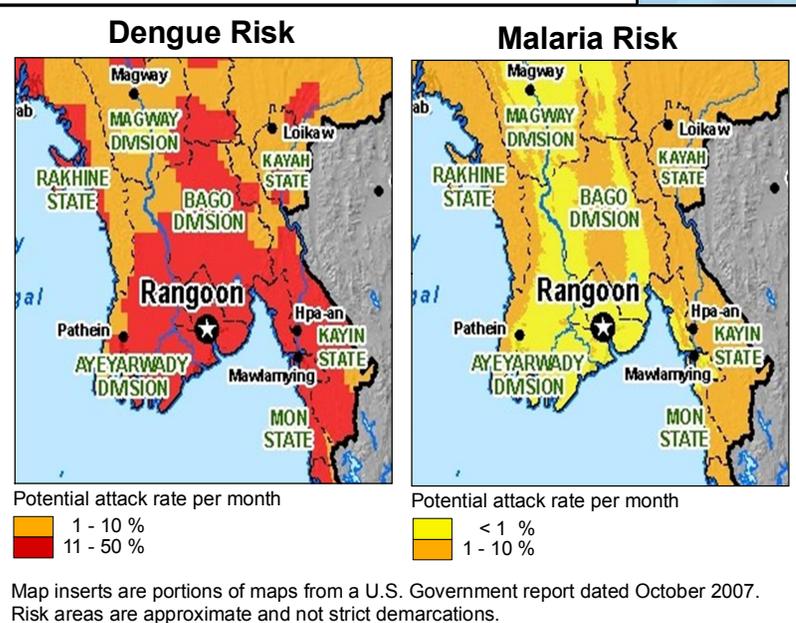
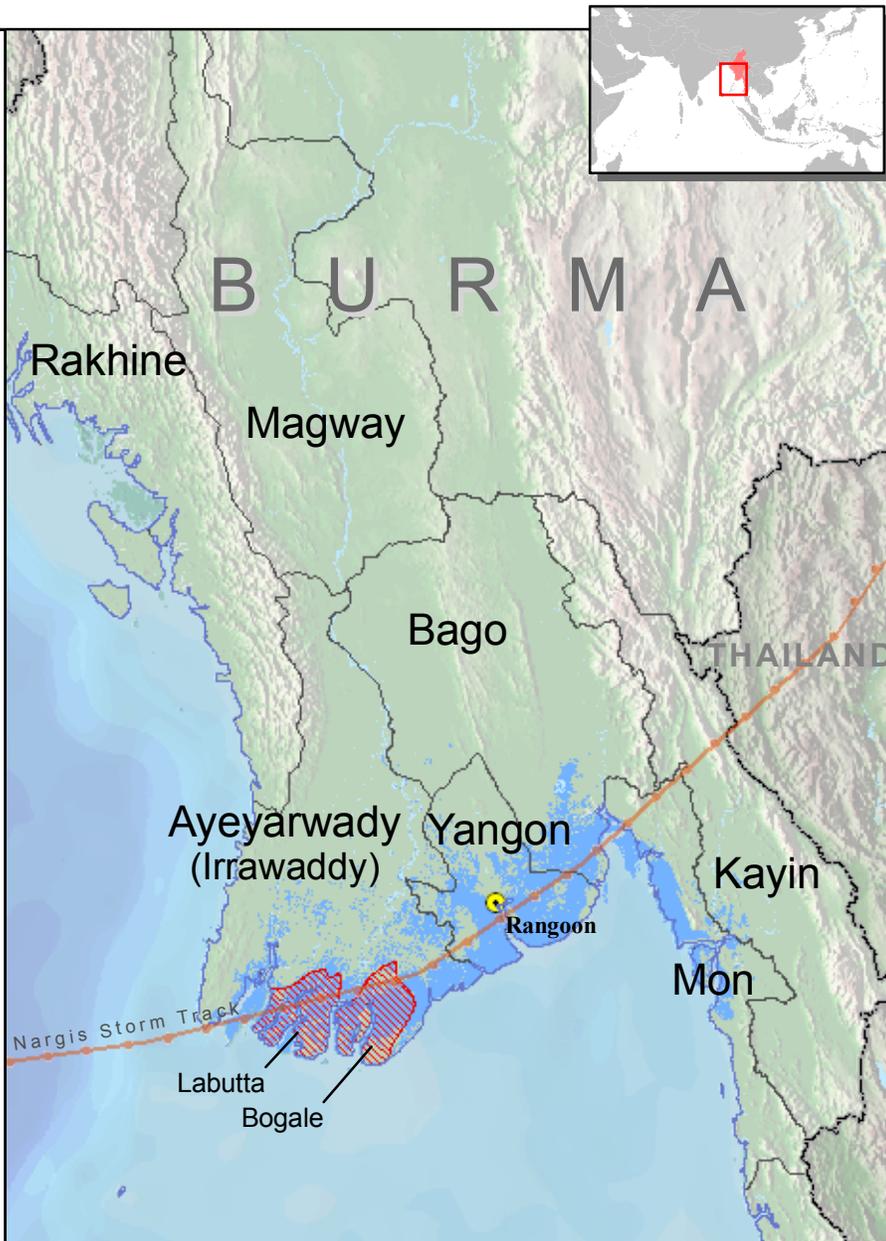


# Burma: Cyclone Nargis - Health Risks and Response

The World Health Organization (WHO) is leading a UN Health Cluster coordination cell with more than 20 NGOs participating. WHO Regional Surveillance Officers are currently active supporting local health officials in disease surveillance activities. An initial tranche of emergency health kits is being distributed in affected areas. Since dengue fever and malaria are endemic to the areas affected by Cyclone Nargis, the Health Cluster cell is dispatching fogging machines and bleaching powder to help prevent outbreaks of disease in the affected areas. Numerous international relief assistance teams are still awaiting visas and clearances.

The primary post-cyclone health threats to survivors include waterborne diarrheal diseases, vector borne diseases, and acute respiratory infections in crowded evacuation centers. Contaminated drinking water and food supplies, as well as poor sanitation, among the cyclone-displaced further increase the possibility of infectious diseases, including cholera. On May 16, WHO confirmed the first cases of cholera and has begun testing and treating suspected cases in Labuta and Bogale areas of the Irrawaddy delta, where cholera is endemic. According to the CDC, malaria risk is highest at altitudes below 3,000 feet (914.4 meters). Low-lying areas in the delta and rice cultivation areas are ideal breeding grounds for mosquitos. Cyclone generated floodwaters initially disrupted those breeding grounds and subsequently lowered the risk for mosquito borne diseases (malaria, dengue fever and Japanese encephalitis) but monitoring conditions in the coming weeks is important to determine whether outbreaks begin to occur as new breeding areas emerge.

Cyclone Nargis is the first big cyclone to hit Burma during the 2008 tropical storm season which continues through October. Other storms have formed and dissipated since Nargis hit, disrupting relief efforts and exacerbating the health risks.



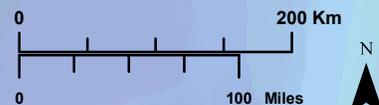
**Cholera**

Regions of Potential Cholera Outbreaks

Inundation Extents

International Boundary

Administrative Boundary



**HIU**  
HUMANITARIAN INFORMATION UNIT

U.S. Department of State  
hiu\_info@state.gov  
http://hiu.state.gov

Names and boundary representations are not necessarily authoritative.

Data sources: U.S. Government report May 8, 2008, CDC, World Health Organization (WHO) May 13, 2008, UN OCHA Situation Report No. 9 May 13, 2008, NOAA, NASA, USGS, Dartmouth Flood Observatory.