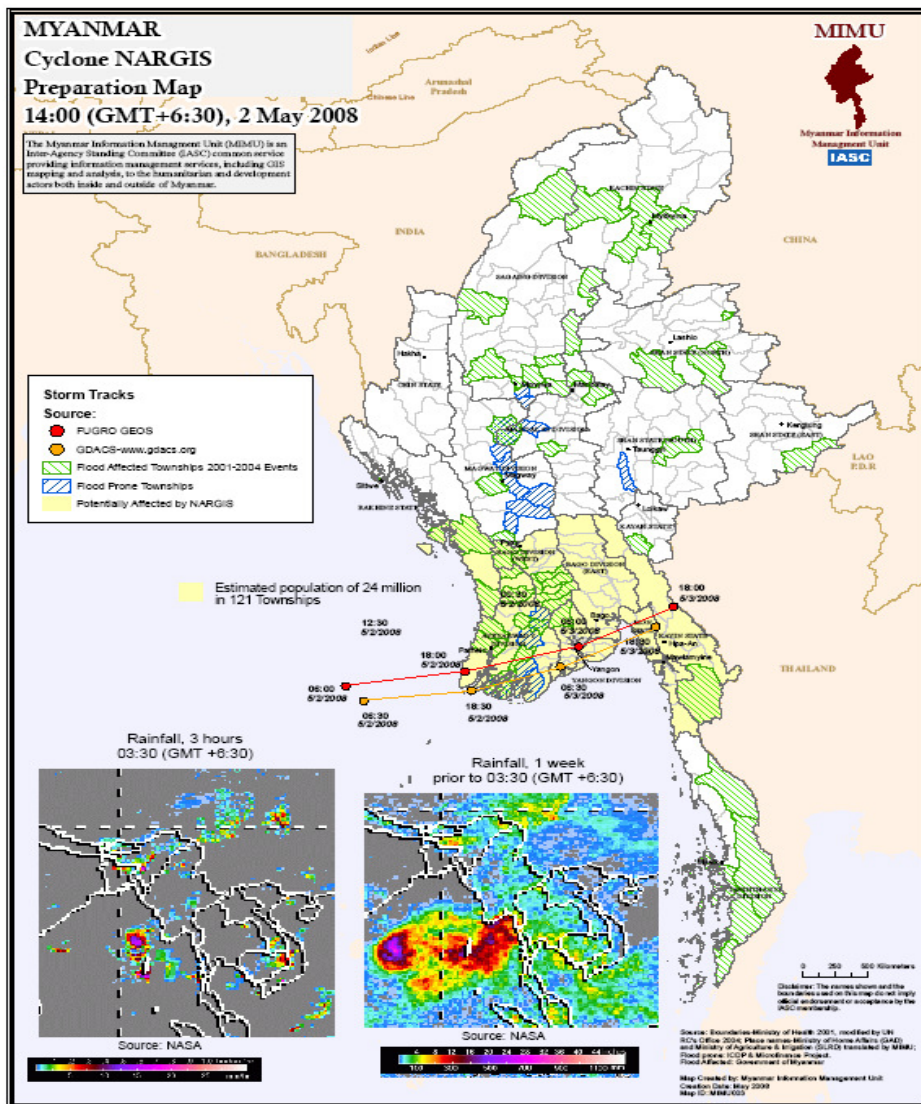


Relief Activity Report No. 1

Myanmar cyclone

05 May 2008

Overall Situation



Source: www.reliefweb.org



A man walks past an uprooted tree in central Yangon. (photo: www.alertnet.org)

The powerful cyclone Nargis, packing winds of 190 km (120 mile) per hour, hit Myanmar on Saturday, 3 May 2008, killing at least 4,000 people, some sources even talk of more than 10,000 deaths. The cyclone also damaged more than 20,000 houses, leaving more than 100,000 people homeless, felled trees and powerlines and

cutted off phone lines and the Internet. Myanmar's main city, Yangon, and the outlying areas have been hit especially

hard, e.g. parts of the Irrawaddy region, with three out of four buildings reportedly blown down in one district. Myanmar has declared Irrawaddy and four other regions, including the main city Yangon, to be disaster areas.

“The cyclone that affected Yangon has left the city and surrounding area without basic infrastructure. Water and electricity supplies are cut off. Unofficial versions mention that city electricity power lines are destroyed in more than 90 percent, including high tension main power lines that supply the city”, Cesar Russo, logistician of Malteser International in Yangon, reports. “Damage to buildings is substantial in Yangon and surrounding areas; most of the wooden constructions have been destroyed or seriously damaged”, he says. “A big number of people have sought refuge in monasteries and school buildings. Shortages of food, bottled drinking water and fuel are evident and prices are on the increase.”



Damages in the roads of Yangon. (photo: www.alternet.org)

The roads in Yangon and the other disaster areas are obstructed due to the big number of fallen trees. The population started to clear the roads on Saturday; Malteser International staff members report that army troops were deployed on Sunday with the apparent intention of assisting in the clearing operation.

Malteser International activities

“The situation here is really dramatic,” Birke Herzbruch, project coordinator of Malteser International in Yangon, says. “We already got water purification tablets for the treatment of drinking water for the people in the district of Dawbon in Yangon and the poor rural settlement of Tantabin not far from Yangon; on Tuesday, we will start to distribute them. This is what the people need especially, because nobody was prepared for such a catastrophe, nobody had stocks,” Herzbruch continues. The city is completely in the dark. Malteser International is also preparing further aid measures, like the distribution of plastic covers and mosquito nets. In the first instance, Malteser International provides

50,000 Euros for emergency relief activities, supported financially by the Federal Foreign Office of Germany.

“Fortunately, none of our staff members was injured”, Herzbruch says relieved. “But of course they are affected by the consequences of the cyclone, so that, in addition to their work, they have to care for their families.”

Malteser International has been working in Myanmar since 2001 and is present in the disaster regions with projects and team members. The organisation is realizing projects to strengthen the health services in the country, to fight diseases like HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and assures safe drinking water, functioning sanitation and hygiene for thousands of people in different regions.

Malteser International is aware that Myanmar is a high risk country for cyclones and tsunamis along its coastal zones. Therefore, the organisation supports local communities in Northern Rakhine State in disaster preparedness.

We shall keep you informed about all further developments.

Ingo Radtke
Secretary General