

## Office of the UN Resident Coordinator Flash Update No. 1 Bangladesh | Mudslides in Chittagong, Rangamati and Bandarban

**June 14, 2017:** Deadly mudslides triggered by torrential monsoon rains yesterday in southeastern Bangladesh are estimated to have so far claimed 135 lives. This disaster occurred just two weeks after Cyclone Mora killed 9 people and caused significant damage across the region. In addition to mudslides, the rains caused severe flooding in low-lying areas, causing significant damage to road and communication infrastructure. Remote communities in Bandarban, Chittagong and Rangamati districts have been cut off and remain without water, electricity, and food supplies. Communities of Rohingya refugees in Bandarban district may also have been affected. Further mudslides are feared today due to continued rainfall.

Initial reports suggest that these mudslides have been the most lethal in Bangladesh's recent history. The total estimated death toll currently stands at 98 from Rangamati district, 30 from Chittagong district and 7 from Bandarban district. Many others are injured and in need of medical assistance.

Thousands of Bangladeshi troops are stationed in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) to promote security after two decades of conflict. At least 4 army personnel were killed when a second mudslide struck during a rescue operation. One soldier is still missing. Several others were injured in different incidents including 5 critically injured who were airlifted to the Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka by a helicopter. The Bangladesh Army is now clearing roads and conducting rescue operations with the help of local police, fire and medical services. 18 emergency shelter centers have been opened to accommodate over 4,500 displaced people. Emergency relief, including 500 tons of rice and \$15,000 cash, has been approved by the government and is being sent to the affected areas. The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society has mobilized its district branches and is also closely monitoring the situation. 60 Red Crescent youth volunteers and 7 officers are working in the region to assist search and rescue, first-aid, and evacuation efforts.

Road transportation to the affected districts has been suspended. Bandarban district has been reported to have suffered significant damage to all roads to adjacent districts, and many communities remain isolated. Most low-lying areas have been flooded and remain submerged.

Both natural erosion and heavy rains have been known to trigger mudslides in the affected districts. Human intervention, including deforestation and the flattening of hillsides for construction, may have contributed to making the region more vulnerable to mudslides. Humanitarian partners with a presence in the area are trying to assess the situation despite communication and logistical challenges. Liaison with national authorities is on-going to evaluate the need for a possible response by the humanitarian community that would complement efforts undertaken by national authorities.

UN agencies present in the CHT area are currently assessing the situation and preparing for a response.

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