

# Operations update



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Myanmar: Cyclone Nargis

Emergency appeal n° MDRMM002  
GLIDE n° [TC-2008-00057-MMR](#)  
Operations update n° 6  
12 May 2008



**Desperate conditions:** this family seeks a modicum of shelter in awful conditions nine days after they lost their home. (International Federation).

**Period covered by this Update:** first six days 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:** 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. A revised appeal will be issued by the end of the week. This appeal will significantly scale up the plan of action and give a stronger indication of work within priority areas but there is still a considerable need to remain flexible in the face of the challenges around this operation.

[<click here to link to the current 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:

A significant shift in strategic thinking has occurred to try to navigate some of the main issues facing this operation. Principal among these is a proposal to recruit and train local people in Yangon in basic relief management who would then move to ten agreed hubs in the delta (various university students have already expressed an interest). Once on site, each team of two would recruit and train two more local recruits (in total, four people per hub) to manage the relief operation from the delta. Initial discussions are underway with a local training company. Any progress on this will be reported on. In addition, before the cyclone, the regional office had begun a new approach to training Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) by bringing key national society personnel to Bangkok. This methodology, which was successful in advancing financial management in MRCS, is now being looked at as a way to strengthen local capacity to manage the Nargis operation, particularly beyond Yangon. Few international staff (from all organizations) are being granted visas for Myanmar; and once in country, it is difficult for international personnel to move beyond the Yangon limits.



**Stuck in the middle:** Red Cross volunteers circulate among tens of homeless people in Bogale township. (International Federation).

Latest reports from the worst affected townships of Labutta, Bogale and Pyapon of Ayeyarwaddy Division indicate 218 temporary shelters containing a total of 206,000 people. These townships are the main focus of the MRCS/ International Federation assistance, in addition to an estimated 700 temporary shelters that exist in Yangon. Conditions in many of these shelters are dreadful: they are overcrowded, lack water and sanitation facilities and are a potential risk for communicable diseases.

MRCS volunteers have been active trying to mitigate some of the worst aspects of these conditions. Injured people have been treated, psychological support and tracing of families has also been initiated, with help from International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and health education over basic hygiene and sanitation has been given. Distribution of hygiene kits, first aid kits and water purification tablets were part of MRCS' initial response.

Health information is limited to date. The World Health Organization (WHO) is conducting a rapid health assessment with the department of health; townships reports are being awaited for consolidation. The cyclone has probably had a devastating impact on the local health care delivery services; emergency health kits for 100,000 people, one cholera kit and additional family hygiene kits are being procured for distribution.

Official government casualty figures have increased: 29,000-plus dead, 42,000 missing, about 1.5 million affected. Unofficial estimates have been as high as 150,000 people killed.

Partner interest is huge (see below). As was pointed out in the preliminary appeal and subsequent updates, it should be re-emphasized that this is a very complex operation. Pledged resources reflect the huge humanitarian concern for the people of Myanmar in these desperate times. However, this is a situation that the country has not dealt with before in terms of scale of disaster and international interest. The national society, despite its many strengths such as volunteer passion and commitment, does not have sufficient experience or capacity to deal with a catastrophe of this magnitude. In light of this, partners are again requested to be sensitive to the significant constraints during this operation.

Many partner national societies have already made contributions to the appeal: American Red Cross/American government, 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/ Danish government, Finnish Red Cross/ Finnish government, French Red Cross, Hellenic Red Cross, Icelandic Red Cross, Japanese Red Cross, Korean Red Cross, Luxemburg Red Cross/ Luxemburg government, 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, United Arab Emirates Red Crescent and Vietnam 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

By Friday (16 May), 17 Red Cross Red Crescent relief flights should have landed in Yangon, carrying 160 tonnes of emergency assistance. At time of reporting, one 18-tonne charter per day is due to leave with landing rights confirmed. Space on scheduled flights has also been secured. This is impressive considering the many challenges but still far from enough in terms of the scale of the needs, which are increasing with time. Kuala Lumpur has been the main staging post for Red Cross Red Crescent supplies to date, but Dubai and Bangladesh are also beginning to feature as staging posts.

While it is important to log the progress of international support, in-country efforts are the ones spearheading this operation and considerable efforts are being devoted to local procurement.

The MRCS president, along with the International Federation head of country office, are on the second day of their assessment mission to the Ayeyarwady delta townships of Labutta, Bogale and Pyapon, the exact locations where MRCS/ International Federation are trying to focus the attention of the operation at the moment. They are due back to Yangon tomorrow (13 May).

The government of Myanmar has assigned geographical areas to different Ministries (twelve townships per Ministry) to monitor funds received under the United Nations (UN) Flash Appeal. The government has said it has begun focusing on reconstruction and resettlement issues; it has also deployed 100 doctors to affected areas.

Cluster leads have expressed their concern over the bad weather approaching Myanmar, due tomorrow to Thursday. It is the first time that the cluster approach has been rolled out in Myanmar and the process will be documented for lessons learnt.

Villages are reporting concerns over the handling of dead bodies; guidance is being given and protective clothing is being procured. Assessment reports show that there are more and more relief distributions in Yangon divisions but hardly any in the Ayeyawady delta.

An ICRC flight with water and sanitation and hygiene materials has arrived in country. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) offered cargo from relief flights consisting of tarpaulins, blankets and kitchen sets, but the MRCS/ International Federation is currently unable to handle the additional warehousing and distribution at the moment due to incoming Red Cross Red Crescent flights.



**First aid:** the Red Cross' original calling of providing first aid is in desperate need among the decimated populations of the Ayeyawady delta (International Federation).

Sister national societies from Southeast Asia have been active (and more able to support directly with personnel) because of less stringent visa issues for ASEAN nationals in many cases.

## 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.

As more relief items are coming in, logistics and relief sectors need to systemize cooperation more; this is being addressed. Warehousing has to be improved to cope with the influx of goods. The ICRC offered warehouse space for the International Federation which will be inspected within the next few days. However, a significant amount of goods is being distributed, such as the 15 tonnes of rice from the World Food Programme (WFP), today (12 May).

Due to the closure of many temporary camps in Yangon, planning for relief distribution is more difficult and has to be kept flexible. Continued assessment will be shifted more to Ayeyawady division.

Reports continue to show a high death toll in the townships of Pyapon, Patheingyi, Myaungmya and Maubin districts. There are urgent requests for clean drinking water, shelter, medicine and family kits

The working relationship between MRCS staff and the field assessment and coordination team members are going well and a more consolidated support from Bangkok is being witnessed.

Discussions are underway with the national society to look at bringing in more volunteers to support operations in the delta. Initial agreement has been given to establish ten hubs in the delta, each of will be staffed by four people, two recruited and trained in Yangon and then two more locally recruited and trained by those recruited in Yangon in each case.



**Pipeline up and running:** the Federation's international supply chain is up and running bringing in tonnes of relief daily. Here rice from the World Food Programme is being prepared for distribution from a Myanmar Red Cross Society warehouse. (International Federation).

### Focus on logistics

As stated above, the Red Cross Red Crescent relief pipeline into Myanmar is now established; by 16 May, 17 flights would have reached Yangon from Kuala Lumpur with 160 tonnes on board. Two commercial flights carrying jerry cans, tarpaulins and mosquito nets have departed from Kuala Lumpur today (12 May), with one scheduled to arrive this afternoon and another tomorrow morning (13 May). An additional 32 metric tonnes of space on commercial flights was confirmed for 13 and 14 May from Kuala Lumpur to Yangon. Procurement for five rotations of an IL76 (Russian aircraft – Ilyushin) is currently under way.

‘These flights only represent the very beginning of what will be a massive logistical operation’, said the head of the International Federation’s logistics unit in Kuala Lumpur. ‘We are working around the clock to identify every possible avenue into the country, but we can begin to feel a rhythm’.

Cargo space on both commercial and chartered flights is being used to get supplies in. Flights are the most viable way to get aid into the devastated country. Yangon’s main port has been essentially closed since two cranes collapsed at its entrance.

Alternative routes are being explored, but one such as a five-day road haul from Bangkok to the Irrawaddy delta is fraught with security problems, and looting is a danger once the Thai border has been crossed. Trucking down from Bangladesh where the Red Cross Red Crescent has supplies available is problematic because of road conditions.

Initial conversations with trucking companies revealed a reluctance to engage as they did not know whether it is possible. One described the roads like ‘donkey tracks’.

The Asia Pacific regional logistics unit has received confirmation of an increase in need for items including blankets, jerry cans, hygiene parcels, kitchen sets and tarpaulins. For Movement partners, please click [here](#) for an up-to-date mobilization table<sup>1</sup>.

The Dubai regional logistics unit is preparing to send shelter kits, jerry cans and kitchen sets from Dubai later this week by air charter to Yangon.

### **Coordination and partnerships**

The coordination mechanisms for the operation are slowly coming together. The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team have two people in-country and have integrated an UNDAC-trained expert from ECHO into the team.

There is some frustration with the cluster coordination system in the country and some organizations have stopped coming to the meetings. The UNDAC team is addressing the issue with the UN. The International Federation is taking over the lead on the emergency shelter cluster. Work with UNHCR should ensure a relatively smooth transition until the actual shelter coordination team is in country.

### **The International Federation**

The International Federation’s regional support team consolidated its new operational structure in Bangkok on 12 May. This structure is currently temporary but longer-term recruitment of key positions is anticipated.

Particular attention is being paid to communications. It is considered vital for operational success that the Myanmar team is protected from unnecessary and confusing communication. A protocol is being drafted for comment and implementation. It will consolidate who talks to whom and about what. One person will oversee all communications – ie operationally, to partners, media, various team members – to ensure a consistency of message and information. A more strategic approach will ensure each communications channel is clear about what are the major issues. In addition to daily operations updates, an informal daily email exchange will be managed from Bangkok by the Movement coordinator and partners. This is interactive and feedback and questions are sought. This will be sent daily at approximately 1300 Bangkok-time; before or at the start of the working day in the Americas, Africa and Europe. Issues raised will be followed up in the next day’s communication. The head of regional delegation will retain overall management of this much strengthened and more focused (and distinct) structure. Daily teleconference are scheduled at 9am Bangkok-time with Yangon for the head of office, head of operations and the FACT team leader.

### **Human resources**

Staff currently in-country include five field assessment and coordination team (FACT) members from the Danish, German, Japanese and Spanish Red Cross Societies and the International Federation, covering health, water and sanitation and relief. In addition, a logistics delegate from the Australian Red Cross, two regional disaster response team members from the Malaysian Red Crescent as well as three disaster management staff from the International Federation are in-country to support the MRCS and country office.

In Bangkok, there are ten field assessment and coordination team (FACT) members and four regional disaster response team (RDRT) members awaiting deployment. Two additional members are due to arrive on Monday, 12 May. FACT members are integrating into the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) coordination in Bangkok at regional level. An operations room for FACT and emergency response unit (ERU) team members is now set up in Bangkok to function as an information clearing

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<sup>1</sup> The mobilization table can be accessed through the Disaster Management Information System (DMIS) which is available to Movement partners.

house, for briefings, updates, mapping of the situation and meetings. Detailed briefings are planned for FACT, RDRT, ERU delegates on MRCS, security, psychosocial support and early recovery.

In support of Yangon relief and shelter planning, FACT needs to explore the possibility of Bangkok-based purchase of shelter kits, jerry cans and other non-food items for land transport. In support of Yangon logistics, FACT needs to explore/map land transport options.

The following positions have been opened and recruitment is currently underway.

- 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

#### **Visa for Myanmar: special note**

Please be advised that all delegates accepted for positions in the International Federation operation in Myanmar and all Red Cross Red Crescent staff intending to visit Myanmar MUST HAVE A VALID entry visa for Myanmar, obtained in their country of departure. A TOURIST VISA IS UNACCEPTABLE and cannot be used to enter Myanmar. An application must be made for a BUSINESS VISA.

The possibility to obtain a visa in Bangkok is NOT easier than obtaining in country of departure. The Bangkok International Federation regional office cannot take responsibility for obtaining visas for any Red Cross Red Crescent staff and visitors.

At present, MRCS is not providing letters of support for any visa applications. A letter from the Red Cross Red Crescent and/or government of the applicants' country may be of value, but is not required. If there are any changes in the Myanmar government's position on aid workers entry into Myanmar, national societies will be notified.

Indications are that holders of passports of ASEAN/Asian countries may obtain business visas more easily than other nationalities.

#### **Communications and advocacy**

A producer from the Associated Press Television News (APTN) Jakarta is filming the loading of the first chartered 18-tonne flight departing the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) for Yangon at 7am Tuesday, 13 May. The flight will carry shelter kits, tarpaulins and kitchen sets. APTN is also scheduled to cover two other chartered 18-tonne flights departing KLIA on 14 and 15 May. APTN coverage will be provided to approximately 500 broadcasters throughout the world.

## 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](mailto:alan.bradbury@ifrc.org)
- Federation zone office in Kuala Lumpur:
  - Jagan Chapagain, deputy head of zone office, phone: +60 12 215 3765, email: [jagan.chapagain@ifrc.org](mailto:jagan.chapagain@ifrc.org)
  - Jyri Rantanen, acting head of disaster management unit, phone: +60 12 220 6920, email: [jyri.rantanen@finrc.fi](mailto:jyri.rantanen@finrc.fi)
  - For pledges of funding: Penny Elghady, resource mobilization and PMER coordinator, phone: +603 9207 5775, email: [penny.elghady@ifrc.org](mailto: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](mailto:jeremy.francis@ifrc.org)
  - For media/communications: John Sparrow, communications coordinator, phone: +60 12 230 8543, email: [john.sparrow@ifrc.org](mailto:john.sparrow@ifrc.org)
- 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](mailto:christine.south@ifrc.org)

[<click here to return to the title page>](#)

## **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        |
| <b>Total Relief Needs</b> | <b>4,350,000</b> |

### **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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|                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Total Operational Needs</b> | <b>1,940,909</b> |
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| <b>Total Appeal Budget (Cash &amp; Kind)</b> | <b>6,290,909</b> |
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**Less Available Resources**

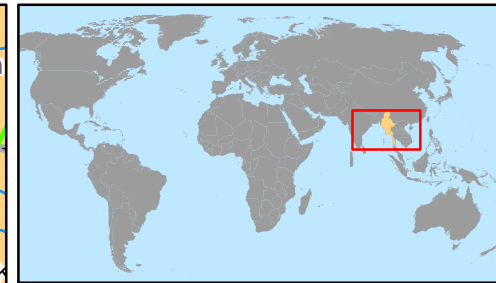
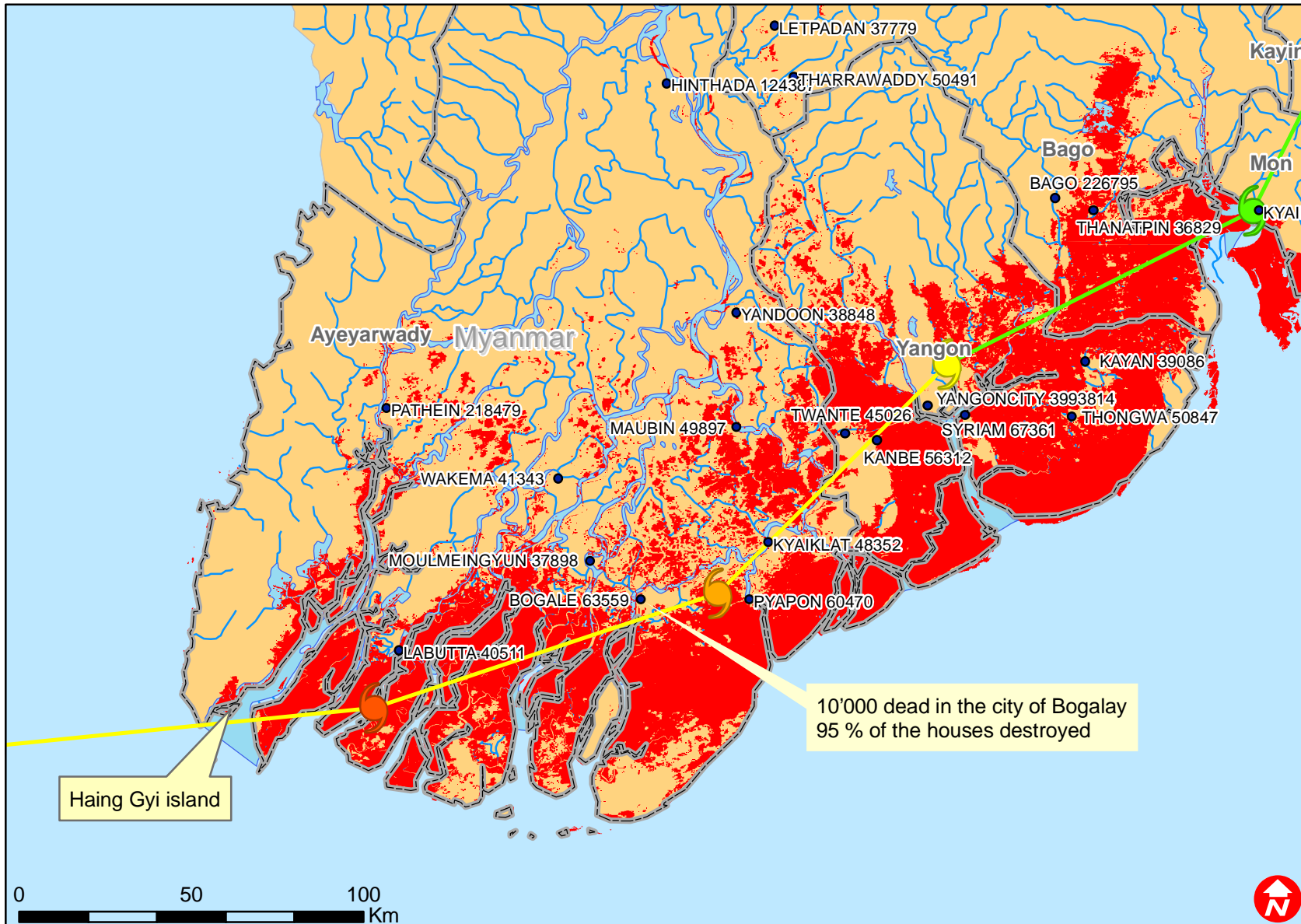
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|                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|
| <b>Net Request</b> | <b>6,290,909</b> |
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# Myanmar: Tropical cyclone



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