

RED CROSS MOVEMENT

RAKHINE OPERATIONAL RESPONSE

JANUARY 2018



CURRENT CRISIS

Following the violence that broke out on 25 August 2017, upon the request of the Union Government, the Red Cross Movement — comprised of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) — has been providing humanitarian assistance in Maungdaw and Sittwe districts.

An emergency appeal of 17 million Swiss francs was launched by the ICRC and the resulting funds enabled the Red Cross Movement to deliver assistance and provide protection and support to 36,000 families (180,000 people) in Rakhine. The assistance was delivered over a period of 3.5 months, with a focus on the following sectors: food, health, shelter (and non-food relief items), water, sanitation and hygiene promotion, food security and livelihoods, and protection.

Throughout Rakhine, as everywhere in the world, the Red Cross is responding in accordance with its Fundamental Principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence. This means the Red Cross works on behalf of all affected people, regardless of ethnicity or religion, and delivers assistance based on needs. The Red Cross maintains regular contact and operates in full transparency with the Government of Myanmar.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS

180,000 people assisted in **3** months.

Nearly **200** Red Cross Movement staff and volunteers supported the response

Assistance provided at **140** different locations (villages, village tracts, temporary relocation sites, transit points)

MRCS response capacity is strengthened through renovation of the Rakhine state branch office, direct training of **202** staff and volunteers, technical support and replenishment of emergency relief items. Security and logistical challenges: roads in poor condition, long distances and remote locations.

RED CROSS ACTION

Over the past three months, the Red Cross has gradually reached all areas affected by the violence. Teams operating in Rakhine have used trucks, cars, boats, a helicopter and cargo ships to deliver aid. They often walked great distances to meet with affected communities, assess emergency needs, and deliver assistance. In order to transport essential supplies, and establish a logistical



More than **175,000** people have received food rations, and over **89,000** people have been assisted with emergency items such as tarpaulins, hygiene kits, oral rehydration salts, etc.

supply chain to reach populations, the Red Cross upgraded the Maungdaw jetty, and the jetty access road. Four rub halls have been constructed for warehousing and positioning of stock. These facilities will be in use after the emergency response. MRCS Rakhine state warehouse rehabilitation plans were drafted during this time phase and the new infrastructure will be developed in 2018. Temporary office and warehousing spaces have been set up in Sittwe as a backup to its branches offices all over Rakhine.

Close to 609,000 liters of clean drinking water have been distributed, and thousands have benefited from Red Cross support to the health system and mobile clinics. For more than 13,200 people with access to markets, including temporarily relocated persons, the Red Cross delivered unconditional cash grants, in order to support the resumption of their economic activity and their reintegration into their home communities. The Red Cross is also looking at the medium-term needs of affected communities in Rakhine and has distributed seeds and fertilizer to more than 10,000 people ahead of the next harvest.

COORDINATION

The Red Cross Movement response is coordinating internally through a strategic decision-making body in Yangon, and simultaneously through operational/technical coordination mechanisms established in Sittwe and Maungdaw. Authorities are engaged at the national, state, district and township levels to ensure that all concerned parties are well informed. Coordination with authorities is key to access to affected areas, in order to deliver humanitarian assistance in accordance with the Fundamental Principles and other Movement policies.

It is an essential priority for the Red Cross Movement to consider the point of view of all communities, and this is achieved through multiple information and networking channels including face-to-face communication, over the phone, and often online.

In order to strengthen understanding and acceptance throughout the communities where it is operating, and mitigate any concerns by community members, Red Cross teams regularly meet with various community and government leaders to convey messages concerning the impartial nature of the Movement's humanitarian work and to listen to their advice and concerns.



In addition, representatives of the Red Cross have participated in meetings of the Humanitarian Country Team to reduce duplication of efforts when international organizations re-engage. There are other stakeholders such as the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine, which will become increasingly important during the recovery phase. The Red Cross will coordinate with these organizations in order to share information and activities, and disseminate the mandate and principles of the Red Cross Movement. Relations with Civil Society Organizations are also important to further the Red Cross Movement's access and the safety and security of its operations.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Over the past few months, Red Cross teams conducted visits to communities whose economic activity was disrupted during the aftermath of the violence and upheaval. The teams distributed rations of food to villages throughout Rakhine in food parcels that included rice, cooking oil, sadawpeas (butter beans), fish cans, a wheat-soya cereal blend, iodized salt and tea. The Red Cross provided daily rations to temporarily relocated persons in different areas of Rakhine such as Sittwe, Kyauktaw, Minbya, Ponnagyun and others.

In a second phase, the Red Cross distributed monthly rations of food in villages without access to fields and markets in Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Rathedaung. Daily rations were provided to populations in transit to Bangladesh.

For nearly 13,200 people who retained access to markets, teams distributed cash grants. Cash grants were also distributed to thousands of temporarily relocated persons to support the return to their villages of origin, encourage economic activity, and support reintegration into their home communities.



To date, nearly 175,000 people have received food assistance. In various locations where the agricultural cycle was disrupted but individuals retained the ability to access and work their fields, Red Cross teams are providing seeds and fertilizer. These distributions, primarily of winter crops, will allow a return to the normal agricultural cycle. Currently over 10,000 persons benefit from this assistance. Finally, Red Cross teams distributed essential household items to over 89,000 people, in packages that include mosquito nets, blankets, hygiene parcels and dignity kits.



C. Chatterjee/ICRC/ICRC

The Red Cross Movement is given a helping hand as they depart one early morning in November for a food distribution in Maungdaw.

PROTECTION

During joint work in the field in Maungdaw district, Red Cross teams visited the people affected by the violence. The findings were shared with the concerned authorities. In addition, the Movement offered its tracing services, with a view to restore and maintain links between families separated due to the violence. Detention visits were conducted in the main prisons in Rakhine State.

WATER, SANITATION, HYGIENE AND SHELTER

Since the onset of the emergency, Red Cross teams have supported temporarily relocated persons with water and sanitation services at various relocation sites in Maungdaw and Sittwe Districts. The humanitarian situation also required the Red Cross to provide emergency assistance in Ah Ley Tan Kyaw and Pya Na Pyin Gi beaches in Maungdaw Township, where people were transiting towards Bangladesh.

The Red Cross regularly delivered clean drinking water through water tanking and the distribution of 1 litre bottles, and teams constructed water points and latrines to ensure basic health and sanitation measures were available to mitigate the spread of disease and unsafe living conditions.

EMERGENCY HEALTH

Red Cross health teams worked directly with the Ministry of Health and Sports to support the existing medical infrastructure, including 26 health facilities and mobile clinics, throughout Rakhine State. Drugs and medical equipment were donated to support primary and secondary health care structures and mobile clinics. Emergency oral rehydration salts, clean delivery kits and first aid kits were distributed to affected populations, and Red Cross health teams have been present at distributions.

STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL SOCIETY RESPONSE CAPACITY

MRCS capacity to respond in Rakhine has been strengthened through emergency preparedness, infrastructure upgrading, strategic dialogue and communication, trainings, as well as financial, logistical and material support.

The Rakhine state branch office was rehabilitated which has enabled more effective delivery of services. Five fabricated office containers were installed on the state branch grounds and a wiikhall (fabric covered building) purchased with the purpose of relocating stocks during the reconstruction of MRCS warehouse in Sittwe in 2018. The renovation activities have been complemented with the purchase of volunteers' safety and security protective equipment items, office and IT equipment's that will enable 10 branches in Rakhine and headquarters to better assist the affected populations.

Another important component of this capacity building was the replenishment and pre-positioning of disaster preparedness stocks such as hygiene parcels, dignity kits, tarpaulins, mosquito nets and other relief items to ensure continuous response to the current and future needs.

As many of the volunteers and staff working in the operation are newly recruited, trainings have been conducted to over 200 people in governance, fundamental principles, logistics and warehouse management and communications, to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement the response and recovery activities.

LOOKING AHEAD IN 2018

We believe that as a Movement, the MRCS's local knowledge, capability, volunteers and staff, the ICRC's global operational expertise and violence-sensitive programming, and the training and capacity-building skills of the IFRC, is a powerful combination which was able to deliver in 2017 and can be effective in addressing existing and changing humanitarian needs in 2018 and beyond.

As the situation in Rakhine stabilizes, it will remain a sensitive area with significant potential for further violence. Thus, although the Red Cross Movement intends to shift its approach in 2018 towards recovery and long-term development efforts, a solid emergency response capacity and violence-sensitive programming will still be needed in case violence re-erupts.




In line with the recommendations of the Rakhine Advisory Commission, the aim of the Red Cross Movement is to contribute to the development of Rakhine State, and help build a more peaceful co-existence among communities following the recent violence, so people can lead healthier, safer lives.

TOWNSHIP	ESSENTIAL HOUSEHOLD ITEMS*		FOOD PARCEL**		SANITATION INFRAS. CONSTRUC.		WATER DISTRIB.	
	HH	POP	HH	POP	HH	POP	HH	POP
Buthidaung	6,279	32,562	14,469	81,530	417	2,094	0	0
Kyauktaw	378	1,430	306	1,142	275	1,069	0	0
Maungdaw	6,259	34,241	12,952	74,064	404	1,982	770	3,810
Minbya	133	658	133	658	0	0	0	0
MrakU	176	670	207	722	77	289	0	0
Ponnagyun	130	466	67	227	0	0	0	0
Rathedaung	2,147	11,867	2,211	11,867	0	0	0	0
Sittwe	1,765	7,548	1,346	5,458	0	0	0	0
Thandwe	8	28	0	0	0	0	0	0
Toungup	35	164	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	17,310	89,634	31,691	175,668	1,173	5,434	770	3,810

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