

GENDER-IMPACT FLASH UPDATE: MYANMAR FLOODING

No. 2

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This update was developed by the Myanmar Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (GiHA WG) and is based on available reports from humanitarian partners, including women-led organizations operating in flood-affected townships in Myanmar.

Overview

Since early September, more than 1 million people across 70 townships in Myanmar have been affected by flooding due to torrential monsoon rains and the aftermath of Typhoon Yagi.¹ Many of the affected people and communities were already displaced due to ongoing conflict, compounding their vulnerability. Some townships in Mandalay Region and eastern and southern Shan also experienced repeated flooding in early October.

The extensive flooding has caused severe damage, including the loss of crops, farmland, and livestock, which has devastated livelihoods in already vulnerable communities.

MORE THAN
1 MILLION
PEOPLE AFFECTED

ACROSS
70
OUT OF
330 TOWNSHIPS

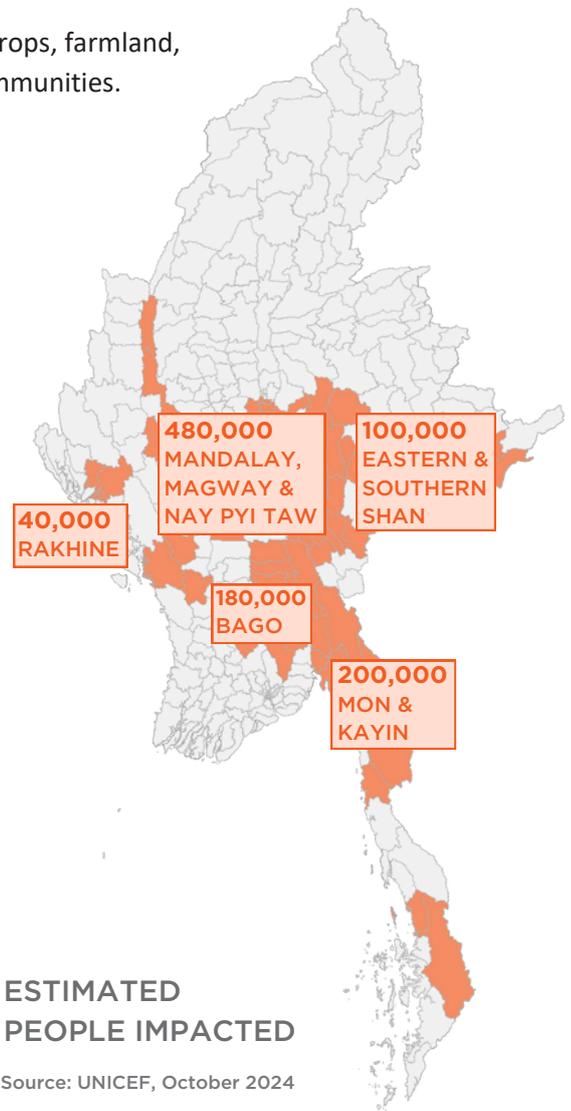
INCLUDING

600,000
WOMEN & GIRLS²

270,000
CHILDREN³

270,000
REPRODUCTIVE
AGE WOMEN⁴

12,974
PREGNANT
WOMEN⁵



67% OF CAMPS REPORT HAVING SAFETY RISKS FOR WOMEN & GIRLS⁶

¹ UN UNOCHA Myanmar Humanitarian Update No. 41, 10 October 2024. [Available online.](#)

² This is an average calculated from data collected by a range of local humanitarian partners in the affected states and regions between 9 and 27 September 2024.

³ UNICEF Myanmar Flood Flash Update No. 4, 7 October 2024. [Available online.](#)

⁴ These are estimates based on the Minimum Initial Services Package (MISP) for Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) in Humanitarian Settings Calculator, which draws on the best available data to help determine affected population demographics. [Available online.](#)

⁵ ibid.

⁶ Findings from UNOCHA analysis of assessments completed across flood-affected areas, October 2024.

Priority needs of women and girls

Almost two months since the flooding began, the shift from emergency response to long-term recovery remains challenging, particularly for women who have lost livelihoods and continue to be at heightened risk of gender-based violence (GBV). Affected populations remain in urgent need of support and the specific needs of women and girls include:

Safe shelter

Approximately 50% of those displaced by the floods are sheltering in religious buildings and around 25% are staying with friends or family. Others are living in community centres, schools and makeshift shelters.⁷ The lack of safe shelter and secure spaces leaves women and girls at heightened risk of violence and jeopardizes their privacy and dignity. There is an urgent need for shelters that are well-lit, equipped with privacy partitions, secure locks, and provide easy access to clean water and safe sanitation facilities. Additionally, dedicated safe spaces, such as women's and girls' centres, are essential to support their physical and emotional security.

Water, hygiene and sanitary items

Access to clean water, hygiene items, and safe, private sanitation facilities are needed to reduce the risks of violence against women and girls, help them maintain their dignity and prevent diseases. Dignity kits, clean water, hygiene supplies, and safe toilets and showers are urgently needed, with organisations on the ground reporting that the second highest need in flood-affected villages (after food) is access to hygiene and sanitary items.⁸

Support to continue girls' education

School closures resulting from damage, combined with economic pressures, increase the likelihood of early marriage or child labour as families struggle to cope. Many girls may drop out of school permanently, reducing their future opportunities and reinforcing cycles of poverty and inequality.

Basic and specialised health services

Roads, bridges, and communication networks have been severely damaged, and the lack of transportation and communications means people cannot access health services or find out where they are located.

Humanitarian organisations on the ground report that health facilities have been damaged or destroyed, and due to the speed of the flooding, hospital equipment, medicine, staff, and patients had to be evacuated quickly.

Livelihoods and economic recovery

Support to rebuild income and livelihoods is critical for those who lost farmlands, businesses, or livestock, especially women reliant on agriculture and small-scale enterprises. The destruction of assets has increased poverty, forcing people to migrate for work. This is more difficult for women, who often have increased care responsibilities that make them less mobile, and it is more dangerous, exposing them to increased risk of trafficking and exploitation.

Protection from violence

In the aftermath of the floods, the scarcity of jobs and resources, and the social upheaval caused by the disaster can exacerbate tensions and put women and girls at increased risk of domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and emotional harm. Lack of privacy, overcrowded living conditions, and insufficient security in the camps have led to an increase in GBV risks. Access to affected areas is restricted, and GBV support services are limited.

⁷ Findings from UNOCHA analysis of 230 assessments completed across flood-affected areas, October 2024.

⁸ *ibid.*



Photo: UNDP Myanmar.

Responding to the needs of women and girls

As women and girls continue to bear the brunt of the crisis, UNFPA, UN Women, the GiHA WG, and their partners are providing gender-responsive support, including:

Dignity kits to support hygiene and wellbeing

Dignity kits provide essential hygiene and protection items, including sanitary pads, soap, and undergarments, helping women and girls maintain personal hygiene, dignity, and safety in challenging conditions. These kits promote physical and psychological well-being, empowering women and girls to feel more confident and secure. Dignity kits distribution also serves as an entry point to engage with women and girls and share information on available services.

Sexual and reproductive health services

Mobile clinics are a crucial lifeline in flood-affected areas where healthcare centres are damaged, and transportation routes are cut off. The clinics provide vital maternal health care and sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning and contraceptives for women who may otherwise be left vulnerable to unplanned pregnancies in already dire conditions.

Helping pregnant women have safe deliveries

Clean delivery kits help pregnant women who do not have access to health facilities have safe deliveries and avoid deadly infections. The kits contain sterile supplies for childbirth, including a plastic sheet, sterile towels and gloves, an apron, soap, a sterile blade, an umbilical cord tie, and an information sheet to guide women through safe delivery.

Gender-sensitive needs assessments

Conducted by local organisations to ensure women are involved in the design and implementation of assessments and to inform gender-sensitive humanitarian action.

Water and sanitation

Women and girls often bear the burden of collecting water, so safe access to clean drinking water is critical. Women and girls urgently require dignity kits, menstrual and personal hygiene products, and private, gender-segregated sanitation facilities, including secure latrines and bathing areas with locks and lighting.

Access to education and learning

Essential Learning Packs have been distributed to more than 9,700 students (including almost 5,000 girls) to help ensure the continuity of their education. And 28 teachers (including 21 women) have been supported to build their capacity to respond effectively to the educational challenges posed by the disaster.⁹

Women volunteers

Local women volunteers are playing a vital role in the response, distributing dignity and clean delivery kits, and raising awareness about how to access available services. They also serve as crucial links between the affected communities and service providers, ensuring that women in the most remote areas are reached.

Gender-based violence services

While access to affected areas remains a challenge to providing services at scale, humanitarian organisations are on the ground raising awareness of available services, including hotlines/helplines, and working with community organisations to promote referrals to help women and girls access support for gender-based violence.

Facing the floods together

Flood-affected women and those at the front line of the response share their challenges, needs and experiences.

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When the mobile clinic came to the place near where we live, I was so happy. They checked my baby's health and gave me the vitamins and a clean delivery kit. I finally feel like I can breathe again, knowing I have the support and care I need for me and my baby.

Moe Moe, an eight-month-pregnant woman from Kayin State.

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““

After the repeated floodings in Kayin during this rainy season, I couldn't get my contraceptives, and I'm not ready to have another child. I went to the mobile clinic, and they were able to provide me with what I needed. Without that, I don't know what I would have done.

Nway Nway, a mother of three from Kayin, living in a temporary shelter.

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““

We frequently face conflict, forcing us to flee and temporarily settle in different places. As a result, we have lost our homes, land, farms, and family businesses. We have also lost the non-food items donated by donors, because we could not carry them during our displacement, and many were washed away by floods.

Staff member of GiHA member organisation.

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The natural environment has been severely damaged and is nearly destroyed, requiring urgent action for relief and recovery.

Staff member of GiHA member organisation.

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Most women are calling for their urgent need for livelihood assistance to be recognized and addressed directly.

Staff member of GiHA member organisation.

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Due to the priority given to men, women are disproportionately affected by rising unemployment. This is partly because men find it easier to travel for work compared to women.

Staff member of GiHA member organisation.

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Facing the floods together

Some team members are providing relief support in affected areas, while others are trying to connect with local donors and service providers for immediate support, and some are collecting data on the affected to identify urgent locations in need. We know that our work is risky, and the conditions are tough, but seeing the smiles on people's faces makes all the hardship and exhaustion fade away.

Htar, a local youth volunteer from Kayin State

I was already worried about my pregnancy because of the conflict. Now, with the flood, it feels like everything is against us.

Thida, an eight-month-pregnant woman living in a temporary shelter.



Challenges and barriers to recovery

Humanitarians continue to face operational challenges, including:

Restricted access

Insecurity, multiple checkpoints and restricted access in conflict-affected areas, as well as physical barriers such as damaged roads and bridges means there is inadequate humanitarian presence, especially in rural areas.

Lack of information and data

Preliminary needs have been identified by the affected population and assessments from humanitarian organisations on the ground, including women-led organisations. However, a multi-sector needs assessment is needed to ensure that needs of all affected population are prioritized, gaps addressed and the most vulnerable are reached.

Unstable telecommunications

This hinders real-time information gathering and effective aid distribution and makes it difficult to ensure people know where and how to access services and assistance.

Lack of funding and resources

Humanitarian organisations need more supplies to be moved from Yangon to the impacted locations, additional funds and expanded access to distribute assistance on a larger scale.





Photo: UNFPA Myanmar.

Urgent need for increased funding and lifted restrictions

Almost 11 months into the year, the 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan is only 28.5% funded.¹⁰ To sustain the delivery of emergency assistance, additional resources are urgently needed, and humanitarian organisations must have unrestricted, unimpeded access to affected areas.

However, more resources are urgently needed to enable humanitarian partners to respond at-scale to expanding needs.

To strengthen the flood response, the Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) has allocated US\$4 million and donors have committed more than \$3 million in additional contributions.

¹⁰ UN OCHA Myanmar Humanitarian Update No. 41, 10 October 2024. [Available online.](#)

About the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (GiHA WG)

GiHA WG aims to promote integration of gender considerations and gendered technical expertise in humanitarian action across the humanitarian response areas of operation and foster greater coordination and consideration of gender through humanitarian action mechanisms. It is composed of civil society organisations, women led and women's rights organizations, community-based women's organizations, NGOs, UN agencies, donor gender focal points (as observers) and cluster leads/focal points. The GiHA WG is co-led by UN Women and UNFPA.

For more information:

MIMU 2024 Myanmar Floods resource page: themimu.info/emergencies/floods-2024

Contact the GiHA Working Group

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