

EMERGENCY RESPONSE UPDATE #2

CYCLONE NARGIS IN MYANMAR

28 May 2008

OVERVIEW

As part of the coordinated humanitarian response effort to the devastation caused by Cyclone Nargis, UNHCR continued to deliver emergency shelter and humanitarian relief items to Myanmar from its global stockpiles in Dubai. With the opening of the WFP logistics hub in



Aid has yet to arrive in many of the remote areas of the delta hit by Cyclone. UNHCR / photo / May 2008

Bangkok, a large quantity of goods was also transferred there for onward air shipment to Yangon. Upon arrival in Yangon, relief items have been transferred quickly to international NGOs for distribution in the cyclone-affected areas. Access for UNHCR staff to the Ayeyarwaddy Delta region remained erratic but improved during the reporting period, with international staff having been reportedly given access following assurances provided

by the Government to the UN Secretary-General. UNHCR is establishing two field units

in the Ayeyarwaddy Delta townships of Lapputa and Bogale to be able to better monitor distribution of UNHCR's relief items and carry out further needs assessments.

ASSISTANCE AND DISTRIBUTION

Since 15 May, six more flights transporting UNHCR relief items have arrived in Yangon. These flights were carrying badly needed plastic sheeting, mosquito nets, blankets, and kitchen sets as part of UNHCR's overall humanitarian response. Since the relief operation began, nine flights and one truck convoy carrying UNHCR relief items have arrived in Myanmar (see Table 1 for detailed figures). Of the 250,000 people UNHCR is working to assist as part of the emergency response, it is estimated that some 150,000 persons will have benefited from the items delivered to date. Although there have been a number of delays due to technical problems with flights, UNHCR's relief operation is on track in terms of delivery of items and capacity to receive and distribute in Myanmar.

Through its network of implementing and operational partners, UNHCR has undertaken the distribution of shelter and NFI kits in townships in Yangon Division (Pyapon, Dawbon, Dala, Twantay, Seikki Khanuangdho) and the Delta (Mawlamyinegyun, Laputta, Dedaye). The authorities in both Lapputta and Bogale townships have confirmed that UNHCR can distribute relief items on its own and they are willing to assist with distribution, if necessary.

According to distribution reports, the following items have been distributed: 13,525 plastic sheets, 15,819 blankets, 2,560 kitchen sets and 14,800 mosquito nets.

Table 1

Date	Means	Quantity - Items	Status
11 May	Air Dubai-Yangon	4,500 plastic sheets, 4,680 blankets, 1552 kitchen sets, 7,500 mosquito nets	Arrived
12 May	Land Mae Sot-Yangon	4,600 plastic sheets, 200 tents	Arrived
14 May	Air Dubai-Yangon	1,300 plastic sheets, 12,000 blankets, 2,400 kitchen sets, 2,000 mosquito nets	Arrived
15 May	Air Dubai-Yangon	4,000 plastic sheets, 3,000 blankets, 5,200 kitchen sets, 10,000 mosquito nets	Arrived
22 May	Air Bangkok-Yangon	16 plastic rolls, 5,400 blankets, 1,800 kitchen sets, 14,000 mosquito nets	Arrived
24 May	Air Bangkok-Yangon	54 plastic rolls, 8,160 blankets, 6,856 kitchen sets, 9,200 mosquito nets	Arrived
24 May	Air Bangkok-Yangon	27 plastic rolls, 4,080 blankets, 3,428 kitchen sets, 4,600 mosquito nets,	Arrived
25 May	Air Chiang Mai -Yangon	10,000 plastic sheets (cargo temp. stored in Chiang Mai)	Arrived
26 May	Air Sharjah-Yangon	1,525 plastic sheets, 9,300 blankets, 3,000 kitchen sets, 14,000 mosquito nets,	Arrived
28 May	Air Sharjah -Yangon	1,650 plastic sheets, 13,200 blankets, 3,300 kitchen sets, 6,300 mosquito nets	Arrived

UNHCR Yangon is currently finalizing a logistics plan for the coming period which will specify those items and quantities still needed and a timetable and most efficient means for delivery.

ASSESSMENTS

Following initial difficulties in accessing cyclone-affected areas in the Ayeyarwaddy Delta, UNHCR fielded assessment missions to Lapputta and Bogale townships from 19 to 22 May. UNHCR is now in the process of establishing field units in both townships in order to be able better monitor distribution of UNHCR's relief items and carry out further needs assessments. UNHCR is planning to field international staff to the Ayeyarwaddy Delta region as of this week with a pending request to the Government for international staff to be able to remain in the Delta for one week periods.

In Lapputta township as of 26 May, assessments confirmed that there were 48 relief camps for the cyclone-affected population in and around the town, of which 2 camps are managed directly by the Government with the rest being assisted by civil society associations such as church associations, Buddhist temples and monasteries. It was reported that 15 of these camps were



Cyclone survivors wait for UNHCR items to be distributed in a monastery. / UNHCR / photo / May 2008

closed by the authorities on 25 May as part of an effort by the Government to group the displaced into camps by villages/areas of origin. As with all such operations, it will be important to preserve the right to return to areas of origin voluntarily, once conditions permit.

A village mapping exercise covering household and population data before and after the cyclone by village tract is currently being carried out by UN agencies and NGOs.

COORDINATION

Modalities for the Tripartite Coordination Mechanism (Government, ASEAN, UN) agreed at the 25 May Pledging Conference in Yangon are being clarified. It is hoped that this



*Displaced people use plastic sheets to construct a temporary shelter.
/ UNHCR / photo / May 2008*

mechanism will facilitate and coordinate contributions, establish channels to deploy aid workers and distribute international assistance and facilitate the logistics chain.

The Emergency Shelter Cluster in Yangon has agreed on the standard composition for all emergency shelter kits, which will be divided into three kits – household tarpaulin kits, community toolkits and household relief kits. IFRC has

now taken over responsibility of information management in the cluster from UNHCR. It is

anticipated that the Government (Ministry of Social Welfare) will start participating in Emergency Shelter Cluster meetings as of 30 May.

STAFFING

UNHCR's emergency team has been supporting the existing Myanmar-based staff to bolster the office's capacity to receive and distribute the tons of relief items which have arrived and carry out assessments in the affected areas. With signs that the operational space for humanitarian actors is increasing, UNHCR will examine the need for additional staff support.

CONSTRAINTS

Lack of clarity on required permissions for staff movements hampered assessments and information gathering. UNHCR and other UN agencies are in the process of deploying international staff to the cyclone-affected areas. Difficulties with logistical coordination among agencies and technical problems with aircraft delivering relief items caused delays; due to the late arrival of some aircraft, required permits had expired and needed staff were not available for off-loading. The Logistics Cluster is working to resolve these issues; the establishment of a logistics hub in Bangkok will also limit potential delays.

FUNDING

UNHCR's appeal is projected to be fully funded, with the office concentrating on ensuring that all received funds are reaching beneficiaries in the form of emergency shelter items and NFIs as quickly as possible.

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