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Bishop Alexander Pyone Cho has called for dialogue among all parties as violence escalates in Myanmar's Rakhine state.

His Pyay Diocese in western Myanmar covers troubled Rakhine, which has experienced the worst strife in decades, reported ucanews.org.

The 71-year-old prelate said the ongoing fighting has largely impacted civilian lives, with no end in sight.

"The conflict may be prolonged if one can't keep extreme nationalism out of the picture," he said.

"The elderly, young people and children are the victims of the war," said Pyone Cho. He said he is concerned that more people may be displaced if fighting continues.

"There are no prospects for returning to the negotiating table as the concerned parties engage in more fighting," Pyone Cho told ucanews.org.

The Rakhine conflict has killed at least 90 civilians and displaced thousands more since it began in December 2018. At least 44,000 people are displaced in 119 sites in Rakhine, and more than 1,800 people are displaced in 12 sites in Chin state, according to the United Nations.

The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported Dec. 31 that clashes between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army continue in Rakhine and parts of Chin state. More than 225 people were newly displaced in Sittwe township in Rakhine.

The Arakan Army is a largely Buddhist militia fighting for greater autonomy for indigenous ethnic Rakhine in the state. Rakhine also has a separate conflict that has seen more than 700,000 Muslim Rohingya flee to neighboring Bangladesh since August 2017 due to military offensives.

Pyone Cho said his diocese has collected clothes from parishioners to support internally displaced persons in Paletwa township in Chin state. The displaced are mostly ethnic Chin who belong to Catholic, Anglican and Baptist denominations.

The bishop said ongoing fighting and a lack of security have prevented him from carrying out pastoral visits and meeting the displaced in Chin.

According to diocesan records, Catholics, mostly ethnic Chin, account for 7,800 out of Rakhine's total population of 3 million. Christians make up 1.4 percent of the state's population, with Buddhists accounting for 63 percent, Muslims 34 percent and Hindus 0.5 percent, according to Myanmar's 2014 census.

Cardinal Charles Maung Bo of Yangon has said Myanmar stands at the crossroads of history, facing many challenges.

"There are chronic wars, there is huge displacement, unsafe migration of thousands of our youth, climate change and the need for reconciliation among various people," Bo said in his Christmas message.

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