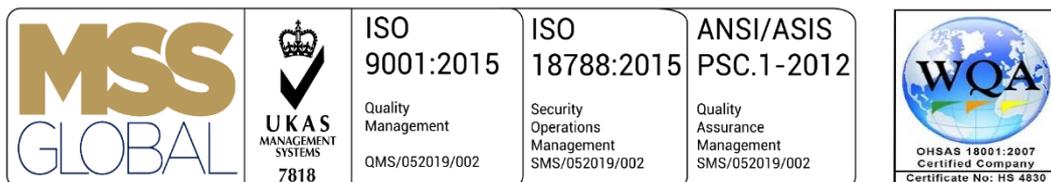


EXERA

Weekly Security Review

Safety and Security Highlights for Clients Operating in Myanmar

Dates covered: 4 June– 10 June 2020



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Covid-19 epidemic

When EXERA released its latest Weekly Security Review (WSR) on 3 June 2020 at 08:36 hrs, Myanmar had a total of 233 Covid-19 patients since the beginning of the pandemic.

As of 10 June 2020, at 08:00 Hrs, 246 people have been contaminated since the beginning of the pandemic, i.e. 13 new cases in 7 days. 159 patients are also considered as cured from the Covid-19.

Internal Conflict

Although this week saw fewer military clashes in Rakhine State, tension remains very high, with numerous arrests of civilians. The conflict seems to be shifting from the battlefield itself into the local communities, with increasing suspicion towards Rakhine civilians and within Rakhine society. This week also saw the return of a little-known political organization in Taungup Township: the National Security Organization. This compounds the complexity of the local context. Meanwhile, almost all the village tract administrators in Myebon Township resigned to protest against the pressure they endure. This may severely impact the cohesion of the local society.

In Shan State, violent clashes broke out in Kutkai Township, between the Myanmar Army, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), 3 members of the Northern Alliance. It is still too early to assess whether it is a punctual clash, or the beginning of a new episode of violence, with the Northern Alliance coming back to the fore.

In Kayin State, 2 explosions rocked Kawkareik and Myawaddy towns in 3 days. Although it is too early to identify a culprit, they happened at the same time as high tensions arise between the Tatmadaw and its former ally of the Border Guard Force, against a backdrop of illegal businesses in Kayin State.

Drugs

As in the last few weeks, numerous raids were led in Shan State, yielding massive amounts of synthetic drugs. This week, Kayin State was no exception, with a massive cargo of sodium cyanide. Along with Shan State and Rakhine State, Kayin State may be one more evidence that border areas are drugs hubs.

INTERNAL CONFLICT

During the reporting period, combats concentrated in Rakhine State, between the Tatmadaw (Myanmar Army) and the Arakan Army. Clashes also broke out in Shan and Kayin States.

Rakhine State

The main incidents collected through news outlets, reliable social media accounts and informers on the ground are the following (fig. 1):

- 1) 1 June, Taungup Township: one villager was arrested by five armed men in Sar Pyin village. He was captured by a little-known organization, called National Security Organization (NSO). This radical outfit, only based in Taungup Township, was reportedly involved in 2012 anti-Muslim pogroms, but had gone silent since then. The villager who was arrested was reportedly a member of the Arakan Liberation Party (ALP), a former armed group which signed ceasefire with the Myanmar government in 2012 and 2015, a move strongly criticized by the AA. In other words, there are tense tensions between the rebel AA and the pro-government ALP. On 4 June, the Arakan Army denied any link with the NSO and any involvement in this arrest. However, some observers challenge such a denial. Shortly after the arrest, the NSO claimed it had executed its prisoner for creating hatred and political disunity among Rakhine people.
- 2) 3 June, Taungup Township: Myanmar Army arrested 5 people from Chet Hpauk village. Two of them are members of the Arakan National Party (ANP), the main ethnic party in Rakhine State. The three others were released on 7 June.
- 3) 3 June, Myebon Township: a member of the township General Administration Department (GAD) was arrested by Myanmar Army and police at his house. His whereabouts are still unknown. On 1 June, 2 village leaders were already arrested for alleged links with the AA.
- 4) 4 June, Maungdaw Township: two members of Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) were killed and some police officers were wounded during a clash on Myanmar – Bangladesh border.
- 5) 5 June, Paletwa Township: fighting broke out between Myanmar Army and AA in two villages in the vicinity of Paletwa town: Tha Htay Kong and Shwe Chong Wa villages. AA claims that Myanmar Army sustained heavy losses.
- 6) 5 June, Kyaukphyu Township: Kon Baung Gyi village, a retired serviceman in the Myanmar Navy and his father were reportedly abducted.
- 7) 5 June, Kyauktaw Township: one local was wounded and 4 houses were damaged when a Navy ship opened fire on Doke Kan Chaung village.

- 8) 6 June, Rathedaung Township: a villager from Tha Mee Hla was arrested by Myanmar Army. He reportedly had to ferry soldiers across a river but was taken away with the troops.
- 9) 6 June, Ramree Township: a senior member of NLD arrested by the AA in was released. He had been detained since 8 February 2020.
- 10) 8 June, Minbya Township: seven villagers from Kyauk Kut village were arrested by Myanmar Army for alleged links with the AA. The soldiers reportedly inspected the detainees' bodies, looking for political tattoos or combat wounds.
- 11) 8 June, Ann Township: fighting broke out between AA and Myanmar Army in Shan Kone, Hnan Chaung and Kun Wa villages. Fighting lasted from 15:00 Hrs to 18:00 Hrs, and 950 villagers fled to seek shelter. In that area, human mobilities and supply transportation are tightly restricted. Villagers are therefore experiencing food shortage
- 12) 9 June, Taungup Township: the chairman of the ANP branch in Ma Ei village was detained by Myanmar Army. His whereabouts are still unknown.
- 13) 9 June, Kyauktaw Township: two men were wounded by Tatmadaw shots in Ah Pauk Wa Pyar village while conducting their daily activities.
- 14) 10 June, Sittwe Township: a 90-year old woman was killed and five other people were wounded when fighting broke out between Myanmar Army and AA near Ah Myint Kyun village. A Navy ship reportedly shelled the village.

From a military point of view, it seems that the conflict intensity has recently decreased. However, the trend highlighted in our previous reports goes on: civilians have become deeply embroiled in the conflict, and arrests by the Tatmadaw and the AA are getting more and more numerous.

In our latest report, we mentioned that a Chin woman died in Minbya one day after being released by the AA. She had been arrested early May, alongside with 3 other men. All of them were accused by the AA to supply the Myanmar Army. On 4 June, the AA denied any responsibility in her death, claiming that she had pre-existing heart problems. On 6 June, the Chin Youth Organization challenged AA's narrative, claiming that the woman's wore marks of ill treatments.

On 4 June, the Chin IDP Support Committee (CISC) gave a glimpse of the dire situation in Paletwa Township: 7,150 people have been displaced by the conflict, and a total of 20,000 people across township face food insecurity due to the conflict and the interruption of land and river transportation.

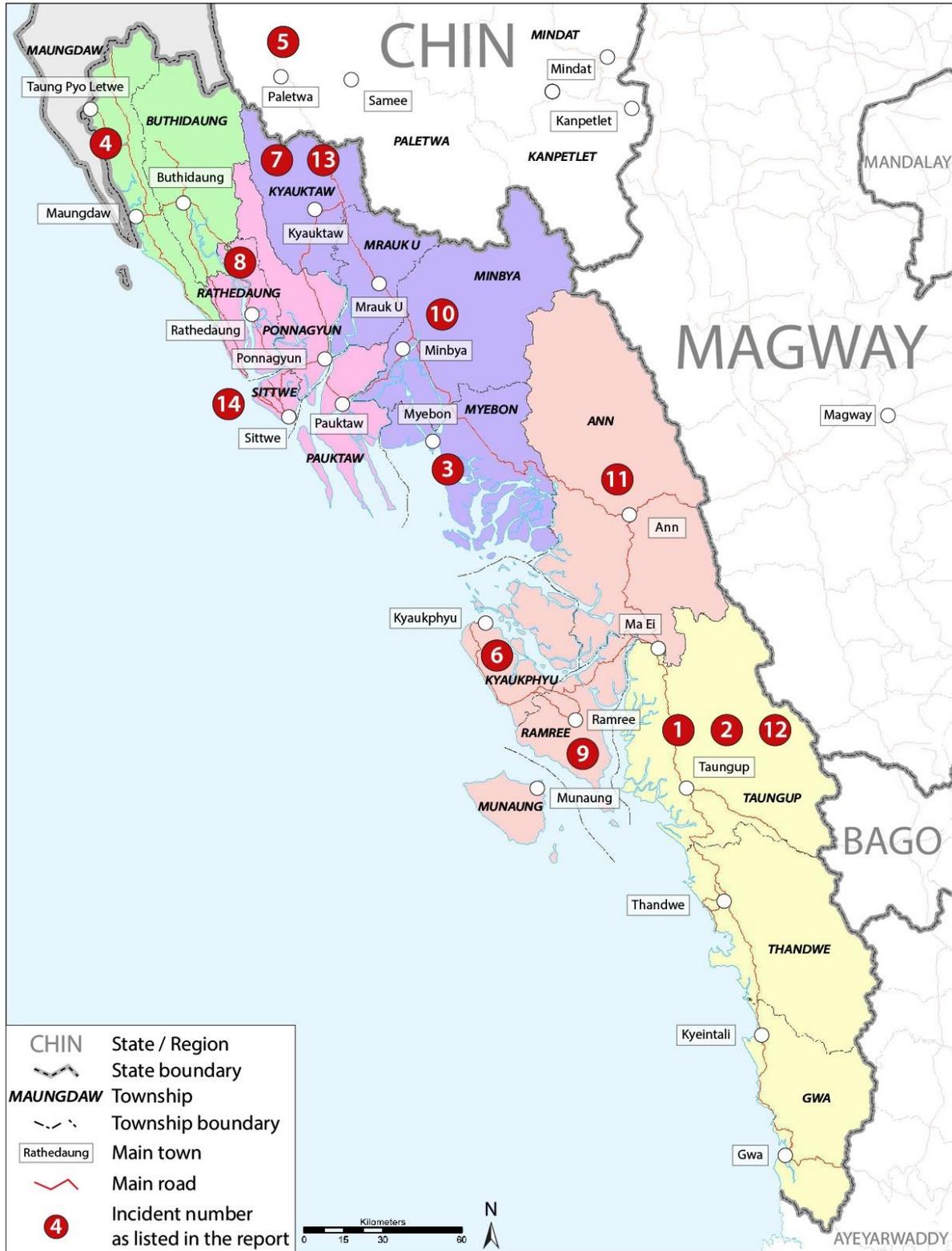


Figure 1: Security incidents in Rakhine State between 3 June and 10 June, 2020.

On 5 June, a statement by the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) claimed that 13 people had been arrested in Rakhine State for alleged ties with the AA in May 2020, and charged under the anti-terrorism law. On top of those 13 people, 65 have been arrested and are still waiting for trial. All those convicts are

from Rathedaung, Ponnagyun, Mrauk-U, Ann, and Taungup townships. According to the Arakan National Party (ANP), its members are specifically targeted, whereas the party claims to have no link with the AA.

Beyond the suspicion towards ANP, one can notice that the conflict creates a concerning political vacuum: on 5 June, 62 of the 68 Village Tract leaders of Myebon Township resigned *en masse*. They protested against the arrest of 3 of their colleagues on 30 May by the Myanmar authorities for alleged ties with the AA, and against the increasing pressures they are facing from both parties. This is concerning, as it severs the link between the Myanmar authorities and the communities and jeopardizes even more any political settlement of the conflict.

On 6 June, villagers from Tin Ma and Tin Ma Gyi (Kyauktaw Township) raised the alarm about the fate of 18 members of their communities, which have disappeared on 13 and 16 March. Almost three months later, their whereabouts are still unknown.

Shan State

While clashes seem to be temporarily receding in Rakhine State, they seem to escalate in Shan State. Last week, we reported incidents pitting the Tatmadaw, Kaungkha Militia and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA). This week, the Myanmar Army clashed in Tarmoenye area (Kutkai Township) with the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) which, alongside with the TNLA and the AA, are members of the Northern Alliance:

- 1) 4 to 6 June, Kutkai Township: fighting flared up in Tarmoenye area, with violent clashes between Tatmadaw's 88 and 99 Light Infantry Division (LID) and joint forces of TNLA, MNDAA and KIA. Tatmadaw resorted to long-range artillery support. Those attacks, initiated by the Tatmadaw, are understood to be a retaliation for the TNLA ambush on two army trucks on the Muse – Kutkai highway on 29 May. During this attack, one Tatmadaw major and 3 soldiers had been reportedly killed.
- 2) 4 June, Kutkai Township: a 38-year villager was killed by landmine blast while searching mushrooms in the forest. His body was found by TNLA fighters, who reportedly buried him on the spot instead of bringing him back to his village.
- 3) 4 June, Kutkai Township: according to a reliable Lashio-based news agency, 30 villagers from Mong Yu village were forced to guide soldiers of the 88 LID to the frontline. According to the villagers' testimonies, the Tatmadaw troops were concerned about potential landmines and forced them to walk ahead to clear the way. They were released afterwards.
- 4) 5 June, Kyaukme Township: a Chon Tit villager died after stepping on a landmine.

On 5 June, the Kachin Post news outlet reported that a new militia, called Kachin Peace Special Force (KPSF), was formed in early 2020 in Mongko Township, in Northern Shan State. It is understood to be a splinter group of the government-aligned Mongko Militia; its force is believed to be 50 fighters. It was founded by Lasang Awng Wa, a former member of the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) and by Reverend Loi, a former pastor of the Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC). Mongko area was the scene of fierce fighting between the Tatmadaw and the Northern Alliance in 2016, and the Tatmadaw has relied heavily on local militias to keep control over the area. This new outfit comes to complexify even more the landscape of armed stakeholders in Northern Shan State.

The situation in Northern Shan State is paradoxical: the Tatmadaw and the Northern Alliance recently extended their unilateral ceasefires until 31 August. Meanwhile, clashes still go on: since 9 May, 8 clashes have occurred between the Myanmar Army and local EAOs.

The recent clashes, involving the TNLA, the MNDAA and the KIA, have brought the Northern Alliance back to the fore. Indeed, those EAOs have refused to participate in any peace negotiation with the Myanmar government as long as their fellow organization AA will be labelled terrorist organization. This has brought negotiation to a standstill and fuelled frustration.

On 3 June, the Kachin-based, non-government Peace Creation Group (PCG) was tasked by the Myanmar Government to broker dialogue with the Northern Alliance. Due to the Covid-19 epidemic, the discussions were supposed to be held by video calls. However, such option was rejected by the Northern Alliance members, as it may allow the Myanmar authorities to track their location. The initiative therefore collapsed.

Those clashes may be interpreted as a military support from the Northern Alliance to the Arakan Army, which is facing drawbacks on the ground, with the recent loss of strategic points in Paletwa Township. Beyond this first analysis, some observers also consider that the recent clashes in Northern Shan State may be a political signal from the Northern Alliance to push the Tatmadaw to resume the dialogue with the AA:

- Recent clashes are meant to remind that the alliance remains a serious threat
- If the authorities want to stabilize Northern Shan State, they have to engage with the Northern Alliance
- The Northern Alliance will not negotiate as long as the AA is left outside of the negotiations.

The cycle of attacks and retaliations which started in late May might last and escalate in the next few weeks.

Kachin State

On 9 June, some Kachin community leaders marked the 9-year anniversary of the ceasefire collapse in Kachin State. On that day in 2011, a 14-year old ceasefire broke down. Since then, fights have been regular, sometimes very violent, although they have come to a lull since the unilateral ceasefire announced by the Tatmadaw on December 2018. Although part of the Northern Alliance, it has involved only marginally in Northern Shan State. The conflict in Kachin State has displaced more than 100,000 people. Resettlement has been delayed by concerns that further displacement may happen in the future: Kachin communities are reportedly waiting for government promise that no clash will happen near their villages. The Covid-19 crisis has also brought all the discussions to a halt.

Kayin State and Bago Region

Several incidents were reported in Kayin State and neighbouring Bago Region in the last week:

- 1) 2 June, Nyaung Lay Pin Township (Bago Region): a medical check point built by Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) Brigade 3 was destroyed by the Myanmar Army. The Tatmadaw claims it was established outside of KNLA area, and without any permission. The KNLA set up 14 medical check points in their control area in Kayin State to prevent covid-19. Among them, three were destroyed in Thaton Township, and another one in Hpapun Township.
- 2) 2 to 4 June, Hpapun Township: fighting broke out at least three times between Myanmar Army and KNLA brigade 5. Casualties were reported on both sides. Hpapun Township has been the scene of regular clashes in the last month. The bone of contention is the renovation by the Tatmadaw of a mountain road between Kyaukkyi (Bago Region) and Hpapun (Kayin State), through areas traditionally controlled by KNLA Brigade 5.
- 3) 8 June, Kawkareik Township: three people were wounded in a grenade attack in front of Myoma police station in Kawkareik town. Two men riding a motorbike reportedly hurled two grenades in front of the police station. One of them did not explode. Investigations are still ongoing. Multiple Karen armed groups are based in the area. They have officially signed a ceasefire with the government: Karen National Union (KNU), Karen National Liberation Army / Peace Council (KNLA/PC), Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), as well as the government-aligned militia of the Border Guard Force (BGF). In November 2019, three police officers and one civilian were killed when men on motorbike threw a grenade into a police car in Kawkareik Township.
- 4) 10 June, Myawaddy Township: two cars were damaged in a bomb blast in Myawaddy town. The incident occurred near the main police station at night time. The investigations are still ongoing. Some analysts consider that the Kawkareik

and Myawaddy attacks are connected. They link them to the rising tensions between the Border Guard Force and the Myanmar government. Indeed, investigative journalists working for Frontier Myanmar have highlighted the magnitude of illegal activities led by BGF, such as casinos or contraband with Thailand. Since then, Nay Pyi Taw has reportedly cracked down on the BGF and on high-ranking Tatmadaw officers, accused of complicity.

Tension has also mounted in Myawaddy in the last year about the increasing Chinese presence. Indeed, the BGF is leading a massive urban and industrial project called Shwe Kokko, on the Thai border, with the active support of Chinese investors. Myawaddy inhabitants have protested against the alleged misconduct of Chinese workers in town. The Covid-19 epidemic has also fuelled wariness against Chinese. As a consequence, the BGF had to pressure its Chinese contractors and partners to stay in Shwe Kokko only. With relation getting sour between the BGF and the Myanmar authorities, some consider that the armed group might be responsible for those two attacks.

Assessment for clash areas

1. Rakhine State:

Although this week featured fewer military clashes, numerous arrests took place. The limit between fighters and civilians seems to be increasingly blurred, with every civilian appearing as potential AA or Tatmadaw supporter. This will feed a vicious circle, because AA vowed to target the Myanmar authorities and their supporters each time Rakhine people would be ill-treated. Meanwhile, political stakeholders leave the stage, therefore hampering the link between the authorities and local communities and compromising any political settlement of the crisis in the short-run. In other words, there is a risk that the conflict shifts from a soldier-to-soldier fight to a confusing, long series of low-burning violence and retaliation. The risk therefore remains very high in Rakhine State.

2. Shan State:

In spite of the unilateral ceasefire, conflict escalated in the next week, involving almost of the members of the Northern Alliance. It is still too early to assess whether it is just a punctual episode, or a more significant return of the Northern Alliance to the frontline to support its Rakhine member. Risk therefore remains at “high” in the whole Northern Shan State, and “very high” in the whole area between Kutkai and Muse.

3. Kayin State:

Rising tensions between the Myanmar authorities and the BGF, and the recent explosions in Kawkaeik and Myawaddy are a concerning trend. Risk is now rated as “very high” on the Kawkaeik – Myawaddy section of the highway, as well as in Hpapun Township.

Comments and recommendations

We recommend our clients to stay away as much as possible from dangerous areas. You should avoid at all cost any proximity with Myanmar security forces' buildings, facilities and convoys, as they are prime targets for attacks. Travelling by daytime is also a must. Keep in mind that even main roads and main towns can be targeted. EXERA remains at your disposition to offer tailor-made security diagnostics and secure travel plans throughout Myanmar.

SOCIAL STABILITY

Although no demonstration can normally be held in Myanmar at the moment because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the recent economy downturn is also a factor of risk. According to a survey by the Asia Foundation led in mid-May on a sample of 750 Myanmar companies, only 24 % could operate normally; all the others were struck by disruptions. 92 % of the respondents reported lower sales due to the Covid-19 epidemic. This slowdown has fragilized whole swathes of the population. The situation is currently getting back on track, many factories reopen, and the government has provided a significant support to the national economy: between 9 April and 2 June, more than 1,000 companies have got 37.55 billion MMK (almost 27 million USD) from the national Coronavirus fund. However, one main expect the low level opportunistic crime to remain high in the near future.

On 4 June, the Union Electoral Commission (UEC) confirmed that the Covid-19 would not impact the date of the general elections, scheduled on early November 2020. Speculations ran high about potential postponement. The UEC is yet to announce the specific date of the election. 37 million voters will have to choose their candidates for Union and Regional Parliaments. 97 political parties have registered to the UEC.

TRANSPORTATION

Main Incidents

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

- 1) 3 June – Bago Region: Car accident occurred between milepost 66/5 and 66/6 on Yangon – Mawlamyine Highway in Waw Township. The driver got serious injuries.
- 2) 3 June – Yangon – Mandalay Highway: A car overturned between milepost 346/4 and 346/2 on Yangon – Mandalay Highway at 14:30hrs. No injury was reported.

- 3) 4 June – Yangon – Mandalay Highway: A speeding car crashed on a guard rail between milepost 52/7 and 53/0 on Yangon – Mandalay Highway at 06:40 hrs and one person got injured.
- 4) 4 June – Shan State (East): A speeding car ferrying workers from Keng Tung to Tong Tar fell down a 50 ft ravine between milepost 363/3 and 363/2 at Tong Tar Town, Mong Pyin Township, Shan State at 11:30hrs. 2 people died on the spot and 25 people got injured.
- 5) 4 June – Yangon Region: A YBS bus hit the wall of a monastery near Yae Khae Sai Bus Stop, Bahan Township. No injury and fatality were reported.
- 6) 4 June – Chin State: A truck transporting bricks overturned on Tedim – Twe Htan Road, Tedim Township. The driver died on the spot, 2 people got seriously injured and 4 others got minor injuries.
- 7) 5 June – Naypyitaw – Mandalay Highway: A car accident occurred between milepost 282/1-2 on Naypyitaw – Mandalay Highway at 19:00hrs and no injury and fatality were reported.
- 8) 7 June – Shan State (North): A car hit a man standing at the back of a truck on Muse - 105 miles Union Road at 4:00hrs. The driver died on the spot and the man got injured.
- 9) 7 June – Kachin State: A car overturned at Namti Town, Mogaung Township at 07:45hrs; no injury was reported.
- 10) 7 June – Yangon – Mandalay Highway: A car overturned between milepost 131/6 and 131/7 on Yangon – Mandalay Highway at 03:45hrs; one person got injured.
- 11) 8 June – Yangon - Mandalay Highway: A speeding car overturned between milepost 329/6 and 329/7 on Yangon – Mandalay Highway at 10:30hrs. No injury was reported.
- 12) 8 June – Kachin State: A truck overturned between milepost 22 and 23 between Hopin Town and Thae Gone village, Mohnyin Township at 14:25hrs. One person got seriously injured and 11 people got minor injuries.
- 13) 8 June – Shan State (East): Two cars crashed between milepost 768 and 769 on Keng Tung – Tachileik Highway, Tachileik Township at 12:15hrs and 3 people got injured.
- 14) 8 June – Yangon Region: A speeding factory ferry overturned on Thanlyin – Thongwa Road, Thanlyin Township at 18:20hrs and 14 out of 23 passengers got injured.
- 15) 8 June – Sagaing Region: A truck overturned at milepost 8/1 on Indaw – Katha Highway, Katha Township at 12:00hrs and 31 people got injured.
- 16) 8 June - Bago Region: A car hit the barrier between milepost 65/7 and 66 on Yangon – Mandalay Highway, Daik U Township, at 06:00hrs. The driver got injured.
- 17) 8 June – Ayeyarwady Region: A car crashed another one on the opposite lane between milepost 13/3 and 13/4 on Dedaye – Pyapon Highway, Dedaye Township at 20:20hrs; 5 people got injured.
- 18) 9 June – Rakhine State: A truck fell down a 100 ft gorge due to brake system failure in Ann Township at 07:3hrs and the driver 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) 4 June, Kayah State: the deputy director for Agriculture Ministry in Demoso township was charged for corruption. He is accused of misappropriating rents paid by farmers to farm government-owned lands.
- 2) 4 June, Yangon Region: Myanmar police detained 7 foreigners who were staying on expired visa in Mayangone township: 2 Koreans, 2 Nigerians, 1 Ghanaian, 1 Cambodian. All of them were charged with immigration act for illegal stay in the country.
- 3) 4 June, Mandalay Region: the Anti-Corruption Commission stated that it opened a case against two officials from the Yamethin township forest department. They are accusing of deducting money from their colleagues' salaries.
- 4) 4 June, Kachin State: two trucks were burned in Myitkyina. Those two trucks belonged to the construction company Power Five Stars.
- 5) 7 June, Mon State: a man was arrested by the police for motorbike theft. For stolen vehicles were found at his place.
- 6) 6 June, Kayin State: a bus driver involved in a fatal accident in Yangon last week was arrested in Hpa-an town as he tried to escape to Thailand. He will be transferred to Yangon to be trialed.
- 7) 6 June, Shan State: Mong Tin village administrator (Kyaukme township) was shot at his home. His murderers have not been identified. In the last year, over a

dozen people have been murdered in Kyaukme Township, but the killers are yet to be identified.

- 8) 10 June, Rakhine State: 4 masked men with swords attacked a branch of Kanbawza Bank in Kyi Pin Gyi Ward, in Sittwe (Rakhine State). They robbed 180 million MMK (130,000 USD approximately) and escaped by car. No casualty was reported. Two men and the car were arrested around 18:00 Hrs. The two others are still at large with their haul.

TRAFFICKING

Main incidents

- 1) 3 June, Eastern Shan State: 3 people were arrested in Tachileik Township. Two of men were intercepted while transporting drugs-related machinery. The last one was arrested subsequently. The authorities seized 4000 amphetamine tablets and 800 kilogram of crystal methamphetamine, as well as 4 of guns, including M-22, M-16, a pistol and some ammunitions.
- 2) 4 June, Northern Shan State: the authorities found 5400 amphetamine tablet inside a building in Yan Lon Kyaing village, Laukkai township. The value of the seizure was estimated at 8. 1 million kyat (6,000 USD).
- 3) 5 June, Eastern Shan State: authorities in Tachilek seized 5.95 kg of ketamine in a house. This finding yielded another one, in a neighboring house. The police found 5.5 kilo of ketamine, 4.95 kilo of heroin, a gun, and 200, 000 Thai Baht. The total amount of the seizure was estimated at 1.9 billion MMK (1.36 million USD).
- 4) 6 June, Northern Shan State: the authorities in Muse stopped a car transporting 0.8 kg of methamphetamine, 25 amphetamine tablet, 5 kg of caffeine and 10 kg of amphetamine powder, with a value of 1.6 billion MMK (1.15 million USD).
- 5) 6 June, Kayin State: acting on a tip-off, Myanmar authorities in Myawaddy town seized 40,000 amphetamine tablets from a couple from Southern Shan State.
- 6) 6 June, Bago Region and Kayin State: Kyaikhto police (Mon State) stopped a truck transporting 2,500 kg of sodium cyanide, a drug precursor. Subsequent investigations allowed to seize 21,250 kg of sodium cyanide in Myawaddy town, Kayin State. The value of the seizure is estimated at 127. 5 million MMK (90,000 USD).
- 7) 7 June, Eastern Shan State: acting on a tip-off, the police arrested 5 people transporting 1,000 kg of methamphetamine in 3 cars. The value of the haul is 2.5 billion kyat (1.8 million USD).

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 3 July 2020, 4 earthquakes have been measured, but no fatality and injury has been reported:

1. 8 May: A slight earthquake with a magnitude of 3.7 was recorded in Shan State (North).
2. 8 May: A slight earthquake with a magnitude of 3.8 was recorded in Sagaing Region.
3. 9 May: A slight earthquake with a magnitude of 4.5 was recorded in Shan State (East).
4. 9 May: A slight earthquake with a magnitude of 3.7 was recorded in Chin State.

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 media, the most significant fire breakouts since the last report are the following:

1. 3 June 2020 -Yangon Region: Fire broke out at Bamaw Atwin Wun Street, Industrial Zone 3, Hlaing Tharyar Township at 15:12 hrs. No injury and fatality were reported.

2. 4 June 2020: Tanintharyi Region: Fire broke out at a stopped ship near Yaw Gyi Wa bridge, Myeik Town, at 09:51hrs. No injury and fatality were reported.
3. 5 June 2020 – Mandalay Region: Fire broke out due to electric wire overheat at a beauty salon between 18 Street and 19 Street, in Mandalay town at 10:30 hrs. The upper storey of building was destroyed; no injury was reported.
4. 5 June 2020 – Magway Region: Fire broke out at oil well at Pauk Township, Magway Region at 16:50hrs. No injury and fatality were reported.
5. 8 June 2020 – Yangon Region: Fire broke out at Hto Par Yong 8 Street, Tharketa Township at 01:41hrs. No injury and fatality were reported.
6. 8 June 2020 – Sagaing Region: Fire broke out in Tamu town at 01:08hrs. No injury and fatality were reported.

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 3 June at 08:36 hrs was 233 confirmed cases since the beginning of the epidemic, i.e. 27 more than the previous week.

As of 10 June, at 08:00 Hrs, 246 confirmed cases have been reported since the beginning of the epidemic, i.e. 13 new cases in the last week. However, all of them except 1 case are imported cases: 8 migrant workers from India, 2 from Thailand, 1 from Italy, as well as 2 people crossing informally the Bangladesh border. All of them were tested while staying in quarantine facilities. This may mean that contamination chains are somehow under control.

Based on MoHS statistics, 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 10 June at 07:00 hrs, 65 new cases were confirmed, out of which 62 imported cases: 34 Myanmar nationals back from India, 13 from Malaysia, 8 from UAE, 2 from Italy, 2 from Bangladesh, 2 from Thailand and 1 from China.

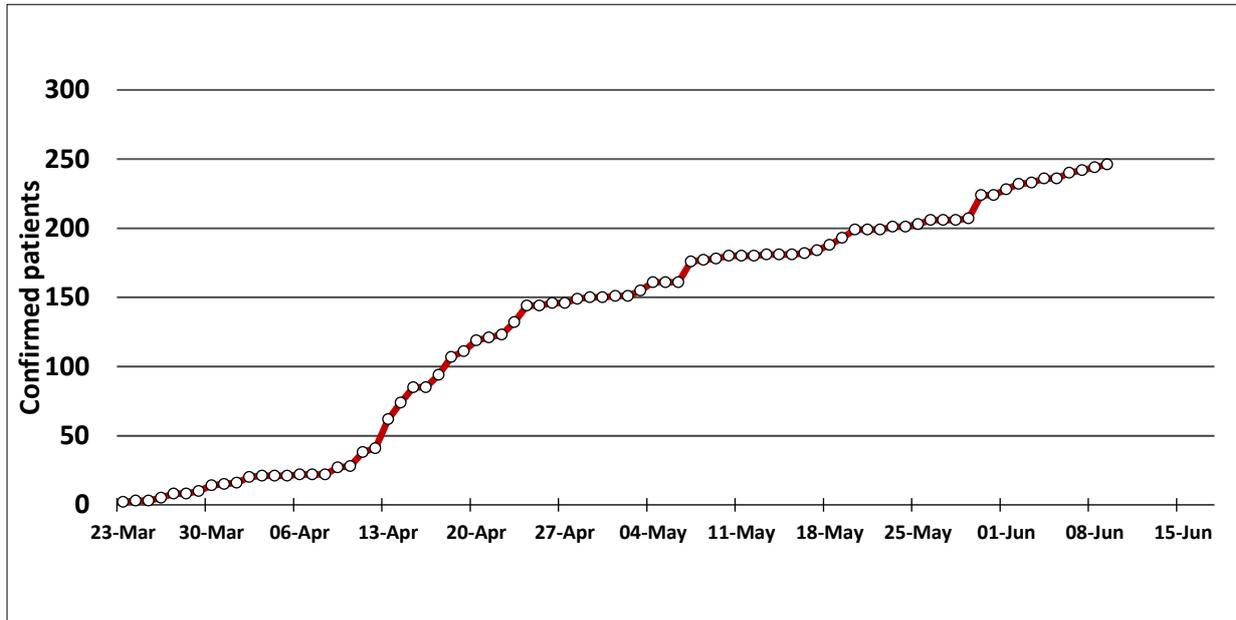


Figure 2: Total Covid-19 cases in Myanmar since the beginning of Covid-19 pandemic. Source: MoHS

As of 10 June 2020, at 08:00 hrs, MoHS has tested a total of 41,584 people since the beginning of the epidemic. Since the publication of the latest WSR, 11471 Persons Under Investigation have been tested, i.e. an average of 1638 per day, versus 1002 in in the previous reporting period. In other words, ¼ of all the people tested since the beginning of the crisis were tested in the last week. This illustrates the clear increase of the testing capacities in Myanmar: at the beginning of the crisis, Myanmar did not have any suitable testing lab; nowadays, it has 5.

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 10 June, at 08:00 hrs, a total of 246 people had been contaminated in the country.
- the current number of active patients, which is the immediate risk indicator. As of 10 June, at 08:00 hrs, there were 87 active patients in the country, out of whom 60 in Yangon Region (i.e. 69 %).

In Yangon, the main clusters are:

- Insein Township, with 49 cases since the beginning of the epidemic, i.e. 1.44 case for 10,000 inhabitants
- Mayangone Township, with 16 cases, i.e. 0.81 case for 10,000 inhabitants
- South Okkalapa Township, with 13 cases, i.e. 0.81 case for 10,000 inhabitants
- Botahtaung Township, with 13 cases, i.e 3.2 case for 10,000 inhabitants

- Dagon Myothit (North), with 12 cases, i.e. 0.59 case for 10,000 inhabitants
- Dagon Myothit (South) with 11 cases, i.e. 0.26 case for 10,000 inhabitants
- Tamwe, with 10 cases, i.e. 0.61 case for 10,000 inhabitants
- Hlaing with 10 case, i.e. 0.61 case for 10,000 inhabitants
- Bahan, with 9 cases, i.e. 0.93 case for 10,000 inhabitants
- Pabedan, with 7 cases, i.e. 2.1 case for 10,000 inhabitants

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 surge of Botahtaung, Dagon Myothit North, Dagon Myothit South and Hlaing Townships in the last weeks must be taken carefully. Some people usually residing in those 4 townships were tested positive among the people flown back from third countries, but they did not live in their home townships when they got infected.

Outside of Yangon Region, the most affected townships of Myanmar since the beginning of the epidemic are:

1. Sagaing Region with 9 cases
2. Bago (West) Region with 8 cases
3. Tedim (Chin State), with 7 cases
4. Eastern Shan State with 3 cases.

The set of preventive decisions that had been made by the authorities in March and April was extended a first time on 15 May. It was then supposed to expire on 31 May, but on 28 May, the government extended them a second time until 15 June. For instance, wearing a mask in public will remain compulsory, and the curfew from midnight to 4.00 hrs will remain enforced.

However, several measures will be significantly relaxed:

- 1) In Yangon, semi-lockdown orders were lifted on 29 May at 04:00 hrs in Bahan, Pabedan, South Okkalapa and Tamwe Townships. As a result, only Insein and Mayangone Townships remain under semi-lockdown measures. Movement in those areas remain restricted: inhabitants cannot leave their homes except to go to work, buy supplies or seek medical care.
- 2) The prohibition of gatherings of more than 5 people is now relaxed. Gatherings are now 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.
- 3) Express inter-city bus service was allowed to operate back to normal from 1 June onwards, provided they follow MoHS guidelines. In Yangon region, YBS has come back to normal on 1 June, with 3,300 buses in function.
- 4) In Mandalay, most travellers are now exempted from quarantine upon arrival. Only those back from Yangon or repatriated from abroad must stay in quarantine. However, all the travellers to Mandalay still have to go through health screening in 7 checkpoints around the town. Those checkpoints will remain in place at least until 15 June.
- 5) On 1 June, the Ministry of Transportation and Communications extended the international air travel ban from 31 May to 15 June, at 23.59 Myanmar time. The restrictions apply to all international commercial flights operating to/from Myanmar. Relief and special flights are not concerned.

On another note, the MoHS announced that dengue fever epidemic is stronger than usual this year. From 1 January to 16 May, more than 1,200 have been infected by the virus, and 8 of them have died. We therefore encourage you to take all the necessary precautions against mosquito-borne diseases.

Comments and recommendations

Based on the current data, it seems that the epidemic is receding in Myanmar. However, recent scientific surveys highlighted the link between temperature and virus survival. So far, this has been an advantage for Myanmar: dry season was not favourable to the spread of the virus. However, with the monsoon coming, one may expect a cooler weather, especially in the hilly peripheries of the country. If precautions are not relaxed sensibly, a second wave of the epidemic may not be ruled out. During the reporting period, the MoHS and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi have advised Myanmar people not to let their guard down, and to remain extremely careful in the long run.

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. On 4 June, it was learnt that 600 people had been put in jail in Ayeyarwaddy Region since 16 April for breaching the curfew rules. Violation of Section 188, which prohibits deliberate disobedience to an order “duly promulgated” by a public servant, is punishable by one month in prison, a fine or both.

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

AAPP: Assistance Association of Political Prisoners

ALP: Arakan Liberation Party

ANP: Arakan National Party

ARSA: Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army

ICOE: Independent Commission of Enquiry

IED: Improvised Explosive Device

ICJ: International Court of Justics

IDP: Internally Displaced Person

EAO: Ethnic Armed Organization

GAD: General Administration department

KDA: Kachin Defence Army

KIA: Kachin Independence Army

KNLA: Karen National Liberation Army

KNPP: Karenni National Progressive Party

KNU: Karen National Union

LID: Light Infantry Division

MMK: Myanmar Kyat

MMT: Myanmar Time

MNDAA: Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army

MoHS: Ministry of Health and Sports

NCA: National Ceasefire Agreement

NLD: National League for Democracy

NSO: National Security Organization

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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