

MARKET PRICE REPORT – RAKHINE STATE (FEB. 2021)

Mercy Corps - Market Analysis Unit

March 15th, 2021

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

Highlights: February 2021

- **Sittwe prices rose 15-20% in February for all essential foods and some other goods**, although they remained relatively similar to those in neighboring townships;
- **Palm oil prices rose 10-25% in four townships**, bucking the stability of past months;
- **Essential foods prices were similar across townships in February**, although prices were higher for pulses in Rathedaung and rice in Sittwe and Maungdaw;
- **Vegetable prices continued to fall in February albeit more gradually than January**, with the primary exception being higher prices for some goods in Sittwe;
- **Vegetables were pricier in import markets like Sittwe, Maungdaw and Rathedaung** and cheaper in some townships like Minbya which have more production;
- **Shrimp and fish prices rose 10-30% in Sittwe and Maundaw** but fell in Mrauk U.
- **Prices for non-food items were mostly similar across markets in February**, notwithstanding some outliers like charcoal and mosquito nets in Maungdaw.

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

Product	Kyauktaw	Maungdaw	Minbya	Mrauk U	Pauktaw	Ponnagyun	Rathedaung	Sittwe
Better Rice (1 kg)	800	900	800	750	700	750	1,000	1,000
Cheaper Rice (1 kg)	600	700	500	500	500	500	-	600
Palm Oil (1 liter)	2,100	2,100	2,200	2,200	2,200	2,100	2,000	2,100
Pulse (1 viss)	2,800	2,500	2,800	2,300	2,500	2,600	3,000	2,650

I. Price Stability in February

Essential Food Items – Essential food prices showed more variation than usual in February, as prices generally rose in Sittwe and palm oil prices rose in all townships. In Sittwe, prices for pulses, oil and low-quality rice all climbed 15-20% to reach new four-month highs. High-quality rice in Sittwe rebounded 11% to return to November-December levels. Palm oil prices—which typically fluctuate around 5% monthly—rose as well, climbing 10% in Minbya and Maungdaw and 15-25% in Sittwe and Mrauk U. All other prices in this category were stable.

Vegetables – Besides Sittwe, vegetable prices continued to fall in February albeit less dramatically than in previous months. Prices for onion, eggplant and green chili all continued a slide which began in December or earlier. Many vegetable prices fell 30-50% in February, and most reached new lows for the season. There were two main exceptions to this. Sittwe, which is a net importer of fresh produce, saw long bean and watercress prices rise significantly in February, possibly due to winter supplies passing their peak. Garlic provided the other exception, with prices rising 15-30% in some locations, marking a rebound from lows in December and January.

Hygiene Products – Hygiene products were largely stable again, although prices for sanitary pads fell in two markets. In most cases, prices for hygiene products held steady or changed just 10-15% (not unusual in recent months). However, the price of sanitary pads fell 25% in Sittwe and Minbya Townships, bringing prices slightly below their four-month averages. Prices appeared to fall in Maungdaw, yet this was due largely to the availability in February of a cheaper variety of sanitary pad. Only in Mrauk U Township—where prices for sanitary pads are already lowest of the four townships—did prices appear stable or slightly rising. In fact, with respect to hygiene products in general, Mrauk U Township stood out somewhat in February for prices which were either flat or slightly rising.

Meat and Fish – Shrimp and fresh fish prices fell to four-month lows in Mrauk U in February, while rising in Sittwe and Maungdaw. In general, fish showed more stability than shrimp or chicken in February. That said, shrimp and fresh fish prices fell by 20% and 33%, respectively, in Mrauk U. By contrast, Sittwe and Maungdaw Townships saw prices rise, with shrimp and dried fish climbing 25-33% and 12-15%, respectively.¹

II. Price Differences by Market (February)

Essential Food Items – Prices for rice, palm oil and pulses were similar across townships in February, notwithstanding higher rice prices in some locations. Prices for low- and high-quality rice were generally around 500-600 MMK/kg and 700-800 MMK/kg, respectively. However, Sittwe and Maungdaw saw rice prices 10-40% above the median. Although palm oil prices rose in February (see above), they were fairly similar across townships at 2000-2200 MMK/liter. Prices for pulses were also relatively consistent across townships, generally in the range of 2500-2800 MMK/viss. That said, prices for pulses were 14% above the median in Rathedaung (3000 MMK/viss) and 12% below it in Mrauk U (2300 MMK/viss).

Vegetables – Vegetable prices varied across markets again in February, with the usual exception of fairly consistent garlic and onion prices. Garlic and onion sold for 3000-4000 MMK/viss and 700-800 MMK/viss, respectively. Prices for eggplant, long bean and green chili prices were also similar across markets, barring one or two outlier townships. Eggplant sold for 400-600 MMK/viss, with higher prices of 800-1000 MMK/viss in Maungdaw, Rathedaung and Sittwe. Long bean sold for 1000-1500 MMK/viss, with lower prices of 500-800 MMK/viss in Minbya and Pauktaw. Green chili sold for 1000-1500 MMK/viss, with prices lower in Minbya (700 MMK/viss) and higher in Maungdaw (2800 MMK). Watercress showed no clear trend, with price of 500-2500 MMK/viss. At a township-level, vegetables were generally cheaper in Minbya, Pauktaw and Ponnagyun and higher among net importers like Sittwe, Rathedaung and Maungdaw.

Hygiene Products – Prices for hygiene products were similar across townships in February, including for sanitary pads which appeared more variable in past months (see above). The price of toothpaste was typically 800 MMK/140g, although it was 9% higher in Mrauk U and 12% lower in Sittwe and Maungdaw. Prices were similar in most locations for soap (350-400 MMK/60g) and detergent (600-700 MMK/400g), with the exception of Rathedaung Townships where prices were 23% above the median. Sanitary pads were also consistent across markets 500 MMK/10pc; the two exceptions to this were Minbya (600 MMK/10pc) and Ponnagyun (450 MMK/10pc).

Meat and Fish – Meat and fish prices varied widely across markets in February, although fish and chicken were more consistent than shrimp. Shrimp sold for 5000-8000 MMK/viss in

¹ Although chicken prices appeared to rise in February, this was probably due in part to changes in how prices were measured between January and February.

February, with the exception of higher prices in Maungdaw and Pauktaw (10000 MMK) and extremely low prices in Rathedaung (2700 MMK). Fresh fish sold for 9000-1200 MMK/viss, with higher prices in Pauktaw (15000 MMK) and lower prices in Sittwe (8000 MMK). Dried fish was the most consistent of the four products, priced at 5500-7000 MMK/viss in all markets besides Kyauktaw (4500 MMK/viss). Chicken generally sold for 10000-1200MMK/viss, with the exception of lower prices in Ponnagyun (8000 MMK) and higher prices in Maungdaw (15000 MMK).

Non-Food Items – Prices for non-food items (NFIs) were fairly similar across markets in February, with the exception of some outliers. Men’s and women’s longyi’s typically sold for 3500 MMK, while umbrellas and blankets sold for around 3500-4000 MMK and 4500-5000 MMK, respectively. Most prices for towels and cookpots were 1500-1800 MMK and 3000-3500 MMK, respectively. In Ponnagyun, Rathedaung and Mrauk U Townships outlier prices for towels and cookpots were due to the unavailability of products that matched specification. Yet in some cases prices were higher for identical goods. Tarps typically sold for 11000-13500 MMK in February, but prices were 30-70% higher in Kyauktaw and Ponnagyun. Similarly, charcoal sold for 500-600 MMK/viss, but in Maungdaw prices were nearly double this. Mosquito nets were similar, selling for 2000-2500 MMK in most markets but 3500 MMK in Maungdaw. In addition to these higher prices in Maungdaw, Sittwe, Pauktaw and Rathedaung often had prices at or below the median.

III. Market Price Tables and Charts

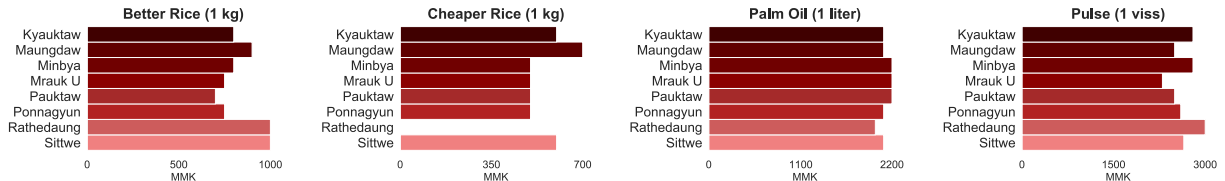
Table 2. February Market Prices (by Category and Township)

Product	Kyauktaw	Maungdaw	Minbya	Mrauk U	Pauktaw	Ponnagyun	Rathedaung	Sittwe
Better Rice (1 kg)	800	900	800	750	700	750	1,000	1,000
Cheaper Rice (1 kg)	600	700	500	500	500	500	-	600
Palm Oil (1 liter)	2,100	2,100	2,200	2,200	2,200	2,100	2,000	2,100
Pulse (1 viss)	2,800	2,500	2,800	2,300	2,500	2,600	3,000	2,650
Garlic (1 viss)	3,800	3,500	3,000	4,000	3,000	3,300	3,800	4,000
Onion (1 viss)	800	700	800	800	800	700	800	700
Eggplant (1 viss)	500	1,000	400	500	500	600	1,000	800
Long Bean (1 viss)	1,200	1,500	500	1,500	800	1,000	1,500	1,000
Watercress (1 viss)	1,000	2,500	500	1,300	750	550	1,500	2,000
Green Chilli (1 viss)	1,500	2,750	700	1,200	1,000	1,100	1,300	1,000
Toothpaste (140 g)	800	700	800	900	800	800	800	725
Detergent (400 g)	600	650	600	700	-	600	800	675
Soap (60 g)	300	300	350	350	350	300	400	300
Sanitary Pad (10 pc)	500	500	600	500	500	450	500	500
Shrimp (1 viss)	5,000	10,000	7,000	6,000	10,000	7,000	2,700	8,000
Fresh Fish (1 viss)	9,000	12,000	12,000	9,000	15,000	10,000	12,500	8,000
Dried Fish (1 viss)	4,500	5,500	7,000	6,000	6,000	7,000	6,500	5,500
Chicken (1 viss)	12,000	15,000	12,000	12,000	-	8,000	10,000	10,000
Charcoal (1 viss)	500	1,000	600	600	500	600	-	550
Cooking Pot (4 cans)	3,500	3,500	-	2,300	3,500	4,500	3,000	3,000
Blanket	4,500	5,000	5,000	5,000	3,500	4,500	3,500	3,800
Mosquito Net	2,500	3,500	2,500	1,800	1,500	2,000	2,000	2,500
Plastic Tarpaulin	22,000	13,500	-	13,000	13,000	17,000	12,000	11,000
Men’s Longyi	4,000	-	4,000	3,500	3,500	3,500	4,000	3,500
Women’s Longyi	3,500	4,000	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500	2,500	2,800
Umbrella	3,000	4,000	3,800	3,900	3,500	3,500	4,000	4,650
Towel	1,200	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,800	2,500	2,500	1,500

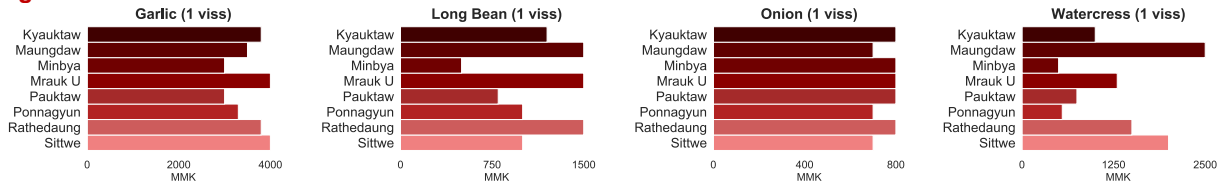
*Dashes indicate products that were unavailable at specification.

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

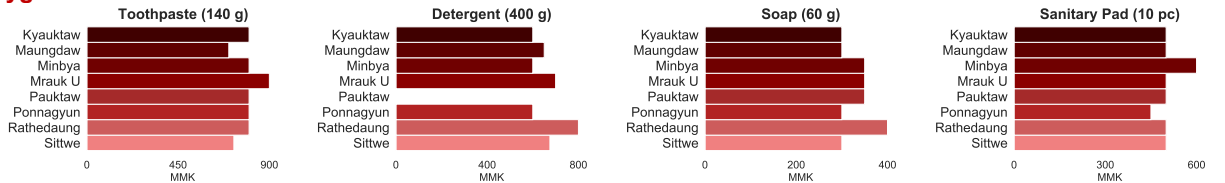
Essential Food Items



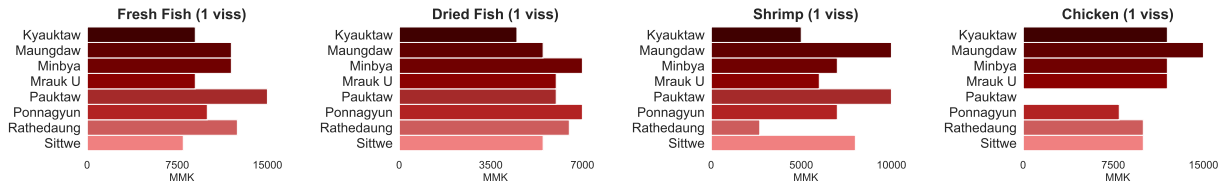
Vegetables



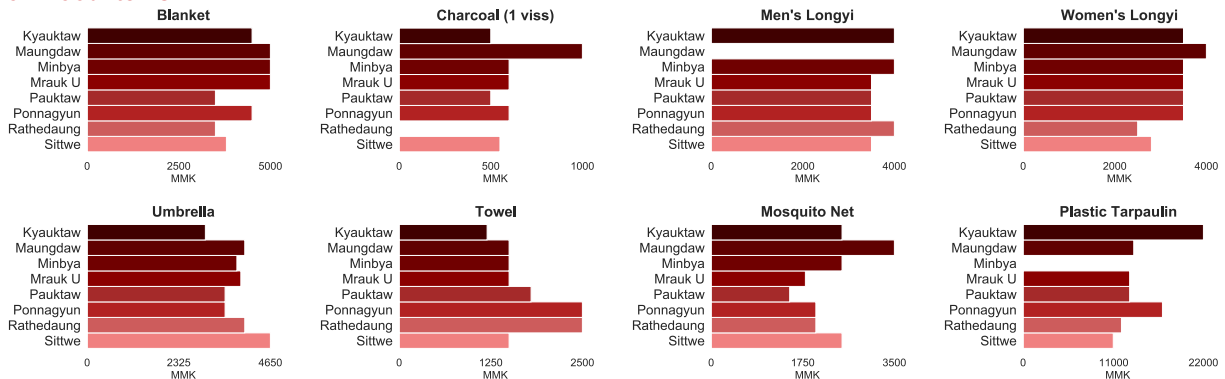
Hygiene Products



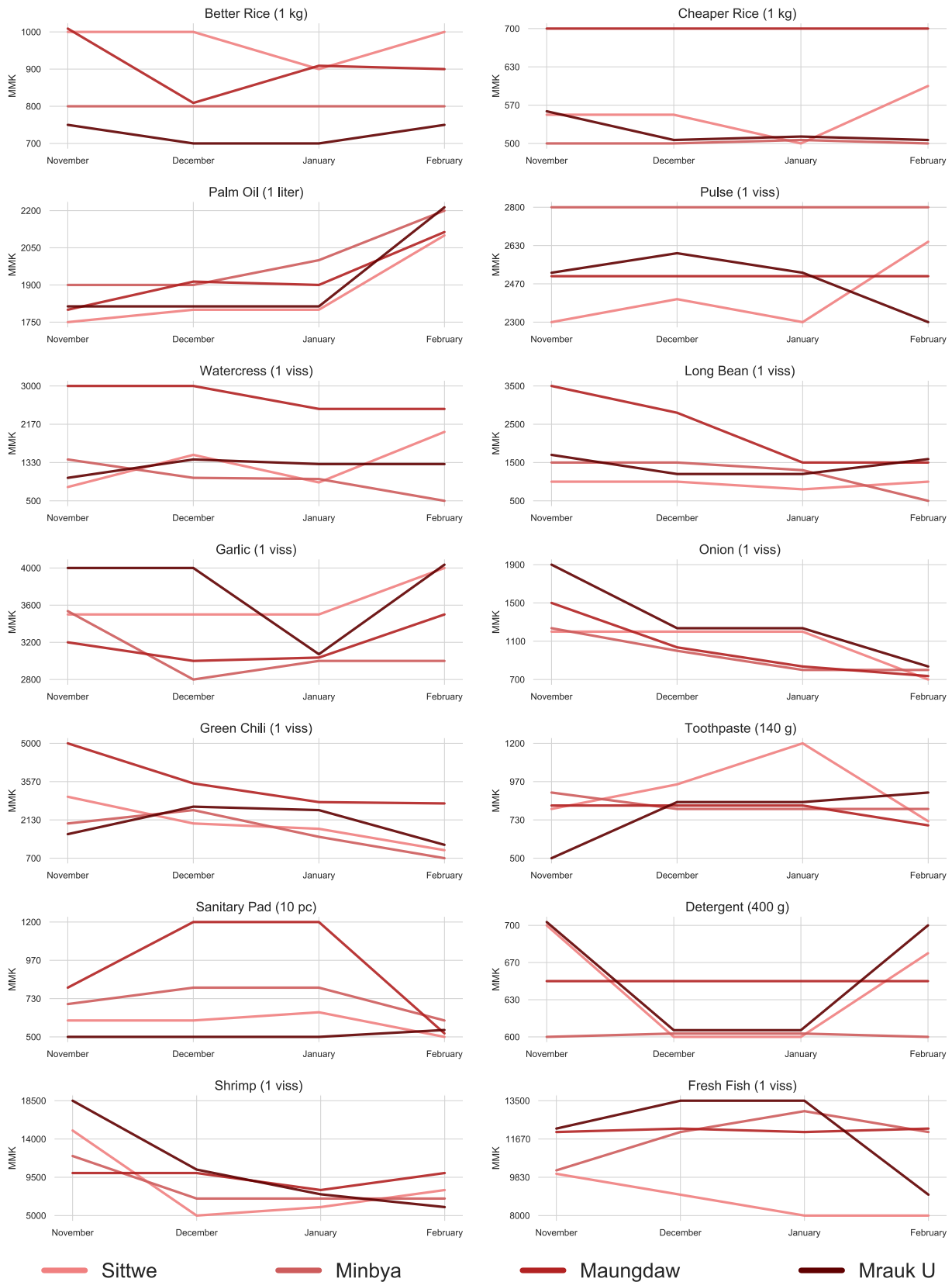
Meat / Fish



Non-Food Items



Charts 25-38. Change in Price for Selected Products (Nov. 2020 - Feb. 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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