

# Cyclone Giri

**More than 175,000 people have been affected by Cyclone Giri in western Burma, and no less than 70,795 people have been made homeless** by the killer storm, according to a report by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.



The report said that severe damage had been caused to infrastructure, but that major loss of life was avoided because of an early warning and evacuation plan. Communications with affected areas remained difficult, said the report.

Sources in Arakan State told *The Irrawaddy* that many of those whose houses were destroyed by winds of over 100 mph are currently being sheltered in local schools. They said that some have been provided with humanitarian aid by local communities, but are yet to receive aid from government and nongovernmental organizations.

“There are so many refugees and they have not yet received any aid,” said one source who had visited the cyclone-hit areas. “The only aid packages of rice they have received were from local residents and monks.

“Local residents help by collecting money and aid supplies to give to the refugees,” she said. “Some NGOs have just arrived in Kyaukpyu Town.

More shelters will need to be opened for refugees as there is insufficient space in the schools.”

**More than 1,200 houses were destroyed and 6,000 people were made homeless** in Kyaukpyu in western Arakan State alone, according to local residents.



Burmese state-run media said **at least 27 people have died and 15 were missing** in badly hit Myebon Township, while five died in the town of Minbyar. However, local residents told *The Irrawaddy* that the death toll will likely be much higher.

The cyclone destroyed schools, government building, infrastructure and houses. Landslides have caused trees and electricity poles to collapse, cutting communications in several areas.

Meanwhile, Burma's state-run media have reported that several government officials, including Minister for Transport Thein Swe, Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Maung Maung Swe, and Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Phone Swe visited cyclone refugees in Myebon Township on Monday.

The report said that officials provided aid which included bags of rice, edible oil, blankets, clothes, drinking water, medicines, household utensils, tarpaulin sheets and personal goods to the cyclone victims.

Meanwhile, Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma) said it is concerned about the lack of health care available to political prisoners in Sittwe and Buthidaung Townships in Arakan State, including prominent activist Htay Kywe of the 88 Generation Students group.