



MYANMAR COUNTRY REPORT

THE STATE OF THE
HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM 2026

ACRONYMS

CBO	Community-based organisation
CSO	Civil society organisation
EAO	Ethnic armed organisations
FGD	Focus group discussion
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HDP	Humanitarian–development–peace (nexus)
HNRP	Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan
IDP	Internally displaced person
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
KSDF	Karenni State Development Fund
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
SAC	State Administration Council (Myanmar military junta)
SOHS	The State of the Humanitarian System
ULA/AA	United League of Arakan/Arakan Army
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

KEY FINDINGS

Theme	Key finding
A fractured system	Myanmar's formal humanitarian architecture – United Nations (UN) agencies, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and the cluster system – has contracted sharply since 2021, largely withdrawing from territories affected by conflict and controlled by ethnic armed organisations (EAO). Local civil society, diaspora networks and faith-based organisations have become the primary responders for millions of people that the formal system cannot reach. Furthermore, the suspension of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) programmes eliminated a critical funding stream for Myanmar, devastating local organisations dependent on US-funded channels.
Localisation in name only	Despite global commitments, localisation has not translated into equitable funding or decision-making power for local actors. Capable local organisations – many operating in areas where international actors appear to have withdrawn – struggle to access resources directly.
Resistance humanitarianism and principled action	Local actors have developed a distinct practice of 'resistance humanitarianism' – aid shaped by solidarity, survival and moral engagement with a population under systematic state violence. This challenges the conventional interpretation of neutrality and requires the humanitarian system to develop more contextually grounded approaches to principled action.
Divergent local governance	Two contrasting models of local humanitarian governance are observed. In Karenni, a consultative and civilian-led model offers an alternative for accountable local governance and access; in Rakhine, we see how military-dominated governance can entrench ethnic exclusion and narrow the humanitarian space.
Humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus: stalled	Formal nexus linkages appear to have collapsed at the national level. Local actors are building nexus-oriented programming organically – through education continuity, community livelihoods and religious institution-based services – but with little international recognition, funding or coordination.

Key message: Myanmar's humanitarian crisis is not primarily a problem of insufficient coordination or operational protocols. It is a problem of political authority, access and recognition. The communities bearing the heaviest burden are served – sometimes exclusively – by local actors operating outside the line of sight and protection of the international humanitarian system. An international system that cannot see, fund and learn from these actors will continue to measure its performance against standards that bear little relation to the lives of the people it claims to serve.

Report structure:

Section 1 establishes the crisis context and humanitarian response landscape in Myanmar. Section 2 describes the methodology for this study. Section 3 analyses the size, shape and performance of the humanitarian system, covering its architecture, the scale of the caseload versus actual reach, and the system's performance on timeliness, quality and coordination. Section 4 looks in depth at four defining features of Myanmar's humanitarian moment: 1) the gap between the rhetoric and reality of localisation; 2) the emergence of resistance humanitarianism; 3) the divergent local governance models of Karenni and Rakhine; and 4) the fractured state of the HDP nexus. Section 5 synthesises findings and sets out actionable learning considerations for donors, UN agencies, INGOs and the wider humanitarian community.

The findings in this report reflect perspectives from humanitarian actors, community facilitators of humanitarian aid and people receiving aid, unless specifically stated otherwise.

