Cyclone REMAL
SITREP # 01
West Bengal, India
13:30 hrs IST, 27.05.2024

Highlights:
The cyclone is ongoing and there are heavy rains and strong winds in the impacted districts.

2 lives lost (Including one child).

103 EDD mothers moved to safe spaces and 09 delivered amidst the cyclone.

100,000 people have been evacuated.

23,267,617 people have faced the impact which includes 7,335,642 children.

South 24 Parganas and North 24 Parganas districts are severely impacted with high rainfall combined with high tide and storm surge, whereas East Midnapore, Howrah, Hooghly and Kolkata are facing heavy rainfall of about 200mm in the last 12 hours.

14 teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) have been deployed in the districts of North 24 Parganas (2), South 24 Parganas (03), East Midnapore (02), West Midnapore (02), Kolkata (01), Howrah (01), Hooghly (01), Murshidabad (01), Nadia (01).

Following continuous early warnings over the past four days by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), Government of India, Cyclone Remal (pronounced as Re-mal), made landfall in the south of West Bengal, between Sagar Island, India, and Khepupara in Bangladesh. The early warnings led to timely action by local government and communities, National Disaster Response Force, Civil Society Organisations, and other stakeholders.

- 100,000 most vulnerable out of 23 million people from South 24 Parganas and North 24 Parganas districts that were at high risk were evacuated to safe places such as cyclone shelters.
- Storm surge is coupled with high tide which has prolonged inundation of coastal and low-lying areas.
- More than 27 blocks are on red alert and are facing a storm surge with a sea-water inundation of about 1 meter. About 15 blocks panchayats have had a sea water inundation of about 0.25 to 0.50 meters (source: IMD)
- Storm surge was also coupled with high tide, led to saline water inundation, which is expected to last for many weeks.
- Ground water sources of drinking water have been salinized; UNICEF is supporting the process of identifying the location of damaged water sources.
- UNICEF is continuously coordinating with state government counter parts to address Child Protection, WASH, Nutrition, Public Health, Education, communication, and social protection needs of impacted children and families.
- UNICEF has kept 8 water treatment plants on standby for deployment and have been offered to the government.
- UNICEF has activated the Inter Agency Coordination Group (IAG) and two preparatory meetings between 60 plus agencies has helped IAG partners and NGOs to support the evacuated families with basic food supply at the shelters.
- IAG partners and NGOs have started supporting the government with basic food supply at the shelters.
- IAG and CSOs are preparing to carry out a Joint Rapid Needs Assessment
- Roads are being cleared, electricity supply and communication lines are being restored.
- Some saline embankments were damaged, and locals have initiated repairs.
- Initial information suggests the worst impacted districts are South 24 Parganas (population: 10,009,781 including 2,830,290 children), North 24 Parganas (population: 8,161,961 including 2,837,135 children), followed by East Midnapore (population: 5,095,875 including 1,668,217 children)
Districts impacted with heavy rains and storm surge from the sea.

Block Level impact of sea water inundation and wind hazard in the south of West Bengal.
Latest status of the Cyclone Remal

Preparedness and early response

- Based on the warning received from Indian Meteorological Department, UNICEF called for a meeting of the Inter Agency coordination Group (IAG) on the 25th and 26th May, convening 30 and 65 participants
respectively. The district control rooms, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), district and state level amateur communication radio clubs, INGOs and CSOs have been a part of these meetings.

- UNICEF has taken the following actions:
  - **WASH**: UNICEF is in discussion with the government for any support for restoration of drinking water and sanitation services. Have offered deployment of the available drinking water purification kits in 2 to 3 days. The Public Health and Engineering Department has also set up a command-and-control centre for any kind of rapid support on the affected blocks.
  - **Health**: In an ongoing workshop the UNICEF Health facilitated an emergency response scenario planning on the 25th May 2024 for the Cyclone Remal, and a robust emergency plan which was executed. The plan included: shifting of pregnant mothers close to their expected delivery dates (from birth waiting huts and homes) to safe district hospitals; pre-positioning of ORS, Zinc and chlorine tablets at the block level facilities and multipurpose cyclone shelters.
  - **Child Protection**: UNICEF is coordinating with the government and partners on the ground. So far, no concern is reported. However, based on preliminary damage assessment, vulnerable situations may arise to those who lived in houses with tin/thatched roof or mud houses. CSO partners and government are keeping a close watch on the situation.
  - **Education**: Schools are closed for summer vacation. Based on UNICEF’s advice the district education officers, and district inspectors have been directed to carry out a damage assessment of the schools. The department has opened the schools for use as shelters wherever required.
  - **Nutrition**: UNICEF is coordinating with the Government for preparedness actions and based on their request UNICEF has provided a list of sectoral Do’s and Don’ts which have been communicated by the department to the local Anganwadi workers vide a Video conference. The intervention was as follows:
    1. Identify an alternate place for AWCs if building is not safe or likelihood of being damaged.
    2. Shifting of foodstuff, weighing scales, registers, medicine kit, PSE kits and other items to safe place
    3. Ensure medicine kits are available and filled with ORS and Zinc, first aid items.
    4. Make and keep list of children severely malnourished or SAM ready for follow up and providing any service.
    5. Make and keep list of pregnant women close to delivery for extending support and referral.
    6. Keep list of all pregnant women in third trimester for follow up.
    7. Separate list of women and child just delivered and follow physically or telephonically.
    8. Quick Orientation of Angan Wadi workers (AWWs) for immediate actions for response:
       1. Damage assessment report
       2. Follow up newborns, pregnant women, and children with SAM / SM
       3. Reinstate AWC services specially SNP.
       4. Reinstate weighing and counselling so malnutrition does not increase.
       5. Ensure breastfeeding continues and children below two years are not provided with formula milk.
       6. Attend to women and children in shelters.
       7. Maintain record and track if all beneficiaries are safe.

*Based on the communication from the department of women and child development, the above advisory was being implemented in the blocks which had warning for the cyclone.*
**SBC and CAP**: A media communication plan was put in place. Along with this, resource material for Child Friendly Spaces has been identified.

**Leadership and Coordination**

- UNICEF CFO is in touch with all Head of the Departments of the state government concerned with UNICEF linked sectors.
- UNICEF is leading the IAG coordination along with CASA, the secretariat of IAG coordination with 60 plus local CSOs.
- UNICEF supporting connecting local volunteers of various CSOs and the NDRF who are leading the search and rescue operations.
- The list of volunteers to carry out the joint rapid needs assessment is made in cooperation with the IAG.
- The volunteers have been identified and briefed to conduct Joint Rapid Needs Assessment (JRNA).
- UNICEF has requested the IAG to set up Child Friendly Spaces in schools and shelters where the evacuated population is housed.

**Government Response**

The Government has set up command centres at state, district, and block levels.

14 teams of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) have been deployed across the impacted areas since 25th May 2024. The teams have started clearing roads and assisted in evacuation of nearly 100,000 people.

All the welfare and development sectors have initiated a damage assessment for calculating the damages and losses.

**For more information please contact:**

**Who to contact for further information:**

- Prabhat Kumar
  - Chief of Field Office a.i
  - UNICEF Office for West Bengal
  - Kolkata, West Bengal, India
  - Tel: +917596065724
  - Email: prkumar@unicef.org

- Suchorita Bardhan
  - CAP Specialist
  - UNICEF Office for West Bengal
  - Kolkata, West Bengal, India
  - Tel: +919001799352
  - Email: sbardhan@unicef.org

- Omkar Khare,
  - Programme Officer, DRR
  - UNICEF Office for West Bengal,
  - Kolkata, West Bengal, India
  - Tel: 919004709333
  - Email: okhare@unicef.org