

## UPDATE ON MYANMAR FLOOD RESPONSE

10 September 2015



Myanmar Red Cross volunteers are often first to respond. Photo credit MRCS.

### CONTEXT AND SCOPE

One month after the passage off-shore of cyclone Komen and heavy seasonal rains that have caused floods and landslides in Myanmar, recovery work has started. To date, according to the Myanmar government, these floods have affected over 1.6 million people and 117 people have lost their lives. Twelve out of the country's 14 states and regions (Ayeyarwady, Bago, Chin, Kachin, Kayin, Magway, Mandalay, Mon, Rakhine, Sagaing, Shan Yangon) have been affected. Hakha in Chin State, Kale in Sagaing Region, Pwintbyu in Magway Region, and Minbya and Mrauk-U in Rakhine State have been identified as the five most affected townships by the National Disaster Management Committee (NDMC).

Since the beginning of the emergency, more than 1,400 Red Cross staff and volunteers have been carrying out evacuations as well as providing first aid, relief supplies and clean water. MRCS volunteers have assisted the evacuation of over 380,000 people from flood areas. In the first month, the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) with the support of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have distributed **essential relief items to over 74,000 people in twelve regions and states** affected. While the IFRC has launched an emergency appeal for 4 million Swiss francs (4.1 million USD) on 11 August to support flood stricken communities in Magway, Sagaing and Chin Regions, the ICRC has refocused and increased its activities in Rakhine, using its budget under the 2015 annual appeal, for which it continues to seek funding.



Myanmar Red Cross volunteers work closely with local communities. Photo credit MRCS.

The IFRC **emergency appeal** is mobilizing funds for MRCS to target over **58,000** people with relief and recovery assistance over a one year timeframe. The MRCS / IFRC operation focuses on channeling support to communities in the three worst affected regions of Magway, Sagaing and Chin including the distribution of non-food relief items, shelter kits, lifeline information and health interventions including water and sanitation, recovery/livelihoods support through cash transfers, and disaster risk reduction programming. Assessments are currently underway to define a more detailed plan of action for the recovery phase, which will be managed from a new MRCS hub office in Kale.



MRCS staff organizing relief distribution in Kalay. Photo credit MRCS.

MRCS has also received substantial **local donations**, both cash and in-kind, which are supporting relief activities in the Ayerwaddy Region. MRCS plans to allocate these domestically generated funds to recovery activities in Magway and Ayerwaddy Regions.

In Rakhine State, the MRCS and ICRC have concentrated their work in the first days on emergency activities: distribution of rice and household items **to more than 22'000 people**, provision of drugs and other medical supplies to hospitals and support to deploy mobile clinics to affected areas. Rain harvesting kits were distributed to some 18 villages for 20,290 people. Since last week, MRCS and ICRC have started distributing food and essential items **to 60,000 people** in Mrauk-U, Kauktaw and Minbya and provide health education sessions to affected communities. In addition, both organizations are helping more than 60 villages in those areas to have access to safe drinking water and to clean contaminated ponds (70 ponds cleaned so far benefiting 10'000 people). In the next six months, the MRCS and ICRC plan to support livelihoods and improve job opportunities of **25,000 people**. Livelihood activities will make use of cash grants or cash-for-work projects in the next six months. Various National Societies contributed to the MRCS / ICRC response in Rakhine via the Federation and have agreed to redirect their original programs to the flood response.



Volunteers on their way to distribution in Kyaukkar village in Kalay Township. Photo credit MRCS.

Across Myanmar, MRCS volunteers addressed needs of **families separated by the floods**, especially in Sagaing and Magway, and provided 7 people with calls to **restore the contact** with their family, while registering more than 1,000 as alive and well. In addition, volunteers facilitated the reunification of 27 families. The RFL Yangon office also disseminated its flood related activities and services through information on TV and radio interviews in Myanmar, as well as with the entire RFL family links network of the RCRC Movement through a RFL Update. 16 "anxious for news" requests were received from families from Shan, Bago and Yangon regions/states, as well as from Dubai, Thailand and Singapore, to enquire about the fate of their relatives. 13 cases have been closed positively.

All Movement components are working together closely on the ground and at headquarters levels. This brief outlines the MRCS/IFRC/ICRC activities implemented up to 7.09 in response to the floods.

## ABOUT US/ CONTACT

As the leading and oldest humanitarian organization in Myanmar, the **Myanmar Red Cross Society** (MRCS) is committed to improving the health and well-being of vulnerable people. It began its operations in 1920 as a branch of the Indian Red Cross Society. After Burma formally separated from India in 1937, the Society obtained official, national status in 1939 and was admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in 1946.

The **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies** (IFRC) is the world's largest volunteer-based humanitarian network, reaching 150 million people each year through its 189 member National Societies. The IFRC has been in Myanmar since 1991 with the deployment of a relief delegate. The delegate assisted the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) in its relief operation for fire victims in Meiktila, Mandalay Region. In 1993, an IFRC office was founded to provide longer-term support to MRCS.

Present permanently in Myanmar since 1986, the **International Committee of the Red Cross** (ICRC) protects and assists people affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence. In case of other emergencies, for instance natural disasters, it also contributes to the relief efforts of its partners from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) in those areas. In response to the floods, the ICRC focuses its work in Rakhine, where it has a strong operational presence, owing to the consequences of the outbreak of intercommunal violence in 2012.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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