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Tens of thousands displaced by severe flooding in Sri Lanka at risk from water-borne diseases





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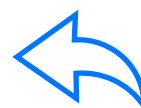
Kuala Lumpur / Colombo, 16 June 2017 — The Red Cross is concerned about the spread of water-borne diseases in the aftermath of the catastrophic floods and landslides that have engulfed south-western Sri Lanka in recent days.

The floods – triggered by the beginnings of Tropical Cyclone Mora – were the worst to hit Sri Lanka in 14 years. According to the Government, more than 650,000 people have been affected, including over 68,000 who remain in temporary shelters having been forced to abandon their homes. 206 people have been killed and close to 100 are missing.

The flooding has contaminated drinking water sources and damaged toilets and sanitation systems, raising the risk of water-borne diseases, including dengue.

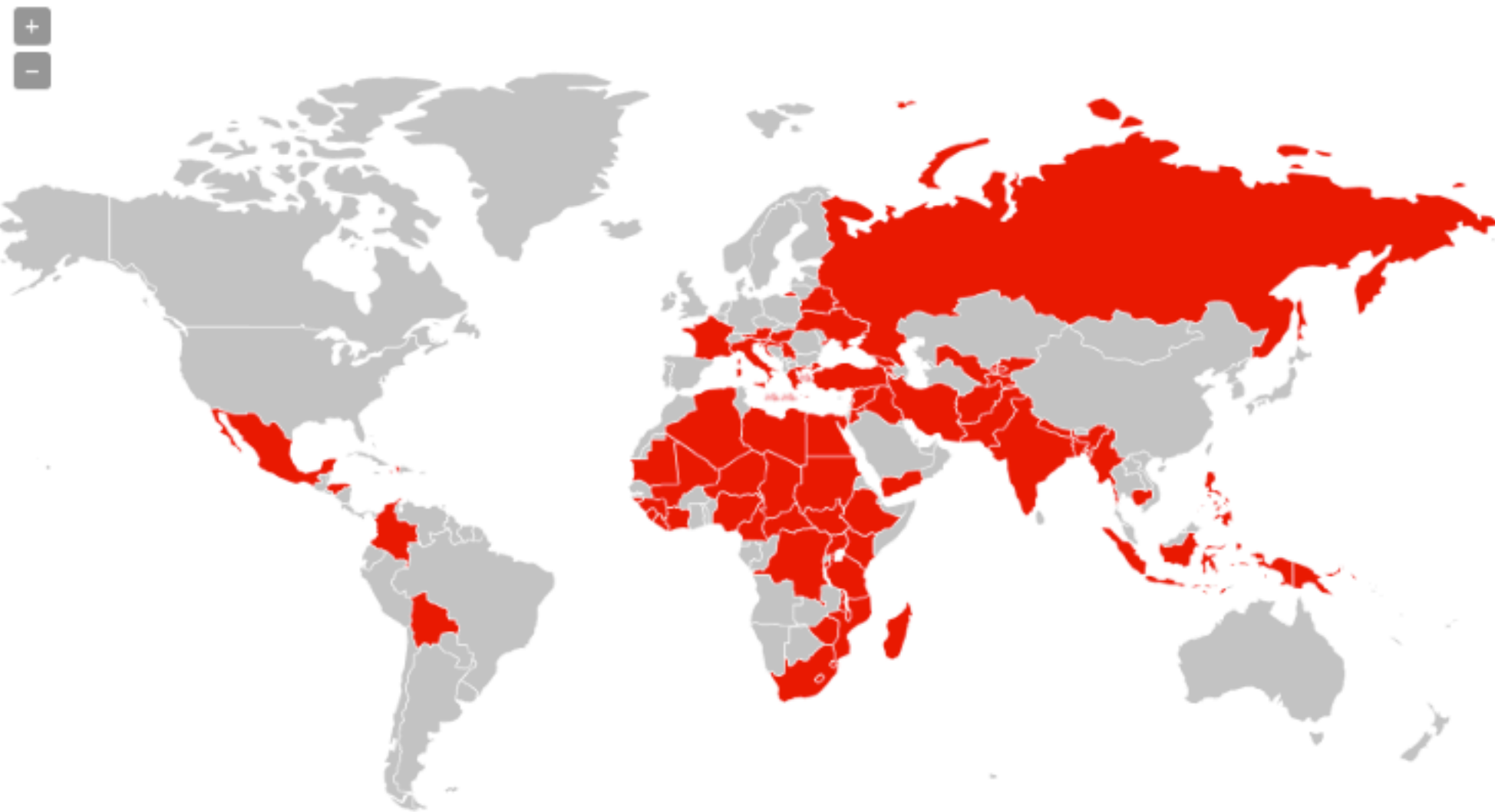
“Tens of thousands of people are still unable to return home,” said Jagath Abeysinghe, President of Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS). “Dengue is endemic in Sri Lanka and with so much standing water, conditions are ripe for mosquitoes to breed and spread the disease. Providing clean water and sanitation together with awareness on preventing communicable diseases is a critical part of our humanitarian response.”

SLRCS disaster response teams and volunteers have been on the ground supporting the emergency aid effort. Many of the volunteers are from affected communities and have been responding to the crisis since the floodwaters started to rise.



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