

# MYANMAR

## INFORM Severity Index trends

### ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report describes the recent changes in the INFORM Severity Index scores of humanitarian crises in Myanmar from January 2021 to July 2024. The selected period covers the military coup in February 2021, which has significantly affected the humanitarian situation in the country. July 2024 was selected as the endpoint of the period to set a closed time frame and relate changes in the INFORM Severity Index scores to specific events. The report explores INFORM Severity Index data to delineate the trends in scores over this period, with a focus on the changes deemed most significant. Additional contextual analysis was conducted to investigate and explain the drivers of the trends observed.

### The INFORM Severity Index

The INFORM Severity Index is a composite index that measures the severity of humanitarian crises against a common scale at the global level. The goal is to support prioritisation in humanitarian funding and response. The index allows users to compare the severity of different humanitarian crises across the world. It is based on three dimensions: *impact of the crisis*, *conditions of people affected*, and *complexity of the crisis*, which are further divided into categories, then into components, and then into core indicators. The Joint Research Centre of the European Commission collaborates with INFORM stakeholders to develop and maintain the index’s methodology. ACAPS is responsible for data collection, adhering closely to the established methodology. In this report, ACAPS uses the full description of the *INFORM Severity Index concept and methodology document* to explain trends.<sup>1</sup>

### Note on the contribution of core indicators to INFORM Severity Index scores

While some core indicators can contribute to INFORM Severity Index scores, they might not generate a change in the score in a given month because of various factors. These factors include gradual changes in the core indicators, the core indicators having less weight as per the design of the INFORM Severity Index formula, and certain conditions assigned to the INFORM Severity Index formula. For example, displacements (which affects two core indicators in the index) related to the country-level crisis in Myanmar have been on an increasing trend, but given the design of the INFORM Severity Index formula and the gradual change in displacements, the increase in displacements itself has not triggered any month-to-month change in the INFORM Severity Index score of the country-level crisis.

Table 1. The INFORM Severity Index and its dimensions, categories, and components

INFORM Severity Index											
Dimensions	Impact of the crisis			Conditions of people affected		Complexity of the crisis					
Categories	Geographical		Human	People in need	Concentration of conditions	Society and safety		Operating environment			
Components	Area affected	People in the affected area	People affected	People affected by category	Extreme conditions		Social cohesion	Safety and security	Rule of law	Diversity of groups affected	Humanitarian access
					Severe conditions						
					Moderate conditions						
					Stressed conditions						
					None/minimal conditions						
Core indicators	42 core indicators distributed across the components										

Source: ACAPS using data from JRC (2020)

### Typography of crisis names

The report bolds and italicises the names of the crises in the INFORM Severity Index. The crises logged into the index for Myanmar are *Rakhine conflict*, *Kachin and Shan conflict*, *post-coup conflict in Myanmar*, *Cyclone Mocha in Myanmar*, and *multiple crises in Myanmar*. The report simplifies the last three as the *post-coup conflict*, *Cyclone Mocha*, and country-level crises.

<sup>1</sup> Poljansek, K., Disperati, P., Vernaccini, L., Nika, A., Marzi, S. and Essenfelder, A.H., 2020, INFORM Severity Index, EUR 30400 EN, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, ISBN 978-92-76-23014-4, doi:10.2760/94802, JRC122162.

## Limitations

- ACAPS staff collects data from publicly available secondary sources and attempts to select the most reliable sources. Significant changes in INFORM Severity Index scores are often a result of the publication of big multisectoral assessments, such as HNOs. **These assessments can be subject to methodological changes, affecting the comparability of figures over time.** Depending on the country, some assessments or sources may have limitations, such as inaccuracies or biases. ACAPS carefully reviews the reliability of the sources used.<sup>2</sup>
- ACAPS staff exercises discretion in selecting which available data and information to use to estimate figures or make adjustments for some core indicators when no reliable assessment provides the data needed. **Lack of data could lead to information gaps in the INFORM Severity Index**, which, in some cases, can limit the identification and explanation of humanitarian trends.
- **Adjustments made to address potential computational errors during data entry or changes in figures from the source can occur**, creating anomalies in the trend observed. For Myanmar, this was the case for the February 2021 score of the *Kachin and Shan conflict* crisis. The error was eventually fixed but still produced an anomaly in the trend.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS: MAIN DRIVERS OF CHANGES IN INFORM SEVERITY INDEX SCORES IN MYANMAR (JANUARY 2021 TO JULY 2024)

- The most notable changes in the INFORM Severity Index scores of the crises in Myanmar during the reporting period resulted from **the incorporation of new data from humanitarian assessments**, especially the Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNOs). These assessments provide data for key core indicators, especially regarding people in need, triggering some major increases in the INFORM Severity Index scores of the crises. Specifically, the assessments reflect the deteriorating trend of the humanitarian situation related to the crises in Myanmar, resulting in an increasing trend in the INFORM Severity Index scores of conflict and country-level crises once incorporated.
- Drivers of smaller changes in the INFORM Severity Index scores included **contextual developments that resulted in changes in the numbers of fatalities, IDPs, and people affected, as well as changes in the humanitarian access situation.**
  - These changes (e.g. changes in the numbers of people affected and fatalities) largely resulted from contextual developments. For instance, drivers of changes in the numbers of fatalities and displacements that contributed to changes to INFORM Severity Index scores generally involved the escalation or de-escalation of armed conflict. An example is the increase in the INFORM Severity Index score of the *post-coup conflict* crisis in December 2021. Since March 2021, armed conflict had intensified significantly in the country, spreading to areas that conflict had historically not affected, such as Sagaing and Magway regions. This caused a rise in the numbers of fatalities and displacements for the *post-coup conflict* crisis, manifesting in the increase of its December 2021 INFORM Severity Index score. Another example is the increase in the INFORM Severity Index score of the *Rakhine conflict* crisis in December 2023. This followed a rise in the number of fatalities after intense armed conflict resumed between the Arakan Army (AA) and the Myanmar military junta in November 2023 following a year-long ceasefire.
  - Changes in the number of people affected that contributed to changes in INFORM Severity Index scores were from the incorporation of new information provided by the HNOs or ACAPS staff reflecting a change in the humanitarian situation based on contextual developments. For instance, in May 2022, based on persistently high levels of security incidents and related fatalities, increasing internal displacement, rising humanitarian access constraints, heightening insecurity levels for civilians, and worsening humanitarian needs, ACAPS staff deemed it appropriate to increase the number of people affected and assign more people among those in need to higher severity levels of needs. This resulted in an increase in the INFORM Severity Index score of the *post-coup conflict* crisis.

<sup>2</sup> To learn more about ACAPS' approach to data collection for the INFORM Severity Index, please see ACAPS' INFORM Severity Index Data Collection Manual.

- **Contribution of individual crises to the country-level score:** the main contributor to the country-level INFORM Severity Index score was the *post-coup conflict* crisis. Compared with other crises in Myanmar, the *post-coup conflict* crisis produced the highest number of people in need and affected both the highest number of people and the largest landmass.
- **Key factors that provide insights into the evolving context** include humanitarian access constraints, security incidents (e.g. armed clashes and violence against civilians) and related fatalities, and the number of IDPs. While these did not trigger frequent and significant month-to-month changes in the INFORM Severity Index scores of the crises during the reporting period, all factors have significantly increased since the military coup in February 2021.
- Myanmar has always had a constrained humanitarian access environment. The February 2021 coup has significantly affected humanitarian access in the long term. The numbers of security incidents and related fatalities have sharply increased since. Most of these security incidents and related fatalities have resulted from the introduction of new fronts in the armed conflict; for instance, areas such as Sagaing and Magway, which historical conflicts did not affect, have started experiencing intense armed conflict. As a result, the number of IDPs has increased significantly since 2021, rising by more than ten times from 2021–2024. Although the rate at which the number of IDPs has been rising decreased in 2023 and 2024, the overall increase remains quite significant. Factors that drive internal displacement likely include the overall high levels and intensity of violence and armed conflict, with some areas, such as Rakhine state, experiencing a significant rise in incidents of armed conflict.
- Given the lack of progress regarding a political reconciliation between most of the major groups involved in the armed conflict, **intense and widespread armed conflict is expected to persist throughout 2025 and beyond**. The continuation of conflict at such levels and intensity or worse would further deteriorate the humanitarian situation in the country. This is likely to show up in the data captured in the INFORM Severity Index and result in changes in the INFORM Severity Index scores of the crises.

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## BACKGROUND

Conflicts in Myanmar have been the key driver of the humanitarian situation in the country for decades. The armed conflict, violence against civilians, and, subsequently, the overall humanitarian situation, have significantly worsened after the military coup in February 2021 (ACLEED accessed 01/01/2025; USIP 30/04/2024). Prior to the coup, around one million people were already in need of humanitarian assistance (HCT in Myanmar/OCHA 27/01/2021). In 2025, 19.9 million people are projected to need urgent humanitarian assistance (OCHA 13/12/2024).

Prior to the coup, armed conflict and violence against civilians and severe humanitarian conditions were mainly limited to a few areas, such as Chin, Kachin, Kayin, Rakhine, and Shan states, as well as Bago region (HCT in Myanmar/OCHA 27/01/2021). Ethnic armed organisations (EAOs) have existed since Myanmar's independence from British rule in 1948, with some controlling certain areas and having political wings with administrative capacity for many years. EAO activity has been affecting multiple states for decades, such as Kachin, Kayin, Rakhine, and Shan states (Geopolitical Monitor 27/02/2024; USCIS 17/08/2000). Prior to the February 2021 coup, armed conflict mostly involved EAOs and the Myanmar military (HCT in Myanmar/OCHA 27/01/2021). ACAPS has been covering the humanitarian crises in Kachin, Rakhine, and northern Shan states even before the February 2021 coup.

### Crises in Myanmar in the considered time frame

#### Rakhine conflict

- Crisis code: MMR002<sup>3</sup>
- Geographical scope: Rakhine state
- Status by July 2024: active

#### Kachin and Shan conflict

- Crisis code: MMR003
- Geographical scope: Kachin and northern Shan states
- Status by July 2024: active

#### Post-coup conflict in Myanmar

- Crisis code: MMR004
- Geographical scope: entire country
- Status by July 2024: active

#### Cyclone Mocha in Myanmar

- Crisis code: MMR005
- Geographical scope: Chin and Rakhine states, Sagaing region, and some affected townships of Kachin state and Magway region
- Status by July 2024: deactivated

#### Multiple crises in Myanmar<sup>4</sup>

- Crisis code: MMR001
- Geographical scope: entire country
- Status by July 2024: active

<sup>3</sup> Crisis codes are unique codes that ACAPS assigns to crises opened for the INFORM Severity Index.

<sup>4</sup> When there are multiple active crises within a country, there is a separate aggregated crisis that collectively represents the crises within a country. This aggregated crisis is logged in the index as *multiple crises in Myanmar* but referred to in this report as the country-level crisis. The country-level INFORM Severity Index score in the case of multiple active crises is the aggregate of the scores of all individual crises, which may or may not overlap geographically and can have different causes, sometimes leading to varied humanitarian outcomes.

## POST-COUP CONFLICT

### Background

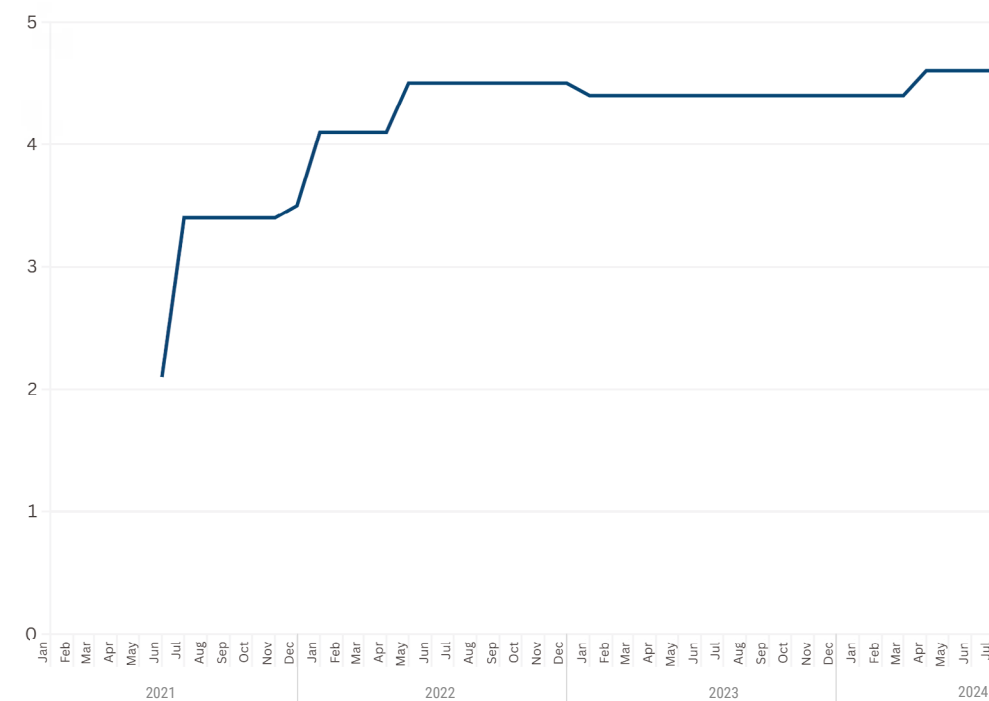
In April 2021, following the February coup, parliamentarians who had won seats in the 2020 elections established a parallel civilian government called the National Unity Government (NUG). In May, the NUG formed its armed wing, the People's Defence Force (PDF) (The Diplomat 13/05/2024 and 06/05/2021; ACLED 22/07/2021). Since then, armed resistance groups, including EAOs and anti-coup resistance forces (mainly the PDF), have taken control or increased their control over a significant portion of the country, especially in the western state of Rakhine, northwestern states and regions of Chin, Magway, and Sagaing, northeastern states of Kachin and northern Shan, and southeastern states and regions of Kayah, Kayin, Mon, and Tanintharyi (SAC-M 30/05/2024). The NUG and its EAO allies have coordinated armed actions against the military junta, with major ones conducted since late 2023 (IISS 2023; OCHA 18/12/2023; The Diplomat 24/11/2023; Mizzima 30/06/2024). The armed resistance groups have also set up significant administrative authority in the areas they control (e.g. many areas in Kachin, Kayah, Rakhine, and northern Shan states and Sagaing region). They have established governance structures providing services such as healthcare, education, and justice to millions of people (The Diplomat 13/05/2024; Stimson 26/03/2024; Mizzima 03/05/2024; SAC-M 30/05/2024).

Myanmar military junta forces and some of their allied militia and EAOs have been fighting against anti-military armed resistance forces, including anti-coup armed resistance forces and anti-military EAOs (ACLED 06/08/2024; ACLED accessed 17/09/2024). By 2 December 2024, the post-coup conflict had internally displaced around 3.2 million people in the country (UNHCR 03/12/2024). The post-coup conflict has significantly affected Myanmar's economy and people's living conditions and resulted in significant humanitarian access constraints (OCHA 15/01/2023 and 18/12/2023; UNDP 11/04/2024).

In July 2024, ACAPS deemed it more appropriate for the *post-coup conflict* crisis to include Kachin, Rakhine, and northern Shan states, which are also facing other historical conflicts and feature separate crises – the *Rakhine conflict* and *Kachin and Shan conflict* crises – in the INFORM Severity Index. To differentiate between the *post-coup conflict* crisis and other conflict crises and to avoid double-counting, key variables, such as the number of people in need for Kachin, Rakhine, and northern Shan states, were not included in the *post-coup conflict* crisis.

### Trends

Figure 1. Monthly INFORM Severity Index score – *post-coup conflict* crisis



Countrywide protests followed the February 2021 coup. Myanmar's military junta responded with the use of systemic and arbitrary violence, which soon escalated into fighting given the involvement of various armed groups, especially the PDF and anti-military EAOs (OHCHR/UN 28/03/2021; The Irrawaddy 15/04/2021; NYT 09/12/2022; OCHA 16/07/2021).

Given these developments, ACAPS opened a new crisis in the INFORM Severity Index in June 2021 to track the state and development of the humanitarian situation in the country in relation to the post-coup conflict. The crisis initially captured the humanitarian situation in Bago, Kayah, Kayin, Magway, and Mon states and regions before expanding multiple times from 2021–2024 with the evolution of the context.

The INFORM Severity Index score of the *post-coup conflict* crisis has followed an increasing trend, more than doubling from 2.1 in June 2021 to 4.6 in July 2024. In July 2021, OCHA's humanitarian snapshot showed that two million people needed humanitarian assistance owing to the post-coup conflict in areas other than Kachin, Rakhine, and northern Shan

states, which resulted in a significant increase in the crisis' INFORM Severity Index score – from 2.1 in June 2021 to 3.4 in July (OCHA 16/07/2021). In March, armed conflict started to spread in areas that conflict historically did not affect, such as Sagaing and Magway regions. In the following months, the armed conflict became more widespread and intense in these areas (ACLED accessed 12/12/2024; OCHA 16/07/2021 and 31/12/2021). There was a slight increase in the score from 3.4 in November 2021 to 3.5 in December as a result of an increase in the numbers of fatalities and displacements in the preceding six months of the reporting month (ACLED accessed 12/12/2024).<sup>5</sup> The humanitarian situation across the country deteriorated significantly in 2021 and was expected to worsen in 2022, as reflected in the 2022 Myanmar HNO, which estimated that 14.4 million people would need humanitarian assistance throughout the year. Of these, around 9.9 million people needed humanitarian assistance because of the post-coup conflict in areas other than Kachin, Rakhine, and Shan states (OCHA 31/12/2021).<sup>6</sup> This increased the number of people in need for the **post-coup conflict** crisis by around five times. There were also slight increases in the landmass affected and exposed population figures. The incorporation of information on people in need was the main driver in the significant increase in the INFORM Severity Index score of the crisis, from 3.5 in December 2021 to 4.1 in January 2022.

In early 2022, ACAPS' monitoring of the **post-coup conflict** crisis revealed that the situation was worse than what was captured in the INFORM Severity Index at the time, based on available secondary data pertinent to the various core indicators in the index. In May, based on factors including persistently high levels of security incidents (such as armed clashes and violence against civilians) and related fatalities, increasing internal displacement, worsening humanitarian access constraints, rising insecurity levels for civilians, and heightening humanitarian needs, ACAPS deemed it appropriate to increase the number of people affected by the crisis from around 9.9 million in April to around 30.4 million in May and assigned more people among those in need to higher severity levels of needs (severe and extreme humanitarian conditions) (ACLED accessed 09/12/2024; OCHA 19/04/2022; IFRC 02/04/2022; FAO 29/04/2022; UNHCR 26/04/2022).<sup>7</sup> This change caused another significant increase in the INFORM Severity Index score of the crisis, from 4.1 in April to 4.5 in May.

The 2023 Myanmar HNO estimated that the number of people in need had increased to around 17.3 million, marking another significant deterioration of the humanitarian situation. Around 14.2 million of these people were in need because of the post-coup conflict in areas other than Kachin, Rakhine, and northern Shan states (OCHA 15/01/2023). The incorporation

of new data on the number of people in need did not change the crisis' INFORM Severity Index score given a condition assigned to the INFORM Severity Index formula.<sup>8</sup> The slight decrease in the score from 4.5 in December 2022 to 4.4 in January 2023 was the result of some distributional changes among severity levels of needs after the incorporation of information from the new HNO.

Since April 2024, the **post-coup conflict** crisis has been considered to be affecting all the states and regions and all the people in the country. The decision to do so was made to better incorporate the context of the post-coup conflict when logged into the INFORM Severity Index. This has increased the number of affected people and partially caused an increase in the crisis' score in the index, from 4.4 in March to 4.6 in April.

<sup>5</sup> The INFORM Severity Index methodology computes the fatalities figure from the crisis-related fatalities recorded in the six months prior to the reporting month.

<sup>6</sup> Initially, the entire Shan state was considered to be affected by the **Kachin and Shan conflict** crisis. With the evolution of the post-coup conflict and its impact in Shan state, only northern Shan was considered to be affected by the **Kachin and Shan conflict** crisis from January 2023.

<sup>7</sup> To learn more about humanitarian condition levels, please see the INFORM Severity Index methodology document.

<sup>8</sup> According to the INFORM Severity Index formula, once the number of people in need exceeds ten million, it does not have any further bearing on the crisis score. This means that when the figure rose from 9.9 million to around 14 million in 2023, the increase did not affect the score or trigger a change in the index score.

## RAKHINE CONFLICT

### Background

Rakhine is one of the poorest states in Myanmar, with the second-highest poverty rate among all states and regions in the country. It is home to the Rohingya, a religious and ethnic minority who has faced persecution, repression, and discrimination in the hands of successive military and civilian governments (The Conversation 21/09/2017; OCHA 18/12/2023; UNDP accessed 10/10/2024). The Rohingya have been living in Myanmar for hundreds of years, but they are not among the 135 officially recognised ethnic groups and have been denied citizenship since 1982. This has rendered them the largest stateless population in the world. Many people in Myanmar perceive them to be illegal immigrants from Bangladesh (HRW 01/08/2000; RCC accessed 10/10/2024; UNHCR 22/08/2024; TNH accessed 09/10/2024).

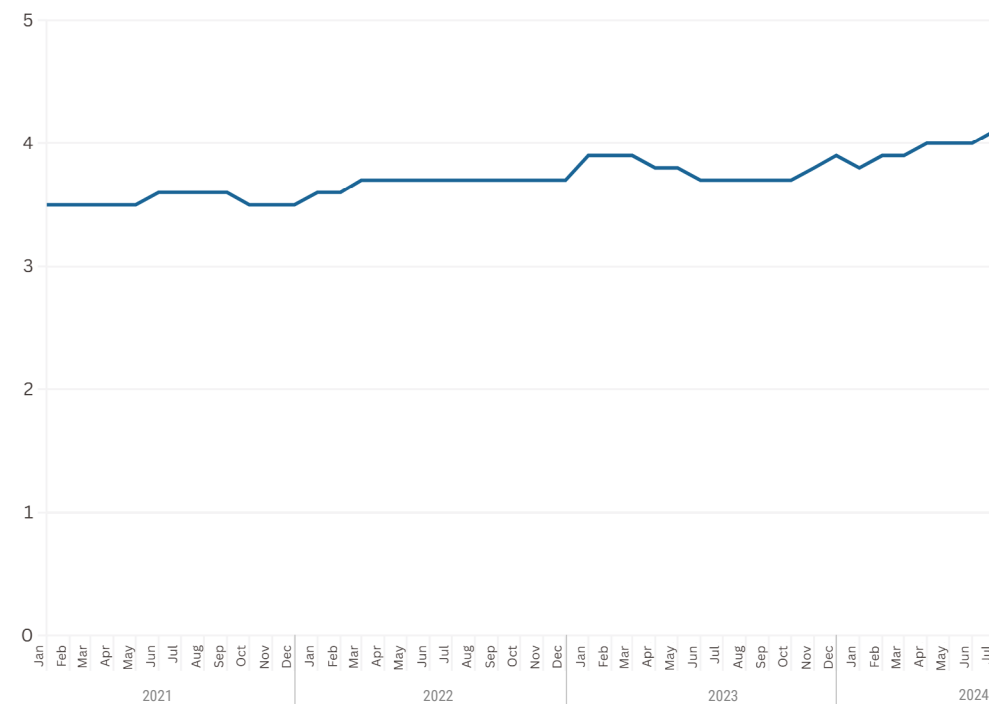
By late 2024, there were around 600,000 Rohingya in the state of Rakhine, of whom around 150,000 were protractedly displaced in IDP camps. For decades, the Rohingya have been living in dire conditions, with severe restrictions on their access to aid, essential services, and livelihood opportunities, as well as movement restrictions within and outside Rakhine state. They regularly make or attempt to make treacherous maritime journeys to neighbouring countries (OCHA 18/12/2023; AI 24/10/2024).

Currently, the AA, a Rakhine EAO, is in intense armed conflict with the Myanmar military junta and has made significant gains in taking control of the state (ACLED accessed 10/10/2024; ICG 27/08/2024; The Diplomat 06/09/2024). The conflict in Rakhine state has worsened the humanitarian situation and put the Rohingya in a much more dangerous situation. In 2024, factors such as the military recruitment of the Rohingya through a combination of coercive and inducive tactics, as well as junta support for Rohingya armed groups fighting against the AA, have fuelled intercommunal tensions between the Rohingya and ethnic Rakhine residents (ICG 10/05/2024; ICG 27/08/2024; US DOS 21/05/2024). Reports also suggest that the AA has committed significant acts of violence against the Rohingya in 2024 (HRW 12/08/2024; Frontier Myanmar 12/11/2024; AJ 21/05/2024).

Paletwa township in Chin state used to be included in the *Rakhine conflict* crisis. Until December 2022, the township's landmass and population were included in computations for the crisis. Paletwa township's landmass and population are insignificant compared with those of the entire Rakhine state. In January 2023, to simplify the area coverage of the crises and accommodate the context of the *post-coup conflict* crisis, which significantly affected Chin state, Paletwa township was excluded from the *Rakhine conflict crisis*.

### Trends

Figure 2. Monthly INFORM Severity Index score – *Rakhine conflict* crisis



The INFORM Severity Index score of the *Rakhine conflict* crisis saw small fluctuations from January 2021 to July 2024. The drivers of these month-to-month changes included the numbers of fatalities, people in need, and people affected, as well as humanitarian access constraints. The majority of the fluctuations occurred because of changes in the number of fatalities.

The increase in score from 3.5 in May 2021 to 3.6 in June 2021 resulted from the worsening of humanitarian access constraints, such as administrative restrictions in Rakhine state and insecurity in Chin state, than during the previous assessment period and an increase in the number of fatalities in all crises in the six months preceding the reporting month (ACAPS

accessed 12/12/2024).<sup>9,10,11</sup> The score decreased from 3.6 in September to 3.5 in October thanks to fewer access constraints than in June. That said, changes in the access constraints were likely driven by the degree of information availability during the different data collection sessions.

In January 2022, information from the 2022 Myanmar HNO was incorporated into the INFORM Severity Index. The assessment showed an increase in the number of people in need, from around 800,000 to around 1.55 million (HCT in Myanmar/OCHA 27/01/2021; OCHA 31/12/2021). Given the humanitarian situation in Rakhine state, the number of people affected by the **Rakhine conflict** crisis was considered to increase from around 1.55 million to around 2.55 million. The increase in the numbers of people in need and people affected in the state caused the crisis' INFORM Severity Index score to increase slightly, from 3.5 in December 2021 to 3.6 in January 2022. In January 2023, the 2023 Myanmar HNO showed an increase in the numbers of people in need and affected for 2023 in Rakhine state, to 1.67 million and 3.47 million, respectively (OCHA 15/01/2023). The increase in the number of people affected caused the crisis' INFORM Severity Index score to rise from 3.7 in December 2022 to 3.9 in January 2023.

Tensions between the Myanmar military junta forces and the AA rose around mid-2022, and the existing ceasefire between the two groups broke down, leading to the resumption of armed clashes in July (USIP 03/10/2022; The Diplomat 07/06/2022; ACLED accessed 09/12/2024). The two agreed to another temporary ceasefire in November 2022 (OCHA 30/12/2022; The Irrawaddy 28/11/2022). In April and June 2023, the crisis' INFORM Severity Index score fell thanks to decreases in the number of fatalities, which captured the number of fatalities in both six-month periods prior to the two reporting months.

The crisis' INFORM Severity Index score has been on an increasing trend since November 2023, when the year-long ceasefire between the AA and the Myanmar military junta came to an end (OCHA 15/11/2023; The Diplomat 13/11/2023). Changes to the score have mainly been from changes in the number of fatalities, a result of the increase in armed conflict and violence against civilians, in the six-month periods preceding each reporting month.

## KACHIN AND SHAN CONFLICT

### Background

Conflict in Kachin and northern Shan states has been continuing for decades (The Irrawaddy 20/11/2014; HCT in Myanmar/OCHA 27/01/2021). It has led to protracted displacement, mostly a result of the fighting between the Myanmar military and the Kachin Independence Army in 2011 after a 17-year ceasefire (HCT in Myanmar/OCHA 27/01/2021). Since the February 2021 coup, both areas have seen a significant rise in armed conflict (ACLED accessed 17/09/2024). Northern Shan also features the presence of many EAOs, which have been engaging in armed conflict against the Myanmar military and among themselves for many years (ACLED accessed 10/10/2024; USIP 29/09/2017; ISDP 05/2018; ACLED 13/05/2019).

Initially, the entire Shan state was considered to be affected by the **Kachin and Shan conflict** crisis. With the evolution of the post-coup conflict and its impact in Shan state, only northern Shan was considered to be affected by the **Kachin and Shan conflict** crisis from January 2023. Other parts of Shan state were considered to be affected by the **post-coup conflict crisis** from the same month.

### Trends

The INFORM Severity Index score of the **Kachin and Shan conflict** crisis increased by nearly 50% from 2.6 in January 2021 to 3.8 in July 2024. There were two significant increases in the score, one in February 2021 and another in January 2022, which resulted from the incorporation of new estimates from HNOs.

In February 2021, information from the 2021 Myanmar HNO was incorporated into the INFORM Severity Index (HCT in Myanmar/OCHA 27/01/2021). An error in the calculation of the people in need figure resulted in an increase in the crisis' INFORM Severity Index score.

In January 2022, information from the 2022 Myanmar HNO was incorporated into the INFORM Severity Index (OCHA 31/12/2021). The number of people in need significantly increased to nearly three million in 2022, with more people facing a higher severity of needs (severe and extreme humanitarian conditions).<sup>12</sup> These changes reflected the heightened humanitarian

<sup>9</sup> Humanitarian access data is collected and its index score calculated biannually and when crises are opened. This means that humanitarian access usually does not contribute to monthly changes in the INFORM Severity Index. The humanitarian access index score could also change for a country-level crisis when one of the crises it covers is closed.

<sup>10</sup> Chin state was considered for access data collection for the **Rakhine conflict** crisis until December 2022, when Paletwa township was still considered to be affected by the Rakhine conflict crisis.

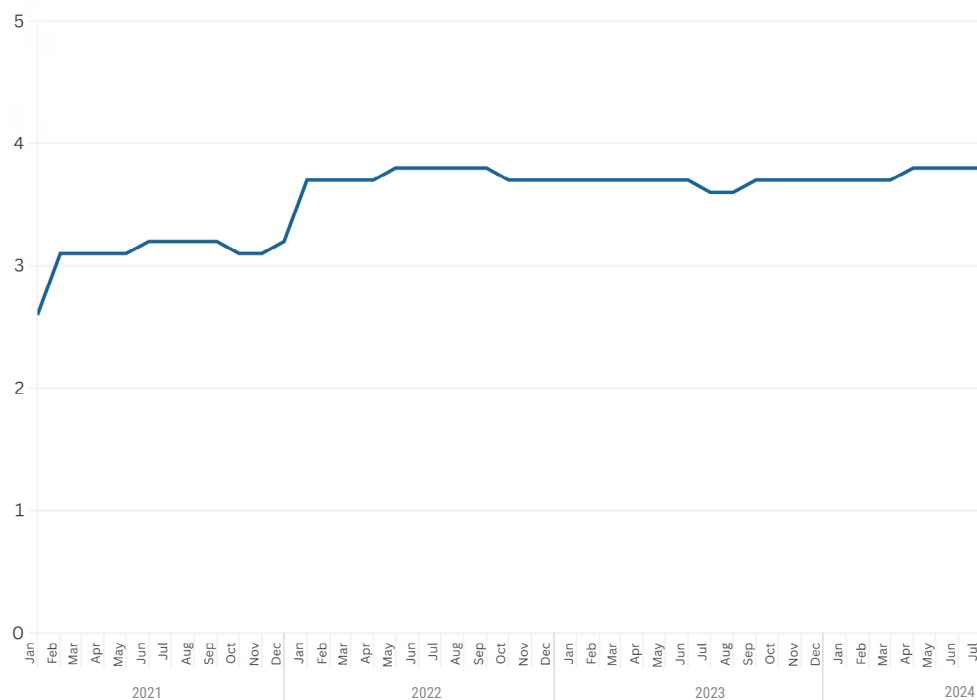
<sup>11</sup> One of the core indicators under the **safety and security** component is **total killed in all crises**.

<sup>12</sup> To learn more about the humanitarian condition levels, please see the INFORM Severity Index methodology document.

needs of the people of Kachin and Shan states after the February 2021 coup and brought a significant increase in the crisis' INFORM Severity Index score.

The other changes in the score were relatively small and were the result of changes in the numbers of people in need (with the incorporation of information from the 2024 Myanmar Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan), fatalities, and IDPs, as well as humanitarian access constraints (OCHA 18/12/2023).

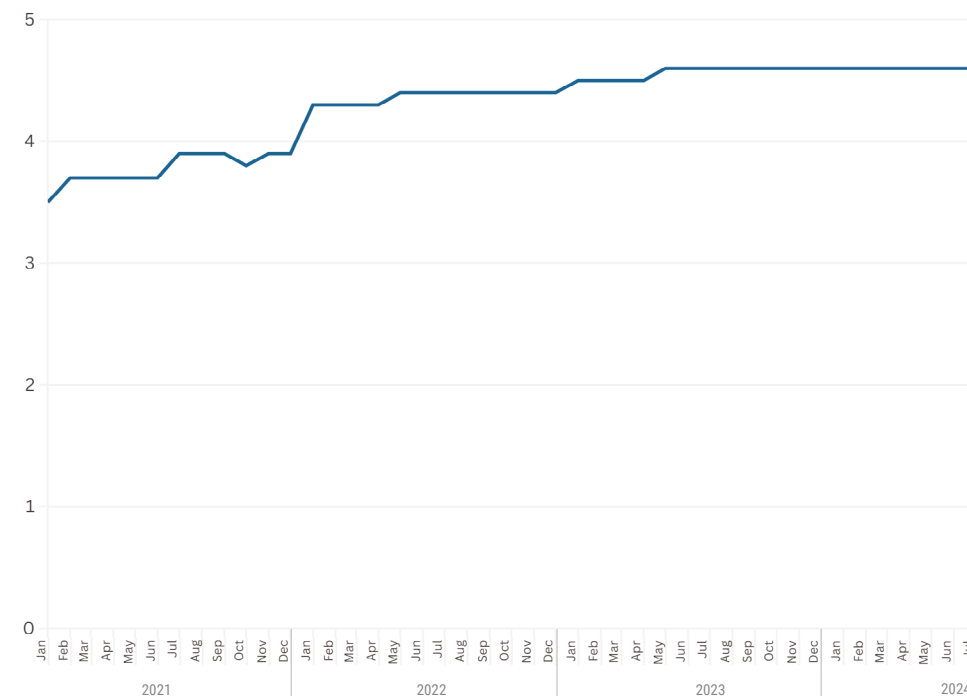
Figure 3. Monthly INFORM Severity Index score – *Kachin and Shan conflict* crisis



## COUNTRY LEVEL

### Trends: INFORM Severity Index score

Figure 4. Monthly INFORM Severity Index score – country-level crisis



The INFORM Severity Index score of the country-level crisis – the aggregation of all the crises opened for the country – experienced a rising trend from January 2021 to July 2024. The score increased by around 30%, from 3.5 in January 2021 to 4.6 in July 2024. The most significant increase was observed in January 2022, when the score increased to 4.3 (from 3.9 in December 2021). The 2022 Myanmar HNO estimated that 14.4 million people would need humanitarian assistance throughout the year. The incorporation of information on people in need was the main driver in the significant increase in the INFORM Severity Index score of the crisis in January (OCHA 31/12/2021). The **post-coup conflict** crisis had the most influence on the changes in the country-level crisis' score among all individual crises, as it had the highest number of people in need, affected the highest number of people and the largest landmass, caused the highest levels of fatalities and displacements, and had the highest levels of humanitarian access constraints among all the crises.

The **Cyclone Mocha** crisis was opened in May 2023 and closed in December. It did not have any impact on the country-level INFORM Severity Index score for several reasons. Mainly, a condition assigned to the INFORM Severity Index formula prevented the additional number of people in need produced by Cyclone Mocha from contributing to the country-level score.<sup>13</sup> The country-level crisis already affected the total landmass and population. Therefore, no landmass and people affected resulting from Cyclone Mocha were added to the country-level crisis.

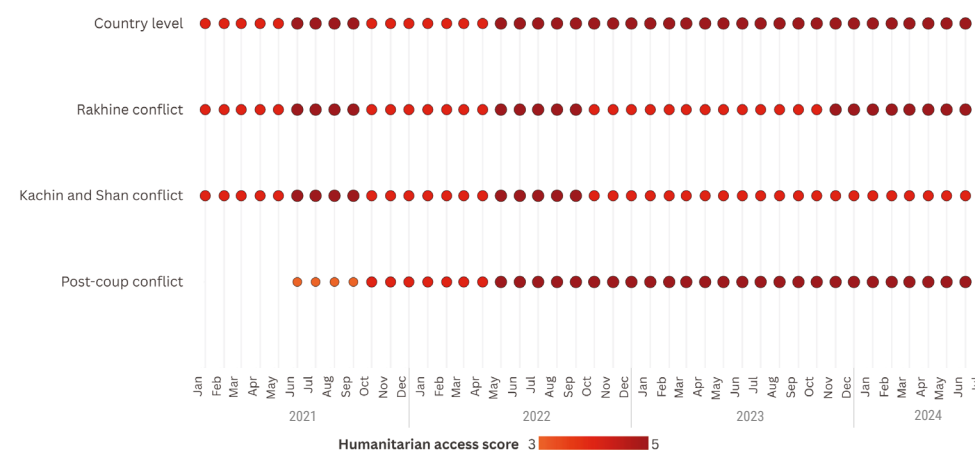
### Trends: Key variables

Some of the key variables that shed light on the conflict in Myanmar are humanitarian access constraints, security incidents (such as armed clashes and violence events against civilians) and related fatalities, and the number of IDPs who have had to leave their homes, shelters, or camps owing to the conflict. Although these variables do not tend to trigger regular or significant changes in the month-to-month INFORM Severity Index score, they are observables that provide vital insights into the conflict situation that drives the conflict crises.

### Humanitarian access constraints

The drivers of humanitarian access constraints in Myanmar include armed conflict and insecurity; violence against humanitarian personnel and assets; critical infrastructure damage and destruction by both armed conflict and natural hazards (e.g. floods and storms); checkpoints, roadblocks, and curfews; administrative impediments, such as the denial and delays in the approval of travel authorisation; and regulations that make registration for national and international humanitarian organisations burdensome or that restrict operations (ACAPS accessed 10/10/2024; OCHA 18/12/2023).

Figure 5. Humanitarian access score of the conflict and country-level crises

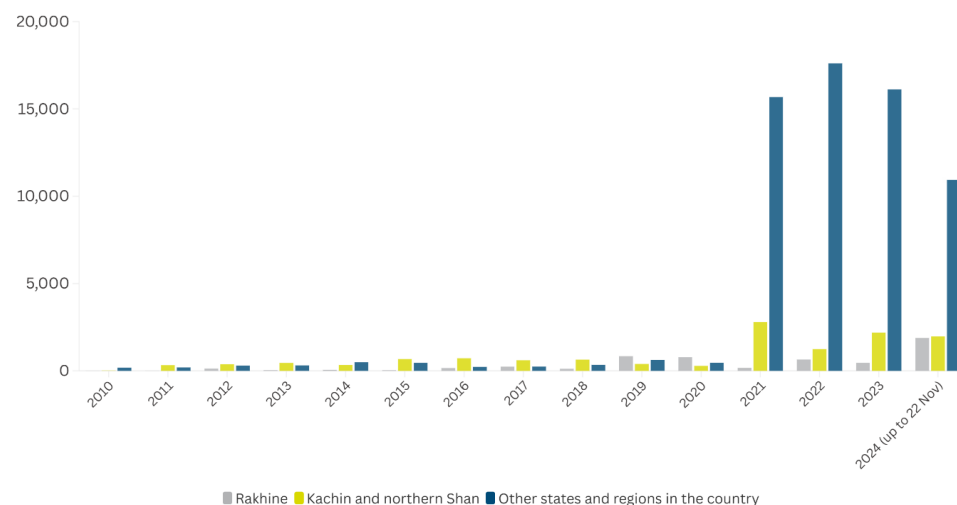


Myanmar has always had a constrained humanitarian access environment, and the humanitarian access score has not fallen below the maximum value (5 out of 5) since May 2022. The **post-coup conflict** crisis has had a significant impact on the country-level humanitarian access score. This score increased from 3 in June 2021 to 5 in May 2022 and has never changed since. The increase coincided with the worsening of armed conflict during that period, suggesting that the February 2021 coup significantly affected humanitarian access in the long term. For the **Rakhine conflict** crisis, the humanitarian access score increased to 5 after the year-long ceasefire between the AA and the Myanmar military junta ended in November 2023 (OCHA 15/11/2023; The Diplomat 13/11/2023). Observations on the changes in scores indicate that the armed conflict situation has significantly affected the overall humanitarian access situation in Myanmar.

<sup>13</sup> According to the INFORM Severity Index formula, once the number of people in need exceeds ten million, it does not have any further bearing on the crisis score. The 2023 Myanmar HNO estimated that 17.6 million people would need humanitarian assistance throughout the year. This means that when the figure increased in May 2023 because of Cyclone Mocha, the increase did not affect the score or trigger a change in the index score.

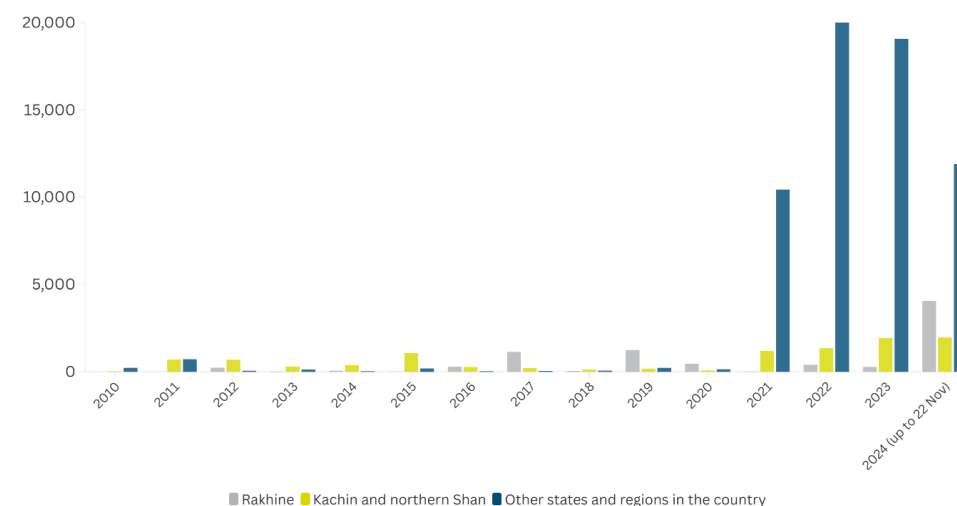
## Evolution of security incidents (including related fatalities) and internal displacement<sup>14</sup>

Figure 6. Yearly number of security incidents in Myanmar (2010–2024)



Source: ACAPS using data from ACLED (accessed 02/12/2024)

Figure 7. Yearly number of fatalities related to security incidents in Myanmar (2010–2024)



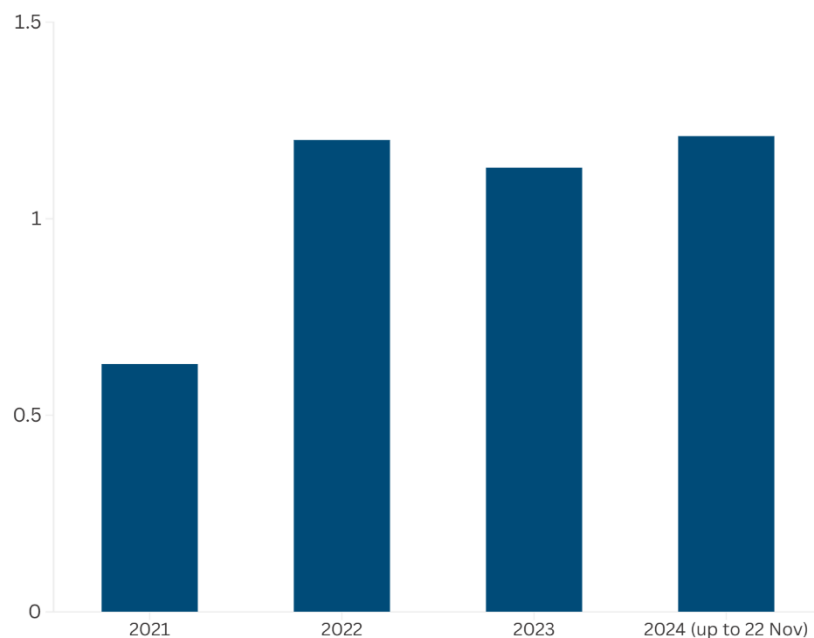
Source: ACAPS using data from ACLED (accessed 02/12/2024)

The numbers of security incidents and related fatalities have sharply increased since the February 2021 coup. Most of these security incidents and related fatalities have been the result of conflict in areas that it historically did not affect, such as Sagaing and Magway regions. In 2022, Myanmar recorded the highest numbers of security incidents and related fatalities. The levels were similar in 2023, albeit a bit lower (around 4% less for the number of security incidents and 9% less for the number of fatalities). Based on 2024 data and the trend in the numbers of security incidents and related fatalities (up until 22 November 2024), the numbers will unlikely be higher than in 2023 or 2022. Regardless, they are still expected to be very high, with significant humanitarian consequences. Around 99% of the fatalities from January 2021 to July 2024 were the result of incidents related to battles, explosions or remote violence, and violence against civilians.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Security incidents comprise events relating to battles, explosions or remote violence, violence against civilians, protests, riots, and strategic developments (strategically important events of non-violent activity by conflict parties and other entities). The total number of fatalities used is taken from the estimated number of reported fatalities associated with such events. ACLED provides more details here and here.

<sup>15</sup> As per ACLED, 'battles' refers to violent interactions between two organised armed groups; 'explosions or remote violence' refers to events involving one side using remote weapons (e.g. artillery), and these events can be against other armed parties or civilians; and 'violence against civilians' refers to violent events where an organised armed group deliberately inflicts violence upon unarmed noncombatants. For more details on the definitions of the events, please see the ACLED codebook.

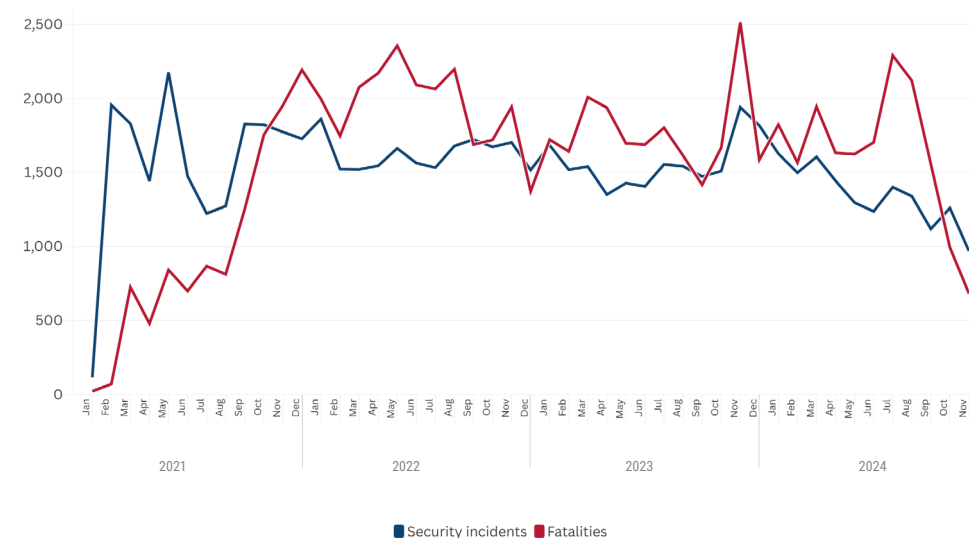
Figure 8. Yearly ratio of security incidents to related fatalities in Myanmar (2021–2024)



Source: ACAPS using data from ACLED (accessed 02/12/2024)

The ratio of security incidents to related fatalities has been persistently high and increased from 2023–2024. This indicates that the high intensity of the armed conflict and violence against civilians has persisted after the coup.

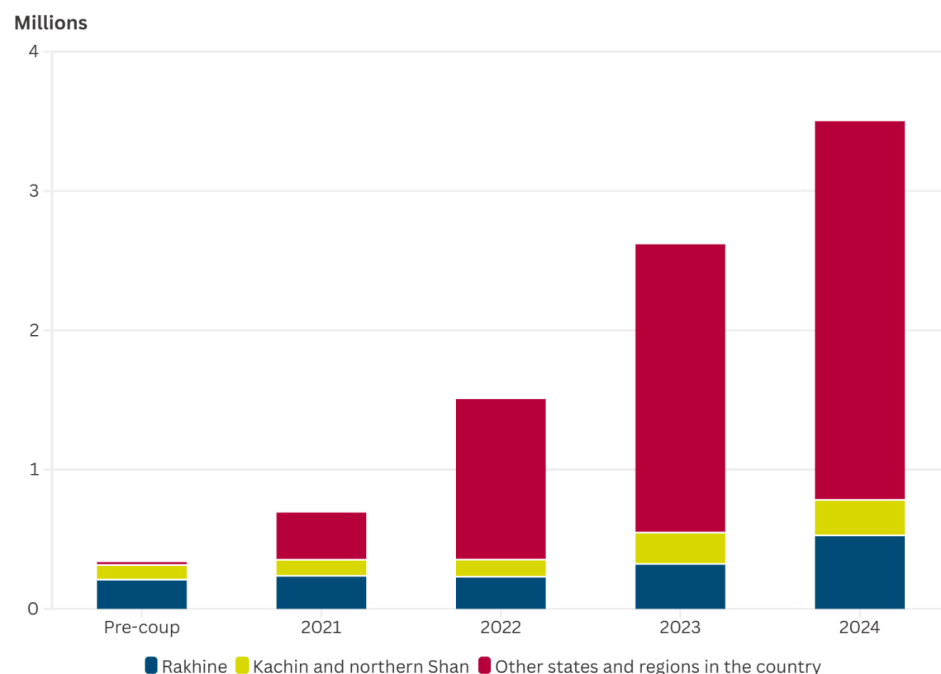
Figure 9. Monthly numbers of security incidents and related fatalities in Myanmar (2021–2024)



Source: ACAPS using data from ACLED (accessed 02/12/2024)

The month-to-month numbers of security incidents and related fatalities generally reflect the dynamics of the armed conflict. Some of the major increases in month-to-month security incidents and related fatalities have been observed in the months when or after conflict parties initiated major offensives. For example, spikes in the numbers of security incidents and related fatalities were observed in July 2023, when the military junta forces initiated a major offensive against the Kachin Independence Army; in November 2023, after the Three Brotherhood Alliance – comprising EAOs, the AA, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army – initiated Operation 1027 in late October 2023 against the military junta forces; and in July 2024, when the alliance initiated the second phase of Operation 1027 (ACLED accessed 02/12/2024; The Irrawaddy 17/07/2023, 26/10/2024, and 30/07/2024; Brookings 16/01/2024; The Diplomat 04/07/2024).

Figure 10. Cumulative Number of IDPs in Myanmar



Sources: ACAPS using data from UNHCR (30/12/2021, 28/12/2022, 28/12/2023, and 05/12/2024); HCT in Myanmar/OCHA (27/01/2021)

Note: pre-2021 coup data was based on the 2021 HNO published on 27 January 2021, 2021 data was recorded on 27 December 2021, 2022 data was recorded on 26 December 2022, 2023 data was recorded on 25 December 2023, and 2024 data was recorded on 02 December 2024.

The number of IDPs has been increasing significantly since 2021, by around 10.5 times from 2021–2024. The IDP figure more than doubled by the end of 2021 (compared with the pre-coup IDP figure), more than doubled by the end of 2022 (compared with the IDP figure at the end of 2021), increased by around 75% by the end of 2023 (compared with the IDP figure at the end of 2022), and increased by nearly 35% by the end of 2024 (compared with the IDP figure at the end of 2023). The trend reflects the increasing humanitarian toll of the conflict on the country. Displacements have mostly resulted from armed conflict and violence against civilians. Fear of persecution and attacks by the military junta forces is considered a key driver of continuing displacement (OCHA 15/01/2023 and 18/12/2023).

The decrease in the numbers of security incidents and related fatalities in 2023 and 2024 likely contributed to a slight decrease in the rise in the overall number of IDPs in the country. That said, although the increases in the number of IDPs in 2023 and 2024 were not as high as previously recorded, they were still significant. The continued increase was likely the result of different factors, including the fact that the levels and intensity of violence and armed conflict have remained high overall, and some areas have experienced a significant increase in incidents of armed conflict and violence against civilians. For instance, in 2024, Rakhine state experienced the highest levels of armed conflict in its history and a significant increase in the number of IDPs because of the conflict (OCHA 10/10/2024; ACLED accessed 02/12/2024). The presence of armed conflict or conflict parties also continues to prevent IDPs from returning to their places of origin, making them protractedly displaced.

## OUTLOOK

Conflict is widespread and intense in Myanmar. There has been no significant progress regarding a political reconciliation between most of the major groups involved in the armed conflict that would significantly abate the fighting (OCHA 13/12/2024; ICG 10/10/2024; DW 06/11/2024; The Irrawaddy 04/12/2024). In general, the lack of cooperation between the military junta and anti-military forces will likely persist, leading to the continuation of intensive and expansive armed conflict. Armed conflict and insecurity will highly likely persist at similar levels or worse in 2025.

At the same time, heavy rains and floods in 2024 have aggravated the humanitarian needs of those already affected by conflict and rendered more people in need of humanitarian assistance. According to the 2025 Myanmar Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, 19.9 million people in Myanmar will need humanitarian assistance in 2025, around a 1.3 million increase from 2024 (OCHA 13/12/2024). The INFORM Severity Index score of the country-level crisis is already quite high at 4.6 out of 5; it is not expected to change significantly in the case of a deterioration in the humanitarian situation. It could increase if significantly more people have higher severity levels of needs (severe and extreme humanitarian conditions) than in 2024. The same applies to the **post-coup conflict** crisis.

Kachin and northern Shan states have experienced significant armed conflict, displacements, and access constraints in 2024, deteriorating the humanitarian situation in the states (ACLED accessed 10/12/2024; OCHA 27/11/2024; ACAPS accessed 10/12/2024). This will likely increase the **Kachin and Shan conflict** crisis' INFORM Severity Index score in 2025. Given the sharp rise in armed conflict and the number of IDPs, severe access constraints, reported high food insecurity levels in Rakhine state in 2024, and the expectation that such issues will persist in 2025, the **Rakhine conflict** crisis' INFORM Severity Index score will likely increase in 2025 (ACLED accessed 10/12/2024; OCHA 27/11/2024 and 04/12/2024; UNHCR 03/12/2024; UNDP 07/11/2024).