



# BURMA – COMPLEX EMERGENCY

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- A resurgence of violence between ethnic Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingya, as well as non-Rohingya, Muslims that began on October 21 in Rakhine State had resulted in nearly 90 deaths, the displacement of approximately 36,000 people, and the destruction of 5,300 houses or religious buildings, primarily as a result of arson, as of November 15. The violence had diminished by early November, with the Government of Burma (GoB) deploying security forces to affected areas and enforcing curfews, but sporadic clashes continue.
- In a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon dated November 16, Burma’s President Thein Sein condemned the violence in Rakhine State and noted that the GoB was prepared to address contentious political issues concerning Rohingya, including resettlement of displaced populations, granting of citizenship, birth registration, work permits, and permits for moving within the country. On November 21, President Sein announced that the GoB would pursue a multifaceted plan aimed at addressing tensions between Muslim and Buddhist communities in Rakhine State, according to international media sources. Components of the plan include reducing prejudices, promoting education, creating jobs, and introducing a birth control program in accordance with international standards.
- In a speech delivered during a November 19 visit to Burma, President Barack Obama called for the end of sectarian violence in Rakhine State and for national reconciliation. President Obama also announced \$170 million in new U.S. Government assistance for Burma to be provided over a two-year period and encompassing a range of programs, including governance, development, humanitarian, and reconciliation interventions.
- USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), USAID’s Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP), and the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM) continue to address the humanitarian needs of Rakhine’s conflict-affected populations, particularly those displaced by violence, through ongoing programs funded in FY 2012 and new programs initiated in FY 2013.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE	Source	
People Displaced by Conflict in Rakhine State	~115,000	OCHA <sup>1</sup> – November 2012
People Displaced by Conflict in Kachin and Shan States	~75,000	OCHA – November 2012

HUMANITARIAN FUNDING PROVIDED IN FY 2013 <sup>2</sup>	
USAID/OFDA Assistance to Burma	\$1,200,000
<b>Total USAID Assistance to Burma in FY 2013</b>	<b>\$1,200,000</b>

HUMANITARIAN FUNDING PROVIDED IN FY 2012	
USAID/OFDA Assistance to Burma	\$1,733,272
USAID/FFP Assistance to Burma and Refugees in Neighboring Countries	\$4,500,000
State/PRM <sup>3</sup> Assistance to Burma and Refugees in Neighboring Countries	\$23,800,083
<b>Total USAID and State Assistance to Burma in FT 2012</b>	<b>\$30,033,355</b>

## Context

- In early June 2012, 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

<sup>1</sup>The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

<sup>2</sup>Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds.

<sup>3</sup>In addition, State/PRM provided more than \$23 million to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (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.

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, primarily houses. The majority of internally displaced persons (IDPs) sought refuge in rural parts of Sittwe township, straining local capacity to meet humanitarian needs, while others attempted to cross into neighboring Bangladesh.

- 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 Kachin Independence Army—the military wing of the KIO. During the first five months of the conflict, approximately 30,000 people in Kachin State fled their home areas in an attempt to avoid the fighting. A majority of the IDPs sought refuge in KIO-controlled territory, beyond the reach of GoB-provided humanitarian services. In late March 2012, 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 areas. Citing deteriorating security conditions, the GoB indefinitely suspended the U.N.-led convoys in April. 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 inconsistent.
- 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. On November 1, U.S. Ambassador Derek J. Mitchell re-declared a humanitarian disaster for FY 2013 due to the ongoing complex emergency in Burma.

## **Displacement**

### *Rakhine State*

- On October 21, clashes erupted between Rohingya Muslims and ethnic Rakhine Buddhists in Minbya township, located approximately 16 miles north of Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine State. By the end of October, violence had spread to neighboring Kyaukphyu, Mrauk-U, Myebon and Ramree townships, displacing populations not previously forced from their areas of residence during the initial outbreak of violence in June. As of November 5, violence had newly displaced nearly 15,000 people to these townships, according to OCHA.
- The October resurgence of violence and associated displacement were most concentrated in Pauktaw township, located approximately 16 miles east of Sittwe. As of November 5, nearly 19,500 displaced people were temporarily residing in four locations in the township, including approximately 12,000 IDPs who were living in open fields with minimal shelter.
- Although Sittwe did not experience high levels of violence during the October clashes, populations displaced from neighboring areas sought refuge in the township, similar to a pattern that emerged during the June violence. Approximately 7,000 IDPs relocated to Sittwe during the October outbreak of violence, increasing the total number of IDPs in the township to approximately 71,600—more than 62 percent of the 115,000 IDPs in Rakhine State—as of November 15.
- During the height of the October unrest, thousands of displaced Rohingya sought refuge in neighboring Bangladesh; however, Government of Bangladesh officials denied entry to these individuals, according to multiple sources, including UNHCR. Despite pressure from the international community, the Government of Bangladesh has refused to allow entry of Rohingya displaced during the October violence.
- On November 16, U.S. Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights Maria Otero and Deputy Assistant Secretary for State/PRM Kelly Clements, along with U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh Dan W. Mozena, visited refugee camps populated by Rohingya, some of whom fled from Burma to Bangladesh prior to October, and met with Bangladesh officials in Cox’s Bazar District, Bangladesh. During the visit, Under Secretary Otero urged Bangladesh not to deny entry to people fleeing violence in Rakhine. Otero also requested that the Government of Bangladesh allow NGOs to continue providing assistance to Rohingya populations and other vulnerable individuals fleeing violence in Rakhine State.

### *Kachin and Shan States*

- As of November, approximately 75,000 people remained displaced in Kachin and northern Shan states, an increase of 5,000 people since September, according to OCHA. The displaced include at least 5,900 people returned to Burma by the Government of the People’s Republic of China in August. Approximately 39,000—or 52 percent—of the 75,000 IDPs temporarily reside in areas beyond GoB control, where international humanitarian community access is limited. Access to approximately 31,000 IDPs in GoB-controlled areas remains unimpeded, according to OCHA.

## **Humanitarian Needs Assessments and Response**

- From November 1 to 6, a USAID/OFDA regional advisor completed an assessment of humanitarian conditions in Rakhine State. The U.S., U.K., and Australian ambassadors to Burma, together with the USAID/Burma Mission Director and the GoB Minister of Border Affairs, led the first three days of the assessment. The assessment team traveled to eight affected townships, and some members of the delegation also visited IDP camps in and around Sittwe. USAID/OFDA visited several other IDP camps around Sittwe with USAID/OFDA partner the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF). USAID/OFDA identified humanitarian needs in all locations visited, particularly emergency relief commodities, food, health, shelter, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH).
- Between October 29 and November 9, the U.N. led an interagency assessment to identify humanitarian needs of populations displaced by the October unrest in Rakhine State. Assessment teams visited 18 locations in seven townships, where more than 36,000 IDPs were temporarily residing. The teams identified food, shelter, WASH, health care, and nutrition as the priority humanitarian needs. On November 9, the U.N. announced the activation of three clusters—coordinating bodies for the provision of humanitarian assistance—for health, shelter, and WASH.
- On November 21, the U.N. issued a revision of the Rakhine Response Plan (RRP), initially released in July, to reflect the humanitarian needs of populations affected by the resurgence in violence, as well as ongoing humanitarian needs of Rakhine's conflict-affected populations. The plan covers a 12-month period—July 2012 to June 2013—and requests nearly \$68 million in funding, representing a \$35 million increase and six-month extension from the initial plan, which requested \$32.5 million between June and December 2012. As of November 30, international donors had provided nearly \$24 million for projects included in the RRP, representing approximately 73 percent of the funding requested in the July RRP or 35 percent of the funding requested in the revised RRP.

## **Logistics and Relief Commodities**

- In November, USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$755,000 to Save the Children (SC) to procure and distribute emergency relief supply kits containing shelter materials, blankets, hygiene materials, and kitchen sets to approximately 2,000 households in Minbya, Mrauk-U, and Pauktaw townships displaced by the recent violence.
- In November, USAID/OFDA provided \$200,000 to the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) to improve logistics capacity in Rakhine. Populations displaced by recent violence in Rakhine are scattered over a large area, often in locations only accessible by boat and where WFP and other partners were not previously operating. USAID/OFDA support will ensure that WFP has the capacity to efficiently deliver life-saving food assistance to affected populations throughout Rakhine State, as well as prepare for potential operations involving multiple relief agencies. With USAID/OFDA support, WFP is augmenting logistics personnel and infrastructure in Sittwe and procuring boats to reach affected populations in remote areas.

## **WASH**

- With more than \$245,000 in funding, USAID/OFDA is supporting activities through SC that aim to improve sanitation facilities, increase access to hand-washing facilities and bathing space for women and children, re-establish a safe drinking water supply through the provision of water treatment chemicals, and promote improved hygiene practices through peer education and the distribution of hygiene kits. The WASH program, which began in November, is targeting approximately 10,000 conflict-affected people in Minbya, Mrauk-U, and Pauktaw townships.
- In addition, USAID/OFDA continues to address WASH needs of displaced populations in Rakhine, as well as Kachin, through nearly \$1.5 million in programs funded in FY 2012. Working in partnership with UNICEF, USAID/OFDA is constructing and repairing latrines, hand-washing and gender-separated bathing facilities, and drainage and rainwater harvesting structures, as well as improving IDPs' access to safe drinking water through the rehabilitation of water points and the provision of water purification supplies.

## **Emergency Food Assistance**

- As of November 9, WFP had provided all Rakhine populations displaced since October 21 with one-month food rations. In total, WFP distributed approximately 550 metric tons (MT) of food assistance. In addition, WFP is providing 7 MT of food for distribution to approximately 400 IDPs in Ramree township. While distributing food, WFP also transported emergency relief items and shelter materials for partner organizations to conflict-affected populations.

**USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO BURMA PROVIDED IN FY 2013<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Implementing Partner</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE<sup>2</sup></b>			
SC	Logistics and Relief Commodities, WASH	Rakhine State	\$1,000,000
WFP	Logistics and Relief Commodities	Rakhine State	\$200,000
<b>TOTAL USAID/OFDA</b>			<b>\$1,200,000</b>
<b>TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO BURMA IN FY 2013</b>			<b>\$1,200,000</b>

**USAID AND STATE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO BURMA PROVIDED IN FY 2012**

<b>Implementing Partner</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE</b>			
OCHA	Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management	Countrywide	\$150,000
UNICEF	WASH	Countrywide	\$853,272
UNICEF	Nutrition, WASH	Rakhine State	\$730,000
<b>TOTAL USAID/OFDA</b>			<b>\$1,733,272</b>
<b>USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE</b>			
WFP	Local and Regional Food Procurement	Kachin and Shan States	\$3,000,000
WFP	Local and Regional Food Procurement	Bangladesh	\$1,500,000
<b>TOTAL USAID/FFP</b>			<b>\$4,500,000</b>
<b>STATE/PRM<sup>3</sup> ASSISTANCE</b>			
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
<b>TOTAL STATE/PRM</b>			<b>\$23,800,083</b>
<b>TOTAL USAID AND STATE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO BURMA IN FY 2012</b>			<b>\$30,033,355</b>

<sup>1</sup>Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds.

<sup>2</sup>USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of November 30, 2012.

<sup>3</sup>A portion of the funding listed here was committed before the disaster declaration was issued for the complex emergency in FY 2012.

**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](http://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](http://www.cidi.org) or +1.202.821.1999.  
Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [www.reliefweb.int](http://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>