



RIJ

国際難民支援会

Building a
Future for
Refugees

Burma (The Union of Myanmar)



Reasons for Displacement: Whilst Burma is a highly ethnically diverse country, inter-ethnic tension and violence against minorities has been widespread and systematic since independence from

the British in 1948. As a result, over the years, hundreds and thousands of people from different minority groups have fled to escape the ongoing military violence.

Although the transition from military rule to civil rule in 2010 has eased certain human rights restrictions and improved civil liberties for many, these conditions have not been equally extended to a number of minority groups including the Rohingyas who continue to face persecution and lack basic services such as water, health care and education.

R Rohingyas are also denied citizenship because of being Muslim and are regarded as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. Accord-

ing to the UN, more than 800,000 people in Myanmar are deprived of citizenship. In other areas including Kachin and northern Shan states, clashes continue between the Myanmar national army and non-state actors, leading to further displacement throughout the country.

Refugee Camps:

12,000 Burmese refugees live in camps along the Thai-Burma border. Many of these refugees are unable to settle permanently in Thailand or return home out of fear of persecution, reducing many to statelessness. Refugees and asylum-seekers living outside the camps are considered illegal immigrants and are subject to arrest and deportation. As a result, Burmese refugees in Thailand are confined to camps, resulting in social, economic, and psychological problems. These problems coupled with the lack of work inside the camps renders the majority to subsist on humanitarian assistance.

Number of refugees:

0 residing in Burma;
479,001 originating from Burma
[source: UNHCR]

Number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):

662,400
810,000 stateless persons
[sources: IDMC, UNHCR]

History:

1937—The UK separates Burma from India

1948—Burma becomes independent

1962—Around 300,000 Burmese Indians flee the country to escape racial discrimination

1978—Over 200,000 Muslims flee to Bangladesh to avoid religious persecution

1988—Uprising started by students in Rangoon leads to military coup

1990—The National League for Democracy wins free elections held for the first time in almost 30 years, but the election results are annulled by the incumbent party

2007—A series of anti-government protests (“Saffron Revolution”) is provoked by the ruling Junta’s decision to remove fuel subsidies; the Junta cracks down on the protests, the death toll remains in dispute

2010—Over 15,000 Karennis flee to northern Thailand after fighting breaks out between Karen rebels and government troops the day after the first election in two decades

2011—A civilian government replaces the military rule which leads to the National League for Democracy gaining a majority in the Parliament in 2012; new citizenship law is discussed

2012, 2013—Rakhine State riots, Burma anti-Muslim riots

2014—Conflict between government troops and Kachin rebels kills 22 people

2015—Burmese government takes away temporary voting rights from Rohingyas; a ceasefire agreement is drafted; hundreds of Rohingyas flee to other countries and are rejected

Assistance:

- RIJ funded several projects for Burmese refugees including: The DARE project working in drug prevention and rehabilitation; and education on law, human rights, environmental issues and nonviolent change by the Karenni Social Development Centre
- Numerous organizations support refugees, IDPs, returnees, stateless people, and host communities, for example UNHCR and Bridge Asia Japan

