

BURMA – FLOODS

FACT SHEET #1, FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2015

AUGUST 6, 2015

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

69

Fatalities Resulting from Recent Floods
Government of Burma – August 6, 2015

4

Number of National Disaster Zones Declared by President of Burma Thein Sein
Government of Burma – July 31, 2015

259,799

Estimated Number of People in Burma Affected by Recent Floods
Government of Burma – August 6, 2015

HIGHLIGHTS

- Heavy monsoon rains and Tropical Cyclone Komen cause widespread flooding, landslides, and strong winds across Burma
- The Government of Burma declares a national disaster in heavily affected areas and requests international assistance
- USAID/OFDA deploys staff to Burma to assist with humanitarian coordination, provides an initial \$100,000 to address critical humanitarian needs, and announces an additional \$500,000 contribution to flood-relief efforts

HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

FOR BURMA FLOODS TO DATE IN FY 2015

USAID/OFDA¹

\$600,000

\$600,000

TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FOR BURMA FLOODS

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- Heavy seasonal rainfall, worsened by Tropical Cyclone Komen—which made landfall over Bangladesh near the Burmese border on July 30—has caused flooding in Chin, Kachin, Kayin, Mon, Rakhine, and Shan states and Ayeyarwady, Bago, Magway, Mandalay, Sagaing, and Yangon regions as of August 1, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). On July 31, President of Burma Thein Sein declared a national disaster in Chin and Rakhine states and Magway and Sagaing regions.
- As of August 6, severe flooding, landslides, and gales caused by weeks of heavy seasonal rains and tropical storm weather had resulted in 69 deaths and affected more than 250,000 people countrywide, according to the Government of Burma (GoB) Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement (MSWRR). Casualty numbers are expected to rise in the coming days as relief actors gain access to additional flood-affected areas of the country. The floods have also damaged approximately 520,000 acres of agricultural land, according OCHA.
- On August 6, Burmese President Thein Sein called for the evacuation of people living in low-lying areas along the Irrawaddy River—particularly in Ayeyarwady Region’s Hinthada and Nyaung Don townships—as the river reached dangerous levels and threatened to breach embankments, according to international media reports. To date, nearly 39,500 households throughout Burma have been or remain temporarily displaced, the UN reports.
- On August 4, U.S. Ambassador Derek J. Mitchell declared a disaster in Burma due to the effects of the floods. In response, USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) is providing \$100,000 to support the initial provision of humanitarian assistance to flood-affected populations throughout the country. USAID/OFDA has also announced plans to provide an additional \$500,000 in support of flood-relief efforts.

¹ USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA)

RAKHINE STATE

- In Rakhine, floods and strong winds have resulted in the deaths of at least 18 people and the destruction of approximately 4,800 houses, nearly 40 schools, three bridges, and more than 53,200 acres of farmland, according to the UN. As of August 2, more than 6,200 households—or approximately 33,850 people—from 10 townships had evacuated to 130 evacuation centers. The Rakhine State Government and international humanitarian organizations have begun conducting assessments and initiating humanitarian response operations in flood-affected areas.
- Mruak-U Township remains the most severely affected area in Rakhine. As of August 5, the non-governmental organization (NGO) Relief International (RI) reported that flooding has destroyed approximately 50 percent of crops in the area and many of the outlying villages were inaccessible. The Kyauktaw to Mruak-U highway was also deluged, further hindering humanitarian access. RI reports that access to food and safe drinking water and replenishment of seed stocks are the most urgent needs among the affected population.
- In Buthidaung Township, flooding had destroyed nearly 3,000 houses and damaged approximately 5,000 others, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Approximately 1,500 people were sheltering in six local evacuation centers as of August 2.
- In Maungdaw Township, floods affected at least 2,500 people and nearly 1,000 people remained in evacuation centers as of August 2. IOM reported that access to Maungdaw remained challenging.
- In Minbya Township, more than 4,000 displaced people were sheltering in 23 monasteries as of August 4, according to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). An assessment conducted by Plan International in Minbya identified safe drinking water and food as priority needs.
- Initial NGO assessments in Myebon Township indicated that flooding had affected more than 60 villages, resulting in extensive crop damage. In Rathedaung Township, floods damaged several houses but did not result in significant population displacement. Initial assessments are ongoing in Kyauktaw Township.

Sittwe IDP Camps

- Strong winds caused by Tropical Cyclone Komen have damaged numerous shelters and structures in Rakhine's capital city of Sittwe, where approximately 100,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) reside in camps. As of August 4, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and partners had assessed 24 IDP camps in Sittwe and determined that flooding had damaged approximately 25 percent of the camps' shelters and displaced more than 21,000 camp residents.
- In Pauktaw Township, Sittwe District, recent humanitarian assessments indicate that shelters in local IDP camps sustained minimal damage, but water levels in some camps remained high as of August 4, according to the UN. Relief agencies reported that Pauktaw villages have sustained greater damage than IDP camps. On August 4, Solidarités International reached previously inaccessible IDP camps in Pauktaw Township, where flood impact was less severe than originally thought. Nget Chung and Anouk Ywe IDP camps sustained minor flooding but minimal damage.

CHIN STATE

- As of August 2, floods and landslides had affected nearly 2,700 people in six townships in southern Chin, damaging or destroying approximately 250 houses in the town of Paletwa, according to the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS). In the capital city of Hakha, more than 1,000 people were sheltering in five evacuation centers as of August 2. Local media reported that more than 5,200 people remained in evacuation centers in Mindat Township and that strong currents in Samee Town washed away approximately 40 houses, according to OCHA. However, relief agencies reported that the water levels in Chin have decreased and people have begun returning to their houses.

MAGWAY REGION

- The UN reported that flooding in Magway's Pwintbyu, Saku, and Sidoktaya townships has prompted local authorities to relocate nearly 8,000 flood-affected individuals to schools, monasteries, and other safe locations. The MSWRR reported that the floods have affected nearly 25,600 people in Magway.
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SAGAING REGION

- As of August 4, flooding in Sagaing has affected 70,000 people in 13 townships, according to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Center). Heavy rainfall and forceful winds caused by Tropical Cyclone Komen most severely affected Kale town, where nearly 8,000 people were sheltering in evacuation centers as of August 5, according to MRCS. MRCS also reported that more than 15,000 people remained displaced in Sagaing.
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NATIONAL RESPONSE

- The GoB Ministry of Foreign Affairs is leading GoB international assistance coordination efforts, while local and national government authorities, MRCS, and other relief agencies are conducting needs assessments. Some organizations have begun relief operations, including the distribution of relief items to flood-affected populations. National disaster preparedness committees have also begun evacuating and resettling affected households in Kayin and Mon states and Ayeyawady and Bago regions.
 - Response coordination and data collection efforts are occurring at the township level through the Township Administrator and the Township Disaster Management Committee, which is chaired by the GoB Ministry of Home Affairs's General Administration Department, according to relief agencies.
 - According to the AHA Center, the GoB had distributed approximately 1.5 billion Kyat—or \$1.2 million—in emergency relief items to flood-affected populations as of August 5.
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INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

- UN agencies and international NGOs are conducting assessments and increasing response efforts to include provision of emergency food commodities, health care services, shelter support, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) supplies to flood-affected populations.
- To meet urgent humanitarian needs in Mruak-U, RI has delivered 10 metric tons of rice and 3,000 liters of safe drinking water, as well as additional food and plastic sheeting, to the township. On August 3, RI also delivered a four-day supply of water purification tablets to more than 200 families in Mruak-U villages. RI plans to deploy a WASH engineer to Mruak-U in the coming days to assess needs and coordinate response efforts. The International Committee of the Red Cross has also distributed water purification tablets, blankets, and other emergency relief supplies in Mruak-U.
- In coordination with the GoB Ministry of Health, MSF has begun providing health care services and distributing emergency relief items to displaced populations in Rakhine's Buthidaung, Minbya, Mruak-U, and Kyauktaw townships.
- The International Federation of the Red Cross released funds from its Disaster Response Emergency Fund to enable MRCS to maintain stocks of emergency relief supplies. MRCS plans to provide non-food relief items to approximately 35,000 people in the most severely affected communities across nine townships in Chin, Magway, Rakhine, and Sagaing.
- On August 4, the Japan International Cooperation Agency delivered approximately \$145,000 worth of emergency relief supplies to Burma, including 6,000 blankets, 1,000 mattresses, and 90 tarpaulins.
- On August 5, the Government of Australia (GoA) announced plans to provide 2 million Australian dollars—nearly \$1.5 million—toward emergency relief efforts in Burma. The GoA is coordinating with the GoB and humanitarian partners to determine the funding's allocation.

- On August 5, the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) announced that £500,000—approximately \$780,000—of contingency funding would be made available to support relief activities and the needs of flood-affected communities in Burma. As of August 5, DFID had provided more than 48,000 flood-affected individuals with high-energy biscuits and approximately 20,000 people with hygiene kits and water treatment supplies.

USG RESPONSE

- On August 4, U.S. Ambassador Derek J. Mitchell declared a disaster in Burma due to the effects of the floods. In response, USAID/OFDA is providing \$100,000 through USAID/Burma to support relief agencies to provide humanitarian assistance to flood-affected populations. USAID/Burma also announced plans to program an additional \$500,000 in USAID/OFDA funds for the Burma Floods response.
- In addition to its monetary contribution to the flood response in Burma, USAID/OFDA deployed a regional advisor from Bangkok, Thailand, to Rakhine on August 4 to meet with GoB officials and partner organizations, further assess the situation, and facilitate coordination of response operations.
- As part of an existing disaster risk reduction project, USAID/OFDA is funding a technical advisor to support the efforts of the GoB Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to improve disaster response coordination and management capabilities before and during disaster events. The EOC is currently coordinating the GoB's response operations with the AHA Center, MRCS, and UN agencies and is operating on a 24-hour schedule to respond to the floods.
- USAID/OFDA is also funding World Vision in Kachin, as well as a consortium of relief agencies led by IOM in Rakhine, to improve community- and state-level preparedness for disasters, including floods.
- USAID's Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) previously contributed \$10 million in FY 2015 to UN World Food Program (WFP) emergency operations in Burma in response to the country's complex emergency. A portion of USAID/FFP's funding is benefiting flood-affected populations under WFP's Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation, which has the flexibility to respond to sudden-onset emergencies. WFP also supports the local and regional procurement of food for IDPs and other vulnerable communities in Kachin and Rakhine, two of the four states worst affected by floods, as well as in northern Shan.
- As of August 3, USAID/FFP partner WFP had identified 150,000 people in urgent need of food assistance in flood-affected areas and estimated that approximately 2,200 metric tons (MT) of food are required to meet immediate needs during the coming month. Due to a lack of accessibility in some regions, WFP has been partnering with the GoB and private air companies to transport WFP food commodities to flood-affected populations since August 2. WFP had distributed more than 260 MT of food commodities and reached more than 81,000 people in need of humanitarian assistance following the recent floods as of August 5.
- USAID and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM) continue to assist displaced and vulnerable populations in Burma and the region through more than \$48 million in FY 2015 humanitarian assistance provided prior to the floods. U.S. Government (USG)-funded humanitarian projects already present in Burma when flooding occurred are working to meet the flood-relief needs of conflict-affected communities.

USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FOR BURMA FLOODS PROVIDED IN FY 2015¹

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
USAID/OFDA²			
Implementing Partners	Humanitarian Assistance	Affected Areas	\$600,000
TOTAL USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE			\$600,000
TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE FOR BURMA FLOODS IN FY 2015			\$600,000

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds.

² USAID/OFDA funding includes actual, obligated, and planned amounts as of August 6, 2015.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at www.interaction.org.
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
 - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: www.cidi.org or +1.202.821.1999.
 - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at www.reliefweb.int.

USAID/OFDA bulletins appear on the USAID website at
<http://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/working-crises-and-conflict/responding-times-crisis/where-we-work>