In spite of the promising election of the National League for Democracy 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. Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine State are facing ethnic cleansing at the hands of the independent powers of the armed forces.

Conflict in Shan and Kachin States

Shan State, in the east, witnessed a conflict erupt in the 1950s when rebel militias fought back against the government. In the north, Kachin State, the 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.

2018 saw the intensification of fighting in both Shan and Kachin States. The military’s threat of indiscriminate attacks have forced 120,000 people of ethnic minorities to be displaced. The military have also stopped aid several times, most recently being August 2019.

The UN’s investigation into alleged crimes concluded that the military’s actions in Shan and Kachin States since 2011 amounted to war crimes and crimes against humanity. The war continues.
Rohingya in Rakhine State (West Coast)

Rohingya are one of the world's most persecuted minorities. Governments have repeatedly marginalised them, excluding them from the 1948 Act which allowed minorities to gain citizenship and barring them from voting in the most recent election in 2015.

The international community failed to act and punish the Burmese government and military when extreme violence was committed against Rohingya Muslims in 2017. Accusations of ethnic cleansing, human rights abuses, extrajudicial killings, rape and arson are common.

600,000 people are IDPs and another 3 million fleeing Burma, mostly to Bangladesh. The majority of those in refugee camps wish to return home, however the fear of persecution keeps them away. The number of new Rohingya arrivals in Bangladesh decreased significantly in 2019, however, the future is extremely uncertain for those 1 million plus refugees in camps.

Currently, there are 941,351 people in need of humanitarian assistance in all of Burma, many of them children.

HART's Partners in Burma
Shan Women's Action Network, SWAN, Shan State

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.

Loi Tai Leng, Shan State

Loi Tai Leng School is situated within a displacement camp in Shan State and is facilitated through SWAN. The school educates 831 children, most of the 400 boarders are orphans due to the conflict.

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
Burma Link - www.burmalink.org/background/burma/human-rights-violations/overview/
HART - www.hart-uk.org/locations/burma/
Heath and Hope - www.healthandhope.org/

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