

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° 22
4 November 2008

Period covered by this Operations Update: 10 September to 27 October 2008.

Appeal target: CHF 73,987,907 million (USD 72.5 million or EUR 45.9 million)

Appeal coverage: 76%;

[<click to go directly to the updated donor response report, or to contact details>](#)



Moving from relief to recovery: After conducting village tract assessments in Bogale, 24 new community projects for 1,500 households were approved as part of the livelihoods programme. (Photo: International Federation/Gurudatta Shirodka). [Full story](#)

Appeal history:

- 8 July 2008: A revised Emergency Appeal was launched for CHF 73.9 million (USD 72.5 million or EUR 45.9 million) to assist 100,000 households for 36 months.
- 16 May 2008: An Emergency Appeal was launched for CHF 52,857,809 (USD 50.8 million or EUR 32.7 million) to assist 100,000 households for 36 months.
- 6 May 2008: A preliminary Emergency Appeal was launched for CHF 6,290,909 (USD 5.9 million or EUR 3.86 million) to assist 30,000 households for six months.
- 5 May 2008: CHF 200,000 (USD 190,000 or EUR 123,000) was allocated from the International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF).

Summary:

- As of 17 October, more than 280,000 households (1.4 million beneficiaries) have been reached with non-food relief items.
- Major relief distributions have concluded.
- Recovery implementation continues with the focus on village tract assessments, village tract recovery plans and village tract recovery committees.

Contributions to the Appeal to date

Partners which have made contributions to the appeal to date include: American Red Cross/American government, Australian Red Cross/Australian government, 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, Cook Islands Red Cross, Cyprus Red Cross/Cyprus government, 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/Kuwait government, Lithuanian Red Cross, Luxembourg Red Cross/Luxembourg government, Malaysian Red Crescent, Monaco Red Cross, Netherlands Red Cross/Netherlands government, New Zealand Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross/Norwegian government, Philippine National Red Cross, 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/Swiss government, Taiwan Red Cross Organization, Turkish Red Crescent, United Arab Emirates Red Crescent and Vietnam Red Cross Society. Contributions have also been received from the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Directorate General (ECHO), the Italian, Estonian and Slovenian governments, Total Oil Company, Stavros Niarchos Foundation and Tides 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

Cyclone Nargis struck Myanmar on 2 and 3 May 2008, devastating the Ayeyarwady and Yangon divisions. Collective assessment data from the authorities and international communities indicates that 115 townships were significantly affected by the cyclone. The official figures of 2 July state that 84,500 people were killed and 53,800 missing. The UN estimates that 2.4 million people were affected.

Coordination and partnerships

International Federation

Delegate travel has increased as the programme continues to develop and deliver the recovery start-up plans across all five programme areas: shelter, health, psychosocial support, water and sanitation, and livelihoods.

An internal review of the operation was carried out highlighting some areas for follow-up on communications, information exchange and human resources.

Discussions have been held with a variety of partner national societies (PNS) on follow-up support either financially or technically to the programme. A paper for PNS engagement will be circulated shortly as a guide on this.

The head of the Asia Pacific zone office visited on 20-25 October, meeting with the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) president and executive committee members, delegates, and the authorities in the administrative capital, Nay Pyi Taw.

The International Federation continues to foster a good working relationship with the national society through continuous dialogue between programme coordinators and MRCS counterparts. This interaction includes weekly operations meetings, monthly hub manager meetings, and frequent field trips by coordinators and delegates with their MRCS counterparts.

Partner National Societies

The Japanese Red Cross visited for one week in early October.

Several visits are scheduled for mid to late October. Recent arrivals (20-25 October) are communications representatives from the British Red Cross and Norwegian Red Cross, who were accompanied by the zone communications manager. A programme visit by the British Red Cross took place between 25 and 28 October.

The Movement platform continues to meet every two to three weeks.

The French Red Cross worked with the MRCS to develop a half-day event, facilitated by the International Federation's regional disaster management coordinator, to explore disaster risk reduction (DRR) and current and planned activities undertaken by the MRCS in this area. This provides a basis for further work on priority areas for DRR using the Framework for Community Safety and Resilience developed by 70 national societies in 2008.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

The implementation of water and sanitation activities continues in Dedaye and Ama. A meeting was convened between the ICRC, International Federation and MRCS on the handover of these areas, planned for December when current ICRC activities will conclude.

The terms of reference for a second visit from a Geographical Information System (GIS) specialist is being developed for a visit scheduled for November. A particular focus of this visit will be on training International Federation/MRCS staff to input and map data that can enhance project monitoring and coordination.

Inter-agency clusters

Recovery planning in the wider sector continues with the clusters engaged in compiling a Plan of Action requested by the Tripartite Core Group¹ for medium-term rehabilitation and recovery. These will be finalized by mid-December. It will involve a rapid exercise amongst cluster members to put together plans for the following sectors:

- Livelihoods
- Water and sanitation, and hygiene
- Health education
- Shelter
- Disaster risk reduction

The Tripartite Core Group has launched the periodic review. This is a follow-up exercise to the PONJA², with a review of the progress of 200 village tracts in the recovery phase. The MRCS has supplied 15 enumerators on secondment, of the 80 required for the activities. Surveys will be done in November and preliminary results published early December, in time for the ASEAN/UN summit.

A light prioritization exercise was undertaken with field-based organizations, to collate top priorities for different townships over the next three months. This was used to inform the humanitarian coordinator's recent donor trip. Food aid, agriculture, health, and water and sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) were identified by the agencies as the main priorities.

Coordinators and delegates continue to attend cluster meetings to promote better inter-agency coordination. The MRCS/International Federation's village tract assessment and recovery planning process has also been shared at these meetings.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The operation

Major relief distributions concluded in the third week of October. Consolidation of the relief situation continues with field visits to check data and start the process of household-level monitoring. This will be concluded by the end of November.

¹ The Tripartite Core Group comprises Representatives of the Government of the Union of Myanmar, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the United Nations.

² The Post-Nargis Joint Assessment for Relief, Recovery and Reconstruction (PONJA) report prepared by the Tripartite Core Group (see footnote 1), with the support of the Humanitarian and Development Community.

Recovery implementation continues and the highlights are as follows:

- Sector plans of action for the recovery phase have been finalized; a budget update is pending.
- To date, more than 100 village tract assessments (VTAs) have been conducted out of a total of 152 targeted (covering about 700 villages).
- There are 40 VTA teams consisting of five volunteers each, who conduct group discussions and interact with key informants such as village leaders, nurses/midwives, teachers and monks. VTA reports are translated from the local language to English by three translators. All assessments were scheduled to be completed by the end of October (apart from those in Wakema and Myaungmya townships).
- Possible overlaps with other aid agencies operating in village tracts, selected by the MRCS/International Federation, are being addressed.
- Village tract recovery plans (VTRP) will be developed based on the assessments. The plans will be inter-sectoral and will be start-up plans.
- The establishment of village tract recovery committees (VTRC) is ongoing. Currently, more than 25 committees have been established out of 140 targeted by the end of the year. Field assistants are being recruited to support the committees in selecting beneficiaries, and coordinating and monitoring recovery activities. Of the 50 planned field assistants targeted, 36 are scheduled to start work in November.



A role-play of a beneficiary interview during a Village Tract Assessment training session for Red Cross volunteers in Kungyangon township, in early September (Photo: Malaysian Red Crescent/Zulkarnain Musa)

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

Objective 1 (immediate needs)

To ensure that up to 100,000 cyclone-affected households receive food and non-food items immediately, to help preserve their physical and psychological well-being, human dignity and counter further deterioration of the humanitarian situation, while preparing the ground for longer-term recovery activities.

Objective 2 (medium and long-term needs)

To ensure badly affected households receive further necessary non-food item assistance, while refocusing MRCS programming towards recovery (to include livelihoods and food security), disaster preparedness and risk reduction activities, in order to mitigate the possible effects of future disasters.

Progress

Major relief distributions concluded in the third week of October.

As of 17 Oct, more than 280,000 households (1.4 million beneficiaries) have been reached with non-food relief items through direct support from the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement. About 230,000 households are located in the Ayeyarwady division and 50,000 households in the Yangon division. These figures were collated during a consolidation exercise conducted by the relief team from late September to mid-October. While the total count exceeds the 100,000 household (500,000 beneficiaries) target set out in the revised Emergency Appeal of 8 July, the following factors are indicative of the difficulty faced in achieving a realistic and accurate quantification:

- Some households did not receive complete relief packages due to the unavailability of all relief items at distribution points.

- Some family kits were split to ensure parity among community members.
- Double counting (or more) of households reached, took place in some areas when some households received the same relief item from different donors.

Ongoing relief distributions are based on MRCS staff and volunteer assessments which identify communities not yet supported due to accessibility problems.

Emergency shelter

Objective 1 (immediate needs)

- Meet the immediate shelter needs of the most vulnerable and cyclone-affected people through the distribution of shelter materials to individual households as well as communities.
- Procure and distribute household tarpaulin kits (comprising two tarpaulins and 30 metres of rope) to individual households and distribute one community shelter tool kit to every five households.
- Target 80,000 households for tarpaulin kits and 275,000 for community tool kits.

Objective 2 (medium and long-term needs)

- Procure and supply appropriate shelter materials to support 10,000 cyclone-affected households which have suffered severe damage, and have not achieved a reasonable status of recovery.
- Ensure better understanding and awareness of appropriate building techniques.
- Integrate with other sectors to support community-based shelter activities such as household water harvesting (a water and sanitation activity supported by the shelter sector) and safe haven establishments.
- All activities are to enhance disaster risk reduction.

A cash grant programme is being considered to provide shelter reconstruction support to 10,000 cyclone-affected families who have not yet received effective shelter. The programme is targeted to begin in November and end in April. It consists of a USD 200 (CHF 232) grant per family, coupled with basic training in *build back safer* techniques and awareness-raising on disaster risk reduction, for each family or community member who will build the shelter. A project plan is in place and awaits the newly appointed shelter delegate.

Livelihoods

Objective (medium and long-term)

To support the early recovery and strengthening of livelihoods through the development of relevant household and community assistance packages as part of 200 well-integrated village tract recovery programmes.

Progress

Cash-for-Work proposals for some 5,000 targeted households are being developed by newly-formed village tract recovery committees, based on the needs of respective communities. A total of 140 committees are scheduled to be set up by the end of the year. The projects are scheduled for implementation in November and December. To date, 24 Cash-for-Work proposals targeting about 1,500 people are at approval stage. A total of 44 projects are targeted by the end of the year.

Work has begun on project planning for cash for asset replacement and on investigating support needed for water vendors who may be unable to function currently in view of the dry season and predicted water shortages early next year.

Challenges

The formation of successful Cash-for-Work project proposals at village tract level is dependent on good community-level facilitation skills on the part of MRCS volunteers. Joint MRCS/International Federation teams including field delegates, livelihoods teams and field officers are providing support to ensure the transparent appointment of village tract recovery committees and the suitability of Cash-for-Work proposals.

I. Community-based health and first aid

Objective 1 (immediate needs)

Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from disease and public health emergencies, by providing immediate basic health care, first aid and psychosocial support, health and hygiene promotion, to the cyclone-affected populations through the MRCS volunteers, in collaboration with the ministry of health.

Objective 2 (medium and long-term needs)

- Ensure access to basic health care, first aid and psychosocial support by training community-based first aid volunteers and putting a referral system in place, in coordination with the ministry of health, and involving the community in health, hygiene promotion (in support of the hygiene promotion activities carried out by water and sanitation sector) and sanitation activities.
- Strengthen the capacity of the MRCS to manage an integrated community-based health and first aid programme which includes water and sanitation, and psychosocial support activities, conducted in emergencies and normal situations, in coordination with the ministry of health.

Progress

The first community-based first aid (CBFA) multiplier training took place in Bo Gone village in Labutta from 15 to 17 October for 30 Red Cross community volunteers selected by the MRCS. A total of 45 CBFA multiplier training sessions for nine townships are targeted for completion by the end of the year. Multiplier training comprises training of community volunteers who will then conduct peer education among the community.

Nine targeted townships will begin community-initiated activities by the end of the year to improve knowledge and modify risky behaviour related to health, and water and sanitation. The townships are Kungyangon, Labutta, Pyapon, Dedaye, Bogale, Mawlamyinegyun, Ngapudaw, Kyaiklat and Maubin. Ten villages will be selected per township, based on information gained through ongoing village tract assessments.

The International Federation/MRCS health team is finalizing the production of improved information, education and communication (IEC) materials (posters, pamphlets etc) for hygiene promotion, especially school hygiene promotion activities. These materials will be used by about 1,500 community volunteers in health education sessions targeted at 10,000 indirect beneficiaries in 13 townships. The sessions are scheduled to begin by the end of November. At the start of the operation, a first-round of these materials were distributed to CBFA volunteers in affected townships for use in health education sessions conducted in conjunction with relief distributions.

A CBFA coordinator for the MRCS was recruited internally and will start work in the first week of November. Recruitments are ongoing for two other MRCS positions – a health coordinator and a CBFA officer.

II. Psychosocial support

Objective 1 (immediate needs)

Address the immediate psychosocial needs of the population affected by Cyclone Nargis, by providing psychosocial-related relief and by conducting psychosocial support programme training for MRCS volunteers and local key workers in psychosocial support, in collaboration with the ministry of health, local non-governmental organizations, the United Nations, and international non-governmental organizations.

Objective 2 (medium and long-term needs)

Address the psychosocial recovery needs of the population by ensuring cultural and spiritual support, and initiating drama and creative activities for children in schools, monasteries and the community at large. This will involve working in an integrated way with other sectors to include psychosocial support in MRCS training, and support access to vulnerable people for livelihoods and other community-based programming.

Progress

A five-day workshop on advocacy skills and psychosocial support programme (PSP) implementation was held in Yangon on 20-24 October, for 40 PSP volunteers, hub health officers and 2ICs (volunteer leaders who are the second-in-command of MRCS branches) from nine townships. The volunteers and officers have begun five-day training sessions for 90 volunteers and community representatives in the nine townships. These 90 people will then conduct multiplier training among other volunteers and community representatives in November. Multiplier

training comprises training of volunteers and representatives who will then conduct peer education among the community.

A PSP coordinator for the MRCS has been recruited and starts work by the end of October.

A total of 29,000 soft toys have been received from Save the Children for distribution. Community kits and family kits are being procured and the distribution methodology is being developed. A community kit includes a radio cassette, volley balls and net; chess, checker and carom boards; and books. A family kit includes a radio and battery set, notebooks, ball pens, drawing book and colour pencils, balls, skipping rope, toy sets, harmonica, and sewing and knitting needles with thread and wool.

Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion

Objective 1

To ensure that the *immediate* risks of waterborne and water-related diseases have been reduced through the *most essential* provision of safe water, adequate sanitation and hygiene promotion and education to 100,000 households.

Objective 2

To ensure that the *long-term* risk of waterborne and water-related diseases has been reduced through *sustainable* access to safe water and adequate sanitation, as well as the provision of hygiene education to 75,000 households.³

Six water treatment units are currently in operation, producing 80,000 litres of drinking water for 5,345 households (26,725 beneficiaries). They comprise four in Bogale (German/Austrian Red Cross ERU⁴), one in Labutta (French RC ERU) and one in Mawlamyinegyun (Australian RC). All six units are being operated by MRCS engineers and volunteers. Five other units which were shut down in August and September were located in Labutta (1), Bogale (2), and Dedaye (2). The units were shut down because communities in the affected areas have begun to rely on other sources of drinking water such as ponds and wells rehabilitated through pond-cleaning exercises, and the availability of rainwater harvesting structures.

Pond assessments and cleaning continue. To date, more than 65 ponds and 16 wells have been cleaned out of 122 assessed in the five townships of Bogale, Labutta, Mawlamyinegyun, Pyapon and Ngapudaw. This represents an increase of 34 ponds cleaned since the [previous operations update](#) on 9 September.

Water quality monitoring for ponds and tube wells cleaned in the emergency phase has begun. This is mainly to ascertain if water quality is changing due to an increase in salinity.

The implementation of dry season water security measures initiated in early October is ongoing. This involves pre-positioning water storage tanks and household water treatment supplies in Yangon, Bogale, Labutta and Mawlamyinegyun.

Water testing units have been established and are operational in five hub offices - Bogale, Labutta, Mawlamyinegyun, Pyapon and Ngapudaw. They are being operated by trained engineers and technicians. To date, a total of 24 engineers and technicians have been trained, 12 of whom are in the field – the remaining 12 will be deployed soon.



With the rainy season ending, the supply of clean water will be a greater challenge. Pond cleaning continues as a priority in five townships (Photo: International Federation/Steve Barton and Ye Thuang Htut)

³ The initial phase of relief focused on reaching 100,000 beneficiaries, irrespective of their level of 'affectedness'. The second phase of relief will focus on the most vulnerable portion of this group of people, and this amounts to 75,000 beneficiaries.

⁴ Emergency response unit

Information, education and communication (IEC) leaflets on water purification tablet usage are being distributed in five townships – Bogale, Labutta, Mawlamyinegyun, Pyapon and Ngapudaw.

Recruitment is ongoing for an MRCS water and sanitation coordinator, as well as six technicians.

Finance

The current global financial crisis may affect International Federation funds in view of currency exchanges (CHF to EURO to USD to FEC⁵ to MMK⁶) required for the Myanmar context.

Capacity of the MRCS

To date, 166 hub office staff have been recruited. A total of 105 recruitments remain, including 50 field assistants and replacements for five vacancies.

With the support of the International Federation, the MRCS is streamlining support for volunteers. In this connection, guidelines on financial support, volunteer incentives and insurance coverage are being updated. The organizational development delegate visited Labutta on 21 October to understand these volunteer issues.

Capacity of the International Federation

There are currently 26 delegates in-country.

Five field delegates have been recruited and are currently spending the majority of their time traveling between hubs, supporting the programming at community level, and occasionally, returning to Yangon for coordination meetings.

The new disaster management delegate arrived on 25 October.

Remaining delegate recruitments: The position for a human resource delegate is being advertised, while a second livelihoods delegate and two shelter delegates are being sought as replacements for staff leaving in November and December. A plan for human resources for the remaining programme is under development.

The seconded shelter delegate from the British Red Cross in Bangladesh ended his mission on 21 October.

The head of country representation (head of country office) is scheduled to complete her mission in November. She is now completing her final duties including the hand-over.

Media/Communications

Recruitment is ongoing for four reporting officers, comprising two remaining hub office positions and two headquarters positions for the MRCS and International Federation respectively.

Visiting communications representatives from the British Red Cross and Norwegian Red Cross travelled with the zone communications manager to three villages in the Bogale township and a village by the Yangon river. The purpose of the visit was to profile heroic volunteers, understand the recovery programme, and share these stories with national societies and the international media. The visit was particularly useful in the light of the six-month commemoration of Cyclone Nargis, and the global interest that continues.

The head of country office gave several interviews to major wire services and broadcast organizations in Bangkok as part of the six-month commemoration of the cyclone.

The new hub reporting templates comprising a narrative (based on the standard International Federation operations update format) and a matrix (to capture quantitative data per programme sector) were rolled out to the field in the second week of October. First reports using these templates are pending.

Forthcoming operations updates will be published in the final week of every month.

⁵ Foreign Exchange Currency (FEC)

⁶ Myanmar Kyat (MMK)

News from the field



Villagers gathered in the None Kyun village tract in Mawlamyinegyun on 19 October to form a village tract recovery committee, under the guidance of the Myanmar Red Cross Society/International Federation team.

During the meeting, the group of about 90 villagers was told about the relief work undertaken by the MRCS, its plans for the coming recovery phase of operations, and that the purpose of the committee was to work closely with the Red Cross in selecting and organizing beneficiaries for different recovery programmes. The villagers who were from three villages (None Kyun, Lay Htat Gyi and Auk Chan) were then asked to form the committee by nominating four representatives for each of the three villages.

“After we received a total of 12 names, we went over each nomination with the villagers as a whole and confirmed that they were happy with the 12 nominees,” explains International Federation field officer Tin Oo. The 12 committee members included five women. Of the 90 villagers present, about 50 per cent comprised women.

At the same meeting, the committee carried out its first task – developing Cash-for-Work proposals tailored to the needs of their community. “People were very happy to be part of the discussions. They were motivated and contributed to the proposal development process,” observed International Federation livelihoods delegate Gurudatta Shirodkar.

“For example, when we asked them about problems faced as a result of the cyclone, they said agricultural land had been affected by sea water, and that river embankments needed to be repaired so that paddy planted during the recent rainy season will be protected in the coming winter.”

MRCS volunteers helped the committee and other villagers write the details of the Cash-for-Work proposals on large chart paper with marker pens. This was then shared by the committee with all meeting participants, to ensure transparency. Three proposals were agreed upon at the end of the day – they comprised two village road repair projects and one river embankment repair project. The projects will be conducted in November and December as part of the livelihoods recovery programme.

The formation of village tract recovery committees and accompanying Cash-for-Work proposals began on 10 October. A total of 5,000 households are targeted for the overall Cash-for-Work programme. To date, more than 25 committees have been formed out of a total of 140 targeted by the end of the year. A total of 24 Cash-for-Work proposals have been drafted out of 44 planned for implementation by the end of the year.

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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