

FINAL REPORT



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

MYANMAR: RAKHINE CYCLONE

3 December 2004

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilising the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organisation and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

In Brief

Appeal No. 14/04; Period covered: 4 July 2004 – 30 September 2004; Final Report; Appeal coverage: 92% (including direct transfers in support of appeal objectives to the Myanmar Red Cross);
(Click here to go directly to the attached Interim Final Financial Report and Contributions List. The Final Financial Report is delayed and will be ready at the end of December.)

Appeal history:

- Launched on 4 June 2004 for CHF 201,000 (USD 163,770 or EUR 134,204) for three months to assist 14,000 beneficiaries.
- Appeal budget has been revised and doubled at 30 June after receiving latest evaluation reports - to CHF 414,000 for 25,000 beneficiaries – and the project extended by one month to 30 September to accomplish last distributions.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: N/A

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Myanmar Annual Appeal 2004 ([Appeal No. 01.65/2004](#)); Southeast Asia Regional Appeal 2004 ([Appeal No. 01.66/2004](#))

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For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.

Background

Rakhine is a sparsely populated, coastal state (population 2.7 million) in the southwest of Myanmar, covering 14,200 square miles. Sittwe, the state capital, is the biggest city. The Rakhine people generally depend on fishing, prawn breeding, farming and salt production for their livelihood.

On 19 May, a cyclone, reportedly the worst to strike the area since 1968, generated winds of up to 160kph blowing in from the Bay of Bengal into the area near Myanmar's eastern border with Bangladesh. The cyclone affected areas including the townships of Sittwe, Myae Bon, Pauk Taw, Myauk Oo, Ponnar Kyun, Min Byar, Kyauk Phyu, Ann and numerous islands off the coast. Local authorities reported damage to houses, offices and religious buildings, schools, dams, embankments and prawn breeding ponds, while many motor and rowing craft were sunk.

At the request of the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS), an emergency appeal was launched on 4 June 2004. The overall goal of the appeal was to provide immediate assistance to those affected and in the longer term, to reduce risk of disaster and enhance the resilience of some of the most vulnerable people in Myanmar. The appeal budget was revised and doubled on 30 June 2004. This was to cover increased needs based on a joint assessment by MRCS and the Federation, after which the number of affected people significantly increased from initial reports to 25,000 (over 4,600 households).

Summary

The programme undertaken by the Myanmar Red Cross (MRCS) to assist 25,000 people in Rakhine state following a severe cyclone in mid May 2004, has marked a significant milestone in the Society's development. During the four month operation, supported by the International Federation, the MRCS provided and, for the first time, directly distributed essential food and non food items to the most affected areas, fulfilling its role as the country's leading humanitarian organisation.

The strength of its volunteer network was demonstrated particularly through active participation in rescue and evacuation work in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, while established training regimes proved their worth as the operation matured. Inevitably, there are lessons to be learned, but overall the experience gained will stand the Society in good stead ahead of future emergencies - especially in its professional relationships with national and local authorities.

The general success of the operation was made possible by strong support from the Society's partners through the appeal, which was revised and doubled at the end of June. Including direct contributions from sister Societies to MRCS to complete the longer term elements, the appeal was almost fully covered.

Coordination

MRCS plays an official role in providing auxiliary humanitarian services in official government relief operations. Good cooperation and common understanding between the Myanmar government and MRCS were further developed as a result of the launch of an emergency appeal. This operation was the first of its kind, as MRCS delivered relief items directly to beneficiaries through its own channels without special involvement from the National Disaster Relief Committee (NDRC). This approach was made possible through the advocacy of the headquarters assessment team that cooperated closely with regional commanders by explaining Red Cross procedures at the beginning of operations.

The relief operation was coordinated closely with participating organisations: World Food Programme (WFP), Bridge Asia Japan (BAJ) and Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association (MMCWA). Contributions from these and other donors were implemented by NDRC. MRCS received local donations from several private donors and BAJ. MRCS headquarters staff kept NDRC informed during all phases of the emergency operation that were carried out by the Red Cross. WFP provided 200 MT of rice for government distribution, BAJ donated MMK 4.5 Million (CHF 928,078) for Red Cross to purchase relief goods. MMCWA together with smaller private donors supported MRCS with direct contributions of cash and goods.

The IFRC delegation in Myanmar cooperated closely with all MRCS headquarters actions at state level during assessment, procurement and distributions. The delegation maintained close contacts with donor societies during the operation and also participated with a group from headquarters during monitoring and evaluation trips. The IFRC Southeast Asia regional delegation supported the country delegation with regular communications during the start of the operation. It also held regular contact with the Geneva Secretariat to provide accurate information of the situation at Myanmar.

The IFRC delegation provided information and supported other interested agencies with published facts and figures. An article highlighting good examples of volunteer commitment as evident in the Rakhine operation was published on the IFRC website. This can be accessed at <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/news/04/04062401/>.

Analysis of the operation - objectives, achievements, impact

The impact of the cyclone was felt in eight townships, five of which were particularly hard hit. Rakhine state organised relief and assistance operations in the region; on 20 May an assessment group was sent from MRCS headquarters to support the Sittwe branch with damage and needs assessment. The first estimate put the number affected at 2,500 families (12,500 beneficiaries).

Immediate rescue efforts formed the first phase of operations. Red Cross volunteers participated from the very beginning, assisting their own local communities to establish evacuation centres at schools and monasteries and helping people to reach them. During the evacuation process, volunteers acted as supporting staff to health personnel at the centres. They participated immediately after the storm helping to clear roads, ditches and water ponds. These ponds are essential sources of water and most of them were polluted with seawater and mixed waste after the storm.

The authorities launched an emergency relief assistance appeal to assist rehabilitation work, which received good response from well-wishers, concerned business entities and local NGOs in terms of cash and in kind contributions. The national society itself responded promptly, sending 250 family packs, each comprising 24 items of relief supplies from the Yangon warehouse, to assist the most vulnerable people. Consignments were sent on 24 and 29 May and distributed in the first week of June.

MRCS officially launched an Emergency Appeal with support from the IFRC country delegation on 4 June to assist 14,000 beneficiaries over a three-month period.

The MRCS/IFRC evaluation team was also well-placed in the area to survey the public health situation. There were no outbreaks of waterborne or other diseases in the affected area. Red Cross volunteers from Sittwe also took part in damage and needs assessment with the national headquarters Disaster Assessment and Response Training (DART) team. The assessment information was delayed due to difficulties in transportation and communication reaching the affected area. During this evaluation it was clear that the number of affected families was higher than originally estimated. The figure agreed with NDRC was increased to 4,628 families.

Emergency relief (food and basic non-food items):

The relief operation was designed to cover the hardest hit areas for three months. Five townships out of 17 were chosen as operation priorities. The total number of affected households was 4,628 (some 25,000 beneficiaries).

Table 1: Distribution of 250 family packs at beginning of June

	Item	Amount	Unit
1	Blanket, single size	2	pieces
2	Plastic sheeting,	6 x 12 (6.7)	ft. (m ²)
3	Nylon rope, 8mm	12 (10.9)	yd. (m)
4	Mosquito net, family size	1	piece
5	Plastic bucket	1	piece
6	Plastic basin	1	piece
7	Body soap	1	piece
8	Washing soap bar	2	pieces
9	Face towel	1	piece
10	Candle	24	pieces
11	Cooking pot, large	1	piece
12	Cooking pot, small	1	piece
13	Wooden rice ladle	1	piece
14	Steel spoon	4	pieces
15	Enamel plate	4	pieces
16	Mug	3	pieces
17	Man's shirt	1	piece
18	Man's loungyi (waist cloth)	1	piece
19	Woman's blouse	1	piece
20	Woman's loungyi (waist cloth)	1	piece
21	Boy's shirt	1	piece
22	Boy's short pants	1	piece
23	Girl's shirt	1	piece
24	Girl's short pants	1	piece

MRCS received a significant in kind donation of 16,800 blankets and 600 rolls of tarpaulins from Danish Red Cross. Due to the timing of the operation, only a part of the consignment was distributed in Rakhine. However, the remaining stocks formed a major part of the warehouse replenishment.

Local authorities, local donors, NGOs and INGOs donated basic food items and urgently needed materials for reconstruction of houses for affected families and damaged infrastructure such as schools, and fish and shrimp ponds destroyed by the cyclone.

Food items for distribution were purchased locally on a contractual basis in cooperation with the Rakhine state authority. The procurement of basic food items of rice, salt, cooking oil, and pulse (dhal) for 4,628 families for a period of two weeks was carried out for their immediate needs. The first Red Cross distribution (A) started on 14 June. Procurement continued for the second distribution (B) of another two weeks' food supplies; this commenced on 7 August.

Although the Red Cross distribution of basic food items was slightly delayed, the timing proved satisfactory as the local authorities had already arranged the previous distribution of rice to the beneficiaries, and that of the MRCS fulfilled the needs for the following month.

Apart from these basic food items, the beneficiaries faced a shortage of other household goods such as cooking pots and buckets for keeping safe water. At the affected area almost all water sources were destroyed or contaminated, rendering them unfit for human consumption at the time. The distribution of water for daily use was arranged by the local authorities involving local Red Cross volunteers. Buckets and cooking pots (C) were added to the second distribution (B) according to the needs assessment from the first (A).

The transportation arrangement of goods to the affected townships was made by the rice merchant according to the distribution plan. This, together with the local purchase of basic food items, saved funds and effort. Red Cross volunteers were deployed to take part in the distributions to the beneficiaries in the affected villages and towns in cooperation with local authorities. These operations took place starting from 14 July. Distributions at the first stage were carried out in areas that were easy to access. Red Cross volunteers helped beneficiaries to transport relief goods further out in coastal and inaccessible areas. Some of the most remote beneficiaries received the items straight to their houses. Distributions were monitored by MRCS and joint monitoring teams. Relief goods that were used from the Rakhine state Red Cross warehouse stock are to be replenished as first priority. The procurement of 3,000 family kits was carried out during the operation and they are now being deployed to warehouses.

Table 2: Items distributed June –August (not including 250 family kits)

	Item	Quantity	Unit	Distribution(-s)
1	Rice (50kg bag)	462,800	kg	A,B
2	Cooking oil	4,628	viss	A,B
3	Salt	2,314	viss	A
4	Pulse	4,628	viss	A,B
5	Bucket	4,628	pcs	B
6	Cooking pot 10"	4,628	pcs	C
7	Cooking pot 9"	4,628	pcs	C
8	Bowl	4,628	pcs	C
9	Bowl	4,628	pcs	C
10	Blanket (DRC)	4,628	pcs	C
11	Plastic tarpaulin	160	roll	3,000 (toilets)
DRC items on stock for replenishment: 440 rolls tarpaulin / 12172 blankets				
1 viss = 3.6 lb = 1.6135kg				

* Note: Distribution C was actually a later part of distribution B, completed in September

Some beneficiary families in the hardest hit areas will receive latrine building material support from a joint operation between the state, UNICEF and MRCS. The national society contribution is 160 rolls of tarpaulin to be used as wall structures for these latrines.

After the replenishment and revised distribution procurement there is still an unspent balance of CHF 7,167, which is less than five percent out of total income of CHF 187,474. This will be reallocated to other Myanmar Red Cross programs supported by the IFRC delegation.

MRCS received direct donations from Chinese Red Cross (CHF 25,290) and Spanish Red Cross (CHF 18,348) for helping the affected of Rakhine cyclone and is presently in the process of planning further relevant activities consistent with operational objectives.

Table 3: Beneficiaries by township

Township	Wards / villages	Families	Beneficiaries
Sittwe	11 / --	213	1245
Pauk Taw	5 / 13	1694	10408
Min Byar	-- / 14	370	2120
Myae Bon	9 / 45	2051	9943
Kyauk Phyu	-- / 43	300	1328
TOTAL	25 / 115	4628	25044

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Principles and initiatives

All Red Cross and Red Crescent principles were carefully applied throughout the implementation of the operation. One of the major achievements was the regional commanders' approval to carry out deliveries and distributions according to Red Cross and Red Crescent criteria:

When identifying the most vulnerable groups, the following were given special consideration:

- Households whose houses have collapsed.
- Households who have been evacuated to safe areas.
- Households that have no labour force.
- Households that receive no significant support from other sources.
- Households that have lost all their means of generating income.

Amongst these households, priority was given to the following:

- Disabled household members.
- Elderly household members.
- Households with young children (0-5 years).
- Households headed by women.
- Pregnant and lactating women household members.
- Households who have lost a family member (during the recent disaster).

National Society Capacity Building

One of the key volunteers at Sittwe branch had participated in a DART course at 2003. He shared that information with other volunteers in the area so that they were able to participate more effectively in case of emergencies. This emergency operation demonstrated the usefulness of knowledge sharing at field level. As a result of this specific example of sharing, MRCS received relevant information more easily during the assessment. The only problem encountered was the lack of transport, as many boats were destroyed and there were no funds to cover fuel expenses. Another DART course, targeted at the Rakhine area, is scheduled for early 2005 to cover all 17 townships and four districts. MRCS disaster response and disaster preparedness (DPDR), training and health divisions are raising working with IFRC delegation to prepare a common curriculum. A combined community-based first aid (CBFA)/disaster preparedness training course aims to include preparedness and self response for villages for the most frequently occurring hazards.

During the cyclone disaster, warehouses in Kyauk Phyu and Sittwe were damaged and renovation was carried out by the Red Cross branches. The repair cost of the Rakhine state ambulance was also covered by the fund so that the ambulance could be mobilised again to provide medical services to the public. BAJ managed the repairs and maintenance for the ambulance.

The communication system is now improved compared to several years ago. The cyclone destroyed communication facilities in Sittwe but these have been repaired and restored. The telephone line and fax machine for the Rakhine State Red Cross branch will be available by the end of 2004 as part of the normal disaster management programme so that communication can be maintained with the national headquarters in case of emergencies. This is considered vital as Rakhine is cyclone- and storm-prone.

Assessment and lessons learned

Like most of the population in the Rakhine coastal area, MRCS was not particularly prepared for this disaster. Weather forecasts only warned of a large low pressure area in the Bay of Bengal. It is possible that this tropical low pressure (now named 02B) never registered on any instruments as a likely storm or cyclone. Still not reaching proportions normally related to serious storms in forecast scales, it changed direction and passed through Rakhine state on the morning of 19 May. MRCS headquarters only received information from the Rakhine state Red Cross branch on 20 May after telecommunication systems were re-established by the government. The society then began immediate assessment measures and the first team of two arrived in Sittwe on the same evening to assist with the operation. Initial information on casualties and people affected was inadequate because of long distances over waterways. There were no other ways of communication to the most remote areas other than travelling by boat.

When the scale of the emergency became clear and the government asked for assistance, the IFRC delegation produced an appeal together with MRCS in order to support relief operations. There were unfortunately some delays with transferring funds to Myanmar, largely due to the financial accounting procedures (online accounts) and technical (e-mail) constraint of communications systems between the Myanmar delegation and the Kuala Lumpur regional finance unit. For the future, consideration should be given to having a national Red Cross emergency fund and/or applying for assistance from Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) which might hasten the Red Cross operations.

MRCS capacities are well utilised at all levels at time of disaster. From time to time the small disaster preparedness and response division together with other divisions and governance representatives are deployed to manage and coordinate efforts at field level. There was a great challenge to ensure that details of procurement, logistics and finance were followed.

Networking and collaboration with other partner agencies and organisations were strengthened during the operation. This cooperation is essential and should be continued in future both during and off disaster periods.

Having a large network of volunteers is an effective way of carrying out different kind of activities. This is also recognised by the government authorities. As these activities and needs should be in reasonable balance, MRCS have a challenge to develop a mid-structure support at state and division level. This system will also support response operations as it will have a significant role in strengthening volunteer network at township and village level.

Conclusions

MRCS has a strong and reliable volunteer organisation at field level. It is clear that motivated volunteers are the ones who ensure that operations and programs reach the beneficiaries. This creates the eventual need to ensure strong support from national and state levels. An excellent example of this work at field level was the long reach of deliveries direct to affected families at the most remote and inaccessible areas. These strengths are important to support as MRCS was the only organisation allowed direct distributions.

National headquarters possess the knowledge and capabilities to carry out such operations. To ensure exact, regular and accurate implementation of its required purchasing, financial and reporting procedures, all headquarters divisions should be working with more closely to cooperate and support each other.

DART training is an essential tool for spreading knowledge and skills to respond to emergency. By reviewing the curriculum of DART training and combining community-based training courses (first aid and disaster preparedness) MRCS is well on the way to providing excellent tools for townships and villages to prepare themselves.

[Interim final financial report below; click here to return to the title page.](#)

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

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Annual report	
Final report	

Appeal No. & Title: 14/2004 - MYANMAR RAKHINE CYCLONE
Operation Time Frame : JULY 2004 TO SEPT 2004
Project(s): PMM504
Currency: CHF

CONSOLIDATED RESPONSE TO APPEAL

FUNDING	CASH		KIND & SERVICES		TOTAL INCOME
	Contributions	Comments	Goods/Services	Personnel	
Appeal budget	413,048				
less					
Cash brought forward	0				
TOTAL ASSISTANCE SOUGHT	413,048				
<u>Contributions from Donors:</u>					
Australian Red Cross	27,024				27,024
British Red Cross	22,860				22,860
Danish Red Cross	8,748				8,748
Japanese Red Cross	11,148				11,148
Monaco Red Cross	15,290				15,290
Nowegian Red Cross	68,905				68,905
Swedish Govt.	33,500				33,500
Danish Govt.			143,958		143,958
TOTAL	187,474		143,958		331,432

OPENING	0
CASH INCOME Rcv'd	187,474
CASH EXPENDITURE	-180,308
CASH BALANCE	7,167

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Description	APPEAL Budget	CASH		KIND & SERVICES		TOTAL Expenditures	Variance
		Expenditures		Goods/Services	Personnel		
<u>SUPPLIES</u>							
Shelter and construction	85,000	0		80,195		80,195	4,805
Clothing and textiles	107,700	30,926		54,384		85,310	22,390
Food/Seeds	94,000	87,532				87,532	6,468
Water and sanitation	32,000	0				0	32,000
Medical and first aid	1,000	0				0	1,000
Teaching materials							
Utensils and tools	21,000	31,568				31,568	-10,568
Other relief supplies							
Sub-total	340,700	150,026		134,578		284,604	56,096
<u>CAPITAL EXPENSES</u>							
Land and buildings							
Vehicles							
Computer and telecom equipment							
Medical equipment							
Other capital expenditures							
Sub-total							
<u>TRANSPORT AND STORAGE</u>							
Warehousing/Inspection	0	1,851				1,851	-1,851
Transport and vehicles	20,000	2,506		9,380		11,886	8,114
Sub-total	20,000	4,357		9,380		13,737	6,263
<u>PERSONNEL</u>							
Personnel (delegates)	12,000	0				0	12,000
Personnel (NS/local staff)	4,500	2,925				2,925	1,575
Sub-total	16,500	2,925				2,925	13,575
<u>WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS</u>							
External workshops and seminars	0	279				279	-279
Sub-total	0	279				279	-279
<u>GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATION</u>							
Travel and related expenses	5,000	2,622				2,622	2,378
Information	4,000	22				22	3,978
Consultants							
General expenses	0	178				178	-178
Security							
Sub-total	9,000	2,822				2,822	6,178
<u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u>	26,848	19,899				19,899	6,949
TOTAL	413,048	180,308		143,958		324,266	88,782