



WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME MYANMAR Southeast Operational Brief

OVERVIEW

Southeast Myanmar is composed of Kayah, Kayin and Mon States, and Tanintharyi Region, bordering with Thailand to the east and south, Bago Region and the Andaman Sea to the west and Shan State to the north. With a population of approximately 5.3 million, according to 2014 national census, this area is inhabited by Mon, Bamar, Kayin, Rakhine, Chin, Kachin, Pa-O, Shan, Salone and Malay ethnic groups.

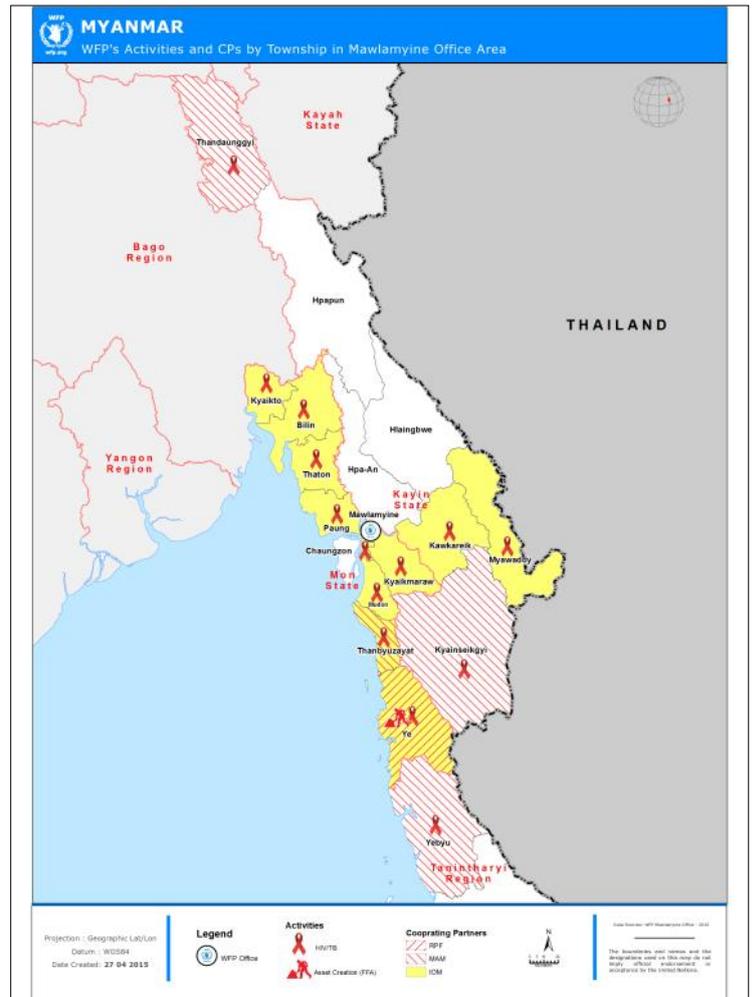
Since the country's independence, the discord between the Government and ethnic groups for federalism instigated the armed conflicts between the Myanmar military and ethnic armed groups including New Mon State Party (NMSPP), Karen National Union (KNU) and Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA). The clashes in rural areas of Southeast culminated in decades of instability and protracted displacement of 110,000 people in ten refugee camps of Thailand and 12,400 people in six IDP camps on Thai-Myanmar border in Shan and Kayin States*.

In general, armed conflicts have been declining, albeit sporadic skirmishes between armed groups over business concessions during 2015, in Southeast since 2012. In October 2015, KNU and DKBA were among the eight signatories of Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). Despite that, insecurity for civilians has persisted as a result of tension between armed groups emanated from commercial exploitation and economic opportunism. Landmine contamination, land confiscation and intimidation or threat of violence have remained widespread, posing complications for voluntary repatriation and resettlement of the remaining refugees and IDPs. Moreover, flooding and droughts combined with unequitable agricultural potential across the Southeast have detrimental effects on food security in terms of unstable commodity prices, inflation and availability of food. In recent years, livelihoods have been advanced with rubber and palm oil plantation, extractive industries as well as business innovations such as Dawei deep seaport in Tanintharyi Region. This however has led to land grabbing and deforestation which has impact on agricultural productivity and food security as subsistence farming being major income source for local populations.

As of January 2016, there have been 1,346 refugees and 6,622 IDPs, verified by UNHCR**, returned for permanent stay in Southeast. Nearly 40 percent of verified returnees reported needing food, during UNHCR's assessment**. Moreover, estimated 15,000 refugees are expected to make voluntary and spontaneous returns in 2016. Thus, assistance in form of either food or cash based transfers is likely to require for existing and potential returnees during resettlement.

*The Border Consortium as of June 2015

**UNHCR's Myanmar SE Operation- Return Assessments as of Jan 2016



PARTNERSHIPS

Government Counterpart

- Ministry of Border Affairs (Department of Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs)

Coordination with Other Government Partners

- Ministry of Social Welfare (Relief and Resettlement Department), Ministry of Health, Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development
- Kayin, Mon State and Tanintharyi Region Government

UN Coordination Agencies



Cooperating Partners





WFP and IOM have been collaborating in providing food-by-prescription to people living with HIV and TB clients in Southeast of Myanmar.

Response: Since 2008, WFP has been providing food and nutrition support to the people living with HIV (PLHIV) and TB clients from Southeast of Myanmar through IOM. To expand the scope, WFP opened Mawlamyine sub-office in June 2014 with the primary objective to support the most vulnerable populations from conflict-affected areas within Southeast as well as to assist future returnees from Thai Border Camp with unconditional food/cash transfers during transitioning period. This will be integrated with small scale community assets creation, school feeding and nutrition activities. The operational strategy of WFP sub-office in Mawlamyine is twofold; i) to support the ongoing peace-building process and durable peace in Southeast Myanmar through food assistance; and ii) to support capacity-building in food security of State/Regional government counterparts and administration of ethnic armed groups in terms of emergency and disaster preparedness, response and early recovery. In line with its objective, WFP reached a total of over 16,700 people, consisting of flood victims, PLHIV/TB patients and unemployed people, in 2015. In 2016, WFP aims to reach over 31,000 beneficiaries with 970 mt of food, specifically in conflict-ridden areas or areas controlled by locally predominant ethnic armed groups, where union government or humanitarian organisations' assistances are restricted.

Partnerships: Humanitarian needs in the Southeast are difficult to separate from longer term development needs. As such, WFP together with UN partners will cover these areas through a separate durable solutions framework. In particular, under the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) framework for Action, the Zero Hunger Challenge and the Renewed Effort Against Child Hunger and Undernutrition (REACH), WFP will cooperate with its strategic partners to scale up nutrition-sensitive and nutrition specific interventions through a multi-sectorial and multi-stakeholder approach. WFP has partnered with International Organization for Migration (IOM), Medical Action Myanmar (MAM) and Rahmonnya Peace Foundation (RPF), who also provide support to conflict affected people and HIV/TB, malaria patients. Above all, WFP is further exploring potential partners to improve food security status in Southeast of Myanmar.

2016 WFP Food Assistance Plan in Southeast

Programme	Areas	Target Beneficiary
HIV/TB	Kayin, Mon	3,100
Community Asset Creation	Kayin, Mon, Tanintharyi	3,000
School Feeding	Kayin, Mon, Tanintharyi	5,000
Relief	Kayin, Mon, Tanintharyi	5,000
Emergency	Kayin, Mon, Tanintharyi	15,000
Total		31,100

Looking Forward

Supporting resettlement of returnees: With peace prospect and reiterated commitment of the Government, situation in the country is anticipated to become conducive for eventual repatriation of refugees from Thailand. Should this be materialised, WFP envisages close cooperation with UNHCR as well as potential cooperating partners (for Kayah in particular) to support returnees with either unconditional cash based transfers or food assistance during the transition. WFP may consider supporting early recovery of returnees through asset creation as well as nutrition support and school feeding activities, if required.

Community Asset Creation: In 2016, WFP will collaborate with RPF to support 1,000 people, in need of transient income opportunities, through food for asset creation activities in resettlement areas for returnees in Mon State. Whereas in other areas of Mon as well as Kayin State and Taninthary Region, WFP will directly implement a range of similar activities. In addition, WFP intends to conduct a joint feasibility assessment in Dawei of Tanintharyi Region.

Nutrition: In July 2015, in coordination with the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development, WFP successfully conducted food security and poverty estimation (FSPE) survey in the Southeast that will further support understanding of food security situation in the area. The results will be consolidated with the food security surveys from all other States and Regions to develop the country's first national food security atlas, scheduled in early 2016. When survey result for this particular area becomes available, WFP may devise a strategy for nutrition intervention if necessary.

School Feeding: WFP will focus on advocating school feeding activities to the Department of Education. The FSPE survey will inform targeting and programming of school feeding activities in the areas with low attendance and high drop out rates.

HIV/TB programme: One of the negative outcomes of migration is the HIV infection compounded to Myanmar. WFP aims to reach 3,100 PLHIV/TB clients from nine townships in Mon and five townships in Kayin States in 2016 through its provision of food-by-prescription activity.

Emergency Response and Preparedness: WFP will conduct Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities at watershed level to prevent rivers to flood and destroy paddy fields and rice banks. In particular, an active and well-functioning DRR coordination working group has been closely working with the Mon State Government since its formation in 2014. WFP has been one of the key actors and will be leading Logistics and Emergency Telecommunication clusters of the group, advancing beyond food security. The objectives of this working group are in line with the sub-office's operational strategy.

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