

In Rakhine State, the protracted humanitarian crisis requires the delivery of WASH services to crisis-affected populations. Many have been **internally displaced** in restricted areas in Pauktaw, deprived of their freedom of movement and with poor access to services and livelihood opportunities. Some of them live in flood-prone areas under sea level. Additionally, they suffer from **water scarcity during the dry season**.

In 2013, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONALE (SI) started the provision of WASH services in **Ah Nauk Ye (ANY) camp and village**, in **Nget Chaung 1 and 2 (NC1 and NC2) camp and camp-like settlement**. End of 2018, SI also took over the delivery of WASH services in **Kyein Ni Pyin (KNP) camp-like settlement**. During the water scarcity period, in these settlements, the salt infiltration on the ground water is forcing the population to rely on surface water stored in ponds. Filled with rainwater during the monsoon season, water collected in these ponds is not sufficient to address the needs of all the populations. SI is responding with **emergency water supply through water boating and remote pumping**. SI is also actively coordinating with communities, Camp Management Committees (CMC), local authorities, UNICEF and WASH cluster.

CYCLICAL WATER SHORTAGES

Monsoon season gives way to a long period of drought, inducing **water scarcity**. This issue strongly affects internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Pauktaw, where more than 22,000 people live in 4 camps and 1 village, of which 5,400 are children under 5 years old.



Pond during dry season



Water boating and challenges related to low tide



Pipeline for remote pumping

MAIN CHALLENGES



Natural resources limited: a few natural resources available and shared by all Pauktaw camps and villages, stresses the need for more (and sustainable) solutions for all affected populations, to provide them with more safe water.



Technical constraints: altitude of sites (under the sea level), environmental hazards (cyclones, high-low tides), and the absence of strong embankments, lead to difficult access, delivery of materials and construction works in the targeted area.



Coverage: not addressing all needs of all communities (IDPs, villages and host communities), raises concerns about contribution to entrench the segregation of IDPs, and triggers power games and looting between and within communities.

SI PROVISION OF WASH SERVICES



Ensuring access to safe water to cover the minimum required standards of 7,5 L/person/day for drinking purposes: by treating and distributing pond water and the water supplied through remote pumping (NC1 and NC2), and facilitating the distribution of the water supplied by UNICEF through water boating (ANY and KNP).



Continuous maintenance of sanitary infrastructures: due to their temporary nature and the environmental hazards of the settlements' location.



Hygiene promotion and related hygiene items distribution: to reduce incidence of water borne diseases.



Raising awareness: to use water moderately in order to mitigate the impact of the shortage.

SI PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE ACTIVITIES IN 2020

In 2020, the **depletion of resources and the first signs of water shortage appeared as early as Mid-March**, one month earlier than in 2019.

To further anticipate this crisis coupled with COVID-19 threat, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL has further **heightened its hygiene promotion activities**, and **implemented preparedness activities**:

- Installation of **86 mobile hand-washing stations**
- Distribution of **11,572 hygiene kits** (carbolic soaps, laundry soaps, disinfectant)
- Pre-positioning of **5,862 contingency kits** (aqua tabs, chlorine, Oral Rehydration Salts)
- **Weekly disinfection of WASH facilities** (latrines, tap stands, hand pumps).

SI has also been implementing **COVID-19 preventive measures**:

- Megaphone broadcasting of prevention messages, using loudspeakers and IEC materials
- Avoid mass gatherings
- Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), especially face masks
- Physical distancing and handwashing during distributions.

COMMUNITIES' PERCEPTION OF COVID-19

If Pauktaw's internally displaced population has adapted and became resilient to hazards such as floodings, **COVID-19 represents a new challenge**.

Thanks to its presence, experience in the area and its camp-based staff, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL has built **trust and good relationship** with these IDPs which facilitate communication and needs' assessment, as **SI continually adapts its activities in the light of the events occurring and concerns raised by these beneficiaries**.

SI's preparedness and response mechanism also alleviated IDPs' fear of the pandemic: they expressed their **relief as SI maintains contingency stocks**.



Hygiene kit distribution with physical distancing, Kyein Ni Pyin camp-like settlement



Hand washing station Kyein Ni Pyin camp-like settlement



Hygiene kit distribution Kyein Ni Pyin camp-like settlement



Emergency water distribution with physical distancing, Kyein Ni Pyin camp-like settlement

"IDPs are receptive, spontaneously and rigorously complying with all COVID-19 measures" - SI camp based staff

For many years, **SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL (SI)** has been looking for **ways to increase the amount of water available per person per day**. Since there are insufficient water sources available and salt infiltration in ground water, SI is searching for alternative solutions such a water river for handwashing and laundry purposes only (due to the level of salinity). As the number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) is constantly increasing while resources are scarce, **longer term mitigation measures** should be put in place to ensure water supply to the affected populations.

Coordination with and involvement of **local authorities** should be reinforced, to consider providing greater support in IDP camps and villages. In line with its action towards meeting needs in Pauktaw villages, **SI is requesting UNICEF and WASH cluster to engage with the Rakhine State Government** to proceed further, by conducting a **geo-hydrological study** to determine the resources available. A **more holistic response** would then be feasible, for rural communities, villages and IDPs in Pauktaw township.