

# Press Release

**Humanity First Canada**

Thursday, May 8, 2008



## **HUMANITY FIRST APPEALS FOR BURMA CYCLONE RELIEF FUND**

Humanity First has launched an urgent appeal for Burma Cyclone 'Nargis' Relief Fund to provide Humanitarian assistance to the victims hit by the cyclone. When this disastrous, category III cyclone, set down with 120 mile-per-hour winds on Saturday, it ripped apart cities, shantytowns, and villages throughout the Burmese nation of 56 million, leaving a path of destruction and hundreds of thousands homeless. It arced from the Irrawaddy delta in the southwest, to Rangoon (Yangon), the former capital, farther north. The city was reduced to a chaotic standstill by Monday, with no electricity and long lines for water. The official figures put the death toll at 22,500, with a further 41,000 missing.

In many villages, reports suggest that 30% of the population have perished and many more are injured. Over a million people are now believed to be homeless, many of them young children. They lack shelter, medication, food and clean water, and require urgent assistance. The Burmese authorities have declared five regions Yangon, Bago, Kavin, Ayeyarvady and Mon as disaster areas.

Humanity First is investigating the best method of getting aid to the desperate people as quickly as possible and it aims to provide food, clean water and basic rations to the dislocated people, especially children who would be more susceptible to water borne diseases, as reports have already confirmed that 40% of the Burma dead are children. Food shortages and contaminated water can lead to widespread problems if people remain stranded. Humanity First has mobilized its teams to respond to requests for help in the severely affected towns and villages. Funds are required urgently to accelerate the distribution of essential supplies.

Time is of the essence for bringing in vital supplies, including food and water-purification tablets, if a worse humanitarian crisis and higher death toll are to be avoided. Thousands of people are getting sick and many places are under salt water, and there is nothing to drink. The victims are in urgent need of food, fresh water and medical supplies that are running low. There is a danger of spread of water borne diseases due to contaminated water.

Humanity First is seeking your generous contributions to continue with its relief efforts. Donations towards the "**Burma Cyclone Relief Fund**" can be made online at [www.humanityfirst.ca](http://www.humanityfirst.ca) or through cheques written to Humanity First – Burma Cyclone Relief Fund, 245 Bowes Road, Concord, ON, L4K 1H8.

### **Notes to Editors:**

Humanity First is an International Non-Profit Charitable Organization established to promote and safeguard the preservation of human life and dignity.

Humanity First is a non-political, non-sectarian international relief and development agency that works with communities around the globe to improve the quality of life for some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people. Humanity First has been granted a special consultative status with the United Nation's Economic and Social Council ([ECOSOC](http://www.un.org/ecosoc)). For further information please visit our website <http://www.humanityfirst.ca>

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