

OCHA Flash Update No 2

Myanmar | Floods Emergency 03 August 2015

Myanmar: On 30 July, Cyclone Komen made landfall in Bangladesh bringing strong winds and additional heavy rains to Myanmar, which resulted in a significant expansion of monsoonal flood waters.

On 31 July, the President declared Rakhine State, Chin State, Sagaing Region and Magway Region as natural disaster zones. As of 3 August, the Relief and Resettlement Department (RRD) of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement reported that over 200,000 people have been affected and 39 people have been killed across the affected states/regions. These figures are likely to rise in the coming days as more areas become accessible and more information becomes available.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, 524,895 acres of farmland have been inundated since June. The loss of stored grains and life-stock is expected to disrupt the planting season and impact long-term food security.

Across the affected areas, transportation, electricity and communication are disrupted. Access to affected areas remains a major challenge. Flooding has spread over a large geographic terrain, from coastal to mountainous areas. Large amounts of debris floating in rivers pose a challenge to boat access. Landslides have blocked some roads and transportation routes.

Response priorities:

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar is leading the response. Immediate needs include food, shelter, water and sanitation, as well as access to emergency healthcare. According to RRD, the Government has already provided food, building materials and essential relief items worth US\$74,200 (MMK92 million). On 1 August, President U Thein Sein visited Kale Township, Sagaing Region, and provided assistance to 8,100 flood-affected people who are temporarily sheltering in five schools. Also on 1 August, the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Service, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, visited Sittwe, Rakhine State, where he provided relief items and cash assistance. Local authorities, the military, as well as the Myanmar Red Cross Society, civil society organizations and the private sector are playing an important part in the response.

On 2 August, the Acting Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. Eamonn Murphy, reiterated the support of the United Nations (UN) to the Government in response to the flooding, particularly in areas designated as natural disaster zones. The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) is in close communication with the Government at State and Union level, and with authorities at the State and the Regional level. Regular meetings of the HCT and the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group are taking place in Yangon and Sittwe.

The UN agencies and INGOs are conducting assessments and scaling up the emergency response, including through the provision of food, emergency health services, water and sanitation assistance,

shelter, mosquito nets, and other relief items. For example, WFP has commenced the provision of food rations to 47,800 people, with a plan to reach close to 150,000 flood affected people in Bago, Chin, Kachin, Magway, Mon, Rakhine and Sagaing. UNICEF has supported the distribution of 400,000 water purification sachets in Sagaing, and has dispatched hygiene kits for some 20,000 people in coordination with the Ministry of Health and the Department of Rural Development. Hygiene kits and water purification tablets are also being distributed in Rakhine. Humanitarian partners are preparing a request to the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) requesting financial support to jumpstart life-saving and time-critical activities.

Chin State:

Hakah is the worst affected Township, where landslides have affected over 2,700 people and destroyed over 60 houses. In this area, food is a major response priority. State media have reported that over 5,200 people remain in evacuation centres in Mindat Township, where 12 bridges have been destroyed. In Paletwa Township, several households in low-lying areas have been moved as the water level in the river basin increased. However, the water level is now down to normal again. In Samee Town, approximately 40 houses are reported to have been washed away by strong currents.

Magway Region:

In the Magway region, many towns on the western banks of the Ayeyarwaddy River are severely affected. According to RRD, close to 25,600 people are affected by floods in Magway, Pwintbyu, Salin, Saw, Sidoktaya townships. In Pwintbyu Township alone, around 70 villages are reported to be affected. Local authorities, civil society organizations and private donors are responding with transportation and providing food, water and clothes for affected households. RRD has provided relief supplies to the affected people in Pwintbyu Township.

Rakhine State:

According to the State General Administration Department (GAD), 18 people have been killed. Over 33,800 people from ten townships (Ann, Buthidaung, Kyauktaw, Maungdaw, Minbya, Mrauk-U, Myebon, Pauktaw, Ponnagyun, and Rathedaung) have been evacuated and are taking shelter at 130 evacuation centres. Moreover, 4,751 houses, 37 schools, three bridges and 53,225 acres of farmland have been destroyed. All figures are likely to change as further information becomes available. Flood-affected communities include previously displaced people in Rakhine State, where over 130,000 people remain displaced as a result of the violence that erupted in 2012.

Agencies are currently conducting assessments in affected townships. Preliminary findings indicate that over 1,700 people remain in three evacuation centres in Ponnagyun Township. People have lost their livelihood assets, houses and rice stocks. In Kyauktaw, 1,800 people are sheltering in four evacuation centres. In Buthidaung Town, six evacuation centres have been established to host 1,500 people. In Maungdaw Township, over 970 people remain in evacuation centres. Mrauk-U Township remains severely affected by floods with 15 evacuation centres set up to accommodate over 2,000 people.

Assessments in Pauktaw indicate that shelters in IDP camps have sustained minimal damage, but that the water level in some camps remains high. RRD reported that the Government has provided the affected people with food and other essential relief supplies. In support of the Government-led response, humanitarian partners are distributing food, drinking water, hygiene kits, medical

assistance and plastic sheets.

Sagaing Region:

According to RRD in the Sagaing, Kale is the worst affected township in the region, with some 70,000 people affected. Kale Town and about 45 villages were flooded. In some areas, water levels are reported to have reached up to 10 feet. Authorities opened 22 evacuation centers in Kale Town and on its outskirts. The water level has receded in the town area but remains in some villages on the outskirts of town and in remote areas. According to RRD, about 7,700 people remain in evacuation centres in Kale Town. The Government has provided food and other essential relief supplies.

Outlook:

The Myanmar Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH) forecasts that rain or thundershowers will be scattered in lower Chin State, Sagaing and Magway regions, fairly widespread in upper Sagaing and Mandalay regions, as well as in Shan and Rakhine states, and widespread in the remaining states/regions, with a likelihood of isolated heavy falls in Yangon and Taninthayi regions, Shan, Kayin and Mon states. As water moves southward, floods are likely to expand and affect additional areas.

The next OCHA report on the floods emergency will be issued on or around 5 August.

The latest map can be found [here](#).

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