

INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

MYANMAR: FLOODS

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This Bulletin is for information only. The Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this situation at this time.

The Situation

Heavy rain and strong winds caused by a storm formed in the South China Sea, which weakened as it moved westward through Vietnam and Thailand, seriously affected the southeastern region of Myanmar last week. The systematic gathering of official information on the present floods situation has been difficult, apart from activities of the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS).

In Kayin State, unusual strong winds on 15 August destroyed 19 houses in Kyondo and 60 houses in Kawkareik. One school was completely destroyed; one person was injured and two children are missing. Following severe flooding in Hpa-an, 1,728 people have been accommodated at evacuation centres set up by the local authorities around the state capital. They are being assisted by residents of neighbouring communities with the government's coordination. In addition, 1,170 families evacuated from the town found shelter at their relatives or friends' homes. Kyain-seikgyi, a small town on the bank of the Zami River, is also reported to have been flooded.

Some 400 houses in Thayar-aye and 100 houses in Zay-yarthiri in Mawlamyine, the capital of Mon State, have been damaged by floods. The road between Bago and Mawlamyine was temporarily closed, as the water level of Thanlwin River, which runs through Hpa-an and Mawlamyine, is expected to increase before it culminates within a few days. There have been reports of floods affecting the whole township of Paung and 75 houses in Kyaikmayaw as well.

In Yangon Division, the storm hit 12 villages in Thongwa, leaving 247 households in distress.

As the rainy season continues, many other parts of the country are also suffering heavy rains and seasonal floods, apart from the last week's storm. In Mandalay Division, 187 people in Singu Township have been left homeless, with 16 dead and 3 missing, after flooding caused by the dramatic increase in the water level of the Ayeyarwaddy River on 2-3 August. Among the other places that are reported to have been recently affected are; Myitkyina and Puta-o in Kachin State, Kengtong in Shan State, Kalewa and Monywa in Sagaing Division, Zayawaddy in Bago Division, Ayeyarwaddy River's delta region in Ayeyarwaddy Division, and some places in Tanintharyi Division.

After the flood water recedes, there will be remaining concerns about health problems, including diarrhoea, waterborne diseases, and influenza.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

Since the beginning of the rainy season, the MRCS has been monitoring the situation in coordination with the Federation and ICRC in Myanmar.

The MRCS Supervisory Committee in Kayin State has joined the state-level damage assessment exercise and submitted the report to the National Headquarters. The situation in Kayin and Mon States was identified as the top priority at the emergency meeting convened on 21 August at the National Headquarters, attended by an executive committee member, senior management staff of MRCS Disaster Preparedness and Response Division, and the Federation Acting Head of Delegation. It was decided then that the MRCS will dispatch a relief team comprising experienced staff and volunteers of National Headquarters to the affected area. It is currently planned that they will depart on 23 August together with around 400 sets of relief supplies, including blankets, mosquito nets, clothing, soap and cooking utensils, according to available information of the emergency needs.

Further information collection regarding the flood situation in Singu, Mandalay Division, was agreed as the second priority. In the meantime, the local Red Cross has already provided emergency aid, comprising second hand clothes and blankets, for the affected population.

MRCS National Headquarters also conducted a relief operation in Thongwa, Yangon Division, on 19 August, distributing four bales of second-hand clothes, 96 pieces of soap and 125 kg of milk powder.

MRCS has just finished a series of preliminary workshops on disaster preparedness and response issues for branch staff, and is currently preparing for the launch of Emergency Disaster Relief Team as well as a disaster management policy. The Society has been also facilitating community-based disaster preparedness activities in Ayeyarwaddy Division since early this year.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see www.ifrc.org

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All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.

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