



International Organization for Migration (IOM)

SRI LANKA FLOODS

SITUATION REPORT: 22 MAY 2016

Background

Recent torrential rains in Sri Lanka have resulted in severe flooding and landslides in many parts of the country. According to the government's Disaster Management Center, as of today over 288,768 people are affected by floods and landslides with 92 reported deaths. Approximately 185,933 people are located at 295 safe locations. About 506 houses are reported to be fully damaged and 3995 houses partially damaged by floods and landslides with numbers expected to increase.

IOM Sri Lanka conducted an assessment of two districts in the Western Province on 22 May 2016. A team of four IOM staffs visited Kolonnawa DS Division in Colombo District and Biyagama DS Division in Gampaha District. During the assessment, IOM was able to meet with government officials including the Government Agents (GA) in both districts, the National Disaster Relief Services Center (NDRSC) representative, the NGO coordinator for Gampaha, and the Grama Niladari (GN) in both Districts. IOM was also able to visit designated safe locations situated in local schools, community centers, and religious buildings.

- Colombo District: Houses Completely Damaged – 21, Houses Partially Damaged – 74, Deaths – 6
- Gampaha District: Houses Completely Damaged – 11, Houses Partially Damaged – 43, Deaths – 8

As of today, there are 62 safe locations with 16,325 families in Gampaha and 65 safe locations camps with 28,907 families in Colombo.



IOM staff at the DS office in Biyagama.

Findings

- Through the government and neighbouring community support, cooked meals and water are being provided without an issue. Stocks of bottled water are available for the next few days.
- Health camps have been set up by the government with available doctors with a special focus on small children and pregnant mothers.
- The military plays its role in Colombo District especially in regard to search, rescue and evacuation operations.
- Government deployed machinery to clear drain blockages allowing flood water to drain.



Designated safe location in Biyagama.

- Schools, community centers, and religious buildings are being used as evacuation centers to shelter displaced families. A number of families are staying in nearby relatives homes.
- Evacuation centers have not been partitioned. Families are free to move and an ID-card access system is said to be introduced soon in Colombo District.
- A number of local NGOs are on the ground as well as Red Cross volunteers to support the ongoing efforts of the government.
- The main roads along the Kelani River are under water but the water level has been decreasing daily. The water level reduced from 6.5 feet yesterday to 5.8 feet today and is expected to reduce to 4 feet in the next two days which will allow people to go back to their original locations.
- In Gampaha, people are returning to their homes and the numbers in safe locations are reducing with the evaporating water levels.
- Important to recognize that a small number of those affected, in Colombo, will not be able to return to their homes and permanent relocation options are immediately needed.
- Some welfare centers are heavily congested and sanitation and hygiene are becoming an issue, especially for women.
- The government has supplied the evacuation centers with mobile toilet facilities; however these appear to not be enough as seen in Wellampiitya.
- Ministry of Health medical officers will soon begin conducting disease control testing in Gampaha.
- Overall IOM team felt that the current data from DMC are reliable and are a reflection of the situation on the ground but are expected to change once registration and damage assessment will be completed.

Needs to be addressed

- In all affected areas in the two districts, electricity and water are completely disconnected.
- Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) needs at the camps need to be immediately addressed as the schools and religious building they are located in are not prepared to accommodate such disasters.
- Kitchen utensils and cleaning supplies are immediate needs upon return to homes for families to be able to clean their houses and cook.
- Emergency shelters are needed for those with houses completely destroyed. Emergency shelter kits are needed for those with houses partially destroyed.
- People are in need of sleeping mats, purification tablets, tarpaulin sheets and other non-food items (NFIs).
- Mainly in Gampaha District, people need to clean water sources in order to have water for use and consumption.
- Environmental clean-up or debris management is needed urgently.