

Forked tongue, or change of heart? (The \$11.7 billion question)

Senior General Than Shwe's surprise concession to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon that all aid workers would be allowed into Burma "regardless of nationalities" was met with immediate skepticism, owing to the regime's ongoing obstruction of aid efforts.²

The regime needs to immediately dismantle restrictions on aid supplies and workers before the donors pledging meeting scheduled for 25 May in Rangoon. At press time, foreign aid workers allowed into Burma remained confined to Rangoon, while independent local aid groups and relief teams led by monks remained vulnerable to persecution and intimidation.

Mr Ban himself became a victim of the SPDC's "cyclone tourism" when he was taken to visit a semi-deserted "show camp" for cyclone survivors, opposite of the reality faced by people of the Irrawaddy delta just a few hundred meters away.³ However, it was progress compared to the previous week, when Than Shwe refused to take Mr Ban's phone calls.

Sr Gen Than Shwe's "green light" to foreign aid may have been made under increasing international and regional pressure. A French-led proposal for an international humanitarian intervention gained support and credibility among diverse stakeholders in Burma and overseas.

The apparent shift in approach may be partly due to the regime's call for US\$11.7 billion for "reconstruction" aid, seen by some as an attempt to secure funds for a bail-out of the Burmese economy, wrecked by decades of economic mismanagement and corruption.

Domestic pressure has been increasing as more people, including military men, become aware of the extent of the disaster and the intensifying impact on the economy. Unconfirmed reports have already been received of clashes between security forces and desperate survivors trying to converge into Rangoon from outlying areas.⁴

The regime, one of the most corrupt in the world, may also be hoping it can get away with yet another empty promise made to the international community.

Meanwhile, donors at the pledging conference scheduled for 25 May must secure agreement to specific terms and conditions governing aid provided through the ASEAN-led "Coalition of Mercy". This includes active participation by all stakeholders with the support of local and international civil society groups. Aid must be delivered in installments, contingent on SPDC's compliance.

SPDC downplays death toll

On 11 May, the SPDC put the cyclone death toll at 28,458.⁵ The regime also claimed that nobody had died "except as a direct result of the cyclone."⁶ The SPDC's figures stood in stark contrast to other aid agencies. On the same day, the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimated that 63,290 to 101,682 persons died and 220,000 were missing.⁷ The International Federation of the Red Cross put the death toll between 68,833 and 127,990.⁸ On 16 May, the SPDC said that 77,738 persons had died, 55,917 were missing and 19,359 sustained injuries.⁹

² Reuters (23 May 08) Myanmar allows in "all" cyclone aid workers

³ BBC (23 May 08) UN head pressures Burma's leader

⁴ Confrontation at Hlaing Tharyar and Htantabin - Breaking News; <http://paraussies.blogspot.com/2008/05/confrontation-at-hlaing-tharyar-and.html>

⁵ Reuters (11 May 08) U.N. says 220,000 reported missing in Myanmar cyclone

⁶ IPS (15 May 08) Foreigners, Cameras Banned in Cyclone-Hit Areas; Globe and Mail (12 May 08) Myanmar toll likely to hit 216,000

⁷ Reuters (11 May 08) U.N. says 220,000 reported missing in Myanmar cyclone; AP (14 May 08) Red Cross: Burma cyclone death toll could go up to 128K; Bangkok Post (12 May 08) UN says 102,000 dead in Burma, Thailand offers to be a base for relief supplies; Reuters (12 May 08) Tragedy of dead and survivors in Myanmar worsens

⁸ AP (15 May 08) Myanmar cyclone death toll soars above 43,000; Reuters (15 May 08) UN says up to 2.5 million affected in Myanmar cyclone

⁹ NLM (16 May 08) Latest casualty figures

On 20 May, UN figures put the total number of people affected by the cyclone at 2.4 million.¹⁰ Researchers from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health estimated that as many as 3.2 million people were affected by the cyclone.¹¹

While people die, SPDC blocks aid workers

On 17 May, two weeks after the cyclone hit, the UN estimated that of the estimated 2.4 million affected by the cyclone, only 500,000 (or 25%) had been reached.¹² Despite the urgent need for aid workers to quickly reach the disaster-affected areas, the SPDC continued to obstruct the work of humanitarian agencies.

- The SPDC delayed or refused to issue visas to aid workers.¹³
 - By 16 May, the SPDC had issued 40 visas to UN staffers and another 46 to NGOs but had confined them to the immediate Rangoon area.¹⁴
 - By 16 May, MSF, which had flown in 140 tons of relief materials and distributed 275 tons of food, was being forced to work with their 30 foreign staff confined in Rangoon.¹⁵
 - By 18 May, there were only 109 Burmese UN staff operating in the cyclone-affected areas, and 72 foreign UN staff in Rangoon. No foreign UN staff had been authorized to work in the affected areas.¹⁶
 - By 21 May, the WFP had only been granted visas for 22 foreign staff, and had been able to deploy 29 of 220 local staff to the delta.¹⁷
- The SPDC set up roadblocks on the main roads to the Irrawaddy delta regions to block foreign aid workers from accessing the worst affected areas.¹⁸ Local NGOs and individuals had to negotiate, and in some cases bribe, their way into the area.¹⁹
- The SPDC showed particular concern over donated items that could be used to access the delta or communicate with the outside world.
 - The SPDC restricted the import and use of communications equipment. All telephones had to be bought from the SPDC Ministry of Posts and Communications for the price of \$1,500 each, for a maximum of ten phones for agency.²⁰
 - On May 16, the SPDC announced that there would be no expedited process for the importation of vehicles by humanitarian agencies.²¹
 - Tons of supplies and high tech equipment sat in warehouses in Rangoon because of restrictions.²²
 - Aid deliveries had to be unloaded off planes by hand because there was no suitable equipment.²³ A British offer to send in suitable machinery was ignored.²⁴

Donors and international aid agencies repeatedly expressed their frustration about the unnecessary bottlenecks and delays. Experts from Asian countries had an easier time acquiring visas.²⁵ [See below *Help us help you*]

¹⁰ OCHA (20 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 16

¹¹ ANI (15 May 08) 3.2 million Burmese estimated to be affected by Cyclone Nargis

¹² OCHA (17 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 13

¹³ Reuters (06 May 08) Hundreds of thousands need help in Myanmar: U.N.; AP (06 May 08) Transport, visa hurdles slowing aid to Myanmar storm victims; Bangkok Post (07 May 08) UN says Burma continues to bar aid workers; AFP (06 May 08) Myanmar says cyclone death toll tops 22,000; AFP (07 May 08) Fears for millions as Myanmar blocks aid workers

¹⁴ AP (16 May 08) UN Says Nobody Knows Full Extent of Cyclone Disaster

¹⁵ MSF (16 May 08) MSF teams delivering aid to the Delta call for immediate and unobstructed escalation of relief operations

¹⁶ OCHA (18 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 14

¹⁷ WFP (21 May 08) WFP makes progress in Myanmar

¹⁸ AFP (07 May 08) Fears for millions as Myanmar blocks aid workers; AP (16 May 08) Myanmar's junta confines foreigners to Yangon; Nation (15 May 08) Millions of refugees at risk of disease; AP (16 May 08) UN Says Nobody Knows Full Extent of Cyclone Disaster

¹⁹ Irrawaddy (16 May 08) Local Heroes Emerge to Help Cyclone Victims; DVB (19 May 08) Villager describes situation in Kunchangone

²⁰ OCHA (17 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 13

²¹ OCHA (17 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 13

²² OCHA (17 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 13

²³ Irrawaddy (15 May 08) A trickle of aid reaches survivors

²⁴ AP (14 May 08) Aid worker enters 'unrecognizable' Myanmar delta

²⁵ IOM (16 May 08) Myanmar: IOM accepts emergency drug consignment, expands funding base; Irrawaddy (15 May 08) Asean assessment team expected in Burma today

Why is the regime blocking aid?

1. Fear of exposure: If foreign aid workers and media are able to access the delta, details of the real extent of the disaster and criminal neglect by the regime could be exposed, not just to the world but also the rest of Burma. There is also the danger of civilians lodging a deluge of complaints not only about their immediate travails from the cyclone, but also concerning the long-term oppression they have faced under SPDC.
2. Humanitarian actors could be seen a “Trojan horse”: Disaster relief organized by foreigners undermines the junta’s obsessive supervision and surveillance. Humanitarian enterprise lingers after a disaster and devises “post-emergency” projects that would potentially entail a near permanent presence in the country to eventually promote real grassroots democracy in Burma.
3. Containing domestic dissent: The entry of foreign aid organizations on a large scale usually goes hand-in-hand with the spawning of local “implementing partners” and “NGO-ization” of the social sphere. Current civil society organizations are tightly controlled and organizing outside out junta-controlled structures is seen as a security threat.
4. Inadequacy: The SPDC is afraid of relinquishing control because it will weaken their psychological and political hold over the population. In addition, aid is being used a way to bribe people during the 24 May referendum. It may also fear being perceived as weak for failing to deal with the disaster and for the damage wreaked upon the naval base in Haing Gyi.
5. Army unity: The SPDC needs to feed the army and army families first in order for the military to remain united in controlling ordinary people.
6. Willful neglect: Allegations have emerged that the regime is “punishing” the population of the Irrawaddy delta which has traditionally been resistant to military dictatorship, and is ethnically diverse.

From Asia Times (14 May 08) The problem with dictators and disasters; AP (09 May 08) Why is Burma junta afraid of letting foreign aid workers?; Asia Times (14 May 08) Why Myanmar's junta steals foreign aid; BBC (15 May 08) Burma generals failing their people.

Help us help you

“This is inhuman. We have an intolerable situation created by a natural disaster. It is being made into a man-made catastrophe by the negligence, the neglect and the inhuman treatment of the Burmese people by a regime that is failing to act and to allow the international community to do what it wants to do.”²⁶ - UK PM Gordon Brown

As the SPDC continued to stonewall the delivery of aid, frustration in the international community grew. Western as well as Asian governments called on the SPDC to step up its relief effort and to cooperate with the international community in bringing relief to the affected communities.

- **7 May:** “What remains is for the Burmese government to allow the international community to help its people. [...] “It should be a simple matter. It’s not a matter of politics. It’s a matter of a humanitarian crisis.” - US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice ²⁷
- **8 May:** “Given the magnitude of the disaster in Myanmar, the international community has expressed concern and willingness to provide assistance. This is natural and we hope Myanmar will cooperate with the international community and have consultations with the international community.”²⁸ - China’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang
- **8 May:** “I hope that we will have an opening before it’s too late [...]. It’s very much a matter of urgency. [ASEAN is] trying to communicate [to the regime] the sense of urgency and the flood of goodwill that is being offered.”²⁹ - ASEAN Secretary-General Surin Pitsuwan
- **12 May:** “It is increasingly important that the Burmese authorities recognize that their lack of cooperation is preventing assistance getting to people, and that unfettered access should be made available immediately.”³⁰ - UK PM Gordon Brown

²⁶ Telegraph (18 May 08) Myanmar cyclone: Burma junta is killing its own people, says West

²⁷ AFP (08 May 08) Rice says Myanmar crisis ‘not a matter of politics’

²⁸ AFP (08 May 08) China urges Myanmar to work with global community after cyclone

²⁹ AFP (08 May 08) Myanmar must open up ‘before it’s too late’: ASEAN chief

³⁰ Irrawaddy (13 May 08) Britain orders warship to deploy off Burma

Frustration at the UN also grew. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon made numerous attempts to telephone SPDC Chairman Sr Gen Than Shwe to no avail.³¹ Ban also asked the SPDC to postpone the Constitutional referendum, because relief assistance to cyclone victims was more important.³²

- **8 May:** “I’m disappointed by the progress we’ve seen.” - John Holmes, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs.³³
- **12 May:** “I want to register my deep concern – and immense frustration – at the unacceptably slow response to this grave humanitarian crisis. [...] I therefore call, in the most strenuous terms, on the Government of Myanmar to put its people’s lives first. It must do all that it can to prevent the disaster from becoming even more serious.”³⁴ - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon
- **14 May:** “Even though the [Burmese] government has shown some sense of flexibility, at this time it’s far, far too short.”³⁵ - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon
- **16 May:** “[...] we are at a critical point. Unless more aid gets into the country—quickly—we face the risk of an outbreak of infectious diseases that could dramatically worsen today’s crisis. There is no more time to lose.”³⁶ - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

On 7 May, French FM Bernard Kouchner advocated for the delivery of aid without SPDC authorization under the “responsibility to protect” doctrine.³⁷ [See box *Responsibility to Protect (R2P)*]. “We are trying to see at the United Nations if we can use this responsibility to protect for [...] a resolution that imposes the passage [of aid] to the Myanmar government,” said Kouchner.³⁸

On 19 May, at an emergency meeting of ASEAN foreign ministers, the SPDC agreed to the creation of an ASEAN mechanism to oversee the distribution of foreign relief.³⁹ International agencies welcomed the news, but with some caution. IOM’s Chris Lom pointed out that no-one actually knew how the coordination mechanism would work.⁴⁰ At the meeting, SPDC FM Nyan Win said that Burma needed \$US11.7 billion in aid with more than 100,000 housing units for rehabilitation and reconstruction.⁴¹ The SPDC’s claim for aid was met with skepticism. ASEAN Secretary-General Surin Pitsuwan said that the junta needed to verify its assessment and figures to convince the international community.⁴² On 25 May, ASEAN and the UN will hold an International Pledging Conference in Rangoon.⁴³

Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

In the face of multiple concessions to the generals, and the generals’ refusal to budge on key access issues, some have suggested that the situation warrants a “humanitarian intervention”. The UN’s concept of “responsibility to protect” allows for such intervention when a state fails in its duties towards its population. They suggest that a UN Security Council resolution could provide the basis for delivering aid directly without waiting for approval from the military authorities, such as air-drops of supplies.

See: www.responsibilitytoprotect.org

The SPDC has been very enthusiastic about discussions over “reconstruction”, including appealing to the World Bank for a loan. While eager to receive international hand-outs, the SPDC has an estimated US\$4 billion in foreign reserves and receives an estimated US\$150 million in monthly gas exports revenues.⁴⁴

³¹ Irrawaddy (13 May 08) Junta Leader Won’t Answer My Calls: Ban Ki-moon

³² UN (08 May 08) Statement Attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General on Myanmar

³³ AP (09 May 08) UN officials criticize Myanmar’s response to cyclone

³⁴ UN News Center (12 May 08) Response to cyclone in Myanmar ‘unacceptably slow’ – Ban Ki-moon

³⁵ BBC News (14 May 08) ‘No access’ to Burma cyclone zone

³⁶ Irrawaddy (17 May 08) No time to lose: Ban to General Assembly

³⁷ AFP (07 May 08) UN should force Myanmar to accept cyclone aid: French FM

³⁸ AFP (07 May 08) UN should force Myanmar to accept cyclone aid: French FM

³⁹ AFP (19 May 08) Fundraising meeting set for Burma; Irrawaddy (19 May 08) Asean to Handle Foreign Aid for Burma

⁴⁰ Nation (20 May 08) Asean meeting agrees to coordinate relief aid to Burma

⁴¹ Nation (23 May 08) A Coalition of Mercy

⁴² Nation (23 May 08) A Coalition of Mercy

⁴³ AP (20 May 08) Myanmar opens door to help from Asian neighbors

⁴⁴ Burma Information Network (22 May 08) Chronology of the recent statements of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) with respect to Burma

Aid trickles in

On 9 May, the UN launched a flash appeal, which, as of 20 May, requested US\$201 million, with \$46.5 million contributed.⁴⁵ While aid has arrived, the amount is still inadequate. The WFP estimated that the daily aid volume was about one third of what was needed.⁴⁶ By 21 May, nearly three weeks after the cyclone hit, the WFP estimated that only 304,000 people (or 14%) of the estimated 2.4 million affected by the cyclone had received their first ration of food.⁴⁷ In Rangoon Division alone, there were 760,000 storm victims and relief reportedly reached only 6%.⁴⁸

Logistical nightmare

- Through tough negotiations and multiple concessions to the junta, international donors were able to get daily flights of aid to Rangoon's airport.
- However, SPDC officials are still requiring a full-days' notice for the clearance of airlifts through the airport.⁴⁹
- Rangoon airport doesn't have the machinery to unload large jet aircraft or adequate supplies for refueling. Consequently, donors were forced to establish a "hub" at Bangkok's partially-retired Don Muang airport.⁵⁰
- At Rangoon airport, much of unloaded aid is immediately stored in warehouses. So much is now stockpiled, rain is threatening to damage warehoused aid.⁵¹
- The cyclone devastated roads in the delta and the arrival of the monsoon season will exacerbate the situation. Most bridges in the Irrawaddy region before the cyclone could only handle a five-ton truck.⁵² The road from Rangoon to the delta is clogged with aid vehicles that wait in line for six hours for fuel to make the trip.⁵³
- The SPDC prevented aid groups from making full use of Rangoon's port and the Irrawaddy River.⁵⁴
- Despite offers from international donors, heavy machinery capable of removing debris and helicopters for the delivery of aid and assistance are in short supply. The SPDC has 40 helicopters, but reportedly only five are operational.⁵⁵
- As of 20 May, the US, France, and the UK had aid vessels anchored in international waters off the coast of Burma where they had been waiting for more than a week for permission from the SPDC to unload. The ships carry helicopters, boats, amphibious vehicles, relief supplies (enough food to feed at least 100,000 people for 15 days, and shelter for more than 15,000 people), water and water purification supplies, and disaster relief personnel.⁵⁶ The SPDC's UN envoy accused France of sending a warship.⁵⁷
- Save the Children and Britain's Department for International Development (DFID), were forced to call on the service of one of Burma's tycoons, Serge Pun, for advice on how to work with and negotiate the military junta's restrictions.⁵⁸

SPDC steals and resells aid

- On 9 May, the SPDC seized the WFP's first two planeloads of food.⁵⁹ The WFP immediately responded by suspending flights, but resumed them the next day saying the scale of the humanitarian crisis necessitated sending the aid even if they could not control its distribution.⁶⁰

⁴⁵ OCHA (20 May 08) Myanmar: Cyclone Nargis Situation Report No. 16

⁴⁶ Wall Street Journal (19 May 08) Myanmar slowly opens door for international donations

⁴⁷ OCHA (21 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 17

⁴⁸ Mizzima News (10 May 08) 760,000 storm victims in Rangoon Division alone

⁴⁹ UN OCHA (17 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 13

⁵⁰ Wall Street Journal (19 May 08) Myanmar slowly opens door for international donations

⁵¹ Irrawaddy (15 May 08) A trickle of aid reaches survivors

⁵² UN OCHA (17 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 13

⁵³ AAP (13 May 08) Aussie aid to arrive in Burma today

⁵⁴ New York Times (15 May 08) Myanmar farmers may miss harvest; Irrawaddy (12 May 08) Rangoon Struggles to Survive

⁵⁵ New York Times (08 May 08) Myanmar's biggest city still paralyzed after 5 days

⁵⁶ Irrawaddy (19 May 08) US Aid 'Waiting Patiently', AP (17 May 08) French Navy ship hover near Burma; Evening Echo (19 May 08) British aid ships ready for 'deal' in Burma

⁵⁷ IHT (16 May 08) Rain pushes Myanmar death toll higher

⁵⁸ Times (UK) (23 May 08) Britain's aid millions channeled through tycoon with ties to Burmese junta

- Aid packages delivered to survivors in donation ceremonies carried the stamp of the junta over the label of the original donor.⁶¹ In one state television broadcast, labels with the names of SPDC army generals were shown pasted over aid packages clearly saying “Aid from the Kingdom of Thailand”.⁶²
- Generators and water-treatment equipment were taken to the administrative capital of Naypyidaw, which escaped cyclone damage.⁶³
- In Rangoon and Bogale markets, donated Thai and Japanese dried food items and donated IGO shelter items were found on sale.⁶⁴ Rangoon shopkeepers reported that SPDC army trucks delivered rice and oil from international donors for resale in markets.⁶⁵
- Rangoon department stores reportedly sold high-energy biscuits, canned fish and meat, and insecticide-treated mosquito nets labeled as US and Japanese donations.⁶⁶
- On 14 May, trucks unloaded aid supplies at a football field in Labutta but displaced survivors reported they hadn’t received anything from the convoy.⁶⁷
- Displaced survivors were given spoiled or poor-quality food instead of nutrition-rich biscuits sent by international donors.⁶⁸
- SPDC Army soldiers from Battalion 77 confiscated donated food items in Rangoon’s Kungyungone Township.⁶⁹
- High-quality mosquito nets and blankets were reportedly smuggled out of the country for sale in Southwestern China.⁷⁰
- Instead of providing basic relief items, the SPDC donated TV, DVD and VCD players to cyclone survivors in Bassein and Hlinethaya Townships, Irrawaddy Division.⁷¹
- Survivors reported being charged for relief items, including UNICEF canvas sheeting.⁷²
- Survivors were told that they had to vote “Yes” in the referendum in order to receive aid.⁷³
- On 13 May, SPDC authorities used the cyclone disaster as a pretext for extorting 2,000 kyat each from 1,300 store owners in Namkham market, Muse Township, Shan State.⁷⁴ On 21 May, Defense Ministry’s General Khin Zaw ordered authorities to collect more than 30 million kyat from residents of Arakan State’s Maungdaw Township.⁷⁵ The SPDC blamed the cyclone when confiscating rice from farmers in Mudon Township, Mon State,⁷⁶ and in Arakan State.⁷⁷

In response to the crisis, monks, NLD members, local celebrities and ordinary people loaded their cars with supplies and drove to deliver aid to survivors in Rangoon and throughout the delta. They reported that the SPDC attempted to stop their efforts.

⁵⁹ New York Times (09 May 08) U.N. resuming aid to Myanmar after dispute with junta

⁶⁰ Asia Times (14 May 08) Why Myanmar's junta steals foreign aid

⁶¹ Nation (15 May 08) Millions of refugees at risk of disease

⁶² Asia Times (14 May 08) Why Myanmar's junta steals foreign aid

⁶³ Irrawaddy (15 May 08) A trickle of aid reaches survivors

⁶⁴ DVB (21 May 08) Locals claim Rangoon authorities still misappropriating aid; Mizzima (16 May 08) Aid supplies resold in markets, junta issues warning; Mizzima News (14 May 08) Mockery of human tragedy; relief supplies on sale; Irrawaddy (15 May 08) A trickle of aid reaches survivors; Mizzima (16 May 08) Aid supplies resold in markets, junta issues warning; DVB (19 May 08) Villager describes situation in Kunchangone

⁶⁵ DVB (17 May 08) Rangoon resident claims military selling aid supplies

⁶⁶ Irrawaddy (19 May 08) Not Much Aid Reaching Laputta Victims

⁶⁷ Irrawaddy (19 May 08) Not Much Aid Reaching Laputta Victims

⁶⁸ AP (13 May 08) Most Cyclone Victims Without Relief; Regime Accused of Stealing Aid; AP (15 May 08) Myanmar cyclone death toll soars above 43,000; DVB (21 May 08) Cyclone victims suspect officials of switching aid

⁶⁹ DVB (19 May 08) Villager describes situation in Kunchangone

⁷⁰ Asia Times (17 May 08) Myanmar's killing fields of neglect - Shawn W Crispin

⁷¹ NLM (07 May 08) Prime Minister General Thein Sein inspects Nargis-hit areas, provides relief supplies to storm victims; NLM (13 May 08) Arrangements made to accommodate victims in foreign-donated tents

⁷² DVB (17 May 08) Cyclone survivors forced to work and pay for aid; Irrawaddy (07 May 08) Monks aid survivors, authorities sell rooftops; DVB (13 May 08) Relief supplies appropriated by officials in Bogalay; DVB (13 May 08) Nargis cyclone: eyewitness account of an aid worker in Bogalay/Bogale

⁷³ Irrawaddy (12 May 08) Rangoon struggles to survive; DVB (17 May 08) Cyclone survivors forced to work and pay for food

⁷⁴ SHAN (15 May 08) Market sellers forced to donate for Cyclone Nargis victims

⁷⁵ Narinjara News (22 May 08) Arakanese Township to raise 30 million Kyat for Nargis victims

⁷⁶ IMNA (21 May 08) Seeds being collected for Irrawaddy where no paddy can be grown now

⁷⁷ Narinjara News (20 May 08) Paddy Seed from Arakan Sent to Delta

- Private donors and NLD members were prevented from talking to survivors and ordered to leave the supplies with soldiers for distribution.⁷⁸ Even medical volunteers were turned away.⁷⁹
- SPDC authorities in some disaster-affected areas in Rangoon did not distribute donated relief materials to survivors. In South Dagon Township, residents rioted, demanding local authorities release donated food and shelter items.⁸⁰
- Some private donors were forced to negotiate with soldiers by paying bribes. Others have been let through because they traveled with monks.⁸¹
- Donors reported that while aid has reached Labutta and Bogale, the villagers in surrounding areas are becoming increasingly desperate. As a result, donors were forced to throw aid from boats in order to prevent desperate villagers from damaging their supplies.⁸²
- SPDC officials reportedly instructed aid agencies not to cooperate with monks' efforts.⁸³
- The regime also distributed leaflets to citizens discouraging them to help, suggesting that giving food may make victims "lazy and more dependent on others".⁸⁴

To address reports of corruption associated with aid distribution, on 15 May, the SPDC issued a warning that they would take legal action against anyone hoarding or selling relief supplies.⁸⁵ However, no action was taken and reports of aid being confiscated and sold continued.⁸⁶

Propaganda machine in full swing

"People are very angry at the government. People know about all their lies and don't believe them - they are not showing what really happened." – A cyclone survivor.⁸⁷

The SPDC's propaganda machine went into overdrive in order to keep the Burmese people and the world in the dark about the true magnitude of the tragedy unleashed by cyclone Nargis. The junta also portrayed itself as being fully in control of the relief effort.

- State-run media did not to publish any report containing independent estimates of the dead and missing or the restrictions it imposed on international aid agencies.⁸⁸
- The state-run newspaper New Light of Myanmar and other junta-controlled media showed images of the military distributing aid and comforting survivors, with little or no mention of aid from foreign sources, especially western countries.⁸⁹ Official reports also ignored the relief work carried out by the Buddhist monks.⁹⁰
- The SPDC censorship board ordered local news editors to emphasize the junta's relief effort and barred them from covering the suffering of cyclone victims.⁹¹
- The junta banned foreign and local journalists from traveling to the Irrawaddy delta.⁹² Burmese journalists who obtained authorization to travel to the cyclone-affected areas were not allowed to take photos of dead bodies or report that survivors were not getting enough aid.⁹³ Reporters were

⁷⁸ BBC (21 May 08) Burmese dodge junta to supply aid; DVB (21 May 08) Phyu Phyu Thin and team help remote villagers; DVB (21 May 08) Joint relief efforts in Irrawaddy Delta; Irrawaddy (20 May 08) Leading monks send money, aid to refugees, DVB (20 May 08) Monks and celebrities step up relief efforts

⁷⁹ Star (16 May 08) Response to killer cyclone highlights the animosity between the country's military and Buddhist clergy; DVB (19 May 08) Villager describes situation in Kunchangone

⁸⁰ Mizzima (21 May 08) Cyclone victims take on junta authorities in Rangoon

⁸¹ Irrawaddy (16 May 08) Local Heroes Emerge to Help Cyclone Victims; DVB (19 May 08) Villager describes situation in Kunchangone

⁸² Irrawaddy (16 May 08) Burmese Relief Workers Bring Aid to Desperate Villagers

⁸³ DVB (16 May 08) Monks prevented from working with other donors

⁸⁴ The Telegraph (UK) (20 May 08) Burma cyclone: World Bank refuses loan claiming junta is in debt

⁸⁵ NLM (16 May 08) Legal action for any relief aid embezzlement

⁸⁶ Star (16 May 08) Response to killer cyclone highlights the animosity between the country's military and Buddhist clergy

⁸⁷ DVB (17 May 08) Reporters banned from photographing storm damage

⁸⁸ Irrawaddy (13 May 08) Danger: Getting the Truth Out of Burma

⁸⁹ Irrawaddy (13 May 08) Danger: Getting the Truth Out of Burma; RSF (06 May 08) Burma - Military government urged to issue press visas to foreign media; CPJ (14 May 08) Burma: Authorities restrict Cyclone Nargis news coverage

⁹⁰ Irrawaddy (13 May 08) Danger: Getting the Truth Out of Burma

⁹¹ DVB (17 May 08) Reporters banned from photographing storm damage; Mizzima News (20 May 08) Weekly journals ordered not to cover "destruction", but cover "reconstruction"

⁹² Irrawaddy (13 May 08) Danger: Getting the Truth Out of Burma

⁹³ Mizzima News (12 May 08) Burmese journals face restrictions on cyclone coverage; DVB (17 May 08) Reporters banned from photographing storm damage

instructed that they could only take pictures of SPDC officials giving aid and helping the victims.⁹⁴ Journalists could only report the death toll released in the official state media.⁹⁵

- On 19 May, SPDC Army soldiers from Light Infantry Division 66 arrested eight local journalists who had allegedly failed to inform authorities of their presence in Labutta Township.⁹⁶
- On 13 May, in an SPDC orchestrated media event, SPDC PM Gen Thein Sein visited Labutta, where 100 blue-colored tents had been erected. Media coverage failed to show the tens of thousands of survivors without any shelter.⁹⁷
- The SPDC refused to issue entry visas to foreign journalists.⁹⁸ The SPDC deported a BBC correspondent on 5 May.⁹⁹ SPDC military intelligence official kept hotels popular with journalists in Rangoon under constant surveillance.¹⁰⁰
- On 13 May, SPDC PM Gen Thein Sein told a meeting of pro-junta businessmen in Rangoon that no foreigners - including journalists - would be allowed into the Irrawaddy delta and that private business employees assigned to the relief effort were barred from using cameras.¹⁰¹
- The regime tapped some journalists' telephones and threatened others.¹⁰²
- On 7 May, SPDC authorities turned back a relief flight from Qatar because it had an unauthorized "media group" on board.¹⁰³

Damaged infrastructure

Estimates of the damage caused by the cyclone vary between US\$3.6 billion (independent experts) and \$11 billion (the SPDC).¹⁰⁴ Junta tycoon favorite Tay Za's companies reportedly secured reconstruction contracts in Rangoon's Kungyungone Township. SPDC crony Aung Thein Mann's Ayeya Shwewa Company was seen at work in Labutta.¹⁰⁵

- Houses, bridges, and roads have disappeared.
- The cyclone damaged Rangoon port terminal. The port's diesel fuel depot was damaged, and oil pipelines were dislocated.¹⁰⁶
- Already limited electricity, water, phone, and internet services were cut off.¹⁰⁷ Several onshore oil exploration sites were also damaged.¹⁰⁸
- The cyclone destroyed an estimated 90% of boats in the affected area.¹⁰⁹
- People have been unable to repair their houses due to shortage of materials.¹¹⁰

Food shortages

In the face of destruction of food stores and disrupted transportation, the prices of food and other basic commodities have skyrocketed.¹¹¹ The junta played down food shortages, saying there was sufficient rice.¹¹²

⁹⁴ DVB (17 May 08) Reporters banned from photographing storm damage

⁹⁵ Mizzima News (12 May 08) Burmese journals face restrictions on cyclone coverage

⁹⁶ Irrawaddy (21 May 08) 8 Burmese journalists arrested in Laputta

⁹⁷ Irrawaddy (17 May 08) With the refugees in Laputta

⁹⁸ IPS (13 May 08) Foreigners, Cameras Banned in Cyclone-Hit Areas; CPJ (14 May 08) Burma: Authorities restrict Cyclone Nargis news coverage

⁹⁹ CPJ (14 May 08) Burma: Authorities restrict Cyclone Nargis news coverage; RSF (06 May 08) Burma - Military government urged to issue press visas to foreign media; Mizzima News (06 May 08) BBC reporter deported from airport by junta

¹⁰⁰ Irrawaddy (13 May 08) Danger: Getting the Truth Out of Burma

¹⁰¹ IPS (13 May 08) Foreigners, Cameras Banned in Cyclone-Hit Areas; CPJ (14 May 08) Burma: Authorities restrict Cyclone Nargis news coverage

¹⁰² Irrawaddy (13 May 08) Danger: Getting the Truth Out of Burma

¹⁰³ NLM (09 May 08) Myanmar receiving emergency relief provisions, making strenuous efforts to transport them without delay to affected areas

¹⁰⁴ Irrawaddy (16 May 08) Nargis Costing Burma \$3 Billion; Wall Street Journal (19 May 08) Myanmar slowly opens door for international donations

¹⁰⁵ Irrawaddy (16 May 08) Regime cronies win contracts for cyclone reconstruction work

¹⁰⁶ Irrawaddy (16 May 08) Damaged Rangoon Port Hinders Recovery

¹⁰⁷ Reuters (04 May 08) Myanmar damage will take days to assess: U.N.

¹⁰⁸ Irrawaddy (16 May 08) Nargis Costing Burma \$3 Billion

¹⁰⁹ OCHA (17 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 13

¹¹⁰ Mizzima News (04 May 08) Water shortage in Rangoon, People rush to buy basic needs

¹¹¹ Mizzima News (04 May 08) Gas prices spiral to all-time high

¹¹² Independent (07 May 08) Aid agencies face battle to reach victims of the cyclone

- The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated that 1.6 million hectares of Burma's most productive rice producing land has been destroyed.
- They warned that farmers had 90 days at the most to return to their land to plant a new crop before the monsoon, or they would face another season with no harvest.¹¹³ However, some experts speculated that much of the land will be unusable due to salt water damage, and that production in the delta would be down 75% for the foreseeable future.¹¹⁴
- OCHA estimated that they will need 55,000 tons of rice to feed 750,000 people between now and the end of July.¹¹⁶
- By 18 May, the WFP still hadn't received a response from repeated requests to the SPDC for the import rice, pulses and oil.¹¹⁷
- By 20 May, the WFP had dispatched more than 1,900 tons of food to affected communities, and received permission to buy 10,000 tons. However, they calculated that they needed 55,000 tons.¹¹⁸
- Delta farmers also lost 200,000 water buffalos.¹¹⁹

Skyrocketing prices (in kyat, US\$1=1,100 kyat) ¹¹⁵			
	Before Nargis	After Nargis	Increase
Rice/kg	500	1,500	200%
Egg	300	400	33%
Pork/kg	2,761	3,067	11%
Cooking oil/liter	1,840	8,000	100%
Cooking charcoal	4,000	7,000	75%
Cooking gas 25 liter	20,000	25,000	25%
Pack of candles	500	1,000	100%
Gas/gallon	4,200	10,000	210%
Diesel/gallon	4,500	18,000	300%
Bus fare	200	500	150%
water/liter	250	500	100%
Zinc roofing	4,000	8,000	100%
Iron nails/kg	940	3,125	250%

Children

"In one village there were 500 survivors and they were all adults." - CARE Australia's country director Brian Agland

In the cyclone's wake, children were extremely vulnerable.

- UNICEF estimates that 40% of those killed in the cyclone were children.¹²⁰
- Untreated dysentery and infections pose deadly threats.¹²¹ UNICEF reported diarrhea in 20% of the children living in some areas.¹²²
- Of the children that survived, many are believed to be orphans or separated from family, and are living in makeshift shelters. The situation leaves them open to trafficking and sexual abuse.¹²³ On 12 May, UNICEF's chief child protection officer reported that police arrested two people when they attempted to recruit orphaned children in a shelter in Rangoon.¹²⁴ It was also reported that an SPDC unit rounded up and took away 300 children in and around Labutta with promises of food and shelter.¹²⁵

¹¹³ AP (14 May 08) UN warns of rice shortage in Myanmar as planting season approaches

¹¹⁴ Irrawaddy (16 May 08) Teak Still Being Sold Illegally Across Borders

¹¹⁵ AAP (13 May 08) Aussie aid to arrive in Burma today; Irrawaddy (05 May 08) Junta May Seek International Aid; Mizzima News (05 May 08) Dead bodies laying in the streets of Day Da Ye: Eyewitness Account; Irrawaddy (04 May 08) Commodity Prices Rise in Devastated Rangoon; Irrawaddy (06 May 08) Residents Say 22 Villages Destroyed in Laputta Township; Mizzima News (04 May 08) Gas prices spiral to all-time high; Irrawaddy (05 May 08) Junta May Seek International Aid; IMNA (07 May 08) Residents restrict travel due to rising bus fares; Mizzima News (05 May 08) Dead bodies laying in the streets of Day Da Ye: Eyewitness Account; Mizzima News (07 May 08) Most Rangoon journals closed after cyclone Aussie aid to arrive in Burma today

¹¹⁶ Irrawaddy (16 May 08) Estimates on Rice Destruction Vary Widely

¹¹⁷ OCHA (19 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 15

¹¹⁸ OCHA (19 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 15

¹¹⁹ AP (14 May 08) UN warns of rice shortage in Myanmar as planting season approaches, New York Times (15 May 08) Myanmar farmers may miss harvest

¹²⁰ AP (15 May 08) UN: Most schools ravaged in Myanmar's cyclone zone

¹²¹ DVB (13 May 08) Nargis cyclone: eyewitness account of an aid worker in Bogalay/Bogale

¹²² AP (11 May 08) Race to prevent disease among Myanmar cyclone victims

¹²³ AP (15 May 08) UN: Most schools ravaged in Myanmar's cyclone zone; Irrawaddy (21 May 08) Children of the cyclone

¹²⁴ Telegraph (UK) (13 May 08) Burma cyclone: British aid reaching Rangoon

¹²⁵ Mizzima News (22 May 08) Cyclone orphans could be trafficked: Human Right group

- Three thousand schools were destroyed or damaged, affecting 500,000 children.¹²⁶ UNICEF has been working with the SPDC to reopen makeshift schools in affected areas in time for the start of the school year on 2 June.¹²⁷ However, Save the Children warned that meeting such a deadline was unlikely.¹²⁸
- On 18 May, Save the Children warned that thousands of children could die of starvation within two to three weeks. 30,000 children in the region were acutely malnourished before the cyclone. Most survivors have been surviving on wild fruits, vegetables, and moldy rice.¹²⁹

Monks shelter survivors

In the weeks after the cyclone, displaced survivors continued to struggle to find temporary shelter. According to an assessment of the delta areas reached by official aid, 70% were sheltered in monasteries with monks bearing the main burden for their care.¹³¹ The continued migration of large groups of displaced survivors searching for places to live belied the SPDC's claims that they had effectively provided relief. Witnesses reported that villagers continued to move North from the lower Irrawaddy delta and many even reached Rangoon.¹³² However, many people still live in the devastated area.¹³³

Township ¹³⁰	Monastery	Public building	Tent camp	Number housed
Labutta	80%	17%	3%	33,948
Bogale	80%	20%		15,500
Pyapon	65%	25%	10%	9,650
Ngaputaw (Haing Gyi)	56%	44%		500
Kungyangon	80%	20%		20,000
Dedaye	60%	40%		1,500
Kawhmu	70%	30%		2,528
Kyauktan	60%	40%		2,500
Kyaiklat	75%	25%		3,360
Twantay	45%	40%	15%	1,200
Myaung Mya	40%	60%		12,000
Maubin	60%	40%		3,500
Pathein	20%	80%		3,600
Total	70%	28%	2%	109,786

- **Maubin:** Reports say that some survivors were forcibly taken to Maubin. Families were split in the process while others were ordered back to their villages.¹³⁴ At Maubin displacement camp, 1,500 men and women were forced to work in quarries.¹³⁵
- **Bogale:** Cyclone victims were reportedly forced out of monasteries where they were taking shelter.¹³⁶ A Bogale USDA secretary threatened cyclone victims with beatings if they refused to go to designated locations.¹³⁷ In another incident, displaced survivors in Bogale were told that they would have to return to their villages to make room for paid “fake refugees” who would give interviews during UN inspections.¹³⁸ On 10 May, local SPDC authorities in Ngabyayma village in Southern Bogale Township forced cyclone survivors to cut trees and reconstruct roads destroyed by the storm.¹³⁹
- **Labutta:** The SPDC reportedly attempted to move people out of monasteries and into a camp in a football field because they feared that large numbers of people in monasteries could lead to further dissent.¹⁴⁰ The camp had a capacity of 1,000 people housed in 50 tents, while the SPDC was moving an estimated 10,000 people.¹⁴¹

¹²⁶ OCHA (12 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 8

¹²⁷ AP (15 May 08) UN: Most schools ravaged in Myanmar's cyclone zone

¹²⁸ AP (15 May 08) UN: Most schools ravaged in Myanmar's cyclone zone

¹²⁹ AP (19 May 08) Save the Children warns of starvation in Burma

¹³⁰ Myanmar Cyclone Nargis Information Center (17 May 08) Rapid assessment of cyclone Nargis affected areas in Myanmar

¹³¹ Myanmar Cyclone Nargis Information Center (17 May 08) Rapid assessment of cyclone Nargis affected areas in Myanmar

¹³² Nation (15 May 08) Millions of refugees at risk of disease; Mizzima (13 May 08) Survivors moving north as humanitarian crisis looms; children at risk

¹³³ Irrawaddy (17 May 08) With the refugees in Laputta

¹³⁴ DVB (12 May 08) Refugees forcibly removed from monasteries in Bogalay

¹³⁵ DVB (14 May 08) Villager describes latest situation in Bogalay; DVB (17 May 08) NLD helps cyclone victims in affected areas; Irrawaddy (16 May 08) Rights Group Warns Donors to Monitor Aid

¹³⁶ DVB (12 May 08) Refugees forcibly removed from monasteries in Bogalay

¹³⁷ DVB (13 May 08) Cyclone refugees in Bogalay forced to relocate; DVB (14 May 08) Villager describes latest situation in Bogalay

¹³⁸ DVB (21 May 08) Junta pays ‘fake refugees’ to pose as cyclone victims; Irrawaddy (21 May 08) Cyclone survivors don't want UN chief to visit Delta

¹³⁹ DVB (17 May 08) Cyclone survivors forced to work and pay for aid

¹⁴⁰ Star (16 May 08) Response to killer cyclone highlights the animosity between the country's military and Buddhist clergy

¹⁴¹ Irrawaddy (15 May 08) Cyclone Survivors Told to Return to Shattered Homes

- **Rangoon:** SPDC official ordered more than 5,000 cyclone survivors sheltered in monasteries, churches, and schools to return to their ruined homes to make way for the 24 May referendum.¹⁴² SPDC authorities in Dawpon Township ordered survivors to leave, and threatened to prosecute home owners who accepted refugees.¹⁴³ There are 760,000 storm victims in Rangoon Division alone and relief has reportedly reached only 6% of the affected.¹⁴⁴

Public health catastrophe

The onset of a “public health catastrophe” of disease and famine looms for the estimated 3.2 million people living in affected areas.¹⁴⁵

- A UN spokesperson warned that disease could double the amount of deaths from the cyclone’s initial impact.¹⁴⁶
- Lack of sanitation, shelter, food, and clean water in the Irrawaddy delta threatens survivors with the rapid spread of disease.¹⁴⁷
- By 16 May, the International Red Cross had enough water purification equipment to meet the needs of 100,000 people, but not much of it had reached them.¹⁴⁸
- UNICEF reported hospitals were overcrowded and received up to 6,000 patients a day.¹⁴⁹

Ninety-two Indian, Singaporean, and Thai medical experts arrived in Burma with supplies. They were the first of 168 Asian health workers cleared for entry into Burma.¹⁵⁰ Local staffers from IOM, MSF, and Merlin established emergency clinics in affected Townships.¹⁵¹

Mosquito and water-borne viruses endemic in the area prior to cyclone include dengue fever, cholera, and malaria. The flooding caused by Nargis has created the conditions for deadly, large-scale outbreaks.

Diarrhea: A volunteer doctor reported 80% of his patients were suffering from diarrhea or **dysentery**.¹⁵² Water contaminated with feces remains a serious concern. To complicate matters, temporary pit-latrines are unsafe with the water table so high.¹⁵³

Cholera, shigella and typhoid have been identified as serious threats. On 14 May, the WHO confirmed a small number of cases cholera.¹⁵⁴ Locals reported of deaths from cholera in Bogale, Labutta in Irrawaddy Division, and Hlaing Thayar and Insein Townships, Rangoon Division.¹⁵⁵

Pneumonia is reportedly common among homeless survivors. Everything is wet all the time, and children and babies are wrapped in wet blankets.¹⁵⁶

Malnutrition is a major risk, both for starvation and increased vulnerability to disease.¹⁵⁷ Before Cyclone Nargis, the population in the Irrawaddy delta had approximately 30% chronic and 9% acute malnutrition. One-third of children were malnourished and one-fifth of newborns underweight.

Malaria: As flood waters recede, survivors will be at increased risk of malaria.¹⁵⁸

¹⁴² Guardian (12 May 08) Refugees living in village school face eviction; Irrawaddy (15 May 08) Cyclone Survivors Told to Return to Shattered Homes; DVB (21 May 08) Kaw Hmoo cyclone victims forced out of camps

¹⁴³ DVB (14 May 08) Refugees driven out of Dawpon township

¹⁴⁴ Mizzima News (10 May 08) 760,000 storm victims in Rangoon Division alone: Sources

¹⁴⁵ John Hopkins School of Public Health (14 May 08) Estimated 3.2 Million Burmese Potentially Affected by Cyclone

¹⁴⁶ Bloomberg (11 May 08) Myanmar Risks ‘Public Health Catastrophe,’ Oxfam Says

¹⁴⁷ Bloomberg (11 May 08) Myanmar Risks ‘Public Health Catastrophe,’ Oxfam Says; WHO (May 08) Communicable disease risk assessment and interventions - Cyclone Nargis: Myanmar, May 2008

¹⁴⁸ AP (16 May 08) Red Cross says clean water most urgent need for Myanmar cyclone victims

¹⁴⁹ Globe and Mail (12 May 08) Myanmar toll likely to hit 216,000

¹⁵⁰ BBC News (16 May 08) India sends doctors to Burma; IOM (16 May 08) Myanmar: IOM accepts emergency drug consignment, expands funding base; DPA (22 May 08) Singapore sends two medical teams to Myanmar

¹⁵¹ Irrawaddy (15 May 08) Cyclone Survivors Told to Return to Shattered Homes; OCHA (17 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 13

¹⁵² Irrawaddy (20 May 08) Diarrhea, dysentery widespread among refugees; DVB (19 May 08) Villager describes situation in Kunchangone

¹⁵³ IHT (19 May 08) Send in the latrines

¹⁵⁴ Reuters (16 May 08) Some cholera confirmed in cyclone-hit Myanmar

¹⁵⁵ Irrawaddy (08 May 08) Eighty thousand people dead; cholera cases reported; Mizzima News (12 May 08) Cholera outbreak in Laputta relief centre; IMNA (09 May 08) Residents face water crisis after cyclone Nargis; DVB (19 May 08) Villager describes situation in Kunchangone

¹⁵⁶ AP (18 May 08) Myanmar health system strained by cyclone

¹⁵⁷ WHO (May 08) Communicable disease risk assessment and interventions - Cyclone Nargis: Myanmar, May 2008

Skin infections, septic wounds, tetanus: Laceration wounds, cuts, bruises, and broken bones from stinging rain and flying debris have not been treated and have become festering wounds.¹⁵⁹ In a hospital in Labutta, civilians used rusty sewing needles to close wounds because there were no supplies.¹⁶⁰ Homeless survivors were reportedly suffering from wind-burn.¹⁶¹ **Snakebites** were also reported.¹⁶²

Measles outbreaks are common in settings of mass displacement.¹⁶³ **Meningitis and E. coli** are also risks associated with overcrowding.¹⁶⁴

Trauma: Aid workers reported that survivors were traumatized, and that psychological assistance and treatment were urgent.¹⁶⁵

SPDC says, UN says

*“What you, Westerners, don't seem to understand is that people in the delta are used to having no water to drink and nothing to eat.”*¹⁶⁶ – SPDC official during a meeting with foreign aid workers in Rangoon.

	SPDC says	UN says
Early warning	“Despite the public notices about the upcoming natural disaster on radio and TV as well as in the newspapers, the people did not take it serious [<i>sic</i>]. They did not have firsthand experiences about severe storms, so they did not care about the possible natural disaster.” ¹⁶⁷ – New Light of Myanmar, 20 May	“Looking at the number of deaths, it leads us to think that an early warning system had not been put in place.” ¹⁶⁸ - Brigitte Leoni, spokesperson for the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, 6 May
Response	“The National Disaster Preparedness Central Committee held its meeting at 8.30 am on 3rd May 2008 in Nay Pyi Taw and the civil and military medical teams were sent immediately to the storm-hit regions to provide health care services to the victims.” ¹⁶⁹ - SPDC's National Disaster Preparedness Central Committee, 17 May	“The [SPDC] authorities [...] have deployed military and police units for rescue, rehabilitation and cleanup operations in Yangon [Rangoon].” ¹⁷⁰ – OCHA, 5 May “Military and police units are carrying out rescue and cleanup operations.” ¹⁷¹ – OCHA, 6 May “[...] four infantry divisions have been deployed to the affected areas.” ¹⁷² – OCHA, 8 May “I want to register my deep concern – and immense frustration – at the unacceptably slow response to this grave humanitarian crisis.” ¹⁷³ - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 12 May
Aid effort	“[Myanmar people] will not rely too much on international assistance and	“[...] the sheer magnitude of the devastation is such that international assistance is indispensable for

¹⁵⁸ WHO (May 08) Communicable disease risk assessment and interventions - Cyclone Nargis: Myanmar, May 2008; AFP (09 May 08) Malaria, diarrhea reported after storm hits Myanmar

¹⁵⁹ AP (14 May 08) Aid worker enters 'unrecognizable' Myanmar delta; NDTV (12 May 08) Wounds, diseases await Myanmar residents; AFP (09 May 08) Malaria, diarrhea reported after storm hits Myanmar; LA Times (15 May 08) Myanmar cyclone survivor faces a new battle

¹⁶⁰ AP (11 May 08) Race to prevent disease among Myanmar cyclone victims

¹⁶¹ AFP (12 May 08) Myanmar says parts of nation still cut off

¹⁶² DMHA (22 May 08) Cyclone Nargis Update

¹⁶³ John Hopkins School of Public Health (14 May 08) Estimated 3.2 Million Burmese Potentially Affected by Cyclone

¹⁶⁴ WHO (May 08) Communicable disease risk assessment and interventions - Cyclone Nargis: Myanmar, May 2008

¹⁶⁵ AP (09 May 08) 1st UN aid plane lands in Myanmar but other arrivals remain uncertain; AP (12 May 08) Bodies Litter Burma Delta; Survivors Focus on Staying Alive

¹⁶⁶ Telegraph (18 May 08) Myanmar cyclone: Burma junta is killing its own people, says West

¹⁶⁷ NLM (20 May 08) Let's replace earth bricks with stone ones

¹⁶⁸ AFP (06 May 08) Myanmar says cyclone death toll tops 15,000

¹⁶⁹ NLM (19 May 08) No infectious diseases except normal diseases common to the storm-hit areas are found

¹⁷⁰ OCHA (05 May 08) OCHA Situation Report: Cyclone Nargis

¹⁷¹ OCHA (06 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 3

¹⁷² OCHA (08 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 5

¹⁷³ UN News Center (12 May 08) Response to cyclone in Myanmar 'unacceptably slow' – Ban Ki-moon

	<p>will reconstruct the nation on a self-reliance basis.”¹⁷⁴ – New Light of Myanmar, 15 May</p> <p>“We have already finished our first phase of emergency relief. We are going onto the second phase, the rebuilding stage.”¹⁷⁵ - SPDC PM Gen Thein Sein, 14 May</p>	<p>ensuring a rapid and coherent response.”¹⁷⁶ - John Holmes, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, 9 May</p> <p>“Even though the [Burmese] government has shown some sense of flexibility, at this time it’s far, far too short.”¹⁷⁷ - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 12 May</p> <p>“[...] the amounts of aid getting in are still not sufficient.”¹⁷⁸ – OCHA, 12 May</p> <p>“[...] Dedaye, Pyapon, Kyaiklat, Mawlamyinegyun, Wakema, and the southern part of Bogale are [...] underserved by relief responses.”¹⁷⁹ – OCHA, 13 May</p> <p>“[...] the levels of aid getting in to the country remain far below what is required to meet the needs on the ground.”¹⁸⁰ – OCHA, 15 May</p>
Aid workers	<p>“Myanmar is not yet ready to receive search and rescue teams as well as media teams from foreign countries.”¹⁸¹ - New Light of Myanmar, 7 May</p>	<p>“The situation is becoming increasingly precarious, with relief capacity inside the country already severely stretched, both in terms of supplies and human resources.”¹⁸² - OCHA, 7 May</p>
Visas	<p>“As the Government is facing huge amount of challenges, we are not yet ready to accommodate all visa requests made by various agencies and organizations.”¹⁸³ - Wunna Maung Lwin, SPDC Ambassador to the UN in Geneva, 16 May</p>	<p>“Faster progress on this issue [granting visa to foreign aid workers] is crucial for the effectiveness of the response.”¹⁸⁴ - John Holmes, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, 9 May</p> <p>“[staff on the ground] were grievously overstretched and the Government continues to deny visas to most foreign aid workers.”¹⁸⁵ – UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 12 May</p>
Risk of diseases	<p>“Some foreign news agencies broadcast false information to the effect that the storm victims did not get health care services in full and there were dangers of cholera and other infectious diseases to break out.”¹⁸⁶ - SPDC’s National Disaster Preparedness Central Committee, 17 May</p> <p>“No infectious diseases except normal diseases common to the storm-hit areas are found.”¹⁸⁷ – SPDC’s National Disaster Preparedness Central Committee, 17 May</p>	<p>“Diarrheic diseases have been reported [...]. 104 cases of diarrhea and 36 cases of dysentery have been reported in Yangon [Rangoon].”¹⁸⁸ – OCHA, 10 May</p> <p>“A few cases of malaria have been reported. Malaria is predicted to become a major concern in the coming weeks.”¹⁸⁹ - OCHA, 11 May</p> <p>“Unless more aid gets into the country – very quickly – we face an outbreak of infectious diseases that could dwarf today’s crisis.”¹⁹⁰ - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 12 May</p> <p>“There is a growing risk of the outbreak of disease among affected populations.”¹⁹¹ – OCHA, 15 May</p>

¹⁷⁴ NLM (15 May 08) Let’s work together for the nation to be able to rise from natural disaster

¹⁷⁵ Reuters (16 May 08) Rain pushes Myanmar death toll higher

¹⁷⁶ OCHA (09 May 08) Myanmar Flash Appeal Launch

¹⁷⁷ BBC News (14 May 08) ‘No access’ to Burma cyclone zone

¹⁷⁸ OCHA (12 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 8 (revised)

¹⁷⁹ OCHA (14 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 10

¹⁸⁰ OCHA (15 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 11

¹⁸¹ NLM (09 May 08) Myanmar receiving emergency relief provisions, making strenuous efforts to transport them without delay to affected areas

¹⁸² OCHA (07 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 4

¹⁸³ Mission of Myanmar (16 May 08) Briefing by His Excellency U Wunna Maung Lwin, Ambassador / Permanent Representative of the Union of Myanmar on the humanitarian situation in Myanmar following the Tropical Cyclone Nargis

¹⁸⁴ OCHA (09 May 08) Myanmar Flash Appeal Launch

¹⁸⁵ UN News Center (12 May 08) Response to cyclone in Myanmar ‘unacceptably slow’ Ban Ki-moon

¹⁸⁶ NLM (19 May 08) No infectious diseases except normal diseases common to the storm-hit areas are found

¹⁸⁷ NLM (19 May 08) No infectious diseases except normal diseases common to the storm-hit areas are found

¹⁸⁸ OCHA (10 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 7

¹⁸⁹ OCHA (12 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 8 (revised)

¹⁹⁰ UN News Center (12 May 08) Response to cyclone in Myanmar ‘unacceptably slow’ – Ban Ki-moon

¹⁹¹ OCHA (15 May 08) Cyclone Nargis - Myanmar - OCHA Situation Report No. 11

Aid pledged¹⁹²

Contributor	US\$	Details (Type, delivery)
Governments		
Argentina		Water purification tablets
Austria		600 plastic sheets
Australia	23.6 million	11.9 million through the UN flash appeal. Food donations through WFP, and sanitation through UNICEF. 13 May: Air force plane has landed with 31 tons of emergency supplies to be distributed through the SPDC
Bangladesh		Relief materials carried by a TC-130 cargo plane and a 5-member military team.
Belgium	389,000	
Brazil		Medical supplies
Brunei	100,000	Cash
Cambodia	60,000	
Canada	2 million	Through the UN, International Red Cross, WFP.
China	5.55 million	Emergency aid, including relief materials 6 May: \$1 million cash and relief supplies worth \$5 million
Czech Republic	154,000	
Denmark	2.1 million	3 million water purification tablets
Estonia	50,000	
Finland	467,000	Will support financial aid & rescue support upon request
France	3.1 million	Amount reduced due to lack of confidence in how the money would be used.
Germany	2.5 million	Through German aid groups
Greece	300,000	2 aircraft carrying food, water and tents
India		2 x naval ships of relief & medicines; 47 medics and relief experts in Rangoon
Indonesia	1 million	Food, medicine & other humanitarian aid
Ireland		Contribution to OCHA relief flight
Israel		8 May: Medical and water specialists flown in.
Italy	449,000	Relief goods
Japan	10 million	Tents, power generators & other supplies through UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP
Laos		2.5 tons of food and water
Malaysia	1 million	To SPDC. Also blankets, clothing, medicine, tents and water.
Netherlands	1.56 million	Decision on where money will go depends on which organizations get entry to the country, further funds available if required.
New Zealand	1.1 million	Through the UN and other agencies
Norway	9.8 million	Relief items to support the UN mission. Also US\$100,000 toward transportation of Sri Lanka's donation.
Philippines		15-member medical team pledged
Poland	240,000	Through UNICEF
Qatar	1 million	1,000 aid kits worth \$300,000
Romania	154,000	Through the WHO
Russia	2 million	2 cargo planes of shelter, medicine and food
Singapore	200,000	73,000 of the relief package has been delivered, and 12 medics have been deployed
South Korea	1.7 million	Tents & medicines
Spain	775,000	1 aircraft of relief items through WFP
Sri Lanka	25,000	To the SPDC. Also 20 tons of relief items.
Sweden	582,000	Water cleaning system & logistical support to the UN
Switzerland	475,000	An assessment team including a doctor, water and building specialists, two logistics experts and a Swiss Red Cross member have been dispatched.
Taiwan	200,000	
Thailand	1.9 million	More than 50 tons of medical and shelter supplies. 30 medics and red cross members are in country.
Turkey	1 million	
United Arab Emirates	1.75 million	Through Dubai Cares, and has flown in medicines and shelter items for the UAE Red Crescent
United Kingdom	33 million	Immediate financial assistance channeled through the UN & charities. Public pledges of \$11.7 million. DFID humanitarian response team in country. 4 flights carrying shelter items.
USA	\$17.9 million	Through UN agencies As of 17 May, 21 US airlifts had carried enough aid for more than 113,000 beneficiaries
Vietnam	200,000	
Total	127.93 million	
Regional Blocs		
European Commission	3.1 million	Using its Rangoon office for emergency relief and aid flights, focusing on shelter & drinking water. 3 humanitarian experts have been deployed.
ASEAN		Through 'Emergency Rapid Assessment Team'. Coordination role.

¹⁹² OCHA <http://ochaonline.un.org/MyanmarSituationReports/tabid/4600/Default.aspx>;
DMHA <http://coe-dmha.org/myanmar.htm>

Corporation/Foundation		
Thai PTT	400,000	Fuel
Gates Foundation	3 million	Software to reunite separated families, funds delivered through Mercy Corp, World Vision & CARE
Mer Afloat		Naval ships/equipment (unclear as to whether free donation)
TOTAL Oil		Diesel and Jet Fuel
OPEC	500,000	through OCHA in relief supplies and emergency operations
UN Agencies		
World Food Programme (WFP)	69.5 million	220 local staff and 15 foreigners. Daily flights arriving at Rangoon's airport since 6 May. Coordination role
UN		UN Flash appeal has requested 201 million to support survivors for at least 6 months. As of 21 May, 47 million had been contributed.
UNHCR		Appealed for 6 million to provide 250,00 people with shelter. As of 20 May, had brought in 119 tons of shelter supplies and other relief items through Rangoon and by land from Thailand.
UNICEF		Launched an appeal for 8.2 million. 130 local workers and 17 foreign workers and 17 foreigners. Four mobile teams are working in 17 townships of Rangoon.
WHO		Local staff deployed to delta. 16 WHO officers have been deployed.
FAO		Focusing on recovery of the agriculture sector