

# BANGLADESH AND MYANMAR

## Impact of Cyclone Mocha

### KEY FIGURES

+7M

PEOPLE  
AFFECTED

+10,000

DAMAGED OR  
DESTROYED  
HOUSES

### FUNDING AND RESPONSE CAPACITY

UN agencies  
(WFP, UNICEF, IOM)  
and INGOs

Several local NGOs  
have started initial  
response activities

### National Red Cross

As at 21 May:  
USA: USD 250,000  
UK: USD 2.3 million  
(Bangladesh)  
& USD 2 million  
(Myanmar)  
USAID: USD 450,000  
in response to the  
impact of the cyclone  
(US DOS 17/05/2023;  
UK Govt 21/05/2023  
and 19/05/2023;  
USAID 17/05/2023)

### CRISIS IMPACT OVERVIEW

- On 14 May 2023, the extremely severe cyclonic storm Mocha made landfall between Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh and Kyaukpyu township in Myanmar. The cyclone caused significant damage to critical infrastructure, houses, and shelters in western and northern Myanmar, including Chin, Kachin, Magway, Rakhine, and Sagaing states, and in Bangladesh's southeastern Chattogram division (ECHO 17/05/2023; OCHA 17/05/2023 a).
- In Myanmar, initial estimations suggest that the cyclone has affected approximately 5.4 million people in Chin, Magway, Rakhine, and Sagaing states, with 3.2 million potentially in need of humanitarian assistance (OCHA 16/05/2023). As at 17 May, 41 people had died and around 700 were injured. The cyclone has resulted in the evacuation of approximately 100,000 people. Among the worst-affected areas is western Rakhine, where the cyclone has extensively damaged numerous IDP camps for Rohingya people. Severe flooding has also affected more than 100,000 people in villages located in Magway and Sagaing (ECHO 17/05/2023).
- In Bangladesh, as at 19 May, the cyclone had affected approximately 2.3 million people, destroyed over 2,000 houses, and damaged more than 10,000 houses in Chattogram division (in Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Feni, and Noakhali districts) (ISCG et al. 17/05/2023; UNHCR 19/05/2023). A pre-existing high needs level meant that Rohingya refugees living in the camps were the most affected (ECHO 17/05/2023; OCHA 17/05/2023 a).
- The main needs reported for those affected in Myanmar are shelter, drinking water, latrine reconstruction or repair, health assistance, relief items, and food. The subsequent flood poses a high risk of spreading waterborne disease in the affected areas (OCHA 16/05/2023). Need assessments are underway but access constraints create more security risks and access obstacles in the cyclone-affected areas (OCHA 19/05/2023; The Guardian 19/05/2023). In Bangladesh, rapid needs assessments are underway (ISCG et al. 17/05/2023).

### Anticipated scope and scale

- Because of the monsoon season, heavy rainfall and thunderstorms are likely to continue for the rest of the month in Myanmar and Bangladesh, which could trigger additional flooding, hamper recovery efforts, and worsen existing needs (ECHO 17/05/2023; ACAPS accessed 21/04/2023).
- The presence of explosive ordnance poses significant risks in conflict-affected rural areas in Myanmar, particularly because of the potential shifting of landmines during flooding and population movements (OCHA 16/05/2023).
- In Myanmar, conflict-induced displacements and access limits are likely to pose challenges to conducting accurate needs assessments and ensuring access to assistance. The reported numbers likely underestimate the true scale of needs, which are expected to further increase in the near future (ACAPS 12/12/2023; OCHA 19/05/2023).

### Humanitarian constraints

- Extreme humanitarian constraints persist in Myanmar (ACAPS 12/12/2023). Preliminary distributions of aid are taking place in areas where humanitarians already had approved access or where there has been newly approved access (OCHA 19/05/2023). The humanitarian community still faces obstacles as they await approval for coordinated field missions, making it difficult to access information, obtain travel authorisation, and conduct needs assessments while providing emergency relief to affected populations (OCHA 19/05/2023; UNICEF 18/05/2023).
- Cyclone-inflicted damage to roads and bridges is further delaying rescue efforts in Myanmar (VOA News 16/05/2023; UNICEF 17/05/2023).
- The lack of electricity and the collapse and damage of cell phone towers caused by high winds have disrupted communications in Myanmar, making it difficult to assess the full extent of the disaster (OCHA 19/05/2023; UN News 15/05/2023; BBC 15/05/2023). Significant information gaps remain, and limited connectivity is hindering connections with the affected communities (OCHA 17/05/2023 b; IFRC 16/05/2023).

## CRISIS IMPACTS

### Shelter

Cyclone Mocha has caused severe damage to or destroyed numerous houses in **Myanmar** (OCHA 15/05/2023). As at 18 May 2023, estimates indicate that the cyclone fully or partially destroyed 1,800 houses in Chin state (OCHA 18/05/2023). In Rakhine state, the exact impact on IDP camps and surrounding rural areas is not yet known, but reports indicate extensive damage (OCHA 16/05/2023). Shelters in IDP sites are at risk of severe destruction as they are made of bamboo and tarpaulin (PIN 22/04/2023). Local volunteers reported that the cyclone has destroyed almost all the IDP shelters in Kyauktaw town (Mrauk-U district, Rakhine state) (OCHA 16/05/2023; Myanmar Now 15/05/2023). As at 19 May, approximately 600 Rakhine people in Sittwe city (capital of Rakhine) sought shelter in six monasteries after the cyclone destroyed their houses (OCHA 19/05/2023). In Sittwe township's Basara camp, the cyclone destroyed three out of 52 longhouses and damaged the remaining structures, affecting around 2,530 IDPs (OCHA 19/05/2023). In Pauktaw township (Sittwe district, Rakhine state), the cyclone damaged a substantial number of houses and heavily affected Sin Tet Maw village and surrounding Sin Tet Maw Rohingya camp (OCHA 19/05/2023). In Rathedaung (Sittwe district, Rakhine state), most villages reported severe shelter damage (OCHA 17/05/2023 b). The cyclone and the subsequent flood, heavy rain, and strong winds have also caused severe damage in other northwestern regions, including Kachin, Magway, Mandalay, Sagaing, and northeastern Shan (OCHA 17/05/2023 b and 19/05/2023).

In **Bangladesh**, tropical Cyclone Mocha has destroyed approximately 2,000 houses, while over 10,000 have suffered partial damage in Saint Martin's Island and Teknaf upazila of Cox's Bazar district (ISCG et al. 17/05/2023; The Daily Star 14/05/2023). In the Rohingya refugee camps of Cox's Bazar, the cyclone has destroyed over 300 shelters and damaged 3,900 (ISCG accessed 16/05/2023). Before the storm, Bangladeshi authorities evacuated around 750,000 people from the coastal region, including Cox's Bazar and Saint Martin; among these were 3,031 Rohingya refugees (UN News 15/05/2023; BBC 16/05/2023; The Business Standard 14/05/2023).

### WASH

In **Myanmar**, IDP sites have reported significant damage to latrines (OCHA 16/05/2023). In Shanjai IDP camp (Myitkyina district, Kachin state), which accommodates around 1,000 IDPs, the cyclone destroyed eight houses and blew the roofs off 74 other buildings, affecting the latrines as well (OCHA 17/05/2023 b). According to local sources, the cyclone damaged 80% of the latrines in the Nget Chaung 1 IDP Rohingya camp (Sittwe district, Rakhine state). In the

Nget Chaung 2 IDP camp (Sittwe District, Rakhine State), it destroyed half of the latrines (OCHA 19/05/2023). Floods have submerged the affected areas and contaminated water sources; clean drinking water and sanitation are urgently needed (OCHA 19/05/2023; IFRC 16/05/2023). In Nget Chaung 1 IDP camp, the cyclone cut off the water supply from the main pond, and the fuel for the water pumps was stolen. As a result, people had to use rainwater collected during the cyclone in an alternative pond, which will last for about a week (OCHA 19/05/2023). In Nget Chaung 2 IDP camp, five out of the community's six ponds are contaminated, and IDPs are relying on rainwater for drinking (OCHA 19/05/2023). The lack of access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities increases the risk of spreading waterborne illnesses such as diarrhoea and hepatitis and mosquito-borne diseases like dengue fever and malaria (UN News 16/05/2023; UNICEF 16/05/2023).

In **Bangladesh**, St Martin's Island faces severe drinking water shortages. The suspension of trawler movements between Teknaf and St Martin's has prevented the transportation of essential goods (The Daily Star 16/05/2023). Rohingya refugee camps cover two-thirds of the area, and an initial field assessment indicated that the cyclone had affected 1,060 WASH facilities, including 751 latrines, 261 bathing facilities, and nine water networks. In Teknaf camps, the shortage of drinking water means that the water supply is limited to 12L a day per person (ISCG et al. 17/05/2023).

### Health

In **Myanmar**, the cyclone has damaged medical centres and hospitals (OCHA 16/05/2023), leading to shortages of medicines, medical supplies, and healthcare personnel. Many laboratories and operating theatres in Sittwe township are non-operational, emphasising the urgent need for fuel (OCHA 18/05/2023). There have been reports of injuries in cyclone and temporary shelters (AP News 16/05/2023). In those shelters, necessary medical treatment includes healthcare for children, infants, and pregnant women, as well as psychosocial support (OCHA 15/05/2023). Since the 2021 coup, humanitarian health needs have increased and become more severe across Myanmar. The northwest region of Myanmar hosts the highest number of IDPs (OCHA 06/04/2023). As at May 2023, 763,100 IDPs were present in Sagaing, 195,700 in Magway region, and 48,700 in Chin state (UNHCR 11/05/2023). These areas have experienced significant conflict, primarily in Sagaing, followed by Magway and Chin (FCS 12/04/2022). IDPs and stateless people already face severe challenges in accessing healthcare, including limited availability, high costs, distance, and movement restrictions, as well as security concerns caused by the lack of documentation (OCHA 15/01/2023; UNHCR 25/08/2022).

In **Bangladesh**, four health posts and four primary health centres in Rohingya refugee camps suffered damage to infrastructure (ISCG et al. 17/05/2023).

## Safety and protection

In **Myanmar**, the military attacked people during the cyclone, further worsening its impact and endangering the safety and wellbeing of those people. Military raids in Sagaing region forced around 16,000 people to flee during heavy rain and flooding (OCHA 16/05/2023; The Irrawaddy 15/05/2023). The cyclone has also affected most of the gender-based violence centres in the Sittwe IDP camps (OCHA 18/05/2023). The destruction of shelters and latrines, coupled with the absence of electricity, increases people's vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence, particularly in IDP camps (OCHA 18/05/2023).

In **Bangladesh**, the cyclone has damaged crucial facilities that provide protection services to refugees, affecting their overall delivery (ISCG et al. 17/05/2023). These facilities include registration sites, community centres, safe spaces for women and girls, and multipurpose centres. The damage has limited mobility for vulnerable groups (women, girls, children, older people, and people with disabilities), as difficult road conditions, severe weather, and limited connectivity hinder their access to necessary services (ISCG et al. 17/05/2023).

## IMPACT ON CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Cyclone Mocha struck Myanmar and southeastern Bangladesh with strong winds and a storm surge, causing widespread damage to infrastructure and disruption to movement and communication. In Myanmar, the cyclone severely affected critical infrastructure: as at 16 May, it had damaged 73 religious buildings, 47 monasteries, 163 schools, 29 hospitals and clinics, and 112 government buildings (ABC News 16/05/2023). In the town of Sittwe, the cyclone severed communication lines and uprooted trees, bringing down pylons and cables, which caused power outages and left residents cut off from the outside world (Al Jazeera 15/05/2023; The Daily Star 15/05/2023). These communication and power supply disruptions affect aid delivery and hinder accurate assessments of the affected areas' needs and the extent of the damage (OCHA 16/05/2023; Al Jazeera 14/05/2023).

In **Bangladesh**, concerns about Cyclone Mocha led to the pausing of liquefied natural gas regasification, causing power cuts as the country's two operational floating storage and regasification units have been shut since 12 May 2023 (The Daily Star 17/05/2023; FE 14/05/2023).

## DRIVERS OF THE CRISIS

### Rainy season

Bangladesh is located to the north of the Bay of Bengal, and Myanmar is situated to the east. The cyclone season in the Bay of Bengal, which affects both Bangladesh and Myanmar, typically occurs in April–May and October–December. This period coincides with the months immediately following the summer monsoon season. The most severe cyclonic storms occur during these times (World Meteorological Organization accessed 16/05/2023; World Data accessed 16/05/2023 a; World Data accessed 16/05/2023 b). The proximity of both countries to the warm waters of the Bay of Bengal makes them prone to cyclones during this time of the year.

## COMPOUNDING AND AGGRAVATING FACTORS

### Food security

With 15.2 million people already experiencing food insecurity in **Myanmar**, the cyclone's damage to croplands significantly disrupted food production, possibly leading to a further increase in food insecurity (OCHA 15/01/2023; The Irrawaddy 17/05/2023). The affected areas were already in urgent need of food, as currency depreciation, inflation, movement restrictions, and conflict result in high food prices that people struggle to afford (OCHA 15/01/2023 and 16/05/2023). Food prices increased by 14% (ADB 04/2023). The country has also experienced lower agricultural production since the 2021 coup (The Irrawaddy 16/02/2023). With pre-existing poverty, lower agricultural production, and high food prices, more people could become food-insecure following the cyclone. The availability of and access to nutritious food may decrease, leading to increased malnutrition and hunger among the affected population.

### Pre-existing vulnerabilities of IDPs and Rohingya

People living in the cyclone-affected regions of **Myanmar** were already experiencing underlying humanitarian vulnerabilities, such as poverty, inadequate infrastructure, limited access to healthcare, and conflict (OCHA 15/01/2023). About 40% of the country's population lives below the poverty line (World Bank 21/07/2022). Rohingya and other conflict-displaced people are among more than 250,000 people living in displacement camps under challenging circumstances, including inadequate sanitation facilities, limited access to essential services, and severe movement restrictions (IRC 17/05/2023). The Rohingya population in Rakhine faces strict controls on movement and limited access to vital services, while areas where IDPs have returned still see security risks and protection concerns (UNHCR 17/04/2023;

OCHA 31/12/2023). These vulnerabilities magnify the impact of the cyclone on these people, making it harder for communities to cope with the immediate and long-term effects of the cyclone and worsening the humanitarian crisis.

Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, **Bangladesh**, are already overcrowded, and shelters made with bamboo and tarpaulin are vulnerable to severe weather conditions (ACAPS 30/08/2022). Some shelters are also located in hilly areas, with a higher risk of landslide damage. Severe movement restrictions are in place, limiting livelihood opportunities and access to basic services (HRW 04/04/2022). The impact of the cyclone will intensify the severity of needs for refugees, who already endure challenging living conditions.

## HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

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### Myanmar

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Myanmar has activated its Emergency Response Preparedness Plan, and humanitarian organisations are actively engaging with stakeholders to ensure readiness for a scaled response to Cyclone Mocha. Humanitarian organisations are preparing for a large-scale emergency response at the national level, including in Rakhine and the northwestern regions (OCHA 14/05/2023; IFRC 13/05/2023). Responders have prepositioned supplies in warehouses and are preparing to distribute cash assistance and relief items to affected people (OCHA 13/05/2023).

These organisations have conducted refresher training sessions before the cyclone to ensure a coordinated response, and advocacy efforts are underway to address access and supply importation issues. Local authorities have issued evacuation advice and designated shelters in various townships. Myanmar's humanitarian community is mobilising its response capacity to assist and support affected communities (OCHA 13/05/2023). Efforts are underway within the humanitarian community to gather resources from different channels to ensure the prompt delivery of essential aid to the most affected communities (OCHA 18/05/2023).

### Bangladesh

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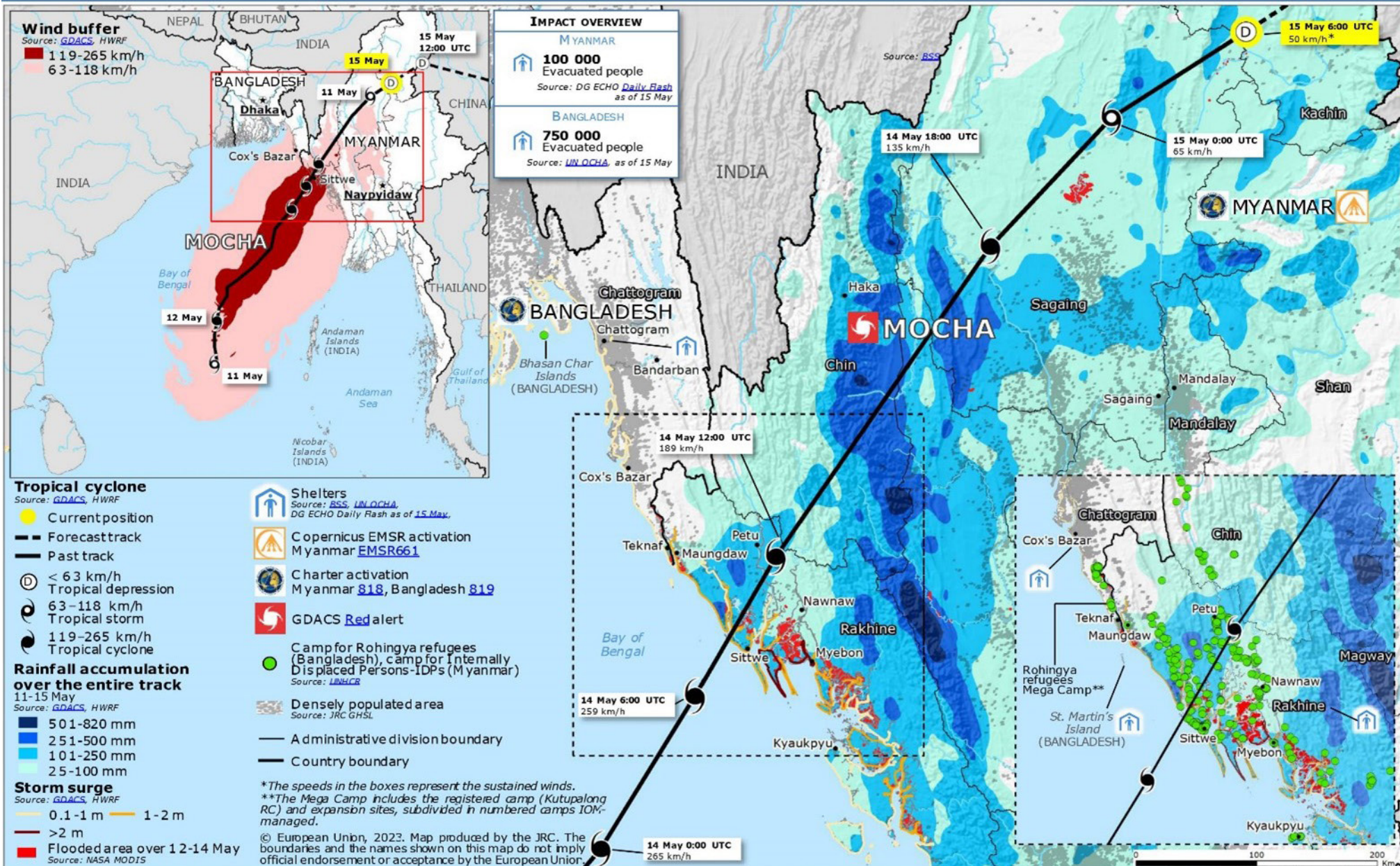
Bangladesh has prepared for the humanitarian response to Cyclone Mocha. UN agencies, INGOs, and local NGOs mobilised before the disaster. Organisations have prepositioned aid, including food and emergency shelters, to assist those in need when the cyclone hits (WFP 13/05/2023). Responders have also undertaken training initiatives, with 3,000 Rohingya refugees prepared for the impact of the cyclones and consequent floods (IRC 12/05/2023). Volunteers have actively assisted with evacuations, particularly for groups needing assistance, such as people with disabilities (HI 13/05/2023).



# IMPACT OF CYCLONE MOCHA ON MYANMAR AND BANGLADESH AS AT 15 MAY

Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) – DG ECHO Daily Map | 15/05/2023

## Myanmar, Bangladesh | Tropical Cyclone MOCHA



Source: ECHO (15/05/2023)