



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. EMBASSY RANGOON

110 University Avenue, Kamayut Township, Rangoon, Burma

**Remarks by Chargé d'Affaires Michael E. Thurston
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RELEASE IN
FULL

Thank you for joining us today. I am here today to announce that the United States is donating a total of \$3 million dollars to assist those displaced by civil conflict and to reduce the risk of natural disasters in this country, through USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA).

Joining me here today are Sayadaw U Pyin Nyar Thiha and U Han of the Sitagu International Buddhist Academy, and representatives from the Interreligious Council of Myanmar's Working Group of Religions for Peace: Dr. Hla Tun of the Hindu community, Daw Yin Yin Maw from the Myanmar Council of Churches, U Myint Swe of Ratana Metta, and U Aye Lwin of the Islamic Center of Myanmar. These individuals, who represent this country's rich ethnic and religious heritage, remind us of our collective responsibility to help the victims of civil conflict and natural disaster, regardless of their religion or background.

Also joining us today is the UNDP Resident Representative, Ashok Nigam, Barbara Manzi, the head of the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Ramesh Shrestha, the UNICEF Resident Representative, and representatives from a number of our partners in the non-government organization community.

Recent violence in Rakhine State has forced tens of thousands of people to leave their homes. During this time, President U Thein Sein's leadership has mobilized government relief efforts to stabilize the situation in Rakhine and provide for the needs of those displaced by the violence. The Minister of Border Affairs Thein Htay and the Minister of Social Welfare Aung Kyi have provided support from their Ministries to facilitate the travel of staff from international organizations, NGOs, and donor countries to the affected regions to assess the needs of the people who have been displaced. Military, local government officials and the international community have all worked together to provide a multi-sector response to this humanitarian crisis.

As a result of last week's assessment mission, the United States has rapidly acted to donate a total of \$1 million dollars to provide emergency assistance to displaced people in Rakhine State and ongoing assistance to people who have been displaced in Kachin State. This assistance will help people from all communities who have been displaced within the boundaries of Rakhine State or Kachin State. We will continue to work with the government to assess the situation as it evolves and respond as we are able. Our aim is to help all communities in need. The needs are great, and the United States is pleased to be able to support these important humanitarian efforts.