

## PROFNET EXPERT ALERTS: Myanmar Cyclone

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Following are experts who are available to discuss various aspects of the Myanmar crisis, including disaster response, international aid, human rights and public health issues:

1. DR. MAURICE A. RAMIREZ, founder of HIGH-ALERT, LLC, founding chair of the American Board of Disaster Medicine, and chair of the Disaster Medicine Task Force that authored AMA core competencies for board certification in disaster medicine, advocates a national "culture of preparedness" in every country, especially the United States: "The victims of Myanmar's cyclone are paying heavily for their government's choices -- their infrastructure is not only destroyed, but they lack fresh drinking water. According to a June 2006 report by the Institute of Medicine, national preparedness has fallen from the public forum, despite the natural disasters we are experiencing." News Contact: Russell Trahan, PRwhiz@prpr.net

Phone: +1-407-299-6128 (5/8/08)

2. WILLIAM MARTEL, professor of international security studies at The Fletcher School at TUFTS UNIVERSITY: "The terrible humanitarian disaster in Myanmar could have an immensely important consequence of strategic proportions. The attempt by the international community to provide humanitarian assistance could slowly lead the government of Myanmar to become more open to the rest of the world. When that happens, there is reason to hope Myanmar might begin to gravitate away from the repressive authoritarian practices that have made it one of the worst governments. Strangely, this humanitarian disaster might lead to a better future for Myanmar." News Contact: Ian Davis, ian\_m.davis@tufts.edu

Phone: +1-617-627-6410 (5/8/08)

3. RICK ESTRIDGE, senior technical advisor for emergency response, CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES (CRS): "Our local partners are in the process of carrying out assessments, including training of volunteers, to identify the needs of those affected and carry out emergency relief efforts. The situation is being complicated by rising food costs and scarcity of gasoline, in addition to blocked roads and access to isolated villages." News Contact: Kim Pozniak, kpozniak@crs.org

DR. DEBORAH BROSANAN, president of SUSTAINABLE ECOSYSTEMS INSTITUTE, a scientific organization: "While natural catastrophes are common, governments treat them as rare events -- surprised and scrambling when they happen. Two-hundred million were affected in 2007, up 48 percent from 2006. It's a growing problem for rich and poor countries alike, warranting global response. Nargis is Myanmar's Katrina, only 100 times greater. Six million people live on the Irrawaddy Delta -- most victims were killed by the storm surge, made worse by years of environmental damage. The marshes are impassible, and thousands more are likely to perish from starvation and disease. Little is being done for the survivors, or for recovering their natural resources that would allow them to survive. Yet, we have the tools for prevention and response." Brosnan worked throughout Southeast Asia after the tsunami and advised in the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina. She has presented expert testimony to U.S. Senate and House committees and advised governments and other sectors on science, conservation and science policy. She has been featured on NPR, "48 Hours" and "The Oprah Winfrey Show." News Contact: Liza Colburn, lcolburn@emergepr.com

AMERICARES, a private, nonprofit international disaster relief and humanitarian aid organization that delivers medicines, medical supplies, and aid to people in crisis around the world, has been mobilizing people, supplies, and information from the U.S., Asia and Europe. Experts noted below are available in the U.S., as well as via satellite phone from Asia. Photos of supplies that are being shipped from the U.S. are available upon request:

-- CURT WELLING, president and chief executive officer, is able to speak to the need for quick response from the global relief community and the importance of in-kind donations directly following a disaster of this magnitude: "With each passing day, the death toll rises and the situation in Myanmar becomes more dire for the survivors of Cyclone Nargis. Access to Myanmar remains an issue, but AmeriCares stands ready to deliver aid at the earliest opportunity. Given the magnitude of the destruction, our focus now, and for the immediate future, will be on providing whatever aid is needed, wherever it is needed most." Welling can discuss logistics, planning, how corporations are helping and what people can do to assist.

-- FRANK BIA, M.D., is a renowned expert in infectious diseases and international health. He recently joined AmeriCares after a 30-year career at Yale University School of Medicine. Bia served as a professor of both medicine in infectious diseases and laboratory medicine in clinical microbiology. He was also co-director of the International Health Program at Yale. As medical director, Bia oversees the planning, assessment, resourcing and clinical operations of AmeriCares Global Programs Operations, as well as the organization's work with free health care clinics throughout the United States, and provides medical oversight of the AmeriCares Free Clinics in Connecticut. He honed his expertise in the areas of infectious diseases, tropical medicine and international health while working abroad in Haiti, China, Colombia, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Iran and Thailand.

-- CHRISTOPH GORDER, vice president of emergency response, is available to discuss how the global relief community is mobilizing to assist in the Myanmar recovery effort and the critical roles of communication and partnership in ensuring humanitarian relief reaches the citizens of Myanmar as quickly as possible.

-- JONATHAN HODGDON, a veteran relief and logistics worker who has been to many relief sites throughout the world, left for Bangkok immediately after news of the tragedy reached the U.S. and will soon be on the ground assisting. He is available via satellite phone, or to help assist media on the ground, should they be going to Myanmar via Bangkok.

News Contacts: Kate Homan (Washington, D.C.), khoman@webershandwick.com

DR. TUN MYINT, visiting professor of political science at CARLETON COLLEGE, was born in Burma but left his home country for the United States in 1988 after the military junta came to power. He is available to speak with reporters regarding the recent tragedy in Myanmar. Myint has many family members that still live in the country, including five brothers, who are all safe after the cyclone hit his home country. Myint has been in touch with two of those brothers and can offer insight into what is happening on the ground, as well as insight into why that country's government is slow to accept international aid in the wake of this disaster. Myint served as a member of the Technical Advisory Team of the Federal Constitution Drafting Coordinating Committee of the Union of Burma, and was previously a research fellow with the Institutional Dimensions of Global Environmental Change, School of Environmental Science and Management at the University of California-Santa Barbara. He came to Carleton from Indiana University, where he earned his Ph.D. in 2005 from the joint program between the School of Public and Environmental Affairs and the School of Law. He was a postdoctoral research fellow at IU, teaching and engaging in research on democracy and environmental governance, with a regional focus on Southeast Asia. He teaches courses on comparative political regimes, Southeast Asian politics, international relations and world politics, international environmental politics and policy, and international institutions at Carleton. News Contact: Eric Sieger, esieger@carleton.edu

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7. DR. THOMAS BIRKLAND, the William T. Kretzer professor of public policy in NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY's School of Public and International Affairs, is a disaster response expert who can speak to general issues about the disaster, including vulnerability; the nature of the region struck by the cyclone; the challenges of getting aid into remote areas, particularly in a relatively closed and repressive country; and comparisons between this and the 2004 tsunami. Birkland will not be available from May 11-25. News Contact: Matt Shipman, matt\_shipman@ncsu.edu

Phone: +1-919-515-6386 (5/8/08)

8. CRAIG KIELBURGER is founder and CEO of FREE THE CHILDREN, the world's largest network of children helping children, and partner for O Ambassadors. Kielburger is an accomplished child rights advocate, leadership specialist, New York Times best-selling author and motivational speaker. At age 12, he founded Free The Children. He is the recipient of the Nelson Mandela Human Rights Award, the World Economic Forum GLT Award, the Roosevelt Freedom Medal, and the World's Children Prize for Rights of the Child. Kielburger has shown the world that no one is ever too young to make a difference. His work has been featured on "The Oprah Winfrey Show," CNN, "60 Minutes," and profiled in numerous newspapers and magazines. News Contacts: Lauren Robinson, robinsonl@plannedtvarts.com

JOHN ARTHUR NUNES is president and CEO of LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF, an organization that works with partners in 35 countries to help people grow food, improve health, strengthen communities, end conflict, build livelihoods and recover from disasters. Nunes's area of expertise is international aid and humanitarian response. News Contact: Lisa Bonds, lbonds@lwr.org

Cell: +1-443- 722-2162 (5/8/08)

10. SANDRA MINIUTTI is vice president of CHARITY NAVIGATOR, America's leading charity evaluator, which is offering giving tips and a list of financially efficient charities to help donors give with confidence to trustworthy charities helping the victims of the May 2 cyclone in Myanmar. Web site: <http://www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm?bay>

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