

Operations update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Myanmar: Cyclone Nargis

Emergency appeal n° MDRMM002

GLIDE n° [TC-2008-000057-MMR](#)

Operations update n° 19

11 August 2008

Period covered by this Operations Update: 26 July to 8 August 2008.

Appeal target: CHF 73,987,907 million (USD 72.5 million or EUR 45.9 million)

Appeal coverage: 72%;

[<click to go directly to the updated donor response report, or to contact details>](#)



In the village of Zee Gone, in the Kawhmu township, this family with their 18-day-old baby sit sheltered under the tarpaulin distributed by Myanmar Red Cross volunteers on 6 August. [<full story>](#)

(Photo: International Federation/American Red Cross - Colin Chaperon)

Appeal history:

- 8 July 2008: A revised Emergency Appeal was launched for CHF 73.9 million (USD 72.5 million or EUR 45.9 million) to assist 100,000 households for 36 months.
- 16 May 2008: An Emergency Appeal was launched for CHF 52,857,809 (USD 50.8 million or EUR 32.7 million) to assist 100,000 households for 36 months.
- 6 May 2008: A preliminary Emergency Appeal was launched for CHF 6,290,909 (USD 5.9 million or EUR 3.86 million) to assist 30,000 households for six months.
- 5 May 2008: CHF 200,000 (USD 190,000 or EUR 123,000) was allocated from the International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF).

Summary:

- Up to 31 July, approximately 518,985 beneficiaries (103,797 households) were reached. Up to 429,450 beneficiaries are in the Ayeyarwady division, while the remaining 89,535 beneficiaries are in the Yangon division. These figures do not include the various types of support that Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) volunteers have provided to organizations outside the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.
- Major relief distributions are scheduled to be concluded by the end of this month.
- A recovery framework has been developed and discussed with the International Federation's sector leads. Preparations for Multi-sectoral Village Tract Assessments (VTA) for the recovery phase, have begun.
- For the last two weeks, the new recovery coordinator and economic security delegate (seconded from the International Committee of the Red Cross for a three-week mission) have combined efforts to kick-start the design of a livelihoods support programme.
- The American Red Cross monitoring delegate arrived on July 25 for a four-week mission to assist in the establishment of a comprehensive monitoring system. The MRCS and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are conducting ongoing monitoring and evaluation exercises as distributions occur and the operation moves into the recovery phase.
- The Hub Coordination Meeting and Workshop on 7 and 8 August are ongoing. The meeting is aimed at resolving management issues at township and hub level, and further improving the implementation of the appeal.
- Discussions continue between the International Federation/MRCS management and relevant authorities to clarify the ever-changing travel authorization application process.

Contributions to the Appeal to date

Partners which have made contributions to the appeal to date include: American Red Cross/American government, Australian Red Cross/Australian government, Austrian Red Cross, Belarusian Red Cross, Belgian Red Cross/Belgian government, British Red Cross/British government, Canadian Red Cross/Canadian government, Red Cross Society of China – Hong Kong branch and Macau branch, Cook Islands Red Cross, Cyprus Red Cross/Cyprus government, Danish Red Cross/Danish government, Finnish Red Cross/Finnish government, French Red Cross, German Red Cross, Hellenic Red Cross, Icelandic Red Cross, Irish Red Cross, Japanese Red Cross, Republic of Korea Red Cross, Kuwait Red Crescent, Luxembourg Red Cross/Luxembourg government, Malaysian Red Crescent, Monaco Red Cross, Netherlands Red Cross, New Zealand Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross/Norwegian government, Portuguese Red Cross, Qatar Red Crescent, Singapore Red Cross, Slovak Red Cross/Slovak government, Spanish Red Cross/Spanish government, Sri Lanka Red Cross, Swedish Red Cross/Swedish government, Swiss Red Cross, Taiwan Red Cross Organization, United Arab Emirates Red Crescent and Vietnam Red Cross Society. Contributions have also been received from the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Directorate General (ECHO), the Italian, Estonian and Slovenian governments, Total Oil Company, Stavros Niarchos Foundation and Tides Foundation.

The International Federation, on behalf of the Myanmar Red Cross Society, would like to thank all partners for their very quick and generous response to this appeal.

The situation

Cyclone Nargis struck Myanmar on 2 and 3 May 2008, devastating the Ayeyarwady and Yangon divisions. Collective assessment data from the authorities and international communities indicates that 115 townships were significantly affected by the cyclone. The official figures of 2 July state that 84,500 people have been killed and 53,800 are missing. The UN estimates that 2.4 million people are affected.

Coordination and partnerships

International Federation

MRCS and the International Federation jointly hosted a partnership meeting in Kuala Lumpur from 21 to 22 July. A total of 24 national society representatives from 15 national societies attended the meeting, together with 12 from the International Federation and one from the ICRC. Movement partners met for the first time after the beginning of the cyclone Nargis operation, to collectively discuss and agree on possible ways of supporting the revised emergency appeal and to talk over early recovery, long-term rehabilitation and capacity building plans.

The meeting provided an opportunity for the MRCS and the International Federation to provide first-hand information on the progress and challenges of the operation, for the participants to raise specific issues and questions, and to discuss the Movement's operational priorities as well as evolution and implementation of the revised emergency appeal.

A summary report of key outcomes of the meeting, attendance list, individual presentations, donor mapping are available on FedNet, the *extranet* for the International Federation (<https://fednet.ifrc.org/sw159335.asp>).

Partner National Societies

- The Australian Red Cross, French Red Cross and German/Austrian Red Cross continue to provide vital support for water and sanitation (*see water and sanitation sector below for details*).

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

- Restoring Family Links activities have continued in Bogale, Pyapon, Mawlamyinegyun and Labutta, with additional *Safe and Well* messages collected. A total of 15 successful phone calls have been made, enabling beneficiaries to re-establish contact with their family members.
- On 30 July, an opening ceremony was held for the newly established RFL office in the MRCS office.
- Four International Federation delegates have been trained to use the basic GIS (Geographical Information System) software. Advanced training is scheduled to take place in mid-September.
- A design for the temporary reconstruction of the sub-rural health centres has been completed and placed at the disposal of the different agencies involved in such activities in the Dedaye township, including the International Federation.
- A 48 m³ diesel pump kit has been placed at the disposal of the International Federation for its pond cleaning programme.

Inter-agency cluster

The sectoral cluster meetings in Yangon continue to take place and the MRCS at township level is also participating more frequently in similar coordination meetings in the delta.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The operation

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

Objective 1 (immediate needs)

To ensure that up to 100,000 cyclone-affected households receive food and non-food items immediately, to help preserve their physical and psychological well-being, human dignity and counter further deterioration of the humanitarian situation, while preparing the ground for longer-term recovery activities.

Objective 2 (medium and long-term needs)

To ensure badly affected households receive further necessary non-food item assistance, while refocusing MRCS programming towards recovery (to include livelihoods and food security), disaster preparedness and risk reduction activities, in order to mitigate the possible effects of future disasters.

Progress

- Up to 31 July, approximately 518,985 beneficiaries were reached (429,450 beneficiaries in the Ayeyarwady division and 89,535 beneficiaries in the Yangon division).¹
- Major relief distributions are scheduled to be concluded by the end of this month. As such, the quantities of relief items are dwindling.



Relief items arrive by boat at a village in Twantay township for distributions later in the day on 6 August. (Photo: International Federation/American Red Cross - Colin Chaperon)

The relief team in Yangon has prepared a Relief Action Plan for the Nargis operation, presented at the workshop on 7 and 8 August. The plan has been discussed with counterparts in the MRCS disaster management division who have endorsed the plan, in principle. The main purposes of the plan are to:

- Clarify the current status of emergency response operations in all divisions, townships, and village tracts (a breakdown of beneficiaries, relief distributed so far, stock position and mobilization, etc).
- Ensure that relief is distributed in the most transparent and accountable manner, and reaches the beneficiaries it is intended for.
- Identify the needs of vulnerable groups and ensure necessary systems are in place to support the relief operation.
- Identify the necessary action to complete the relief operation, including moving all response-targeted items in the pipeline to affected communities, as per the Relief Action Plan.
- Identify necessary action for the transition into the recovery phase, and ensure necessary systems are in place to support the recovery operation.
- Define the timeline for the relief to recovery transition.

Discussions for the possible introduction of beneficiary ration cards, are in progress. The ration card is a tool to assist the MRCS/International Federation in keeping track of assistance provided to individual targeted households. The card is intended to include or cover the activities of all sectors and will be used in a pilot case planned for one of the targeted village tracts during the initial implementation of the recovery programme.

¹ This figure does not include the various types of support that MRCS volunteers have provided to organizations outside the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, and is therefore, an underestimate. A system is being developed to enhance reporting on the actual distributions. Revised relief distribution report forms are being designed to enhance better and consistent reporting by all hub offices.

On 6 August, the relief and monitoring delegates, along with four members of the MRCS communications division made a day's trip to the Twantay and Kawhmu townships. A longer field trip for the relief and monitoring delegates is planned, pending travel approval.

Challenges

Relief distribution coordination continues to prove difficult for the timely receipt of actual distribution reports from the hub offices. The difficulties are associated with inadequate communication facilities in the hub offices.

Recovery

Progress (up to 1 August)

A Recovery Framework has been developed and discussed with the International Federation's sector-leads, and the MRCS is involved in the recovery discussions. The framework which was introduced at the workshop on 7 and 8 August, aims to give clarity to the general recovery objectives and the approach which will be incorporated into all sectoral programmes. Key elements are:

- Community participation
- Integrated approach and multi-sectoral linkages
- Needs-based programming
- Mainstreaming disaster management, MRCS capacity building, gender and environmental issues
- Sustainable solutions (and exit strategies)

Preparations for multi-sectoral Village Tract Assessments (VTA) for the recovery phase, have started. Objectives, methodologies, and instruments as well as training modules will be developed. It is anticipated that the first assessments will start at the beginning of September and will then be rolled out over a period of two to three months in all 200 selected village tracts.

Contacts have been intensified with the (Early) Recovery Cluster.

Challenges

The selection of the village tracts in which the MRCS/International Federation recovery programmes will be concentrated, is crucial to the upcoming process of carrying out Village Tract Assessments.

At the moment, not much consolidated information is available on programmes conducted by international NGOs, the UN and the Myanmar government in the different village tracts.

There is no technical recovery (and livelihoods) counterpart available within the MRCS although the MRCS head of disaster management takes part in the recovery discussions. It has therefore been decided that the MRCS will recruit a Recovery/Livelihoods officer who will work together with International Federation delegates in developing and implementing the respective programmes.

Emergency shelter

Objective 1 (immediate needs)

- Meet the immediate shelter needs of the most vulnerable and cyclone-affected people through the distribution of shelter materials to individual households as well as communities.
- Procure following Federation procurement procedures and distribute household tarpaulin kits (comprising two tarpaulins and 30 metres of rope) to individual households and distribute one community shelter tool kit to every five households.
- Target 80,000 households for tarpaulin kits and 275,000 for community tool kits.

Objective 2 (medium and long-term needs)

- Procure following Federation procurement procedures and supply appropriate shelter materials to support 10,000 cyclone-affected households which have suffered severe damage, and have not achieved a reasonable status of recovery.
- Ensure better understanding and awareness of appropriate building techniques.
- Integrate with other sectors to support community-based shelter activities such as household water harvesting (a water and sanitation activity supported by the shelter sector) and safe haven establishments.
- All activities are to enhance disaster risk reduction.

- Total distribution up to 1 August in the Ayeyarwady and Yangon divisions:

Community tool kits: 30,666
Household tarpaulin kits: 123,898

Preparations for a detailed Plan of Action (Recovery Phase) are well underway. Current thinking is based around four objectives:

1. Giving specific support to households which do not have a reasonable and minimal level of housing through the provision of materials, tools or construction support.
2. Investigating existing housing practices and following up with written and practical technical advice on how to 'build back safer'.
3. Strengthening existing public community buildings such as schools or religious buildings which can serve as future safe havens in the event of severe climatic events. These institutional buildings are also seen as vital support centres for community recovery and disaster risk reduction.
4. Investigating existing village-level buildings and houses which survived the cyclone and provided protection to households, with the goal of producing a manual on findings and recommendations that can be used by organizations and communities, particularly the MRCS for disaster risk reduction.

Livelihoods

Objective (medium and long-term)

To support the early recovery and strengthening of livelihoods through the development of relevant household community assistance packages as part of 200 well-integrated village tract recovery programmes.

Progress

For the last two weeks, the new recovery coordinator and economic security delegate have combined efforts to kick-start the design of a livelihoods support programme. So far, the thinking has focused on vulnerable groups to be targeted and the feasibility of interventions to be adopted.

The vulnerable groups comprise:

- cyclone-affected vs. other people in need
- casual workers vs. small entrepreneurs
- dependent family members or new breadwinners

The intervention options consist of:

- asset recovery (in-kind or cash/voucher).
- strengthening and diversifying income-generating activities and support.
- community/economic infrastructure projects.

Challenges

- Before getting further into the design phase, some major issues need to be clarified and decided upon. These include the political acceptance of and possible constraints on cash interventions, and the potential for community-based initiatives and/or support.
- Until now, no one has been in charge of recovery and livelihoods support within the MRCS nor is the required structure in place at the hub office level. MRCS volunteers also do not possess knowledge and experience in running such a programme (from the initial assessments and the facilitation of participatory meetings to day-to-day project management and monitoring tasks). This will be addressed.
- Based on all the above, it seems clear that the implementation of the livelihoods-support programme will require a strong training and coaching component, geared towards the MRCS staff and volunteers, as well as the newly recruited International Federation field staff (at township/hub levels).

I. Community-based health and first aid

Objective 1 (immediate needs)

Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from disease and public health emergencies, by providing immediate basic health care, first aid and psychosocial support, health and hygiene promotion, to the cyclone-affected populations through the MRCS volunteers, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health.

Objective 2 (medium and long-term needs)

- Ensure access to basic health care, first aid and psychosocial support by training community-based first aid volunteers and putting a referral system in place, in coordination with the Ministry of Health, and involving the community in health, hygiene promotion (in support of the hygiene promotion activities carried out by water and sanitation sector) and sanitation activities.
- Strengthen the capacity of the MRCS to manage an integrated community-based health and first aid programme which includes water and sanitation, and psychosocial support activities, conducted in emergencies and normal situations, in coordination with the Ministry of Health.

Progress

- Job descriptions have been finalized for the four MRCS headquarters health officers to be recruited (one Nargis operational health coordinator, one community-based first aid (CBFA) coordinator, one psychosocial support programme (PSP) coordinator, and one water and sanitation coordinator).
- The MRCS/International Federation continues to work on a plan of action, especially a three-year budget plan.
- In Mawlamyinegyun, the hub health team consisting of five health officers has reported that it has continued with assessments, first aid, and health and hygiene promotion activities in the Kywe Chan Yay Kyaw village tract. The team has requested oral rehydration salts (ORS), water purification tablets, soap, and information, education and communication (IEC) materials such as pamphlets and posters which are necessary for health promotions.
- In Bogale, the hub health team visited the Thazin Kone village tract with the water and sanitation team on 29 and 30 July. Health education (on personal hygiene, the prevention and control of dengue haemorrhagic fever, prevention of diarrhoea, and environmental sanitation) was provided by the health team.
- The Early Warning, Alert and Response System (EWRS), a disease surveillance system developed by the Ministry of Health in collaboration with WHO, and which integrates data from the ministry and NGOs, has been strengthened. According to a recent EWRS report, the overall number of cases of measles, malaria, suspected dengue fever and dengue haemorrhagic fever has fallen; however, there is a high prevalence of these diseases in Labutta.
- The health cluster's nutrition strategy will not change since it has been developed in collaboration with UNICEF and Ministry of Health.

Needs and challenges

A monitoring and assessment system at headquarters and branch levels is needed. This is being worked on by the monitoring delegate.

II. Psychosocial Support**Objective 1 (immediate needs)**

Address the immediate psychosocial needs of the population affected by Cyclone Nargis, by providing psychosocial-related relief and by conducting psychosocial support programme training for MRCS volunteers and local key workers in psychosocial support, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, local non-governmental organizations, the United Nations, and international non-governmental organizations.

Objective 2 (medium and long-term needs)

Address the psychosocial recovery needs of the population by ensuring cultural and spiritual support, and initiating drama and creative activities for children in schools, monasteries and the community at large. This will involve working in an integrated way with other sectors to include psychosocial support in MRCS training, and support access to vulnerable people for livelihoods and other community-based programming.

Progress

- The one-day psychosocial support programme (PSP) briefing meeting for 25 MRCS volunteers returning from a two-week deployment to nine affected townships, took place on 28 July. The main outcomes of the meeting were:

1. Identification of the challenges faced by the population and the Red Cross volunteers.
2. Identification of the contents of the PSP family and community kits and the mechanisms of distribution.
3. A pre-test of the draft PSP brochures while gathering recommendations for modifications and changes.
4. A collection of recommendations related to the MRCS PSP Plan of Action for the next three years.

- A health officer in each hub health team shall be assigned to take on PSP responsibilities. A paper on the officer's tasks and responsibilities is being developed for this purpose.

- Monitoring and evaluation indicators for the MRCS PSP programme are being identified with the support of the monitoring delegate.

Needs and challenges

The need for psychosocial support in the affected areas is now a major concern in view of the feedback recorded from volunteers returning from the field, as well as recommendations from the Post-Nargis Joint Assessment for Relief, Recovery and Reconstruction (PONJA).

Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion

Objective 1

To ensure that the *immediate* risks of waterborne and water-related diseases have been reduced through the *most essential* provision of safe water, adequate sanitation and hygiene promotion and education to 100,000 households.

Objective 2

To ensure that the *long-term* risk of waterborne and water-related diseases has been reduced through *sustainable* access to safe water and adequate sanitation, as well as the provision of hygiene education to 75,000 households.²

Progress

● Pond cleaning and assessments

Assessments conducted by MRCS/International Federation water and sanitation teams continue. In total, 11 ponds have been cleaned completely (nine in Labutta and two in Bogale). The team has also completed assessments in the following townships:

- Labutta: 26 villages
- Bogale: 11 villages
- Pyapon: 20 villages
- Mawlamyinegyun: 12 villages
- Ngapudaw: 20 villages

● French Red Cross emergency response unit (ERU)

The unit in the Bi Tut village in Labutta continues to produce and distribute 12,000 litres of water every – this includes distribution by boat to surrounding villages in the Bi Tut village tract. The French Red Cross ERU unit is also carrying out pond cleaning activities as part of the overall exit strategy for water purification units.

● Water purification unit in the Labutta township

The head of the MRCS health has confirmed that all the internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in Labutta are closed and those previously displaced are now back in their villages.

● German/Austrian Red Cross

The German Red Cross emergency response unit team is now in Bogale to review the operation of all six water purification units – on the basis of the review, a plan will be devised to shut down some of the units. There are also plans to support ongoing pond-cleaning activities in Bogale.

² The initial phase of relief focused on reaching 100,000 beneficiaries, irrespective of their level of 'affectedness'. The second phase of relief will focus on the most vulnerable portion of this group of people, and this amounts to 75,000 beneficiaries.

- **Australian Red Cross**

The water treatment unit in the Kyar Chaun village tract in the Mawlamyinegyun township, continues to produce 5,000 litres of safe drinking water everyday for 500 households.

- **Training**

Training of the MRCS water and sanitation teams, including volunteers, in the installation and operation of water purification units, is planned for the end of August.

The ICRC has planned a participatory hygiene and sanitation transformation (PHAST) Training of Trainers session on 18 August, which will be attended by five MRCS staff members and volunteers. The ICRC has also agreed to extend its support to the next MRCS/International Federation PHAST training session.

Logistics

The logistics unit is now at full strength with the arrival of one procurement delegate and a third general logistics delegate.

The logistics cluster will stop its activities on 10 August and existing warehouses in the Pyapon, Bogale, Labutta and Mawlamyinegyun townships will be handed over to other organizations operating in these areas. The MRCS/International Federation plans to request 209 m³ of warehouse space in Mawlamyinegyun, and discussions in this respect are underway.

The procurement process following International Federation procurement procedures for items for the hub offices is ongoing.

Weekly reports detailing delivery from hubs to distribution sites have been received from some of the hubs. Data from these reports is being fed into the International Federation's warehouse management database.

The World Food Programme ended its barge activities in Mawlamyinegyun on 5 August, a service that it shared with other agencies at no cost. As such, increased quantities of goods, totaling ten truck loads, were transported using this barge service in the week prior to 5 August.

Finance

The substantial devaluation of the Foreign Exchange Currency (FEC) which began in early July continues.

Capacity of the MRCS

- The terms of reference for the hubs, containing hub roles and responsibilities, have been finalized. Translations are underway.
- The procedures for hub finance management are being developed.

Capacity of the International Federation

The Yangon office is currently staffed by 26 local employees and approximately 27 international delegates including eight members of the regional disaster response team (RDRT), two ERU personnel and one economic security delegate seconded from the ICRC.

Communications

In recent weeks, international press interviews have been conducted with major outlets such as Agence France Press and CNN. Interest increased on the third month anniversary and plans are currently under development for potential media and/or key stakeholder trips to key worksites. Discussions with delegation and operational leadership surfaced great topics for enhanced focus for members of the media in coming weeks. A [new communications resource](#) is now in place, based with the Southeast Asia regional office in Bangkok, Thailand.

News from the field



This family (on the front page) in the village of Zee Gone in the Kawhmu township is one of the many who continue to rebuild their lives and livelihoods while sustained with the help of the Myanmar Red Cross volunteers.

On August 6, the family received relief items among which were the tarpaulin that now shades the roof and shelters the family, and the mosquito net that is especially needed for their 18-day-old baby.

The International Federation's monitoring delegate met the head of the household, Htun Htun and his wife who expressed their gratitude for the relief items, especially the much-needed mosquito net.

"They told me that when they heard on the previous day that the MRCS was going to distribute relief items, they were so excited they could not sleep, despite not knowing what they were going to receive!"

Other items included a blanket, a kitchen set, and a jerry can.

The Kawhmu township is one of several areas visited by the monitoring delegate, the relief delegate and the MRCS communications team to monitor and evaluate distributions.

(Photo: International Federation/American Red Cross - Colin Chaperon)

How we work

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief and is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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