

IDP Resilience and Food Insecurity after 2021 Myanmar Coup in Demoso and Mese Townships, Karenni State, Myanmar

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Abstract

Following the 2021 military coup in Myanmar, Karenni State has experienced widespread armed conflict and large-scale internal displacement, resulting in severe food insecurity and livelihood disruption. This study examines how internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Demoso and Mese Townships experience food insecurity and build resilience under conditions of protracted conflict and repeated displacement. By comparing a conflict-affected township (Demoso) with a borderland township adjacent to Thailand (Mese), the research examines how geographic location, displacement patterns, market access, and local governance arrangements shape distinct food security outcomes.

The study adopts a qualitative research design, drawing on in-depth interviews with displaced households, key informant interviews with camp committee members and civil society actors, participant observation, and secondary document analysis. Data collection focuses on IDPs who have been displaced since the 2021 coup and are residing in camps or host communities. Thematic analysis is employed to examine the lived experiences of displacement, disruptions to local food systems, household coping strategies, and community-based resilience mechanisms.

The study anticipates that IDPs in both townships face chronic food insecurity driven by land loss, restricted mobility, market disruption, and limited humanitarian access. At the same time, displaced communities demonstrate resilience through livelihood diversification, food-sharing practices, collective farming initiatives, and reliance on social, religious, and cross-border networks. However, the nature and effectiveness of these strategies vary between central and borderland contexts. By foregrounding local perspectives and everyday practices, this study deepens understanding of resilience as a socially embedded process. The findings aim to inform context-sensitive humanitarian and development interventions that strengthen local food systems and reduce aid dependency among conflict-affected IDP communities in Karenni State.