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**BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)  
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)**

## **Burma – Cyclone**

Fact Sheet #1, Fiscal Year (FY) 2008

May 5, 2008

### **BACKGROUND AND KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

- On May 2 at 1600 hours local time, Cyclone Nargis made landfall near the mouth of the Irrawaddy River in the Irrawaddy Division of Burma, according to the U.S. Joint Typhoon Warning Center. The cyclone made landfall with a maximum sustained wind speed of approximately 132 miles per hour (mph) and a storm surge of 12 feet. The cyclone then continued east-northeast, affecting Rangoon through May 3 with a maximum sustained wind speed of approximately 90 to 100 mph.
- The Government of Burma (GOB) has reported more than 4,000 deaths and 93,000 displaced, but these figures remain unconfirmed. The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reports that the most affected areas are Irrawaddy Division, Rangoon Division, Bago Division, Kayin State, Kayah State, and Mon State.

<b>ESTIMATED NUMBERS AT A GLANCE</b>	<b>SOURCE</b>	
<b>Total Dead</b>	4,000	GOB – May 5, 2008
<b>Total Missing</b>	3,000	Reuters – May 5, 2008
<b>Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)</b>	93,000	GOB – May 5, 2008
<b>Houses Destroyed</b>	20,000	GOB – May 5, 2008

### **FY 2008 HUMANITARIAN FUNDING PROVIDED TO DATE**

**USAID/OFDA Assistance to Burma Cyclone .....\$250,000**

### **CURRENT SITUATION**

- OCHA has reported that the GOB is having difficulty contacting islands and low-lying villages due to flooding, blocked roads, and disrupted communications, indicating that the numbers of individuals killed and displaced by the storm will likely increase.
- Initial reports from MRTV, the Burma state television channel, indicate that the cyclone destroyed 20,000 houses on Haing Gyi Island. OCHA has reported that the cyclone destroyed 95 percent of houses in villages along the south coast of the Irrawaddy delta area.
- The GOB has declared a state of emergency in Bago, Irrawaddy, and Rangoon divisions and Kayin and Mon states.

#### ***Cyclone-related Damages***

- In the city of Rangoon, the cyclone damaged the electrical power grid, which is unlikely to be restored for several days, according to OCHA. The cyclone also disrupted service to telecommunications lines and radio and television stations.
- Throughout affected areas, the storm destroyed buildings, caused widespread flooding, and downed trees and billboards, blocking a number of roads. Local security forces began clearing major roads on May 4. OCHA reports that local residents and monks are clearing smaller roads without assistance.

#### ***Humanitarian Needs***

- According to OCHA, the most urgent needs of populations in the city of Rangoon include plastic sheeting, water purification tablets, cooking sets, mosquito nets, emergency health kits, food, and possibly fuel supplies. In other areas, determining humanitarian needs is more difficult due to a lack of direct assessment, but immediate needs are likely to include shelter materials and safe drinking water.

#### ***GOB and U.N. Response***

- The GOB Ministry for Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement is coordinating the response to the disaster. The GOB has established an emergency committee headed by the Prime Minister and deployed military units for rescue, rehabilitation, and clean-up efforts in Rangoon. According to media reports, the GOB has also sent rescue teams to the Irrawaddy Division.

- On May 4, the U.N. announced the organization of a U.N. Disaster Assessment and Coordination team, which is standing by to assist the GOB to respond to humanitarian needs, if required.

**USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE**

- On April 27, representatives of USAID/OFDA in Washington, D.C.; Bangkok, Thailand; and Kathmandu, Nepal began tracking the storm. On April 28, USAID/OFDA officials began coordinating storm monitoring efforts with officials from the U.S. Embassy in Rangoon. On May 3, U.S. Embassy staff began conducting informal damage assessments in Rangoon. On May 5, an official from the U.S. Embassy in Rangoon met with other donors to discuss the humanitarian response to the storm.
- On May 5, U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Shari Villarosa declared a disaster in Burma due to the effects of Cyclone Nargis. In response, USAID/OFDA is providing \$250,000 to the U.N. Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the U.N. World Food Program (WFP), and the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for emergency food, water and sanitation, and shelter assistance.

**USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO BURMA CYCLONE**

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<b>USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE<sup>1</sup></b>			
UNICEF, WFP, and UNHCR	Water and Sanitation, Emergency Food Assistance, Shelter	Affected Areas	\$250,000
<b>TOTAL USAID/OFDA</b>			<b>\$250,000</b>

<sup>1</sup>USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of May 5, 2008.

**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. Information on organizations responding to the humanitarian situation in Burma may be available at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int).
- 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, warehouse space, etc); 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: [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov) – Keyword: Donations
  - The Center for International Disaster Information: [www.cidi.org](http://www.cidi.org) or (703) 276-1914
  - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)