

Conflict and Farm Workers: Insights from Myanmar

Andrew Laitha¹, Bart Minten², Eva-Marie Meemken¹

¹Food Systems Economics and Policy Group, ETH Zurich; ²International Food Policy Research Institute

1 Motivation & Objectives

- One-quarter of humanity is living in conflict-affected regions.¹
- Conflict hampers the effort to achieve all the SDGs¹ and affects the agricultural sector in several ways².
- Its implications for farm workers are understudied but very relevant since they are often landless, seasonal migrants, belonging to the poorest of the poor.³

Paper 1: Conflict Intensity and Farm Wages



Paper 2: Conflict Intensity and Labor Migration



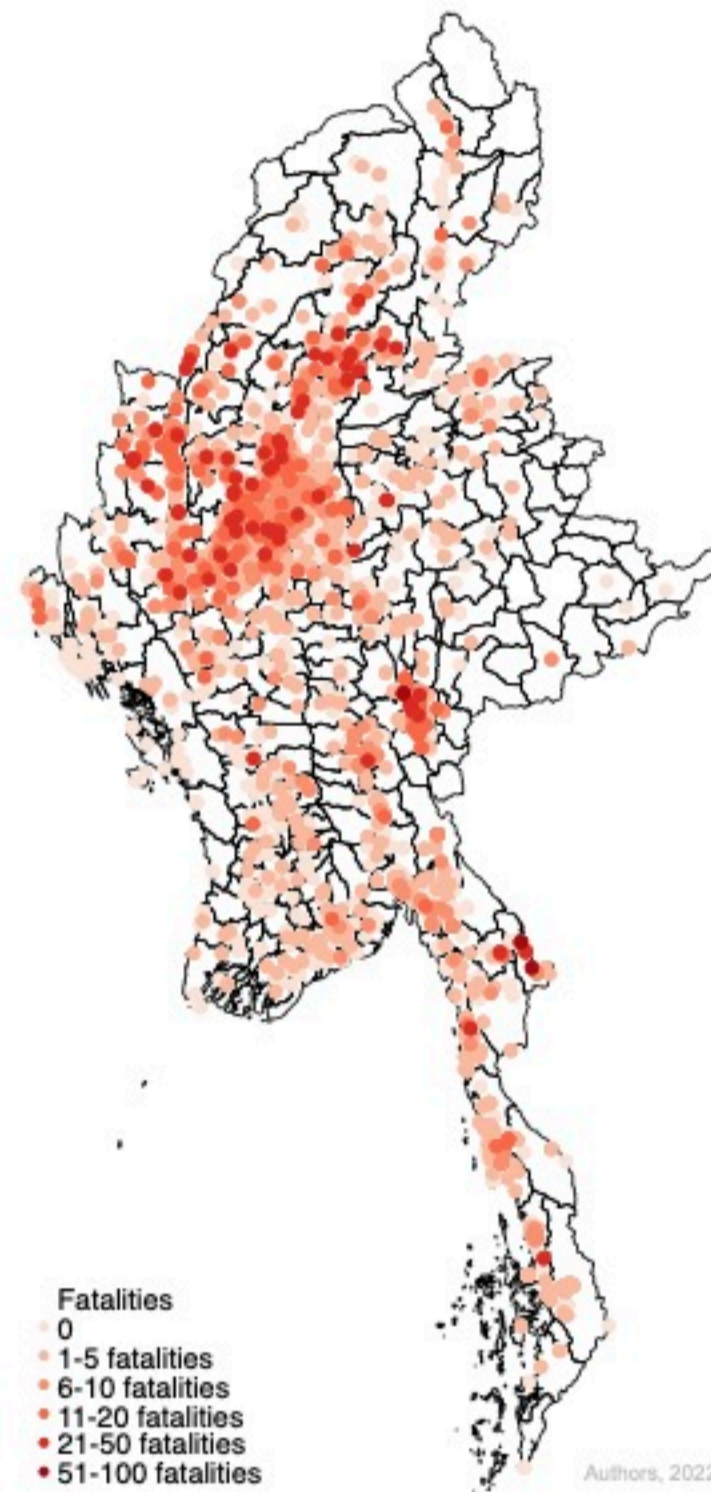
Paper 3: Violence, Mental Health and Productivity



2 Case study country: Myanmar

- Even though the devastating effects of conflict on societies are apparent, it is unclear how conflict affects labor and wages in the agricultural sector.
- 1.3 million households depend on agricultural wage income.⁴

Conflict Events in 2022
Number of fatalities (as of 17 Aug)



Income source of
11%
population

Real wage
decreased by
29%

Basic staple food
prices increased by
43%

Gender wage gap
widened to
28%

IFPRI, 2022

Authors, 2022

3 Data & Methods

Primary: phone survey among 1,562 farm workers

Secondary: nationally representative panel phone survey of 12,100 households and agricultural performance survey of 5,465 crop farmers

Econometric approaches, including:

- Fixed-effects & path analysis

References

1. UN, 2022. The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022. The United Nations.
2. Adelaja, A., George, J., 2019. Effects of conflict on agriculture: Evidence from the Boko Haram insurgency. World Development 117, 184–195.
3. FAO, ILO, IFAD, 2007. Agricultural Workers and Their Contribution to Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development.
4. IFPRI, 2022. The precarious situation of agricultural wage laborers in Myanmar. International Food Policy Research Institute.