



Photo caption: Distribution of food packs to communities in the informal settlements of South Dagon Township, Yangon © UN-Habitat, Myanmar

Severe Flooding Hits Myanmar: Climate Change Takes a Toll

Yangon, Myanmar, August 2, 2024 — Myanmar is facing a severe humanitarian crisis triggered by protracted conflict, political instability and exacerbated by climate impacts. As of August, extensive flooding continues to overwhelm and displace populations in several regions, including Kachin, Magway, Mandalay, Bago, Mon, Kayin, Tanintharyi, Ayeyarwady, and Yangon. The flooding has submerged communities, displaced thousands, and inflicted significant damage on infrastructure.

Described as the worst in recent years, the recent intense rainfall follows a pattern of increasingly severe weather events linked to global climate change. In Myanmar, changes in monsoon patterns and increased rainfall are directly linked to rising temperatures. The increased frequency and intensity of these weather events are creating a cycle of vulnerability for many communities.

Historical Context and Current Challenges

Myanmar has a long history of both natural and human-caused disasters, including cyclones, floods, droughts, heatwaves, and rising sea levels. Recent years have seen changes in rainfall patterns, increased deforestation, and more extreme weather events. These intensifying disasters have had a severe impact on the country's economy, environment, and people. For example, Cyclone Nargis in May 2008 caused extensive loss of life and economic damage, while recent events like the 2015 floods and Cyclone Mocha in May 2023 have further devastated Myanmar. Climate change threatens to worsen the frequency and severity of these events, making it increasingly challenging for Myanmar to manage and recover from its impacts.

Farmers Struggle Amid Severe Flooding in Delta Region

Farmers in Ayeyarwady Region are facing severe challenges due to massive flooding. The torrential rains have inundated extensive areas, resulting in significant losses for the farming community. Kyaw Soe, a farmer from Ingapu Township, reported that around 80 villages and 5,000 acres of paddy fields were flooded, leading to severe losses. "Farmers lost about a third of their fields. The impact is especially harsh for those who can't afford fertilizers and seedlings, forcing them to seek loans," Kyaw said.



*Photo caption: Schools in the informal settlements of South Dagon Township, Yangon, have been submerged by floodwaters.
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Impact on Yangon's Informal Settlements

According to data collected by UN-Habitat and MRCS, severe flooding has significantly impacted informal settlements in Dagon Seikkan, South Dagon, and Thanlyin Townships, affecting around 2,273 households. The situation has been exacerbated by high floodwaters from the Bago River and continuous heavy rainfall.

Affected Areas Include:

- **Dagon Seikkan Township:** Ward 93, Ward 87, Ward 88, Ward 168, Ward 58, Ward 67
- **South Dagon Township:** Ward 140, Ward 54, Ward 72, Lay Daunk Kan Ward, Ward 104, Ward 142, Ward 143
- **Thanlyin Township:** Myo Haung East Ward

Rising Floodwaters and Urgent Relief Efforts

"Water levels have risen above the danger mark in ten towns across Myanmar, with the Bago River exceeding this level by about four feet," according to the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH). The situation remains precarious, with minimal chance of water levels receding soon. Rivers such as the Ayeyawady, Bago, Sittaung, Ngawun, Bilin, Shwegyin, and Toe are experiencing rising water levels.

Floodwaters, reaching about 4 feet in height, have forced many residents to build temporary bamboo attics or seek refuge in local monasteries where space is limited. Some families have relocated to religious sites or relatives' homes. Health issues, including diarrhea, have increased. The closure of the Bago River's water gate has worsened the situation, preventing additional river water from entering the area and disrupting livelihoods, especially for those dependent on casual work.

Moving Forward

The severe flooding in Myanmar and the situation in Yangon's informal settlements highlight the urgent need to address the impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities, emphasizing the immediate requirement for both emergency relief and long-term resilience strategies. Investing in infrastructure, supporting community adaptation, and taking comprehensive climate action are essential for building resilience and reducing future risks. This crisis also highlights the global challenge of climate change, underscoring the need for cooperative efforts to effectively address and reduce its impact.

UN-Habitat's Myanmar Climate Change Alliance (MCCA2) Programme

UN-Habitat is dedicated to supporting local communities in Myanmar through the Myanmar Climate Change Alliance Phase 2 (MCCA2) Programme, which is funded by the European Union. MCCA2 aims to provide essential information and technical support to help communities become more resilient and promote sustainable development.

The programme provides technical assistance to communities in key areas: enhancing climate resilience planning, integrating climate change into local development plans, and developing and implementing climate actions. MCCA2 focuses on:

- **Building Resilience:** Strengthening community resilience, with particular emphasis on empowering women and youth.
- **Climate Sector Dialogue:** Facilitating knowledge sharing, raising awareness about climate issues, and improving communication among stakeholders.

For more information, please visit: www.myanmar-can.com

Sources: UN-Habitat Myanmar, MRCS, ElevenMyanmar.com

<https://elevenmyanmar.com/news/severe-flooding-hits-ten-towns-rivers-surpass-danger-levels-schools-closed-residents-relocated>

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