

Caritas response in Myanmar supports thousands of households in need.

Search and rescue efforts continue in Myanmar following an earthquake on Friday the 28th of March. Over 3,000 people have lost their lives, with the death toll expected to rise as more of the rubble is cleared. Concerns are growing about the impact of the looming monsoon season on the already catastrophic conditions.

Humanitarian operations remain challenging due to a lack of access, limited fuel, and interruptions to banking services. In the hardest hit areas communities are struggling to meet basic needs, such as access to clean water and sanitation. With essential services disrupted, thousands of people are in urgent need of shelter, health care and essential household items.

Caritas partners in the region have existing relationships in some of the most remote areas through churches, pagodas, and monasteries. In 2024 their humanitarian operations covered 16 Diocese, reaching 5,253 villages and camps, comprised of 219,000 households and over one million people – this makes up 35 percent of the UN impact target for Myanmar.

As a result, in the early days of the disaster these partners have been able to provide the following:

- Shelter kits for 150 households
- Drinking water and emergency food rations for 250 households
- Fortified biscuits for 2,189 households, in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP)
- Blankets, kitchen sets, mosquito nets and tarps for 1,000 households, in partnership with The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)

Joseph Kodamanchaly works across Caritas Australia's Asia-Pacific partnerships. He lived in Myanmar for 13 years and said of the current crisis "The people of Myanmar are very resilient. They have suffered floods, food insecurity and inflation. It seems like every year there is a major event, with successive crises like these bound to break people to some extent.

The scale of the need now is astronomical, especially in some of the most remote places, many of which were hard to contact even before the earthquake. Fortunately, our partners have the networks, access, and trusted relationships with local authorities required to procure and distribute lifesaving necessities in remote areas.

This means all is not lost in Myanmar, but its people – who for many years ranked as some of the world's most generous – are certainly in dire need of our support."

To support Caritas Australia's Myanmar Earthquake Appeal, visit www.caritas.org.au/myanmar or call 1800 024 413 toll free.

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