

MARKET PRICE REPORT – RAKHINE STATE (SEPT. 2020)

Mercy Corps - Market Analysis Unit

October 29th, 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 September 21-29 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: September 2020

- September **food prices were generally higher in Maungdaw** than other townships, while **food prices were lower in Ponnagyun**.
- Among essential food items, **pulse prices were most consistent across townships**.
- **Vegetables prices varied by township**, particularly for green chili and bamboo shoots.
- **Vegetable prices in Minbya were slightly lower** than elsewhere in September.
- Prices for **kitchen goods were slightly higher in Maungdaw and lower in Sittwe**.
- Prices in **Maungdaw tracked closest to other townships for shelter goods**.
- From May to September, **Maungdaw prices were often higher than elsewhere** for essential food items, while **Ponnagyun prices were more often lower**.

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, various household products, etc.

I. Market Prices: September 2020 (by Category)

Essential Food Items – Essential food prices exhibited some variation across townships in September, with the exception of pulses. Salt showed the greatest variation among essential items (200-600 MMK/500g), while pulses showed the least (2400-2500 MMK/viss). Broadly speaking, prices for essential food items were highest in Maungdaw and lowest in Ponnagyun. The main exception was high and low quality rice, for which Mrauk U saw the lowest prices in September (700 and 400 MMK/kg). By contrast, Maungdaw saw the highest September prices for high and low quality rice (950 and 700 MMK/kg, respectively).

Vegetables – Vegetable showed considerable price variation across townships in September, with green chili and bamboo shoots being among the more variable. Chili prices varied from 1500-4000 MMK/viss, while bamboo varied from 1100-3000 MMK/viss. Less variable were potato (1300-2000 MMK/viss) and onion (1000-1500 MMK/viss). At a township-level, Maungdaw saw consistently higher vegetable prices in September. No townships saw

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 due to lockdown measures.

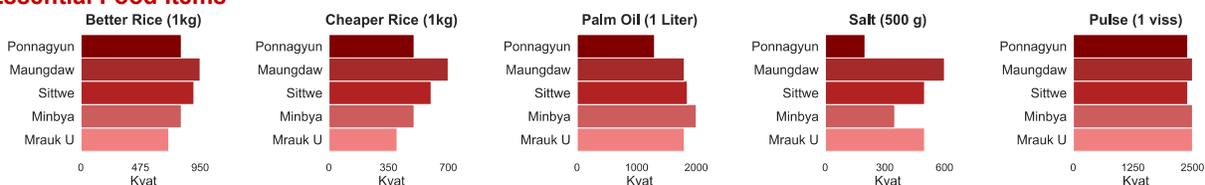
consistently lower vegetable prices, but Minbya was often on the low end (notwithstanding chili). Relative to other townships, a few prices stood out as exceptionally high (e.g. bamboo in Sittwe and onion in Mrauk U) and low (e.g. watercress in Ponnagyun).

Shelter Goods – Shelter goods showed a mixed picture for price variation across townships in September. No township had across-the-board higher or lower prices for shelter goods. However, Maungdaw prices stand out for being relatively in line with other townships for shelter goods (in contrast to prices for vegetables and essential food items). Among products with more uneven prices were tarps (5000-14500 MMK/unit) and towels (1200-2000 MMK/unit), although this may also be due to unavailability of identical goods.² In particular, the prices for plastic tarp (Maungdaw) and blankets (Sittwe) stand apart from other townships.

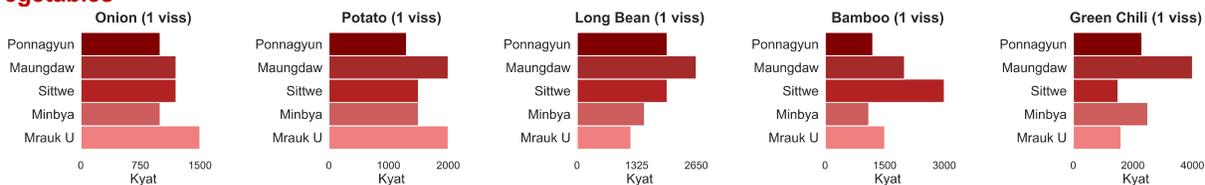
Kitchen Goods – Kitchen goods showed a mixed picture for price variation across townships in September. No township had across-the-board higher or lower prices for kitchen goods in September. However, Maungdaw prices were generally on the higher end and Sittwe prices generally on the lower end. Some products showed uneven prices across townships, such as kitchen knives (300-1000 MMK/unit) and cooking spoons (500-2000 MMK/unit). This may be due in part to unavailability of identical goods.

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

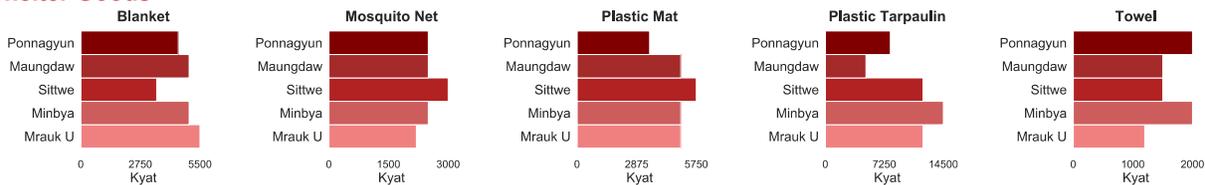
Essential Food Items



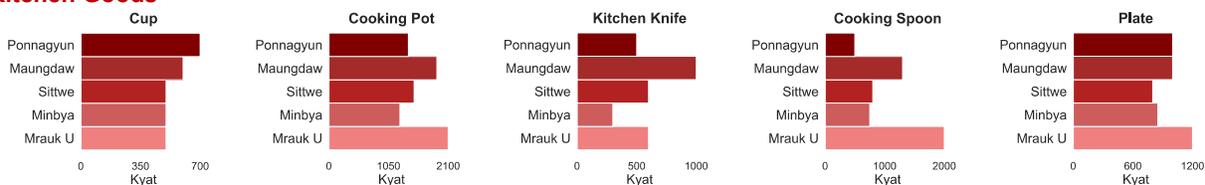
Vegetables



Shelter Goods



Kitchen Goods

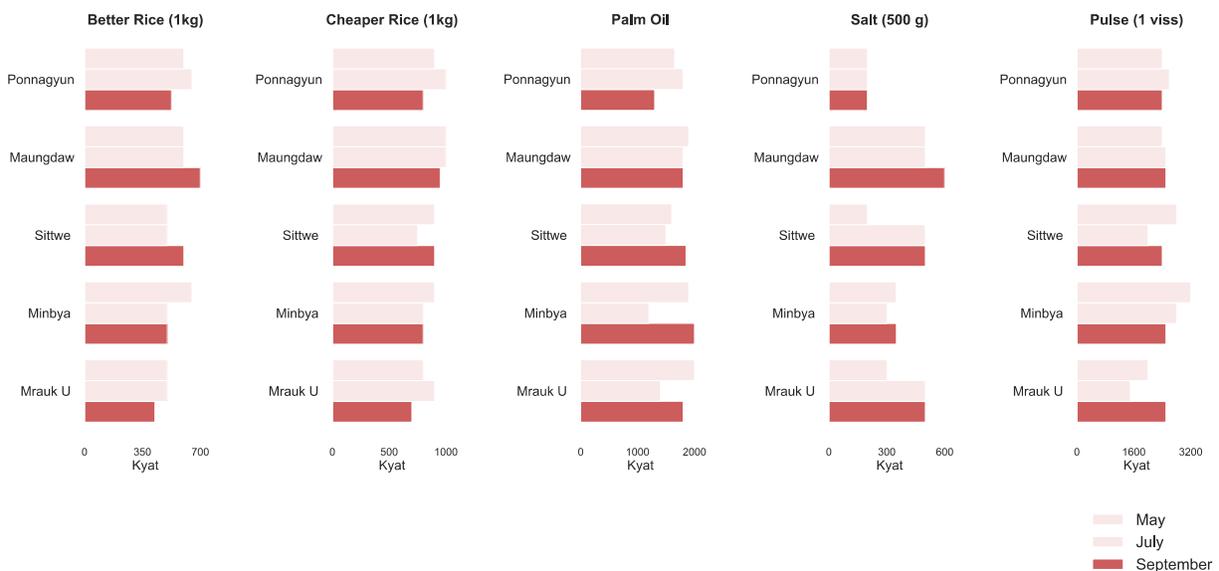


² Comparing prices across townships can be more difficult for non-food items (NFIs) if available goods are not perfectly identical in size and quality. To the extent possible, prices are collected for identical products or the nearest available alternative.

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

Essential Food Items – Price data for essential food items gathered in May, July and September indicate a variable picture of price changes by product and location. Among townships, Maungdaw and Ponnagyun showed the least change across the three collection periods—they also most consistently sat on the high and low end of prices, respectively. By contrast, the data suggest Sittwe, Minbya and Mrauk U saw more price swings between May and September. Among products, rice showed the least dramatic price swings over time. While prices for pulses were consistent across townships in September, this has not been the case in past months with Sittwe, Minbya and Mrauk U all showing change. Data collection in July and September—which straddled the recent COVID-19 resurgence in Rakhine State—point to prices rising in Sittwe, although the picture is mixed in other townships (some prices had begun to readjust by late September).³ Maungdaw, already at the higher end for prices, saw prices either stable or rising between July and September. Charts 21-26 compare prices for essential food items collected in May, July and September 2020.

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



³ Beyond general observations, caution should be used in reading too much into price changes from this data, as it represents changes over eight-week periods. During the two-month window between collection periods a number of events may push prices higher and lower and obscure broader trends. Beginning in October, this report will include a more robust look at monthly changes in price data.

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

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

Category	Product	Ponnagyun	Maungdaw	Sittwe	Minbya	Mrauk U
Essential Food Items	Better Rice (1kg)	800	950	900	800	700
	Cheaper Rice (1kg)	500	700	600	500	400
	Palm Oil (1 liter)	1,300	1,800	1,850	2,000	1,800
	Pulse (1 viss)	2,400	2,500	2,400	2,500	2,500
	Salt (500g)	200	600	500	350	500
Vegetable	Bamboo Shoot (1 viss)	1,200	2,000	3,000	1,100	1,500
	Bitter Gourd (1 viss)	1,800		1,500	1,550	1,200
	Cabbage (1 pcs)	2,500			1,500	1,000
	Garlic (1 viss)	2,800	3,500	3,000	3,100	4,200
	Green Chili (1 viss)	2,300	4,000	1,500	2,500	1,600
	Long Bean (1 viss)	2,000	2,650	2,000	1,500	1,200
	Luffa (1 viss)	1,500	2,800	2,000	1,550	1,000
	Okra (1 viss)	1,500	3,500		1,000	1,000
	Onion (1 viss)	1,000	1,200	1,200	1,000	1,500
	Potato (1 viss)	1,300	2,000	1,500	1,500	2,000
	Roselle Leaf	1,000	1,500	1,200	1,500	1,300
	Tomato (1 viss)		4,000		2,100	2,000
	Watercress (1 viss)	600	2,000	1,500	1,100	1,500
Fish	Crab (1 viss)			5,000		8,000
	Fish (1 viss)		14,000	10,000	12,500	12,000
	Shrimp (1 viss)		7,000	7,000	8,000	14,500
Kitchen	Cooking Pot (1 can)	900	1,500	1,200	1,050	1,000
	Cooking Pot (2 can)	1,400	1,900	1,500	1,250	2,100
	Cooking Spoon	500	1,300	800	750	2,000
	Cup	700	600	500	500	500
	Kitchen Knife	500	1,000	600	300	600
	Plate	1,000	1,000	800	850	1,200
	Vacuum Flask (15 cups)	10,000	6,500	12,000	7,500	12,000
	Water Jar		1,500	1,500	1,600	2,000
Shelter	Blanket	4,500	5,000	3,500	5,000	5,500
	Candle		450	675	375	400
	Charcoal (1 viss)	5,000	1,250	6,250	600	1,500
	Firewood	1,000		1,500	600	150
	Mosquito Net	2,500	2,500	3,000	2,500	2,200
	Pillow	1,500	5,000	3,500	2,000	1,200
	Plastic Chair	6,500		6,350	5,500	6,500
	Plastic Mat	3,500	5,000	5,750	5,000	5,000
	Plastic Tarpaulin	8,000	5,000	12,000	14,500	12,000
	Towel	2,000	1,500	1,500	2,000	1,200
Hygiene	Umbrella	3,000		3,500	3,500	5,000
	Detergent (400g)	1,000	500	725		800
	Sanitary Pad	500	600	600		500
	Soap (60g)	300	300	600		350
	Toothbrush	300	500	650		500
	Toothpaste	800	800	750		500

Mercy Corps' Market Analysis Unit (MAU)

The Market Analysis Unit provides development practitioners and policymakers operating 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, coping mechanisms and access to basic needs;**
- **Value chains**, including **trade** (ag. Inputs, machinery, supply), **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 (construction, factories, food services).

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