



LOVE FOR MYANMAR

MYANMAR (BURMA) COUNTRY PROFILE



Location: Southeast Asia sharing borders with India, Bangladesh, China, Laos, Thailand

Population: 25th in the world at an estimated 56,590,000 categorized within seven major ethnic groups- Burman 68%, Shan 9%, Karen 7%, Rakhine 4%, Chinese 3%, Indian 2%, Mon 2%, other (Chin, etc.) 5%, and totaling 135 government-recognized ethnicities. 14.3 million people or 25.6% live below the international poverty line of \$1.90 per day.

Religions: Buddhism is the "de facto" (not officially designated by law but it is by practice) national religion. In 2015, several laws were passed which regulate conversion, marriage, and births restricting religious freedoms of non-Buddhists. The major religions are: Buddhism 88%, Christianity 6%, Muslim 4%, other 2% (animist, Hindu).

Government: Parliamentary Republic with a House of Nationalities (224: 168 directly elected by the people, 56 appointed by the military) and a House of Representatives (440: 330 directly elected by the people, 110 appointed by the military). The President is the official head of the government; however, Aung San Suu Kyi as the State Counselor (similar to prime minister) is recognized as directing the affairs of the country.

World standing: *World Health Organization* ranks Myanmar's health care system 190 out of 191 participating countries; only Sierra Leone is worse. Myanmar ranks among the countries with the lowest education expenditures investing only 2.2% of their budget. It is estimated that 75% of Burmese children drop out of school before the 5th grade. *Transparency International* ranks Myanmar in the bottom 25% of its annual corruption index. Myanmar continues to drop in the World Press Freedom Index maintained by *Reporters Without Borders* now ranked at 139 out of 180 participating countries. The *U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom* has designated Myanmar among the worst violators every year since its inception in 1998. *Open Doors* reports that Myanmar had over 200 churches attacked or closed in 2019 alone placing it 4th among all countries. Myanmar is ranked 19th on the *World Watch List* of the 50 most dangerous countries in which to follow Jesus.

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