

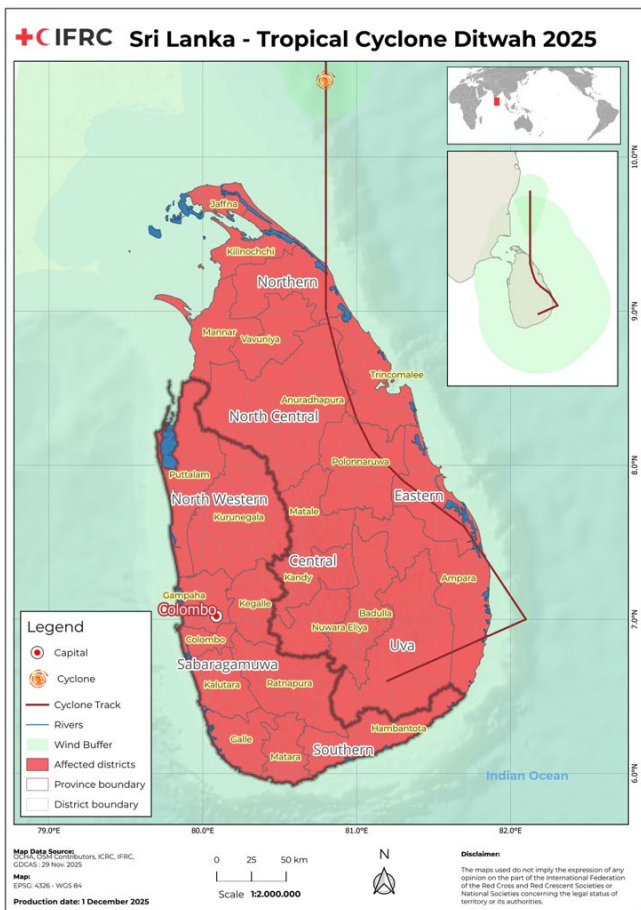
# EMERGENCY APPEAL

## Sri Lanka | Tropical Cyclone Ditwah



An aerial view of severe flooding in Sri Lanka, where entire neighbourhoods and agricultural lands are submerged following heavy rains. The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society is on the ground providing life-saving assistance to affected communities. (Photo: SLRCS)

Appeal No: <b>MDRLK023</b>	IFRC Secretariat Funding requirements: <b>CHF 5 million</b> Federation-wide Funding requirements: <b>TBD</b>	
Glide No: <a href="#">FL-2025-000213-LKA</a>	People affected: <b>1,151,776 people</b>	People to be assisted: <b>500,000 people</b>
DREF allocation request: <b>CHF 1 Million</b>	Appeal launched: <b>2 December 2025</b>	Appeal ends: <b>30 June 2027</b>



## SITUATION OVERVIEW

A low-pressure system that developed over the southwest Bay of Bengal near Sri Lanka on 25 November 2025 rapidly intensified into a deep depression by 26 November 2025, bringing heavy rains and strong winds across the island. The Department of Meteorology, along with the Disaster Management Centre (DMC), issued early warnings as the system began to track north-northwestwards, positioning itself approximately 100 kilometres south of Sri Lanka's eastern coastline.

Cyclone Ditwah further intensified into a devastating tropical storm system, unleashing unprecedented rainfall and severe weather impacts across Sri Lanka. According to the Disaster Management Centre's situation report issued on 29 November 2025, at 2:00 PM, the cyclone has affected 25 districts nationwide, impacting 316,366 families and 1,151,776 individuals, with 366 confirmed deaths and 367 people reported missing. Evacuation efforts have relocated 61,612 families – amounting to 218,526 people – into 1,564 safety centres,

while widespread infrastructure damage has been recorded, including more than 15,000 houses destroyed and 827 partially damaged, with figures expected to rise as assessment teams reach remote areas.

Torrential rainfall exceeding 200 millimetres within 24 hours, and in some districts surpassing 540 millimetres, triggered catastrophic flash flooding in low-lying regions and along major river basins. The Department of Meteorology issued a 'RED ALERT' on 27 November, the highest warning level, covering both land and sea areas. By 28-29 November, the cyclone had tracked north-northwestward, moving away from Sri Lanka toward Tamil Nadu and Puducherry in India, where red alerts were also issued for coastal regions anticipating extreme rainfall. Despite the system's gradual departure, Sri Lanka remained under critical threat through 30 November, with forecasts of an additional 200 millimetres of rainfall likely to worsen flood risks, while the Irrigation Department's flood warning remained in effect until 3:00 PM on 30 November.

In response to the widespread devastation, the Government of Sri Lanka declared a nationwide state of emergency, confirming that all districts have been severely affected by Cyclone Ditwah. The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) has mobilised its branches and volunteers to conduct assessments, collect impact data from the respective districts, and provide First Aid services, while the national headquarters (NHQ) has begun sending essential household items to the branches of landslide affected districts to support the people affected.

Access to many impacted areas remains severely constrained, with more than 200 roads still impassable and at least 10 key bridges damaged, limiting overland delivery and restricting population movement from isolated communities. The President of Sri Lanka declared a nationwide state of emergency on 28 November in response to the severe impacts of Cyclone Ditwah, granting the government broad powers under the Public

Security Ordinance to safeguard public order and ensure the continuity of essential services. Through an Extraordinary Gazette, the Essential Public Services Act No. 61 of 1979 was also activated, legally designating critical sectors such as healthcare, water supply, electricity, transport, communications, and disaster response operations as essential to the life of communities. This declaration prohibits strikes or work stoppages in these services and obliges workers to continue their duties, thereby guaranteeing uninterrupted delivery of vital public services during the crisis. Together, the state of emergency and the activation of the Essential Public Services Act provide the government with the authority and mechanisms needed to stabilise the situation,

protect vulnerable populations, and coordinate national disaster response more effectively in the face of widespread flooding and infrastructure disruption caused by the cyclone.

Assessments are currently underway, and with the situation still evolving, the full scale of the impact has yet to be determined. As more detailed information emerges from field assessments and coordination with local authorities, the Emergency Appeal may be revised to more accurately reflect the needs, priorities, and required level of support.

## TARGETING

This operation will target approximately **500,000 people** from 100,000 households across the most severely affected districts of Cyclone Ditwah, prioritising those currently displaced in safety centres, staying with relatives, and communities returning to damaged homes.

The selection focuses on districts experiencing the greatest impact, especially Badulla (30 deaths, severe landslides), Ampara (major agricultural losses), Kandy (declared state of emergency), Kurunegala (extensive low-lying community flooding), and other severely affected areas within the targeted 20 districts.

The water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), cash and voucher assistance (CVA), shelter-essential household items, health (first aid and medical camps), and education (school supplies) interventions directly address the immediate needs identified through rapid assessments by SLRCS branches and government data from the DMC.

Targeting will depend on the actions and will be further elaborated in the Operational Strategy. Targeted vulnerable groups will be reached through inclusive mechanisms: rural communities will be identified through village-level coordination with Grama Niladhari divisions and Divisional Secretariats; estate sector workers will be prioritised; migrants and refugees will be verified through UNHCR coordination with government immigration authorities; LGBTQ individuals will be engaged through established community networks in Colombo and Gampaha; and women-headed households, the elderly, people with disabilities, pregnant and lactating women, and households with infants will be identified through disaggregated household assessments.

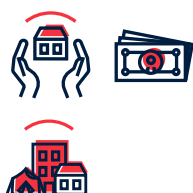
Transparency and protection will be ensured through community meetings to share selection criteria, verified lists of the targeted population posted publicly with feedback hotlines, coordination with government authorities to prevent duplication, and protection, gender, and inclusion (PGI) mainstreaming across all targeting processes. The SLRCS's commitment to the IFRC's minimum standards for gender and diversity in emergency programming ensures that vulnerable groups receive appropriate, dignified, and protective assistance throughout the operation cycle.

## PLANNED OPERATIONS

Through this Emergency Appeal, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) aims to support the SLRCS in responding to Cyclone Ditwah. The IFRC's strategy is to strengthen immediate relief and recovery efforts and will focus on the following priority areas:

### **Integrated assistance**

*(Shelter, Livelihoods, and Multi-purpose Cash)*



The integrated assistance strategy is designed to provide a comprehensive response that bridges immediate relief, early recovery, and long-term resilience building. In the emergency phase, families living in temporary shelters or hosting displaced persons will receive essential household items such as bedding, hygiene kits, and cooking sets to restore basic living conditions and dignity. To ensure flexibility and address diverse needs, unconditional cash grants will be introduced, allowing households to cover critical expenses including food, healthcare, and transportation. As the situation stabilises, conditional cash support will be provided for shelter repairs and owner-driven reconstruction, complementing in-kind assistance to guarantee safe and adequate housing. Moving into the recovery phase, multipurpose cash grants will be expanded to include education-related vouchers, helping families meet education costs and other essential needs. Livelihood recovery efforts will prioritise vocational training, skills development, and income-generating activities, with a focus on vulnerable groups and on linking them to local markets. Together, these interventions aim to restore economic stability, promote social reintegration, and strengthen community resilience against future shocks, ensuring that affected populations can rebuild their lives with dignity and security. In Sri Lanka, the Shelter Cluster is part of the global humanitarian coordination system, activated during major disasters to organise shelter-related responses. The SLRCS, together with the IFRC, plays a key role in supporting coordination, providing technical expertise, and delivering shelter assistance to affected communities.



### **Health and Care including Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)**

*(Mental Health and Psychosocial Support/Community Health)*

The health and care response, including WASH, will focus on urgent measures to protect public health and prevent the spread of disease in disaster-affected communities. Mobile health clinics and medical camps will be deployed to reach isolated populations where access to health facilities has been cut off due to road closures, while trained volunteers will provide first aid and general medical care to reduce hospitalisation risks. Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services will be offered to help individuals cope with trauma, and disease surveillance systems will be reinforced to detect and respond to potential outbreaks of diarrhoea, leptospirosis, and dengue. Immediate WASH interventions will prioritise the supply of safe drinking water through bowsers and

purification tablets, alongside well cleaning and disinfection in inundated areas. Hygiene kits containing soap, detergent, sanitary napkins, and toothpaste will be distributed, with special attention given to women and adolescent girls in evacuation centres, while temporary latrines and portable sanitation facilities will be installed in areas where infrastructure has been damaged. As conditions begin to stabilise, community clean-up campaigns will be organised in schools, shelters, and public spaces to eliminate mosquito breeding grounds and restore sanitary conditions. Preventive health messaging and hygiene promotion will continue into the recovery phase, strengthening resilience against waterborne and vector-borne diseases. In the longer-term, the operation will support the rehabilitation of health centres, capacity building of staff and volunteers in public health emergencies, expansion of first aid services, epidemic preparedness, and the training of first aid trainers, ensuring that communities are better equipped to respond to future health crises.

### Protection and Prevention

*(Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI), Community Engagement and Accountability, Migration, Environmental Sustainability, Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery, Education)*

Training programmes will be organised to equip volunteers with the necessary skills and awareness to address issues related to sex and gender-based violence (SGBV), ensuring they are prepared to provide appropriate support, protection, and referral services to survivors. Volunteer deployment will be carefully planned and based on the assessed needs, allowing resources to be directed to the most affected communities while ensuring equitable coverage. In parallel, Movement-wide commitments on community engagement and accountability (CEA) and PGI will be systematically integrated into all aspects of the operation. This will involve establishing consultation processes with affected populations, creating accessible feedback and complaint mechanisms, and promoting inclusive participation to ensure that diverse voices – particularly those of women, children, persons with disabilities, and marginalised groups – are heard and acted upon. By mainstreaming these minimum actions, the operation will strengthen accountability, enhance transparency, and promote trust between responders and communities, while ensuring that humanitarian assistance is people-centred, protective, and responsive to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of all affected groups.



## Enabling approaches

The sectors outlined above will be supported and enhanced by the following enabling approaches:

### Coordination and Partnerships



In terms of coordination and partnerships, the National Society continues to uphold its auxiliary role to the public authorities, ensuring alignment with national priorities while actively contributing to key humanitarian clusters

such as WASH, Health, and Cash. This engagement enhances sectoral coordination and promotes integrated responses to emerging needs. Regular tripartite meetings between the IFRC, SLRCS, and ICRC provide a platform for strategic dialogue and operational coherence, while Partners Calls facilitate broader engagement with diplomatic actors to strengthen collaboration and mobilise resources. These mechanisms collectively reinforce a unified and partnership-driven approach to humanitarian action.

### **IFRC Secretariat Services**

The IFRC will continue to provide extensive technical and operational support to the SLRCS, ensuring accountability, compliance, and the highest quality of delivery throughout the emergency operation. This support encompasses guidance across all stages of response planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation – under a Federation-wide approach that guarantees adherence to established IFRC standards and procedures. Surge deployment is being planned to mobilise resources into the country, which also includes mobilising personnel from the Country Cluster Delegation. To maximise impact, these roles will be strategically positioned at both National Headquarters and field levels, enhancing coordination and technical capacity across the organisation. In addition, the IFRC will oversee procurement and financial management processes in strict alignment with international standards, ensuring transparency and efficiency. A central pillar of this support strategy will be the mobilisation, engagement, and capacity building of Red Cross volunteers, recognising their vital role as the backbone of the response and as key agents in delivering humanitarian assistance to affected communities. This comprehensive approach aims to not only address immediate needs but also reinforce institutional resilience and preparedness for future emergencies.



### **National Society Strengthening**

To help the SLRCS quickly identify practical ways to strengthen its capacity for the current crisis, a readiness check is recommended. In the shorter-term, priority will be given to quick improvements such as strengthening coordination mechanisms, streamlining information management, and reinforcing volunteer engagement to boost efficiency and responsiveness. While the rapid check serves as an entry point to address urgent needs in this crisis, a proper Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) process will be essential to guide longer-term, systematic strengthening of preparedness and response. Building on this, strategic investments will target critical areas including logistics, planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting (PMER), and disaster response planning, ensuring that immediate improvements are complemented by sustainable institutional capacity. This dual-track strategy, addressing urgent operational requirements while building sustainable institutional capacity, will enable the SLRCS to efficiently and effectively respond to the current operation, while also positioning the National Society to manage future crises with greater predictability, accountability, and



localisation. Ultimately, these measures are designed to reinforce resilience, enhance preparedness, and ensure that the SLRCS continues to serve as the humanitarian partner of choice while upholding the confidence and trust of the government, communities, and partners.

The planned response reflects the current situation and is based on the information available at the time of this Emergency Appeal launch. Details of the operation will be updated through the Operational Strategy to be released in the upcoming days. The Operational Strategy will also provide further details on the Federation-wide approach, which includes the response activities of all contributing Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, and the Federation-wide funding requirement.

After 30 June 2027, the remaining supplementary activities will continue under the [IFRC Network Sri Lanka Country Plan](#), which provides an integrated approach to ongoing emergency response, recovery, and longer-term programming tailored to the country's needs, while also providing a Federation-wide perspective on actions in the country. This aims to streamline activities under one plan while ensuring that the needs of those affected by the disaster are met in an accountable and transparent manner.

## RED CROSS RED CRESCENT FOOTPRINT IN COUNTRY

### Sri Lanka Red Cross Society



#### Core areas of operation



Number of staff:	<b>90</b>
Number of volunteers:	<b>3,895</b>
Number of branches	<b>25</b>

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) has a strong disaster response capacity, supported

by 25 branches strategically located across the country and thousands of trained volunteers ready for rapid deployment. With extensive experience in managing floods, landslides, cyclones, and complex emergencies, the SLRCS delivers timely life-saving assistance including first aid, emergency relief, and restoring family links (RFL). Its well-coordinated branch network, pre-positioned stocks, and partnerships with government and Movement actors enable the SLRCS to respond effectively to disasters while strengthening community resilience.

#### IFRC Membership coordination

There is currently no Participating National Society presence in Sri Lanka. The IFRC is launching this Emergency Appeal on behalf of the SLRCS and will be coordinating international support to the SLRCS through the Emergency Appeal. The IFRC, in particular, will work hand in hand with the SLRCS to

facilitate the sharing of information across the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and with external partners, thereby strengthening transparency and collective action. In addition, the IFRC Country Cluster Delegation in Delhi and the IFRC Asia-Pacific Regional Office will provide extended coordination support, offering technical guidance, resource mobilisation, and strategic oversight to reinforce the national response. This layered coordination structure provides the SLRCS with benefits from both localised support and regional expertise, enabling a more coherent, accountable, and impactful humanitarian operation.

### **Red Cross Red Crescent Movement coordination**

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) maintains an active presence in Sri Lanka and actively supports the SLRCS through contributions to the ongoing emergency response with a financial contribution, RFL services, and logistics support. To ensure strong Movement coordination, regular tripartite meetings between the ICRC, SLRCS, and IFRC are convened to review the evolving situation and agree on joint actions, strengthening collaboration and alignment throughout the operation.

### **External coordination**

The SLRCS and the IFRC actively engage with the United Nations system to ensure coordinated and complementary humanitarian action. Their participation extends to Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) meetings, as well as sectoral clusters and working groups focused on Food Security, Health, and Cash assistance. Through these platforms, the SLRCS and IFRC contribute to joint assessments, share operational updates, and align their interventions with broader humanitarian priorities, thereby strengthening collective impact. This engagement not only enhances coordination with UN agencies and other humanitarian actors, but also ensures that Red Cross Red Crescent activities are integrated into national and international response frameworks. By maintaining a strong presence in these forums, the SLRCS and IFRC reinforce accountability, promote resource mobilisation, and advocate for the needs of vulnerable communities, while driving collaboration that supports both immediate relief and long-term recovery efforts.

## Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation, please contact:

### At the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society:

- **Secretary General:** Dr. Mahesh Gunasekera; email: [mahesh.gunasekara@redcross.lk](mailto:mahesh.gunasekara@redcross.lk), +94703471084
- **Operational coordination:** Damitha Chanaka, Preparedness & Response Manager; email: [damitha.chanaka@redcross.lk](mailto:damitha.chanaka@redcross.lk), phone: +94703514929

### At the IFRC Country Cluster Delegation Delhi:

- **IFRC Country Cluster Head of Delegation;** John Entwistle, CCD; email: [john.entwistle@ifrc.org](mailto:john.entwistle@ifrc.org), phone: +919266905183

### At the IFRC Asia-Pacific Regional Office in Kuala Lumpur:

- **Regional Director:** Alexander Matheou; email: [alexander.matheou@ifrc.org](mailto:alexander.matheou@ifrc.org)
- **Deputy Regional Director:** Juja Kim; email: [juja.kim@ifrc.org](mailto:juja.kim@ifrc.org)
- **Acting Head of Health, Disaster, Climate and Crisis Unit:** Dr. Sushma Bhusal; email: [sushma.bhusal@ifrc.org](mailto:sushma.bhusal@ifrc.org)
- **Acting Lead of Evolving Crises and Disasters:** Ganesh Navaratnam; email: [ganesh.navaratnam@ifrc.org](mailto:ganesh.navaratnam@ifrc.org)
- **Operations Coordinator:** Nusrat Hassan; email: [opscoord.southasia@ifrc.org](mailto:opscoord.southasia@ifrc.org)
- **Regional Communications Manager:** Afrhill Rances; email: [afrhill.rances@ifrc.org](mailto:afrhill.rances@ifrc.org)
- **Regional Head, PMER and Quality Assurance:** Alice Ho; email: [alice.ho@ifrc.org](mailto:alice.ho@ifrc.org)

### For IFRC Resource Mobilisation and Pledges support:

- **Senior Officer – Partnerships in Emergencies:** Mohd Hisham Bin Ahmad Nazri; [hisham.nazri@ifrc.org](mailto:hisham.nazri@ifrc.org), +60173816985

### At IFRC Geneva:

- **Senior Officer Operations Coordination:** Christina Duschl; email: [christina.duschl@ifrc.org](mailto:christina.duschl@ifrc.org)

### For In-Kind Donations and Mobilisation table support:

- **Manager Regional Logistics Unit:** Nuraiza Khairuddin; email: [nuraiza.khairuddin@ifrc.org](mailto:nuraiza.khairuddin@ifrc.org)

#### Reference



Click here for:

- [Link to IFRC Emergency landing page](#)