

# MARKET PRICE REPORT – RAKHINE STATE (MAR. 2021)

## Mercy Corps - Market Analysis Unit

April 13<sup>th</sup>, 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 prices for goods based on data from three vendors per product per market. March data were gathered on March 26-27 in Kyauktaw, Maungdaw, Minbya, Mrauk U, Pauktaw, Ponnagyun, Rathedaung and Sittwe Townships. Prices for December - February are provided for comparison.

### Highlights: March 2021

- **Essential food prices were stable in March, despite some price increases for rice in Mrauk U, Pauktaw and Ponnagyun Townships;**
- **Palm oil prices continued to rise, climbing 5-15% in some markets, although this was more gradual than the increases observed in February;**
- **Vegetable prices rose dramatically across the region as local winter supply ebbed, particularly for eggplant, watercress and green chili;**
- **Vegetable prices differed between more- and less-producing regions in March, which is not uncommon late in the winter season when supply is reduced;**
- **Prices rose for some NFIs, such as hygiene products in Rathedaung Township, although in general NFIs were stable in March.**

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

Product	Kyauktaw	Maungdaw	Minbya	Mrauk U	Pauktaw	Ponnagyun	Rathedaung	Sittwe
Better Rice (1 kg)	800	900	800	800	700	800	1,000	900
Cheaper Rice (1 kg)	600	700	500	600	600	600	-	600
Palm Oil (1 liter)	2,100	2,300	2,200	2,500	2,200	-	2,200	2,200
Pulse (1 viss)	2,800	2,500	3,000	2,400	3,000	2,600	3,000	2,400
Salt (500 g)	175	250	150	200	100	250	150	150

### I. Price Stability in March

**Essential Food Items** – Essential food prices were mostly stable in March, although palm oil prices continued a gradual rise and prices for cheaper rice climbed in three townships. Prices for high-quality rice were stable, shifting by just 5-10% in three townships and remaining flat elsewhere. Cheaper rice presented a different picture, with prices stable in some townships but rising 20% (from 500 MMK/kg up to 600 MMK/kg) in Mrauk U, Pauktaw and Ponnagyun Townships. Palm oil prices rose further in March, albeit less dramatically than in February. Palm oil prices rose by 5-15% in four markets while remaining flat elsewhere. Pulses were generally stable, although prices rose 20% in Pauktaw and roughly 5% in Mrauk U and Minbya Townships.

**Vegetables** – Prices for many vegetables rose in March for the first time since November, most likely due to reduced local supply as the winter harvest waned. Prices for eggplant—a common winter garden crop in the region—rose significantly, increasing by 100% or more in most townships. Watercress prices also climbed in four townships, albeit in a lower range of 20-100%. The same was true of chili, which saw price increases of 10-40% in five of eight townships.

Watercress presented a mixed picture, with prices rising or falling by 30-40% depending on the township. Garlic and onion prices were fairly stable in March, except in Sittwe where prices fell.

**Meat and Fish – Prices for meat and fish revealed no obvious trends in March, with prices rising or falling moderately in various markets.** Prices for chicken were the most stable in this category, shifting by just 5-20% in three townships. Prices for fresh fish and shrimp were more volatile. Fresh fish rose or fell by 10-50% in five markets, and shrimp rose or fell by 15-60% in five townships. Prices for dried fish shifted by 10-30% in three townships.

**Hygiene Products – Hygiene products were again very stable in March, although Rathedaung and Sittwe Townships stood out for slightly rising prices.** Toothpaste, detergent and soap saw price increases of 5-25% in Sittwe and Rathedaung Townships, while in most other townships prices for these goods were unchanged since February. Prices for sanitary pads were unchanged in all eight markets.

**Other NFIs – Most prices for non-food items (NFIs) were stable in March, and no products stood out as particularly volatile.** Half of all prices collected for NFIs were unchanged in March, and those that did change generally rose or fell by 5-15%. Only in Sittwe and Pauktaw Townships did prices shift by more than 15% for some items.<sup>1</sup>

## II. Price Differences by Market (March)

**Essential Food Items – Prices for essential food items were fairly similar across townships in March.** Palm oil prices—while higher in March—were typically in the range of 2100-2300 MMK/liter. Other goods showed more variation. Prices for pulses were in the range of 2400-3000 MMK/viss, while cheaper- and better-quality rice sold for 500-600 MMK/kg and 800-900 MMK/kg, respectively. Salt prices differed most by market (150-250 MMK/500g).<sup>2</sup>

**Vegetables – Vegetable prices showed the usual variation across markets in March, with long bean and watercress showing the most variation.** Long bean sold for 1000-2000 MMK/viss in most markets, although it was far cheaper in Minbya at just 500 MMK/viss. Watercress sold for 1000-1500 MMK/viss in net-importer townships like Sittwe, Rathedaung, Pauktaw and Maungdaw, although it sold for just 500-700 MMK/viss elsewhere. Prices for chili and eggplant—both of which rose in March—were more similar across townships. Chili sold for 1000-2000 MMK/viss, and eggplant sold for 800-1700 MMK/viss. Garlic and onion were as usual similarly priced across townships at 3200-4000 MMK/viss and 700-800 MMK/viss, respectively.

**Hygiene Products – Prices for hygiene products were fairly similar across townships in March, although prices were higher for some goods in Rathedaung Township.** Toothpaste typically sold for 800-900 MMK/150g, while sanitary pads sold for 500-600 MMK/10pc. Detergent and soap prices were typically very consistent at 600-700 MMK/400g and 300-350 MMK/60g, respectively. However, both goods were more expensive in Rathedaung Township, where they sold for 850 MMK/400g and 500 MMK/60g, respectively.

**Meat and Fish – Meat and fish prices were similar across townships in March, even though prices were often trending in different directions.** Fresh fish sold for 10000-13000 MMK/viss, while dried fish sold for 5000-7000 MMK/viss (the sole exception being Sittwe, where it sold for

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<sup>1</sup> The largest increases were due to the unavailability of products that matched the usual product specifications.

<sup>2</sup> This may be due in part to unit size, as 500g packages were not available in all cases.

4000 MMK/viss). Shrimp sold for 6000-8000 MMK/viss in most townships, although it was just 4300 MMK/viss in Rathedaung Township. Prices for chicken varied significantly across townships at 8000-12000 MMK/viss, and Maungdaw chicken was even more expensive at 15000 MMK/viss.

**Non-Food Items – Other NFIs were for the most part similarly-priced across townships in March, with the exception of several which were not available at the same specifications in every market.** For example, men’s and women’s longyi sold for 3500-4000 MMK/pc in all townships (with the exception of Rathedaung Township where the latter was just 2500 MMK/pc). Products like plastic tarps, mosquito nets, blankets and cookpots were also very similar across markets, notwithstanding some outliers like inexpensive mosquito nets and cookpots in Mrauk U or expensive plastic tarps in Ponnagyun Township. On the other hand, prices differed notably across townships for charcoal, towels and umbrellas, likely due to differences in product quality.

### III. Market Price Tables and Charts

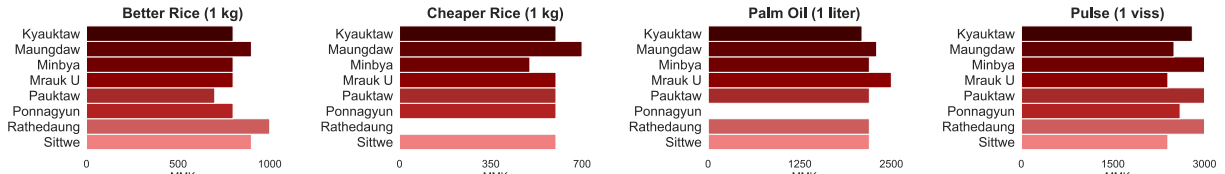
**Table 2. March Market Prices (by Category and Township)**

Product	Kyauktaw	Maungdaw	Minbya	Mrauk U	Pauktaw	Ponnagyun	Rathedaung	Sittwe
Better Rice (1 kg)	800	900	800	800	700	800	1,000	900
Cheaper Rice (1 kg)	600	700	500	600	600	600	-	600
Palm Oil (1 liter)	2,100	2,300	2,200	2,500	2,200	-	2,200	2,200
Pulse (1 viss)	2,800	2,500	3,000	2,400	3,000	2,600	3,000	2,400
Salt (500 g)	175	250	150	200	100	250	150	150
Garlic (1 viss)	3,800	3,200	3,000	4,000	3,000	3,000	4,000	3,500
Onion (1 viss)	800	700	800	800	700	700	700	500
Eggplant (1 viss)	1,500	1,000	800	1,200	1,200	800	950	1,700
Long Bean (1 viss)	1,400	2,000	500	-	1,500	1,000	1,500	2,000
Watercress (1 viss)	500	1,500	700	-	1,000	650	1,500	1,500
Green Chili (1 viss)	1,700	2,000	1,000	1,500	1,000	1,000	1,450	1,200
Toothpaste (140 g)	800	700	800	900	800	800	900	800
Detergent (400 g)	600	700	600	700	650	600	850	700
Soap (60 g)	300	300	350	350	350	350	500	350
Sanitary Pad (10 pc)	500	500	600	500	500	450	500	500
Shrimp (1 viss)	7,000	8,000	7,000	6,000	7,000	8,150	4,300	-
Fresh Fish (1 viss)	10,000	12,000	12,000	13,000	10,000	11,750	12,500	12,000
Dried Fish (1 viss)	5,000	5,500	7,000	6,000	5,000	7,000	6,500	4,000
Chicken (1 viss)	11,000	15,000	12,000	12,000	7,500	8,250	10,000	8,000
Charcoal (1 viss)	500	1,000	600	500	500	550	-	500
Cooking Pot (4 cans)	3,500	3,500	-	2,450	3,500	4,500	3,000	3,000
Blanket	4,500	5,000	5,000	6,000	6,000	4,650	3,500	4,500
Mosquito Net	2,500	3,000	2,500	1,800	2,000	2,100	2,300	2,500
Plastic Tarpaulin	13,000	13,500	-	-	14,000	17,250	12,000	11,000
Men's Longyi	4,000	-	4,000	3,500	3,500	3,600	4,000	3,800
Women's Longyi	3,500	4,000	3,800	3,500	4,500	3,450	2,500	3,500
Umbrella	3,200	-	3,800	3,800	6,500	3,000	4,500	3,800
Towel	1,300	1,500	1,500	1,300	1,500	-	2,500	1,500

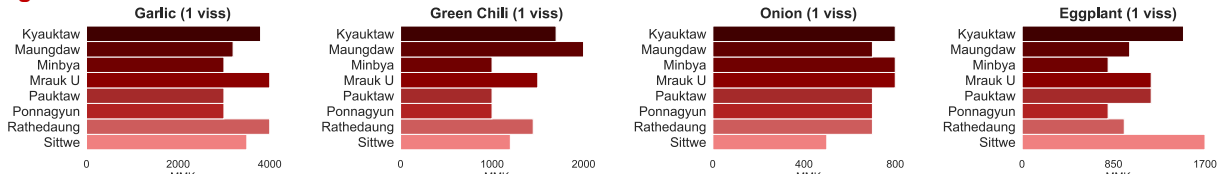
\*Dashes indicate products that were unavailable at specification.

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

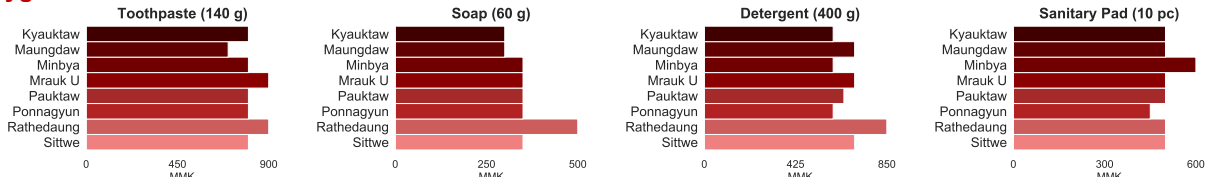
### Essential Food Items



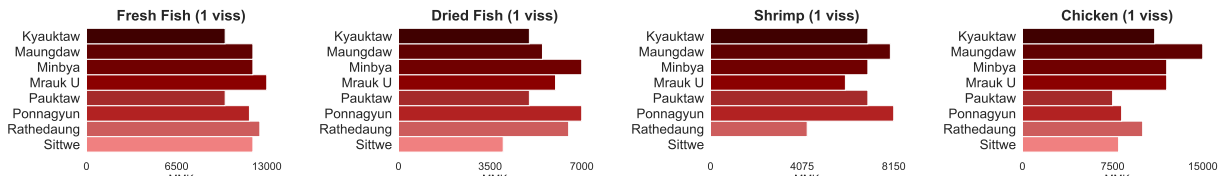
### Vegetables



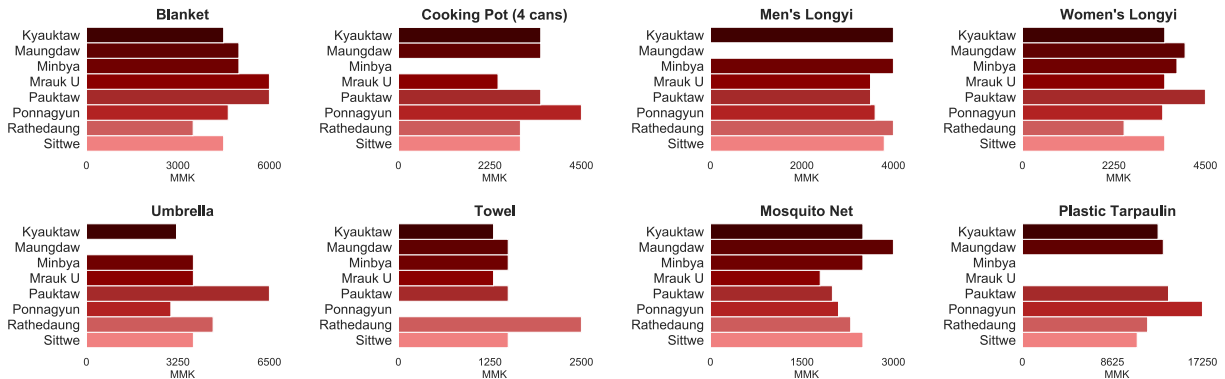
### Hygiene Products



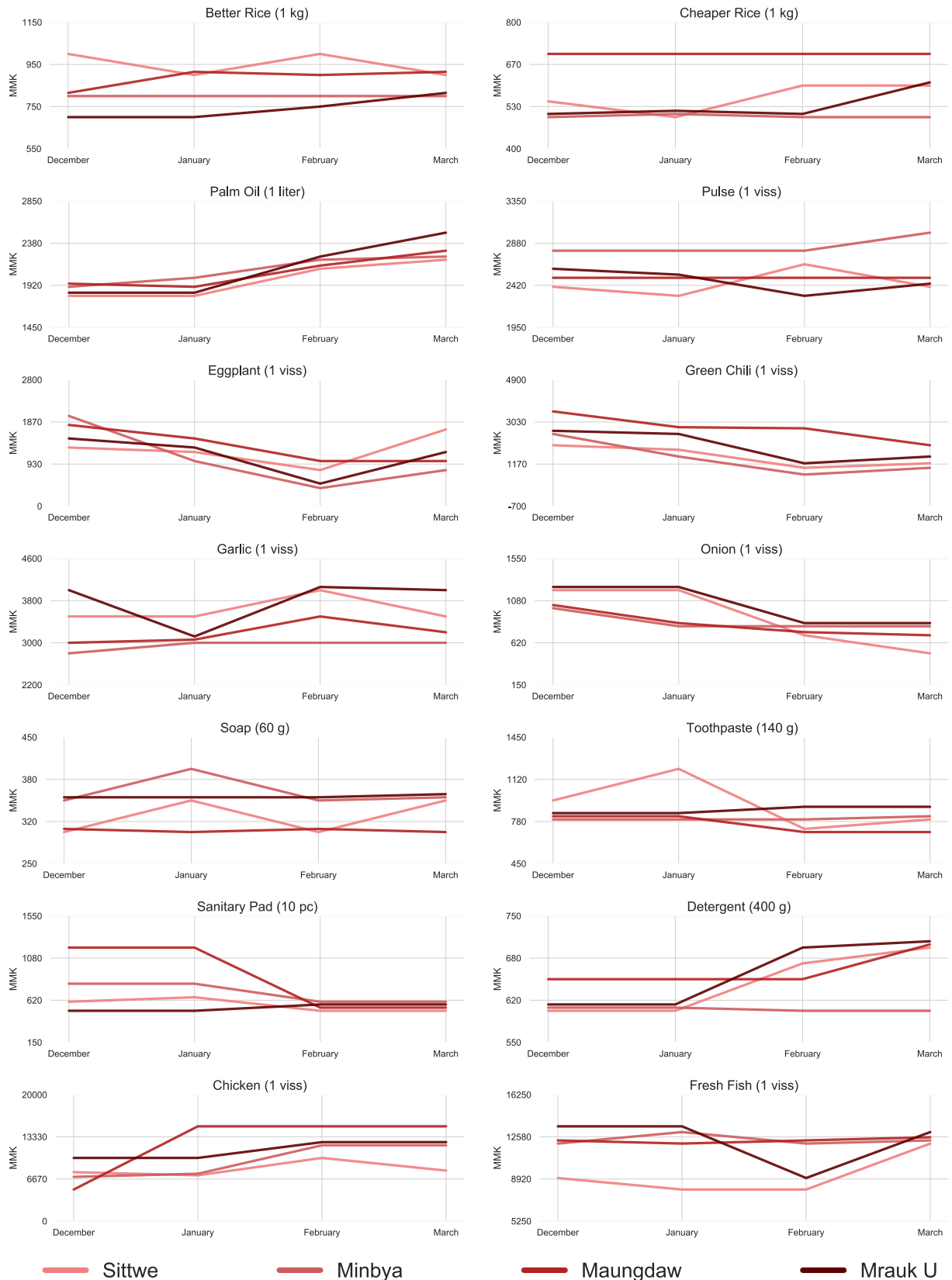
### Meat / Fish



### Other Non-Food Items



## Charts 25-38. Change in Price for Selected Products (Dec. 2020 - Mar. 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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