

Highlights

- Extremely Severe Cyclone Mocha crossed the coast between Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh and Kyaukpyu township in Myanmar at lunchtime on 14 May (local time) packing winds estimated at around 250 kmph, making it one of the strongest cyclones on record in the country.
- Heavy rains, storm surge and strong winds have been recorded across the affected areas throughout the day with flooding in low-lying areas of Rakhine, particularly in and around the state capital, Sittwe.
- Thousands of people spent the day sheltering in evacuation centres and in relatives' houses inland from the coast, where they will remain tonight until the winds subside.
- The ongoing wild weather in Rakhine and telecommunications interruptions mean it has not yet been possible to assess the full magnitude of the disaster, but early reports suggest the damage is extensive and needs among already vulnerable communities, particularly displaced people, will be high.
- The UN and its humanitarian partners have spent the week preparing for the cyclone's arrival and have been pre-positioning stocks and personnel ready to assess and respond to needs as soon as it is safe to do so. With the cyclone now losing intensity and moving inland, humanitarian teams plan to begin this work tomorrow.
- An urgent injection of funds is desperately needed to facilitate a full-scale response to the impacts of the cyclone and subsequent flooding. To date, the [US\\$764M Humanitarian Response Plan](#) is only 10 per cent funded.

Situation Overview

Extremely Severe Cyclone Mocha made landfall at 1230hrs on 14 May, crossing the coast between Kyaukpyu township (close to Sittwe) in Myanmar and Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh with stronger than expected winds.¹ The cyclone approached the coast with maximum sustained wind speeds of roughly 250 kmph, according to the Joint Typhoon Warning Center (JTWC). Storm surge estimated at 3-3.5 meters has inundated low lying areas in Rakhine and the adjoining southeast Bangladesh coast this afternoon, with significant water entering Sittwe around 1400hrs, flooding many parts of the town.

Extremely strong winds have knocked down power lines, uprooted trees, and damaged and destroyed houses. Communications with the affected areas are currently limited after extensive damage to telecommunications towers during the cyclone. Partners are reporting slow or non-existent internet, with zero connectivity in some areas which is hampering the collection of information on impacts tonight. Early reports indicate significant damage to houses and other infrastructure in Sittwe and Gwa townships, including roofs being torn off homes. Local media reported people unable to leave their homes in Sittwe due to the storm surge and rising water. Evacuations of displacement camps and residential areas in low-lying took place prior to the cyclone's arrival but it is not clear if everyone in the path of the cyclone was able to reach these sites and at least some of these evacuation centres were damaged by the strong winds at the peak of the cyclone.

¹ Cyclone Mocha was recorded as having winds of 250kmph when it was 40 km from Sittwe at 12:30PM local time. Source: JTWC Satellite Imagery.



*Destroyed house in Gwa township.
Source: Twitter*



Destroyed telecommunications tower in Sittwe township. Source: Twitter



Storm Surge in Sittwe township. Source: Twitter

There is no confirmation yet of damage levels in the northern townships of Maungdaw and Buthidaung where more than half of the shelters are either temporary or semi-permanent, placing households at very high risk in case they were not able to reach evacuation centres. No confirmed reports have yet been received of significant damage in Ayeyarwady.

The weather system is weakening as it continues to move towards the country's Northwest. It will weaken into a depression by 15 May over Sagaing before moving towards Kachin. Heavy rainfall and winds are expected over the coming days as it moves across the country through areas that are highly prone to flooding and/or landslides.



Evacuation shelter in Ah Loe Taw Pyae Monastery in Sittwe, Rakhine Source: OCHA

Coordination

The humanitarian community has been preparing for a scaled-up response to needs as soon as the cyclone has passed. The Humanitarian Emergency Response Preparedness Plan was activated a week ago and stocks and personnel have been pre-positioned to areas most likely to be affected over the past few days.

National and sub-national inter-cluster coordination meetings are taking place on 15 May to activate the response. OCHA and its humanitarian partners aim to begin rapid needs assessments (RNAs) in the field as early as 15 May to confirm the initial impact of the cyclone and the immediate humanitarian needs there. Access requests for assessments have been pre-submitted and hundreds of trained partners are standing by, ready to deploy across the affected areas.

Funding is critically needed to sustain the response across all clusters for cyclone Mocha. The 2023 HRP is less than 10 per cent funded and a significant injection of resources is urgently required to support a disaster response operation of this scale. Health, shelter, relief items and water, sanitation and hygiene support are likely to be most in demand after a disaster of this nature and humanitarians are working to quickly mobilize funds for these sectors as an immediate priority.

Read the UN's press release on Cyclone Mocha preparations and funding needs [here](#).

Information in this update is based on inputs from humanitarian partners and meteorological organizations. The next update on the cyclone will be issued on 15 May.

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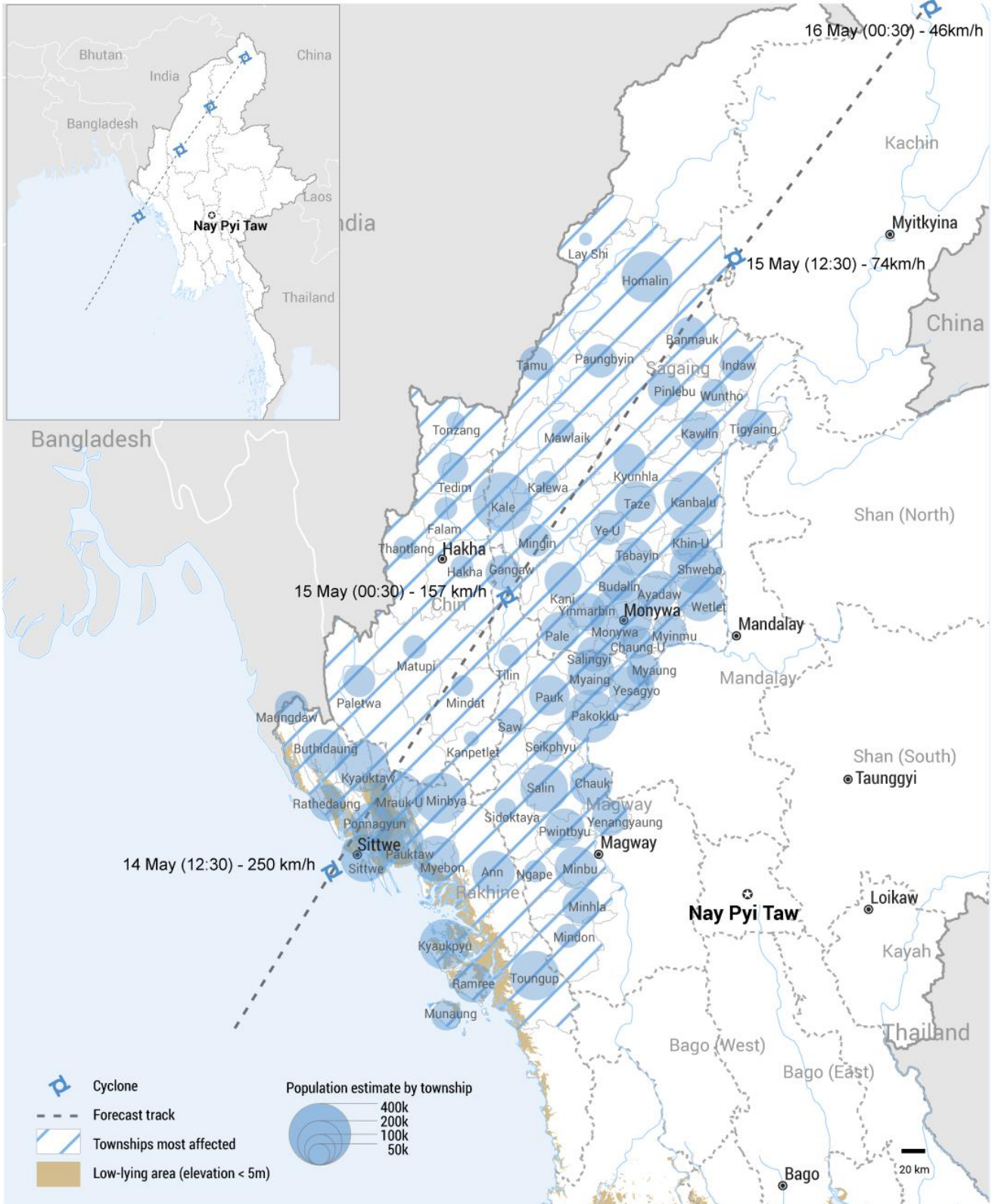
For more information, please visit www.unocha.org | <https://reliefweb.int/country/mmr> | <https://www.facebook.com/OCHAMyanmar>



MYANMAR

Cyclone Mocha

As of 14 May 2023



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