

MARKET PRICE REPORT – RAKHINE STATE (APRIL 2021)

Mercy Corps - Market Analysis Unit

May 24th, 2021

As part of Mercy Corps' cash and voucher assistance programs, the MAU tracks market prices in Central and Northern Rakhine State and Chin State. This monthly report summarizes prices for goods based on data from three vendors per product per market. April data were gathered on April 26-27 in Kyauktaw, Maungdaw, Minbya, Mrauk U, Paletwa, Pautaw, Ponnagyun, Rathedaung and Sittwe Townships.¹ Prices for January - March 2021 are provided for comparison.

Highlights: April 2021

- **Essential food prices were mostly stable in April**, although higher prices were observed for palm oil and to some extent higher-quality rice as well;
- **Palm oil prices rose 10-25% in most markets in April**, rising for a third straight month;
- **Prices for vegetables rose in Maungdaw and Ponnagyun Townships**, although April did not see the more widespread vegetable price increases observed in March;
- **Across all products, prices were highest in Paletwa, Maungdaw and Rathedaung Townships**, although no township saw across-the-board higher prices;
- **Prices for NFIs and hygiene products were once again generally stable in April.**
- **Palm oil rose 25-40% and rice 10-30% in four markets monitored since January**, although most other products have not changed dramatically.

Table 1. Essential Food Prices, by Township: April 2021 (MMK)

Product	Kyauktaw	Maungdaw	Minbya	Mrauk U	Paletwa	Pautaw	Ponnagyun	Rathedaung	Sittwe
Better Rice (1 kg)	800	1,000	900	850	1,400	800	900	1,300	900
Cheaper Rice (1 kg)	600	700	600	650	800	600	600	-	700
Palm Oil (1 liter)	2,500	2,600	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,300	2,300	2,700	2,500
Pulse (1 viss)	3,000	2,500	3,000	2,300	3,000	2,500	2,600	3,000	2,500

I. Price Stability in April

Essential Food Items – Essential food prices were stable or rising in April, with the most notable change being increases of 10% or more for palm oil and high-quality rice in several townships. Palm oil prices rose for a third straight month, climbing by 10-25% in five of seven townships. Prices for high-quality rice also rose, increasing by at least 10% in five townships. Cheaper rice and pulses were relatively stable in April. Less-expensive rice rose by 10% or more in just two townships, and prices for pulses were stable in most locations.

Vegetables – Vegetable prices rose in Maungdaw and Ponnagyun Townships in April, although other markets did not see more of the price-hikes observed in March. Long bean stood out as the one product that saw overall price increases in April, rising 33% or more in most locations outside of Sittwe. Otherwise, prices for eggplant, watercress, and green chili—all of which climbed in March—showed a mixed picture this month, rising and falling in different markets. Garlic prices rose and fell in different markets, while onion prices held steady or rose.

¹ Paletwa Township in Chin State is included in the MPR for the first time this month.

Maungdaw and Ponnagyun Townships alone stood out for generally-rising vegetable prices, although this was true to a lesser extent in Rathedaung Township as well.

Meat and Fish – Shrimp prices were stable or declining in April, while other meat and fish products showed no clear trend. Shrimp prices fell in April, declining by 10-30% in four of seven townships. Chicken prices also appeared to fall in April, although this was likely due partly to changes in measurement. Prices for dried fish were once again mostly stable, although fresh fish prices fluctuated moderately in April, rising or falling by 10% or more in most townships.

Hygiene Products – Hygiene products were fairly stable in April, with no townships demonstrating obvious trends. Soap prices were fairly stable in April, as were prices for detergent and toothpaste (despite slight changes in prices in most townships). Prices for sanitary pads rose by roughly 20% in Kyauktaw, Pauktaw and Ponnagyun but held steady elsewhere.

Other NFIs – Prices for non-food items (NFIs) were again stable in April and no products stood out as particularly volatile. Many NFIs were generally stable, while others saw both rising and falling prices in different markets. While prices for plastic tarp appeared to fall, this was mostly likely due to changes in measurement. At a township-level, Ponnagyun stood out for generally-rising prices while Pauktaw stood out for generally-falling prices. NFIs were most stable in Maungdaw, where there was little change in prices in April.

II. Trends since January

Prices for rice and palm oil have risen since January, although vegetables and other product categories appear generally stable. Rice and palm oil prices rose in four townships monitored since January, and in none of these cases did prices fall. Palm oil prices increased most dramatically, climbing 25-40% since January. Palm oil rose from 18000-20000 MMK/liter in January to 25000-26000 MMK/liter in April. Cheaper rice also increased 20-30% since January in three of four townships, climbing from 500 MMK/kg to 600-700 MMK/kg. Higher-quality rice rose as well, albeit less steeply, climbing from 700-900 MMK/kg to 850-1000 MMK/kg in three of four townships for a three-month increase of 10-20%. Most other prices are near January levels.

III. Price Differences by Market (April)

Essential Food Items – Prices for essential food items were similar across townships in April, with the main exception of elevated prices for rice in Paletwa and Rathedaung Townships. While palm oil prices rose further in April, most markets sold oil in the range of 2300-2500 MMK/liter. Cheaper rice sold for 600-700 MMK/kg in most townships while selling for 800 MMK/viss in Paletwa. Higher-quality rice sold for 800-900 MMK/kg in most townships while selling for 1300-1400 MMK/kg in Paletwa and Rathedaung Townships. Salt prices again varied by market, possibly due to differences in product quality.

Vegetables – Vegetable prices showed typical variation across markets in April, with generally-lower prices in Minbya and higher prices in Maungdaw and Paletwa Townships. As usual, bulbs like onion and garlic were most similar across townships, at 700-900 MMK/viss and 3000-4000 MMK/viss, respectively. Watercress often sold for 10000-12000 MMK/viss, while prices for long bean and local green chili were in the range of 17000-20000 MMK/viss and 1000-1500 MMK/viss, respectively. Township with more expensive vegetables, such as Maungdaw, Paletwa and Rathedaung, often saw prices 50-100% above the median township price.

Hygiene Products – Prices for hygiene products were similar across townships in April, although Paletwa Township saw higher prices in some cases. In general, toothpaste sold for 800-1000 MMK/150g, detergent sold for 700 MMK/400g, and sanitary pads sold for 500-600 MMK/10pc. Soap prices were higher in some markets, possibly due to the unavailability of small sizes. Prices for hygiene products in Paletwa Township were 10-40% higher than elsewhere.

Meat and Fish – Meat and fish prices were mostly similar across townships in April, although the price and availability of seafood in Paletwa Township stood out somewhat. Fresh and dried fish typically sold for 10000-15000 MMK/viss and 5000-7000 MMK/viss, respectively. Chicken prices were less variable than in past months, usually selling for 7000-9000 MMK/viss, while shrimp sold for 5000-7000 MMK/viss. In Paletwa Township, dried fish was 17% above the median township price, while fresh fish and shrimp were reported unavailable.

Non-Food Items – NFI were priced similarly across townships in April, with the exception of certain data points where products were not available at specification. Prices for longyi and umbrellas were the least variable of all NFIs. Outlier prices were observed for some NFIs where available goods did not match the brand or origin specified (e.g., cookpots in Maungdaw and Ponnagyun Townships, towels in Paletwa, Ponnagyun and Rathedaung Townships).

IV. Market Price Tables and Charts

Table 2. April Market Prices (by Township)

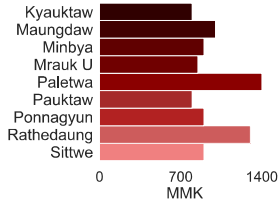
Product	Kyauktaw	Maungdaw	Minbya	Mrauk U	Paletwa	Pauktaw	Ponnagyun	Rathedaung	Sittwe
Better Rice (1 kg)	800	1,000	900	850	1,400	800	900	1,300	900
Cheaper Rice (1 kg)	600	700	600	650	800	600	600	-	700
Palm Oil (1 liter)	2,500	2,600	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,300	2,300	2,700	2,500
Pulse (1 viss)	3,000	2,500	3,000	2,300	3,000	2,500	2,600	3,000	2,500
Salt (500 g)	200	250	250	150	250	200	250	100	200
Garlic (1 viss)	3,100	4,000	3,000	3,500	4,000	3,600	3,200	3,500	3,500
Onion (1 viss)	800	800	800	800	800	700	900	700	700
Eggplant (1 viss)	1,000	1,400	500	1,300	1,500	1,000	900	1,300	1,500
Long Bean (1 viss)	-	3,500	1,000	1,250	3,000	2,000	2,000	1,700	2,000
Watercress (1 viss)	500	1,500	800	1,200	1,000	-	1,000	1,600	1,000
Green Chili (1 viss)	1,000	2,500	1,000	1,500	-	1,200	1,500	1,300	1,000
Toothpaste (140 g)	800	650	800	900	1,000	900	900	850	1,000
Detergent (400 g)	700	700	650	750	750	625	700	700	700
Soap (60 g)	300	350	350	350	500	500	350	500	400
Sanitary Pad (10 pc)	600	500	600	500	700	600	550	500	500
Shrimp (1 viss)	5,000	7,000	7,000	5,000	-	7,000	5,700	6,500	7,000
Fresh Fish (1 viss)	9,000	14,000	13,000	11,000	-	15,000	13,000	12,000	10,000
Dried Fish (1 viss)	6,000	5,500	7,000	6,000	7,000	6,000	6,300	6,700	4,500
Chicken (1 viss)	10,000	9,000	7,000	8,000	-	9,000	6,500	9,000	7,000
Charcoal (1 viss)	600	1,000	600	500	-	500	650	-	500
Cooking Pot (4 cans)	3,600	3,500	2,800	2,500	3,000	2,500	4,700	3,000	2,500
Blanket	4,500	5,000	5,000	6,000	4,500	4,000	4,500	3,500	3,500
Mosquito Net	2,400	3,000	2,500	1,800	3,500	1,500	2,600	2,500	3,500
Plastic Tarpaulin	3,500	3,600	6,000	4,400	5,200	2,800	3,600	6,000	4,000
Men's Longyi	4,500	4,000	4,500	3,500	4,500	3,500	4,000	4,000	4,200
Women's Longyi	3,500	4,000	3,500	3,400	4,000	4,000	3,600	2,700	4,000
Umbrella	3,200	3,500	4,000	3,900	4,500	3,500	3,600	3,500	3,500
Towel	1,100	1,500	1,700	1,400	2,500	1,500	2,600	2,500	1,500

*Dashes indicate products that were unavailable at specification.

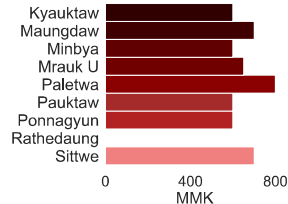
Charts 1-24. April Market Prices (by Category and Township)

Essential Food Items

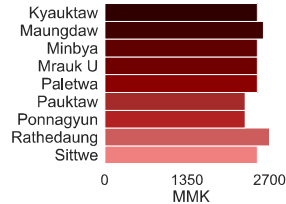
Better Rice (1 kg)



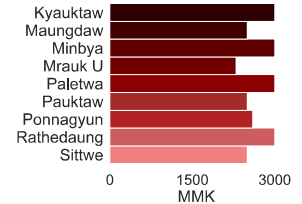
Cheaper Rice (1 kg)



Palm Oil (1 liter)

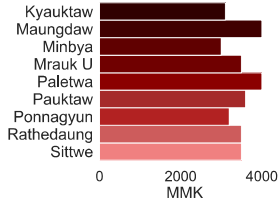


Pulse (1 viss)

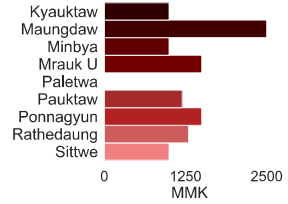


Vegetables

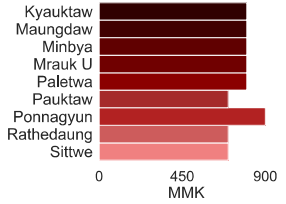
Garlic (1 viss)



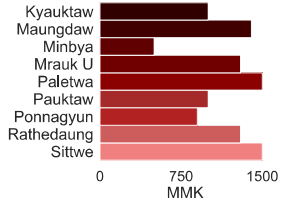
Green Chili (1 viss)



Onion (1 viss)

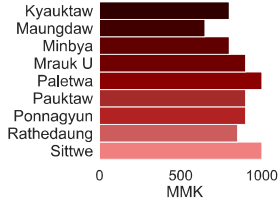


Eggplant (1 viss)

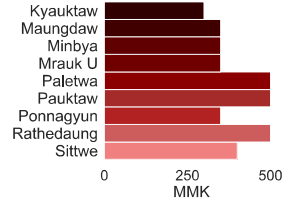


Hygiene Products

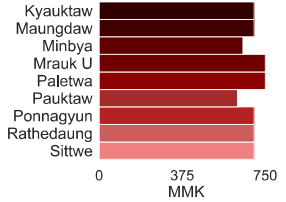
Toothpaste (140 g)



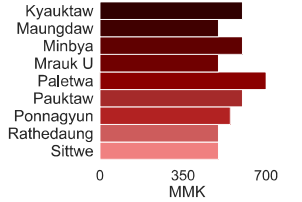
Soap (60 g)



Detergent (400 g)

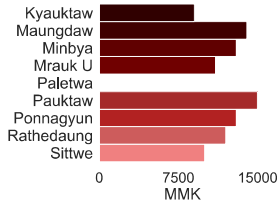


Sanitary Pad (10 pc)

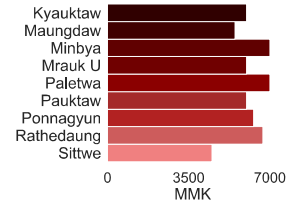


Meat / Fish

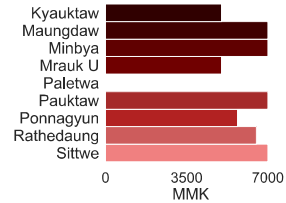
Fresh Fish (1 viss)



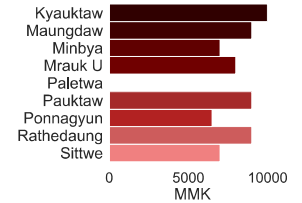
Dried Fish (1 viss)



Shrimp (1 viss)

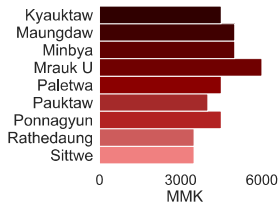


Chicken (1 viss)

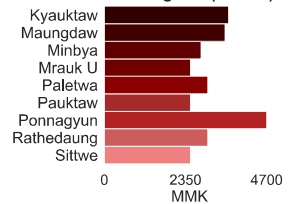


Other Non-Food Items

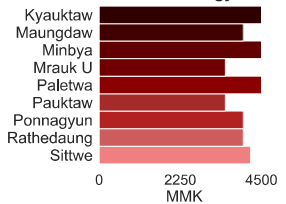
Blanket



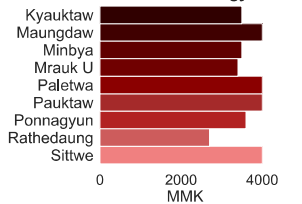
Cooking Pot (4 cans)



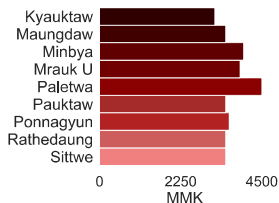
Men's Longyi



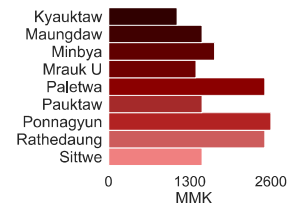
Women's Longyi



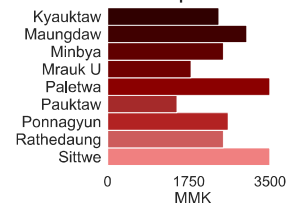
Umbrella



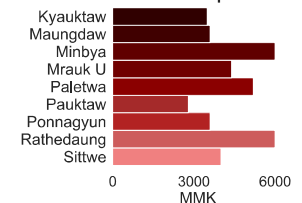
Towel



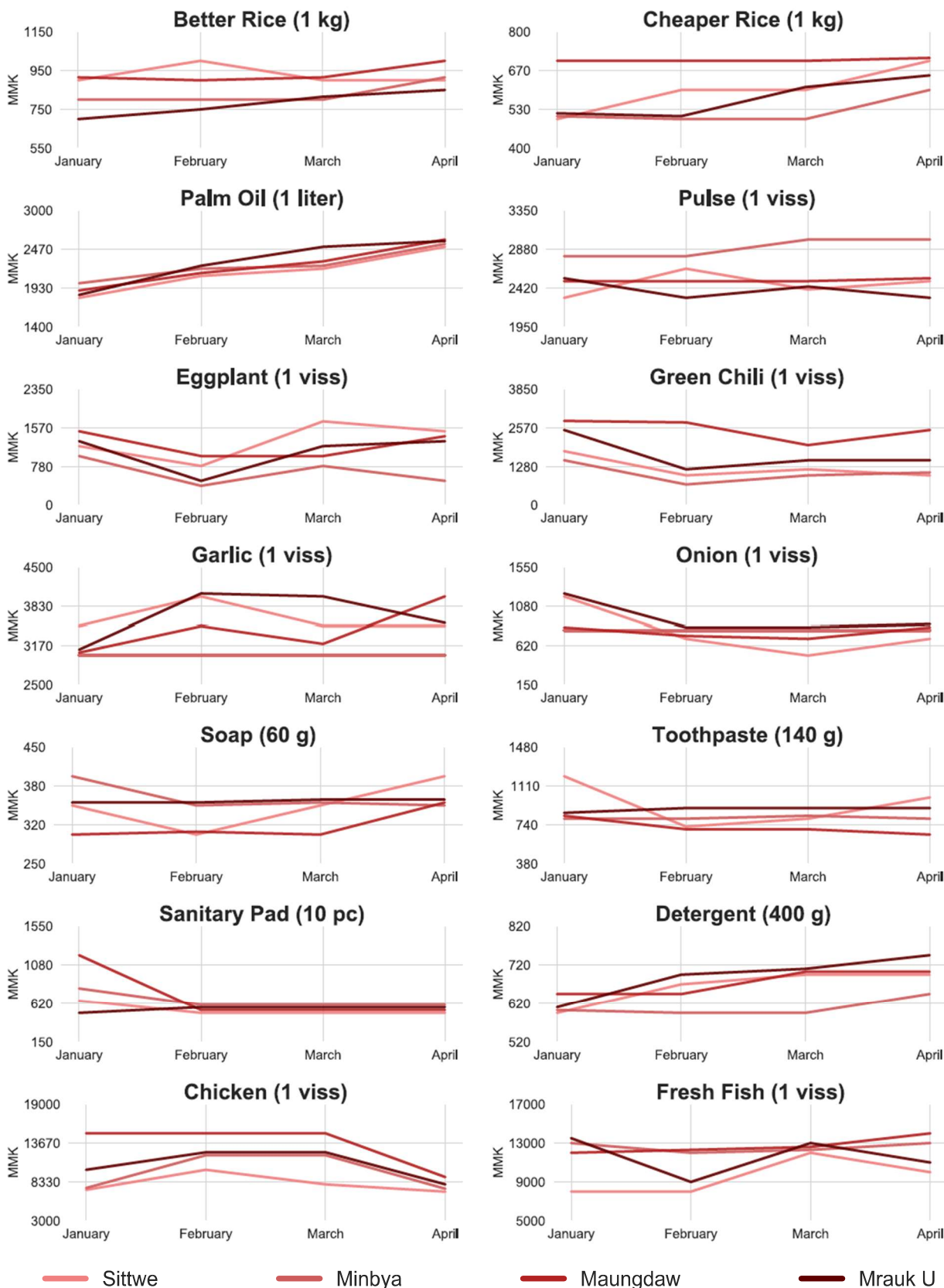
Mosquito Net



Plastic Tarpaulin



Charts 25-38. Change in Price for Selected Products (Jan. 2021 - April 2021)



Mercy Corps' Market Analysis Unit (MAU)

The Market Analysis Unit provides development practitioners, policymakers and private sector actors in Rakhine State with data and analysis to better understand the present and potential impacts of Covid-19, conflict and other crises on:

- **Household purchasing power**, including coping mechanisms, safety nets and access to basic needs;
- **Supply chains**, including trade, cross-border dynamics and market functionality (particularly as it relates to food systems);
- **Financial services**, including financial services providers, household and business access to finance and remittances; and
- **Labor markets** (formal and informal), with a focus on agricultural labor and low-wage sectors (e.g. construction, food service).

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