

Caritas Bangladesh Situation Report - 1

Landslides in Badarban, Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHTs)

Dated: 06/08/2009

Time: 12:00 hours

1. Situation Overview

At least 11 people were killed (six persons from a family) and 24 injured in mudslides/landslides on 31 July 2009 (Friday) in Aziznagar and Gozalia of Lama *upazila* in Bandarban district under Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHTs). The landslides occurred at about 3:00am burying alive the victims, living in bamboo huts at the foot of the hills, the police said, quoting local residents. Media apprehended that driving rain during the last four days might have caused the mudslide.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHTs) is situated in the south-eastern part of Bangladesh bordering with India and Myanmar and at the backdrop of the Bay of Bengal. As a part of the Himalayan Ranges, the region comprises numerous hills, forests and river valleys. The CHTs covers about 10% of the 144,000 sqkm land area of Bangladesh. The CHTs is inhabited by over a dozen of ethnic groups or communities including Chakma, Marma, Tripura, *Bawm*, *Khumji*, *Lusai*, *Chak*, *Mru* living mainly in the hilly and adjacent areas and practising *Jhum* (slash and burn cultivation).

In 1996, at least 11 people were also killed in a series of mudslides and landslides at Chittar Tali, Chiwni Para and Muslim Para adjacent to Aziz Nagar Industrial Area in the district. Bangladesh witnessed its worst landslide in recent decades on June 13, 2007 when 123 people were buried. Two probe bodies formed after the series of landslides on 11 June, 2007 put forward 36 recommendations, including restriction on dwellings within five kilometres and brickfields within ten kilometres of the hills, afforestation of the hills and construction of boundary walls around the major hills, most of which remained unheeded. Sources in the Directorate of Environment said that nearly 7,000 families have been dwelling on the foothills in spite of the dire risk to their lives and properties, and pointed out that 2,000 of these families were in the most vulnerable situation.

2. Responses from Bangladesh Government:

Three fire engines from Chakaria and Pekua in Cox's Bazar and Satkania of Chittagong went to the spot and started recovery operations. With the help of locals they recovered the 10 bodies in seven hours. Several high officials of Bandarban took part in the operation.

Mr Abdul Mannan, Additional Deputy Commissioner (general), Bandarban, Mr Kya Shai Hla, District Council Chairman have visited the spot. After the mudslide, the District Administration over loudspeakers asked locals in vulnerable areas to move to safer places. Bandarban Zila Parishad allocated Tk 25,000 cash and six tonnes of rice for the victims.

3. Caritas Bangladesh Response

Caritas Chittagong Region has sent the following report:

Caritas Regional Office Chittagong took immediate steps both for assessment and emergency response. Mr. James Gomes, Regional Director, Caritas Chittagong went to the spot, talked the victims and conducted an initial assessment. Two Initial Assessment Teams consisting eight members went to the two affected spots. The Initial Assessment Teams have collected data of casualties and damages of

Aziznagar and Gozalia Unions in Lama *upazila* under Bandarban Districts. The team collected data by physical visit and had discussions with Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), Union Parishad Chairman of Aziznagar and Gozalia Union. They also talked with community people to know real situation.

A summary of casualties and damages are given below:

➤ Union	:	Aziznagar, Lama, Bandarban
Affected Para	:	30 (9 Wards)
People died	:	9 (Man: 5 and Women: 4)
People injured	:	20

Damages:

Houses fully	:	40
Houses partially	:	60
Poultry firm	:	3 (fully damaged)
Mud roads	:	about 20 km
Domestic animal	:	110 (cow- 6, goat- 4 and poultry- 100 died)
Fish firms & Ponds	:	50
Paddy & Seed fields	:	about 200 acres
Betel leaf gardens	:	50 (fully damaged)
Plant gardens	:	about 200 acres

➤ Union	:	Gozalia, Lama, Bandarban
Affected Para	:	6
Children died	:	1
People injured	:	4

Damages:

Houses fully	:	10
Houses partially	:	20
Mud roads	:	about 15 km
Paddy & Seed fields	:	about 150 acres

Present Situation of the Areas:

1. Family members from fully and partially damaged houses took shelter in their relatives and neighbors houses.
2. After getting primary medical support from army the injured people are staying in their relatives and neighbors houses.
3. People's Organization has provided Tk 1500 to three mostly affected families for emergency food.
4. The District Commissioner of Bandarban provided with a total of five metric ton of rice for Aziznagar union.

Comments of the assessment teams:

1. No emergency food relief is needed.
2. Cash for work is needed for removing mud from the paddy & seed fields, cleaning of the ponds and repairing of roads.
3. Financial support also needed for rebuilding and repairing of the damaged works.
4. Cash money is needed for purchasing paddy seeds/seed plants and betel leaf gardens.
5. Resettlement of the families living in the high-risk hilly areas is necessary

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LANDSLIDES-1



fully damaged paddy fields is seen which has been covered by the mud due to Landslides



A house was smashed by the landslides and killed six persons from one family