

COVID-19 AND CONFLICT IN MYANMAR
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No. 1

**HOW HAVE MYANMAR'S CONFLICTS
BEEN AFFECTED BY COVID-19
AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE ABOUT IT?**

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SMART PEACE 

HOW HAVE MYANMAR'S CONFLICTS BEEN AFFECTED BY COVID-19 AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE ABOUT IT?

This short briefing paper is the first in a series of practical notes prepared by The Asia Foundation as part of Smart Peace, a global initiative which combines the expertise of consortium members to address the challenges of building peace. Smart Peace works in Myanmar, Central African Republic, and Nigeria, seeking to combine peacebuilding techniques, conflict analysis, rigorous evaluation and behavioral insights. The resulting lessons will help communities, international organizations and governments to implement peace strategies with greater confidence. Smart Peace is funded by the UK Government.

At a glance...

The Covid-19 crisis has had mixed impacts on Myanmar's disparate conflicts and the ongoing peace process. This paper aims to explore some of the key events and initiatives that have been witnessed in conflict-affected parts of the country throughout the pandemic, with a particular focus on the implications for ongoing and longer-term peacebuilding efforts.

- The Covid-19 crisis has not unfolded in Myanmar as catastrophically as many had anticipated, with only 350 confirmed cases and 6 deaths as of 28 July 2020, although rates of testing are comparatively low.¹ Risks of a significant escalation remain, such as the continued return of migrant workers from neighboring countries and the spread of disease through makeshift quarantine and treatment facilities. At best, Myanmar has bought precious time to put in place risk communications systems, stockpile equipment, prepare quarantine facilities, and raise awareness of the dangers of the pandemic.
- The Covid-19 response has highlighted deep fragmentation across Myanmar society, in particular along ethnic lines. Large parts of the population, especially in rural and ceasefire areas, have not had access to government health services and support, instead relying on civil society or ethnic armed groups. Meanwhile, the government's public health discourse largely targets Bamar Buddhist communities, failing at times to include the diverse needs and experiences of other groups.
- Some useful cooperation between state and non-state institutions on the pandemic response points to the potential for new and ongoing relationship-building or reconciliation. However, uninterrupted fighting and renewed clashes have continued in the West, the North, and the Southeast. Hopes for any progress in ongoing peace dialogues are extremely low.
- Many international funders in Myanmar, who ordinarily target a variety of issues including peacebuilding, have pivoted toward public health and humanitarian support. Mitigating the potentially devastating long-term effects of the pandemic on nascent livelihoods and governance systems, and the fragile social fabric of conflict-affected communities in particular, remains crucial. Focus must also remain on higher-level efforts to seek negotiated solutions to conflict and address the underlying causes of violence, while augmenting efforts for bottom-up support with incremental and small-scale peacebuilding initiatives.

¹ Ministry of Health and Sports, [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(Covid-19\) Surveillance Dashboard \(Myanmar\)](#), accessed on 28 July 2020.

Myanmar on the Eve of the Covid-19 Pandemic

Covid-19 hit Myanmar when the country was experiencing a steady increase in active conflict and a deterioration in the prospects of achieving peace through a political dialogue that had made minor gains since 2016.² In Rakhine State, the rise of the Arakan Army (AA) had led to the most intense fighting in the country in recent decades,³ whilst in Northern Shan State, conflict had been growing between the Tatmadaw and several groups including the Ta'ang National Liberation Army throughout 2019 and 2020.⁴ On the eve of the pandemic, thousands of people across Myanmar were living in conditions of displacement and without access to reliable health and sanitation services. As well as those affected by active conflicts with the Tatmadaw, tens of thousands of Kachin, Shan, Chin and Karen and an estimated 130,000 Rohingya, had been displaced across the country.⁵ Internally displaced person (IDP) camps have been described by Human Rights Watch as 'tinder boxes' for the spread of Covid-19.⁶ Although none have reported positive cases to date, public health concerns have reignited debates about IDP camp closures, particularly in Kachin State.⁷

Despite calls by the United Nations (UN) Secretary General for a global ceasefire, conflict between the AA and the Tatmadaw has continued to intensify across Rakhine State.⁸ Since consolidating its stronghold in Northern Rakhine over the past two years, the AA has moved further into central townships, and now appears to be active in the South.⁹ In a further indication that new fronts may be emerging, a landmine explosion was recorded in Toungup township in Southern Rakhine State, on 1 July 2020, killing four people.¹⁰ Reports have continued to emerge of the Tatmadaw targeting civilians and destroying property in other parts of the State.¹¹

Myanmar's peace process has been stalled since October 2018 when the Karen National Union (KNU) and Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS) departed from the government-led negotiations. Despite an uptake in formal meetings between the ethnic armed organizations (EAOs), government and political parties showing promising signs of reviving the process in early 2020, the arrival of Covid-19 has diminished prospects of a breakthrough. By March 2020 face-to-face meetings and domestic travel had become almost impossible and the Panglong Conference scheduled for April 2020 was postponed.¹² As Myanmar continues to face the new threat of Covid-19, the old challenge of resolving the country's many ethnic conflicts still persists.

² UNHCR and OCHA, ['Myanmar Flash Update: Humanitarian Situation in Rathedaung'](#), 30 June 2020.

³ International Crisis Group, 'An Avoidable War: Politics and Conflict in Myanmar's Rakhine State', 9 June 2020.

⁴ Myanmar Institute for Peace and Security, [Annual Peace and Security Review 2020](#), p. 11.

⁵ Singh, P. and Hardman, N., ['Pandemic Adds New Threat for Rohingyas in Myanmar'](#) in *The Diplomat*, 28 May 2020.

⁶ Human Rights Watch, ['Myanmar: Displacement Camps Are Covid-19 Tinderboxes'](#), 30 March 2020.

⁷ [UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to Covid-19 in Myanmar](#), 10 July 2020; Gerin, R. ['Myanmar's IDP Camps Put 350,000 in Path of Coronavirus: Rights Group'](#) in *Radio Free Asia*, 30 March 2020.

⁸ UN News, ['Covid-19: UN chief calls for global ceasefire to focus on 'the true fight of our lives''](#), 23 March 2020.

⁹ International Crisis Group, 'An Avoidable War: Politics and Conflict in Myanmar's Rakhine State', 9 June 2020.

¹⁰ Narinjara, ['4 killed in Taungup landmine explosion'](#) in *Myanmar Peace Monitor*, 1 July 2020.

¹¹ Sai Wunna, ['Thousands flee military offensive in Rakhine's Rathedaung'](#) in *The Myanmar Times*, 29 June 2020.

¹² Sai Wunna, ['Pandemic delays Myanmar peace talks'](#) in *Myanmar Times*, 26 March 2020.

Covid-19 Responses Show Uneven Collaboration

Although the official number of cases and the death toll from Covid-19 in Myanmar has so far been much lower than health experts may have first expected, the potential for the pandemic to spread exponentially across the country remains real. National support for Myanmar's coronavirus response has been mixed, as it is marked by delayed, uneven and haphazard regulations, policies and initiatives. The government has been praised by the World Health Organization and others for acting to suspend flights, ban mass gatherings and instigate partial lockdowns in Yangon region.¹³ At the same time, civil society groups from conflict-affected areas have complained that special powers to tackle 'misinformation' have been misused to quash criticism of the Tatmadaw.¹⁴

Government action has focused on mitigating the arrival of infected individuals from overseas and limiting the waves of documented and undocumented migrants returning via land borders. Sporadic lockdowns have been applied in densely populated townships in Yangon in response to specific infection clusters. Outside the urban and Bamar-dominated areas, however, government pandemic responses have been less sweeping. In many areas, local governance actors and civil society organizations have stepped up to implement some of their own measures.¹⁵

How did this situation arise? Between mid-April and late May 2020, enhanced efforts were undertaken by a variety of stakeholders to assist EAOs with Covid-19 programming.¹⁶ Donor agencies and multilateral funds, along with scores of local and international non-governmental organizations redirected their programming to meet the needs generated by Covid-19. This involved not only increasing support for health services and equipment to fight the virus, but also promoting public awareness campaigns, and supporting community screening and quarantine facilities.

Initial research undertaken by The Asia Foundation and Saferworld highlights that these interventions have been more successful in Southeastern parts of the country than in other conflict-affected areas such as Shan and Kachin States. Efforts undertaken in Rakhine State appear not to have had any impact at all. A number of factors could be responsible for these geographic variations. There are differences in the number and scope of civil society networks, and in the ability of community health workers to work safely in certain areas but not others. The death of a World Health Organization worker in Minbya township, Rakhine State on 20th April 2020 whilst transporting coronavirus swabs out of a conflict zone is a stark reminder of the real barriers to accessing healthcare that exist for communities affected by conflict in that region.¹⁷

To date, there have been a handful of joint pandemic responses between the Tatmadaw and certain EAOs. These include agreements to set up screening check points, share personal protective equipment, and coordinate efforts to screen and quarantine suspected cases.¹⁸ However, expectations that increased cooperation in fighting Covid-19 will ultimately lead to sustained benefits for the peace process should be tempered. Recent initiatives have shown that the potential for successful joint interventions may be greater where they involve smaller armed groups and in areas where government

¹³ Kyaw Phyo Tha, '[WHO Country Chief urges Myanmar to sustain amazing Covid-19 response](#)' in Irrawaddy, 1 July 2020.

¹⁴ Progressive Voice of Myanmar '[A Nation Left Behind: Myanmar's Weaponization of Covid-19](#)', June 2020.

¹⁵ Swe Lei Mon, 'More ethnic armed groups enlist in Covid-19 fight in Myanmar' in Myanmar Times, 25 May 2020.

¹⁶ The Asia Foundation and Saferworld, *Covid-19 Committees and Health Service Providers*, June 2020; International Crisis Group, Conflict, *Health Cooperation and Covid-19 in Myanmar*, Yangon/Brussels, Crisis Group Asia Briefing 161, May 19, 2020.

¹⁷ International Crisis Group, '[Conflict, Health Cooperation and Covid-19 in Myanmar](#)', 19 May 2020.

¹⁸ Ibid.

control is sufficiently secure. In other areas, however, such as those governed by the KNU and RCSS, Covid-19 has coincided with reports of fighting and tensions, none of which are certain to abate when the health threat eventually diminishes.¹⁹ These are deeply embedded concerns, and in some cases, it is perceived that the Covid-19 crisis has actually created opportunities for the Tatmadaw to continue its tactics of intimidation and objectives of territorial expansion.²⁰

There is evidence of both the Tatmadaw and EAOs increasing their public engagement through the Covid-19 crisis. The Tatmadaw has been seen to make ritualistic public donations of supplies and assistance to some EAOs, including the Wa, Mong La group and others, whilst EAOs have also looked to assert greater influence at the local level through their Covid-19 responses.²¹ The militaristic undertone of public health discourse by both the Tatmadaw and EAOs has caused clashes on several occasions, undermining both their efforts to work collaboratively on the pandemic response and potential future peacebuilding objectives.²²

Covid-19 Related Ceasefire Offers Little Hope of Real Engagement

Throughout March and April 2020, with the presence of Covid-19 confirmed in Myanmar, public calls to the Tatmadaw by certain EAOs requesting a ceasefire increased, in line with international pressure called for in particular by the UN Secretary-General.²³ Whilst initially rejected by the Tatmadaw, which described the proposals as 'not realistic',²⁴ a unilateral ceasefire was eventually declared on 9 May.²⁵ It should be emphasized that, although cessation of violence should generally be accepted as a positive development, recent examples in Myanmar have yielded little by way of tangible results. Notably, the unilateral ceasefire declared by the Tatmadaw from late 2018 to August 2019 aimed to enable bilateral ceasefire negotiations with several EAOs but achieved no formal progress.²⁶

The Tatmadaw's declaration made on 9 May 2020 includes the assertion that: 'ethnic armed organizations need to control themselves and take responsibilities for avoiding attacks [*sic*]'.²⁷ Beyond the vaguely threatening language of the text itself, there is a graver concern that the Tatmadaw's ceasefire does not apply to the conflict in Rakhine State, given the government's labelling of the Arakan Army as a 'terrorist organization' in line with the respective Myanmar laws.²⁸ The ceasefire may also be seen as an attempt by the Tatmadaw to improve its image before its first six-monthly compliance report on the implementation of interim measures in the Rohingya genocide case was submitted to the International Court of Justice. U Zaw Htay, a former military officer and current Director General of the State Counsellor's Office, has acknowledged that the international legal claims that Myanmar is facing have

¹⁹ Carter, L., '[Myanmar: Armed conflict puts brakes on Covid-19 response](#)' in DW, 7 May 2020.

²⁰ Nyein Nyein, '[In Western Myanmar, State Counsellor's Praise for the Tatmadaw Causes Unease](#)' in Irrawaddy, 23 April 2020.

²¹ Swe Lei Mon, '[Military chief offers medical teams to two Shan armed groups](#)' in Myanmar Times, 12 May 2020.

²² Swe Lei Mon, '[More ethnic armed groups enlist in Covid-19 fight in Myanmar](#)' in Myanmar Times, 25 May 2020.

²³ Hoelzl, V. and Diamond, C. '[Myanmar's Military Steps up Attacks and Coronavirus Spreads](#)' in Al Jazeera, 16 April 2020.

²⁴ Sai Wunna, '[Tatmadaw rejects call for ceasefire during pandemic](#)' in Myanmar Times, 2 April 2020.

²⁵ Myo Thiri Kyaw, '[Tatmadaw's Covid-19 Ceasefire Leaves Little hope for Conflict Wrecked Arakan](#)' in Development Media Group, 10 May 2020.

²⁶ Kumbun, J., '[Myanmar's Meaningless Unilateral Ceasefires](#)' in The Diplomat, 29 May 2020.

²⁷ Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, '[Statement on Ceasefire and Eternal Peace](#)', 9 May 2020.

²⁸ Nyein Nyein, '[Humanitarians join UN, Ambassadors in Calling for Ceasefire in Myanmar's Rakhine State](#)' in Irrawaddy, 1 July 2020.

'severely' damaged the country's reputation in the international community.²⁹ In the absence of an all-inclusive ceasefire that extends to Rakhine State, it is difficult to see how the Tatmadaw's recent declaration could bolster the image of the government in these circumstances.

Keeping Peace Talks Alive During the Pandemic Response

With the peace process effectively stalled prior to the onset of Covid-19, those EAOs that had signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) were already expressing frustration at seeing little benefit from it. Meanwhile, with the Tatmadaw heavily engaged in fighting the Arakan Army in Rakhine State, there has been a growing perception of the Tatmadaw shifting their efforts beyond NCA signatories toward strengthening relations with powerful non-NCA signatory groups in the North, particularly the Kachin and the Wa.³⁰

With Covid-19 challenges now adding further complexity to existing dynamics and frustrations, where does this leave the NCA? In late April 2020, the government formed the 'Committee to Coordinate and Collaborate with Ethnic Armed Organizations to Prevent, Control and Treat Covid-19' ('Committee'). The four-member body comprises representatives from government-affiliated entities including the National Reconciliation and Peace Center (NRPC), the Peace Commission and the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs.³¹ The move was welcomed by both NCA signatory and non-signatory EAOs at the time, as evidenced by their participation in public discussion and information sharing on their own Covid-19 response plans.³² Importantly, the Committee has collected information from 14 EAOs, not limited to those who have signed the NCA, in a move that could lend hope to a growing space for dialogue between the EAOs and government. Still, practical challenges remain. Box 1 outlines the main functions of the Committee – an ambitious list of propositions that recommends sharing information, integrating parallel systems, and working together to manage flows of people between separately governed areas. Given that these are some of the same fundamental issues at play in the ongoing political dialogue process (where no real progress has been made), expectations about the Committee's effectiveness should be tempered.

Functions of the Committee to Coordinate and Collaborate with Ethnic Armed Organizations to Prevent, Control and Treat Covid-19

- Exchanging information and data on preventing, controlling and treating on Covid-19;
- Coordinating for monitoring and examining on returnees who are passing border gates, exchanging information on suspected Covid-19 patients, referring the suspected patients and identifying the people who had contact with the suspected patients;
- Coordinating on quarantine and treating Covid-19 positive patients;
- Coordinating on complying health guidelines and directives;
- Coordinating on technologies and methodologies when implementing Covid-19 controlling activities to be in harmony;

²⁹ The Irrawaddy, '[Myanmar's image 'severely damaged' by international legal cases over Rohingya: Govt](#)' in Irrawaddy, 15 November 2019.

³⁰ Swe Lei Mon '[Wa armed group reaches out to Tatmadaw leader](#)' in Myanmar Times, 21 May 2020.

³¹ Nyein Nyein, '[Myanmar sets up Covid-19 Committee with Rebel Armies](#)' in Irrawaddy, 28 April 2020.

³² Ethnic Health Committee, '[Ethnic Health Committee's statement on the Government formation of Covid-19 prevention Coordination Committee to cooperate with EAOs](#)' in Progressive Voice of Myanmar, 6 May 2020.

- Coordinating on preventing, controlling and treating on Covid-19 among the EAOs and the State governments; and
- When there is emergency implementation needed on Covid-19 in the areas EAOs are operating, coordinating in line with the NRPC's guidance.³³

Box 1. Functions of the EAO/NRPC Committee on Covid-19 response

Another Union Peace Conference, and then Elections

Against this backdrop of multiple diverging engagements between EAOs, the Tatmadaw and other bodies, the government announced the possibility of convening another Union Peace Conference, scheduled for mid-August 2020 but with reduced attendance and designated social distancing protocols.³⁴ Flights are to be arranged to transport EAO leaders from Thailand, and the agenda is to include discussions with NCA signatories on 'security reconciliation.'³⁵ Previous Union Peace Conferences have often broken down in acrimony and produced little by way of measurable progress.³⁶ If this year's Conference proceeds, expectations of what it will be able to achieve in the midst of the Covid-19 emergency should be tempered.

Just as the military officials appear to prioritize form over substance in promoting a ceasefire, so the peace conference plans appear predicated on bolstering reputations ahead of the November nationwide elections.³⁷ Even where EAO and government cooperation has been positive in responding to the health emergency animus towards the Union civilian and military leadership will likely rise in many ethnic areas ahead of the November polls, and could escalate again where electoral expectations are not reflected in results, further deepening political divisions. Related concerns include whether safe and straightforward access to polling stations can be guaranteed for remote and conflict-affected communities.

The November elections may bring with them a reshuffle of the government representatives assigned responsibilities for the peace process, even though the NLD is expected to retain its majority.³⁸ More significant changes may be seen in the members elected to parliament, where the NLD may lose seats to ethnic political parties in the States, and to other parties such as the Union Solidarity and Development Party, or the People's Party, in the Bamar regions. Such changes in parliament will have a direct impact on NCA negotiations in future, as the Framework for Political Dialogue requires elected political parties to form one third of the tripartite negotiating table. Furthermore, due to the lengthy period of transition following the election, substantive engagement by the next government in peace process issues would be unlikely before April or May 2021, further underscoring the symbolic importance for the NLD of squeezing in a last symbolic event before the door shuts on its current term.

³³ Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Office of the President, 'Forming coordinating committee with EAOs on preventing, controlling and treating on COVID 19', Directive No.63/2020, April 27, 2020.

³⁴ Myat Thura, '[Govt plans fourth Panglong Session for July](#)' in Myanmar Times, 1 July 2020.

³⁵ Global New Light of Myanmar, 'Ministry of State Counsellor Office holds press briefing about handling of prevailing issues', 31 May 2020.

³⁶ Sai Wansai, '[Constitution-Making and Peace Process Stagnation in Myanmar](#)', Transnational Institute, 3 September 2018.

³⁷ Myat Thura, '[Govt plans fourth Panglong Session for July](#)', Myanmar Times, 1 July 2020.

³⁸ Sithu Aung Myint, '[To revive the peace process, all sides need to compromise](#)' in Frontier Myanmar, 18 June 2020.

Supporting Peace Work is More Important than Ever

Covid-19 Support Should Reinforce Peacebuilding Commitments

In 2019, the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre imposed conditions on development assistance and called on UN agencies to improve overall aid coordination and to seek formal permission to operate, causing a great deal of apprehension and confusion amongst aid agencies. The letter distributed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs states: ‘it is suggested that the development assistances and projects to be provided or funded by the UN agencies to Ethnic Armed Organizations (or) ethnic political parties in respective States and Regions should be informed to NRPC through the proper diplomatic channels in order to succeed [*sic*] the implementation of the National Ceasefire Agreement – NCA [*sic*].’³⁹

All governments, of course, have a right and responsibility to oversee foreign activities taking place within their borders, including development assistance and peace support. The problem in this case is that these oversight measures effectively undermine the promise of the ‘interim arrangements’, a key component of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. Ongoing concerns of this type indicate the fragile and incomplete state of the peace process at this point. Given such problems, it is premature to see the pandemic as an opportunity to further advance power-sharing or joint governance activity. In short, the peace process is unlikely to receive a Covid-19 cooperation boost given that the underlying conditions which hinder progress remain unaddressed.

Donors Should Guard Against Funding Less Peace Work

The redirection of Western donor assistance towards public health responses and pandemic containment will have long-standing consequences for the peace process and conflict resolution in Myanmar. One key source of assistance, the multi-donor Joint Peace Fund, is nearing the end of its first phase at a time when Western aid funding is likely to be cut, given massive budget constraints stemming from the Covid-19 economic fallout. Other peace support budgets may also be vulnerable given both the need to spend funds on responding to the pandemic and reduced overall funding availability. What is more, donor fatigue may well continue to limit interest in a peace process that has made limited progress, and the unfaltering commitment by China to outspend all other foreign governments in Myanmar.

Funding decisions are complex, but it would be short-sighted to cut support for programs working to alleviate hardship in conflict-affected areas and promote peace in the current environment of increased conflict. Scrutiny and analysis around spending are useful, although peacemaking and peacebuilding work is, by its very nature, a long-term enterprise. It remains critical to retain a long-term view around expected results and to be poised to capture opportunities if conditions change. Peace support is also relatively low-cost, especially when considering its potential impact.

The Importance of Localized Approaches

Covid-19 programming in conflict areas offers various opportunities for learning and innovation. Donors should not be locked into state-centric approaches. They may consider augmenting support for innovation in cash-based and livelihood programming, remote monitoring systems and more. Above all, organizing support for the pandemic response highlights the urgent necessity for localization.⁴⁰ It is

³⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Letter to All the Offices of the United Nations, its Specialized Agencies and International Organizations”, Nay Pyi Taw, Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, MOFA No.33 08 39, October 4, 2019.

⁴⁰ Walsh, M., ‘[Time to recenter power to northern Shan State’s first responders](#)’ in Frontier Myanmar, 27 January 2020.

already clear that robust local aid networks, such as those found in Kayin and Kachin States, have responded comparatively well to the current crisis. How can these lessons be harnessed to improve the effectiveness of development and peacebuilding initiatives into the future?

Donors should be more alert than ever to the need to avoid exacerbating regional inequalities in Myanmar by prioritizing relatively 'easy to work' conflict-affected locations such as the Southeast, over other harder to reach areas, such as Eastern Shan State. Instead, Covid-19 may present an entry point for donors to expand their programming to areas of Myanmar where there is little foreign assistance. Equally, international agencies should be aware of the risk of a 'saturation effect' developing in the Southeast. This may arise where EAOs seeking Covid-19 support are potentially hampered in their work if high numbers of international agencies are replicating efforts.⁴¹ The stark regional differences in Covid-19 responses across Myanmar are an important reminder of the geographic restrictions placed on donors. Nevertheless, effective infectious disease responses must be universal, and past efforts to tackle HIV, tuberculosis and malaria in Myanmar all offer examples of how aid can be usefully provided to the country's more inaccessible corners.

The illusion of increased cooperation and collaboration between government and EAO actors in the peace process over tackling the challenge of Covid-19 is unlikely to become a reality, so the Covid-19 response should not be expected to make an automatic or lasting contribution to peacebuilding in Myanmar. While there is great need for collaboration across conflict lines in order to tackle the pandemic, and both the government and EAOs have vital roles to play, there is little chance that such steps will shift the dynamics of Myanmar's intractable conflicts. Donors and other members of the international community must not neglect their commitment to engaging in long-term support toward peacebuilding and conflict resolution, through adaptation, learning and a commitment to innovative ways of thinking.

Was this resource useful? We invite comments and topic ideas for future briefings on Covid-19 and conflict in Myanmar

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kyaw.oo@asiafoundation.org

For contact in English: Tabea Campbell Pauli, Program Adviser, tabea.pauli@asiafoundation.org



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⁴¹ The major humanitarian and development actors, particularly Access to Health (A2H), the Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT), and major UN agencies have released resources to assist displaced people and support EAO service providers such as ethnic health departments. See [Access to Health Fund COVID19 Response Dashboard](#); '[Myanmar: UN supports Covid-19 response efforts](#)', UNOCHA, 15 April 2020; '[LIFT announces new funding to support Myanmar's Covid-19 response](#)', media notification 9 April 2020.