

Highlights

- Fighting between the MAF and Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) and local People's Defence Forces (PDFs) has intensified in Kayah and Kayin states since December 2021.
- In Kayah State, increased fighting has been seen in Loikaw, Demoso Hpruso, and Shadaw townships. In Kayin, the escalation initially started in Lay Kay Kaw in Myawaddy Township and has since spread to Kawkareik, Hpapun and Hpa-An townships.
- More than half the population of Loikaw township has been internally displaced. People who have fled their homes have sought refuge in community centers, host communities or the jungle.
- Several humanitarian organisations have been forced to temporarily suspend operations in parts of the southeast due to the security situation.
- As of 3 January, 162,000 people from Kayah and Kayin states, including women and children, remain displaced after fleeing their homes since May 2021.
- To date, 654 houses and other civilian properties, including churches, monasteries, and schools, have reportedly been burnt down or destroyed in Kayah State since May 2021.

181,400¹

People newly displaced across the southeast since May 2021

654

houses and other civilian properties reportedly burnt or destroyed in Kayah State since May 2021

2,800

people remain displaced to Thailand as of 10 January 2022

Situation Overview

The humanitarian and security situation in southeast Myanmar has deteriorated during the past few weeks, especially in Kayah and Kayin states, following heavy fighting between the MAF and EAOs as well as local PDFs including the use of airstrikes by fighter jets and attacks from helicopters. A heavy military presence and increased military checkpoints have been reported and search and arrest operations have been conducted.

Since early January 2022, fighting has been escalating in Loikaw, Demoso, and Shadaw townships in Kayah State, forcing thousands of people to flee their homes and seek refuge in community centers, host communities or the jungle. More than half the population of Loikaw township has reportedly since been displaced. Of those who have fled, 5,000 people reportedly sought refuge in Taunggyi township in southern Shan State. Secondary displacement was also reported in Demoso township and more than 1,000 people from this group reportedly crossed the border into Mae Hong Son, Thailand.

In December 2021, Kayah State recorded one of the highest single-day casualty figures following an incident that occurred in Hpruso township, where at least 35 civilians, including four children and two humanitarian workers, were burnt and killed. The Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths, expressed his horror over the incident in a [statement](#) where he called on "the Myanmar Armed Forces and all armed groups in Myanmar to take all measures to protect civilians from harm."

Ongoing armed clashes have also resulted in destruction of civilian properties across Kayah State. Since May 2021, 654 houses and other civilian properties, including churches, monasteries, and schools, have reportedly been burnt down or destroyed.

In Kayin State, fighting has been escalating since mid-December 2021, following the arrest of pro-democracy activists, including former member of parliament. The fighting started in Lay Kay Kaw in Myawaddy Township and spread to Kawkareik, Hpapun and Hpa-An townships. Heavy shelling and airstrikes have been reported, and roadblocks were erected in these areas. More than 22,000 people were reportedly displaced from Lay Kay Kaw, with more than 8,600 crossing the border into Tak, Thailand. Of those, several thousand people have returned and are currently residing in informal displacement sites within Myanmar while just about 2,800 people remain in Thailand.

¹ As of 10 January 2021, UNHCR.

Overall, as of 10 January 2021, 181,400 people remain internally displaced in southeast Myanmar (89,300 in Kayah, 74,400 in Kayin, 7,200 in Mon, and 1,500 in Tanintharyi). IDPs are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Local partners have been providing critical assistance to the extent possible. Several humanitarian partners have suspended their operations since last December due to the security situation. Others, who are still operating are still facing access constraints which are stopping them reaching IDPs and other affected people in these contested areas due security and military checkpoints and lack of travel authorizations.

Humanitarian Needs & Response

Kayah – Loikaw, Demoso, Shadaw

- Essential needs for those newly displaced include shelter, food, water, non-food items including warm clothes, sanitation services and medicine. More than 2,000 of the IDPs who were displaced into southern Shan need food. Women and girls need dignity kits and clean delivery kits.
- IDPs and civilians remaining in Loikaw are in need of physical safety and protection services. Partners are coordinating to provide essential relief items in areas that can be reached by humanitarian agencies, primarily those displaced in Taunggyi township, southern Shan, as well as some limited assistance to those in other nearby townships. Small quantities of food, shelter, NFIs and dignity kits have already been provided. The majority of the assistance provided to date in southern Shan has come from local communities, civil society or community-based organizations (CSOs and CBOs), churches and monasteries.
- An emergency Kayah Interagency Coordination Group meeting will be held in the coming days to gather a greater understanding of needs, gaps and response capacities.

Kayin – Myawaddy and Kawkeriek

- Newly displaced people need food, clean water, warm clothes, shelter materials, sanitation facilities including latrines, and psychosocial support.
- Displaced people in Thailand are in urgent need of protection.
- Some limited support is being provided by CSO and CBO networks in terms of basic shelter, non-food items, and food.

Gaps & Challenges

Kayah

- Most of the UN and NGO community has been forced to evacuate their staff from Loikaw city to safety in southern Shan and elsewhere in Kayah.
- Many CSOs and CBOs that are normally based in Loikaw have been displaced along with local residents.
- While agencies have managed to respond to some IDPs in southern Shan, there is extremely limited access to IDPs in Loikaw and Demoso townships due to insecurity.

Kayin

- There is very limited access to displaced and conflict-affected communities in Myawaddy and Kawkeriek townships due to insecurity and lack of travel authorizations from Hpa-An. To date, most of the assistance has been provided by CSO and CBO networks only which have limited resources.
- Mobile networks have been disabled across the area, hindering communication with affected communities and response efforts more generally.

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MYANMAR

Surge in displacement in the southeast

As of 13 January 2022

