

MARKET PRICE REPORT – RAKHINE STATE (OCT. 2020)

Mercy Corps - Market Analysis Unit

November 30th, 2020

As part of its cash and voucher assistance programs in Rakhine State, Mercy Corps gathers market prices at town markets in Central and Northern Rakhine State. This monthly market price report summarizes median product prices, based on data from three vendors per product per market. Data were gathered October 20-30 in Ponnagyun, Maungdaw, Sittwe, Mrauk U, and Minbya Townships. Data for May and July 2020 are also provided for comparison in section two.¹

Highlights: October 2020

- **October food prices were generally higher in Maungdaw than other townships**, with the difference most pronounced for vegetables and low-quality rice;
- **Pulses and palm oil saw more consistent prices regionwide** relative to other foods;
- **Vegetable prices varied considerably by township in October**, particularly for items like green chili, long bean, watercress, okra and bitter gourd.
- **Vegetable prices were generally higher in Maungdaw than other townships** and slightly lower in Sittwe;
- **Prices for kitchen goods were slightly higher in Maungdaw and lower in Sittwe**;
- **Prices for most essential food items were fairly stable from September to October**, both at a product-level and at a township-level;
- **Prices for low-quality rice were static or rising slightly from September to October.**

Table 1. Market Prices in this Report (by Category)

Essential food items	High-quality (better) rice, low-quality (cheaper) rice, palm oil, salt, and pulses.
Vegetables	Green chili, long bean, potato, onion, bamboo shoot, etc.
Shelter goods	Blankets, mosquito nets, plastic mats, plastic tarps, towels, etc.
Kitchen goods	Plates, cooking spoons, kitchen knives, cooking pots, cups, etc.
Other goods	Hygiene products, fish, shrimp and crab.

I. Market Prices: October 2020 (by Category)

Essential Food Items – Prices for palm oil and pulses were fairly consistent across townships in October, while rice and salt showed slightly more variation. Salt showed the greatest variation among essential items (200-600 MMK/500g), while palm oil showed the least (1800-2000 MMK/liter). In general, prices for both high- and low-quality rice were highest in Maungdaw Township and lowest in Mrauk U Township. However, beyond rice it is difficult to generalize about township-level price differences for essential food items in October.

Vegetables – Vegetables showed considerable price variation across townships in October, with green chili and long bean being among the more variable. Prices for green chili and long bean both varied from 1200-3500 MMK/viss in October, while other products showing variation

¹ Data for May and July also included markets in Rathedaung, Pauktaw and Kyauk Taw Townships. However, data collection at these markets was not possible in September and October due to lockdown measures.

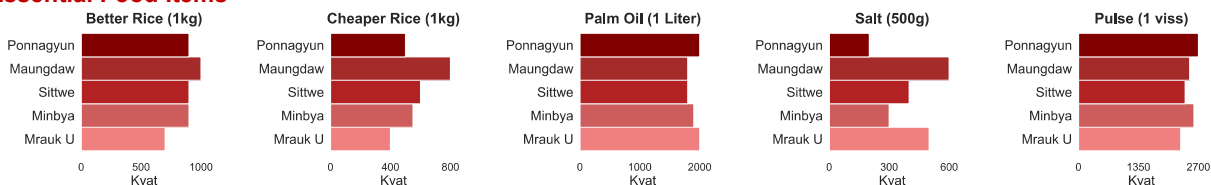
included watercress, okra and bitter gourd. Less variable were products like potato (1500-2000 MMK/viss) and onion (1200-1500 MMK/viss). Among the townships monitored, Maungdaw again saw consistently higher vegetable prices in October. No townships saw consistently lower vegetable prices, but Sittwe and Mrauk U vegetables were often on the low end. Relative to other townships, a few prices stood out as either quite high (e.g. long bean and green chili in Maungdaw) or low (e.g. green chili in Sittwe) compared to other townships.

Shelter Goods – Prices for shelter goods showed wide variation across townships in October. Among products with more uneven prices were plastic mats (3500-6000 MMK/unit) and towels (1200-2000 MMK/unit), although this may also be due to unavailability of identical goods. No township had across-the-board higher or lower prices for shelter goods. However, prices in Minbya were more often on the higher end. While a few items do stand out, such as blankets (Sittwe) and plastic mat (Ponnagyun), comparisons are more complicated for non-food items where products may vary more in quality than food items.

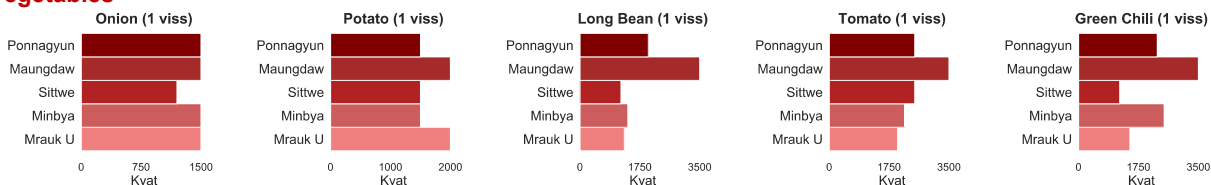
Kitchen Goods – Kitchen goods showed considerable price variation across townships in October. No township had across-the-board higher or lower prices for kitchen goods in October, although Maungdaw prices were often on the high end. Among the products with more uneven prices were kitchen knives (400-1000 MMK/unit) and cooking spoons (500-1500 MMK/unit), although this may also be due to unavailability of identical goods.

Charts 1-20. October Market Prices (by Category and Township)

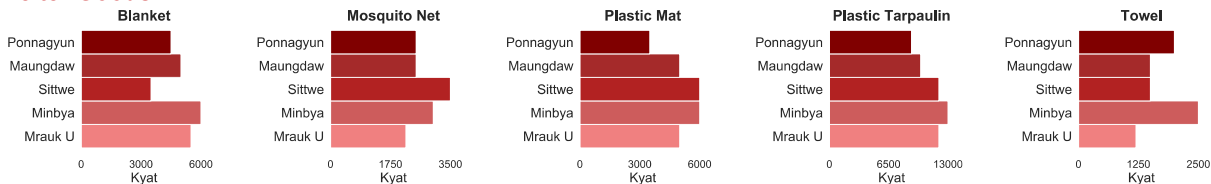
Essential Food Items



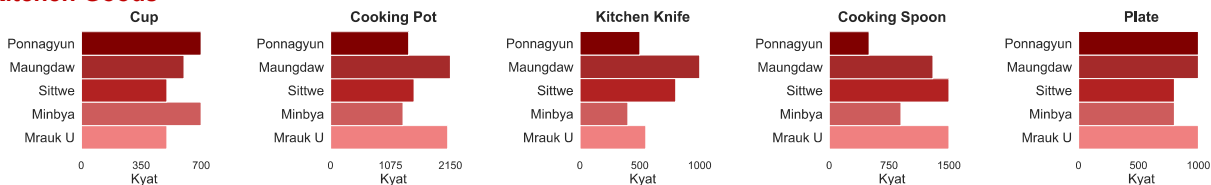
Vegetables



Shelter Goods



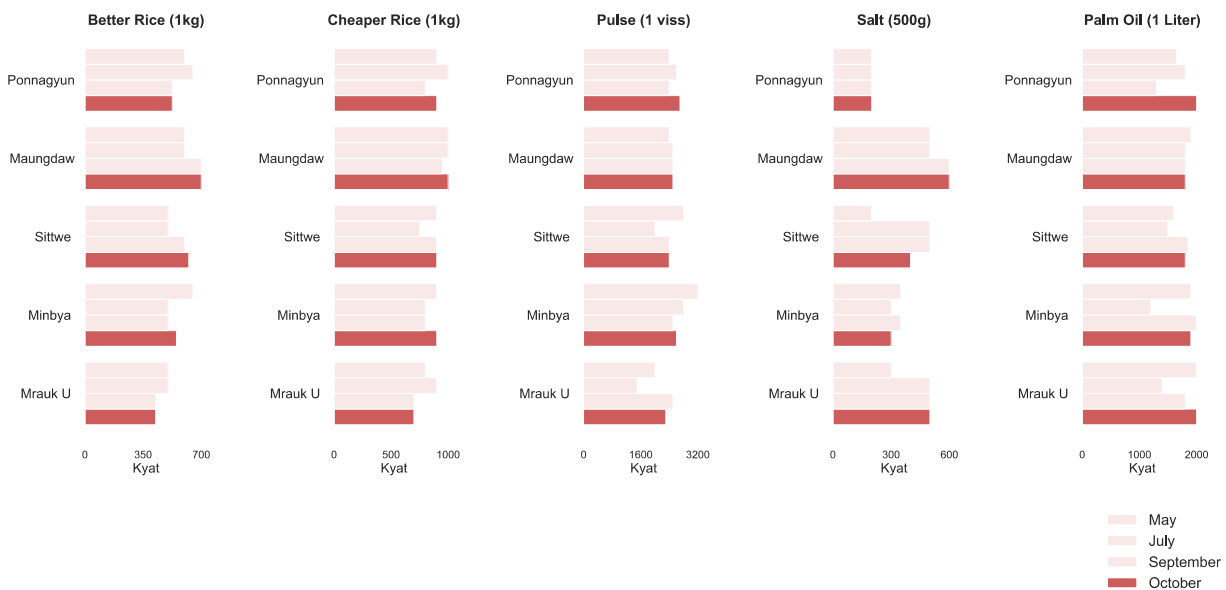
Kitchen Goods



II. Price Stability: Essential Food Items (Sept. – Oct. 2020)

Essential Food Items – Price data for essential food items gathered in September and October indicate relatively stable prices across products and locations. At a township level, Maungdaw and Mrauk U saw the least change in essential food prices in this period (e.g. Maungdaw’s only change was a slight rise in the price of lower-quality rice) while the other three townships saw only minor increases or decreases in select products. At a product-level, prices were fairly consistent from September to October as well. Palm oil, salt and pulses all saw minor increases and decreases in different markets, while rice products were either static or increased slightly in October. Prices for lower-quality rice showed the most change, rising moderately in Ponnagyun, Maungdaw and Minbya. According to one vendor, this may be due to shop owners beginning to replace cheaper rice from the 2019 harvest with more expensive imports of rice from the arriving 2020 harvest. Charts 21-25 compare prices for essential food items collected in May, July, September and October 2020.

Charts 21-25. Prices for Essential Food Items (May, July, Sept. and Oct. 2020)



III. Market Price Table: October 2020 (by Township)

Table 2. Market Prices, by Township: October 2020 (MMK)

Category	Product	Ponnagyun	Maungdaw	Sittwe	Minbya	Mrauk U
Essential Food Items	Better Rice (1kg)	900	1,000	900	900	700
	Cheaper Rice (1kg)	500	800	600	550	400
	Palm Oil (1 liter)	2,000	1,800	1,800	1,900	2,000
	Pulse (1 viss)	2,700	2,500	2,400	2,600	2,300
	Salt (500g)	200	600	400	300	500
Vegetable	Bamboo Shoot (1 viss)	1,600		3,000	1,200	1,700
	Bitter Gourd (1 viss)	1,800	3,500	800	1,500	1,200
	Cabbage (1 pcs)	1,500	2,000			
	Garlic (1 viss)	2,800	3,500	3,500	3,800	4,200
	Green Chili (1 viss)	2,300	3,500	1,200	2,500	1,500
	Long Bean (1 viss)	2,000	3,500	1,200	1,400	1,300
	Carrot (1 viss)	4,000	7,000	4,000		
	Okra (1 viss)	1,700	2,800	2,000	1,200	1,000
	Onion (1 viss)	1,500	1,500	1,200	1,500	1,500
	Potato (1 viss)	1,500	2,000	1,500	1,500	2,000
	Rosella Leaf	1,000	2,000	800	1,300	1,500
	Tomato (1 viss)	2,500	3,500	2,500	2,200	2,000
	Watercress (1 viss)	600	3,000	1,000	1,200	1,500
Fish	Crab (1 viss)			3,000		
	Fish (1 viss)		12,000	10,000	13,000	12,000
	Shrimp (1 viss)		7,000	15,000	6,000	
Kitchen	Cooking Pot (1 can)	900	1,500	1,100	1,050	1,000
	Cooking Pot (2 can)	1,400	2,150	1,500	1,300	2,100
	Cooking Spoon	500	1,300	1,500	900	1,500
	Cup	700	600	500	700	500
	Kitchen Knife	500	1,000	800	400	550
	Plate	1,000	1,000	800	800	1,000
	Vacuum Flask (15 cups)	10,000	6,500	12,000	8,500	12,000
	Water Jar		1,500	1,500	1,300	2,000
Shelter	Blanket	4,500	5,000	3,500	6,000	5,500
	Candle		400	800	400	400
	Charcoal (1 viss)	500	1,000	6,000	500	1,200
	Firewood	1,000		1,500	1,500	200
	Mosquito Net	2,500	2,500	3,500	3,000	2,200
	Pillow	1,500	5,000	6,000	1,500	1,200
	Plastic Chair	6,500		6,500	7,500	6,500
	Plastic Mat	3,500	5,000	6,000	6,000	5,000
	Plastic Tarpaulin	9,000	10,000	12,000	13,000	12,000
	Towel	2,000	1,500	1,500	2,500	1,200
Hygiene	Umbrella	3,500		3,500	3,750	4,500
	Detergent (400g)	1,000	500	800	700	800
	Sanitary Pad	1,500	800	700	700	500
	Soap (60g)	600	600	550	450	350
	Toothbrush	500	500	700	1,000	500
	Toothpaste	500	800	800	650	500

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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