

**From:** [WarringLtd@aol.com](mailto:WarringLtd@aol.com)

**Date:** June 2, 2008 7:44:39 PM PDT

**Subject:** Myanmar Update

The last six days in Yangon were surreal, in juxtaposing what you read in the western press with what in reality transpires here. Hopes soared here last Friday, May 23, following UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon's personal meeting with the ranking general, when Mr. Ban reported to the global press that all foreign-aid materials and crisis experts from all nations would be admitted directly to the cyclone zone without restrictions. This is still being put out to the press as of today, but accompanied by "creeping equivocations."

But that's not what has happened, and morale continues to deflate here.

On the surface, normalcy is gradually returning to the Yangon capital, with more electricity, more streets and restaurants reopened, etc. The government continues assuring that they're opening wide the doors to qualified foreign assistance. The fact is that 36 or more entry visas were "showily" issued in the last 48 hours.

But in the delta disaster area, here's what I learn from my now multiple Yangon sources, including a couple of key U.N. career executive and NGO counterparts whom, obviously, I must not name.

1. Aid-workers from NGO's, and the U.N. and foreign governments continue to be held off, mostly at the main staging point in Bangkok, or at their Yangon hotels if they got in, still denied the promised access to the disaster zone.
2. Large transport plans bearing many tons of relief supplies are, indeed, allowed to land at Yangon Airport, but, if offloaded, their contents are turned over to government troops, and donor representatives are not allowed to proceed further than Yangon itself.
3. We've learned that some foreign donors who were given initial access permits by the government in the brief euphoria of early last weekend did get down to the delta with their relief materiel while the heavily-armed checkpoint troops were temporarily re-deployed to Yangon to "protect" the U.N. donors' conference, leaving the delta-access checkpoints unmanned. However, when troops returned last Monday to the delta, all foreigners were then turned back. Furthermore, Burmese people in the area were told they would face severe criminal penalty if "caught" in the delta area with any foreigner!

The U.N. Burma nerve center was moved to my large lakeside hotel last weekend, and I've become close to several of their key players. Rotary is respected among this multi-national, ad hoc aid community, as is the esteemed local Myanmar charity with which Rotary has cooperated for the past three years in our continuing water project for children's orphanages. Even with the current trauma here, we are constructing two more of them for June 15 completion!

Not surprisingly, morale among those non-national institutions has plummeted in the last six days, as their leaders and staff absorb the realization that the

promises to Ban Ki-Moon last Friday seem largely illusory, and nothing has, or probably will, change as to allowing in expert foreign help on anything like the scale urgently needed. On a per country basis, the Burma cyclone disaster was far deadlier than the 2004 tsunami, which we also video-documented onsite for Rotary. The Burma government's own statistics acknowledge 80,000 known cyclone deaths, with 60,000 missing. Each day without massive multi-government and agency deployment of landing watercraft with helicopters means, at least, hundreds more persons, including very many children, are dying; unconscionably; unnecessarily.

Were I not on the ground here since May 12, and well-connected to key persons in the special aid community, I would not believe any of this, and I don't blame you if you don't. The cold pride and self-preoccupation of those in whose iron grip this nation is captive is such that they would permit the deaths in fear, thirst and starvation of tens of thousands of their most vulnerable citizens, rather than accept the embarrassment of having the world (and its media) see how ill-equipped they are to cope with the aftermath of any disaster.

**So, is there no hope or way to help these suffering people???**

Yes, yes, there is!!!

**Read closely; here's how to help:**

- Myanmar local citizens are still allowed virtually unrestricted access to the disaster zone, in many cases, with large trucks laden with relief supplies. Some of them are very capable, and well-connected with outside resources. At great sacrifices, these people are putting on hold their own businesses to save their fellow citizens now. We're bringing back photos they've shot as recently as this week.
- You and I must help them. Please review the absolutely trustworthy and effective avenues I've listed below to get financial and other aid to these private and effective aid servants now, today! Each day gained does save lives. All money (100%) goes directly, undiluted, to benefit those in direst need.
- Please "forward" this email in its entirety to everyone on your personal or Rotary email list. However, so that we will be allowed to continue our work here into the future, I ask that I not yet be quoted by name in the press. However, mention of my activities here will be all right.
- Reliable sources for immediate Burma relief aid through private local entities:
  - a. Rotary Myanmar Project c/o Maesai Rotary Club Separate Account, Bangkok Bank, Transfer to Account No. 398-0384253, Maesai Branch, bank swift code is BKKBTHBK. All Rotarians can securely transfer via this account. U.S. and Thai Rotarians will jointly allocate all disbursements.
  - b. Asia Heartbeat in Colorado Springs, P.O. Box 63720, Colorado Springs, CO 80962-3720, telephone (719) 332-8172. To Wells Fargo Bank, Account No. 6225216172; swift code is WFBIUS6S.

- c. Roman Catholic Missions to Myanmar, through Fr. Emile Louis-Tisserand, email [procupic@netvigator.com](mailto:procupic@netvigator.com), or Hong Kong telephone (852) 2849-8187 or 2849-8186.

I wish I had better news on the total circumstances here. But we can help and, by helping our friends identified above, we are helping drive a wedge of direct help to these many of our desperate Myanmar fellow humans.

Sincerely,

J.T. Warring  
05/30/08

P.S. Dear Friends – the above dispatch was completed last Friday, and vetted by absolutely trustworthy “on-ground” Burmese friends. Then, we tried deep into the night Friday, and all day Saturday to send it to my Yorba Linda secretary via two unconnected, secure sources, one of them satellite.

Each time it was blocked just before transmission was complete. We’ll leave you to your own conclusions. Today it was sent from Thailand, where I’ve just arrived.

My only new intelligence is the following:

1. Children and families standing beside the few roadways in the area in desperate need of food handed from passing cars and trucks have been forcibly herded away by government army troops. “Begging is unseemly and embarrassing to the image of the proud Myanmar nation.”
2. Families taking refuge in the few intact schools and monasteries were herded out and told to “go back to your villages and rebuild your own homes.” [With what?]
3. The government Saturday pronounced that “rescue operations are now complete. And now we return to rebuilding structure and infrastructure.” [Not even close.]
4. Although the cyclone was exactly 30 days ago, bodies of the dead are still visible in flooded rice paddies, channels and estuaries, attested to me by eyewitnesses from no more than 48 hours ago.
5. The Myanmar school year started today nationwide, except in the delta disaster area, where postponement for a month was announced at the weekend.

I wish I were making all this up, but frankly, I wouldn’t be capable. My best to you all. I’ll return to the US June 07.

J.T.  
06/02 8:30 p.m.