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## Myanmar (Burma)

**Total area:**

676,578 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:**

51,486,253 (2014)

**Literacy:**

83%

**Official languages:**

Myanmarese

**GDP (PPP) per capita:**

\$6,360 (2017 est.)

**Life expectancy:**

65 years

**Religions:**

89% Buddhist, 4% Muslim, 3% Protestant, 1% Catholic, 1% indigenous beliefs, 2% other religions

### Prayer points

**Radio wisdom**

There are still some 600,000 Rohingya living in Myanmar who need our prayers. A new radio programme made for them was broadcast recently, called 'Navigating Wisely Through Life's Challenges'; a result of consultations with Rohingya families on health, welfare, and peace and reconciliation. These will be also loaded onto 3,000 memory cards to be given to mobile phone users. Pray for impact among this unreached group. (Reach Beyond - May 2020)

**Provisions for refugee camps**

On the border of Thailand and Myanmar lie several refugee camps, some of which have been there for decades and which house up to 100,000 people. These camps are primitive and the people who live in them are reliant upon supplies being brought to them on a regular basis. Curfews and travel restrictions between provinces in Thailand are creating a situation which, if not addressed, will result in a massive shortage of basic necessities and food for these people. Pray that authorities will recognise what could become a bigger problem than the coronavirus itself, and relax measures in order that food and water can be made available within the camps. Pray for Christian people within the camps that they would be able to find ways of showing the love of Jesus to those who are in need. (AsiaLink - May 2020)

**The De'ang Pale People of Central Asia**

The De'ang Pale People are an unreached people group who live in various locations along the China/Myanmar/Thai border. Most of them are farmers or loggers. Buddhism, animistic beliefs and

rituals cause them to be trapped in constant fear of Shamans and demons. They are considered to be relatively resistant to Christianity. Pray for those few Christians in this people group to have the courage to share the gospel of the Lord Jesus with their families and neighbours. Pray for them to be released from the fear and bondage of the spirit world and to be born again by the Spirit of the Living God and know HIS peace in abundance. (AsiaLink - April 2020)

### **'Rice Intensification' to improve rice yields**

In Eastern Shan, Myanmar, many people diagnosed with leprosy are forced to live hand to mouth surviving on subsistence farming. Praise God for the success of the new system of 'Rice Intensification', a method to improve rice yields. Pray that many people will benefit from this training and for the success of other income generating crops such as rubber and star beans. Pray too for the success of 'Lunch for Leprosy', a fundraising opportunity for supporters to share food together, raising funds to help people affected by leprosy. (The Leprosy Mission England and Wales - December 2019)

### **Relationships with Theological Colleges**

Give thanks for the developing relationships with theological colleges in Myanmar, who have been open to working with The Leprosy Mission. Pray that plans to add teaching modules about leprosy to their courses will soon be in place. Pray that students will be inspired to see the importance of mission through the local church, and that the Holy Spirit will soften their hearts to serve people affected by leprosy. (The Leprosy Mission England and Wales - August 2019)

### **Christian radio programmes in remote communities**

One radio listener in Myanmar wrote, "I am now in a very remote area. In my village, we do not have a pastor, evangelist or any Christian worker. One day, when I tuned the radio, I heard a radio programme broadcast in my native language and was so excited to be listening to the programme. From that time onward, thankfully I am very blessed by the Word of God. This is the only programme I am now relying on for my spiritual and physical growth. Not only me, I invite villagers to come to my house and listen to the radio programme. Thank God for this opportunity." Pray for the impact of Christian radio programmes in remote communities throughout Myanmar. Pray that God would transform lives. (Reach Beyond - June 2019)

### **Freedom for the Rohingya**

'For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight.' (Psalm 72:12-14) The targeting of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar 'seems a textbook example of ethnic cleansing', the UN human rights chief says. Around 300,000 have fled to neighbouring Bangladesh, with 450,000 remaining. Pray that God would watch over them, take pity on them and rescue them from the oppression of the military in Myanmar. Pray that through this situation, God would bring many Rohingya people to salvation and that they would find security, identity and peace in Him. Pray for people to be willing to go and minister to the Rohingya. (Frontiers - November 2017)

### **The Word of Hope Ministry**

Myanmar is one of the world's most impoverished states and still experiences unrest after decades under a brutal military regime. Christians in Myanmar face adversity, persecution and isolation – over 3,000 Christian villages have been burned in the last 10 years. Pray that perceptions will be changed and barriers will be broken in Myanmar to bring freedom and protection to Christians. The Word of Hope ministry is sharing the gospel and planting churches in Myanmar; pray that through this ministry many people will find a new hope in Jesus. (WorldShare - November 2017)

### **Valued Community Members**

Pray that people affected by leprosy in Myanmar will become aware of the support offered by The Leprosy Mission (TLM) for medical treatment and education as well as being aware of their rights, and

able to speak up about issues relating to their lives and communities so that they can earn a living. Pray too that they will be accepted as valuable members of their communities who can influence people around them regarding leprosy and other disabilities and for TLM-Myanmar to help change public attitudes towards leprosy. Pray for the medical and office staff who work long hours to ensure that people affected by leprosy are loved and cared for. Pray that God will bless and strengthen them as they continue in his service. (The Leprosy Mission England and Wales - July 2017)

### **Disability Resource Centres give voice**

The Leprosy Mission's community-based approach strengthens people affected by leprosy and disability, to give them a voice to speak up about issues about their lives and communities. The Disability Resource Centres are focal points for rehabilitation; visible where leprosy is highest which ensures new cases are detected and treated in a timely way. Pray for the Orthopaedic Shoe Workshop in Taungoo Township, that it will change lives in a lasting way. Give thanks how God is working through the physiotherapists and other workshop team members. (The Leprosy Mission England and Wales - )

### **A Practical Prayer - 5,000 Blankets**

Two assistant pastors have been charged with unlawful association with an armed ethnic group, accused of serving as "informers and spreading false news on behalf of the armed insurgents". These pastors face between three and five years in prison. Meanwhile, an urgent prayer request from a contact at refugee camps in the same region: "Night Temperature -4°C, elderly sick women trying to get warm under the sun. Mothers with new babies are sleeping on the ground... food, shelter, warm cloth in urgent need." Please, join us in prayer for God's provision of 5,000 blankets for these people living in desperate conditions, largely ignored by the media. (AsiaLink - April 2017)

### **Campaigns for complacent believers**

Prayer is requested by our partners for gospel campaigns. One evangelist writes to say, "By late October and into November, several youth renewal meetings and evangelistic crusades are being planned. I believe it must have been one of the effects of economic and political changes; many young people went to Yangon upon the news that companies have opened up and new jobs are available. Many young people are tired of tilling the ground everyday with little return to their barns. They look for a new way to make a living and that means, for most people, leaving their home towns. Hence, it is very common to have few young people in the churches these days." Please pray for the unbelieving communities and complacent believers being reached through the campaigns. (AsiaLink - November 2016)

### **Political transition**

Please pray for Burma's new president, U Htin Kyaw, as he takes office as the first civilian president in over 50 years. Pray for wisdom for Aung San Suu Kyi in her capacity as Burma's new Foreign Minister and the ruling party's 'state counsellor'. Ask God to strengthen and encourage political prisoners who are paying such a high price for expressing their views, and that restrictive laws on freedom of religion or belief would be repealed before they can further harm freedom of religion or belief in Burma. Pray that this time of transition would mark the beginning of a new era of peace, thanking God for the changes that have already taken place in Burma. (Christian Solidarity Worldwide - May 2016)

### **Cyclone Komen**

WorldShare is responding to the worst flooding in Burma (Myanmar) for decades, working through our Burmese partner Word of Hope to provide shelter for people who lost their homes, food, and essential household goods. Tens of thousands of homes were destroyed and 1.25 million acres of farmland submerged in western Burma after torrential rains associated with Cyclone Komen in the Bay of Bengal. Pray that our partners will be able to bring practical and spiritual help to many families in desperate need. (WorldShare - September 2015)

### **Shing Kachin refugee camp**

The Shing Kachin refugee camp in Myanmar burned down back in December. Over 180 families displaced by the ongoing conflict in Kachin State were living in the camp. No one died, but the one church in the camp and more than 100 temporary shelters were destroyed along with food and personal belongings. The refugees face severe difficulties as winter in this region near the Chinese border is cold. Please pray that food, warm clothes and rebuilding materials would be delivered to them despite the government's blockade of aid to these camps. (AsiaLink - March 2015)

### **Leprosy in rural communities**

Pray for people affected by leprosy from Eastern Shan State in Myanmar, many of whom were driven from their homes simply because they had leprosy. Give thanks for the amazing work being done to rehabilitate them into new villages and for wonderful supporters who enable The Leprosy Mission to provide medical care, health training and education about leprosy. Schools are also being built in partnership with other agencies to increase educational achievement in children. Pray that the Disability Resource Centres and drop-in centres elsewhere in Myanmar will be able to continue to provide physical rehabilitation through physiotherapy to overcome disabilities, as well as counselling and emotional support. In over 100 rural communities, 1,500 families affected by leprosy have been helped, including about 150 leprosy patients who have undergone reconstructive surgery. (The Leprosy Mission England and Wales - January 2015)

### **Under attack**

In January we received this brief note from our friends working among the Kachin people who had just come under attack. "A total of six civilians were killed and buried in the village. One of them was mentally disabled and did not know he needed to run away. He was severely tortured and killed. The rest were not identified. They had already been buried and as the graves were being dug up for identification, we came under attack again. Houses and refugee camps were destroyed and damaged. Valuable materials were taken and the remaining materials and utensils including aid recently supplied, were destroyed. There are also unexploded mortars lying around the village which is very dangerous for the people." We ask that you continue to pray for Burma - that political change would be genuine, lasting, and would filter down to remoter areas. (AsiaLink - March 2014)

### **A new radio transmission**

Despite a history of great suffering and oppression, the Church in Myanmar has continued to grow. Christian radio has been a big influence on this growth and radio missions such as TWR and FEBC continue to broadcast gospel programming in 35 languages. In the autumn a new transmission of Burmese programming began from the Reach Beyond shortwave radio facility in Australia. Pray that listeners will discover these programmes and that lives will be transformed. (Reach Beyond - January 2014)

### **Reaching oral learners**

An estimated 4.35 billion people worldwide are oral learners, either choosing not to read or unable read at all. Oral societies include most of the remaining Unreached People Groups, so creative ideas for communicating the gospel in ways that these people can understand are of vital importance. One such idea is to use solar-powered digital audio players to get God's Word into hundreds of unreached communities. The immediate goal is to send 100 solar-powered digital players to Myanmar with the Scriptures in both the Karen and the traditional Myanmarese languages. Please pray that millions of Myanmarese people will soon be hearing some really Good News. (AsiaLink - July 2013)

### **Reconciliation and tolerance**

On 20th March violence broke out between Muslims and Buddhists in central Myanmar, leaving 43 dead, 61 injured and almost 13,000 people internally displaced. A state of emergency was declared in four townships. Conflict continued in other regions and as a result over 200,000 people were internally displaced. In some regions, the church has been highly active in running camps for those

affected. Please pray that the government will promote reconciliation and tolerance in this multi-ethnic, multi-religious society whilst at the same time holding those who are responsible for violence accountable. Pray too for courage for the minority church in Myanmar. (Tearfund - May 2013)

### **Prosthetic limbs**

Thank God for the new mobile clinic in Myanmar, one of the poorest countries in Asia. The clinic makes and fits prosthetic limbs for people affected by leprosy and others who have lost lower limbs and who are suffering physical and emotional trauma. Pray that this will enable increased freedom in mobility and bring new opportunities for employment. Pray also for the four physiotherapists who work in the clinic; for sensitivity and strength to do their work, which will transform the lives of 350 people during the first year. (The Leprosy Mission England and Wales - January 2013)

### **Time of change**

Myanmar is changing rapidly, with more democracy and more personal freedoms. Pray that God will bless this country and keep it safe from those who would want to do harm. Pray for God's people there as they cautiously seek to move into areas of service which have been closed to this point. Pray for the first 11 students who have recently graduated from Hope Bible College in Yangon. Pray for these young men and women as they move into Christian service throughout the land, that God will keep them safe from the many dangers they face, and will make them effective in serving churches and planting new ones. (WorldShare - May 2012)

### **Transforming attitudes**

In one tribal village in Myanmar traditional beliefs have often proved fatal to young people. Twins were viewed with suspicion and both babies would be put to death immediately; infants born with defects would be cast out of the village. However, a recent church project has helped the community understand the need to protect children. Praise God for this transformation in attitudes and pray for the ministry of churches working to bring the light of the gospel to communities in Myanmar. (Tearfund - September 2011)

### **Human trafficking**

One of the biggest exports from the Mekong sub-region of Myanmar is people. Around 600,000 Myanmar migrants are registered to work in neighbouring Thailand alone but many more are working illegally. Unregistered workers are vulnerable to all sorts of exploitation. Men, women and children often trafficked into forced labour, forced marriages or the sex industry with common destinations including Thailand, China, Malaysia, South Korea or Macau. Please pray for the protection of migrant workers in this area as well as for comfort and restoration for those who have been affected by trafficking. (Tearfund - September 2010)

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