

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° 2
8 May 2008

Period covered by this Update: first 48 hours since appeal was launched

Appeal target (current): CHF 6,290,909 (USD 5.9 million or EUR 3.86 million);

[<click here to view the attached Emergency Appeal Budget>](#)

Appeal coverage: There has been very quick response from donors to this appeal, and with confirmed pledges and indications of support, this Preliminary Appeal is already covered. However, the needs are enormous, and a revised scaled up appeal will be issued soon.

[<Click here to link to the donor response list>](#)

[<click here to link to contact details >](#)

Appeal history:

- This preliminary emergency appeal was launched on 6 May 2008 for CHF 6,290,909 (USD 5.9 million or EUR 3.86 million) for six months to assist 30,000 families.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF): CHF 200,000 has been allocated from the Federation's DREF.

Summary: The past 24 hours have seen a definite shift up in gear both on the ground in Myanmar and internationally. Significant issues remain to be resolved and further challenges await.

In Myanmar, the quantity and quality of assessment is increasing as evident in the substance of this operations update. In-country coordination is working well. Internationally, progress has been made on visas for key personnel with hopes high the first key handful will arrive tomorrow morning (May 9). Further arrivals will need to be tightly coordinated to ensure the most needed people arrive first and that the delicacy of the operational context is not upset. In addition, it will still take some time to build significant capacity to move effectively and to scale up outside of Yangon. **Note: Myanmar Red Cross is not allowing any Red Cross Red Crescent staff to enter on tourist visas.**

In Myanmar, the authorities and international organizations are regarding Myanmar Red Cross (and the wider Movement) as an increasingly important part of the evolving response to the humanitarian catastrophe in the wake of Cyclone Nargis. This though brings with it the considerable risk that the national society could be overwhelmed. Several recent experiences of major disasters illustrate that this is not an idle threat. However, in-country partners are sensitive and supportive of this issue. Similarly, the Federation is clarifying, through discussions with MRCS, how the national society wants to proceed in terms of managing what is set to be a massive international support operation. This will be designed to ensure that: first, the MRCS – and the whole Movement – ends up helping more

people in an effective way; and second, that MRCS is left stronger post-disaster to provide sustainable support to vulnerable people, long after the international assistance. This approach is based on lessons learned during the tsunami operation.

Despite the complex and sensitive nature of this operation from many perspectives, these past few days have seen 27,000 committed volunteers from Myanmar Red Cross putting aside personal loss and suffering to help family, friends and neighbours recover from Cyclone Nargis. Through their impartial approach to addressing needs the volunteers are demonstrating a high degree of independence of humanitarian decision making and action.

This preliminary emergency appeal is focused on relief and emergency shelter only. A more detailed and comprehensive picture is emerging on needs and the appropriate (and logistically possible) response. A revised appeal will be issued soon. The initial number of beneficiaries, – 30,000 families – is set to expand significantly.

Many partner national societies have already made contributions to the appeal: American Red Cross, Australian Red Cross, Austrian Red Cross, Belgian Red Cross/Belgian government, British Red Cross, Canadian Red Cross, Red Cross Society of China - Hong Kong branch, Danish Red Cross, Finnish Red Cross/ Finnish government, French Red Cross, Icelandic Red Cross, Japanese Red Cross, Korean Red Cross, Luxemburg Red Cross, Netherlands Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross/Norwegian government, Qatar Red Crescent, Spanish Red Cross/Spanish government, Swedish Red Cross/Swedish government, Swiss Red Cross, Taiwan Red Cross Organization, and United Arab Emirates Red Crescent Society. The International Federation, on behalf of Myanmar Red Cross Society, would like to thank all partners for their very quick and generous response to this appeal.

At present, humanitarian organizations, national and international communities, governments and other donors are coming forward with offers of aid in cash and kind. More specific information on donor response will be provided in upcoming operations updates.

The situation

In Yangon, at least, there are increasing signs of some return to 'normal life'. People are endeavouring to rebuild their lives and livelihoods but in many cases major support is desperately needed. People continue to repair or cover damaged roofs. Local authorities and community members continue to clean up after the cyclone, repairing roofs and clearing away debris. Businesses are starting to open although there are concerns with regard to supplies of various food staples.

Limited water supplies have returned to parts of the city. However the many people whose main water supply is from a ground well are still without water as there is no electricity to run their pumps. Power supplies are not expected to be up and running for at least two weeks.

Mobile telephone communication is improving but still patchy. Similarly, some land lines are being reconnected with a limited number working in the MRCS headquarters and the Federation country office.

Interagency coordination is going well, however demands of meetings is putting a strain on the small in-country team. Cluster arrangements are currently being finalised.

Transportation access to the most affected areas such as Ayeyarwady division is being reconnected slowly. The number of boats needed is one of the key questions as many areas remain inundated.

Tropical cyclone Nargis (which means daffodil in Urdu) struck the mid-south of Myanmar on 2 May. The scale of destruction and loss is massive with casualty figures still rising with one in-country

estimate citing 100,000 dead. This has not been confirmed and the government figure is 'more than 22,000' dead, with 41,000 missing and one million people affected. What has possibly been overlooked a little in initial reports is the fact that it was the consequent storm surge (reportedly 3.5 metres in many areas and occasionally seven metres in some parts- important to note that this is different to a tsunami) that has caused the most loss of life rather than the cyclone per se. On flat land this phenomenon can be – and has been – devastating. While technology allows cyclones to be 'seen' in terms of wind speed and rain potential, storm surges are much more difficult to predict.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Overview

The national society has confirmed its openness to assistance in managing and planning this massive operation. The MRCS executive committee is being proactive in these discussions. Meanwhile, the leadership continues to work with its line ministry (ministry of health) as well as the ministry of relief, social welfare and resettlement.

The operation is gaining structure and momentum, with daily meetings to assist in focusing priorities and a process of consolidating assessment information into clear reports, including analysis and record of relief distributions. This is helping to direct the current limited resources in-country to those most in need.

The dedication of the assessment teams, MRCS staff and volunteers and Federation staff is extraordinary. Local MRCS and Federation staff are carrying the bulk of the 'operational weight' at the moment as international staff are for now restricted to the Yangon area. This is even more significant considering many colleagues have themselves been directly affected by the disaster. However, clearly, more human resources are needed. News late today (8 May) indicated that key – and agreed – Red Cross Red Crescent personnel will be granted visas.

MRCS leaders have approved the arrival of a regional disaster response team (RDRT) and a field assessment and coordination team (FACT). Members for both have been alerted and they are set to be briefed in Bangkok en route.

The proposed RDRT includes specialists in relief, water and sanitation, logistics and administration from Indonesian Red Cross (1), Philippine Red Cross (2) and Malaysian Red Crescent (2).

A 16-member FACT is also being assembled comprising specialists in telecommunications, relief, water and sanitation, shelter, reporting, logistics, health, administration and media. This team includes members of the Norwegian (1), German (2), Danish (1), Australian (2), Belgian (2), Japanese (1), Finnish (2), Spanish (1) and Canadian (1) Red Cross as well as the Federation (3). Both the RDRT and FACT are scheduled to be in-country for four weeks. The need for both teams is very high, together with significant logistics support. The country office is also looking at available expertise in-country.

Main needs

Key needs continue to be emergency shelter, hygiene items, food rations and safe drinking water. Other matters include rising concern over health issues such as malaria and communicable diseases. In the longer term, there will be a need for seeds to assist in crop production (it is planting season, with the harvest due in September), rebuilding of houses and restoring family links (also in the shorter term).

Assessments and relief support

The MRCS is presently supporting 69,440 people (approximately 13,900 families) who are housed at 12 schools and pagodas acting as temporary mass shelters in Yangon. This support will continue as

well as efforts to assist people at temporary camps in other divisions and states. Assessments have been followed by targeted distribution of relief items. Discussions regarding restoring family links (RFL) have also been initiated with the MRCS identifying a potential focal point trained in tracing. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is very much a part of this.

MRCS has made assessments in the five divisions/states affected. Relief items, such as jerry cans, family kits and water purification tablets, have been distributed. Within the Yangon area this includes 1.5 tonnes of rice, 600 litres of water, 120 jerry cans, and 900 water purification tablets to 60 families (approximately 300 people) in Dawbin.

Assessments in Yangon have been made in Kun Chan Gon, Kanyan and Thone Kaa among other locations. In Kun Chan Gon, at least 1,000 dead have been reported while 2,000 are missing. Human corpses and animal carcasses have not been collected. In Kanyan, which housed 35 villages, authorities report 26,927 men and 29,842 women homeless. Only a limited number of shelters are available. Two people are reported dead and 11 missing. A monastery is presently acting as a shelter, housing 1,000 people. Water contamination is high and access to clean safe water remains a priority. The Red Cross will set up a post for food and cash collection.

In Thone Kaa, 3,700 houses are destroyed and 101 schools damaged. Six other schools constructed from bamboo have been destroyed as have the local agricultural office and police station. 270 Red Cross volunteers are clearing roads and transporting those injured to receive help. The local hospital, however, is roofless, protected only by a shaky ceiling. Operating facilities and isolation wards are severely damaged. Eleven camps currently house 5,446 families (approximately 23,040 people). 100 bags of rice have been distributed but hunger remains a problem. Red Cross volunteers have set up a collection point for community donations from those less affected.

Outbreaks of diarrhoea have been reported in Labutta and Bogalay.

The MRCS will continue to distribute soap, water purification tablets and fresh drinking water to all families in the camps in Yangon. These remain priority items together with hygiene kits, family kits, medical kits and clothing.

MRCS and the Federation will meet with other aid agencies to map out a longer-term strategy in the distribution of relief supplies, such as rice and plastic sheeting.

The Federation has also requested vehicles for assessment teams. The ICRC is also looking at the rehabilitation of detention centres which were hit by the cyclone and has offered some support to MRCS for hospitals.

Logistics

Two serious logistical issues are apparent: first, capacity (and ability) to get goods and people into the country (i.e. news that the main port in Yangon is set to be out of action for two weeks); second, once in Myanmar, UN OCHA has major concerns of a second bottleneck in the delta itself. Infrastructure was already relatively less developed before the disaster; now cyclone damage has made the situation even worse. The seriousness of this can be gauged with a French Red Cross logistical analysis that revealed an expected journey time of road shipments from Bangkok to affected areas in Myanmar of up to five days. This option, like all others remain open, until the best consistent rhythm is found and is up and running. Related to this is the ability of aid organizations to manage the flow of goods in-country because of the current preferred approach to receiving goods on the part of the authorities.

MRCS warehouses lack available stock. Local purchase of items has begun along with a daily tracking of prices of essential items and their availability. The Red Cross is also looking to hire vehicles for relief distribution. However, the regional shelter cluster in Bangkok reports a serious shortage of trucks (many damaged), drivers (some killed and injured). This is compounded by a fuel shortage (and

consequent price rise) caused in part by a lack of power to pump the fuel. On a brighter note, roads are increasingly open.

MRCS and the Federation are contacting airport and sea port authorities as well as the local customs department towards establishing smooth receipt and transfer of relief items. The Federation will brief authorities on relevant aspects of the International Disaster Response Law guidelines in this regard if required.

The MRCS has arranged to set up a rathall for storage at a local sports oval near the Yangon headquarters. This will be used as a receipt point for imported relief, supplementing existing warehouses in Yangon. Placing two further rathalls in the Ayeyarwady delta area is being considered.

An air charter with 300 shelter kits and 600 tarpaulins left from Kuala Lumpur late this afternoon. A further shipment of 1,000 tarpaulins and 3,750 jerry cans is scheduled to leave Kuala Lumpur tonight via commercial airline. A regional logistics unit delegate has received a visa and will arrive in Myanmar tomorrow. A logistics emergency response unit (ERU) will be deployed. Pending the approval of visas, the team of British and Swiss Red Cross staff is expected to arrive in Myanmar this weekend. The regional logistics unit in Kuala Lumpur is coordinating the mobilization of relief goods and continues to find various options to deliver relief items faster.

Coordination and partnerships

MRCS maintains good, proactive contacts with the ministry health, the ministries of social relief and rehabilitation as well as with Movement partners. The feedback from these authorities is positive on a coordinated Federation support of MRCS in this operation. In addition, the Federation continues to coordinate efforts with UN agencies and the international non-governmental organization sector via the cluster system at national, regional and global level. The Federation is playing the role of focal point for the MRCS, and coordinating the international community interaction with the MRCS network to ensure that the national society is not overwhelmed. International agencies have shown consideration of the MRCS's current capacity.

Small teams of volunteers are being deployed from other states and divisions where necessary. French and Danish Red Cross representatives are fully engaged in the operation, providing valuable support to the Federation. Other partners throughout the Federation have expressed their solidarity with the MRCS and Federation thanks to improved phone and email links.

Within the Movement itself, daily contact is maintained between the Federation, MRCS and the ICRC. The ICRC is deploying its cooperation delegate from Kuala Lumpur to Myanmar.

The Myanmar government has signalled its support of relief supplies as contributions to the authorities or the MRCS. The ministry of health has informed that all duty will be waived for relief items imported to Myanmar for cyclone relief purposes. The general opinion is that supplies should be coordinated and distributed through the MRCS. The authorities have displayed a generally open attitude regarding figures concerning the disaster.

The national society also maintains good relationships with the Federation and partner national societies. MRCS welcomes their support and guidance in implementing the operation in a coordinated manner. National society and Federation staff and volunteers deserve high recognition in their active efforts in this operation considering many have suffered a direct hit from the cyclone on their own homes and families.

Coordination and prioritization is a major – but necessary – task to manage such a spread of partnerships. Because of MRCS' comparative advantage in terms of presence and access, it is seen as a priority organization by fellow humanitarian organizations. This though brings tremendous pressure to

manage what amounts to a triple emerging role for MRCS: to deliver a Red Cross operation (with all its inherent responsibilities), to be an auxiliary to its government; and to be an operational partner for organizations such as UNICEF, with whom it has worked since 1991.

In terms of communications and advocacy, a major media relations operation remains in full swing with literally worldwide coverage of the issues of vulnerability in Myanmar and the work of MRCS and its Movement partners in addressing these. Via Federation media spokespeople, the Red Cross Red Crescent is proving to be a key reference and preference for global media.

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

- Myanmar Red Cross Society, phone: +95 1 383680; fax: +95 1 383675, email: mrcshsec@redcross.org.mm.
- Federation country office in Myanmar: Bridget Gardner, head of country office, phone: +95 9513 0564; fax: +95 1 682588; email: ifrcmm01@redcross.org.mm
- Michael Annear, Asia Pacific disaster management coordinator, phone: +66.81 753 9598, email: michael.annear@ifrc.org (currently in Myanmar).
- Federation regional office in Bangkok: Alan Bradbury, acting head of regional office, phone: +66 2661 8201, fax: +66.2.661.9322; email: alan.bradbury@ifrc.org
- Federation zone office in Kuala Lumpur:
 - Jagan Chapagain, deputy head of zone office, phone: +6012 2153765, email: jagan.chapagain@ifrc.org
 - Jyri Rantanen, acting head of disaster management unit, phone: +6012 2206920, email: jyri.rantanen@finrc.fi
 - Penny Elghady, resource mobilization and PMER coordinator, phone: +603 9207 5775, email: penny.elghady@ifrc.org
 - For mobilization of relief items: Jeremy Francis, regional logistics coordinator, phone: +60 12 298 9752, fax: +60 3 2168 8573, email: jeremy.francis@ifrc.org
- Federation secretariat in Geneva: Christine South, operations coordinator Asia Pacific, phone: +41 22 730 4529; mobile: +41 79 308 9824; email: christine.south@ifrc.org

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PRELIMINARY APPEAL BUDGET SUMMARY

Myanmar:Tropical Cyclone

MDRMM002

ORIGINAL

RELIEF NEEDS

Shelter	1,800,000
Clothing & Textiles	150,000
Utensils & Tools	1,200,000
Other Supplies & Services	1,200,000
Total Relief Needs	4,350,000

CAPITAL EQUIPMENT

Vehicles Purchase	280,000
Computers & Telecom Equipment	10,000

TRANSPORT, STORAGE & VEHICLES

Storage - Warehouse	50,000
Distribution & Monitoring	100,000
Transport & Vehicles Costs	500,000

PERSONNEL

International Staff	372,000
Regionally Deployed Staff	30,000
National Staff	50,000
National Society Staff	50,000

GENERAL EXPENSES

Travel	30,000
Office /Admin	30,000
Communication Costs	30,000

PROGRAMME SUPPORT

Programme Support - PSR (6.5% of total)	408,909
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Total Operational Needs	1,940,909
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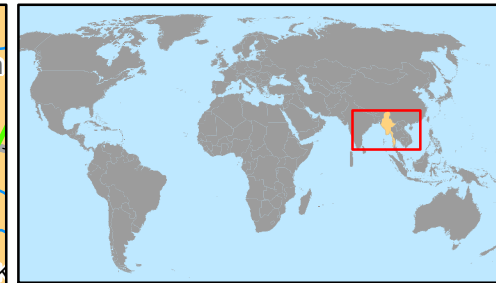
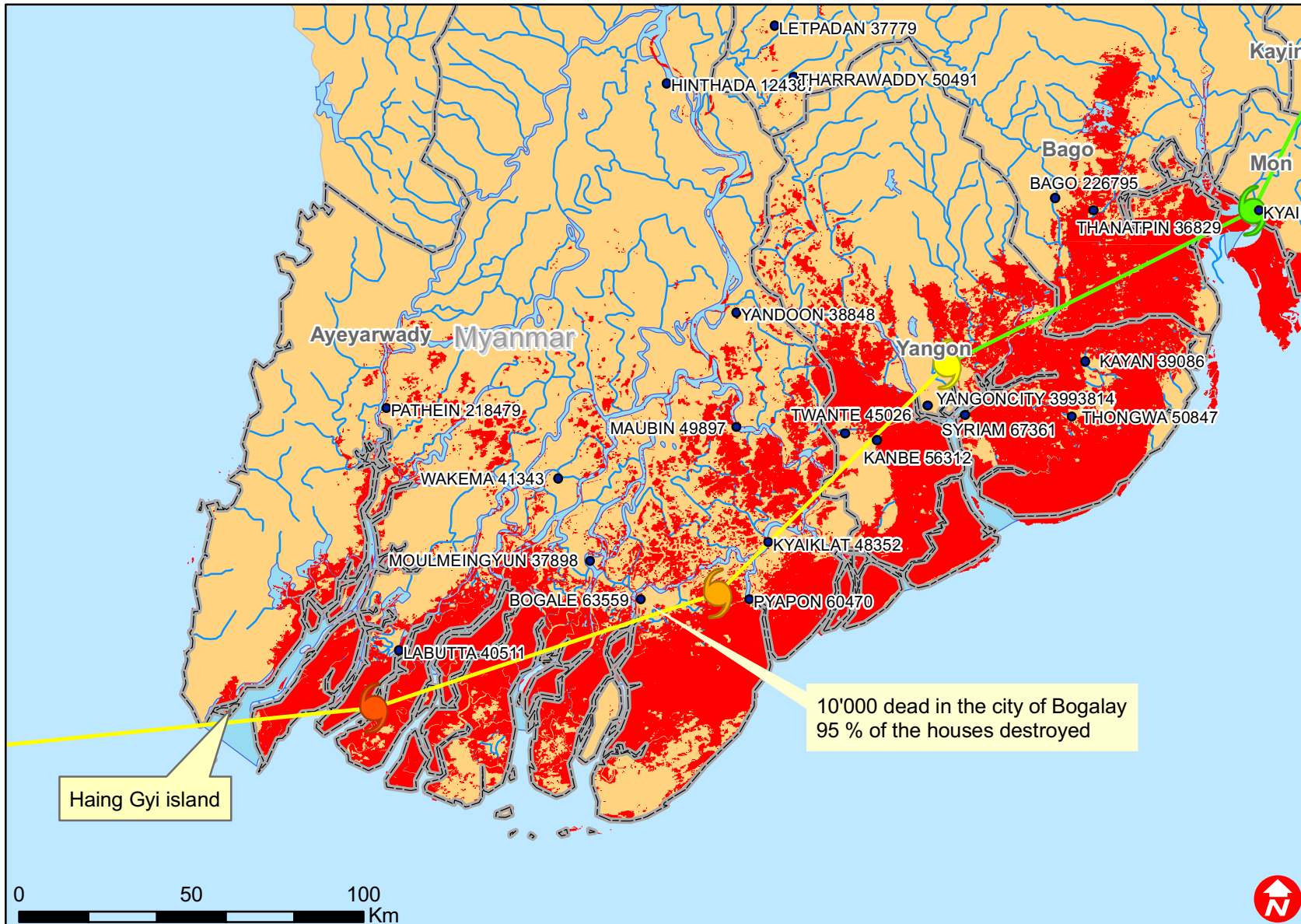
Total Appeal Budget (Cash & Kind)	6,290,909
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Less Available Resources

Net Request	6,290,909
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Myanmar: Tropical cyclone



- Main cities with population
- ☄ CYCLONE-1
- ☄ CYCLONE-2
- ☄ CYCLONE-3
- ☄ CYCLONE-4
- ☄ TROPICAL DEPRESSION
- ☄ TROPICAL STORM
- ▭ Provinces
- Inundated extend (MODIS derived)