

THE RIGHT TO SHELTER AND BASIC SERVICES IN CRISIS

Joint Advocacy Statement – 23rd January 2024

The Shelter/NFI/CCCM Cluster and Protection Cluster advocate for immediate action in response to the rapidly escalating conflict and humanitarian crisis in Myanmar. As of October 2023, the Shelter/NFI/CCCM Cluster estimates **4.3 million people in Myanmar are in dire need of Shelter/NFI assistance** and the Protection Cluster estimates **12.2 million people in need of protection services**.

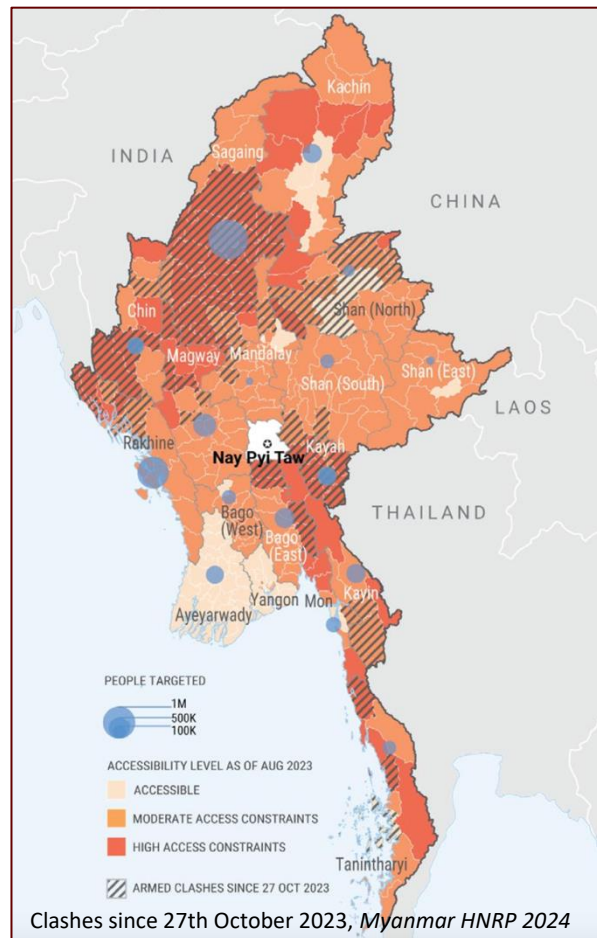
SITUATION OVERVIEW

With already severe humanitarian needs linked with conflict, violence, and climate-related crises, the further escalation of the conflict in Myanmar starting in 2023 has dramatically exacerbated the situation. Over the course of the last two months, this escalation in fighting has resulted in the forced displacement of 700,000 people¹, in addition to the two million people who were already displaced before the current escalation began. The situation demands urgent and coordinated efforts to ensure access for conflict-affected communities to life-saving humanitarian assistance and enable the protection of affected populations.

Outside Ukraine and the occupied Palestinian territory, **Myanmar recorded the highest number of conflict-related fatalities in the world as of 27 November 2023**.

PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

Humanitarian actors expect violations against civilians to increase as conflict continues to escalate. **Forced recruitment, including of children, arbitrary arrest and detention, killing, injuries, abduction, and the use of civilians as human shields continue unabated.** Reports suggest that some humanitarian staff have been subject to forced recruitment by EAOs, including the Arakan Army (AA) in Rakhine State, with this troubling trend expected to increase in other regions. In northern Shan State in Myanmar’s North-East, both men and women have been subjected to forced recruitment by the MAF and EAOs. Daily airstrikes and shelling have also caused damage to civilian infrastructure, such as schools, hospitals, and religious buildings, while personal property has also been damaged or destroyed. There is a high risk of physical and



¹ Source: UNHCR IDP tracking system as of 11 Dec 2023

bodily harm given the large-scale usage of **landmines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW)** in areas of protracted conflict and locations of new conflict.

Trafficking of people across borders, and **Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**, including **Conflict-Related Sexual Violence**, are observed in locations of active fighting where civilians have limited access to humanitarian services and where services in camps and IDP sites are limited. With respect to **Child Protection**, irregular movement of Myanmar people by land and sea has led to an increased risk of arbitrary arrest and detention and separation of children from caregivers.

There has been a significant **increase in restrictions on freedom of movement across the country** due to checkpoints, roadblocks, and household searches hindering the ability of people to farm their fields, to access markets and reach essential services. It is common for civilians moving through checkpoints to experience intimidation, harassment, extortion, and denial of passage, **including for those seeking health care and emergency health care services.**

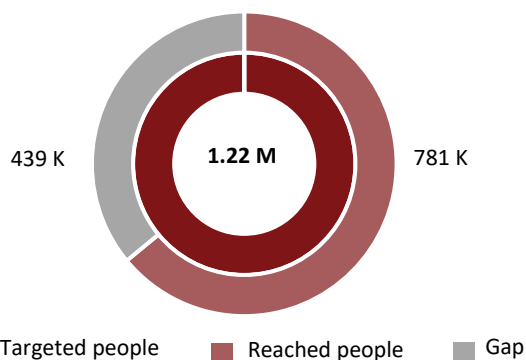
THE RIGHT TO LIFE-SAVING ASSISTANCE

Growing numbers of displaced people require dignified shelter and access to life-saving assistance, including non-food item packages and dignity kits. **Poor shelter conditions have led to conditions of overcrowding, exposing vulnerable communities to heightened protection risks, such as GBV, and health risks, such as possible disease outbreak, emphasizing the urgency of providing emergency shelter support, such as rapid response tarp kits, and winterization items, in key regions** like Kachin, Shan, Sagaing, Chin, Magway, northern Rakhine, Mandalay, Kayah, Kayin, and eastern Bago.

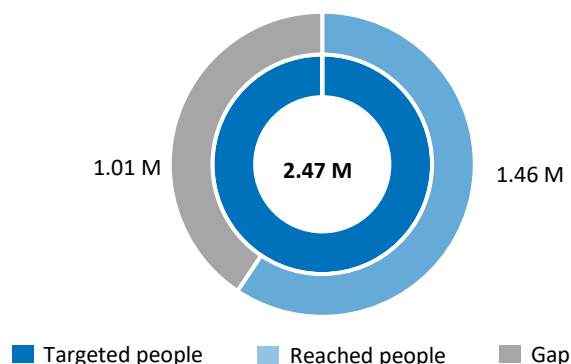
According to the latest reports from partners on the ground, the inflation at 35%, banking constraints, increased fuel prices and supply chain challenges necessitate the need to ensure flexible funding is available for humanitarian actors to provide assistance for shelter and NFIs, for both rapid and protracted response.

As of October 2023, shelter activities were only 26% funded, while NFIs were only 23% funded and CCCM 53%. Meanwhile, Protection is funded by 21%.

Shelter/NFI/CCCM Assistance 2023



Protection Assistance 2023



URGENT UNIMPEDED HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

The Shelter/NFI/CCCM and Protection Clusters call for **urgent, unimpeded humanitarian access; the cessation of attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure; respect for the civilian character of humanitarian spaces; and preservation of humanitarian and civilian infrastructure in accordance with International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law and associated standards and norms.**

To mitigate **human suffering and displacement** caused by conflict, a scaled-up protection-focused response is urgently required to alleviate suffering and ensure affected communities have access to assistance services.

Contact for more information:

Shelter/NFI/CCCM Cluster Coordinator: Jaqueline Julca, julca@unhcr.org

Protection Cluster Coordinator: Toloe Masori, masori@unhcr.org

Shelter Cluster Myanmar: <https://sheltercluster.org/response/myanmar>

CCCM Cluster Myanmar: <https://www.cccmcluster.org/where-we-work/myanmar>

Protection Cluster Myanmar: <https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/emergencies/99/Myanmar>