

ALTSEAN-Burma Contribution on Burma/Myanmar

1. Please describe the impacts of the adverse effects of climate change on the full and effective enjoyment of the human rights of people in vulnerable situations. Where possible, please share specific examples and stories.

The following responses are informed by our consultations with ethnically diverse youth, women activists, ethnic media and other diverse human rights defenders from Burma/Myanmar.

An assessment of the current situation in Burma/Myanmar shows that vulnerable groups are highly affected by the impacts of climate change, preventing them from fully enjoying the human rights they are entitled to.

Several vulnerable populations are impacted by climate change:

- Refugees in Cox's Bazar have been affected by and are under a constant threat of flooding, landslides, and fires.
- IDPs vulnerability has increased exponentially by ongoing conflicts, natural disasters, and a lack of adequate natural resources;
- Farmer's livelihoods are threatened by land grabbing from mega development projects, and the loss of arable/fertile land;
- Women are disproportionately affected by the impacts of natural disasters, including lack of water, decline of WASH standards, increased exposure to GBV;
- Ethnic minorities have been forced to relocate from river banks regions due to erosion and mangrove deforestation;
- Hand-to-mouth workers have been pressured by loss of income and food insecurity during floods and droughts and will continue to face this risk;
- Children have been deprived of education due to natural disasters and are more likely to be forced into unsafe labor;
- Low wage workers from extractive industries have no options to engage in eco-industries. The pandemic and natural disasters have pushed them towards working in coal mining and logging, among others, which increase Burma/Myanmar's climate vulnerability.

From these consultations we've learnt that climate change is a multidimensional issue. Climate change is an armed conflict multiplier. Widespread conflict makes systematic climate change action impossible. Growing urban spaces increases danger of virus exchange between species and accelerates impacts of climate change. COVID-19 increases risk of atrocities and casualties while armed conflict fuels the spread of the disease.

The impacts of climate change in Burma/Myanmar cannot be separated from conflict legacies and COVID-19.

Burma is the second most vulnerable country to climate change. The population is still recovering from the impact of cyclone Nargis in 2008, the likelihood of natural disasters is expected to increase, and there are no prevention, mitigation and preparedness plans involving the local communities.

2. Please describe any specific policy, legislation, practice or strategy that your Government has undertaken, in compliance with applicable international human

rights law, to promote an approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as loss and damage that ensures the full and effective enjoyment of the human rights of people in vulnerable situations. Please also note and identify any relevant mechanisms for ensuring accountability for these commitments including their means of implementation.

Burma/Myanmar has adopted several policies regarding climate action, among these are:
- Myanmar Climate Change Strategy 2018–2030 (MCCS);
- Myanmar's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC).

These policies were fundamentally flawed. Even before the Coup, the lack of democratic transparency translated into an inconsistent policy implementation. After COVID-19, the NLD was set to expand high footprint industries to help the economic recovery. Climate change policies since the coup are non-existent and resource extraction has grown exponentially.

Mega development projects led by the junta cause high levels of deforestation, greenhouse gas emissions and the clearing of large amounts of land which increase the population's vulnerability to flooding, droughts and land grabbing.

3. Please share a summary of any relevant data that captures how the adverse effects of climate change have affected people in vulnerable situations, taking into account multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination (i.e. discrimination based on a combination of multiple grounds, including disability, gender, race, colour, sex, language, religion, nationality and migration status).

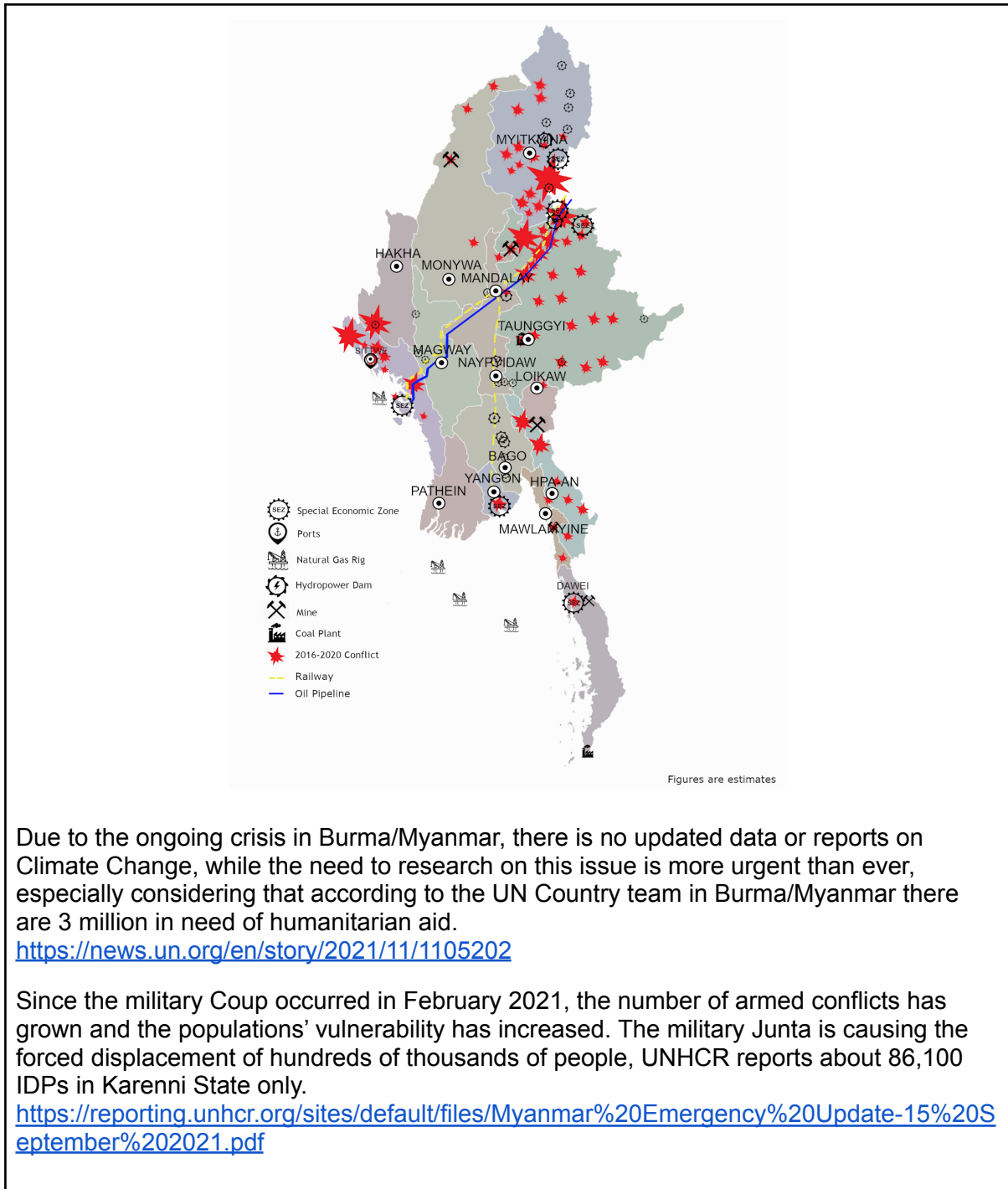
As mentioned previously, according to "GLOBAL CLIMATE RISK INDEX 2021" based on data from the Germanwatch, in 2019 Burma/Myanmar was the second country most affected by the impacts of extreme weather events, with 14.35 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants.

https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Global%20Climate%20Risk%20Index%202021_1_0.pdf

As stated by the UNDP, the pandemic coupled with the instability following the military Coup in February 2021, could plunge almost half of Myanmar's population into poverty, reversing economic gains made over the last 16 years, resulting in as much as 25 million people - nearly half of Myanmar's population - living below the national poverty line by early 2022.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/04/1091002>

Correlation between mega development projects and conflict map:

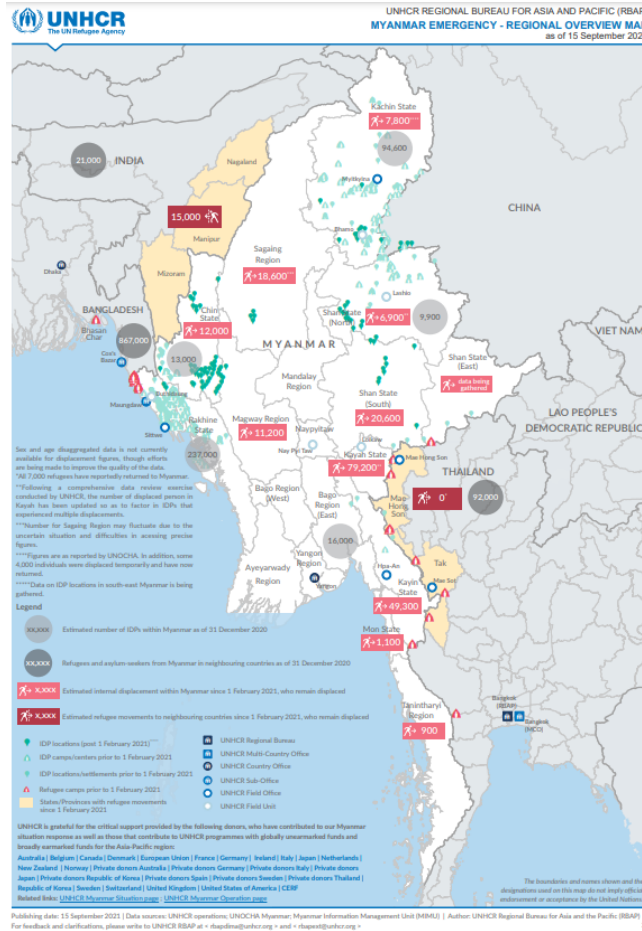


Due to the ongoing crisis in Burma/Myanmar, there is no updated data or reports on Climate Change, while the need to research on this issue is more urgent than ever, especially considering that according to the UN Country team in Burma/Myanmar there are 3 million in need of humanitarian aid.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/11/1105202>

Since the military Coup occurred in February 2021, the number of armed conflicts has grown and the populations' vulnerability has increased. The military Junta is causing the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, UNHCR reports about 86,100 IDPs in Karenni State only.

<https://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/Myanmar%20Emergency%20Update-15%20September%202021.pdf>



4. Please describe any mechanisms and tools that are in place to measure and monitor the impacts of climate change on the full and effective enjoyment of the human rights of people in vulnerable situations.

With the current situation of ongoing conflict and the establishment of an illegal military Junta, there are no national mechanisms or tools to measure or monitor the impact of climate change on human rights.

After the February 2021 military Coup, the role of NGOs has become even more central for Climate Action. Effective climate action in Burma/Myanmar will rely on leadership and alliances from civil society organizations, focusing on the intersection of human rights and climate change.

5. Please identify and share examples of good practices and challenges in the promotion, protection, and fulfilment of the human rights of people in vulnerable situations in the context of the adverse effects of climate change.

Burma/Myanmar populations are facing multiple challenges which negatively impact the promotion, protection and fulfilment of human rights. Among the main challenges are:

- The exponential increase of armed conflict, that is compounding on a history of impunity and lack of democracy, and it's causing more fatalities than not in Yemen (4906): Burma/Myanmar registered 5857 fatalities (1st Jan - 31st Oct), second only to Syria (6486);
- The populations' increased multi-dimensional vulnerability due to the COVID-19 outbreak;

- The deepening crisis of natural resource extraction and mega development plans implemented by the military Junta which led to troubling waste management systems, soil erosion, shrinking of arable/fertile lands, and massive deforestation.
- Limited environmental awareness;
- No mechanisms implemented to involve youth, women or other minorities in climate change and climate resilience plans.

From a national plan perspective, Burma/Myanmar is lacking:

- A preparedness plan to reduce the risk of a disasters ,
- A provisions to enhance the collaboration among different ethnic groups,
- A lens of conflict sensitivity to facilitate local grown and sustainable Climate Change actions.
- International support/funding for Burma/Myanmar on transitioning to a green economy.

6. Please include examples and good practices that highlight international and multilateral cooperation and approaches that are implemented through close consultation with and active involvement of people in vulnerable situations.

Multilateral cooperation and approaches attempted to improve the climate situation and the impact on human rights in Burma/Myanmar are:

- Paris Agreements, 2015;
- ASSCR (ASEAN State of Climate Change Report), 2021.

7. Please provide any additional information you believe would be useful to support climate action that promotes the full and effective enjoyment of the human rights of people in vulnerable situations.

In the context of Burma/Myanmar, climate action, without attention to human rights abuses, impunity, COVID-19, or poverty, will fail.

Climate change, along with social and political realms of society are interlinked and affect each other; the worsening of one condition causes the direct deterioration of the others. Solutions must be found from and built on these connections, not addressed in silos. Even if the situation stabilizes in the future, whether with the military Junta or with a civilian government now identified in the NUG, there will be increased pressure on the economy to recover from COVID-19 and the conflict. This pressure will result in more constraints and higher climate vulnerability because there will be a new boost to grab land and start mega development projects, commercial and export-oriented. This impetus for economic development will contribute to greater displacement in the country and will weaken the communities affected by COVID-19, conflict and climate change.

Climate action in the country must have a climate justice lens that takes into account the conflict and generational suffering the populations of Burma/Myanmar endure. Each community has specific impacts and locally-driven solutions: involving and engaging with all the communities living in Burma/Myanmar will make any kind of intervention sustainable.

Furthermore, solutions adopted must involve the network of women's organizations defending human rights, fostering the presence of youth, women and minorities' groups, and supporting their job as the most vulnerable and integral actors in climate action.