

snapshot

# Myanmar Red Cross Society

May 2017



## Background

The Myanmar Red Cross Society began its operations in 1920 as a branch of the Indian Red Cross. After Burma formally separated from India in 1937, the Society obtained official, national status and was admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in 1946.

The Myanmar Red Cross Society is committed to improving the health and well-being of vulnerable people. The National Society's volunteers are actively involved in responding to disasters and emergencies such as fires, flood and landslides, and in health care delivery - nutrition, water and sanitation and immunizations. There are approximately 469 staff members working mainly at headquarters level.

The National Society's roster includes approximately 17,800 first aid staff, 46 people trained in psychosocial support, 95 people with water safety skills such as life-saving, and a disaster action response team of 1,230 members trained in assessment and relief activities.

## Programme Overview

**Community based healthcare:** The society is one of Myanmar's largest and longest-standing community-based health organizations. Programmes target the most vulnerable and include: Community Based Health and First Aid (CBHFA); maternal, neonatal and child health care; malaria prevention; HIV/AIDS prevention and outreach and orthopaedic and rehabilitation services.

**Disaster preparedness and relief:** The society's disaster preparedness & response initiatives focus on reducing deaths, injuries and impacts from natural disasters. The National Society prepares by:

- Strengthening logistics, particularly warehouse capacity
- Establishing emergency response teams
- Strengthening communication and early warning systems
- Promoting coordination and collaboration with partners and authorities
- Disseminating contingency plans and standard operating procedures

## Key Information

### Branch Offices

330 branches nationwide with an on-the-ground presence in regions most affected by disasters

### Date Established

Formed: 1920  
Recognised by ICRC: 20 April 1939  
Admitted to IFRC: 23 May 1946

### IFRC Country Delegation

Yes

### Key Persons

President: Professor Dr. (Daw) Mya Thu  
Secretary General: Mr. (U) Khin Maung Hla

### Legal Status

Myanmar Red Cross Society's new law was approved in August 2015 and it has been introduced to Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners, UN Organizations, INGOs, LNGOs, CBOs, and media groups. A series of drafting process was organized so that the statutes are in line with the new law.

### Major Partners

American, Australian, Danish and Swedish Red Cross Societies, **Qatar Red Crescent Society**, IFRC and ICRC

### Volunteers

Myanmar Red Cross Society has a strong national presence with support from more than 40,000 active volunteers.



- Establishing and scaling up emergency funds
- Enhancing branches' preparedness
- Improving township branches' capacities
- Advocating for the society's positioning
- Encouraging sustainable volunteer-based recovery operations

**First aid:** First aid and community-based first aid are among the society's primary activities. Basic, standard and instructor first-aid courses are offered to the public.

**Community safety and resilience:** This programme guides the society in creating a common community-based framework for resilience.

**Ambulance service:** The society operates a 24-hour ambulance service in 17 states and divisions of the country, benefiting up to 10,000 people a year.

**Water and sanitation:** The WASH unit's goal is to reduce the morbidity and mortality rate of water and sanitation related diseases. The unit targets the vulnerable, particularly children under 5 years old, and focuses on rural areas. Hygiene promotion is conducted at the community-level.

**Restoring family links:** Approximately 650 staff and volunteers from the society, together with ICRC, work to restore family links by looking for family members, restoring contact, reuniting families and seeking to clarify the fate of those who remain missing.

**Disaster risk reduction:** A local-level model reduces death and injury. The lives of the vulnerable are improved through participation in risk reduction, supported by key activities: Mobilization of communities, students and teachers; development of resources to prevent and manage risk; development of trained and skilled volunteers; establishment of active village

committees; increase of village-level knowledge and preparedness; enhancement of branch preparedness; improvement of township branch resources; increase in staff capacities in project management, monitoring, and reporting.

## Recent Disasters

Myanmar is at high risk of natural disasters. Coastal regions are exposed to cyclones, storm surges and tsunamis, while much of the country's interior suffers from flooding and landslides during rainy season, and drought and fire during dry season. Myanmar is also subject to earthquakes. The impacts of climate change are becoming evident and are expected to exacerbate risk.

### Recent natural disasters include:

- Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004)
- Cyclone Mala (2006) and Cyclone Nargis (2008)
- Floods and landslides (2015)
- Floods (2016)

## Disaster Law

A new disaster management law was adopted in Myanmar in July 2013. Since then, Myanmar Red Cross Society has played a significant role in disaster law advocacy, particularly on strengthening procedures to facilitate and regulate international assistance (IDRL). As a result, a chapter on international coordination was adopted in Myanmar's new disaster management rules in April 2015. A specific request was also made by the government during the August 2015 flood response for IDRL technical support. The National Society is currently working with the Myanmar Relief and Resettlement Department and IFRC to undertake an IDRL research study and identify how to continue strengthening the legal framework in Myanmar.



### For further information about the Myanmar Red Cross Society

#### Headquarters Address & Contact Details

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#### Online Profiles

Website <http://www.myanmarredcrosssociety.org>  
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/info.mrcs>  
Twitter <https://twitter.com/MyanmarRedCross>  
YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/user/myanmarredcross>

#### Recent Appeals

A list of all appeals Myanmar Red Cross Society has submitted is available on the IFRC website: <http://www.ifrc.org/en/publications-and-reports/appeals/>

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