

## MYANMAR CYCLONE RELIEF

More than 34,000 people have died with nearly 28,000 missing after Tropical Cyclone Nargis slammed into Myanmar May 3, said the government's state television. However, the United Nations says the actual death toll could be between 62,000 and 100,000. It is the region's deadliest storm-related natural disaster since a tsunami struck Southeast Asia in 2004. The Associated Press reported that the United States delivered its first relief supplies on May 12, as the U.N. urged the reclusive nation to open its doors to foreign experts who can help up to 2 million cyclone victims facing disease and starvation.

The World Food Program said some villages have been almost totally destroyed and immense rice-growing areas are wiped out. Power was out in the largest city, Yangon, and drinking water was contaminated in the city of five million. Cyclone Nargis packed winds of 120 miles per hour when it struck the coast May 3, sending the sea surging as much as 12 feet. The government declared a state of emergency in five low-lying provinces, mostly in the Irrawaddy River delta, where villages were flattened by winds and rain, the United Nations said. Nonprofit organizations are mobilizing to get food, water and shelter materials ready to bring in once Myanmar's isolationist government agrees to accept outside help. The International Red Cross is already distributing supplies.



Image courtesy of Google maps

Here are some organizations that are providing aid to Myanmar:

### **Save the Children**

[www.savethechildren.org](http://www.savethechildren.org)

Response to Deadly Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar

54 Wilton Road

Westport, CT 06880

Save the Children's staff are reporting up to 100,000 children and their families are without shelter. Initial response includes the distribution of two metric tons of food, plastic sheeting, water purification tablets and other non-food items. Save the Children operates programs in all five of the affected regions, and has worked in Myanmar since 1995. As one of the largest non-governmental organizations at work in Myanmar, the agency implements programs focused on early childhood care and development, child survival and child protection.

### **Oxfam International**

[www.oxfam.org](http://www.oxfam.org)

226 Causeway St., 5th Floor

Boston, MA 02114-2206

Oxfam has committed more than \$1.8 million in aid. It currently does not run operational programs in Myanmar, and is channeling its aid effort through partner organizations. Oxfam has made grants of \$1 million so far to organizations working inside Myanmar to deliver relief to 22,000 people in the Ayeyarwaddy and Yangon regions. Though transportation around the affected area remains extremely difficult, these organizations have excellent networks of national staff and volunteers who can move freely around the country. They are distributing essential life-saving items such as rice, beans and oil, drinking water, soap, clothes, family first aid kits, and plastic sheeting for emergency shelter. They are also repairing damaged wells and providing basic sanitation facilities – activities essential for preventing the spread of disease.

### **World Vision**

[www.worldvision.org](http://www.worldvision.org)

Disaster Relief

P.O. Box 9716

Federal Way, WA 98063-9716

World Vision has delivered 35 metric tons of rice and 18,000 liters of drinking water and diesel fuel to allow generator pumps to continue to pump water. Clothing, blankets and tarpaulins have been distributed to people living in and around Yangon. World Vision assessment teams have been deployed to five areas in the hardest-hit Irrawaddy River delta region to determine the most urgent needs, including Bogalay, where some 10,000 are thought to be dead. The team in Myanmar estimates that up to two million people may be affected by the cyclone. World Vision has several community development programs in areas hit by the path of the storm. Its national office is based

in Yangon, the country's largest city and a state-declared disaster zone. World Vision National Director James Tumbuan described a chaotic scene there: "Yangon totally collapsed. All the roads were blocked with fallen trees. The way Yangon used to look, with its big trees, has been totally changed. Getting drinking water is a real problem. We need water purification units like those that were used in the tsunami. It could take days to get the electricity back." Tumbuan said thousands of people are now camped in government schools in and around Yangon. He noted that one school was sheltering 5,000 people. The World Vision team has worked in Myanmar for 40 years and currently assists children and families across the country through food assistance, agriculture, health, clean water, education, income generation, anti-trafficking and nutritional assistance programs.

### **World Food Program**

[www.wfp.org/english](http://www.wfp.org/english)

Disaster Relief

WFP North A

Two United Nations Plaza,

Room DC 2-2500

New York, NY 10017

The World Food Program (WFP) has dispatched food to eight townships in Yangon and five townships — Bogale, Labutta, Maubin, Ngaputaw, and Pathein — in Myanmar's Irrawaddy delta. When a natural or man-made disaster strikes, such as a flood or earthquake and people need food, WFP joins U.N. Emergency Assessment Teams to help answer the key questions: how much food aid is needed and how will it be delivered to the hungry. The agency uses the assessment to draw up a detailed plan of action and budget. To cover their immediate needs, WFP country directors can borrow up to \$500,000 from the agency's Immediate Response Account (IRA). The IRA, a special account funded multilaterally to buy and transport food to the victims, has to be replenished. The use of the IRA funds is usually limited to the first three months of an operation. However, many disaster-hit communities need help for longer than three months. In this case, the country director draws up an Emergency Operation or EMOP before making an appeal to the international community for funds and food aid. EMOPs usually last for three to 12 months. If further assistance is required, WFP prepares a Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation.