

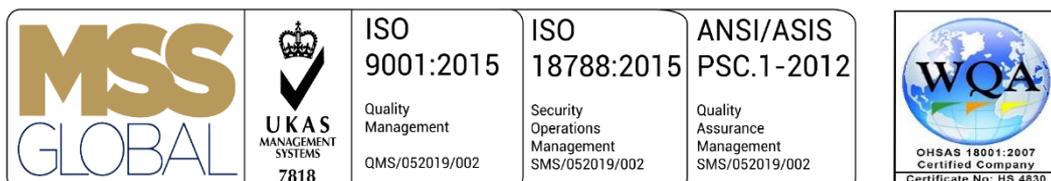
The information in this report is correct as of
1200 hours (UTC+6:30) 23 April 2020.

EXERA

Weekly Security Review

Safety and Security Highlights for Clients Operating in Myanmar

Dates covered: 09 – 22 April 2020



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SITUATION UPDATE

Conflict in Northern Rakhine and Southern Chin States: clashes between the Myanmar Army (Tatmadaw) and Arakan Army (AA) intensified. The government forces used air support as well as long range artillery to clear some AA positions. Since the previous report, most clashes occurred around Paletwa town (Chin State), Minbya and Ponnagyun towns (Rakhine State), with punctual incidents around Kyauktaw and Maungdaw. Although data are sparse and contradictory, Tatmadaw and Arakan Army both sustain fatalities and injuries.

Civilians are also impacted by the conflict: according to the UNHCR, more than 120,000 villagers have been displaced since early 2018. Since our latest report on 8th April, 13 civilians have been killed and several injured. AA reportedly target people considered as close to the Myanmar government, while the Tatmadaw proceed to arrestations of villagers considered as AA informers.

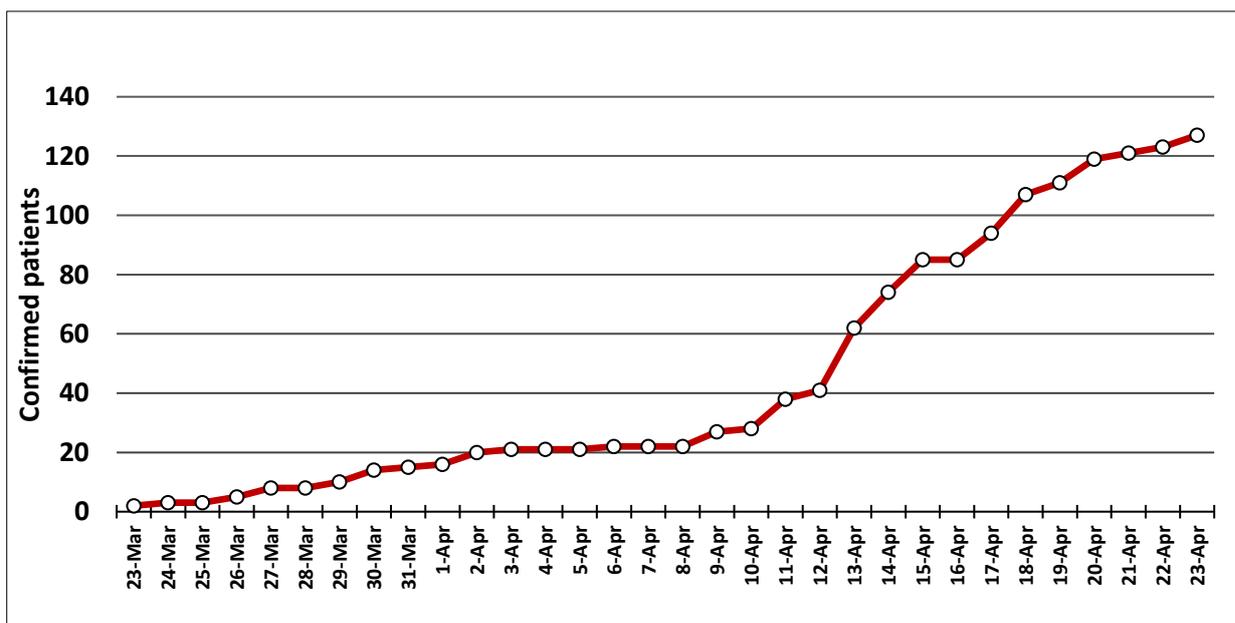
Since mid-March, the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) has also reappeared in the Maungdaw area, leading attacks on Tatmadaw’s outposts and on civilian population.

COVID – 19 pandemic situations:

According to an official statement from Ministry of Health and Sports (MoHS) made public on 23rd April at 7:00 am, the situation in Myanmar was the following:

- Total people tested – 5375 cases
- Person Under Investigation (PUI) – 2333 cases
- Confirmed – 127 cases
- Death among Lab Confirmed – 5 cases
- Recovered Patient – 7 cases

The numbers of confirmed patients increased from 22 to 127 between our previous Weekly Security Report (8 April at 2 pm) and this latest issue (23 April at 12:00 am, cf. graph below). Most of the new confirmed cases are local transmission, as opposed to imported cases from abroad.



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Nationwide, the States and Regions most impacted by the pandemic are

- Yangon Region – 91 cases
- Bago Region – 7 cases
- Sagaing Region – 6 cases
- Chin State – 5 cases
- Eastern Shan State – 3 cases
- Mandalay Region – 2 cases
- Southern and Northern Shan State,
Nay Pyi Taw, Mon State, Magway Region – 1 case
- Kayah, Rakhine, Kayin, Kachin States,
Ayeyarwaddy Region and Tanintharyi – 0 case

In Yangon Region, the situation by township is the following:

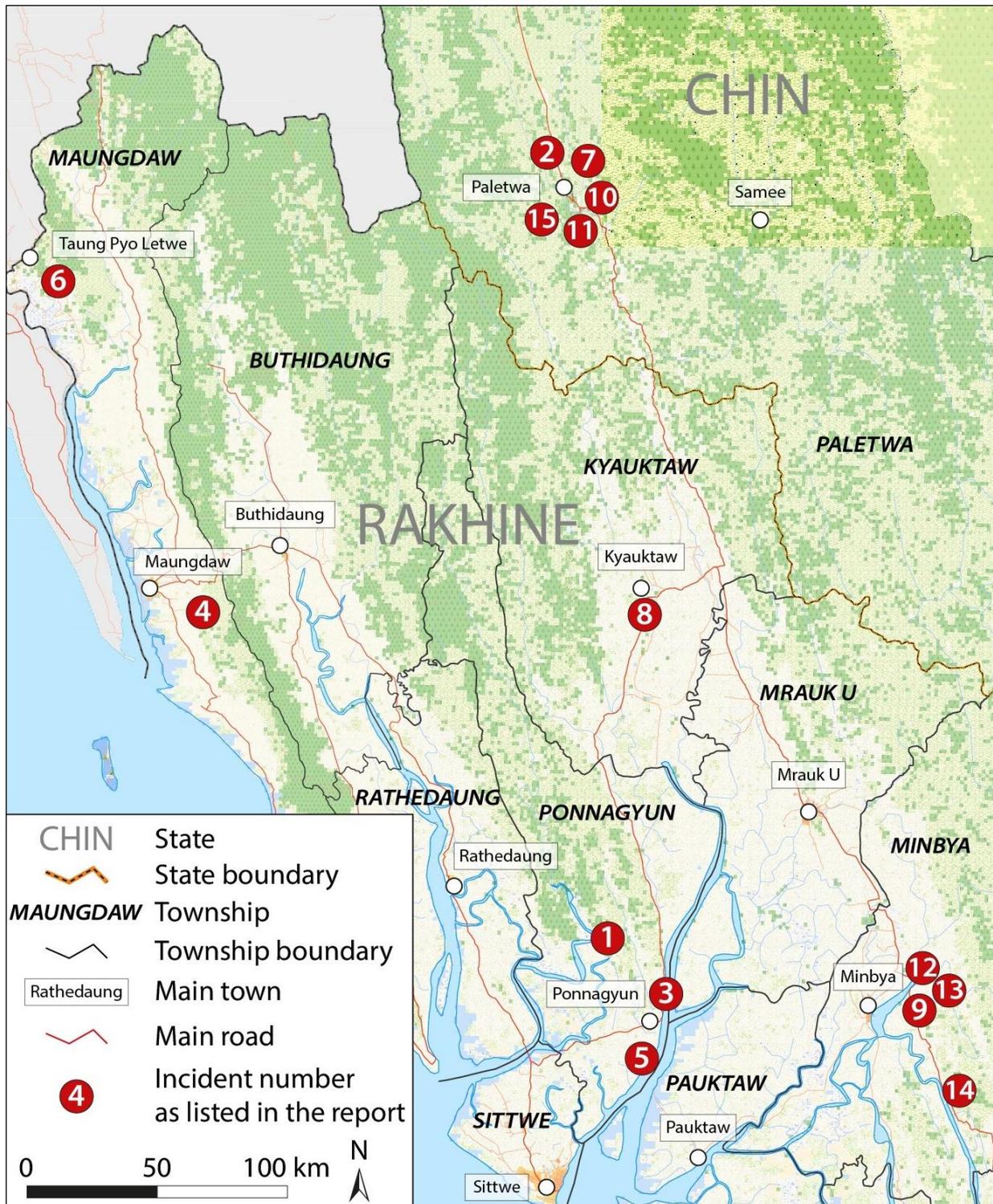
- Insein – 20 cases
- South Okkalapa – 13 cases
- Bahan – 12 cases
- Mayangone – 10 cases
- Pabedan – 6 cases
- Hlaing Thar Yar – 5 cases
- Botataung, Shwe Pyi Thar – 3 cases
- Mingalar Taung Nyunt, Mingalardon,
North Okkalapa, Sanchaung, Dawpon,
Dagon Myo Thit (North) – 2 cases
- Hlegu, Ahlone, Pazundaung,
Dagon Myo Thit (South), Tamwe,
Thingangyun, Lanmadaw, Kamayut,
Dagon Myo Thit (East) and Tharkata – 1 case

INTERNAL CONFLICT

Since our previous report (8th date), Northern, Central Rakhine State as well as Southern Chin State have been the scene of severe clashes between the Myanmar Army and the Arakan Army. The main incidents were the following (cf. map below):

1. On 11th and 12th April, clashes occurred 1 km north-east of Pauk Taw Pyin village, Ponnagyun Township (NFD).
2. On 12th April, AA troops arrested the chairman of the Paletwa Municipal Committee from his home without giving any reasons (NFD).
3. On 13th April, a mortar shell hit the center of Kyauk Seik village, Ponnagyun township, killing 8 people and injuring 13. On 19th April, 39 people from that village were subsequently arrested by the Tatmadaw, under the claim they were in relation with the AA.
4. On 14th April, an excavator working on road construction triggered a landmine and was damaged at 500 m north-east of Ngan Chaung village, Maungdaw township.
5. On 15th April, a military convoy was targeted by remote IEDs while waiting for rations and goods to be unloaded from transportation ships, 1 km south-east of

- Ponnagyun Town. Simultaneously, Kin Taung Military outpost was attacked by AA troops, using small arms and heavy weapons. Myanmar Army troops led counter attacks with supporting fire from naval boats from Kaladan river. Some soldiers were reportedly injured in this incident (NFD).
6. On 15th April, armed men on motorbikes, reportedly linked to Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), attacked policemen, 2 km north-west of Khamaung Seik village, Maungdaw township. They retreated after police reinforcements arrived on the spot. Some police officers were killed in this incident (NFD).
 7. On 15th April, Tatmadaw troops occupied a strategic hilltop, 6 km south-east of Paletwa town. This hill had been heavily disputed between the Tatmadaw and AA since February, as it is a stronghold on Kyauktaw – Paletwa main transportation road and Paletwa – Samee road. The hill has a mobile phone tower and the instruments were also destroyed by AA before they retreated.
 8. On 16th April, AA troops conducted IED attacks and opened fire on a Tatmadaw column near the Kisapanaddy bridge, in the outskirts of Kyauktaw town. The amount of casualties is still unknown (NFD).
 9. 20th April, Tatmadaw conducted attacks on AA troops, 1 km south of Hpar Hpyo village, Minbya township (NFD).
 10. 20th April, Tatmadaw conducted an attack on an AA post near Daunt Chey village, 500 m east of Paletwa town. Artillery was used in support during the attack. One villager was killed and several injured during the fight (NFD).
 11. On 20th April, Kyet U Wa village, Paletwa township was reportedly burnt down by the Tatmadaw and some villagers were arrested (NFD).
 12. On 20th April evening, one of the most striking incidents saw one UNWHO vehicle shot in Myinbya township, killing the driver and injuring one health personnel. The UNWHO vehicle was transporting swabs from COVID-19 suspected patients to Yangon for testing. After crossing the Ramaung Bridge, it was targeted by shots which origin is still unclear; the Tatmadaw and AA have both denied responsibility for the shots. The UN condemned the incident and called for thorough investigations. After that incident, 16 INGOs called for an immediate ceasefire in Myanmar.
 13. On 21st April, a light truck carrying fertilizers was attacked 500 m south of Hpar Pyo village, very close to the location where the UNWHO was shot, in that same Minbya Township. The driver was shot in the head and another man on board was injured. The vehicle turned over.
 14. On 21st April, one man was shot dead in Kyauktaw township after refusing to comply at a military checkpoint and driving away. A grenade was reportedly found in his motorbike's tool box.
 15. On 22nd April, a mortar shell exploded in the Myanmar Economic Bank (MEB) premises in Paletwa, killing 3 people (including 2 child) and injuring 2 bank staff.



Assessment for Clashes and Areas

After the Tatmadaw tightened its control on Southern Chin and adjacent Kyauk Taw township area in the last few weeks, the AA troops changed their strategy and moved closer to towns. Such a shift significantly increases the risks, as major roads and main towns can now be the scenes of conflict. Meanwhile, another armed group, ARSA, is re-

merging in Northern Rakhine State. Therefore, the general situation for the threats and risks assessment can be identified as Very High Level.

Comments and recommendations

Travel by road should be avoided in those regions. Even major town outskirts have become high-risk areas. One should be careful not to approach Myanmar security forces or display too close a proximity with them.

SOCIAL STABILITY

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, no demonstration or rally can be organized in Myanmar at the moment.

TRANSPORTATION

Based on the main Myanmar media, notable road accidents since the last report include:

1. **12th April – Yangon Region:** one car accident in Twantay township, killing one person and injuring 4 others.
2. **19th April – Bago Region:** one accident took place on the main Yangon – Mawlawmyein road in Waw township area. One passenger was killed and 3 others were injured.
3. **20th April – Chin State:** one vehicle skidded off the road on a steep hillside and tumbled down 400 feet lower. That accident, which occurred in Hakha Township, killed 2 people.

Comments and recommendations

Road accidents are a major risk in Myanmar. Make sure to use properly-trained drivers and well-maintained vehicles. Beware of drowsiness while driving. Assess road and climate conditions before starting your trip. Avoid speeding, even on good roads.

CRIME

Based on the main Myanmar media, notable crimes since the last report include:

1. **9th April, 2020** – 5 dead bodies were found in Northern Shan State. According to the report received from villagers, the police found these 5 dead bodies including 2 women with gunshot wounds in the woods near the Kone Mon village, Hsipaw township area.
2. **11th April, 2020** – A man was stabbed to death in Yangon area. Two men working on a municipal working site near Gwa Zay (Sanchaung township) had an argument. One of them stabbed his partner. He was arrested.
3. **18th April, 2020** – A robbery case happened in Yangon (Hlaing Thar Yar township), when a man on a motorbike stole the sling bag and the handphone from a woman who was also riding a motorbike. Later in that evening, the man who accused the case was arrested.

On 17th April, President U Win Myint signed three Presidential Pardon orders, ordering the release of 24,896 prisoners (among whom 87 foreigners) who were serving jail terms in various correctional facilities across the country. This decision seeks to decrease the prison population in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is also historic by its magnitude: those 25,000 inmates account for 27 % of the Myanmar prison population. Never had the President released so many prisoners. One may expect a significant increase in crime and insecurity in the next weeks.

Comments and recommendations

As a rule, take the usual precautions: do not carry large amounts of cash; be cautious when you withdraw money at the bank or when you step out of a money changer; avoid ostentatious displays of wealth in a public area.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Earthquakes in Myanmar:

Myanmar is located on the active Sagaing seismic fault line and is therefore vulnerable to earthquakes. Since our previous report on 8th April, a total of 13 earthquakes have been measured:

1. **15th April 2020:** a slight earthquake, with a magnitude of 3.5 was recorded in Kachin State.
2. **16th April 2020:** a slight earthquake was recorded in Chin State (4.1 magnitude), in Kachin State (3.5 magnitude) and in Mandalay Region (4.0 magnitude)
3. **17th April 2020:** a slight, 4.1-magnitude earthquake was recorded in Southern Shan State.
4. **20th April 2020:** a slight earthquake, with a magnitude of 3.0 was recorded about (9) miles southwest of Kaba-Aye, in Yangon region. It was recorded at 20:06:53 Hrs. Another seism occurred in neighboring Ayeyarwaddy Region, reaching a 4.6 magnitude.

The most affected area was around Hakha, in Chin State: on 16th April, it was shaken by a 6.1-magnitude earthquake. Some damages were reported in Hakha and Kale town area but no fatality and injury. Tremors were recorded on 17th April (magnitude 4.0), 19th April (magnitude 3.6), 21st April (magnitude 3.3) and 22nd April (magnitude 3.4 and 4.0).

Fire Breakouts:

Based on the main Myanmar media, the most significant fire since the last report are the following:

1. **12th April 2020 – Mandalay Region:** a fire broke out in Sepin village, Amarapura township. 23 houses were burnt down.
2. **11th April 2020 – Sagaing Region:** a fire broke out in Kine Twein village, Pale township. 37 houses were burnt down.

Comments and recommendations

Fire is a significant risk in Myanmar. Make sure your office or your accommodation comply to satisfactory electric norms and are fitted with a fire alarm; make sure they have a proper and clear evacuation route; equip yourself with fire-extinguishing devices; be extremely careful when dealing with candles or mosquito repellents.

Health Hazards:

In the context of the fight against Covid-19 epidemic, national and regional government issued some instructions. The main ones are the following:

1. **Night curfew imposed in some townships:** from 18th April onwards, inhabitants are banned from leaving home from 10 pm to 4 am in most of the townships of Myanmar. However, there are some exception to that new measure, including government duties, health affairs and funeral.
2. **Restrictions:** local authorities also restricted travels and movements within the country. They recommended wearing masks in markets and outside from home. Violation will result in legal actions.
3. **Stay at Home (semi lockdown) in some townships of Yangon:** according to MoHS order n° 38/2020 made on 18th April, 7 townships in Yangon Region are subject to a semi lockdown. Inhabitants can only leave their homes for essential movements, defined as going to work, buying supplies and seeking health care. The 7 townships concerned are South Okkalapa, Pabedan, Bahan, Mayangone , Insein, Shwe Pyi, Hlaing Tharyar.
4. **Restrictions for Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory area:** according to Nay Pyi Taw Council order n° 56/2020 made on 19th Apr, any traveler heading to Nay Pyi Taw must accept quarantine if deemed necessary; vehicles have to go through inspections.
5. **Extension of Air Travel ban to Myanmar:** the suspension of international commercial flights to/from Myanmar which was decided on 29th March until 13th April was extended until 30th April by the Ministry of Transportation and Communication.
6. **Hate-speech control:** the Myanmar government encouraged regional governments to prevent the rise of hate speech related to the Covid-19 crisis. In the last few weeks, violent messages have been reported against some communities. The Christian community has been especially targeted, as one of the Yangon clusters originated from a Christian ceremony held in Insein Township.

According to immigration sources, more than 25,000 Myanmar migrant workers are expected to come back from China in the next few weeks through the border checkpoints located in Shan and Kachin States. According to local officials, such amounts exceed the capacities of local quarantine facilities.

Recommendations and Advice for the Public

- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water, or with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Practice social distancing: maintain at least 2-meter (6 feet) distance with any other people.
- Avoid crowded places and public gatherings.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Practice respiratory hygiene: wear face mask as much as possible. Cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or a tissue when you cough or

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sneeze. Dispose of the used tissue immediately. Make sure the people around you also follow those good practices.

- Stay home as much as possible. Limit your movements outside from home to the most necessary tasks (go to work, buy supplies, go to the doctor).
- If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing. Do not rush to health facilities, as it may contribute to the virus propagation, but inform local health personnel as early as possible.
- Stay informed about the latest developments and follow advice given by your healthcare provider, your local and national public health authorities or your employer.
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Those precautions should be followed even more closely by people living in cluster areas where COVID-19 is especially active, who visited such regions in the last two weeks, or who have been in contact with a confirmed case.

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