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| **Cyclone Nargis** |
| **Storm development and background**  **Cycone Nargis struck in May 2008 and caused huge devastation in the military dictatorship of Myanmar (formerly known as Burma). The tropical system developed from a low pressure system in the Bay of Bengal during the last week of April. Early on 27 April, The India Meteorological Department (IMD) declared the system had strengthened to a tropical depression on the 27th of April, about 748 km (465 mi) east-southeast of Madras, India. The depression slowly moved north-northwest at about 11 km/h (7 mph) as convective banding around its center increased. On 28 April, the system was centered 547 kilometers (340 miles) east of Madras and the IMD upgraded the storm to a cyclone, Nargis. This is the equivalent of a Category 1 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. By the morning of 29 April, the cyclone had winds of 161 km/h (100 mph), making it equivalent to a Category 2 hurricane or a very severe cyclonic storm, as regarded by the IMD. It then decreased in strength, only to rapidly intensify on May the 1st and track eastward, returning to cyclone status. By 2 May, the cyclone reached its peak status with winds of 217 km/h (135 mph) (equivalent to a Category 4 hurricane). Cyclone Nargis made landfall in southwest Myanmar on 2 May, near the town of Wagon in the Ayeyarwady Division. The storm moved inland, but remained along the coast of the Irrawaddy Delta, which prevented the rapid weakening traditionally exhibited by cyclones as they moved over land, this didn’t happen until the 3rd of May.**  **Impacts**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Economic Impacts** | **Environmental Impacts** | **Social Impacts** | | **$10 billion worth of damage**  **Majority of the population worked on the flooded rice fields therefore they lost their harvest and income**  **75% of buildings collapsed but on the delta 95% collapsed**  **1,163 temples were destroyed** | **Rice fields were flooded on the Irrawaddy Delta**  **The 2008 and 2009 harvests of rice were destroyed - The UN’s Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) estimated that Nargis impacted 65% of the country's paddies.**  **Strong winds up to 135mph**  **• Storm surge of 7.6m**  **• Heavy rainfall**  **Floodwaters penetrated an estimated 40-50 km (24-31 mi) inland from the coast. Farmland, livestock, and fisheries were all destroyed.** | **There was a lack of food, water for survivors**  **Many children were orphaned**  **Diseases spread with many survivors dying from disease**  **50,000 people are still missing**  **A death toil of at least 138 000 people has been quoted, but estimates vary widely, it is thought that 80,000 people could have died in the town of Labutta alone, making the 84,000people death toll seem unrealistic**  **It is estimated that at least 2.4 million people were severely affected by this cyclone. Structural damage throughout Myanmar was extensive, causing over a million to become homeless after the event.** |   **Responses**  **Initially the response of the Military government was appalling. The military Junta did not want foreign people coming into the country and destabilising their political oppression, so they refused aid despite the scale of the disaster. A full 6 days after the storm made landfall and with the government woefully underprepared and unable to cope, the Myanmar government representation from the United States formally asked the United Nations (UN) for help.**  **Even then, the Myanmar government did not endorse international aid and placed harsh restrictions on even the most basic forms of assistance. It was not until 9 May, a full week after the cyclone made landfall, that the Junta finally gave into international pressure to accept outside aid. However, this aid was limited to food, medicine and basic supplies, and foreign aid workers remained banned from the country.**  **Finally, on 19 May, Myanmar granted members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations admittance into the country to deliver aid. After negotiations between Ban and the Myanmar head of state, Than Shwe, it was declared on 23 May that other international aid workers would be let into the country - a full 3 weeks after the cyclone struck.**  **Responses were largely from international organisation and through international aid.**  **• Italian flights were allowed to enter on 7th May to bring food supplies.**  **• Bangladesh – emergency aid and aid workers used to dealing with cyclones.**  **• Indian navy and air force supplied 140 tonnes of tents, blankets and medicines. On 8th May they also sent 50 medical personnel and set up 2 mini hospitals.**  **• Thailand sent US$100,000 in supplies including thirty tonnes of medical supplies and twelve tonnes of food supplies from Thai Red Cross.**  **• The United Kingdom gave ₤17 million of aid (approx US$33.5 million) and sent an international relief team to help with the co-ordination of the international relief effort.**  **• The United States donated US$41,169,769 to the relief effort, including help from the American Red Cross.** |
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