

# Thematic COVID-19 Bulletin: Child Protection

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for every child

*With the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) across Myanmar, many children and caregivers are required to stay in quarantine centres, in isolation and in hospitals, and special attention is needed to ensure children's rights are protected in these settings. Violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect still occurs despite COVID-19 and continuity of the child protection case management system is essential to protect all children, including the most vulnerable. UNICEF's Child Protection support focuses on mitigating the secondary impacts of physical distancing measures by ensuring children, parents and caregivers continue to have access to child protection services. Here are some of the highlights of UNICEF's work:*

## Case Management

### UNICEF and Save the Children, with support from the Government of Canada, have partnered to provide technical guidance to frontline workers

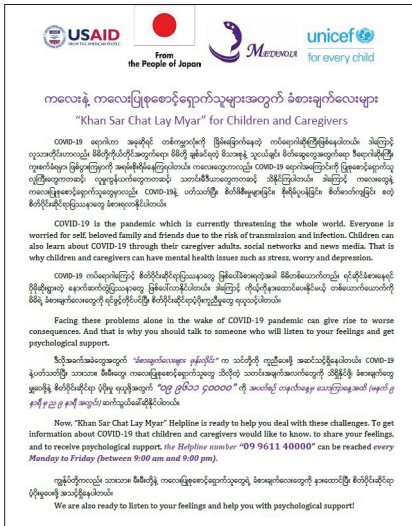
UNICEF Myanmar and Save the Children as co-chairs of the Myanmar Inter-Agency Case Management Task Force, along with its organization members, developed and launched two guidance notes to address the special circumstances of children: (i) one on adapting [case management in the context of COVID-19](#); and (ii) another, [on key considerations for children and caregivers in quarantine, isolation and hospitalization due to COVID-19](#). The guidance notes which aim to complement the Standard Operating Procedures on Quarantine, issued by the Ministry of Health and Sport (MoHS) and other recently adopted guidelines, provide technical direction and practical tips for frontline health professionals and child protection practitioners.

### UNICEF rolls out 'remote' orientations with the Government of Myanmar, Civil Society Organizations and health personnel to protect children during COVID-19

UNICEF and Save the Children started providing training for frontline workers from the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) and the Department of Rehabilitation (DoR) on the guidance note on child protection during COVID-19 (see details in the above story). More than 200 frontline staff across Myanmar received the orientation in the first two weeks of May. Orientation sessions are also on-going for frontline workers of child protection agencies at national and regional level including: 31 members of Myanmar's Case Management Task Force, 53 members of the child protection sub-sector in Kachin, as well as 65 of UNICEF's implementing partners. UNICEF's Child Protection and Health teams are collaborating to expand orientations on the guidelines to health professionals working in quarantine facilities through partnership with the Myanmar Medical Association.

# Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

## MHPSS Hotline



In partnership with Metanoia, UNICEF launched a [helpline](#) which provides Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services for children and caregivers during COVID-19 called "Khan Sar Chat Lay Myar". With school closures and social distancing measures in place, children are at risk of feeling isolated in their confinement and it is crucial they have access to services during this time. The service was tested by Yaw Ying, a UNICEF staff member from Lashio who called the hotline. Yaw Ying stated "I am taking care of my nephew – who is staying with us, very bored at home due to restrictions to go outside. My experience was good, seemed the operators were trained well". Further discussions have begun to provide hotline services in other ethnic languages. The helpline has been established with support from the Government of Japan and USAID.

## Virtual storytelling and audio programme to spread the messages of 'My Hero is You!'

In the first week of May, UNICEF, in collaboration with its Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services partner Metanoia, began the pilot of a series of virtual story-telling sessions of the story book, 'My hero is you', via Zoom for children and their caregivers. The story inspires every child to become a hero in the fight against COVID-19 by taking an active role in sharing information on preventing the spread of coronavirus. So far, trained facilitators have conducted five sessions and feedback from children has been positive. The sessions which are split into three parts, run for 40 minutes each, allowing for plenty of time for questions. This initiative is funded by USAID and the Government of Japan. The story is currently available in both Myanmar and Rohingya languages and can be found on the [UNICEF website](#).



## Children and Armed Conflict

### Armed conflict continues to impact the lives of children

Conflict in Rakhine and Chin States between the Myanmar Armed Forces and the Arakan Army has continued unabated during the COVID-19 pandemic. The intensified fighting has taken a high toll on civilians including children, who are being caught in crossfire and killed or injured by landmines and other explosive remnants of war. The erosion of the protection of civilians has been of particular concern, as conflict comes amidst a reduction of humanitarian actors on the ground due to COVID- 19. [UNICEF's Mine Action in Myanmar Factsheet](#) for another one of 2020, echoes this alarming trend. Figures show the number of victims countrywide



reaching more than 40% of the total annual cases for the entire year of 2019. The most notable increase is in Rakhine State which accounts for nearly 60% of those first quarter cases. With most group awareness raising activities on Explosive Ordinance Risk Education (EORE) suspended due to the pandemic, alternative ways to disseminate EORE messages through local radio, pamphlets and mobile applications are being explored. UNICEF’s mine action work in Myanmar is supported by USAID and the Government of Japan.

## Funding

With US\$1.2 million, UNICEF’s Child Protection Programme would be able to support:



**Over 5,000** vulnerable families and 60,000 children and adolescents at risk of /or experiencing abuse, exploitation and violence with a range of direct/remote Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services;



**Around 1,000** at risk children and adolescents, especially girls in camps for Internally Displaced Persons or in containment/ isolation, with Gender Based Violence/ Violence Against Children prevention interventions and remote/direct child protection services through the national case management system;



**Over 300** children and adolescents in conflict with the law and released from detention with community reintegration support.



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UNICEF Myanmar acknowledges the Governments of Japan, Canada, EU, Denmark and USAID for their generous contributions to support child protection activities to curb the impact of COVID-19 on children.