



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.



Key Info

Size: 676,578 km²
Population: 54 million
Continent: Africa
Capital City: Naypyitaw
President: Htin Kyaw
Aung San Suu Kyi: State Councillor and de facto ruler (barred from Presidency)
National League for Democracy (NLD): Current governing party
Union Solidarity & Development Party: Opposition
Myanmar: Official name for Burma since 1989
Muslim Rohingya: heavily persecuted ethnic minority
Kachin Independence Army (KIA)
State Law and Order Restoration Council (Slorc): Government group created to 'keep the peace'

Key dates

1885 – 1886: Burma became a province of British India
1948: Independence with U Nu as Prime Minister
1960: U Nu wins election, promotion of Buddhism as state religion & tolerance to separatism angers military
1962: U Nu ousted in a coup, military rule in place
1988: anti-government riots – Slorc is formed
1990: Free elections, NLD headed by Suu Kyi won with 81%, ignored by the military
2007: Anti-government protests, protests by Buddhists
2009: Jan. – Muslim Rohingya are expelled from Thailand. Burma denies their existence
2011: Mar. – Thein Sein is sworn in as President
2012: Aug. – Commission set up by Sein, investigated violence between Rakhine Buddhists & Rohingya Muslims, dozens had died
2015: Government withdraws voting rights from Rohingya for upcoming election
 Mar. – a ceasefire agreement is signed between government and 16 rebel groups
 Nov. – Suu Kyi wins election in landslide victory
2017: Aug. – exodus of Rohingya after militants attack police posts in Rakhine State
2018: Aug. – UN report - Burma's military leaders convicted of crimes against Rohingya, including genocide. Accuses Suu Kyi of failing to prevent violence
2019: Aug. – renewed fighting in Shan State, at least 17 civilians dead and 27 injured, many women and children
2020: Apr. – military bombed villages in Chin State, killing civilians and destroying homes and churches.
 – Ethnic and religious tensions prevail.

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.

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.

Loi Tai Leng School, 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 and most of the 400 boarders are orphans due to the 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/

Heath and Hope - www.healthandhope.org/

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

