

PRESSEMITTEILUNG

## **MYANMAR: More than 76,000 children displaced by violence since coup, with pregnant women forced to give birth in forest**

*Montag, 04. Oktober 2021* – More than 76,000 children<sup>i</sup> in Myanmar have been forced to flee their homes since the coup on 1 February as armed conflict has erupted in several parts of the country, Save the Children said today.

Most of the displaced children are living outside in the jungle, with nothing but tarpaulins held up with bamboo sticks to protect them from the torrential monsoon rain. Many families do not have adequate food supplies and are sharing just one meal between them per day, Save the Children said.

Since the coup, 206,000 people have been displaced across the country. In Kayah State in southeastern Myanmar – a displacement hotspot - around 22,000 people fled their homes in September alone, [according to the UN](#). More than 79,000 people – including around 29,000 children – are currently displaced in the state<sup>ii</sup>. One town, Demoso, has been left completely empty after its entire population fled violent clashes there last month.

A UN human rights envoy [warned in June](#) that Kayah State could see “mass deaths from starvation, disease, and exposure”. With access to food and life-saving services blocked, displaced families were reported to have been living on only rice broth.

Cherry\*, 33, has been living in a displacement camp in a forest since she fled her home in Demoso Township five months ago with her husband and their two children. The family is living under a small makeshift tarpaulin shelter. Cherry\* is pregnant with her third child, and faces the prospect of giving birth outside without access to medical care.

*“I cannot even describe in words the pain I feel,”* Cherry\* told Save the Children. *“My delivery date is close, and I’m so worried about the baby because I’m living in this camp. I can’t even think about eating nutritious food, as we have to eat whatever we can get. I’m also worried about what I’m going to feed my baby after its born. All we have is donated food and we have to eat whatever there is – it’s not the right food for a baby.”*

In many parts of the country aid agencies have been unable to reach families in need due to ongoing conflict and restrictions on delivery of aid. Many displaced families are relying on donations from local people for food and essentials.

U Tun\* and his family fled their home with nothing when fighting in their hometown of Demoso escalated in May. The family is unable to return home as their house was set alight in the conflict along with everything they own.

*“I was only able to bring a few important identity documents, and I fled with my family. Now, we are living on a hill in a temporary shelter. It is very difficult to get food and we*

*have to rely on donations because all of our property was destroyed and we can't go home. Other people here are also suffering like us," U Tun\* told Save the Children. Save the Children warned that thousands of displaced children could go hungry without urgent food aid. Some 60% of Kayah families surveyed by Save the Children in April said they relied on farming as their primary source of food, but had been uprooted from their farms by the conflict.*

Earlier this year, the [WFP estimated](#) that the number of children in the country going hungry could more than double to 6.2 million in the next six months, up from 2.8 million prior to February.

Esther\*, a volunteer at a displacement camp in Kayah State, said hunger was a huge concern for displaced families.

*"In the beginning they received some donations from local people or charities that were helping people in the camps. But now donations are limited because people are being prevented from going to the camps. We got some bags of rice bags donated, and when we divided it, every household got just five cups of rice per family. That's not much for a family of seven people to live off for long," Esther\* told Save the Children.*

Save the Children said:

*"While the world's attention has moved on, a hunger crisis is unfolding in Myanmar. Tens of thousands of children across the country who have fled their homes are living outside in jungles or sheltering in temples, many of them with nothing but a tarpaulin sheet to protect them from the torrential monsoon rains. Families are living on next to nothing, sharing just one meal a day between six or seven people. Children are already going hungry, and very soon they will start to succumb to disease and malnutrition.*

*"Displaced families urgently need tents, food, clean water, medical care and sanitation. Our teams will continue doing everything they can to get children and their families the help they need, but we urgently need access to displaced families to deliver our life-saving services.*

*"As long as the violence continues, more families will be forced to flee in search of safety. We call on all parties to protect children's rights and keep them out of harm's way. This goes beyond protecting them from the dangers of conflict – children need to get back to school, and they need support to process the trauma they have experienced. Myanmar children have shown incredible strength and resilience, but they cannot be expected to keep carrying such a heavy load."*

Save the Children and its partners in Myanmar are providing food assistance and essential items to families who need it most. It provides life-saving health and nutrition services, as well as getting children back into learning and supporting them with their mental and physical health and wellbeing.

*\*Name has been changed.*

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<sup>i</sup> 206,000 people have been displaced in Myanmar since February 1. 37% of those in need are children, according to the UNHCR.

<sup>ii</sup> [UN data as of 13 September](#)

**Für weitere Fragen wenden Sie sich bitte an unsere Pressestelle.**

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**Über Save the Children**

Im Nachkriegsjahr 1919 gründete die britische Sozialreformerin und Kinderrechtlerin Eglantyne Jebb Save the Children, um Kinder in Deutschland und Österreich vor dem Hungertod zu retten. Heute ist die inzwischen größte unabhängige Kinderrechtsorganisation der Welt in rund 120 Ländern tätig. Save the Children setzt sich ein für Kinder in Kriegen, Konflikten und Katastrophen. Für eine Welt, die die Rechte der Kinder achtet. Eine Welt, in der alle Kinder gesund und sicher leben und frei und selbstbestimmt aufwachsen und lernen können – seit über 100 Jahren.