

Update on Water Scarcity
Thursday 24 of March 2022
Solidarités International Myanmar

Keywords: water insecurity, climate change, preparedness, public health, IDPs

Introduction:

The Rohingya IDPs in the Pauktaw Township in Rakhine State (Myanmar) suffer annual potable **water scarcity** during the dry season into early rainy season. Due to hydrogeology, with surface brackish water and sea water intrusion, the area's main water source is rainwater collected in ponds. Due to water loss, linked to seepage and evaporation, the ponds go dry 3-months a year, impeding meeting the minimum humanitarian standards during water scarcity period, and water is boated in to fill the gaps. This is a costly intervention, easily disrupted and not financially sustainable. Moreover, water supplied is limited, impacting personal hygiene, including menstrual hygiene, and public health, creating the conditions for diffusion of skin infections, COVID-19, acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) etc. Climate change is starting to exacerbate these issues, as sea level rise threatens to flood low lying camps, increases saltwater intrusion and makes rainy season unpredictable.

Update:

Considering the upcoming season of water scarcity in **Pauktaw** and the need for coordinated efforts to ensure continuation of water supply, as a life-saving action, it is shared below with relevant stakeholders the summary of the trend of water consumption and forecasted date of the start of the emergency response, based on our software to monitor and analyse each pond's available water, together with the user numbers, and actual water consumption and losses, to predict scarcity timing and plan water boating for Rohingya settlements of Pauktaw township where Solidarités International is the main WASH service provider.

Together with water boating, the response provided by Solidarités International includes a gradual reduction of water consumption to 7.5 litres/person/day, and a decrease of water points to ration distribution to delay the start of water boating. In addition, water conservation behavioural change messaging is provided to IDPs. To save freshwater, brackish water is used in public handwashing stations.

The forecast below is based on pond monitoring done on the **18th of March 2022**:

Location	Trend & Forecast of water boating
<i>Ah Nauk Ye village</i>	The daily water consumption is 32.6 liters per person on average Water boating is needed starting from the second week of June Remote pumping has started
<i>Ah Nauk Ye camp</i>	Average consumption l/p/d is 20.4 Water boating is needed starting from the Third week of April Awareness on correct utilisation of water resources to be continued, rehabilitation of the distribution points is ongoing
<i>Kyein Ni Pyin</i>	Average consumption l/p/d is 7.5 Water consumption is decreasing (but this may be due to other issue) Water boating is needed starting from the End of April Solidarités is getting prepared for water boating
<i>Nget Chaung 1</i>	Average consumption l/p/d is 16.68 Water consumption is decreasing Water boating is needed starting from the First week of June
<i>Nget Chaung 2</i>	Average consumption l/p/d is 17.47 Water consumption is decreasing Water boating is needed starting from Mid-August Awareness on correct utilisation of water resources to be continued

Recommendations:

- To all: Thanks to pond improvements and prediction capacity and the application of innovative water saving techniques, water supply in the camps has never suffered from major disruption when put in place. Nevertheless, limited supply of water during dry seasons still exacerbates public health risks. Until durable and dignified solutions for the IDPs can be provided, it is recommended to ensure sufficient freshwater availability by reducing evaporation and seepage, enlarging existing ponds, raising dikes for flood vulnerable ponds and using non-potable water in innovative ways.
- To CMA: a call for urgent action is done especially around Kyein Ni Pyin (KNP) to support operations.
- To CMA: it is recommended to facilitate coordination with CMS to ensure that the WTU is maintained functional and the water supply services are done smoothly and in alignment with the mandate to provide the community members with 10 l/p/d and contain the public health risks particularly of AWD spread.
- To the Water Scarcity Technical Working Group lead and members: to timely coordinate the water scarcity response this year and identify more sustainable solution for the years to come being the water scarcity a recurrent subject in Sittwe & Pauktaw.
- To WASH and non-WASH actors in camps/villages of concern: to collaborate to raise awareness on the correct use of water resources and consistent behaviors to be adopted.
- To donors: to assist Myanmar in the provision of humanitarian assistance to affected persons who have been internally displaced and to support the 2022 joint response plan for the Rohingya humanitarian crisis to ensure adequate resources for addressing the humanitarian crisis are available.

Solidarités International invites all stakeholders, government and non-governmental, to continue raising attention on the importance of addressing vital water needs of affected population living in sub-standard settlements through relevant channels and to respond collectively, while seeking for more durable solutions.

For more information please contact:

Eric Rheinstein

WASH Coordinator
Solidarités International Myanmar
wash.coo@solidarites-myanmar.org

Amandine Arduin

Deputy Field Coordinator
Solidarités International Myanmar
rks.dpt.fc@solidarites-myanmar.org

Anna Montironi

Deputy Country Director for programmes
Solidarités International Myanmar
dpt.cd.prg@solidarites-myanmar.org