

GENDER-IMPACT FLASH UPDATE: MYANMAR FLOODING

No. 1

1 October 2024

This update was developed by the Myanmar Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (GiHA WG) and is based on available reports from humanitarian partners, including women-led organizations operating in flood-affected townships. It provides an overview of the gendered impacts of the flooding in Myanmar and the differentiated needs of women, men, girls, and boys.

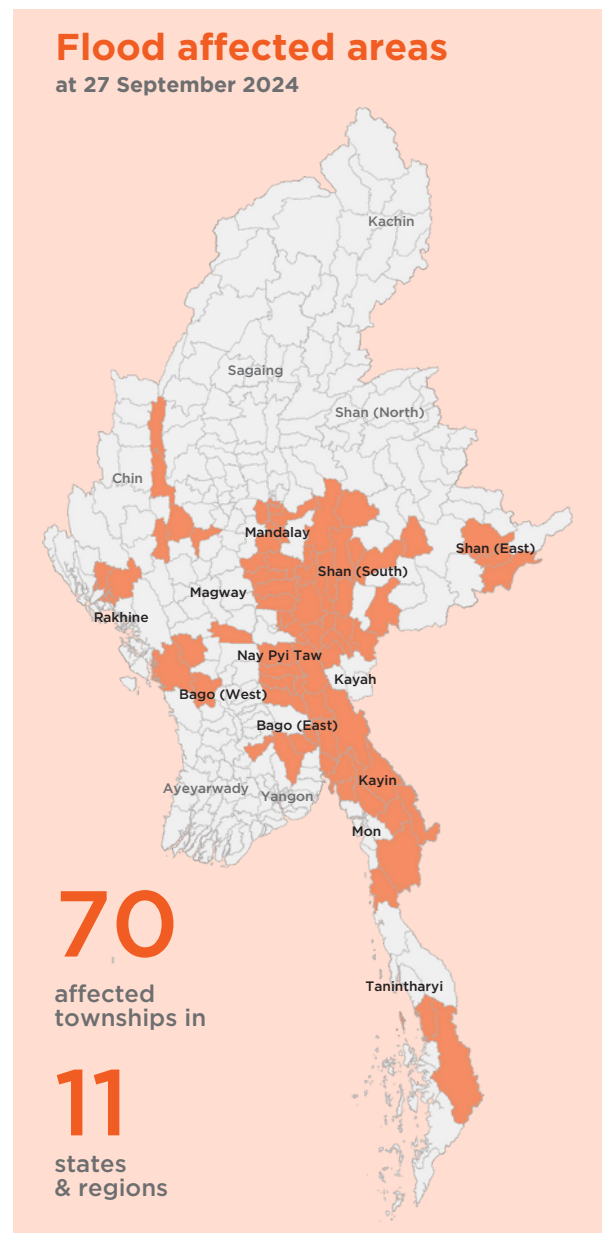
Overview

Since 9 September 2024, severe flooding and mudslides triggered by torrential monsoon rains and remnants of Typhoon Yagi have devastated 70 townships across 11 states and regions in Myanmar.

An estimated 1 million people have been impacted, with more than 360 fatalities and 100 people reported missing,¹ although data is still being verified. The flooding has affected already marginalized groups, including internally displaced persons, pregnant and breastfeeding women, children, and the elderly, for whom the disaster has exacerbated existing vulnerabilities. Early assessments suggest women and girls account for approximately 60% of people affected.²

The most severely affected areas include the capital Nay Pyi Taw; the regions of Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Sagaing and Tanintharyi; and the states of southern and eastern Shan, Mon, Kayah, Kayin, and Rakhine.³ As floodwaters recede, communities, including those in camps for internally displaced persons and relocation sites are beginning cleanup efforts.

The floods have submerged thousands of crops, farmlands, and livestock, significantly impacting the livelihoods of affected communities. Critical infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed, including roads, bridges, communication networks, schools, public service facilities, religious sites, and farmlands.⁴ More than 65,000 homes, 1,500 schools, 200 roads and bridges, and more than 80 telecom towers have been destroyed or damaged. The impacts of the disaster are exacerbating Myanmar's existing humanitarian crisis, already strained by ongoing conflict, political instability, and widespread food insecurity.⁵



¹ UN OCHA Myanmar: Flood Situation Report No. 3, 27 September 2024. [Available online.](#)

² This is an average calculated from data collected by a range of local humanitarian partners in the affected states and regions between 9 and 27 September.

³ UN OCHA Myanmar: Flood Situation Report No. 3, 27 September 2024. [Available online.](#)

⁴ UN OCHA Myanmar: Flood Situation Report No. 2, 20 September 2024. [Available online.](#) And Flood Situation Report No. 3, 27 September. [Available online.](#)

⁵ International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) Emergency Appeal for Myanmar, Flood Typhoon Yagi, 18 September 2024. [Available online.](#)

1 MILLION

PEOPLE AFFECTED INCLUDING

600,000

WOMEN⁶

270,000

CHILDREN⁷

270,000

REPRODUCTIVE
AGE WOMEN⁸

12,974

PREGNANT
WOMEN⁹

>360

DROWNED

>100

MISSING

OCHA Sit Rep 27 Sept.

Immediate impact on women and girls

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by the flooding due to pre-existing vulnerabilities and gender roles. Key immediate impacts include:

Increased risk of gender-based violence (GBV)

Reports from local humanitarian organisations indicate a rise in domestic violence, as emotional stress from the disaster has escalated tensions within households. Overcrowded, poorly equipped shelters significantly heighten the risk of GBV and the lack of safe, gender-segregated spaces, including latrines and bathing facilities, where women and girls can feel secure is a major concern. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to early marriage, unsafe migration, and potential trafficking as they flee to temporary shelters.

Loss of livelihoods

Women, especially those working in small-scale farming and informal economies, have lost their primary income sources as livestock, equipment and other assets and resources have been damaged or destroyed.

Food insecurity

Severe food shortages are widespread, compounded by increasing prices and inflation resulting from the economic crisis. Nutritious food, especially for pregnant and lactating women and children, is scarce.

Landmine risk

There is growing concern about the risk of landmines, which can get caught in debris carried by floodwaters into areas that were previously free of landmines. As the water recedes, people return to clear the debris, and there is an increased risk of accidents.

Limited access to healthcare

Road blockages, damaged infrastructure, and fuel shortages have made it nearly impossible for women and girls to reach healthcare facilities. Many are unaware of where to access available healthcare services due to disrupted communication networks. Even when services are accessible, they often do not cater to the specific needs of women, including access to reproductive health, contraceptives, and maternal care.

Lack of safe water, hygiene and sanitation facilities

There is a critical shortage of basic hygiene items, secure latrines, and bathing facilities. Women and girls are struggling to access menstrual hygiene products and safe sanitation, which further compromises their dignity and health. Contaminated water sources have led to outbreaks of food poisoning and diarrhoea.

Adoption of negative coping mechanisms

With little access to food, water, shelter, or healthcare, many women are forced to take on loans, borrow from neighbours, or sell their belongings. Men and women are migrating or seeking precarious employment, leaving families even more vulnerable to exploitation and further economic hardship.

⁶ This is an average calculated from data collected by a range of local humanitarian partners in the affected states and regions between 9 and 27 September.

⁷ UNICEF Flood Flash Update No. 3, 27 September 2024. [Available online.](#)

^{8 & 9} These are estimates based on the Minimum Initial Services Package (MISP) for Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) in Humanitarian Settings Calculator, which draws on the best available data to help determine affected population demographics. [Available online.](#)

Urgent needs of women and girls

The following needs must be prioritised to protect and support women and girls in the immediate response:

Healthcare

Need for mobile health units to provide basic medicines, maternal health services, and reproductive healthcare to address the specific needs of women and girls.

Protection

Need for immediate psychosocial support (including for pregnant and nursing women), GBV and protection services and referrals, and the creation of safe spaces to prevent exploitation and abuse in shelters.

Nutrition

Household kits and the distribution of nutritious food are essential, particularly for pregnant and lactating women, to support their health and that of their children.

Safe shelter

There is an urgent need for secure, well-lit shelters equipped with partitions for privacy, locks, and easy access to clean water and safe sanitation facilities. Safe spaces, including women and girls' centres/safe spaces, are crucial for providing physical and emotional security to women and girls during this emergency. The absence of these essential resources leaves women and girls vulnerable to violence and compromises their privacy and dignity.

Non-food items

Items such as household kits, appropriate clothing, underwear, kitchen utensils, and sleeping mats are necessary to maintain a safe and dignified living environment.

Water and sanitation

Access to clean drinking water is critical. Women and girls urgently require dignity kits, menstrual and personal hygiene products, and private, gender-segregated sanitation facilities, including secure latrines and bathing areas with locks and lighting.

“

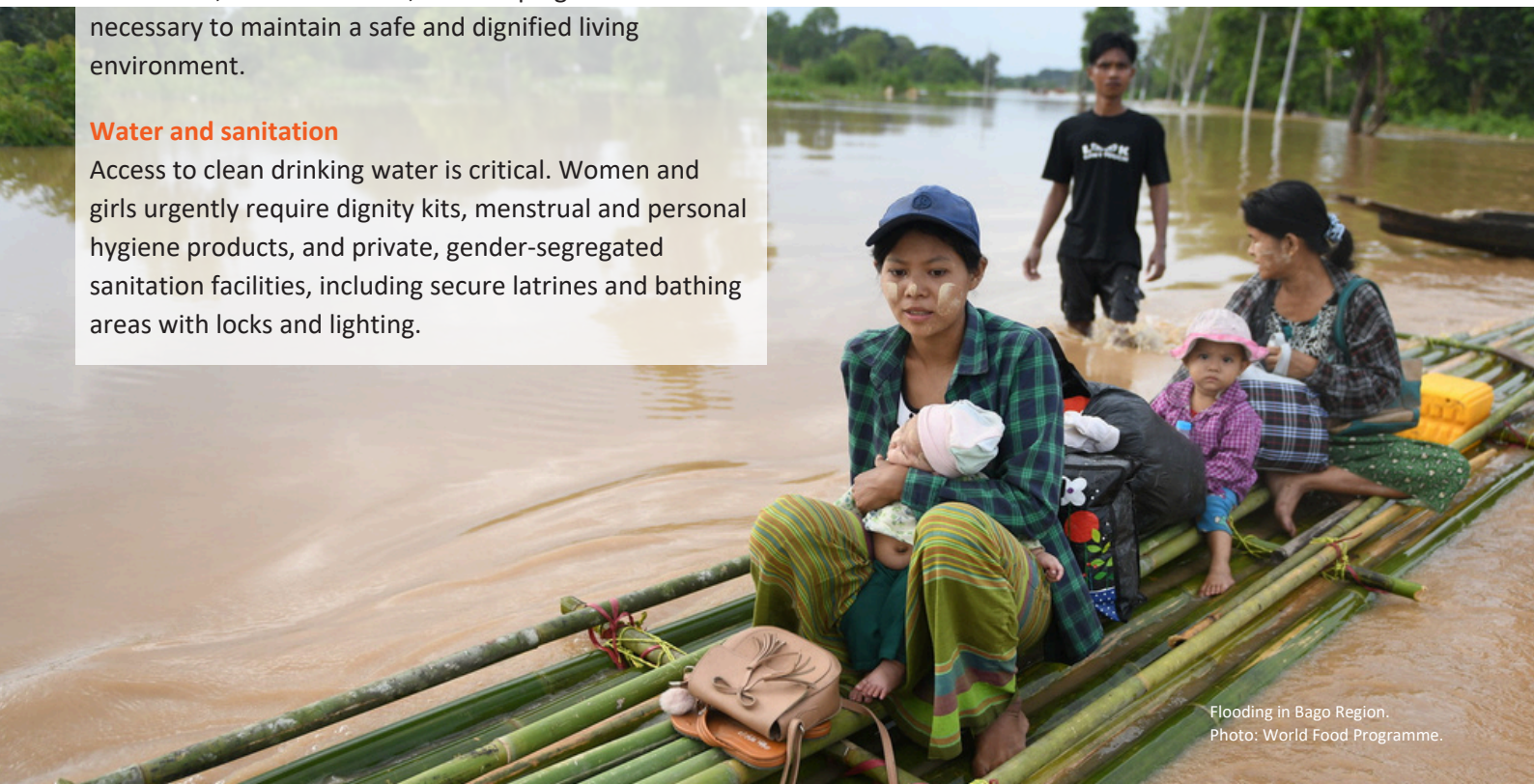
We had less than two hours to leave. The water started rising in the morning of the 13th, and before we knew it, we had to escape.

I couldn't move by myself, so [volunteer responders] had to carry me on a motorcycle through the flooded streets. The water was everywhere.

All of my important documents, like my disability training certificates, and the supplies from my store were ruined. Electrical appliances, books, soaps—everything was damaged.

”

Phyu Wai Mon is a small business owner and woman with a disability who lives in Bago Region.



Medium to long-term impacts on women and girls

Without sustained interventions, the medium to longer-term effects of the flooding will likely deepen existing gender inequalities. Humanitarian organisations on the ground in affected communities report that these impacts are likely to include:

Livelihood loss and economic exclusion

Women, particularly those who rely on agriculture and small-scale businesses, have been disproportionately affected by the destruction of farmland, marketplaces, and livestock. The loss of their income-generating assets will push many women into deeper poverty. As inflation rises and economic conditions worsen, women may be forced to migrate in search of work, further exposing them to exploitation and unsafe conditions.

Increased care responsibilities

The burden of unpaid care work will rise as women take on greater responsibility for caring for children, the elderly, and other dependents in the aftermath of the disaster. This additional workload will limit their ability to seek employment or engage in economic recovery activities, exacerbating their vulnerability to poverty.

Educational setbacks for girls

School closures and economic pressures increase the likelihood of early marriage or child labour as families struggle to cope. Many girls may drop out of school permanently, reducing their future opportunities and reinforcing cycles of poverty and inequality.

Heightened risk of violence

In the aftermath of the floods, the scarcity of jobs and resources, coupled with the social upheaval caused by the disaster can exacerbate tensions and put women and girls at increased risk of domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and emotional harm.

Psychosocial impacts

The loss of income, land, and personal assets will likely lead to long-term emotional and psychological impacts for women and girls. Many may face exploitation in their search for economic opportunities abroad, while others may feel psychological insecurity from being separated from their families. Without targeted psychosocial support, the emotional toll of displacement, violence, and poverty will continue to affect women's and girls' mental health and psychosocial wellbeing.

Health risks

Prolonged disruptions to reproductive and maternal healthcare services will have lasting consequences, including higher rates of maternal mortality and poor health outcomes for women and infants. Lack of access to essential healthcare will further erode the physical and emotional wellbeing of women and girls.





Flooding in Shan State.
Photo courtesy of GiHA Working Group member.

Priority actions needed

Local humanitarian organisations, including women-led and women's rights organisations, have actively mobilised and are offering critical support to affected communities. However, the response is limited by several challenges. To ensure a gender-responsive approach to the flood response, the following areas require urgent attention:

Gender-sensitive needs assessments

Ensure that women are involved in the design and implementation of all assessments.

Access to information

Information about available services should be shared using accessible channels that women and vulnerable groups can easily access.

Gender-responsive livelihood support

Provide direct cash assistance and livelihood opportunities to women, particularly those who are primary providers for their families.

Protection measures

Strengthen protection services to mitigate risks of GBV in the displaced sites.

Food, WASH and shelter

Restore water supply networks and provide safe shelter and sanitation facilities with gender-sensitive designs, including private spaces for women and girls. Ensure pregnant and lactating women and their children can access the food they need to meet their specific nutrition needs.

Increase funding and lift access restrictions

Almost 10 months into the year, the 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan is only 28% funded. To sustain the delivery of emergency assistance, additional resources are urgently needed, and humanitarian organisations must have unrestricted, unimpeded access to affected areas.

About the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (GiHA WG)

GiHA WG aims to promote integration of gender considerations and gendered technical expertise in humanitarian action across the humanitarian response areas of operation and foster greater coordination and consideration of gender through humanitarian action mechanisms. It is composed of civil society organisations, women led and women's rights organizations, community-based women's organizations, NGOs, UN agencies, donor gender focal points (as observers) and cluster leads/focal points. The GiHA WG is co-led by UN Women and UNFPA.

For more information:

MIMU 2024 Myanmar Floods resource page: themimu.info/emergencies/floods-2024

Contact the GiHA WG co-chairs:

Rowena Dacsig, Humanitarian Specialist, UN Women: rowena.dacsig@unwomen.org

Eri Taniguchi, Gender Equality and GBV Programme Specialist, UNFPA: taniguchi@unfpa.org



GENDER IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION
WORKING GROUP (GiHA WG)
Myanmar