



Traffick Report: Myanmar

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Myanmar's trafficking situation

The migration of Burmese to Thailand is one of the largest movements of migrants in all of Southeast Asia making them extremely vulnerable to human trafficking.

Many of them migrate to escape economic hardships and limited opportunities in Myanmar, while others are fleeing from human rights violations, forced labor or minority repression.

Although Burmese are trafficked to other Asian countries, such as China, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Korea and Macau, the primary destination is Thailand. Approximately 600,000 Burmese migrants are registered to work in Thailand, but many more are there illegally. Once migrants are inside the border, they have difficulty migrating within Thailand to find work. Many of them pay brokers to assist them in moving from border areas to major cities where there are more job opportunities. Due to their illegal status many Burmese men, women and children are trafficked to Thailand to work in agriculture, fishing, construction, factories, domestic work and the sex industry.

Burmese children make up the largest proportion of foreign child labor according to Thailand's immigration detention centers. Foreign-born children including the Burmese are predominantly found in work situations that are more exploitative and hazardous than other Thai children, putting them in grave danger. These children are also trafficked into Bangkok and other urban areas where they are forced to sell flowers, beg, or work in domestic service.

Internal trafficking is also a problem in Myanmar where men and boys are trafficked for forced labor in industrial and agricultural sites. Women and girls in villages are trafficked to urban areas and other locations, such as fishing villages, border towns, mining areas, and military camps for sexual exploitation.

Trafficking snapshot:

More than 1 million documented and undocumented Burmese migrant workers and their families are believed to be in Thailand, comprising some 80% of the entire migrant population.

The Tak province is the most common checkpoint for Burmese crossing the Thai border where an estimated 95% of the workforce is made up of Burmese. (Federation Trade Unions-Myanmar, 2004)

An estimated 30% of Myanmar's population live below the poverty line. (www.voicesforburma.org)



Because of their age group and disconnection from family or community, runaway teenagers are often approached by traffickers with offers of better opportunities. The vocational training that Shwe Ba, front, has received through the World Vision Street Children Centre in Yangon helps him to make safe plans for his working future.

Myanmar's trafficking solutions

Communication and research around the patterns and causes of trafficking in Myanmar need to be scaled up for more effective programming in at-risk communities.

Young people are particularly at risk. Existing networks for youth, including schools, universities and clubs, can be used to share vital anti-trafficking messages.

Authorities on both sides of the border need a better understanding of what constitutes trafficking; without the right paperwork, illegal immigrants become extremely vulnerable to labour exploitation and trafficking.

Cross-border collaboration by governments on repatriation means that victims of trafficking can return home safely without fear of future harassment. NGOs can play a "watchdog" role in this process, advising and facilitating at individual level.

World Vision's **RESPONSE**

World Vision has been working in Myanmar for nearly 25 years, delivering long-term development programmes as well as specialist interventions focused on children in crisis. World Vision Myanmar's anti-trafficking initiatives include:

Action Against Trafficking (AAT) The goal of this project is to reduce the number of vulnerable people trafficked for sexual labour and other forms of exploitation within Myanmar and from Myanmar to Thailand. New opportunities to remain within home villages reduce forced migration and the risk of trafficking, and increase the ability of those who still choose to migrate to protect themselves from exploitation on arrival. The project builds on knowledge and understanding among local partners contributing to the developing of national and regional advocacy strategies. The project is present in several locations: Lokaw, Hmawbi, Thanbyuzayat, Dawei, Myeik, Kawthaung

Children in Crisis, Laboratory of Learning Project (CIC-LOL) At the assessment stage, this project aims to reduce the number of children being trafficked or subjected to any form of exploitation within Myanmar and from Myanmar to Thailand, and to empower the populations at risk to effectively protect themselves from falling victim to organized crime groups.

Research is taking place within two areas where World Vision already works as well as a third area known to be vulnerable to trafficking. Through better understanding of the needs and issues that lead to trafficking in children, World Vision and partners can plan for future interventions to help children in crisis. This includes reducing the number of children trafficked, protecting child rights in the process of repatriation for formerly trafficked children, and increasing the capacities and knowledge of children to protect themselves against all forms of exploitation. The project is present in Tachileik, Myawaddy, Kawthaung.

Myanmar Trafficking in Persons Program

The project goal is to reduce the number of persons trafficked for sexual labor or other forms of exploitation within Myanmar and from Myanmar to neighbouring countries such as Thailand, China, India and Malaysia.

Through a combination of peer education, government and NGO networks and community involvement, vulnerable villages have enhanced capacity to combat trafficking effectively, as well as to protect returned trafficking survivors from situations or attitudes that may lead them to be re-trafficked, and to educate migrants before they leave on how to protect themselves en route or upon arrival at their destinations.

The project is present in several locations: Mandalay Division, Magwe Division, Tanintharyi Division, Northern Shan State, Chin State. Up to 700,000 people will receive trafficking prevention knowledge as a result.

World Vision Asia-Pacific regional projects

Mekong Delta Regional Trafficking Strategy 2 (MDRTS2) Project

World Vision's Mekong Delta Regional Trafficking Strategy project is addressing the issues of trafficking in five countries simultaneously - Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand and Myanmar. The goal of MDRTS-2 is to reduce vulnerability to trafficking in both source and destination areas and to provide trafficking survivors with the support they need to start a new life after the trafficking experience. It also seeks to synergise country-level operations to create a united response to the issues of human trafficking.

Regional Advocacy anti-Child Trafficking Project (RACTP)

RACTP flows across Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. Its main goal is to improve the policy environment towards eliminating trafficking in persons, especially children, in the Greater Mekong Sub-regions. Strategies include the strengthening of local advocates on trafficking issues and partnering with governments to encourage real action to effectively combat human trafficking at community, national and regional level.

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For further information on World Vision's anti-trafficking initiatives in Myanmar:

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