize aid effectiveness, or directly by WFP when partners face access restrictions.

WFP co-leads the Food Security Sector with FAO for the coordination of assistance under the Humanitarian Response Plan, resource mobilization, implementation, monitoring and reporting of the food and livelihood assistance in conflict-affected areas. Under the Food Security Sector, As the co-Chair of the Cash Working Group, WFP organizes monthly meetings to facilitate the coordination, harmonization and communication set-up among its stakeholders.

## THE WAY FORWARD

Despite the challenging and unpredictable context, WFP remains committed to supporting the people of Myanmar, prioritizing ongoing life-saving relief assistance to vulnerable communities in Rakhine, Kachin, Shan and Chin states. Building on its strong field presence and extensive partnership network, WFP is ready to respond to additional humanitarian needs given increasing conflict and displacements. WFP closely monitors the dynamic situation on the ground, including the food and nutrition security situation, market prices, supply chain, and banking services, especially in urban and border areas.



WFP Relief Operational Areas in 2021

**Photo:** A family from an informal settlement in peri-urban Yangon enjoys lunch with rice provided by WFP ©WFP/Kaung Htet Linn

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