

OPERATIONS UPDATE



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: CYCLONE RAKHINE

8 July 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; Operations Update no. 1; Period covered: 4 June to 30 June 2004; Appeal coverage: 86% ([click here to go directly to the attached Contributions List, also available on the website](#)).
[Click here for the weekly updated Contributions List.](#)**

Appeal history:

- Launched on 4 June 2004 for CHF 201,000 (USD 163,770 or EUR 134,204) for 3 months to assist 14,000 beneficiaries.
- Appeal budget has now been revised - and doubled - to CHF 414,000 for 25,000 beneficiaries, with an unchanged time frame of 3 months; Final Report is therefore due on 30 November 2004.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: N/A

Outstanding needs: CHF 60,000 (USD 48,592 or EUR 39,532)

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

Operational Summary: The Myanmar Red Cross Society, along with the local authorities, was the first organisation to respond to the cyclone and to provide assistance to many of those most affected, and has been continuing its response operations. Pledges in cash and kind have been received from the following: British Red Cross, Chinese Red Cross, Danish Red Cross, Japanese Red Cross, Monaco Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross, Swedish Red Cross and local donors. A joint assessment by the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) and Federation confirmed the number of targeted beneficiaries has increased to 25,000, and support has been extended to one more township, Min Byar, in which vulnerabilities have seriously increased at the time of reporting. Owing to these increased needs, as well as the generous response from donors, the appeal budget has been revised to double that of the original.

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Background

Rakhine is a sparsely populated state, with 2.7 million people, 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 a livelihood.

A cyclone hit the southwestern coastal state of Rakhine on 19 May. The storm, reportedly the worst to hit the area since 1968, had winds of up to 160kph and came from the Bay of Bengal into the area near Myanmar's eastern border with Bangladesh. The Relief and Resettlement Department, Social Welfare Ministry and Fire Services Department together compiled an initial report on the disaster. It reported that the tidal surges and flooding following the storm had made more than 18,000 people homeless in the coastal townships of Sittwe, Myae Bon, Pauk Taw, Myauk Oo, Ponnar Kyun, Min Byar, Kyauk Phyu, Ann and numerous islands off the coast. The government made a rare request for international assistance on 28 May.

Operational Developments

Following a joint assessment of the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) and the Federation, it is confirmed that the number of affected people has significantly increased from the initial report. The official number of households affected has increased from 2,855 to 4,628, leaving approximately 25,000 people affected. The local authorities reported damage to houses, departmental and religious buildings, schools, dams of the Irrigation Department, embankments of farmers, prawn breeding ponds and sinking of motor boats and rowing boats.

Damages and costs caused by the cyclone

Description	Quantity	Estimated costs in Kyat	Estimated costs
Loss of lives	236	N/A	N/A
Affected households	4628	N/A	N/A
Schools	247	2441 lakh*	USD 270,000
Religious buildings	133	27.5 lakh	USD 3000
Governmental buildings	176	3746 lakh	USD 415,000

*Note: 1 lakh = 100,000

Coordination

In Myanmar, the central government, through the Ministry of Relief and Resettlement, takes the lead role in emergency response coordination. The role of MRCS is complementary, as an auxiliary to this response. The National Disaster Relief Committee (consisting of various ministries) of which the state level Red Cross is one of the members was immediately set-up after the disaster.

The government's relief, resettlement and reconstruction period is expected to take from six to nine months. At the time of reporting, all evacuees have returned either to their own homes or to their friends and/or relatives.

Coordination is not a major challenge since the MRCS and the government agencies are the major actors. During the reporting period, the Myanmar Delegation has had numerous discussions and meetings with other agencies and organisations in sharing information as well as coordinating relief efforts. In addition, the local authorities have made all relevant information available to the MRCS.

At the start of the disaster, the local health department had immediately distributed water purification tablets and other medication to treat diarrhoea and malaria to control the usual waterborne diseases. The National Disaster Relief Committee has distributed 500 tonnes of cement and 50,000 roofing sheets, and to date has distributed immediate relief goods twice since the disaster. The immediate relief items covering around 4,205 families include the following items; male longyi (sarong), female longyi, blankets, aluminium pots and cotton sheets. Work is also underway on rebuilding schools in the affected areas. The World Food Programme (WFP) has contributed 200 tonnes of rice through the National Disaster Relief Committee and the distribution is anticipated to complete by

mid July. The rice is rationed to last one month for around 4,000 families. Other United Nations (UN) agencies have contributed in cash and kind, reconstruction and rebuilding materials including blankets, tarpaulins, iron sheets, etc. Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has contributed blankets, water filters, jerry cans and plastic sheets. Local donations include cash and kind.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The overall goal of the appeal is to provide immediate assistance to those affected and in the longer term, reduce risk of disaster and enhance the resilience of some of the most vulnerable people in Myanmar.

Along with the National Disaster Relief Committee, the state level Red Cross was the first to respond to the cyclone by releasing available disaster preparedness stocks from both the headquarters in Yangon and the Sittwe warehouses. It was also responsible for deploying more than 100 volunteers in search and evacuation operations, the cleaning of wells and purification of drinking water in the affected areas.

Based on the information provided by the National Disaster Relief Committee and channelled to the national headquarters through the state level Red Cross, a joint MRCS/Federation team was deployed to assess the situation.

At the request of the MRCS, the International Federation launched an appeal on 4 June 2004. Due to the low level of emergency stocks at both headquarters and state level and a lack of funds to pre-finance the procurement of relief items, MRCS interventions are only taking place when funds are received from national and international levels. Hence MRCS intervention is mainly in the 'prolonged' phase of the emergency and may be regarded as more reactive than proactive.

As a result of the international appeal and subsequent donor response, plus feedback from a joint MRCS/Federation assessment team, the MRCS and the Federation Myanmar delegation developed an initial plan of action qualifying five townships (one additional township from the time of appeal launch) affected to benefit from the Red Cross assistance.

The 5 townships covered in the flood response programme are:

Townships	Households	Number of affected persons
Sittwe (11 townships)	213	1245
Pauk Taw (5 townships & 13 villages)	1694	10408
Myay Bon (9 townships & 45 villages)	2051	9943
Kyauk Taw (43 villages)	300	1328
Min Byar (14 villages)	370	2120
Total	4628	25044

The operation consists of three phases:

Phase I

- To help meet the immediate needs for safety, food and temporary shelter for people whose homes have been damaged or destroyed and who have been forced to evacuate to higher ground.
- To clean and chlorinate contaminated wells and ponds, and to remind families every two days to boil their drinking water.

Phase II

- To help 4,628 households to recover quickly by providing basic food items i.e. rice, salt, cooking oil and beans for a one-month period;
- To provide 600 rolls of plastic sheets (size 6 x 12 feet, per piece per family) to 4,628 households; remainder to be stocked
- To provide 10,000 pieces of blankets to 4,628 households; remainder to be kept in reserve
- To provide two four-gallon water buckets to each household
- To equip the township Red Cross with 100 units of first aid kits
- To provide the Red Cross with essential briefing and training to undertake the response operation.

Phase III

- To replenish the relief stocks in Sittwe and in the national warehouse in Yangon
- Propose to provide funding and technical support to the communities in constructing water shelter ponds – pending funding and local authorities' approval

Criteria for beneficiary selection

The MRCS and the Myanmar Delegation have agreed on the main criteria for the beneficiary selection as follows:

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

- Households whose houses have collapsed
- Households who have been evacuated to the 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 should be given to the following:

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

The Red Cross in townships were advised by the headquarters that the above criteria should be strictly observed. However, the ultimate responsibility of identifying the most vulnerable within the communities remains with the National Disaster Relief Committee and applies to the local appropriate vulnerability criteria. The MRCS and the Myanmar delegation remain therefore supportive of maintaining a flexible approach to beneficiary selection at the grassroots level. The final lists of beneficiaries were made available to the joint MRCS/Federation assessment team.

- **Health and Care**

At the initial stage, an outbreak of diseases was anticipated following the disaster and provision was made in the appeal for health and care. However, the joint assessment team confirmed that there is no major health and care concern. As such, it was decided by the MRCS and the Myanmar delegation that health and care will no longer remain as a priority area for this operation.

However, the MRCS will distribute 100 first aid kits to the Red Cross at all township levels in Rakhine state during Phase II of the operation.

- **Water and sanitation**

Flood waters have temporarily contaminated wells and other ground water supplies. During Phase I of the operation, MRCS volunteers were involved in cleaning wells and water purification efforts.

Safe and clean water was and still is a primary concern, therefore the appeal was framed to provide two bottles of drinking water to the affected households. Subsequently, following the assessment team's visit, instead of providing drinking water in water bottles which is costly and is a short term solution, options are being considered in constructing water shelter ponds as per the community's needs. There are four water shelter ponds that need repairing in the affected areas and two new ponds are requested. These water shelter ponds can accommodate 500 people and act as a safe haven, having water source close to the affected people.

The construction of water shelter ponds during Phase III will be a community based disaster preparedness project with involvement from the communities, local authorities, Red Cross volunteers and other relevant agencies.

Most of the community members interviewed by the assessment team have clearly indicated desire for a more long-term solution.

The MRCS is looking at the possibilities of initiating the construction of water shelter ponds. The local authorities and the Irrigation Department have been contacted for potential action and collaboration. If implemented this project is expected to complete within six months. Funding for this project is earmarked by the Chinese Red Cross which channelled its funds through the Chinese Embassy in Myanmar. As this project is expected to take a longer period to complete, it will be treated outside the emergency appeal period of three months.

- **Relief distribution of food and basic non-food items**

Information from the state-level Red Cross and from the assessment visits indicated that the priority remains as basic food and non-food items. Therefore, with the confirmed funds made available by the donors, arrangements are underway in purchasing rice, cooking oil, salt and beans for five townships. Funding for the procurement and distribution of these items will come from the Australian Red Cross, British Red Cross, Japanese Red Cross, Monaco Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross and Swedish Red Cross.

After further discussions with the people at the affected areas, it was decided that mosquito nets would no longer be a priority. Instead a four-gallon water bucket has been requested.

Food items

Purchase of basic food items such as rice, salt, cooking oil and beans, complied with the Federation procurement standards. Whilst waiting for receipt of funds, the MRCS had already started the tendering process for the purchase of goods in related quantities. Vendors submitted three sealed quotations for all purchases and these were opened by the tendering committee. The tendering committee consisted of at least one Myanmar delegation member. Samples were provided when submitting the quotes. The contract would be signed between the MRCS and the vendors.

Non-food items

A total of 16,800 blankets and 600 rolls of plastic sheeting were procured and despatched by the Danish Red Cross. Specifications for the blankets and plastic sheet have been confirmed in compliance with the local needs and usage. The goods are expected to arrive in July. The distribution of these items will take place thereafter. Bearing in mind that the monsoon season will continue until September, the need for plastic sheeting and blankets is for the long term and suitable in this phase of emergency. The remaining blankets and plastic sheeting will be stored in the warehouse in Sittwe.

Several factors including financial, logistics, information flow and human resource constraints have caused the operation to run at only a moderate pace. At the time of reporting, distribution of food and non-food basic items have not started.

The delays in the distribution of the above items do not seriously affect survival strategies of the beneficiaries since most of them have benefitted already from government support or support from other local and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and United Nation agencies. The Myanmar delegation has had a coordination meeting to confirm relief efforts of other organisations so as to avoid operation overlapping.

Funding will be primarily used during Phase I and Phase II.

- **Logistics**

The quickest access to Sittwe is by air. Domestic flights are not reliable especially during the monsoon season. Within Rakhine state itself, access is predominantly by land and sea and is costly due to the interruption and destruction of transportation means such as motorboats and rowing boats. When accessing certain remote areas, the MRCS members/volunteers had to pay very high prices for motorboat fuel.

Having looked at the various options and comparing costs, it was decided at the very onset that the purchase of goods would be done centrally in Yangon by the headquarters and despatched from the supplier to the Rakhine capital city, Sittwe. The transportation of goods from Yangon to Sittwe will be undertaken by a local shipping company which has offered to transport them for free. Transportation of goods within the Rakhine state will depend largely on the arrangements of the local authorities. All goods upon arrival will be inspected and monitored by the state level and/or the headquarters.

During the third phase of the operation, efforts will be made to replenish the depleted stocks in the warehouses especially in Yangon and Sittwe. All MRCS warehouses were replenished in 2002/03 with support from national societies. The replenishment process was carried out according to the Federation standard logistics procedures.

- **Telecommunication**

Telecommunication was also disrupted and destroyed during the disaster. Telecommunication systems at the township Red Cross is poor with the absence of telephones/telephone lines, faxes or computers. Despite that there has been regular information flow between the state's level and the headquarters throughout the operation.

Based on the disaster management appeal for 2004, there is an existing allocation of basic telecommunication systems to disaster prone areas such as Sittwe to be carried out during this quarter.

- **National Society Capacity Building**

The MRCS has a long-established national society with 324 townships throughout the country, and about 300,000 volunteers. The state-level Red Cross leadership is dynamic and has been pro-active in their operation. The experienced disaster management team at the headquarters is mobilised along with other departments and stays alert at all times. Human resources are stretched during this time especially when there are ongoing disaster management activities to be conducted and carried out as planned.

Like many other townships, the state level township is not fully equipped to respond to disasters. The only ambulance available is in need of an engine overhaul, thus limiting service to the community. There is a lack of basic infrastructure (telecommunication) at the township level. The warehouse in Sittwe is in good condition.

Over the past few years, the MRCS has taken significant steps to enhance its capacity in disaster management. Since 2002, the disaster assessment and response team (DART) was established, which has been important in improving MRCS's capacity to gather, analyse and act on accurate and timely information at the time of disasters. These courses are continued at lower levels of the organisation. A DART multiplier course was organised in March this year, which was attended by Red Cross volunteers and numerous government departments and local NGOs who are responsible directly or indirectly for disaster management. This course has increased the understanding of the Red Cross role in times of disaster and increased cooperation amongst the agencies during the actual disaster.

Efforts are now underway to implement an integrated community-based disaster preparedness (CBDP) and community-based first aid (CBFA) approach to reach the communities.

In March this year with the support of the regional delegation, the MRCS developed a disaster management strategic plan for three years.

For details of the MRCS disaster management programme and the Federation's ongoing support to the programme, please see the Federation's appeal 2004 for Myanmar ([Appeal no. 01.65/2004](#))

- **Communication - Public Information**

The Federation office, situated in the MRCS building, is in constant communication with the MRCS disaster management team, and is providing regular information to the ICRC delegation in Myanmar. The office also maintains close contact with the Federation's regional delegation in Bangkok and the Geneva secretariat. International and local media, donors and other stakeholders are updated regularly on Red Cross action.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation**

A minimum of four monitoring and evaluation trips will be conducted by teams from the MRCS headquarters, including Federation delegates, over the next three-month period.

- **Capacity of the Federation**

The Federation has a country delegation in Myanmar, currently composed of four delegates (head of delegation, organisational development/disaster preparedness delegate, and two health delegates) and eight local staff, providing support to the MRCS. Technical and administrative support is also provided by the Federation's regional delegation for Southeast Asia in Bangkok and the secretariat in Geneva.

- **Outstanding needs**

There is an outstanding need to replenish the warehouse stocks especially in the two warehouses in Yangon and Sittwe. As this is only the start of the monsoon season, it is anticipated that the relief stocks will be distributed in the near future.

In addition there is a need to upgrade the communication system at the township level. Currently there is no mode of communication available. During the disaster, the state Red Cross officer had to borrow a telephone to call the headquarters. Although information flow has been regular, a boost to communication systems would improve its speed.

In addition to the four basic food items, the MRCS and the Myanmar delegation agreed to include two water buckets per household in their relief distribution. Should there be increased funding in response to the appeal, the MRCS will increase distribution of basic food items for an additional one month period.

Local and regional technical expertise are sought to initiate the construction of water shelter ponds.

[Contributions list below; click here to return to the title page.](#)

REVISED BUDGET SUMMARY**Myanmar: Rakhine Cyclone**APPEAL No.
02/2004VALUE IN
CHF

TYPE	ORIGINAL	REVISED	VARIANCE
RELIEF NEEDS			
Shelter & constructions	12,000	85,000	73,000
Clothing & textiles	59,000	107,700	48,700
Food & seeds	54,000	94,000	40,000
Water & sanitation	10,000	32,000	22,000
Medical & first aid	12,000	1,000	-11,000
Utensils & tools	7,000	21,000	14,000
TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS	154,000	340,700	186,700
<u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u>			
Programme support (6.5% of total)	13,000	26,848	13,848
<u>TRANSPORT STORAGE & VEHICLE COSTS</u>			
Transport & vehicle costs	6,000	20,000	14,000
<u>PERSONNEL</u>			
Expatriate staff	15,000	12,000	-3,000
National staff	5,000	4,500	-500
<u>ADMINISTRATIVE & GENERAL SERVICES</u>			
Travel & related expenses	3,000	5,000	2,000
Administrative & general expenses	5,000	4,000	-1,000
TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS	47,000	72,348	25,348
TOTAL APPEAL CASH, KIND, SERVICES	201,000	413,048	212,048
LESS AVAILABLE RESOURCES (-)		0	
NETT REQUEST		413,048	

Myanmar - Rakhine cyclone

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 14/2004

PLEDGES RECEIVED

07/08/2004

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				414,000	TOTAL COVERAGE 85.7%	
BRITISH - RC		10,000	GBP	22,860	30.06.04	
CHINESE - RC		20,000	USD	25,290	02.07.04	DIRECT TRANSFER
DANISH - GOVT/RC		6,918	USD	8,748	30.06.04	PROGRAMME SUPPORT
JAPANESE - RC		8,319	USD	10,516	14.06.04	
MONACO - RC		10,000	EUR	15,360	28.06.04	
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC		377,562	NOK	68,905	29.06.04	
SPANISH - RC		12,000	EUR	18,348	02.07.04	DIRECT TRANSFER
SWEDISH RC/GOVT		200,000	SEK	33,800	18.06.04	
MYANMAR - PRIVATE DONORS				6,900	02.07.04	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				210,727	CHF	50.9%

KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
DANISH - GOVT		113,846	USD	143,958	30.06.04	600 ROLLS TARPULINS, 16800 BLANKETS, TRANSPORT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				143,958	CHF	34.8%

ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	