

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° 14
4 June 2008

Period covered by this Update: 19 days since the revised emergency appeal was launched on 16 May 2008;

Appeal target: CHF 52,857,809 (USD 50.8 million or EUR 32.7 million) to assist 100,000 families for three years;

Appeal Coverage: There continues to be a very generous response to the Cyclone Nargis appeal - with contributions received to date and those in the pipeline, the revised appeal is now some 83%¹ covered. Partners are requested to continue providing their excellent and much-appreciated support. [<click here to link to the donor response list, or here to view contact details>](#)



A Myanmar Red Cross Society youth volunteer distributing rice in Yangon. (Photo: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies)

¹ Including soft pledges

Appeal history:

- 16 May 2008: A revised emergency appeal launched for CHF 52,857,809 (USD 50.8 million or EUR 32.7 million) to assist 100,000 families for three years.
- 6 May 2008: A preliminary emergency appeal launched for CHF 6,290,909 (USD 5.9 million or EUR 3.86 million) for six months to assist 30,000 families.
- 5 May 2008: CHF 200,000 allocation from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF).

Summary: The distribution pipeline is picking up with more than 40,000 beneficiaries receiving aid in a span of four days between 26-30 May. This advancement is partly due to the fact that respective roles and responsibilities have been more clearly defined for both the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) and International Federation staff.

To date, 165,200 beneficiaries have received some form of aid, predominantly in the Ayeyarwady area, followed by beneficiaries in Yangon and Mon. In the case of many of these survivors, such aid represents only a portion of the relief support they need.

On 3 June, permits were granted for five international water and sanitation delegates to enter the Ayeyarwady delta region today (4 June). The permits represent a small but significant step in the operations of the International Federation as the presence of these specialists will help ensure the set-up of water and sanitation emergency response units (ERUs) and the expedient provision of safe water to beneficiaries. The delegates will require a longer stay to be able to provide training to MRCS staff in order to build the capacity of the national society's ability to continue providing such services in the medium and long-term stages of the operation.

Over the last few days, the International Federation received several more invitation letters which are still necessary for the application of visas into Myanmar. Given the size of the operation and the human resource constraints, the continued provision of these letters is vital to the Red Cross Red Crescent movement, as increased staffing will help to re-distribute the overwhelming workload across a wider pool of trained human resources.

The small number of visas and the short duration of travel permits for access into the Ayeyarwady delta area continue to impose serious constraints on the effectiveness of overall operations. The International Federation staff must have sufficient time in the field in order to engage and properly plan and implement. In addition, many in-country delegates will soon need to have their visas extended. The current delegates in-country are familiar with the situation and to ensure operational continuity, they will require extensions.

Many partner national societies (with the support of their respective governments) have made significant contributions to the appeal: the American, Australian, Austrian, Belarusian, Belgian, British, Canadian, China (Hong Kong and Macau branches), Cook Islands, Danish, Finnish, French, German, Hellenic, Icelandic, Irish, Japanese, Korean, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norwegian, Portuguese, Singapore, Slovak, Spanish, Sri Lanka, Swedish, Swiss, and Vietnam Red Cross National Societies; and the Kuwait, Malaysian, Qatar, and United Arab Emirates Red Crescent; and the Taiwan Red Cross Organization. Contributions have also been received from the European Commission (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

Tropical cyclone Nargis struck the mid-south of Myanmar on 2 May. The scale of destruction and loss is massive with government figures listing 78,000 people dead and another 56,000 missing. The UN

estimates that 2.4 million people are affected. The subsequent storm surge which was reported to be 3.5 metres in many areas, caused the most significant loss of life

Coordination and partnerships

National society and capacity building

The selection of qualified personnel to strengthen the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) is being jointly conducted on a daily basis by the MRCS and International Federation staff in the different areas of health, disaster management, finance/administration, logistics and management. Qualified candidates have been screened and approved by MRCS executive committee members. To date, 34 people have been selected. Competition for staff has increased significantly for all international aid and humanitarian organizations in Myanmar. In recent weeks, a small number of staff have left the MRCS for higher-paying jobs. An emergency allowance is being provided to MRCS staff but given the high demand for human resources, retaining such staff members could prove to be a significant challenge to the national society.



Displaced people in the town of Labutta. (Photo: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies)

International Federation

The Movement coordinator is organizing standard briefings for all incoming delegates and is in direct contact with in-country partner national societies such as the French Red Cross and Danish Red Cross, as well as the ICRC.

The procedure for submitting travel permits and the length of time required for the processing of these applications remain unclear. The MRCS president has committed to following up on this with the minister of health.

The MRCS executive committee is meeting to discuss a draft organizational structure for current and short-term operations.

Partner national societies

The French Red Cross has sent four teams of nine members each comprising national staff members and trained volunteers to the Kyaiklat and Mawlamyinegyun townships to start water and sanitation activities such as the cleaning of ponds, preparing rain water collection systems and giving personal hygiene training. The teams will also distribute shelter tool kits provided by the International Federation and other basic relief items.

ICRC

ICRC has brought in two more water purification units. Discussions are underway as to how this may work in coordination with the present operation of the French, German/Austrian and Australian water and sanitation units.

With the support of the ICRC, the MRCS has established a department dedicated to the restoration of family links and reuniting relatives separated by the disaster. The necessary systems have been put in place to allow MRCS volunteers to collect information from people who are seeking news of their loved ones or who themselves wish to inform their friends and family that they are safe and well. Support to MRCS volunteers in the Ayeyarwady division will be provided by ICRC staff working from within the MRCS township branch offices currently being established. Joint MRCS/ICRC field trips have confirmed the need for restoring family links (RFL) services, including those related to specifically vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied children who have been separated from their families. The MRCS is actively cooperating with other agencies and organizations that share these concerns.

ICRC has provided adapted existing guidelines for the management of dead bodies within the present context in Myanmar, promoting this activity to the MRCS and giving guidance during the training of MRCS volunteers. MRCS has recognized the need to properly equip its volunteers in the event they are called to assist with this task.

Red Cross Red Crescent action

Operation update

Relief

Over the last week, an average of 2,800 families have received main relief items such as shelter kits, family kits and hygiene parcels each day. However, due to the limited stock of relief items, complete packages have been split to be shared among several beneficiaries.

After several attempts over two weeks, a 50-tonne boat bound for Mawlamyinegyun arrived on 1 June loaded with relief items for approximately 4,500 families together with the provision of fuel which has been difficult to obtain at township level. While more boats are becoming available, access to fuel has become increasingly more difficult. The availability of the 50-tonne boat will enable the Red Cross Red Crescent to set up a small fuel supply chain, and use small boats for distribution to beneficiaries.

Red Cross Red Crescent relief items have reached Labutta and are being well stored in a church compound. A MRCS executive committee member will travel to Labutta on Monday to work with authorities to develop a plan to distribute the items to beneficiaries.

There will be a new weekly distribution plan beginning on 9 June for the most affected townships in the Ayeyarwady division but smaller distributions are also targeted for the most affected areas in the Yangon division.

A number of Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers are affected by this disaster, and plans have been made distribute relief packages to these volunteers. Additional support packages from smaller

donations such as those made by Thai Red Cross and Singapore Red Cross will be also be distributed to affected volunteers.

Progress has been made on reconciling logistics and relief figures to provide consolidated [information on distributions](#) made to date. The logistics team will be significantly strengthened over the coming days with the arrival of the logistics coordinator and two logistics delegates, and this will further support accurate information on distributions.

Emergency shelter

The shelter cluster has recommended providing International Federation community tool kits to groups of five families, as well as household tarpaulin kits and household relief kits. This proposal was also accepted during discussions with the MRCS president and executive committee members.

In summary, the shelter cluster's strategic plan outlines that MRCS/International Federation will provide:

- 40,000 community tool kits (comprising handsaw, hammer, shovel, hoe, wire, nails, tin snips, machete and rope) for a total of 200,000 families (based on one kit for every five families). The MRCS cyclone office will work with the 100 household heads and their respective group leaders in each area to distribute the community tool kits. The distribution of these kits at the township level will be done by the MRCS/International Federation and other organizations based on agreements and documentation.
- 80,000 household tarpaulin kits comprised of two tarpaulins and 30 metres of 12mm rope will be distributed by the MRCS/International Federation to 80,000 families.
- 80,000 household relief kits comprising two 10-litre jerry cans, two blankets, one kitchen set, two double mosquito nets and one family hygiene kit.

Emergency health and care

The one-day community-based first aid refresher training session for MRCS volunteers from less-affected areas in the Ayeyarwady and Yangon divisions started on 1 June. Altogether, 216 volunteers will be trained over the next two weeks.

The training included sessions on community mobilization in emergencies, identification and prevention of communicable diseases including vector-borne diseases, diarrhoea and dehydration, provision of safe drinking water, psychosocial support, restoring family links and simple instructions on dealing with human remains.

Discussions on the way forward for the health component of the appeal were held with key MRCS health division representatives.

Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion

Permits were granted on 3 June for five water and sanitation international delegates to travel to the Ayeyarwady delta region today (4 June). This team includes water and sanitation specialists from Australia, Austria, France, Germany and India. This represents a significant improvement in the operation to be able to provide clean water and sanitation.

Part of the French Red Cross' emergency response unit's (ERU) equipment was sent to Labutta on 30 May and arrived safely. One MRCS executive committee member will travel to Labutta soon to liaise with local authorities and assist in identifying suitable locations for the installation of the unit.

The equipment of the Australian and joint German/Austrian emergency response unit was transported to Bogale. The Australian treatment plant is to be installed in Mawlamyinegyun. Efforts to identify suitable locations will continue over the next few days.



A small boy plays in water near his home on the outskirts of Yangon. There is serious concern that contaminated water is exposing many people to serious water-borne diseases.
 (Photo: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies)

Logistics

The International Federation pipeline of relief items continues to flow into Myanmar, with further shipments arriving this week by commercial and charter flights. The first shipments by sea will begin to arrive in Yangon next week.

A possible contract for a warehouse in Yangon was identified on 29 May but was not pursued as the owner failed to remove pre-existing items in the warehouse on time. However, a larger warehouse was found a day later and contractual arrangements are under discussion.

The provision of fuel for boats is a problem in all distribution areas. Therefore, fuel has been purchased in smaller quantities in Yangon and will be transported to certain townships like Bogale, Mawlamyinegyun, Pyapon and Labutta.

The International Federation wishes to emphasize that all Red Cross Red Crescent partners wishing to donate goods to this operation should coordinate with its regional logistics unit in Kuala Lumpur.

Administration

In Pyapon, further steps have been taken to establish the MRCS/International Federation's office within the town. An office including warehouse space, accommodation for staff, a car and a boat have been rented, and a separate bank account will be opened. Office equipment, including generators have been ordered and the office is expected to be operational by the end of this week.

Communications

Sustained media interest continues with international news agencies still reporting on the issues of access and the situation one month on.

A communications delegate recently arrived in Yangon to provide first-hand accounts of the situation on the ground. Also in Bangkok, the recruitment of an information delegate to support media relations will be posted soon.

The communications department in Geneva, with support from Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur, continues to provide updates to national societies on a regular basis. Updated stories, press releases and photos can be found at www.ifrc.org or www.flickr.com/ifrc.

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

- 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
 - Amy Gaver, head of disaster management unit, phone: +6012 2201174, email: amy.gaver@ifrc.org
 - For pledges of funding: 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
 - For media/communications: France Hurtubise, spokesperson in Bangkok, phone: +66 84 752 6523, email: france.hurtubise@gmail.com
- 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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Myanmar: Cyclone Nargis

Total distribution of relief by Red Cross Red Crescent until 30 May 2008

Serial no.	Items	Yangon	Ayeyarwady	Bago	Mon	Kayin	Total Distributed Qty.
WATER AND SANITATION							
1	Jerry cans	5167	26114	0	0	0	31281
2	Purification tablets	117400	81000	0	0	0	198400
3	Chlorine tablets	0	82800				82800
4	Latrines	0	0				0
5	Bottled water (litre)	20660	22385	0	0	0	43045
FOOD							
6	Rice (kg)	29450	30000	0	0	0	59450
7	Ovaltine	2908	500	0	0	0	3408
8	Cooking oil (litre)	0	2700				2700
9	Flour (kg)	0	1500				1500
10	Sugar (kg)	500	2800				3300
11	Noodles (packs)	1000	1000				2000
12	Sardines (tins)	1000	3300				4300
HEALTH							
13	First aid kits	0	5	0	0	0	5
14	Hygiene kits ¹	1500	13475	0	0	0	14975
15	Mosquito net	6600	32600	0	0	0	39200
16	ORS ¹ (sachets)	700	7200				7900
17	Antibacterial soaps	32	0				32
18	Surgical spirit (litre)	7.5	0				7.5
19	Alcohol swabs	700	0				700
20	Absorbent cotton wool (kg)	12.5	0				12.5
21	Gauze (boxes)	511	0				511
22	Elastic bandages	120	0				120
23	Stretcher	0	41	0	0	0	41
24	Face mask	250	3050	0	0	0	3300
25	Surgical gloves	300	1900	0	0	0	2200
26	Gloves	300	3400	0	0	0	3700

¹ Oral Rehydration Salts

SHELTER							
27	Shelter kit ²	2700	11583	0	0	0	14283
28	Tarpaulins	6800	41416	0	0	0	48216
29	Plastic sheeting	0	0	0	0	0	0
30	Tents	0	0				
NON-FOOD ITEMS							
31	Blanket	1400	28101	0	0	0	29501
32	Sleeping bag	600	0				600
33	Kitchen set ³	2800	11513				14313
34	Clothes	6575	21862	0	0	0	28437
35	Soap	11910	44650	0	0	0	56560
36	Family Kit ⁴	0	430	0	318	0	748
37	Cooking Pot	500	1500	0	0	0	2000
38	Plastic Plate	1300	4500	0	0	0	5800
39	Mug cup	2400	4500	0	0	0	6900
40	Steel spoon	500	3000	0	0	0	3500
41	Towel	2155	6980	0	0	0	9135
TOTAL NO. OF BENEFICIARIES		32,105	131,505	0	1,590	0	165,200

This information does not capture all items distributed by local Red Cross Red Crescent branches without MRCS HQ involvement or items distributed by other agencies using RCRC structures.

1) One **hygiene kit** contains: Washing powder (3 kg), toilet paper (12 rolls), 5 soaps, 5 toothpaste tubes (75 ml), 5 tooth brushes, shampoo (500 ml), 5 razors, 8 hygiene pads.

2) One **shelter kit** contains a rope, hand saw, roofing nails, shovel, hoe, machete, tin snips, nails, tie wire, claw hammer and woven sack, and is usually distributed with 2 tarpaulins.

3) One **kitchen set** contains: Cooking pot, plates, mugs, spoons etc.

4) One **family kit** contains: Kitchen set, clothes for men and women, blanket, towels, soap.