

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° 16
11 June 2008



Period covered by this Update:

26 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)

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 96%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>](#)

Survivors in the Ayeyarwaddy delta receiving much-needed supplies, such as blankets, tarpaulins, mosquito nets, jerry cans, and hygiene parcels at a Red Cross distribution centre in Labutta. International Federation

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:

Although access into the Ayeyarwaddy delta area has improved for the humanitarian community, there are still some challenges. The International Federation has received further travel authorization for four field trips to Bogale, Kyaiklat, Mawlamyinegyun and Pyapon. International staff include members of the International Federation and the French Red Cross. In addition, three International Federation expatriate water and sanitation teams returned from the field, after missions to Labutta, Bogale and Mawlamyinegyun. Following their return, local MRCS representatives in the delta continue to provide safe drinking water to affected communities. More detail of their activities is reported under [water, sanitation and hygiene promotion](#).

¹ Including soft pledges

A briefing provided by the government of Myanmar on the afternoon of 10 June provided details of further changes that the authorities intend to make regarding “the programme to be followed by UN agencies, INGOs and NGOs in carrying out the activities related to the aid and assistance for the cyclone-affected victims.” There were concerns expressed by the humanitarian community that additional steps for seeking approval may unnecessarily delay the relief response. The meeting was assured by the concerned ministries that this would not be the case and that delays would definitely not be a consequence of the approval process outlined.

Further applications for visa extensions for delegates were submitted on 9 June. The working relationship with all relevant ministries is quite strong and it is not envisaged that there will be any problems.

Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) and International Federation staff and volunteers in the field continue to be challenged by the lack of communication facilities which hampers operations and creates some cause for concern for delegate’s security in the field. These issues are being addressed with the concerned ministries and assistance is also being sought through UN channels.

There are plans for an operational review to be conducted towards the end of August in order to capture the initial successes and challenges concerning actions taken for the relief operation. Participants of this review will include key staff from MRCS, the International Federation, ICRC and others who played an active role in contributing to the initiation of activities. The outcomes of this review are expected to feed into the update of the MRCS contingency plan and further equip the national society to respond effectively in disaster situations.

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

Operations update

Following the approval of travel permits for international staff into the Ayeyarwady delta area, four teams were dispatched on 9 June to Bogale (including 2 international staff), Kyaiklat (including two international staff), Mawlamyinegyun (including one international staff) and Pyapon (including two international staff) to support operations. These teams will meet with local MRCS branch staff and volunteers for a briefing and gather information on further support for the operation in terms of relief, shelter, health and logistics. Team members will also:

- Accompany relief distributions where possible, providing feedback on possible improvements to

- logistics processes and discussions on longer term needs for improving operational implementation;
- Support records of all relief distributions, local procurement and volunteer registrations; and,
- Identify future human resource needs to support the MRCS volunteers and staff.

The outcome of this field work is expected to provide a clearer direction for ongoing activities as well as those planned for the recovery phase.

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

As of 9 June, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement had reached over 250,000 beneficiaries with water, food and relief items. More than 189,950 of the beneficiaries are located in the Ayeyarwady delta. Currently it is estimated an average of approximately 10,000 people per day are reached through the Red Cross. In many areas reached, the Red Cross is the only organization operating, making it critical for the continuation and scaling up of the ongoing operation. MRCS is supporting the distribution of relief items through their network of volunteers and they have earned the respect of many for the work being done.

The distribution of relief items continued in the last week to all major townships in the Ayeyarwady division and the four most affected townships in the Yangon division. Approximately, 11,000 families have received shelter materials, family kits and hygiene kits in the last week. Distribution at township level has gathered momentum and coordination and cooperation with the authorities are being strengthened. Selection of beneficiaries through including community members in the selection process such as village monks, government officers and community elders has further ensured that the most vulnerable are being prioritized. Movement and distribution in the surrounding area, however, remains a challenge due to the access to sufficient boats, land transport vehicles and fuel.

The distribution plan for the coming week aims to reach 12,500 families in total with 11,500 in the Ayeyarwady division and 1,000 in the Yangon division. Distribution of additional tarpaulins in the areas most affected is a primary focus

Emergency shelter

The arrival of shelter kits and tarpaulins this week will be distributed in the coming days. More than 7,500 tarpaulins will be distributed in Kyaiklat, Labutta, Mawlamyinegyun, Nagapudaw and Kungyangon. The ICRC will also provide support in the distribution of the shelter kits and non-food items within the purview of their water and sanitation activities in the area. Discussions continue within the shelter cluster regarding coverage and recovery activities.



Survivors living in Red Cross tents in Labutta. (International Federation)

Emergency health and care

A total of 240 Red Cross volunteers from affected townships in the Ayeyarwady and Yangon divisions have now completed a one-day intensive health and hygiene promotion orientation. A further 60 Red Cross volunteers also from affected townships in the Ayeyarwady division will complete their orientation/refresher training this week. This provides the added benefit of a possibility for some of the very committed and hardworking volunteers to have a break from their usual activities in the delta and allow the planned rotation of volunteers to build in momentum.

From 5-7 June, staff and volunteers of the MRCS and the International Federation participated in the group joint assessment orientation and training. The participants also included UN, government and non-government organizations. Twenty MRCS volunteers from the Yangon division together with over 100 volunteers from other organizations were trained to carry out field assessments and reviews for ten days in 260 villages in 30 affected townships in the Yangon and Ayeyarwady divisions.

Meanwhile, Red Cross volunteers have also been mobilized to support first aid activities in mobile clinics set up by local health units. These volunteers will additionally support children and women coping with the aftermath of the cyclone as well as assisting in providing relief support by distributing food to the vulnerable, sick and elderly in shelters that are presently being used by people who are displaced.

On a more administrative level, the selection of 40 MRCS branch health/hygiene officers is ongoing. An overview of the health and care operation has also been provided to the newly employed MRCS operations staff, prior to their deployment to the cyclone hub offices in the delta.

The MRCS and International Federation also participated in the weekly health and psychosocial support (PSP) cluster meeting. A smaller group meeting on PSP included representatives from the IOM, WHO and the University of Yangon where it was recommended that the MRCS/International Federation community-based PSP manual, already translated and reviewed by MRCS staff and volunteers from the states and divisions during previous training in-country, be used to support the Nargis response. Future discussions on information sharing for psychosocial support coordination and collaboration in the affected areas will be included in the upcoming PSP cluster meeting.

Joint meetings and discussions with the MRCS health and training divisions for the review and revision of the health and care portion of the emergency appeal are also held. These seek to further incorporate and coordinate community health, first aid, psychosocial support, and water and sanitation activities within the scope of the [appeal](#).

A Finnish Red Cross health delegate with previous experience in working in the field in Myanmar is part of the team from the International Federation that has been deployed to the Ayeyarwady delta on 9 June as part of the MRCS/International Federation team.

ICRC, WHO and UNICEF are providing resource people for the health and hygiene information sessions for MRCS volunteers and information education and communication (IEC) materials. These materials will be provided to volunteers who return to the field to support efforts in promoting community health, first aid, hygiene and psychosocial support activities.

Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion

In Labutta, the water and sanitation emergency response unit supported by the French Red Cross has begun the production of safe water. Full production of safe water at 20,000 litres per hour is expected to be achieved shortly, but there still remains the challenge of local distribution to a scattered beneficiary population.

The German/Austrian water and sanitation emergency response unit in Bogale has installed three filters, each producing 4,000 litres per hour with distribution carried out to the local community. A fourth filter was installed on 8 June in the southern village tract of Kadon Kani which is home to more than 6,000 people. The team will soon set up two additional water filters in the area. They are also working closely with the local MRCS branch, its volunteers and water and sanitation engineers in the management and operation of water purification units. The team will identify additional needs in water and sanitation as well as facilitate education in health and hygiene promotion. These efforts seek to ensure the ongoing provision of safe drinking water for communities within the Bogale township.

Mobile safe water services are being provided by the Australian water purification unit which has been installed on a boat in Mawlamyinyun to serve some 6,500 people in six or so villages. This unit is capable of producing 5,000 litres per hour and provides fresh water to fill bladder tanks set up in each of these village locations. Regular boat visits ensure that these tanks constantly filled and that safe water is available to the local communities. It is a creative solution in response to accessing some of these communities in need of drinking water.



Water and sanitation tanks go up in Labutta. (International Federation)

Logistics

As of 8 June, a total of 915 tonnes of relief supplies have arrived in Yangon by air freight (charter and commercial).

The logistics capacity of the operation continues to strengthen and grow in momentum as the initial phase of mobilization comes to a close and segues into its next phase. To date, the majority of relief goods coming into Yangon has arrived by commercial and charter air freight but as of this week, there will be a shift to sea freight. The first shipment by sea is expected to arrive in Myanmar on 11 June.

Four logistics bases are currently being established at the MRCS cyclone office hubs in Labutta, Bogale, Pathein and Pyapon. Preliminary assessments have ascertained the lack of warehousing capacity in Labutta and subsequently, two Rubbhalls² have been transported to the area to serve as storage facilities. One of these has already been erected with the help of the local community while the other is in the process of being erected. The International Federation's logistics delegate is scheduled to arrive in the area to review the set up and provide any assistance required. Rubbhall training has also been carried out with MRCS volunteers in Yangon with the help of the German/Austrian water and sanitation team.

There are currently four MRCS warehouses in Yangon, one of which is based in the national society's building and three others at commercial warehouses. An additional warehouse has been identified with a total floor space of 27,000 square feet, and negotiations are currently underway regarding the contracting of this space. Two of the present warehouses are better suited for emergency needs rather than longer term warehousing of materials and as such, these will be phased out as remaining relief items are transferred to existing warehouses. Presently, two logistics delegates are responsible for reviewing stock management.

To date, local procurement has been minimal but is expected to increase. Procurement will be integrated into the MRCS processes as far as possible and with the assistance of the logistics delegates.

More all-terrain vehicles are being requested for field operations to support the response in the delta. The International Federation head of country office is presently in discussions with authorities over transport issues. There has already been some success in that vehicles sent with the emergency response units have been

² Mobile tents used as distribution warehouses

transferred from the airport to be handed over to the International Federation to support MRCS programming by 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.

Coordination and partnerships

Working together, the president of MRCS and the head of the International Federation's head of country office have been creating productive working relationships and links with relevant ministries and government bodies. This ongoing relationship building plays an important part in supporting the operations and the overall humanitarian effort in the wake of this disaster, and has strengthened the rapport with the authorities in the response to the cyclone.

Information technology concerns continue to challenge the operation. The engagement of a consultant now working with several organizations including the International Federation to support efforts to improve the capacity of internet and email services is expected to produce a positive outcome soon.

The mobilization of eight more regional disaster response team (RDRT) members is currently under process. The human resource capacity required by the operations continues as international specialists under the emergency response unit teams end their missions and new delegates enter the country to continue the operations. New delegate positions soon to be filled include the areas of recovery and livelihoods as well as water and sanitation and psychosocial support positions.

Another French Red Cross water and sanitation emergency response unit team member has arrived in the delegation and will be integrated into the International Federation's operations structure, and is soon to be deployed to the Ayeyarwady delta.

The ICRC continues to provide indispensable support in its role in the overall operation and have expanded their current role to include water and sanitation activities in the divisions of Dedaye and Pyapon.

The International Federation country office continues to work with the UN humanitarian coordinator and cluster coordinators on a variety of issues, including any shortfall in relief items that could be addressed through increasing mobilization using the Movement mechanisms.

Communications

Sustained media interest continues with international news agencies still reporting on the issues of access and the general situation one month after the cyclone. The communications department in Geneva, with support from Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur, continue 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.

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