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

02/16/2016

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.





Tens of thousands of women and children are fleeing from South Sudan to Sudan

02/05/2017

Nairobi/Geneva, 30 May 2017 – Tens of thousands of South Sudanese women and children have crossed the border into Sudan since the beginning of the year, fleeing violence and the looming threat of famine.

This represents a dramatic spike in the movement of people across the border. Nearly 137,000 South Sudanese have crossed into Sudan since 1 January – already more than the 131,000 that arrived during 2016, according to UNHCR. Aid workers on the ground report that the vast majority of new arrivals are women and children.

“The people who are arriving are in a desperate state,” said Dr Fatoumata Nafo-Traoré, Regional Director for Africa for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). “Most are in poor health, exhausted from their journeys, and traumatized by what they have seen and experienced.”

In all, about 417,000 South Sudanese refugees have entered Sudan since December 2013. More than half are in camps in East and South Darfur and West and South Kordofan. The Sudanese Red Crescent Society is present in these areas and has, in partnership with the UN, been supporting more than 300,000 with food aid, and about 90,000 refugees with clean water, sanitation and health services.

However, with the increased arrival of refugees, IFRC and SSRC are warning of an elevated risk of diseases such as malaria, as existing healthcare and water and sanitation services come under ever greater strain.



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