

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° 3
9 May 2008

Period covered by this Update: first 72 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 a huge and very generous response from donors to this appeal, and with many confirmed pledges and indications of support, this appeal is already well covered. Initial planning is underway in-country as the International Federation's ability to scale up effectively increases to support Myanmar Red Cross Society and to meet the huge needs, taking into account various operational constraints. A revised appeal will be issued early next week.

[<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 in-country International Federation team estimates that there are 700 camps for homeless people in Yangon alone. On a more encouraging note, electricity returned to the Myanmar Red Cross (MRCS) office today (9 May) and to parts of Yangon city. This makes life a lot easier during the day and night. Most MRCS staff and volunteers, however, still face dark nights with no power. It is another pressure on those who have suffered significant personal loss in this disaster. Media reports late 9 May indicated the World Food Programme (WFP) have suspended aid flights after concerns over the fate of cargo from two flights that landed today. There have been no issues thus far for Red Cross Red Crescent support arriving from overseas.



Life on the street: A girl sits on her new bed, a few blankets folded on a Yangon road. MRCS volunteers are distributing goods to many such children and offer words of comfort and hope to people who have lost family and possessions. International Federation.

The first Red Cross relief flight arrived yesterday (8 May) and the second one this morning. Relief goods from the first flight have already been distributed by Myanmar Red Cross Society. The regional logistics unit in Kuala Lumpur is looking at all options to get relief supplies into the country as soon as possible.

As of 9 May, 17 International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement staff are in-country; nine additional personnel have arrived since cyclone Nargis struck. While this is a small team in the face of such a catastrophe, it is encouraging to note the calibre and experience of those there in terms of major and complex disaster management. Capacity in logistics, relief, water and sanitation, information management as well as overall disaster management has been considerably strengthened. The communications specialist on arrival to MRCS headquarters reported 'a buzz of activity, inside and around the MRCS. Many young volunteers are pitching in to help; stacking water, clothes, buckets, household items in readiness to move out to people in need'. Because of the increasing health hazards in the working environment in-country, all Red Cross Red Crescent personnel are being urged (and supported) to make personal health a priority so that they can remain strong to help as many others as possible.

International staff are still unable to travel beyond the city limits, however, agreement has been secured for the International Federation head of country office to travel with the MRCS president and two national society disaster specialists to the Ayeyarwady delta on Sunday 11 May.

In Geneva, the secretary-general of the International Federation visited the Myanmar mission today (9 May), and expressed his condolences and stressed the excellent work of the staff and volunteers of Myanmar Red Cross. He also discussed International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement cooperation with Myanmar Red Cross Society and requested the Myanmar government's close support in facilitating the fastest possible entry of supplies, equipment and relief personnel, and their smooth operation in the country.



Homes in many districts have taken a battering and flood waters in places are showing little sign of receding.

Official government casualty figures have remained unchanged: 22,000-plus dead, 41,000 missing, about 1.5 million affected. Other, higher casualty estimates have been made but have not been substantiated.

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 and Macau branch, Danish Red Cross, Finnish Red Cross/ Finnish government, French Red Cross, Hellenic Red Cross, Icelandic Red Cross, Japanese Red Cross, Korean Red Cross, Luxemburg Red Cross, Netherlands Red Cross, New Zealand Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross/Norwegian government, Qatar Red Crescent, Slovak Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross/Spanish government, Swedish Red Cross/Swedish government, Swiss Red Cross, Taiwan Red Cross Organization, and United Arab Emirates Red Crescent and Viet Nam Red Cross Society. Contributions have also been received from ECHO, the Italian and Estonian governments and Total Oil Company. 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.

The situation

Clean-up in Yangon city continues relatively well. Food prices are reportedly increasing significantly as are prices of materials to repair homes. Bulk buying of rice sees a price of about USD 22 for a 50kg bag.

Petrol prices have tripled but fuel is still available. Taxi drivers report queuing nine hours for petrol. Transportation is much more expensive. Taxis cost approximately four times the regular price. Many people have lost their work and cannot afford the increased bus fares.

The picture from the most affected areas of the delta, unfortunately, remains patchy although it is improving.

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. Official government casualty figures have remained unchanged: 22,000-plus dead, 41,000 missing, about 1.5 million affected. Other, higher casualty estimates have been made but have not been substantiated. 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) 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.



Something on her plate: A hungry woman grabs her first meal in a long time at a Yangon shelter housing hundreds of people, which is being supported by MRCS. International Federation.

Red Cross Red Crescent action

Operation overview

The main needs are for safe drinking water, emergency shelter, hygiene items and food. The threat of health problems and communicable diseases looms greatly over the affected communities.

The in-country team has started to prioritize areas based on impact maps and the limited information available. This will assist in trying to develop longer-term distribution plans as well as contribute towards the revision of this appeal.

This will be supported by new data from others in the humanitarian community tomorrow (May 10). Strengthened links with the UN is needed but capacity limitations make this difficult.

There is a need to improve the collection of data on activities and distributions undertaken by MRCS volunteers in the branches and also those undertaken with support provided by other agencies, such as UNICEF.

Safe water supply in Ayeyarwady is becoming a great concern. The International Federation is following up with UNICEF on a potential bigger Red Cross role in this; one major issue of concern is transportation in terms of trucks and boats required.

International staff are still unable to travel beyond the city limits, however, agreement has been secured for the Federation head of delegation to travel with the MRCS president and two national society disaster specialists to the Ayeyarwady delta on Sunday 12 May.

Altogether 300 shelter kits arrived 9 May evening and 1,000 tarpaulins and 3,750 jerry cans arrive tomorrow (10 May).

There are increasing reports of cases of diarrhoea, dengue and malaria. Also, as expected, respiratory infections and mental stress is being reported. Learning from the experience of the 2004 tsunami has been important and stressed that psychosocial support is a vital part of an effective operation and recovery (as is the organizational development in emergencies approach with MRCS that was reported in yesterday's operations update no. 2).

One option being considered is the establishment of 'first aid posts' at a number of camps in Yangon. In reality, these posts would provide 'extended first aid' including basic antibiotics and basic consultation from a local health officer from the ministry of health as well as Red Cross volunteers. Local procurement is being sourced.

The ministry of health is starting a measles vaccination campaign in Yangon for six months, concentrating on 15-year olds. In terms of health, hygiene kits (family hygiene kit and women hygiene kits) remain a priority.

There are reports of increased population movement and unconfirmed reports of fighting in camps in Ayeyarwady division.

Relief

- Today 100 bags of rice (locally procured), jerry cans and water purification tablets were distributed to Myaungmya in Ayeyarwady division.
- Distributions to Lupatta and Bogale were postponed today due to the unavailability of UNICEF trucks and goods.
- Preparations for erecting a rubhall and providing security for this storage were made in readiness for setting it up over the weekend.
- Planned distributions tomorrow (10 May) in Laputta, Bogale and Pyapon in Ayeyarwady (100 family kits, 100 shelter kits, 500 jerry cans, 5,000 water tablets and five stretchers) through the use of UNICEF supported trucks.
- In Yangon division, distributions (25kg of rice, one bar bathing soap and one bar washing soap, two jerry cans and 75 water tablets) will be made to three townships for 500 families in each. A further 50 families will be supported in three other camps.
- Another company providing trucks has been identified along with an offer from Total Oil Company.
- The WFP has also agreed to provide rice to assist with distributions in Yangon, which will continue over the coming days.
- PSI, a local company, has provided two bottles of water guard which can treat 480,000 litres of water; the best use of this will be considered.

Emergency shelter

- 300 shelter kits and 1,600 tarpaulins have arrived.



The power of youth: Young Red Cross volunteers help their adult mentors as best they can to help some of the 1.5 million people estimated to be affected. The rudimentary first aid box on the table indicates the chronic lack of local capacity to provide help despite the best will in the world. International Federation.

- MRCS and the International Federation are beginning to look at what is needed to support families in the rebuilding of their homes; be it in the provision of materials, transitional shelters etc.

Emergency health and care

- Face masks and gloves have been bought and sent to Ayeyarwady to protect MRCS volunteers.

Logistics

- Reports that trucks travelling to key locations in Bogele have damaged the bridge and the route is now unusable; other options are being looked at.
- The clearing agent has provided great support with regard to receiving the shelter kits, preparing for the arrival of goods on 9 May and also providing information on open ports.
- The main government port will not be open for three weeks.
- Two private ports have been identified and MRCS and the International Federation are gathering information on possible access for the regional logistics unit in Kuala Lumpur.
- No feedback as yet from the government on the UN's offer of air link to air lift relief items from Yangon to Patheingyi.
- An offer from Total Oil Company to use their helicopter is being considered.
- Local procurement for jerry cans (1,500- with orders for more), soap, clothing (limited needs at present), bath towels, blankets were made today (9 May).



The main port in Yangon that is due to be out of action for up to three weeks.

Coordination and partnerships

The cooperation and working relationship with MRCS is gathering pace. Operational decision making is better as a result of a more structured working partnership between the Asia Pacific zone disaster manager and MRCS executive committee member for disaster management. The benefit of this, in terms of planning distributions, has already been seen.

MRCS continues to mobilize volunteers from across the country to Ayeyarwady.

The International Federation today (9 May) met the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) to discuss a number of issues, including Movement coordination. One member



Side by side: Myanmar Red Cross volunteers provide what help is to hand in one school acting as a temporary shelter for many homeless families in Yangon.

of the ICRC team with vast experience in the tsunami

coordination has offered to put together some initial advice on 'good practice' in Movement coordination based on recent live experience in Southeast Asia. Other issues covered included restoring family links (RFL) and cooperation support to MRCS.

An experienced (Myanmar national) tracing delegate arrived on 7 May and is currently looking at the RFL/tracing needs and how joint planning with MRCS in this area should proceed. The International Federation confirmed that the use of military assets to air lift relief items from Yangon to Patheingyi may be necessary. The goods would then be collected and warehoused by MRCS/ International Federation. ICRC was in agreement with this.

In terms of inter-agency coordination, coordination meetings are due to reconvene from tomorrow Saturday 10 May in-country. The agreement on cluster coordination is being finalised with the UN emergency relief coordinator in New York and will be announced tonight. The WFP has also agreed to provide rice to MRCS/ International Federation.

The Yangon-based operation support team needs to be strengthened and dedicated resources quickly put in place. The following positions will be open for an initial six months:

- 1 Head of operations
- 1 Movement coordinator
- 3 Logistics delegates
- 2 Relief delegates
- 1 Shelter delegate
- 1 Reporting delegate
- 1 Water and sanitation delegate
- 1 Communications delegate
- 1 Psychosocial support delegate
- 1 Health delegate
- 1 Finance and administration delegate

Capacity of the national society

Any arrival of substantial numbers of delegates and partner national societies threatens to overwhelm the national society. The head of country office has started to address this with the president of MRCS and this will remain a live issue. The arrival of two veterans from the tsunami operation in Indonesia, one from the International Federation and one from ICRC, will help in the management of Movement coordination that has MRCS interests high on the agenda.



Crowded house: A pregnant woman and children are among those who are more vulnerable at this packed temporary shelter in Yangon. MRCS is supporting as best they can thousands of people in such conditions. International Federation.



Exhausted and homeless: people are facing their sixth day in temporary shelters with very little and the toll is beginning to tell. International Federation.

Capacity of the Federation

The International Federation team has benefited greatly from the remarkable support and input from the bilateral French and Danish Red Cross delegates already in-country. This will be, unfortunately, more difficult to draw on as these two excellent staff are required, understandably, to support the needs and priorities of their respective national societies. One water emergency response unit (ERU) has been deployed and another two are on standby.

An 18-strong field assessment and coordination team (FACT) has been mobilised. Three members of FACT is already in-country and the remainder are currently assembling at the International Federation's Southeast Asia regional office in Bangkok, and will subsequently be deployed to Myanmar. The FACT will support the Myanmar Red Cross and the International Federation country office in assessing, planning and cooperating with other humanitarian agencies on the ground. This team will also review existing assessment information, recommendations and actions, and work with government and other humanitarian agencies, to identify gaps or needs that need to be addressed. The team will also formulate a plan of action in order to keep overall relief efforts moving in a coordinated and effective manner. The first regional disaster response (RDRT) team members are due to arrive tonight (9 May) from Malaysian Red Crescent Society after being briefed today in Bangkok. Other members (from Indonesian Red Cross and Philippines Red Cross) of the six-strong team are being mobilized.

International logistics

- The first air charter from Kuala Lumpur with 300 shelter kits and 600 tarpaulins was received in Yangon airport yesterday (8 May) and customs cleared. These relief items have already been distributed by MRCS.
- A second shipment via commercial flight of 1,000 tarpaulins and 3,750 jerry cans arrived in Yangon this morning (9 May).
- A regional logistics unit delegate arrived in Yangon this afternoon via commercial flight to oversee and coordinate International Federation relief supplies.
- The deployment of a logistics emergency response unit (ERU) has been agreed upon. This will include members of British Red Cross and Swiss Red Cross. They are expected to arrive in Myanmar early next week, though this is still contingent on visa approval.
- Space on commercial flights have been confirmed for Saturday (10 May), Sunday and every day next week. Between 3 to 11 MT of jerry cans, mosquito nets, tarpaulins will be shipped per day.
- The regional logistics unit is looking at options for charter flights in the coming days from Kuala Lumpur, and also exploring options out of the Dubai regional logistics unit and from Dhaka (borrowing stock from the International Federation's operation in Bangladesh).
- The regional logistics unit is looking at all different transport options for urgent delivery of relief items. With the main port in Myanmar badly damaged, sea transport seems unlikely for the next few weeks. Road transport through Thailand is also under consideration.
- The mobilisation table is available on DMIS.



The first consignment of Red Cross Red Crescent left Kuala Lumpur on Thurs 8 May arriving in Yangon late in the night. The chartered flight carried six tonnes of emergency shelter items (tarpaulins, ropes, tools, etc). Reuters/ Zainal Abdul Halim/courtesy www.alertnet.org

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

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- Michael Annear, Asia Pacific disaster management coordinator, phone: +66.81 753 9598, email: michael.annear@ifrc.org (currently in Myanmar).
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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**

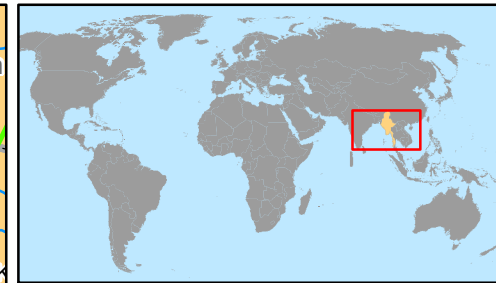
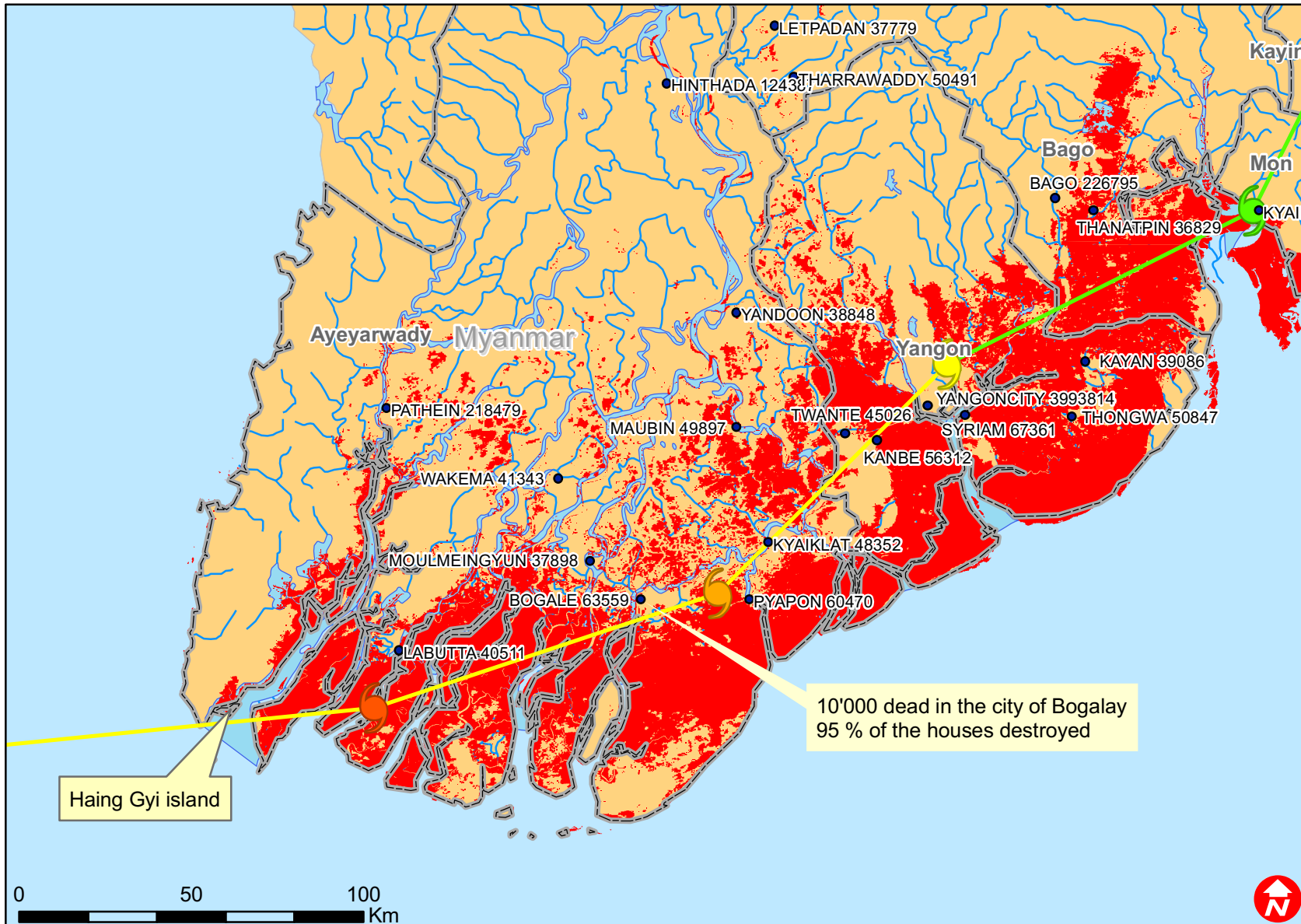
Total Appeal Budget (Cash & Kind) **6,290,909**

Less Available Resources

Net Request **6,290,909**



Myanmar: Tropical cyclone



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