

Highlights

- Communities and humanitarian organizations in Myanmar are preparing for the likely arrival of Cyclone Mocha which has formed in the Bay of Bengal and is predicted to make landfall this weekend.
- While the track and intensity of the cyclone are still evolving, most forecasts currently have the cyclone crossing the coast between Kyaukphyu in Myanmar's Rakhine State and Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh on Sunday.
- This cyclone impact area in Rakhine is low-lying and highly prone to flooding. Heavy rains and strong winds are later expected to hit inland communities in the Northwest which are also prone to landslides and flooding.
- The Myanmar humanitarian Emergency Response Preparedness Plan has been activated nationwide since the start of the week. Humanitarian organizations, especially in Rakhine, have ramped up their preparedness efforts and have been pre-positioning personnel and supplies wherever possible. Preparedness is also being stepped up in the Northwest.
- OCHA is engaging with all relevant stakeholders to ensure timely and unimpeded access to those in need.
- Across Rakhine and the Northwest, there are already about six million people in need of humanitarian assistance and 1.2 million people displaced, even before the cyclone hits.
- An urgent injection of funds is desperately needed to facilitate a full-scale response to the Cyclone and any subsequent flooding. To date, the [US\\$764M Humanitarian Response Plan](#) is only 10 per cent funded.

Situation Overview

On 11 May, the Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS) issued a Red Storm Alert for Cyclone Mocha, which has formed in Bay of Bengal and is currently forecast to cross the coast between Kyaukphyu in Myanmar and Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh on 14 May with maximum sustained wind speeds of 150-160 kmph, gusting to 175 kmph. A significant storm surge is expected to accompany the cyclone of 2-2.7m. Evacuation advice has been issued by local authorities in Rakhine for low-lying and coastal areas in Sittwe, Pauktaw, Myebon, Maungdaw and Buthidaung with many people already starting to move ahead of the storm. Associated heavy rains and strong winds are expected to affect Rakhine and areas of high displacement further inland in northwest Myanmar.

This is the first cyclone to threaten Myanmar this Monsoon season and there are grave concerns about the impact especially on the already vulnerable and displaced communities with reduced coping capacity. Of particular worry is the situation facing 232,100 people who are displaced across Rakhine. Many of the IDP camps and sites in Rakhine are located in low-lying coastal areas susceptible to storm surge. The suffering of more than a million displaced people and other communities in the Northwest is also expected to worsen over the coming days as the ex-cyclone moves inland bringing heavy rain. Displaced people in the Northwest are already living in precarious conditions in camps, displacement sites or in forests often without proper shelter. According to the [2023 Myanmar Humanitarian Needs Overview](#), there are already 6 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in the most likely affected areas of Rakhine (1.7M) and the Northwest (4.3M – Chin, Magway and Sagaing).

Coordination

In preparation for Cyclone Mocha, the humanitarian community has been closely monitoring the development of weather conditions and activated the Myanmar Humanitarian Emergency Response Preparedness Plan nationwide. Common Rapid Needs Assessment forms have been developed and rolled-out with associated trainings to support quick and consistent analysis of needs after the landfall. An updated pre-approved list of staff who have been trained on the needs assessments, has been submitted to facilitate timely access in Rakhine. UNOCHA has surged a team to Sittwe to bolster capacity under a whole of Rakhine coordination approach. OCHA continues to engage with all relevant stakeholders to facilitate a timely response over the coming days. Inter-cluster coordination is also being stepped up in the Northwest.

The following preparedness measures have been undertaken by clusters and their partners at the national and sub-national levels:

- Stockpiling and pre-positioning of commodities in existing warehouses and preparations for the distribution of cash assistance to affected people.
- Preparation of a consolidated stock list at the national, Ayeyarwady and Rakhine levels to identify gaps and available resources. A response-wide stock list is under preparation, including the Northwest.
- Dissemination of practical safety messages to affected people across the country, with a focus on people at risk in coastal areas, advising how to protect themselves and their family members. These messages were disseminated in various languages in both written and audio formats, through various communication channels.
- Updating of existing evacuation site lists, contact lists and baseline datasets.

Preparations are also underway on the Bangladeshi side of the border where camps hosting hundreds of thousands of Rohingya people are likely to be affected by strong wind, rain, and flooding, even if the cyclone ultimately makes landfall in Myanmar.

Access in Rakhine and the Northwest remains heavily restricted. Timely and sustained humanitarian access to disaster-affected areas is critical to assess needs, move supplies and distribute immediate assistance. Relaxation of Travel Authorization requirements is critical to support the emergency response to people in need in the affected areas. Restrictions on the importation of lifesaving humanitarian stocks, particularly health and nutrition supplies, have hindered efforts to get assistance to affected areas and engagement continues on the release of these stocks.

Additional funding is critically needed with the HRP less than 10 per cent funded. The Emergency Shelter and NFI Cluster has not received any new funding this year and an urgent injection of funds will be needed to sustain the response across all clusters over the weeks ahead.

Information in this update is based on inputs from humanitarian partners and meteorological organizations. The next update on the Cyclone will be issued on 13 May.

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