Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)

MYANMAR

Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID 2018)

Conflict displacement
Figures analysis
About 57,000 new internal displacements were recorded in 2017 as a result of continued armed conflict, political violence and inter-communal conflict in various parts of Myanmar. Most took place in Rakhine, Shan and Kachin states.

The situation in Rakhine deteriorated following attacks on Myanmar security force outposts by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) on 25 August, which triggered a military crackdown. As many as 354 villages were completely or partially destroyed between August and December, according to HRW. More than 655,000 Rohingya Muslims fled to Bangladesh between August and December amid accusations of ethnic cleansing. Nearly 130,000 remained in camps in central Rakhine that were established following a major outbreak of inter-communal violence in 2012.

The protracted displacement situation in Kachin and Shan entered its seventh year, with nearly 100,000 IDPs still living in camps or with host families as a result of conflict between the Myanmar army and various ethnic armed groups, including the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), and the Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA). Competition for resources also triggered fighting and new displacement in mining areas. Many IDPs have been displaced several times, sometimes across the border into China.
More than 26,700 were evacuated by the Myanmar government due to violence in Rakhine state during late August and early September 2017. In addition, about 6,000 new displacements were estimated to have taken place based on camp data. These figures are however unlikely to represent the full scope of the new internal displacement as lack of humanitarian access to northern Rakhine has prevented data collection in northern Rakhine, where significant numbers crossed the border to Bangladesh during the year.

Location: Rakhine state
Source: OCHA/UN and the Government of Myanmar/CICM Cluster/Myanmar Shelter Cluster

More than 6,000 secondary displacements between January and March 2017 as IDPs were forced to relocate due to clashes in the proximity of IDP camps.
Location: Kamarin state
Date: January 2017
Source: The Joint Strategy Team (JST)

About 4,400 new displacements in Namshan township, Shan North, due to clashes between the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and the Myanmar army in January and June 2017.
Location: Northern Shan state
Dates: 14 January and 23 June 2017
Source: Media/local authoritative society/IDMC

Sources: Displacement data (IDMC); map (OCHA, Reliefweb) created in Sep 2013. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations and IDMC.
This corresponds to the total number of individuals in a situation of internal displacement at the end of 2017

Sources and methodologies
Our primary data sources are the CCCM/shelter cluster for Rakhine, Kachin and Shan North, and the Border Consortium (TBC) for the south-east of the country. The former data is based on camp registration and KI information. The latter is based on semi-structured KI interviews. We also included smaller estimates reported by various sources (see below).

Main caveats and monitoring challenges
No comprehensive assessment has been undertaken in the south-east since 2012, and TBC’s estimate for that year of about 400,000 IDPs includes people displaced by disasters and development projects. Many IDPs in the region are considered to have permanently settled in their areas of displacement. Access constraints in northern Rakhine led to a near information-blackout on the internal displacement of Muslim communities still living in the area as of the end of the year, which means our estimate may not fully capture its scope.

IDMC figure, methodology and rationale
In addition to the CCCM/shelter cluster and TBC figures which came to about 627,000 IDPs, our estimate includes about 13,000 IDPs displaced in the south-east since 2012, 1,400 identified in northern Rakhine by UNOSAT, 590 new IDPs in Chin, 2,400 people evacuated because of violence in Rakhine and whose return had not been reported by the end of the year, and 250 relocated IDPs considered as still displaced because of the involuntary nature of their relocation. To update the TBC figure, we also subtracted more than 10,000 IDP returnees identified by UNHCR in the south-east.

Significant methodological and contextual changes from last year
Despite an increase in the number of sources consulted, our 2017 figure is slightly lower than the previous year’s. This is partly explained by the fact that most new displacements in 2017 took the form of cross-border flows, and partly by around 44,000 returns that took place in Rakhine, according to OCHA.
Sources and methodologies
None of our partners publish comprehensive new displacement estimates for Myanmar, so we gathered data independently by monitoring news, bulletins and other reports. The figures included are based on various methodologies, including camp registration and KI interviews.

Main caveats, limitations and monitoring challenges
Our figure does not include any potential internal displacement of Rohingya who may have been displaced in northern Rakhine before crossing the border into Bangladesh, nor those who may have gone into hiding, because there is no reliable data on these movements. Our figure may include an unknown number of internal migrant workers registered by the CCCM/shelter cluster following fighting in mining areas.

IDMC figure, methodology and rationale
We used an events-based approach for Kachin and Shan North and to some extent Kayin, because OCHA, ECHO, the media, and occasionally the CCCM/shelter cluster report flow figures. We used these whenever there was direct evidence that increases could be directly attributed to events we had recorded as causing displacement. The same approach was not feasible in Rakhine because of the lack of humanitarian access outside camps. We calculated figures for Rakhine by adding the sum of the positive differences in the CCCM/shelter cluster’s monthly camp figures, adding about 26,700 evacuations reported by the government.

Significant methodological and contextual changes from last year
Our figure for 2017 is higher than last year’s, partly because of escalating conflict in some areas, and possibly because last year’s estimate did not cover Kachin, where quite significant numbers of new displacements took place in 2017.
Nearly 49,000 returns/relocations were reported in 2017, but we did not account for them because of significant concerns as to their durability and insufficient evidence of some of the reported flows.
**Challenges in accounting for returns**

We estimate that more than 80,000 IDPs had reached provisional solutions as of 31 December 2017, of whom less than 49,000 reportedly returned or relocated during the year. There is, however, no system for tracking returning IDPs or their progress toward achieving durable solutions in Myanmar, so our figures have low reliability. The breakdown below should also be considered approximate and overlapping to some extent.

**Return to destroyed houses:** OCHA reported more than 44,000 returns in 2017 to areas of Rakhine where the houses had been burnt down, but there was no data with which to determine exact numbers.

**Return to vulnerability:** (1) Nearly 16,000 Rohingya IDPs have been provided with individual housing in their previous areas of habitual residence, but their freedom of movement is restricted and they lack citizenship rights and livelihoods, according to the CCCM/shelter cluster. They do not appear to be affected by their displacement anymore in that their situation is similar to that before their displacement, but we still consider that there is a link between their present predicament and the displacement history. (2) More than 10,000 returning IDPs in the south-east identified by UNHCR based on their reintegration needs.

**Relocation to vulnerability:** More than 6,000 Buddhist IDPs have been relocated following the closure of displacement camps in Rakhine but they still receive humanitarian assistance for reasons possibly linked to their displacement. Nearly 330 were relocated in 2017.

**No tangible evidence supporting reported return:** The Special Rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar reported 3,000 returns in Kachin and 300 in Shan, but none of our partners had data to support this.

**Insufficient evidence to conclude return resulted in a durable solution:** Based on TBC data, there were at least 930 returns from camps in the south-east, triggered at least in part by the withdrawal of food aid.