

### OVERVIEW

On 28 March 2025, a magnitude-7.7 earthquake hit Myanmar's Sagaing region, with a subsequent magnitude-6.4 aftershock shaking the neighbouring Mandalay region (ECHO 28/03/2025; AJ 28/03/2025). This has led the State Administrative Council (SAC), to declare a state of emergency in six affected states and regions: Bago, Magway, Mandalay, Nay Pyi Taw, Sagaing, and southern Shan (IFRC 08/04/2025). By 6 April, the earthquake had killed over 3,500 people and injured around 5,000 (AHA Centre 06/04/2025; OCHA 07/04/2025 a). By 7 April, it had affected approximately 17.2 million people, including 9.1 million across 58 townships, and caused widespread damage or destruction to over 41,000 houses, 3,300 religious facilities, and 1,800 schools (OCHA 07/04/2025 b; AHA Centre 06/04/2025). It had also displaced around 200,000 people, adding to the 3.5 million IDPs across Myanmar (AHA Centre 14/04/2025; ECHO 14/04/2025). The priority needs among the affected population include food, safe drinking water, access to healthcare, cash assistance, and shelter (OCHA 07/04/2025 a).

In Bago, the most affected townships are Htantabin, Kyaukkyi, Kyauktaga, Oktwin, Phyu, Taungoo, and Yedashe in the north (OCHA 07/04/2025 b and 03/04/2025; COAR/Premise 03/04/2025; WFP 28/03/2025). By 31 March, 37 people had died in the region, including six children, while 176 people sustained injuries (OCHA 31/03/2025). Initial assessments show two healthcare facilities destroyed and 20 others damaged, limiting access to essential health services and increasing health risks for affected communities, such as untreated injuries and outbreaks of communicable diseases (OCHA 03/04/2025).

Bago is one of the regions affected by the conflict between the Myanmar Armed Forces (MAF) and armed resistance groups, including People's Defence Forces (PDFs), that has been increasing since 2023. Although the SAC and the Three Brotherhood Alliance – a major coalition of armed resistance groups, including the Arakan Army and the Karen National Union (which recently commenced operations in Bago to facilitate humanitarian operations) – have announced a temporary ceasefire, hostilities have continued across Myanmar. By 11 April, more than 120 attacks were recorded after the earthquake, including over half after the ceasefire declaration on 2 April (UN 11/04/2025; AJ 11/04/2025; The Irrawaddy 11/03/2025).

Bago has long been underrepresented in humanitarian efforts, resulting in limited information flows and an incomplete understanding of the needs and challenges faced by a significant portion of the population. Ceasefire violations are likely to constrain humanitarian access, particularly in areas controlled by armed resistance groups, and are expected to further complicate the delivery of assistance to populations affected by the earthquake (UN 11/04/2025; AP 11/04/2025).

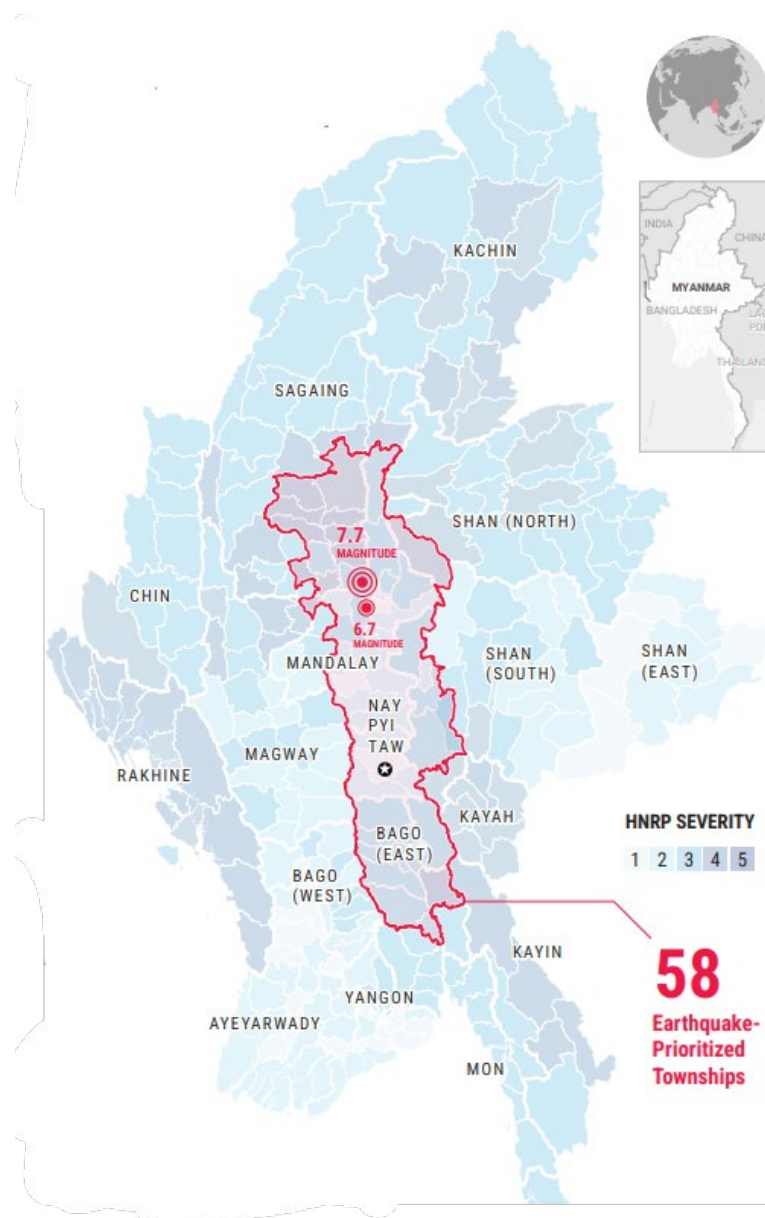
### KEY MESSAGES: BAGO REGION

- In October 2023, the overall number of crisis-affected people with humanitarian needs started increasing with the widespread escalation of conflict in Myanmar.** Bago has been one of the regions with the highest number of people displaced as a result (OCHA 13/12/2024). By 29 March 2025, just after the earthquake occurred, over 33,000 conflict incidents had been recorded in the region since the coup in February 2021 (ACLEDA 08/04/2025). In that month, prior to the earthquake, the region was hosting around 235,000 IDPs (UNHCR 07/04/2025). Many were sheltering in informal settings, such as monasteries and schools, lacking adequate access to essential services (OCHA 13/12/2024).
- Prior to the earthquake, around two million people in Bago region were in need of humanitarian assistance,** with people living in Kyaukkyi and Htantabin townships among those experiencing the most severe needs (Severity Level 4 according to the five-level scale of the Joint Intersectoral Analysis Framework). Despite the severity of needs, only around 351,000 people (18% of those in need in Bago) were targeted in 2024 (OCHA 13/12/2024). The anticipated reduction in US funding assistance, including for humanitarian programmes, is likely to further limit the humanitarian response capacity, leaving a substantial portion of identified needs unmet.
- Bago region faces significant healthcare challenges owing to conflict and displacement.** The conflict has seen attacks on healthcare facilities resulting in damage and destruction and the displacement and detention of health workers, disrupting the adequate delivery of essential health services (Insecurity Insight 28/03/2025). The 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan estimated 1.8 million people needing health assistance in the region (OCHA 13/12/2024). The influx of IDPs into the region as a result of conflict in neighbouring areas further strains the already limited healthcare resources.

## ANTICIPATED SCOPE AND SCALE

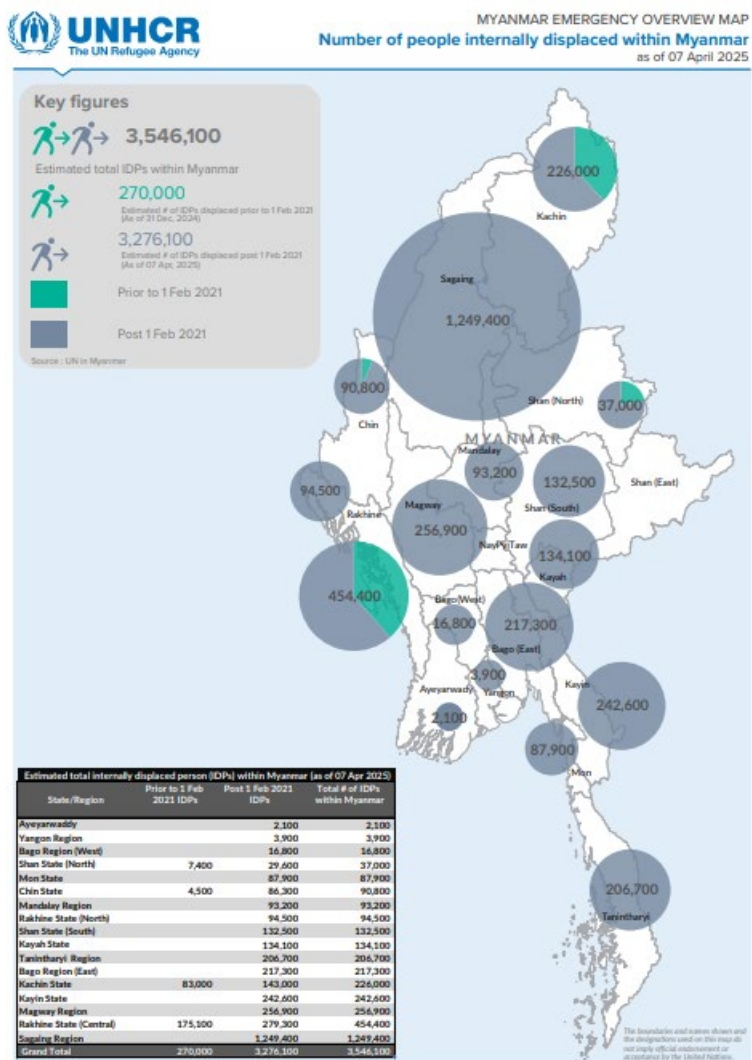
- In 2023, Myanmar recorded 1,052 casualties from landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW), with Bago region accounting for 12% of the casualties, ranking third after Sagaing and Shan regions (OCHA 13/12/2024; UNICEF 01/06/2024). The earthquake may have disturbed landmine-contaminated areas (e.g. Htantabin, Kyaukkyi, Kyauktaga, and Yedashe), increasing the risk of accidents related to explosions, particularly in townships such as Taungoo and Kyaukkyi, which have been conflict hotspots (The Irrawaddy 11/03/2025; UNICEF 10/01/2024; KHRG 14/11/2023). MAF air strikes towards armed groups' targets and civilians are likely to continue even after the announcement of the temporary ceasefire (UN 11/04/2025; RFA 10/04/2025; Karen News 25/03/2025).
- Bago region has experienced significant flooding in recent years, notably between June–July 2024, displacing over 20,000 people. These floods have compromised water supply and sanitation infrastructure (ACAPS 27/08/2024; OCHA 27/09/2024). Earthquake-induced damage to already weakened systems could further limit access to clean water, increasing the likelihood of waterborne diseases such as cholera and diarrhoea.
- In 2024, the agricultural sector in the region suffered because of monsoon floods that damaged over 160,000 hectares of paddy fields in eastern Bago, affecting around 18% of the region's rice cultivation (USAID et al. 13/11/2024). The recent earthquake may further disrupt agricultural activities by damaging irrigation systems and transport networks, potentially leading to decreased crop yields, reduced household income, and heightened food insecurity.
- The earthquake struck during Myanmar's dry season (March–May) (The Diplomat 08/04/2025). High temperatures and waterlogging during the dry season create a favourable environment for the breeding of cholera bacteria and other vectors, including larvae for mosquitoes that cause dengue. There has been a cholera outbreak in Bago since July 2024, with 67 cases reported between 9 February and 23 March. The prevalence of cholera cases could increase with water scarcity, poor living conditions, and limited health services (WHO 26/03/2025, 26/02/2025, and 12/03/2025). IDPs living in temporary shelters with limited essential services are particularly exposed.
- Between April–May 2024, Myanmar experienced a record-breaking heatwave, during which at least 1,500 people died from heat-related causes nationwide, including in central and southern regions of Myanmar, such as Bago (RFA 01/05/2024). Damage to water supply infrastructure, combined with extreme heat, could cause further dehydration and heat-related illnesses among the affected population. The impending monsoon season also raises concerns about the region's preparedness to handle additional environmental stresses after the earthquake.

Map 1. Earthquake-prioritised townships in Myanmar by 7 April 2025



Source: OCHA (07/04/2025)

Map 2. Number of IDPs across Myanmar by 7 April 2025



Source: UNHCR (07/04/2025)

## BAGO REGIONAL CONTEXT

### Conflict

Eastern Bago region hosts a complex array of armed resistance groups whose activities significantly shape the security landscape and affect humanitarian operations. The PDFs, formed in response to the 2021 military coup, are active in the eastern districts of Bago. These groups, aligned with the National Unity Government, employ guerrilla tactics, such as ambushes and landmine attacks, against MAF positions (The Irrawaddy 11/03/2025). The Karen National Liberation Army, the armed wing of the Karen National Union, also controls territory east of the Sittaung River and frequently coordinates with local PDFs in joint operations (RFA 13/12/2023). The MAF maintain a strong presence in the region, controlling key towns and strategic routes, such as the Yangon–Mandalay highway (Myanmar NOW 27/02/2025). In response to resistance activities, the MAF have employed harsh counterinsurgency tactics, including air strikes, artillery shelling, village burnings, and a ‘four-cuts’ strategy aimed at severing armed resistance group access to resources (The Irrawaddy 11/03/2025 and 17/03/2025). The hostilities, ceasefire violations, and the likelihood of further escalation continue to disrupt aid delivery, hinder the movement of humanitarian personnel, and heighten the vulnerabilities of affected communities (UN 11/04/2025; Protection Cluster 20/02/2025).

In early 2025, the conflict between the MAF and the Arakan Army spread to southwest regions, including Bago (OCHA 19/02/2025). In March, PDF groups across Taungoo and Bago in the east and Pyay and Tharrawaddy in the west started engaging in guerrilla tactics, targeting small units of the MAF. In response, the MAF began conducting village raids and carried out arson attacks in districts such as Pyay and Tharrawaddy, aiming to disrupt access to resources and public support for armed resistance groups (The Irrawaddy 11/03/2025). These tactics are likely to pose continued threats to civilian safety and humanitarian access as military reprisals and insecurity restrict movement, increase protection risks, and limit the delivery of assistance (Protection Cluster 20/02/2025).

### Climate hazards

Bago region is prone to recurrent flooding during the southwest monsoon season, typically from May–October. Between June–July 2024, severe flooding affected multiple townships, leading to significant displacement and infrastructure damage in Bago region. The floods submerged communities, displaced at least 20,000 people, and inflicted significant damage to agricultural land (UN-Habitat 02/08/2024; ACAPS 27/08/2024).

Myanmar experiences two primary cyclone seasons: the pre-monsoon period, which spans from mid-April to mid-May, and the post-monsoon period, occurring from October–November (DMH accessed 17/04/2025). In September 2024, Typhoon Yagi brought strong winds and heavy rainfall, triggering severe flooding and landslides across Myanmar, with Bago region being one of the hardest hit (OCHA 27/09/2024). The floods and landslides severely affected over 100,000 people in the region, particularly across the townships of Bago, Htantabin, Oktwin, Phyu, Taungoo, and Yedashe (OCHA 20/09/2025). The heavy rains and flooding also aggravated the humanitarian situation in the region, compounding the challenges posed by conflict and displacement (OCHA 20/09/2025; ACAPS 24/09/2024).

## PRE-CRISIS HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

### Protection

Frequent clashes, widespread displacement, and the presence of landmines and ERW expose communities in Bago region to violence, insecurity, and movement restrictions (OCHA 13/12/2024). In Htantabin, Kyaukkyi, and Kyauktaga townships, contaminated roads and farmland continue to limit safe movement and access to livelihoods, particularly for displaced households attempting to return home. Risk education and victim assistance services remain limited, compounding the impact of explosive ordnance contamination on civilians (Protection Cluster 20/02/2025; UNICEF 07/11/2023).

In 2024, the SAC activated the People's Military Service Law, leading to the conscription of up to 45,000 people (mostly men ages 18–35 and some women in Bago region) by February 2025 (The Irrawaddy 08/02/2025 and 31/05/2024). Alongside formal conscription, the MAF and MAF-aligned militias have also engaged in the forced recruitment, including in Bago region, of an unknown number of people, sometimes by detaining them on the streets (Mizzima 08/09/2024). Conscription and associated displacement have likely resulted in a high number of women-headed households in Bago, who may face particularly high protection risks and humanitarian needs after the earthquake.

### WASH and health

According to the WASH Cluster's analysis of the southeast in the third quarter of 2024, approximately 200,000 people lacked access to safe drinking water, adequate sanitation facilities, and essential hygiene items in Bago region (MIMU 30/09/2024). The situation worsened in September 2024 with the severe flooding caused by monsoon and Typhoon Yagi, which affected more than a million people across 70 townships nationwide, including several

critical areas within Bago region (OCHA 27/09/2024). Flood damage to WASH infrastructure and contaminated water sources have increased the risk of waterborne disease outbreaks, including acute watery diarrhoea, which has affected nine states and regions, including Bago region, since June 2024 (WHO 26/03/2025, 26/02/2025, and 12/03/2025).

Eastern Bago, whose townships have been affected by the earthquake, is identified as one of the regions facing some of the most severe health needs nationally, at Severity Level 3 or worse. Limited access to functioning healthcare facilities, shortages of essential medicine, and attacks on healthcare workers have significantly undermined service availability (OCHA 13/12/2024). Displaced and flood-affected populations face increased risks of preventable diseases, compounded by poor sanitation and limited access to healthcare (WHO 26/03/2025; UNICEF 05/02/2025). The impact of the earthquake will likely worsen the WASH and healthcare needs in Bago region considering the extensive damage to infrastructure.

### Food security

Prior to the March 2025 earthquake, 1.3 million people in Bago region were facing food insecurity (out of approximately 15.2 million across Myanmar) (OCHA 13/12/2024). Bago region, a significant contributor to the nation's rice production, has faced substantial challenges from consecutive climate-induced disasters. In July 2024, riverine floods affected an estimated 70,600 hectares of paddy fields in eastern Bago, representing 17% of the area's rice cultivation. Subsequent flash floods in September further affected approximately 89,400 hectares, accounting for 18% of the region's rice cultivation (USAID et al. 13/11/2024). These events disrupted the monsoon paddy harvest, leading to significant crop losses and affecting farmers' livelihoods. The destruction of irrigation systems compounded these challenges, delaying replanting efforts until the summer paddy season in March 2025 (Frontier Myanmar 07/11/2024). Conflict-related disruptions to transport networks further constrained the internal distribution of rice and other cereals from agricultural heartlands such as Bago region to other parts of the countries, reducing domestic availability and resulting in surplus stocks intended for export (WB 12/2024).

By 2023, over 38% of the population lived below the national poverty line in Bago region (UNDP 11/04/2024). The cumulative impact of climate shocks, coupled with economic instability and conflict, has worsened food insecurity in the region. High inflation rates and soaring food prices have also diminished household purchasing power, making it increasingly difficult to access sufficient and nutritious food (WB 12/2024). The earthquake is expected to further aggravate these challenges by disrupting supply chains, damaging infrastructure, and displacing communities, intensifying the region's food security crisis.

## PRE-CRISIS HUMANITARIAN ACCESS AND RESPONSE CAPACITY

Humanitarian access in Bago has been increasingly constrained since the February 2021 military coup, with conditions worsening throughout 2023 and early 2024 as a result of escalating conflict, administrative restrictions, and insecurity, which hamper humanitarian operations through threats to personnel, active hostilities, and other risks (Protection Cluster 20/02/2025; HRW 13/12/2021). OCHA classifies eastern Bago as one of the areas facing severe access constraints, with humanitarian stakeholders facing significant challenges in the region, particularly in eastern townships where fighting between the MAF and armed resistance groups intensified throughout 2024 (OCHA 11/04/2025 and 13/12/2024; Protection Cluster 20/02/2025). By mid-August, fighting and access restrictions had cut off all major transportation routes in the southeast, disrupting supply chains and leading to severe shortages of essential goods, including humanitarian assistance (OCHA 16/08/2024). Bureaucratic hurdles and movement restrictions imposed by the SAC heavily constrain humanitarian access in conflict-affected townships, such as Kyaukkyi and Mone, leading to critical delays that undermine the timely delivery of assistance to affected populations (Protection Cluster 20/02/2025; The Irrawaddy 11/03/2025). The implementation of the People's Military Service Law in February 2024 has further restricted the ability of humanitarian responders to reach communities, as forced conscription policies have increased fear among the population and pushed some to displace to remote areas (RFA 30/01/2025; The Irrawaddy 19/03/2025).

Access to reliable information on humanitarian needs is also limited, given heavy censorship of local media and intermittent internet shutdowns, particularly in conflict-affected districts (DW 27/02/2025; Fulcrum 24/01/2025). This likely delays early response planning, limiting the ability of humanitarian responders to target assistance effectively. It may also contribute to the underreporting of emerging risks in conflict-affected areas, particularly in remote areas.

Until February 2025, humanitarian presence in Bago region remained limited compared to other crisis-affected areas. Around 66 organisations reported activities in the region, with the majority concentrated in sectors such as health, protection, and agriculture (MIMU accessed 14/04/2025). Sectoral distribution was uneven, with most activities clustered in northern and urban townships such as Taungoo, while rural eastern areas, where over 80% of the people in Bago region live and where conflict was more intense, had a less active humanitarian presence (MIMU 14/04/2025; UNICEF 19/11/2024). The uneven distribution of organisations and activities is likely to pose additional challenges for responding to humanitarian needs in earthquake-affected areas, particularly in remote and conflict-affected townships.

## Key data for Bago region

Area size	39,405km <sup>2</sup>
Total population	5 million
Urban population	17%
Rural population	83%
People in need (2025)	1.9 million
IDPs (cumulative, by March 2025)	234,800
Htantabin township population (2024)	122,116
Kyaukkyi township population (2024)	101,822
Kyauktaga township population (2024)	247,847
Oktwin township population (2024)	150,881
Phyu township population (2024)	268,165
Taungoo township population (2024)	237,728
Yedashe township population (2024)	175,824

Sources: MIMU (accessed 09/04/2025); UNHCR (03/04/2025); City Population (accessed 09/04/2025)