

Myanmar

Refugee quota factsheet

New Zealand Refugee Quota Burmese Refugees

The New Zealand Government works with the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to offer permanent resettlement solutions in New Zealand for 1000 refugees annually.¹ Refugees from Myanmar are included in the 2018/2019 refugee quota and will be resettled to New Zealand throughout the year.

The Burmese refugees resettled to New Zealand under the refugee quota programme have been living in either Malaysia or Thailand. Refugees located in Malaysia live in urban and often very over-crowded conditions. Refugees located in Thailand generally live in one of nine refugee camps location on the Thai/Myanmar border.

Before settlement in the community all refugees accepted under the annual refugee quota programme complete a six week reception programme at Auckland's Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre.

In order to become successfully resettled, refugees will be accessing the assistance of mainstream services such as health, education, housing and Work & Income. The New Zealand Red Cross is the key agency responsible for assisting quota refugees in their initial community settlement.

This document aims to provide New Zealand's community-based professionals with general information about Myanmar, the human rights situation in Myanmar, the Burmese culture as well as some general information on supporting successful refugee resettlement in your community.

Humanitarian situation and needs

Myanmar is one of the most ethnically diverse nations in the world. Out of the approximately 45 million people in Myanmar, around one third come from ethnic minority groups, principally the Mon, Kachins, Chins, Shans, and Karen, each of which have traditionally dominated a particular area of the country.

Myanmar faces many human rights challenges. The United Nations estimates that more than 860,000 people in the country are currently in need of humanitarian assistance, including those displaced in the conflict-torn states of Rakhine, Kachin, and Shan. Violence in northern Rakhine, which started on 25 August 2017, has so far forced more than 700,000 people from the minority Rohingya Muslim community to flee across the border into Bangladesh. Between 200,000 and 240,000 stateless Rohingya are left in northern Rakhine and approximately 400,000 remain in central Rakhine, 128,000 of whom, remain confined to camps since 2012. They remain deprived of basic rights, including freedom of movement.²

¹ The quota will increase to 1500 refugees from July 2020.

² European Commission: European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), 27 September 2018, *Myanmar/Burma - ECHO Factsheet*

Burmese cultural communications:

- › It is considered rude to touch a person's head, because it is the "highest" point of the body. It is also considered taboo to touch another's feet, or to point with the foot, because the feet are considered the lowest.
- › Burmese culture is paternalistic whereas New Zealand culture is largely based on gender equality
- › Acknowledge the male parent first if present
- › It is acceptable for men and women to shake hands
- › It is important to give and expect returned eye contact
- › Shoes are always taken off before entering homes
- › A modest dress code is recommended
- › It is ok to decline invitations for food and drinks but the host will often offer three times.

Supporting successful refugee resettlement:

- › Be aware of differences between yourself and your client / student in terms of customs, values and belief systems, as well as perceptions of service delivery and treatment. It may be advisable to obtain the assistance of a cultural adviser, or someone familiar with the culture of your client's home country to help you develop culturally appropriate forms of service delivery when working with a new refugee community in your area.
- › Many adult refugees will have only had limited formal education so communication styles may need to be adjusted accordingly.
- › Refugees may also have difficulty comprehending the importance New Zealand society places on official documentation. Some refugees may associate the recording of personal information with suspicion because of past experiences in their home country.

As such, it is important to ensure refugee clients understand why you are recording information, where it will be stored and with whom it will be shared.

- › Explain your role carefully to the client and always use a professional interpreter if the client is not proficient in English. If your organisation does not have established procedures for using interpreters, interpreting services can be found through the following organisations: Interpreting New Zealand – <http://www.interpret.org.nz/> and Language Line – <http://ethniccommunities.govt.nz/browse/language-line>

Language

Burmese (official) *note:* minority ethnic groups have their own languages.

■ BASIC BURMESE:³

Hello (literally, 'it's a blessing') – *min-gala-ba*

Goodbye (I'm leaving now) – *thaw-ba-oun-meh*

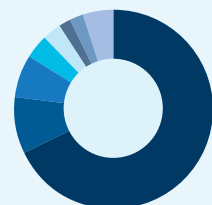
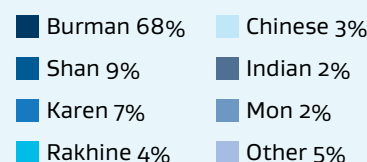
Thank you – *ce-zu-beh*

Yes – *houq-keh*

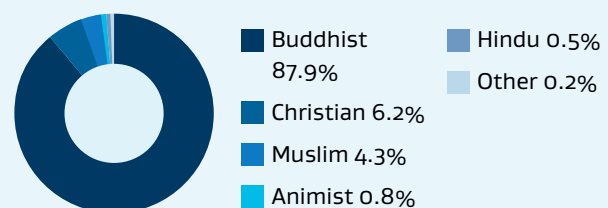
No – *mahouq-pa-bu*

³ Source: Reid, Robert [et al], [2012], *Myanmar (Burma)*, Lonely Planet, Footscray, Victoria, p.382

Ethnicity⁴



Religion



⁴ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), 3 December 2018 [last updated], *The World Factbook: Burma*

New Zealand is one of thirty seven countries that take part in the United Nations Refugee Agency's regular refugee resettlement programme. Our annual refugee quota of 1000 refugees is a reflection of the government's commitment to fulfilling its international humanitarian obligations and responsibilities to provide protection to refugees.

The New Zealand Government and a number of local organisations, such as New Zealand Red Cross, are helping these families to resettle, and to access the goods and services they need to restart their lives.



Rangoon (Yangon)
is the capital
city of Myanmar.

*Note: Nay Pyi Taw
is the administrative
capital.*

*Myanmar has
not agreed to formally
establish an office of the
UN High Commissioner for
Human Rights (OHCHR),
restricting monitoring
by human rights
observers.*

*A humanitarian
crisis has been unfolding
on both sides of the Myanmar-
Bangladesh border. There have
been widespread allegations of
attacks on civilians, threats and
violence used to drive people out
of their homes and other serious
human rights violations,
including the killing of civilians
and large scale burnings
of villages.*

Around **900,000**
refugees from Northern
Rakhine (Myanmar) reside in
camps in Cox's Bazar District
(Bangladesh)..

Additional Resources

- › New Zealand Immigration has factsheets and videos for refugees and family members settling in New Zealand which are available at <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/audiences/supporting-refugees-and-asylum-seekers/information-for-refugees-settling-in-new-zealand>
- › Detailed UNHCR guidelines for working refugees are available in a publication called *Refugee Resettlement: An International Handbook to Guide Reception and Integration*, see <http://www.unhcr.org/4a2cfe336.html>
- › Amnesty International, 18 October 2017, "My World Is Finished" – Rohingya Targeted in Crimes Against Humanity in Myanmar, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/59e70f224.html>
- › BBC, 3 September 2018, [last updated], Myanmar country profile, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-12990563>
- › Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11 November 2018, [last updated], Myanmar (Burma), <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/400119/Myanmar>
- › Every Culture, [2018], Burman, <https://www.everyculture.com/wc/Mauritania-to-Nigeria/Burman.html>
- › Every Culture, [2018], Shans, <https://www.everyculture.com/wc/Mauritania-to-Nigeria/Shans.html>
- › Human Rights Watch, August 2018, "Bangladesh in not my country": Stateless Rohingya refugees expelled from Myanmar, https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/bangladesh0818_web2.pdf.
- › United States Department of State (USDOS), 20 April 2018, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Burma, <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/1430158>.

Contact Information

For more information about New Zealand's Refugee Quota programme, or New Zealand's Refugee Policy, please contact:

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If you require further information or support on any health or education issue for the refugees recently resettled in your region, please contact the following specialist agencies located at the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre:

Refugees as Survivors New Zealand (RASNZ)

(09) 270 0870
www.rasnz.co.nz

Refugee Health Screening Service

(09) 276 6719
www.refugeehealth.govt.nz

AUT - Centre for Refugee Education

(09) 921 9366
<https://www.aut.ac.nz/aut-centre-for-refugee-education>

INZ Resettlement Team

(09) 928 2648
www.immigration.govt.nz

New Zealand Red Cross

0800 RED CROSS
www.redcross.org.nz

Please note: No personal information will be released without written consent from the client.