

In spite of the promising election of the NLD in 2015 who have subsequently formed a government, Burma still faces many challenges. The 2015 nationwide ceasefire is repeatedly violated in both Shan and Kachin states and the Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine State are facing ethnic cleansing at the hands of the independent powers of the armed forces.

Key individuals, Groups & Places

Aung San Suu Kyi: State Councillor and de facto ruler

Htin Kyaw: President (Suu Kyi is barred from Presidency)

Min Aung Hlaing: Commander in Chief of Armed Forces

Burmese Independence Army: Fought for Burmese independence

National League for Democracy (NLD):
Current governing party

Myanmar: Official name for Burma since 1989

Key dates

1948: Gained independence

1962: Military rule established by Burmese General Ne Win

1988: Coup d'état staged by General Saw Maung

1990: Free elections, Suu Kyi won with 80% but was later put under house arrest and the military held power

2007: Anti-government protests erupted into civil resistance

2008: Constitution approved by Burmese people which led to 2010 elections, these were later declared unconstitutional

2011: Military junta dismantled, legalisation of NLD, release of political prisoners

2015: Suu Kyi won landslide election but military retained 25% of seats and their veto over constitutional change as well as total control of military and police



Conflict in Shan State

Conflict erupted in the 1950s in Shan State as rebel militias fought back against the government, following the latter's failure to meet the conditions in the Panglong Agreement and institute a federal system (1947, part of independence agreements). Currently the strongest resistance group is the Shan State Army (SSA) in its two divisions North and South.

Conflict in Kachin State

In 1961 the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) began its insurgency to gain autonomy. A ceasefire was signed in 1994 but fighting erupted again in 2011 when the government attacked KIA positions. Over 100,000 have been displaced by this conflict.

The Rohingya in Rakhine State:

The Rohingya are a Muslim ethnic group living in majority Buddhist Burma and one of the world's most persecuted minorities. Governments have repeatedly marginalised the Rohingya, they were excluded from 1948 Act which allowed minorities to gain citizenship, and they were not allowed to vote in the last election.

In the summer of 2017, hostilities erupted again when a group of militant Rohingya attacked government troops. The army retaliated with extreme force and have been accused of committing ethnic cleansing, human rights abuses, extrajudicial killing, rape and arson. Similar military reactions also took place in 2013 and 2016 but the crackdown has been more severe in 2017. 500,000 (out of a population of 1.2 million) Rohingya have fled the area, mostly to Bangladesh, and tens of thousands of people are displaced.

HART's Partners in Burma

SWAN, Shan State

The Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN) is a community-based organisation dedicated to gender equality and justice. SWAN has health, education and women's empowerment programmes. After being trained by SWAN, health workers can return to their villages in other parts of Burma where they themselves can then deliver training and provide health care for women. SWAN also provides emergency assistance for migrant women and children in crisis.

Health and Hope, Chin State

Dr Taing Saing San (or Dr 'SaSa' as he is known) leads the Health and Hope project to deliver training to health workers in Chin State, who in turn bring health education and medicines back to their villages. They then form Village Health Committees to support the implementation of basic health care practices.

Doh Say, Karenni State

Doh Say and his team take life-saving medical supplies to Karenni and Karen people. Based in Thailand, the mobile medical teams regularly cross the border into Burma to provide essential health care to those remote areas of Burma experiencing ongoing conflict.

Some useful links for more information:

Human Rights Watch - www.hrw.org/asia/burma

Burma Campaign - <http://burmacampaign.org.uk/>

Amnesty - www.amnesty.org/en/countries/asia-and-the-pacific/myanmar

Burma Link - www.burmalink.org/background/burma/human-rights-violations/overview/

Al Jazeera - www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/08/rohingya-muslims-170831065142812.html

HART - www.hart-uk.org/locations/burma/

Health and Hope - www.healthandhope.org/

If you have any queries, please visit www.hart-uk.org or contact office@hart-uk.org