

EXERA

Weekly Security Review

Safety and Security Highlights for Clients Operating in Myanmar

Dates covered: 25 June – 1 July 2020



ISO
9001:2015
Quality
Management
QMS/052019/002

ISO
18788:2015
Security
Operations
Management
SMS/052019/002

ANSI/ASIS
PSC.1-2012
Quality
Assurance
Management
SMS/052019/002



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**Covid -19 pandemic**

When EXERA released its latest Weekly Security Review (WSR) on 25 June 2020 at 13:54 hrs, Myanmar had had a total of 292 Covid-19 patients since the beginning of the pandemic, i.e. 30 more than the previous week.

As of 1 July, at 08:00 Hrs, 299 confirmed cases have been reported since the beginning of the epidemic, i.e. 7 new cases in the last week. All of them came back from other countries, 5 from India, 1 from Bangladesh and 1 from Thailand.

On 27 June, the set of government-sanctioned preventive measures in force until 30 June was extended until 15 July.

On 28 June, Government announced that suspension of all commercial international flights and of all visa issuance to Myanmar would be extended until 31 July 2020.

On 1 July at 4:00 hrs, the semi-lockdown measures were lifted in Insein (Yangon Region), the last township which was still under restrictive measures.

Internal Conflict

In Rakhine, this week saw major clashes in Kyauk Tan village tract (Rathedaung Township) after the arrest by the Arakan Army of 3 boys (relatives of Tatmadaw officers), who attempted to retrieve a missing drone. Those clashes displaced more than 10,000 villagers. The increasing fighting in Rathedaung Township fuels concerns about an extension of the frontline to the west.

Clashes also happened in Ann Township, and an explosion rocked Taungup Township, which had been relatively spared by conflict so far. Some observers worry the conflict may also extend to the east.

In Sittwe, a police sergeant was stabbed to death, adding one more fatality to a row of stabbing attacks against security forces and administration officers in Rakhine State, and highlighting the evolution of the war towards a low-burning, underground, little-legible struggle.

In Northern Shan State, clashes pitted the Tatmadaw and the Restoration Council of Shan State / Shan State Army – South (RCSS/SSA-S), a ceasefire signatory and occasional ally of the Myanmar Army. The bone of contention was the organization

by the RCSS/SSA-S of a drug-burning ceremony, an initiative rebuffed by the authorities.

Drugs

On 26 June, Myanmar authorities held several drug-burning ceremonies to celebrate the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. Events were organized in Yangon, Mandalay, Taunggyi, Lashio and Kutkai and tons of drugs, worth 839 million USD, were burned.

Myanmar General Elections

On 1 July, the Union Election Commission (UEC) announced that the elections would take place on 8 November 2020, ending weeks of uncertainty and speculation.

On 26 June, 63 political parties signed the code of conduct proposed by the UEC, but 30 refused, demanding that a paragraph be included to ban the use of General Aung San picture during the campaign. That request was dismissed by the UEC and the Union government, triggering tension.

The Tatmadaw confirmed that for the first time, soldiers and their relatives would not vote in their barracks, but in the public polling stations, under public scrutiny. According to some observers, this move may allow more transparency in the poll.

INTERNAL CONFLICT**Rakhine State**

EXERA has collected incident reports through news outlets, reliable social media accounts and informers on the ground. During the reporting period, the main incident took place in Rathedaung Township, on the banks of Mayu River (figure 1 below). On 24 June, a Tatmadaw drone, an Israeli-made military-grade Skylark I-LEX, went missing over Kyein Thar village, in Kyauk Tan village tract. In the afternoon, 3 boys were arrested by the AA while searching for the aircraft; they appeared to be the sons of Tatmadaw soldiers.



Figure 1: The missing drone and the 3 boys arrested by the AA. Source: AA information dept, via The Irrawaddy.

Shortly after this arrest, clashes broke out in Kyein Thar village between soldiers searching for the 3 boys and the AA. On the same day, the Rakhine Minister for Border Affairs warned that military clearance operations would be launched on AA militants in the area and urged the villagers to evacuate their villages. On 25 June, over 10,000 people from 17 villages of Kyauk Tan village tract were relocated. On 26 and 27 June, heavy fighting took place in several villages of Kyauk Tan village tract. More than 300 Tatmadaw soldiers were involved in those operations, with artillery support. Although such statements cannot be verified, the AA claims to have killed 40 soldiers and wounded 20 others during those clashes. The armed group also reported that some of its fighters sustained injuries. Some houses were damaged by the fights. On 27 June, embassies of Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America issued a joint statement stating their concern about the military operations in Kyauk Tan village tract and calling Tatmadaw and AA to

exercise restraint. Most villagers displaced by the fights have not returned home yet and are still taking shelter in Sittwe.

Beside this major clash, other incidents in Rakhine State during the reporting period include:

- 2) 23 June, Mrauk-U Township: 12 people appeared at the court in Mrauk-U after 2 months of detention. They were part of a group of 15 people arrested on 4 April by the Myanmar Army while transporting rice to Nyaung Chaung IDP camp. They were accused of supplying AA soldiers and charged under anti-terrorism law. 3 of them were less than 18 years old and released on bail. Their next audience at the court is scheduled on 7 July.
- 3) On 25 June, Rathedaung Township: an IDP was wounded by gunshot when a clash broke out near an IDP camp, in the vicinity of Rathedaung town.
- 4) 25 June, Buthidaung Township: an 11-month old baby was killed and his father wounded when an artillery shell fell on their houses in Pyaing Taung village. Residents accuse a Myanmar Navy moored on the Mayu river to have fired that shell.
- 5) 26 June, Mrauk-U Township: one villager who went fishing along with two friends was shot dead in Kyauk Twin Kone village. Local residents blame the Tatmadaw for this death.
- 6) 26 June, Ann Township: two residents of Nat Maw village, in Dar Let village tract, were killed and another one was wounded when an artillery shell fell onto their house at 19:00 hours. Tatmadaw's Infantry Battalion 80 is accused of firing that shell. Dar Let village has been the scene of clashes in recent weeks, and the local humanitarian situation has deteriorated.
- 7) 26 June, Kyaukphyu Township: 9 residents of Kat Tha Pyay village were arrested by the Tatmadaw for alleged links with the Arakan Army. Those nine people were watching a video together on a phone when Tatmadaw entered their village at 20:00 hours. This video was deemed pro-AA and the 9 villagers were arrested and taken to Danyawaddy Naval Base. On the next day, over a hundred of locals fled their village, for fear of further arrests.
- 8) 26 June, Sittwe Township: an explosion took place in Yae Chan Pyin village. No casualty was reported. Five other unexploded ordnances were defused by the military. Two university students and one civil servant were arrested but

released on the following day. After release, they claimed they had been subject to torture by the Tatmadaw. The bruises and injuries on their bodies may support those claims.

- 9) 27 June, Myebon Township: a woman was injured after stepping on a landmine in Sa Hnyin village. She was staying in the local IDP camp in Sa Hnyin village.
- 10) 29 June, Sittwe Township: a police Sergeant was stabbed to death by two unidentified aggressors who knocked at his door at 20:40 Hrs. This is one more incident in a series of stabbing of security personnel.
- 11) 29 June, Kyauktaw Township: Myanmar Army reported that they would release 3 detainees out of a group of 5 people arrested in Ah Pauk Wa village. The two others remain in detention: one for illegal driving; the other will be charged under the anti-terrorism law; on his mobile, investigators found photos of homemade bombs, and of a handcuffed prisoner.
- 12) 29 June, Taungup Township: 4 people were killed in the explosion of an IED in Tharaba village, along the Yangon-Sittwe highway. According to the local residents, the 4 men are not from the region; some speculate they may be from Kyaukphyu. Although investigation is still ongoing, the police considers the possibility that those people were AA fighters who got killed by the IED they were planting.
- 13) 30 June, Taungup Township: a court decided to charge 4 people with the anti-terrorism law for alleged ties with AA. They were arrested on 9 May. Among them: the vice-chairman of the local branch of the Arakan National Party (ANP); a member of the General Administration Department (GAD) and his younger brother; one former head of GAD.
- 14) 30 June, Kyaukphyu Township: a Myanmar Army convoy was targeted by a landmine in Pyar Tae village, 8 km south of Kyaukphyu. During the incident, the soldiers reportedly shot one farmer tilling his field near the blast site. Eleven other farmers who were working in the surroundings were also arrested. No casualty was reported on Army side.

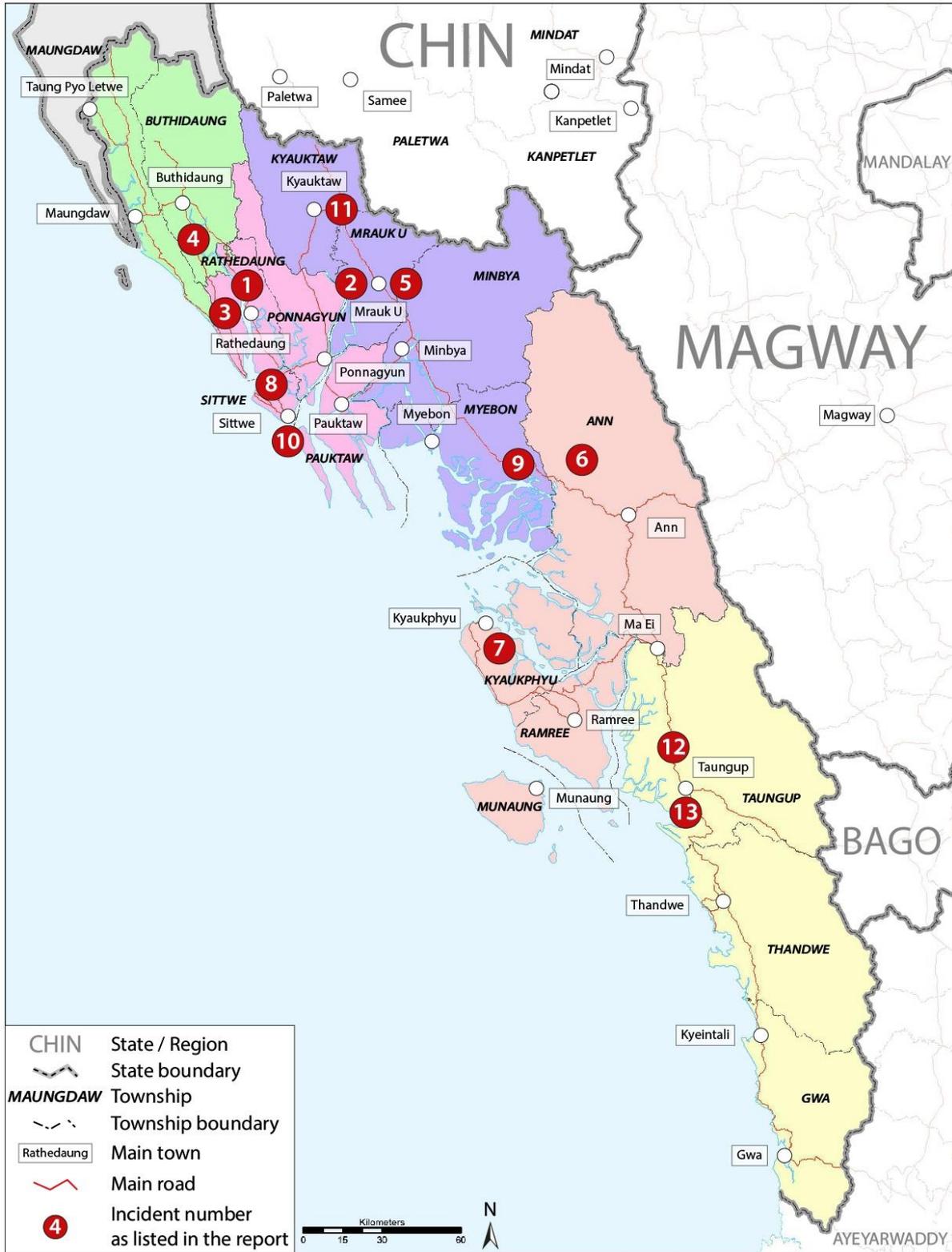


Figure 2: Security incidents in Rakhine State between 25 June and 1 July 2020.

Northern Shan State

In Northern Shan State, the main incidents were the following:

- 1) 24 June, Kyaukme Township: clashes broke out between the Tatmadaw and the Restoration Council of Shan State / Shan State Army South (RCSS/SSA-S) in Pan Kyan village. The Shan EAO was keen to celebrate the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking by holding a drug-burning ceremony on 26 June. Such an initiative was refused by the Tatmadaw, leading to clashes. Tension remained high for several days. On 29 June, one local was killed and one woman wounded by an artillery shell in Pan Kyan village. Although the RCSS/SSA-S signed the National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) in October 2015, and grown quite close to the Tatmadaw since then, clashes sometimes happen between both parties.
- 2) 24 June, Namtu Township: over 200 local people from Pang Lon village tract returned home after taking shelter in Mann San town on 23 June, amid rising tensions between the TNLA and the RCSS/SSA-S
- 3) 28 June, Kyaukme Township: 3 soldiers of the Shan State Progressive Party, a Shan EAO, were investigated by their organization for extorting money from a branch of KBZ bank in Kyaukme town in breach of the SSPP's procedures.
- 4) On 30 June, Kyaukme Township: 600 villagers fled from their villages in Pang Loi village tract as they were afraid of fighting between Myanmar Army and RCSS.
- 5) On 25 June, Muse Township: three armed men on motorbikes shot to the base of a local militia in 105-mile trade zone. According to the targeted militia, no one was wounded.

Karen State

On 25 June, Hpapun Township: the Karen National Union rebuilt the Covid-19 screening checkpoint that the Myanmar Army had destroyed on 2 June. Since then, the KNU had got a formal agreement from the Tatmadaw.

Analysis and assessment

At the national scale, the Myanmar authorities announced that 2 rounds of video-meetings will be held with the EAO which signed the 2015 NCA. They will lay the

ground of the fourth 21st Century Panglong Conference, the main peace negotiation forum in Myanmar, scheduled on the second week of August.

In Rakhine State, it seems that the military efforts of the AA now focus on the western and eastern parts of the frontline:

- In the west, Rathedaung Township has been the epicentre of violence in the last weeks, with regular clashes and the Kyauk Tan battle on 26 and 27 June. Clashes in southern Rathedaung demonstrate the frontline may extend to Maungdaw Township in the future.
- In the east, local residents are concerned that the conflict may spread. Clashes in Ann in the last few weeks and the explosion of an IED in Taungup on 30 June corroborate those fears.

A supposed affinity between the local population and the AA has pushed the Tatmadaw to tightly control food transportation. In several parts of the State, the humanitarian situation has become alarming. On 28 June, the UN released a statement conveying concern about the humanitarian impact of conflict in Rakhine and southern Chin States. In Pein Hne Taw (Ponnagyun Township), the army does not allow residents to leave their village to buy supplies or to farm their fields; soldiers reportedly fire warning shots to deter the villagers to do so. In Ann Township, Dar Let village tract, its 48 villages and 8,000 inhabitants are severely impacted by recurrent fight (2 villagers were killed on 26 June) and by food shortage; 3,000 people are reportedly in a critical situation. On 30 June, a cargo of 3,500 rice bags arrived in Paletwa town (Paletwa Township). More than 5,000 IDPs have taken shelter in the town, and 3,000 in Hsamee. The price of food has boomed in the region, with a rice bag fetching 65 to 70,000 MMK (approximately 50 USD), versus 25,000 MMK (18 USD) before the conflict spread to the region.

Landmines are also becoming a very severe risk in the region, with civilians getting injured every week. During the reporting period, the victim was a woman, in Myebon Township, on 27 June. On 25 June, the NGO Fortify Rights issued a statement demanding that Myanmar security forces stop antipersonnel landmines and lead to demining operations. It also reacted to the announcement by Minister Win Myat Aye on 12 June that a National Mine Action Center would be created, stating that this initiative would not be enough and that stopping using landmines should be the priority.

On 30 June, the Myanmar Army Commander-in-Chief office announced that the court martial had "confirmed the guilty verdict" first handed out on 8 May against three soldiers for extra-judicial killings in Gutapyin village (Buthidaung Township) in 2017. The statement did not provide any information about the crimes the soldiers

perpetrated, nor about the sentences they received. Gutapyin massacre was well-documented by journalists of the Associated Press.

Based on the current situation and the short-term trend of the conflict in Rakhine State, the risk remains very high.

In Northern Shan State, conflict has somehow receded in Kutkai and Muse compared to the previous weeks; however, it has flared up in Kyaukme Township, between the Tatmadaw and the RCSS/SSA-S, an NCA signatory turned occasional ally. The bone of contention was the organization of a drug-burning ceremony. Once this punctual incident over, one may speculate that tension may ease between both parties. The situation in Northern Shan State remains very unstable, and the risks are rated as very high.

Comments and recommendations

Travel by road should be avoided at all cost in Northern and Central Rakhine State as well as in Southern Chin State. Even major towns' outskirts have become high-risk areas. In Northern Shan State, Kyaukme, Kutkai and Muse Townships remain dangerous; we therefore advise our clients to avoid the region for the moment.

Awareness and vigilance should be priority before planning or performing any activities in these regions. EXERA remains at your disposition to offer tailor-made security diagnostics and secure travel plans throughout Myanmar.

SOCIAL STABILITY

Although no demonstration can be held in Myanmar at the moment because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the recent economy downturn is a factor of social risk. Indeed, the activities slowdown has fragilized whole swathes of the population. On 27 June, the Ministry of Labor, Immigration and Population stated that 140,000 Myanmar workers had lost their jobs in approximately 6,000 businesses due to the epidemic. This figure should also be complemented with 110,000 migrant workers who lost their jobs abroad, i.e. a total of 250,000 people. It is probable that this figure underestimates the real situation, as it does not take into account informal employment. Although the situation is currently getting back on track, and although the government is implementing several assistance programs, low level opportunistic crime may remain high in the near future.

On 24 June, in Mandalay, the court started the trial of the Buddhist monk U Sein Ti Ta, a leading figure of the 2007 Saffron Revolution, sued by a military for recent statement he found insulting to the Army. U Sein Ti Ta is sued under the controversial Telecommunications Law Article 66 (d).

On 25 June, in Ramree Township, a right activist was sentenced to 15 days in jail or 20,000 MMK (14 USD) fine. He was arrested while taking a picture of the town's entrance signboard to commemorate the first anniversary of the internet shutdown in Rakhine State.

ELECTION WATCH

In November 2020, Myanmar will hold its general elections. In Myanmar, the general elections take place every five years. Myanmar people vote for their representatives at the Upper House and Lower House of the Parliament¹.

According to the 2008 Constitution, on top of those elected members, those two chambers comprise 25 % of MPs directly appointed by the Senior-General of the Tatmadaw. The Constitution can be amended only if more than 75 % of the MPs agree for it, which gives the Army a decisive veto.

The elected and appointed members of the two chambers (664 members) elect the President of the Republic. The latter is therefore not elected directly by the Myanmar citizens, but indirectly, through the Parliament.

The two main parties in Myanmar are the National League for Democracy (NLD), led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), a military-aligned party which used to rule the country from 2011 to 2016. Myanmar is extremely diverse from a political point of view, with 97 parties ready to contest the 2020 elections.

¹ They also cast their votes for regional functions:

- their representative at their respective Regional/State Parliament
- their representative at the municipal level
- ethnic minorities can elect their representatives in the regional government if their ethnic group accounts for more than 0.1 % of the regional population.
- in Self-Administered Zones (SAZ), people also elect the local administrators.

During the report period, the main news about the elections were the following:

- 1) On 22 June, Deputy Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry Maung Maung Win announced that the government had earmarked 50 billion MMK (37.5 million USD) to organize the elections; in that amount, 12.4 billion MMK (8.9 million USD) will be devoted to the police, to ensure the security of the poll.
- 2) The Tatmadaw confirmed an important information, which had remained uncertain for several weeks: for the first time, soldiers and their relatives will not vote in their barracks, but in the public polling stations, under public scrutiny. According to some observers, this move may allow more transparency in the poll.
- 3) On 25 June, a spokesperson for the NLD stated that the party would not cover the campaign expenses of its candidates. The latter will therefore have to cover their budget themselves, within the limit of 10 million MMK (7,150 USD) set up by the UEC for all the candidates.
- 6) On 25 June, the Kachin State Election Commission reported that about 1.1 million people are on the voters lists, but that 150,000 people cannot be registered, as they do not have the relevant ID documents. Out of the 21 political parties which registered to contest the poll in Kachin State, 18 have been approved by the UEC.
- 7) On 26 June, the Mandalay Region Chief Minister lamented that some candidates are selected based on their affinities with the party leaders, and not on their competences.
- 8) On June 26, the UEC and Switzerland embassy organized a ceremony for the signature of a Code of Conduct for political parties. The event was attended by the representatives of 83 political parties. Out of the 97 parties set to contest the poll, 64 signed the CoC. 30 others, led by the USDP, refused, demanding that a clause be included to bar parties from using the portrait of General Aung San. On 29 June, the UEC rebuffed this demand, stating that no law prohibits the use of General Aung San's image. On the same day, the Union government blocked a press conference the 30 opponents wanted to hold to voice their concerns.
- 9) On June 26, U Zaw Htay, director of President' s Office said that in a press conference that his government would take action against any person who

would spread fake news. He mentioned that a rise of fake news is expected in the election context.

- 10) On June 29, the UEC released the details of the election map: there will be 168 constituencies for the Upper House of the Parliament; 330 for the Lower House. There will also be 644 constituencies for regional Parliaments, and 29 constituencies for Ethnic Affairs Ministers in States and Regions.
- 11) On 30 June, on the sideline of an official visit to Russia, Senior-General Min Aung Hlaing hinted he considers involving in politics. He said that after the election result is known, he would continue to work based on the wishes of the political parties, groups and people. He also said he wants to keep serving Myanmar, and that his experience would be valuable for the country.

Senior-General Min Aung Hlaing does not need to contest the elections to reach the highest responsibilities of the State. Indeed, according to Myanmar Constitution, the elected members of the Lower House, the elected members of the Upper House and the appointed military representatives pick one candidate each for presidency. They then convene all together to elect 1 president and 2 vice-presidents. Interestingly enough, the 3 candidates do not have to be Members of the Parliament. Lower House, Upper House and military appointees are entitled to select a figure from the outside.

- 12) On 1 July, the UEC eventually announced the date of the general elections: they will take place on 8 November. This announcement closes weeks of uncertainty and speculation, with some observers considering that the poll may be postponed because of the Covid-19 epidemic.

TRANSPORTATION

Main Incidents

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

N°	Date and time	Location	Incident	Casualties
1	25 June, 15:15 Hrs	Yangon – Mandalay Highway, between mileposts 139/6 and 139/7	A speeding car overturned due to brake system failure	4 people injured
2	25 June, 06:45 Hrs	Bago Region, Waw Township	A motorbike crashed on a train on Yangon – Mawlamyine Railway	One motorcyclist died on the spot and one got injured
3	25 June	Shan State (North), milepost 277/7 on Muse – Lashio Union Road	A truck collided with a truck driving on the opposite lane near	2 people died on the spot and 2 people got injured
4	25 June	Yangon – Mandalay Highway, milepost 141	Car crash	The driver got seriously injured and 3 people got minor injured
5	26 June	Ayeyarwady Region, Nyaungdon Township	Truck crash	18 people got injured. The driver was arrested
6	26 June, 04:50hrs	Yangon-Mandalay Highway, milepost 58/0	Collision between a car and a bus	5 people got injured
7	26 June, 14:30hrs	Kayin State, Kawkareik Township, Kawkareik – Kyondoe Highway	Collision between 2 cars	1 person got seriously injured and 2 got minor injuries.
8	27 June, 14:20hrs	Ayeyarwady Region, Kyangin Township, between mileposts 3/1 and 3/2	A truck hit a tree	One person got injured
9	27 June, 18:20hrs	Yangon – Mandalay Highway, between mileposts 186 and 186/1	A car hit a tree due to brake system failure	One person died on the spot and 3 people got injured
10	28 June, 05:10hrs	Yangon – Mandalay Highway, milepost 310/3	A car crashed due to brake system failure	2 people got injured
11	28 June, 13:00hrs	Yangon Region, Insein Township	A truck hit a stopped truck	the driver got injured
12	28 June	Mon State	Collision between a bus and a car	2 people got injured
13	29 June	Bago Region, Yedeshe Township,	A fuel truck crashed with another truck on	The 2 drivers were killed by the explosion,

		milepost 201	the opposite lane	and 3 roadside shops were destroyed
14	30 June, 19:15hrs	Mandalay – Naypyitaw Highway, milepost 313/1	Car crash	one person got injured
15	30 June, 21:00hrs	Naypyitaw – Mandalay Highway, milepost 346	A bus hit a pedestrian	The person died on the spot

Comments and recommendations

Road accidents are a major risk in Myanmar, and one has to be extremely careful. The Yangon – Mandalay Highway is especially dangerous. Among other risks, this road is made of cement, which is known to wear out tyres much faster than macadam. If you often drive on that road, monitor closely the wear and tear of your tyres.

As a rule, avoid speeding, even on good roads. Keep your distances, keep clear from motorbikes and be careful of light vehicles or cattle on the road. Do not assume other drivers have a good command of their vehicles, the right reflexes and know the traffic rules. Make sure to use properly-trained drivers and well-maintained vehicles. Always fasten your seat belt.

At night, keep in mind that many vehicles, especially motorbikes, drive without any light; drive slowly and be extremely cautious. Accidents are even more frequent during rainy season. Assess road and climate conditions before starting your trip.

CRIME

Main Incidents

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

- 1) 24 June – Tanintharyi Region: people suspected of killing 3 family members of a railway worker in Yebyu Township on 13 June were arrested.
- 2) 24 June – Yangon Region: a raid of immigration personnel in Mayangone Township led to the arrest of 27 foreigners staying illegally in Myanmar. Most of them are Nigerian nationals.
- 3) 25 June – Kachin State: 2 Chinese men with no legal Myanmar visa were arrested at a Covid-19 checkpoint in Hpakhant.

- 4) 27 June – Mandalay Region: a couple riding a motorbike was shot by 2 other men one a motorbike between 78 and 79 Streets, in Mandalay town. The man got injured. The offenders were arrested.
- 5) 27 June – Kayin State: the dead body of a missing university student was found at Mount Zwegabin.
- 6) 27 June, Rathedaung Township: three detainees evaded from the town jail at 3:00 Hrs. How they managed to escape remains unclear. They are still on the run.

EXERA also reminds its clients that on 17 April 2020, a mass presidential amnesty resulted in 25,000 inmates freed from jail throughout the country. This may significantly increase crime rate.

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; avoid routine times and routine routes in the matter of going-out from your apartment or house.

We encourage you to use taxi booked through Grab app rather than taxi hailed from the street, especially at night; in suburbs; if you're alone; if you're a woman; if you are alcohol-intoxicated or drowsy, etc. Be extremely careful when travelling, especially in industrial zones and poor neighbourhoods: keep your doors locked, make sure you are not followed, attract attention or take shelter if you have any doubt.

TRAFFICKING

Main incidents

- 1) 23 June, Mandalay Region: Patheingyi Township police seized 24,000 amphetamines from a bus passenger. The illegal drugs have a value of 230 million MMK, i.e. 165,000 USD.
- 2) 23 June, Northern Shan State: Lashio Township police stopped two men who were transporting 50,000 amphetamine pills on a motorbike. They were arrested. The value of their haul was 100 million MMK, i.e. 73,000 USD.
- 3) 23 June, Mae Sot (Thai/Myanmar Border): Thai authorities seized 4,600 amphetamine tablets from a family of IDPs in Mae La refugee camp. The camp shelters 30,000 people who fled fighting between Myanmar Army and KNU.

- 4) 24 June, Sagaing Region: authorities in Pinlebu Township seized 17.6 kg of heroin and 125,400 pills stimulants in Sagaing region, for a total value of 2.4 billion MMK, i.e. 1.7 million USD. Four suspects were arrested.
- 5) 25 June, Mandalay Region: a man who had run away after having an accident with his car loaded with 6 kg of heroin on 24 June was arrested by Madaya Township police. The seizure value is 880 million MMK (USD \$ 640,000).
- 6) 26 June, Eastern Shan State: three people were arrested in Tachileik Township when the police found 20,000 amphetamine tablets in their car, which had a value of 30 million MMK (USD \$ 21,500).
- 7) 26 June, Kachin State: Waingmaw township police stopped a man on a motorbike, who was transporting 550 grams of heroin, for a value of 44 million MMK (USD \$ 32,165).
- 8) On 26 June, Southern Shan State: the United Wa State Army (UWSA) led one seizure of drugs, which yielded 1 million amphetamine tablets and 90 small bags of methamphetamine (ice). One UWSA soldier was killed in the operation.
- 9) On 29 June, Eastern Shan State: the Tachileik Township authorities found 6,480,000 amphetamine tablets inside of 60 bags and 1,148 kg of amphetamine powder in Ye Pu San village. The haul was buried and deteriorated by humidity. Weapons were also seized. The value of the seizure was estimated at 26.9 billion MMK (19 million USD).
- 10) On 30 June, Rakhine State: three people were arrested in Maungdaw Township, when the authorities found 579,500 amphetamine tablets in their car.

On 26 day, Myanmar authorities held several drug-burning ceremonies to celebrate the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. Events were organized in Yangon, Mandalay, Taunggyi, Lashio and Kutkai. More than 839 million USD worth of drugs were burnt on that day, including 3,000 kg of opium, 1,000 kg of heroin, 300 million pills of stimulants, 10,000 kg of methamphetamine powder, 1,400 kg of ketamine, as well as 50 different kinds of precursors.

Comments and recommendations

Do not indulge in any drug-related activities in Myanmar, even for recreational and private purpose. It is against the law and can yield every heavy sentences. Northern, Eastern Shan State, as well as Rakhine State are major drug hubs; this can result in violent disputes between traffickers or violent arrests. Extra precaution should be taken when visiting those areas.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

- Earthquakes

Current situation

Myanmar is located on the active Sagaing seismic fault line and is therefore vulnerable to earthquakes. Since our previous report on 25 June 2020, 2 earthquakes have been measured, but no fatality and injury has been reported:

Date	Location	Magnitude	Casualties and damages
25 June	Sagaing Region	3.2	-
26 June	Magway Region	4.4	-

Comments and recommendations

Be aware that Myanmar is a seismic country and prepare yourself accordingly. Try to settle down your accommodation or your office in recent, well-built buildings. Adapt the common earthquakes reaction tips to your environment. Keep a survival kit at home and in your office, within reach. Spread those instructions to your family and in your work environment.

- Fire breakouts

Current Situation

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

N°	Date and time	Location	Event	Casualties and damages
1	25 June 2020, 09:25 hrs	Mandalay Region, Pyigyidagun Township	House fire	No injuries
2	25 June 2020, 12:25 hrs	Yangon Region, Kyauktan Township	Fire in a construction worker's hostel	No injuries
3	26 June 2020, 20:48 hrs	Yangon Region, Shwepyithar Township, 11 Ward	House fire	No injuries
4	26 June 2020, 23:55 hrs	Southern Shan State, Taunggyi Town	House fire	No injuries
5	29 June 2020, 08:25 hrs	Yangon Region, Htantabin Township	House fire	No injuries
6	29 June 2020, 12:22 hrs	Yangon Region, Dagon Myothit (South), industrial zone 3	Fire broke out due to gas pipe leakage	No injuries
7	29 June 2020, 20:50 hrs	Sagaing Region, Indaw Township	House fire	No injuries
8	29 June 2020, 22:07 hrs	Kayin State, Hpa-An Township	House fire	No injuries
9	30 June 2020, 12:00 hrs	Yangon Region, Hlaing Thar Yar Township	House fire	No injuries
10	30 June 2020, 13:50hrs	Tanintharyi Region, Myeik Townhip	House fire	No injuries

Comments and recommendations

Fire is a severe 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 coils.

- Health Hazards

The sanitary situation in Myanmar is still dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

When EXERA released its latest Weekly Security Review (WSR), the figure for 25 June at 13:54 hrs was 292 confirmed cases since the beginning of the epidemic, i.e. 30 more than the previous week.

As of 1 July, at 08:00 hrs, 299 confirmed cases have been reported since the beginning of the epidemic, i.e. 7 new cases in the last week.

All those cases are imported: 5 from India, 1 from Bangladesh and 1 from Thailand. They were repatriated by government-arranged relief flights, put in quarantine on arrival on Myanmar, and tested while in quarantine. In other words, in those specific cases, contamination chains were somehow under control.

MoHS statistics indicate that the number of positive patients went through a sustained growth in the first 3 weeks of April, before reaching a plateau. Since mid-May, the increase of new figures has been chiefly driven by imported cases: from 16 May to 1 July at 08:00 hrs, 118 new cases were confirmed, out of which 113 imported cases: 50 Myanmar nationals back from India, 23 from Thailand, 17 from Malaysia, 8 from UAE, 9 from Bangladesh, 3 from Qatar 2 from Italy, and 1 from China. The high amount of people tested positive while in quarantine suggests that quarantine facilities themselves may be active clusters. This raises the question as to whether quarantine facilities can efficiently contain the epidemic.

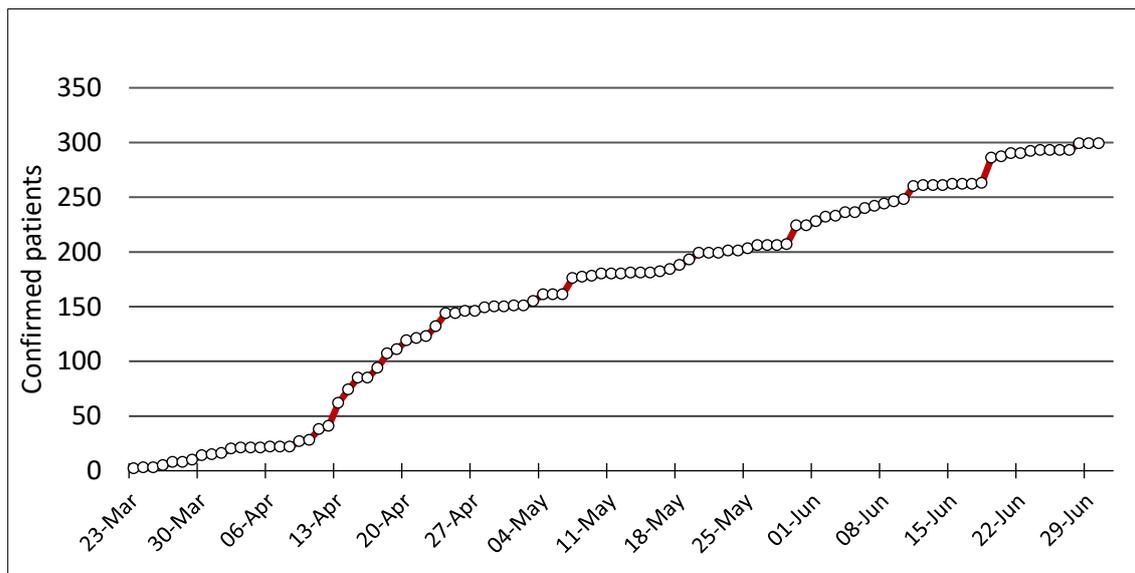


Figure 2: Total Covid-19 cases in Myanmar since the beginning of Covid-19 pandemic. Source: MoHS

More than 180,000 Myanmar nationals have been repatriated from abroad since the beginning of the crisis, out of whom 70,000 from Thailand. Repatriation was also operated by flight: as of 30 June, Myanmar had repatriated a total of 6,476 people by special relief flights.

As of 1 July 2020, at 08:00 hrs, MoHS has tested a total of 76,693 people since the beginning of the epidemic. Since the publication of the latest WSR, 10,312 people have been tested, i.e. an average of 1473 per day, versus 1698 in the previous reporting period. At the beginning of the epidemic, Myanmar was notorious for its very low number of tests, as it did not have any suitable testing lab; since then, it has increased its capacities, with 5 labs and more systematic testing.

We suggest being careful of the distinction between:

- the total number of patients since the beginning of the pandemic, which combines active cases, deaths and discharged patients. It is the commonly-used and oft-quoted metric. As of 1 July, at 08:00 hrs, a total of 299 people have been contaminated in the country, out of whom 209 in Yangon Region (i.e. 70 %)

- the current number of active patients, which is the immediate risk indicator. As of 1 July, at 08:00 hrs, there were 72 active patients in the country, out of whom 27 in Yangon Region (i.e. 37.5 %).

In Yangon, the main clusters are:

Township	Number of cases since the beginning of the epidemic	Number of cases for 10,000 inhabitants
Insein	49	1.44
Botahtaung	22	5.37
Hlaing	18	1.12
Mayangone	17	0.86
South Okkalapa	13	3.2
Dagon Myothit (North)	12	0.26
Dagon Myothit (South)	11	0.30
Tamwe	10	0.61

As a comparison, EU countries had an average of 3.6 positive cases for 10,000 inhabitants as of 25 March, at the peak of the epidemic. It must be noted that the high number of patients in Botahtaung and Hlaing Townships is mainly ascribable to

returnees flown back to Myanmar from abroad and tested positive while in quarantine. In other words, they did not live in their home townships when they got infected.

Outside of Yangon Region, the most affected States/Regions of Myanmar since the beginning of the epidemic are:

1. Kayin State, with 26 cases, mostly due to returnees from Thailand
2. Rakhine State with 12 cases
3. Chin State with 10 cases
4. Sagaing Region with 9 cases
5. Bago (West) Region with 8 cases

The set of preventive decisions that had been made by the authorities in March and April has been extended several times (15 May, 28 May and 12 June) with gradual relaxing throughout time. On 27 June evening, the set of government-sanctioned preventive measures against Covid-19 in force until 30 June was extended until 15 July.

The current situation is the following:

- 1) The prohibition of gatherings of more than 5 people has been relaxed since late May. Gatherings are allowed in the following contexts:
 - governmental departments, organizations, companies, factories and workshops
 - in public, private and monastic schools
 - meetings, discussions and classes at governmental departments, organizations, companies, factories and workshops in accordance to the health ministry guidelines
 - food shops which have been allowed to re-open as they follow the ministry's guidelines
 - essential sectors described in the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population's May 3 -notice.

Mass gatherings such as marriages, festivals, demonstrations, rallies and conferences remain tightly restricted.

2) International commercial flights, as well as the issuance of any kind of visa remain suspended until 31 July at 23:59 hrs Myanmar time. Relief and special flights are not concerned.

3) A curfew remains enforced from midnight to 04.00 Hrs.

4) Wearing facial mask in public spaces remains compulsory

5) While 10 Yangon townships used to be under semi-lockdown measures at the peak of the crisis in April, those orders have progressively been lifted. The last township under semi-lockdown measures, Insein, which was the hotbed of the epidemic in April/May, saw restrictions lifted on 1 July at 04:00 Hrs.

6) On 30 June, Mandalay authorities canceled the Taungbyone festival, usually held in May north of Mandalay, and which is a highlight of Myanmar cultural life.

7) On 30 June, Ayeyarwaddy Region government announced the local beaches would remain closed until 15 July.

8) On 30 June, the Thai authorities announced it would open its 37 border posts with neighboring countries on 1 July. Myanmar shares 8 passage points with Thailand. However, tourists are still barred from crossing the borders.

Comments and recommendations

Based on the current data, the epidemic seems to be receding in Myanmar, with few local cases. However, news from the rest of the world shows that the epidemic bounces back in several countries. A second wave of contamination remains possible.

We advise you to carefully follow the official instruction and orders:

- Wear facial mask in public spaces: it is a compulsory requirement on streets and on buses. According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, 3,100 people were fined in May for failing to wear facial mask nationwide.
- Abide by the curfew rules, from midnight to 4 am.

According to the spokesperson of the President Office U Zaw Htay, 8,470 people have been sued in the last 3 months for breaching the Covid-19 protection rules.

More generally, we invite you to follow the usual precautionary measures:

- 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 sneeze. Dispose of the used tissue immediately. Make sure the people around you also follow those good practices.
- Stay home as much as possible. Whether you live in a semi-lockdown area or not, limit your movements to the most necessary tasks.
- If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, do not rush to medical facilities, as it may contribute to the propagation of the epidemic. Inform the medical authorities beforehand.
- Stay informed about the latest developments and follow advice given by your healthcare provider, your local and national public health authorities or your employer.

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.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AA: Arakan Army

ARSA: Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army

ICOE: Independent Commission of Enquiry

IED: Improvised Explosive Device

ICJ: International Court of Justice

IDP: Internally Displaced Person

EAO: Ethnic Armed Organization

KDA: Kachin Defense Army

KIA: Kachin Independence Army

KNLA: Karen National Liberation Army

KNPP: Karenni National Progressive Party

KNU: Karen National Union

MMT: Myanmar Time

MNDAA: Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army

MoHS: Ministry of Health and Sports

NCA: National Ceasefire Agreement

NLD: National League for Democracy

NMSP: New Mon State Party

NSCN-K: National Socialist Council of Nagaland- Khaplang

RCSS: Restoration Council of Shan State

SNA: Shanni Nationalities Army

SSA-N: Shan State Army - North

SSA-S: Shan State Army – South

SSPP: Shan State Progressive Party

TNLA: Ta'ang National Liberation Army

UNWFP: United Nations World Food Programme

UNWHO: United Nations World Health Organization

UWSA: United Wa State Army

WSR: Weekly Security Review

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