**Myanmar Cash Working Group**

**Weekly Update #29 (8 - 14 May 2021)**

| **Myanmar Situation Updates**  |
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| **Situation Update**The cash flow and banks situation continues to deteriorate across Myanmar. With partners experiencing increasing delays and difficulties accessing physical cash MMK for program operations and distributions to program participants. Withdrawing MMK from bank branches requires a limited token system and even ATMs are increasingly difficult to withdraw cash from with long lines and many running out of cash early and often. The restrictive withdrawal limits continue in order to preserve bank liquidity. And there are reports the CBM is having difficulty disbursing funds to banks. With few deposits from clients, the bank liquidity situation is not likely to improve. Current withdrawal limits in MMK for individuals from the leading banks include:* KBZ Bank: 200k per week with ATM plus 200k with KBZ pay. Weekly withdrawal cap 400k.
* Yoma bank: Max 300k per withdrawal, max 600k per week.
* AYA Bank: 300k per day max 1 million per week
* CB Bank: Max 300 k per day max 2 million per week

Organizations can only withdraw around 10 million MMK per week depending on the bank. USD withdrawals from MFTB is capped at USD 3000 per week. Access to MMK through informal networks continues to be possible, but fees exist for their services. Fees range anywhere from 3-10%. The MMK continues to weaken against the USD now over 1650 MMK to 1 USD. Watch for widening spreads in the informal markets due to high demand for USD. Market prices for certain commodities are increasing, particularly for cooking oil. This is on top of significant increases in both February and March. The complete analyzed market price data from the end of April will be released shortly from WFP and the Mercy Corps MAU. International remittances into Myanmar continue to be a challenge and prone to lengthy delays. Banks are required to report all inward remittance transactions of INGOs and NGOs and to obtain CBM’s prior approval for remittances above USD 10,000. Specific details are requested including organizational registration and utilization of funds. Regarding CVA transfer modalities, electronic transfers to bank accounts or e-wallets, even interbank, are feasible and encouraged by authorities. However, are no longer widely accepted by partners or suppliers, due to not being able to withdraw MMK successfully from their bank accounts. Mobile money programs are becoming more difficult as agents are having problems securing enough physical cash liquidity. Given the issues, agents that can secure liquidity are now forced to charge fees over 3%, but in some places even higher. This is unable to be controlled by the Mobile Money Operators (MMOs). In addition, the MMOs can no longer ensure the liquidity of agents, even through their own contracted cash distributor networks. Even the cash distributors are paying fees themselves to secure MMK on the informal markets. Voucher programs have been facing significant constraints for a while now, as vendors, for the most part, are unwilling to accept bank transfers as reimbursement. Although some limited number of vendors have expressed a willingness to accept bank transfer with service fees. For specific support or options for your organization regarding remittances or cash and voucher programs, please reach out to the CWG. **Key Resources:*** [Myanmar CVA 4W](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1xnQ8pFbqxr45WE4tXFFAKg3522Qyv8eR7cbpS8lm1Bw/edit#gid=1230035561)s for is available online and the dashboard can be found [here](https://datastudio.google.com/u/0/reporting/1ab3123c-1589-42c7-bcbe-29bae99a0281/page/IAE6B/edit).
* Mercy Corps Myanmar publishes the **Market Price Report Dashboard -** The dashboard is [live on MIMU](http://themimu.info/rakhine-market-analysis-unit) and [standalone here](http://mau-mpr-dashboard-beta.herokuapp.com/).
* WFP also has a nationwide market monitoring [dashboard](https://analytics.wfp.org/t/Public/views/MarketMonitoringDashboard/MainSummary?:isGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&:embed=y) and recently released the detailed [March Market Price Update Report](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1D5JYIowBBl-HzWhTBx2VuswnJWeE4sAO/view?usp=sharing).

A comprehensive financial service provider mapping and [Emergency Cash Transfer Programme Tools for Humanitarian Actors](https://themimu.info/fsp-mapping) site are available on the MIMU website. [Myanmar-Emergency-Cash Assistance-Dashboard](https://analytics.wfp.org/t/Public/views/MyanmarEmergencyCashAssistanceInformation/OverallPage) together with FSP dataset and CTP SOPs can be found on the page.**In the News:*** Analysts said [Myanmar lurching towards collapse](https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/myanmar-lurching-towards-collapse-analysts): In a worrying sign of deepening economic collapse, military-ruled Myanmar's agricultural sector is sinking fast as cash runs short and access to mobile-based financial services that were a lifeline is cut off.
* First Myanmar Investment Public Co Ltd which runs a lot of businesses, including banking services, will not give out profit shares this year due to the ongoing economic situations, said company chair Theim Wai. The remark was included in the 29th annual general meeting report of the company. Read [here](https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/fmi-chair-says-no-profit-shares-this-year-due-to-ongoing-economic-situation)
* Some Wave Money agents from townships in the region including Magway Township cannot provide enough cash for their customers since early May and almost all of agents in the region cannot provide cash starting from May 10. Read [here](https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/insufficient-cash-in-atms-and-wave-money-agents-make-trouble-for-magway-residents)
* The Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) has announced that US$6 million was sold at an auction exchange rate of Ks1,650.6 per US dollar on May 12. [News here](https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/cbm-sold-6-million-at-auction-exchange-rate-of-ks16506-per-usd-on-may-12)
* Continuously rising local gold price went down to around Ks1.6 million at about 2 pm on May 13 after the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) started selling dollars at some money changers. [News here](https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/local-gold-price-down-to-around-ks16-million-after-central-banks-dollar-sales-at-money-changers)
* Nearly 13% of companies in Myanmar have ceased all activities there since the Feb. 1 military coup, according to a survey, highlighting the heavy toll of political turmoil on the economy. ([Nikkei Asia](https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Myanmar-Coup/Myanmar-coup-forces-13-of-companies-to-halt-business-poll))
* Myanmar currency hits record low of 16.600 Kyat as economy fails to normalize due to heavy demand for foreign exchange. Read [here](https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Myanmar-Coup/Myanmar-currency-hits-record-low-as-economy-fails-to-normalize)
* New contribution (US$ 4 million) from Japan will help WFP provide assistance to some 600,000 people in the Yangon Region. Food rations will be delivered directly into the hands of vulnerable families as part of WFP’s new operation for 2 million people in the poorest townships of Myanmar’s urban areas. The distribution started on 13 May in Yangon’s Hlaing Tharyar township. [News here](https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/new-contribution-japan-helps-wfp-fight-hunger-myanmar-s-impoverished-urban-townships)
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| **Recently published:** **Articles/Blogs/Research/Guidance/Discussion threads/Policy briefs** |
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| **In Myanmar:****Publication:** * WFP has shared [Logistic sector meeting notes](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_nRD3oyojTEsy-S8SCBaDn3uYOl24KpI/view?usp=sharing) that was organized on 30 April 2021 via online.

**In General****Publication and Research:*** [Capacity Needs Analysis for Cash and Voucher Assistance in the Asia-Pacific Region](https://reliefweb.int/report/world/capacity-needs-analysis-cash-and-voucher-assistance-asia-pacific-region-march-2021) has been produced after consultation with eleven country Cash Working Group (CWG) coordinators and members of the Pacific Regional Cash Working Group (RCWG) and the Asia-Pacific Regional Cash Working Group. The study was led by CashCap in collaboration with the Asia-Pacific RCWG and in consultation with Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP). The findings of the study are intended to enhance the capacity of various stakeholders, regional organisations, and national and local actors (where required) to respond to CVA capacity needs in a timely and effective manner by liaising, advocating, and flagging needs at various levels including within donor communities.
* ALNAP and CaLP recently published ‘[Cashing in: Turning challenges into opportunities when evaluating humanitarian cash assistance](https://www.alnap.org/help-library/cashing-in-turning-challenges-into-opportunities-when-evaluating-humanitarian-cash)’, which explores some of the issues identified as being most critical to consider and improve upon for when it comes to evaluating cash assistance in humanitarian contexts.

**Blogs and Podcasts:** * Samir Hafiz (ALNAP) and Ruth McCormack (CaLP) draw on the findings of the study to highlight five key considerations when evaluating humanitarian cash assistance. Access the blog [here](https://www.alnap.org/blogs/five-things-to-consider-when-evaluating-cash-assistance).
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| **Webinars and Events** |
| **Recent webinars and events:*** A recent webinar, on May 4, CaLP, MiC, UNHCR and NRC explored market assessment tools, trends and recent developments. The webinar recording and presentation are available [here](https://www.calpnetwork.org/publication/making-market-assessments-fit-for-your-purpose/).
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| **Survey, Resources and Trainings** |
| * Save the Children, Plan International and the Women's Refugee Commission are developing a training package on Child Protection & Cash and Voucher Assistance that will be available on-line and in person formats. To ensure the training package is tailored to gaps and needs at the field-level, a survey is conducting which is live now through May 2nd which specifically targets country-level child protection and CVA practitioners. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes and is available in English, French, and Spanish [here](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=V20wlrdexE2lvSKg5cwKq0pXD-qPIMNFp0nlFpyXQJBUNlAwQjNCOTUwMlk4WUNJTlVWS1FDUDVLNi4u). Further questions about the online survey, get in touch with Hannah Thompson on: Hannah.rachel.thompson@gmail.com
* [Socialprotection.org](https://socialprotection.org/) continues to host a space on [social protection responses to #COVID19](https://socialprotection.org/connect/communities/social-protection-responses-covid-19-task-force) which provides access to a series of events, newsletters, mappings etc. In addition, the website hosts a number of online communities including one specifically focused on [social protection in crisis contexts](https://socialprotection.org/connect/communities/social-protection-crisis-contexts). CaLP has a dedicated space on [CVA and COVID-19: resources, guidance, events and questions](https://www.calpnetwork.org/themes/cva-and-covid-19-resources-guidance-events-and-questions/) and [CaLP-produced guidance on CVA considerations for COVID](https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/CaLP-summary-guidance-version-5-16-April-2020_.pdf)-19 (including a section specific to SP/HCTs).
* The Cash Hub (hosted by the British Red Cross) has developed a number of tip sheets on delivering CVA and advocating for the use of CVA in response to COVID-19. Whilst targeted towards Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, the resources can be adapted to the needs and approaches of other organisations. They can be found [here](https://cash-hub.org/resources/cash-and-covid-19) in English and Spanish.
* The Cash Hub platform also provides quarterly updates which provide a useful consolidation of CVA-related topics. Subscribe by clicking on this [link](https://r1.dotmailer-surveys.com/4952l7ad-074f9u4b).
* A multi-country cash transfer research initiative – the Transfer Project – provides a quick-access round-up of COVID-19 related resources [click here](https://transfer.cpc.unc.edu/cash-transfers-covid-19/?utm_source=Transfer+Project+Newsletter&utm_campaign=df0f757bb9-)

**Resources:** * CCD has a page on [Social Protection and Humanitarian Cash](https://www.collaborativecash.org/social-protection-working-group) which includes country case studies and guidance.
* **Foundational webinars**: The [first webinar](https://socialprotection.org/linking-cash-and-voucher-assistance-and-social-protection-demystifying-entry-points-humanitarians) from GB cash sub group series to demystify the concept of linking social protection and HCT; good introduction and primer to the topic. Second: How can SP Systems respond to the COVID-19 crisis? sets the scene on how SP systems can respond and the challenges governments are facing; [recording here](https://socialprotection.org/how-can-social-protection-systems-respond-covid-19-crisis). And thirdly, [Lessons learned and Opportunities: Linking SP systems to humanitarian cash in a pandemic](https://socialprotection.org/discover/blog/lessons-learned-and-opportunities-linking-social-protection-systems-humanitarian-cash). Includes examples within the context of COVID-19 for measures to link SP/HCT.
* Click the link to access [Ugo Gentilini’s Weekly Social Protection Links newsletter.](https://www.ugogentilini.net/) Packed with valuable information, focusing on social protection developments and action across the globe but also referencing humanitarian action where relevant, the newsletter is a helpful resource for practitioners and policymakers alike.
* **CaLP’s Global Capacity Building Team** have some great video playlists on CaLP’s YouTube channel, combining new training videos, with previous webinars and shorter sound bites! Topics include:
* Gender & CVA
* Monitoring CVA
* Multipurpose Cash (MPC)
* COVID-19 & CVA
* Data Responsibility & CVA
* Preparedness & Organisational Capacity Building for CVA
* Market Based Programming
* Improving our work on Minimum Expenditure Baskets
* Cash Coordination

Take a look [here](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtu6QnuH68z3thAeFt8o5Og/playlists). * CaLP has updated a number of its tools for training facilitators including for the “Linking CVA and Social Protection” course. You can find the materials [here](https://kayaconnect.org/course/info.php?id=603).

**Surveys:*** CaLp page creates to share and learn about ongoing and planned CVA research. If you are undertaking CVA related research, you can submit details and information will usually go live within 48 hours. Webpage [here](https://www.calpnetwork.org/resources/ongoing-research/)
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| **We welcome your feedback. It is important to allow us to tailor the newsletter to your needs and to make decisions on what is useful.** |