

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° 15
6 June 2008

Period covered by this Update: 3 weeks 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)

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 94%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>](#)



Local Myanmar Red Cross volunteers distributing relief supplies to families and community members in Mawlamyinegyun, Ayeyarwady Division. (Photo: French Red Cross)

¹ Including soft pledges

Appeal history:

- 16 May 2008: A revised emergency appeal was 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 was 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 International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF).

Summary: The distribution pipeline continues to improve with more than 62,945 beneficiaries receiving assistance in a span of seven days between 30 May and 6 June. As of 6 June, a total of more than 228,145 beneficiaries have received some form of assistance through the Red Cross from the beginning of the operation. These have been predominantly in the Ayeyarwady (Irrawaddy) 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.

Application procedures for travel permits granting international delegates access into the Ayeyarwady delta continue to vary depending on the ministries involved, while the time frames for the approval of these permits range from 38 hours to one week. The validity of the permits also varies between several days and one week. The International Federation has been informed that the processing of travel permits will improve in the future when it makes direct contact with the deputy minister for health who has been tasked with approving field trips for the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) and the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.

The permits granted on 3 June for five international water and sanitation delegates to enter the Ayeyarwady delta for one week, represent a small but significant step in the operations of the International Federation. 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.

While the International Federation has received several more invitation letters which are vital for the application of visas into Myanmar, pressing concerns remain: the small number of invitation letters received to date considering the size of the emergency operation, the short duration of travel permits for access into the Ayeyarwady delta, and the uncertainty over visa extensions for in-country delegates.

A greater number of invitation letters and subsequently, visas, are needed to build a substantial pool of specialists who can take on the overwhelming workload being borne by about 30 international delegates. Longer stays in the delta will enable these delegates to provide training to MRCS staff – essential for improving the national society's ability to operate effectively in the medium and long-term stages of the operation, while visa extensions for in-country delegates who are familiar with day-to-day operations will facilitate operational continuity and overall effectiveness.

All these concerns signify that the International Federation and the wider Red Cross Red Crescent Movement has reached a critical juncture in the emergency operation. If they are not addressed, the small pool of in-country international specialists may soon be depleted substantially, severely hampering the implementation of the operation.

Many partner national societies have already made contributions to the appeal: American Red Cross/American government, Australian Red Cross, 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, 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 European Commission Humanitarian Aid Directorate General (ECHO), the Italian, Estonian and Slovenian governments, Total Oil Company and the Stavros Niarchos 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

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.

Red Cross Red Crescent action

Operation update

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

As of 6 June, a total of 228,145 beneficiaries have received water, food and relief items – 83 per cent of beneficiaries reached are in the Ayeyarwady delta. On average, 8,992 people have been reached every day from 30 May to 6 June.

The new weekly distribution operation begins today (6 June) in seven townships in the Ayeyarwady division and three townships in the Yangon division. The operation is to last for six days and is aimed at reaching a similar number of families as the previous week. Smaller quantities of non-food items donated to the MRCS will be included in the general distribution of family kits and hygiene kits.

On 5 June, the operation began receiving distribution reports which provided more detail on beneficiaries than before – these reports contained information such as names, fingerprints and the number of people in families. A database is also being established in Yangon and will include information gathered during relief training. In future, trained MRCS staff will be able to use this database as a resource, as well as feed information into it. A detailed list of relief items distributed is available [here](#).

Emergency shelter

The inter-agency shelter cluster reports that as of 4 June, approximately 21 per cent of affected households have been provided with plastic sheets. The cluster is attempting to address the shelter needs of some 486,000 households in more than 40 townships.

Following the recommendations of the inter-agency shelter cluster (i.e. one kit for every five families), the team distributing shelter kits in the Kyaiklat and Maylaminegyun areas in the Ayeyarwady delta has reported good progress and that the distribution plan is well understood by the authorities and beneficiaries.

The shelter delegate has left on a one-week field mission to the Ayeyarwady delta to monitor the ongoing distribution of shelter materials and to devise mid- and long-term strategies.

Interaction with the cluster system continues, especially with the shelter cluster headed by the International Federation which has proven a driving force in overall strategy and planning. More links have also been established with the logistics cluster through the arrival of experienced logistics delegates.

Emergency health and care

Interviews are being conducted for the recruitment of 40 MRCS health/hygiene officers, some of whom will start work in mid-June. The recruits will attend an orientation before being deployed to eight MRCS branches.

The MRCS and the International Federation will take part in a UN, government and non-governmental organization joint assessment covering 260 villages in 30 townships scheduled to take place soon. Preparations for this assessment include a three-day assessment training facilitated by the WHO, UN and local facilitators which is now taking place (5-7 June) and being attended by 30 participants from the MRCS. Meanwhile, MRCS community-based first aid volunteers are working in the field, providing psychosocial support and first aid, and helping in distribution of relief supplies.

The MRCS and the International Federation continue to participate in weekly health, water and sanitation, and psychosocial support cluster meetings.

The community-based first aid refresher training session for 216 MRCS volunteers from the Ayeyarwady and Yangon divisions is ongoing. The main focus of the training is safe water and sanitation, prevention of communicable diseases and psychosocial support. Community education training is being conducted in collaboration with UNICEF.

Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion

The Myanmar Red Cross water unit in Dedaye has been producing 70,000 litres of drinking water per day for more than a week, reaching at least 5,000 people.



Myanmar Red Cross volunteers working together with local community members in Mawlamyinegyun, Ayeyarwady division. (Photo: French Red Cross)

Three International Federation water and sanitation teams comprising international delegates left for the Labutta, Bogale, and Mawlamyinegyun townships in the Ayeyarwady division on 4 June and will stay for one week. The teams comprise French Red Cross, German/Austrian Red Cross and Australian Red Cross members. Their main tasks will be to facilitate the final installation of water purification units with trained local personnel already on the ground, and to conduct mid-term and long-term planning for water and sanitation needs. Water production is scheduled to begin today (6 June) and when fully operational, the units will produce a total of 1 million litres of clean water which should reach at least 600,000 people daily.²

It has been agreed that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) will be responsible for the provision of safe water in the Dedaye and Pyapon townships. They will be sending their second and third sets of equipment to Pyapon soon.

Additional engineers hired by the International Federation are scheduled to undergo water laboratory training by the end of this week, after which they will join the teams in the field.

Logistics

The logistics unit has been strengthened with the arrival of the logistics coordinator and two delegates. New distribution of responsibilities will take place within the next few days with the focus on warehousing systems, transport facilities and local procurement. Logistics systems in bigger townships such as Labutta and Bogale will also be put in place.

The new logistics team also intends to train MRCS staff and improve systems particularly in relation to warehousing.

The MRCS has accepted the French government's donation of 10,000 kitchen sets which is scheduled to arrive by the end of this week on a vessel carrying other relief goods for the UN and non-governmental organizations.

Two German Red Cross delegates have arrived as part of the water and sanitation emergency response unit. Due to their short visa validity, the delegates are planning a two-day training session on erecting rubbhalls³ for eight MRCS volunteers. The volunteers will leave for Labutta next week to set up the rubbhalls.

As of 5 June, a total of 900 tonnes of relief supplies have arrived in Yangon by air freight. The first shipments by sea will begin to arrive next week.

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

Preparations for the establishment of township offices in Pyapon, Bogale, Labutta, Pathein and Ngapudaw are ongoing. A total of 33 people who have been recruited for different positions will undergo a one-day induction session tomorrow (7 June). Offices are also being planned for the Mawlamyinegyun, Dedaye and Kungyangon towns.

² This is based on SPHERE standards – the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response - which recommend 15 litres of clean water per day per person. However, when needs are great, water will be shared among more beneficiaries.

³ Mobile tents used as distribution warehouses

Coordination and partnerships

National society

The MRCS faces a massive challenge: transforming itself from an organization with a USD 2 million (CHF 2 million) annual budget to one that needs to deal with a USD 49.9 million (CHF 52 million appeal). It has taken some time for the national society to fully appreciate the scale of the emergency operation and short-term and long-term reconstruction efforts, and their impact on the society. The International Federation is still in discussion with the MRCS on how and when to implement the organizational development framework that is crucial for an operation of this magnitude.

An executive committee member of the MRCS and the head of the health department have gone to Labutta to work with the authorities on a plan to facilitate the distribution of relief items presently stored in a church compound. Another executive committee member and disaster management focal point has gone to Kyungyangun, a severely affected township in Yangon, to monitor relief distributions there. Seven out of 11 hardest-hit villages have already received relief supplies. In villages presently awaiting supplies, local authorities are selecting the most vulnerable families with the assistance of MRCS members and monks to facilitate impending distributions.

Capacity building: Recruitment is underway for training, disaster management and logistics personnel. The training recruits will boost the training unit which is presently severely understaffed as it has been operating as a relief team since the beginning of the operation. The logistics recruits will form a new logistics unit meant to operate separately from the disaster management unit which is currently also responsible for logistics.

International Federation capacity

The International Federation is working on increasing the size of the delegation by mobilizing eight regional disaster response team (RDRT) members who will primarily support relief and logistics activities at the MRCS cyclone offices. These delegates will initially act as a pool of field staff who will undertake short trips to the Yangon and Ayeyarwady divisions. In the future, these and other delegates will be based in the cyclone offices to support the MRCS staff and volunteers in their operations.

There are currently more than 30 international delegates in the country, one of whom heads the inter-agency shelter cluster.

Partner national societies

Three members of the French Red Cross' emergency response unit (ERU) have left the country, after training MRCS volunteers and local engineers who deployed one water purification unit to Labutta. The new French Red Cross emergency response unit team leader joined the local team yesterday (5 June) to supervise the production of good water quality. The head of the French Red Cross regional office has also arrived for a short mission.

Two more members of the Austrian Red Cross' water and sanitation emergency response unit have arrived in the country and are awaiting travel permits for the Bogale area.

ICRC

With the support of the ICRC, the MRCS has established a department dedicated to reuniting relatives separated by the disaster and which caters for specifically vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied children who have been separated from their families.

The ICRC has also adapted existing guidelines for the management of dead bodies in the present Myanmar context and has promoted this activity to the MRCS by training volunteers.

Communications

Sustained media interest continues with international news agencies still reporting on the issues of access and the situation one month after the cyclone. A communications delegate recently arrived in Yangon to provide first-hand accounts of the situation on the ground. 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

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- For media/communications in Myanmar: John Sparrow, spokesperson, phone: 9595 1190 64, email: ifrcmm-g3@redcross.org.mm
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Myanmar: Cyclone Nargis

Total distribution of relief items by Red Cross Red Crescent up to 2 June

| No. | Items | Yangon | Ayeyarwady | Bago | Mon | Kayin | Total Qty. Distributed |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|--------|------------|------|-----|-------|------------------------|
| WATER AND SANITATION | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Jerry cans | 5167 | 26114 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 31,281 |
| 2 | Purification tablet | 117400 | 81000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 198,400 |
| 3 | Chlorine tablet | 3600 | 126000 | | | | 129,600 |
| 4 | Latrines | 0 | 0 | | | | 0 |
| 5 | Bottled water (litre) | 20660 | 22385 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 43,045 |
| FOOD | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Rice (kg) | 29450 | 30000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 59,450 |
| 7 | Ovaltine | 4828 | 600 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5,428 |
| 8 | Cooking oil (litre) | 0 | 3080 | | | | 3,080 |
| 9 | Flour (kg) | 0 | 1500 | | | | 1,500 |
| 10 | Sugar (kg) | 500 | 4300 | | | | 4,800 |
| 11 | Noodles (packs) | 4860 | 8590 | | | | 13,450 |
| 12 | Sardines (tins) | 2500 | 7900 | | | | 10,400 |
| HEALTH | | | | | | | |
| 13 | First aid kits | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| 14 | Hygiene kits ¹ | 2000 | 15835 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17,835 |
| 15 | Mosquito net | 6600 | 32600 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 39,200 |
| 16 | Oral rehydration salts (sachets) | 700 | 12000 | | | | 12,700 |
| 17 | Antibacterial soaps | 32 | 0 | | | | 32 |
| 18 | Surgical spirit (litre) | 7.5 | 0 | | | | 7.5 |
| 19 | Alcohol swab | 700 | 0 | | | | 700 |
| 20 | Absorbent cotton wool (kg) | 12.5 | 0 | | | | 12.5 |
| 21 | Gauze (boxes) | 511 | 0 | | | | 511 |
| 22 | Elastic bandage | 120 | 0 | | | | 120 |
| 23 | Stretcher | 0 | 41 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 41 |
| 24 | Face mask | 250 | 3050 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3,300 |
| 25 | Surgical gloves | 300 | 1900 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2,200 |
| 26 | Gloves | 300 | 3400 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3,700 |

| SHELTER | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|----------------|----------|--------------|----------|----------------|
| 27 | Shelter kit ² | 2700 | 11583 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14,283 |
| 28 | Tarpaulins | 7800 | 50913 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 58,713 |
| 29 | Plastic sheeting | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 30 | Tents | 0 | 0 | | | | 0 |
| NON-FOOD ITEMS | | | | | | | |
| 31 | Blanket | 1400 | 37401 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 38,801 |
| 32 | Sleeping bag | 600 | 0 | | | | 600 |
| 33 | Kitchen set ³ | 2800 | 11452 | | | | 14,252 |
| 34 | Clothes | 6575 | 21862 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 28,437 |
| 35 | Slippers (pairs) | 1000 | 0 | | | | 1,000 |
| 36 | Soap | 12410 | 51150 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 63,560 |
| 37 | Emergency kit ⁴ | 500 | 0 | | | | 500 |
| 38 | Family kit ⁵ | 0 | 430 | 0 | 318 | 0 | 748 |
| 39 | Cooking pot | 500 | 1500 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2,000 |
| 40 | Plastic plate | 1300 | 4500 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5,800 |
| 41 | Mug cup | 2400 | 4500 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6,900 |
| 42 | Steel spoon | 500 | 3000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3,500 |
| 43 | Towel | 2155 | 6980 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9,135 |
| TOTAL NO. OF BENEFICIARIES | | 34,605 | 155,245 | 0 | 1,590 | 0 | 191,440 |

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

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

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

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

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