

Myanmar earthquake emergency

UNHCR response to urgent needs of displaced people and host communities

April – December 2025



KEY FIGURES



35 million people impacted by the earthquake*



2.1 million IDPs impacted by the earthquake*



1.2 million people targeted for assistance



\$15.9 million urgently required

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is seeking \$15.9 million to deliver life-saving protection and assistance to 1.2 million people affected by the earthquake, including internally displaced persons (IDPs) and their host communities.

Overview

On 28 March, a powerful 7.7 magnitude earthquake struck central Myanmar, causing severe loss of life and widespread destruction, reducing homes and civilian infrastructure to rubble.

The epicentre was located approximately 16 km north-northwest of Sagaing City and 19 km northwest of Mandalay. A strong aftershock of 6.4 magnitude followed at a depth of 10 km in the same area. The tremors were felt across Thailand, India, Bangladesh, and China.

In Myanmar, an estimated 20 million people live in earthquake-affected areas and have been impacted to varying degrees. By 3 April, the death toll had surpassed 3,000, with over 4,500 people injured. As search and rescue efforts continue, these figures are expected to

climb.

Myanmar's de facto authorities have declared a state of emergency in Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway, and Bago Regions, as well as Shan State (South) and Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory, and have issued a request for international aid.

The disaster has struck in the midst of an ongoing conflict that has persisted for over four years, devastating areas that host 1.55 million of Myanmar's 3.5 million IDPs. This catastrophe compounds an already dire humanitarian crisis, deepening the hardships faced by both displaced and local communities in areas where humanitarian access remains severely restricted.

UNHCR response

UNHCR's response to the earthquake in Myanmar prioritizes immediate life-saving assistance and protection-centred interventions for affected populations, including IDPs, stateless persons, and host communities.

Given the scale of destruction and displacement, UNHCR is mobilizing emergency shelter and non-food items (NFIs), while also strengthening access to protection services, including through community-based protection activities, thanks to its operational presence and

partnerships on the ground.

Key priorities include distributing emergency shelter materials, blankets, sleeping mats, hygiene kits, and solar lamps – essential items that not only support survival, but also provide a sense of safety and security in the aftermath of the disaster. These interventions are being carried out in a manner that is inclusive, needs-based, and protection-sensitive. UNHCR also plans to scale-up its multi-purpose assistance to the most vulnerable

* Data source: UNHCR, USGS, OSM, OCHA, WorldPop, and UNOSAT. Data updated as of 4 April 2025.

earthquake affected population, enabling them to meet their pressing basic needs with dignity and choice.

By re-prioritizing existing resources, UNHCR swiftly dispatched emergency supplies from Yangon to assist approximately 25,000 earthquake survivors in the Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw areas. These relief items include plastic sheets, sleeping mats, blankets, kitchen sets, and mosquito nets, which offer immediate support to those in urgent need. Additionally, a support team was deployed from Yangon to Mandalay to strengthen coordination and response efforts.

Thanks to its longstanding presence in Myanmar since 1993, UNHCR has been on the ground from the onset of this emergency, working in coordination with authorities and humanitarian partners to assess and respond to the growing needs. To bolster the response, UNHCR has strengthened its existing field presence in three key locations: Mandalay Field Unit (covering Mandalay, Sagaing, and Magway), Nay Pyi Taw Liaison Office, and Taunggyi Field Unit, which covers Bago and Shan (South).

Recognizing the scale of the crisis, UNHCR declared a Level 2 emergency on 31 March and is urgently appealing for additional resources to meet rising humanitarian needs. As part of its expanded response, UNHCR aims

to assist up to 1.2 million displaced people and their host communities, focusing on the following key areas of intervention:

Protection

- ◆ Strengthen access to protection services, including communication with communities, legal assistance, psychosocial support, and targeted interventions for children, women, and persons with disabilities.

Shelter

- ◆ Provide emergency shelter kits (including plastic tarpaulin, ropes, and other essential materials) to enable people to live in safe and dignified shelters, particularly in light of the upcoming monsoon season, and support camp coordination and camp management (CCCM) to improve service delivery and reduce risks in displacement sites.

NFIs and multi-purpose assistance

- ◆ Deliver immediate emergency NFIs, including sleeping mats, blankets, kitchen sets, mosquito nets, buckets, and solar lamps, as well as multi-purpose assistance to support earthquake-affected populations.



Earthquake effected communities sheltering under the tree for shade in Mandalay. ©UNHCR/Pan Pwint

Financial requirements

UNHCR is urgently seeking **\$15.9 million** to scale up its response and address the pressing needs of displaced communities affected by the earthquake and their hosts.

While UNHCR has reprioritized activities within its current budget, as of the date of publication, **UNHCR's 2025 operations in Myanmar are estimated to be funded at just 20 per cent of the \$88.3m requirements.**

Additional and flexible funding remains critical – not only to respond to needs of earthquake-affected communities, many of whom were already among Myanmar's most vulnerable – but also to sustain UNHCR's ongoing programmes, particularly with the monsoon season approaching.

Budget breakdown by sector (in \$)

Sector	Population targeted	Total requirements in \$
Protection	250,000	1,060,000
Emergency shelter	300,000	2,300,000
Non-food items	300,000	5,600,000
Multi-purpose assistance	350,000	6,900,000
Total	1,200,000	15,900,000

Coordination

In Myanmar, UNHCR works under the leadership of the Office of the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, collaborating closely with UN agencies, international and local NGOs, and other humanitarian and development partners. UNHCR also maintains strong partnerships with grassroots community-based organizations to deliver humanitarian and protection assistance.

UNHCR leads the Protection Cluster and the combined Shelter/NFI/ CCCM Cluster at both the national and sub-national levels. UNHCR's expertise in information management, data collection and protection analysis underpins evidence-based programming and supports advocacy for the broader humanitarian community.

Flexible funding

Flexible funding allows UNHCR to respond swiftly to emergencies, support under-resourced crises, and manage resources efficiently. It enables the rapid deployment of aid, including shelter and protection, during the initial phase of a response. As emergencies evolve, flexible funding remains crucial, particularly for overlooked crises. Contributions to specific emergency

situations, and particularly flexible donations for general emergency preparedness and response, are a lifeline for people forced to flee.

To all donors, especially those who provide funding that is flexible and not earmarked for a particular use, UNHCR extends its most sincere thanks.