



## **Protection Alert: Earthquake in Myanmar**

**04 April 2025**

*The Global Protection Cluster (GPC) is issuing this urgent Protection Alert in response to the devastating earthquake in Myanmar, which has exacerbated an already dire humanitarian and protection crisis. Distressing reports from protection partners indicate severe impacts on communities already affected by conflict and displacement.*

On March 28, a powerful 7.7 magnitude earthquake struck central Myanmar, with its epicenter located approximately 16 km North-West of Sagaing City, and 19 km North-West of Mandalay city. A significant aftershock measuring 6.4 in magnitude followed at a depth of 10 km, further compounding the destruction. The earthquake was felt across neighboring countries, including Thailand, India, Bangladesh, and China. This disaster has caused widespread devastation in Myanmar, destroying homes and civilian infrastructures, including schools and health centers. The collapse of roads and bridges, and the disruption of communication and electricity networks has severely hindered rescue efforts. Current reports indicate more than 3,000 deaths, with 4,715 others injured, and hundreds still missing.

The earthquake has struck areas already deeply affected by Myanmar's ongoing conflict, compounding vulnerabilities for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and conflict-affected communities. Of the 3.5 million IDPs in Myanmar, 1.6 million reside in the regions hardest hit by the earthquake. Even before this disaster, nearly 20 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance due to protracted conflict and attacks against civilians, soaring rates of poverty, and displacement. A 20-day ceasefire has been declared from 2 to 22 April, however the Myanmar Army continues to impose severe access restrictions, raising serious concerns about the safety of affected populations and humanitarian actors and further limiting response efforts.

Protection actors are actively responding to the most urgent needs of those affected by the earthquake. Mobile protection response teams are responding to immediate priorities, including to deliver urgent Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support (MHPSS), family tracing and reunification, GBV services, legal aid and access to essential services and safe information. Mine action interventions are also underway to prevent further loss of life and injury. The Protection Cluster is leading with response planning together with local, national and international partners, and advancing Communication with Communities (CwC) efforts to ensure that accurate and life-saving information reaches affected populations. Protection monitoring and inter-agency rapid needs assessments are underway to better understand the evolving protection risks and inform the response.

The GPC urges all stakeholders to act swiftly to ensure a protection-centered response that prioritizes the safety, rights and dignity of those affected by this crisis and further enables the response efforts of local and national protection partners. Actions needed include:

- All parties to the conflict to uphold their obligations under International Humanitarian Law, immediately halt attacks on civilians and adhere to a full ceasefire.
- All parties to the conflict to ensure full, unimpeded humanitarian access to all affected areas, enabling communities to access timely assistance and protection while humanitarian actors are able to safely operate and reach those experiencing the greatest need.
- Partners to step up the delivery of MHPSS services and further leverage community-based protection mechanisms, including child protection and GBV prevention through coordinated and integrated interventions.
- Donors to further direct and scale-up support to local responders and national protection organizations who are on the frontlines of the response.
- Investment, by all humanitarian partners and leadership, in the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, ensuring it remains a priority area of action throughout the response effort.

For more information on the protection situation in Myanmar, please contact:

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